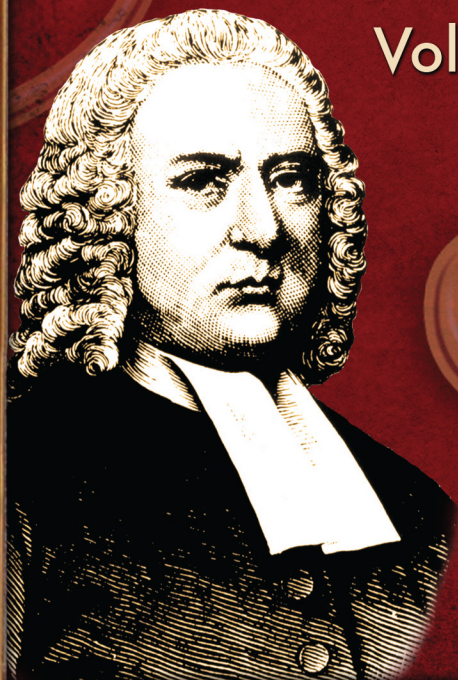


EXPOSITION OF THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS

John Gill, D.D.

Volume 9 of 9

Galatians 2 through
Revelation



**EXPOSITION OF
THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

By John Gill, D.D.

Complete & Unabridged

VOL. 9 of 9



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JOHN GILL, D. D.

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OF THE

New Testament

BY

John Gill D. D.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III

LONDON

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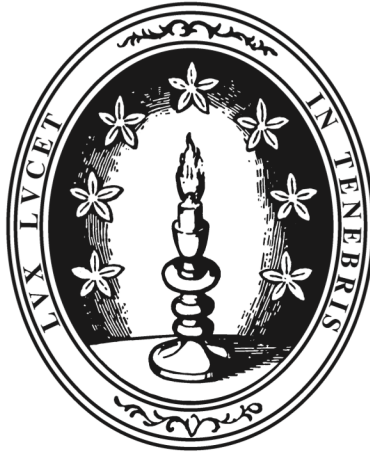
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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

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AN
EXPOSITION
OF
The New Testament ;

IN WHICH

THE SENSE OF THE SACRED TEXT IS GIVEN ;

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL TRUTHS ARE SET IN A PLAIN AND EASY LIGHT ;

DIFFICULT PASSAGES EXPLAINED ; SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS RECONCILED :

AND WHATEVER IS MATERIAL IN

The various Readings and several Oriental Versions is observed.

THE WHOLE ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES, TAKEN FROM

THE MOST ANCIENT JEWISH WRITINGS.

BY JOHN GILL, D. D.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

London :

PRINTED FOR MATHEWS AND LEIGH, 18, STRAND,

BY W. CLOWES, NORTHUMBERLAND-COURT.

1809.

AN EXPOSITION
OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
THE GALATIANS.

C H A P. II.

Ver. 1. *THEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem, &c.*] That is, either after it pleased God to call him by his grace, and reveal his son in him; or rather after he had been at Jerusalem to see Peter, with whom he stayed fifteen days, and then went into Syria and Cilicia; so that it was seventeen years after his conversion that he took this journey to Jerusalem he here speaks of; and he seems to refer to the time when he and Barnabas went from the church at Antioch to the apostles and elders about the question, whether circumcision was necessary to salvation, Acts xv. 1, 2. which entirely agrees with the account the apostle here gives of this journey, and which he went not alone, but *with Barnabas: and took Titus with me also*; Barnabas is mentioned in Luke's account as going with him at this time, but Titus is not; who, though he was not sent by the church, yet the apostle might judge it proper and prudent to take him with him, who was converted by him, was a minister of the Gospel, and continued uncircumcised; and the rather he might choose to have him along with him, partly that he might be confirmed in the faith the apostle had taught him; and partly that he might be a living testimony of the agreement between the apostle's principles and practice; and that having him and Barnabas, he might have a competent number of witnesses to testify to the doctrines he preached, the miracles he wrought, and the success that attended him among the Gentiles; and to relate, upon their return, what passed between him and the elders at Jerusalem; for by the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing is established.

VOL. III.—NEW TEST.

Ver. 2. *And I went up by revelation, &c.*] He was not sent for by the apostles at Jerusalem, nor did he go of himself, nor only by the vote of the church at Antioch, but by a divine revelation; not a revelation made to the church, or by the prophets there, but by God himself to him; he had a secret impulse from the spirit of God, and a private intimation given him, that it was the will of God he should go up at this time; which is no ways inconsistent with his being sent by the church, but served as a confirmation to him, that what they determined was right, and according to the mind of God: *and communicated unto them that Gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles*: that self-same Gospel, which he had preached, and still continued to preach to the Gentiles; relating to free and full remission of sin by the blood of Christ, justification by his righteousness without the works of the law, and freedom from all the rituals and bondage of the Mosaic dispensation: for as the Gospel he preached was all of a piece, uniform and consistent, so he did not preach one sort of doctrine to the Gentiles, and another to the Jews; but the very self-same truths which were the subject of his ministry in the Gentile world, which were a crucified Christ, and salvation alone by him, these he communicated, laid before, and exposed unto the consideration of the elders and apostles at Jerusalem; not with a view either to give or receive instructions, but to compare their sentiments and principles together; that so it might appear that there was an entire harmony and agreement between them; and this he did not publicly, to the whole church, at least

B

at first, and especially the article of Christian liberty, which respects the freedom of the believing Jews, from the yoke of the law; for as yet they were not able to bear this doctrine; they could pretty readily agree that the Gentiles were not obliged to it, but could not think themselves free from it; wherefore the apostle, in great prudence, did not avouch this in the public audience: *but privately to them which were of reputation; or who seemed to be, i. e.* somewhat, very considerable persons; not in their own opinion, or appearance only, but in reality, they seemed to be, and were pillars in the house of God; particularly he means James, Cephas, and John, men in great esteem with the saints, and deservedly honoured and respected by them, they being faithful labourers in the word and doctrine; so the Jewish doctors * call men of great esteem, חֲסִידִים, who seem to be, or are accounted of, a word to which the phrase here used answers: these were spiritual men, capable of judging of all spiritual things; men of full age, whose senses were exercised to discern between truth and error; and were very proper persons for the apostle to lay the scheme of his ministry before, and the various truths he insisted on in it: these he met *privately, or separately, and singly*, as it may be rendered; he either conversed with the apostles alone, and all together, in some private house; or separately, one by one, in their own houses, and there freely and familiarly discoursed with them about the several doctrines of the Gospel; and particularly this, of freedom from the law: his end in it was, as he says, *lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain*: which is said, not with regard to himself, as if he had entertained any doubt of the doctrines he had preached, and needed any confirmation in them from them; for he was fully assured of the truth of them, and assured others of the same; or that he questioned the agreement of the apostles with him; or that his faith at all depended on their authority; but with regard to others, and his usefulness among them. The false teachers had insinuated that his doctrine was different from that of the apostles in Jerusalem, and so endeavoured to pervert the Gospel he preached, and overthrow the faith of those that heard him; and could this have been made to appear, it would in all likelihood have rendered, in a great measure, his past labours in vain, and have prevented his future usefulness: some read these words as an interrogation, *do I in any manner run, or have I run in vain?* no; from the account he laid before the church, the elders, and apostles, both in private and in public, Acts xv. 4, 12. it clearly appeared what success attended his ministry, how many seals he had of it, what numbers of souls were converted under it, and how many churches were planted by his means; for by *running* here is not meant the Christian course he ran, in common with other believers, which lies in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; but the course of his ministry, which he performed with great activity, application, diligence, and constancy, until he had finished it.

Ver. 3. *But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, &c.*] There was such an agreement between the apostle, and his fellow apostles at Jerusalem, even

about this article of the necessity of circumcision, and other rituals of the law of Moses, to salvation; that Titus, whom he brought along with him, an intimate companion of his in his travels, a fellow-labourer with him in the ministry, and now upon the spot, though he was a Gentile, an uncircumcised person, yet even not he *was compelled to be circumcised*: the elders did not urge it, or insist upon it, as proper and necessary; they looked upon it as a thing indifferent, left him to his liberty, and made use of no forcible methods to oblige him to it; yea, were of opinion, as Peter and James in the synod declared, that such a yoke ought not to be put upon the necks of the disciples, and that those who turned to God from among the Gentiles, should not be troubled with these things.

Ver. 4. *And that because of false brethren, &c.*] This is the reason why the elders did not insist upon the circumcision of Titus, why he did not submit to it, and why the apostle would not admit of it: had it been left as a thing indifferent, or had it been moved for in order to satisfy some weak minds, it might have been complied with, as in the case of Timothy; but these men insisted upon it as necessary to salvation; they were sly, artful, designing men; could they have gained their point in such an instance; could they have got such a precedent at such a time, when this matter was canvassing, they would have made great use of it in the Gentile churches, for which reason it was by no means judged proper and expedient. These men are described as *false brethren*: they had the name, but not the grace, which entitles to the character of *brethren*; they called themselves Christians, but were in reality Jews: at the head of these, Cerinthus, that arch-heretic, is said^b to be. They are further described as such, who were *unawares brought in, who came in privily*; into the churches, and into the ministry, into private houses, where the apostles were; or rather into the public synod, where they were convened together about this article of the necessity of circumcision to salvation. Their views, aims, and ends were, *to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus*; by which is meant, not a liberty to sin, which is no Christian liberty, is contrary to Christ, to the spirit of Christ, to the principle of grace in believers, and to the doctrines of the Gospel; but a liberty from sin; not the being of it, but the dominion and damning power of it: that branch of Christian liberty the apostle here chiefly designs is a freedom from the law, both the moral law, as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, though not from obedience to it as in the hands of Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; but from obeying it, in order to obtain life, righteousness, and salvation by it, and from the curse and condemnation of it; and chiefly the ceremonial law, circumcision, and all the other rituals of it, and the free use of all things indifferent, provided the glory of God, and the peace of weak believers, are secured. This liberty is said to be had *in Christ*, because Christ is the author of it; it is that with which Christ makes his people free; and such as are made free by him, are free indeed; and is what they come to enjoy by being in him; for by having union to him, they come to par-

* Vid. Sol. Ben Melech in Psal. xl. 17.

^b Epiphau. contr. Hæres. l. 1. Tom. 2. Hæres. 28.

take of all the blessings of grace which come by him, and this among the rest. Now the design of these false teachers getting in privily among the apostles, elders, and brethren, was to make their remarks upon this liberty, to object to it, and, if possible, to break in upon it, and destroy it, and so gain another point, which follows: *that they might bring us into bondage*; to the moral law, by directing souls to seek for justification and salvation by the works of it, which necessarily induces a spirit of bondage, genders to a state of bondage and involves in it; and to the ceremonial law, by engaging to an observance of circumcision, that yoke of bondage, and of days, months, times, and years, and other beggarly elements, which naturally lead on to such a state.

Ver. 5. *To whom we gave place by subjection, &c.*] Meaning not the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, who did not insist upon the observance of the rituals of the law as necessary, but were one and all of opinion that the Gentiles should be free from them; but the false teachers with whom they combated, and would not yield in the least unto, so as to be brought into subjection to their impositions, nor suffer others to yield unto them: *no, not for an hour*; for the least space of time, knowing what advantages and improvements would be made of it, should they allow of the use of these things as necessary for any short time, though it should be agreed then to drop them. This is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when they would express their steady adherence to any principle or practice; of which take the following instance from Gamaliel: "it happened to Rabban Gamaliel, that he read the first night he was married; his disciples said to him, master, hast thou not taught us, that the bridegroom is free from reading the Shema, *i. e.* hear, O Israel, &c. the first night? he replied to them, I won't hearken to you to cause to cease from me the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, אפילו שעה אחת, *even one hour.*" The reason why the apostle, and others with him, were so resolute and pertinacious in this matter was, *that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you*; with the Galatians in particular, and with all the Gentiles in general, which otherwise would have been in danger of being entirely removed from them, at least of being adulterated and mixed with the Mosaic rites, and the inventions of men; whereas the apostle's desire was, that the Gospel might be continued with them genuine, sincere, and unmixed, in opposition to the shadows of the law, and the false doctrines of men.

Ver. 6. *But of these, who seemed to be somewhat, &c.*] Not the false brethren, but the Apostles James, Cephas, and John, who were חשובים, *men of great esteem*: high in the opinion of all good men; not that they were looked upon to be more than human, as Simon Magus gave out that he was *some great one*, and his followers thought him to be *the great power of God*; for such an extravagant conceit of these men was never entertained; nor were they thought to be something when they were nothing, for they really were somewhat; they were ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of grace; they were the

Lord's ambassadors, and the apostles of the Lamb. However, says the apostle, *whatsoever they were*; *was, formerly*, some time ago, which our version does not so fully express, *it maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person.* This is said, not by way of slight or contempt, but in vindication of himself, whom the false teachers endeavoured to lessen, by giving high encomiums of the apostles at Jerusalem. It looks as if they had upbraided the apostle with being a persecutor of the church before his conversion, when nothing of such a nature could be laid to the charge of these men, and therefore he was not to be set upon a level with them: to which he may be thought to reply in such manner as this, that as for himself, 'tis true, he had been an injurious person to the saints; and he was ready to own it, for his own humiliation, and to illustrate the grace of God in his conversion; and as for these excellent men, what they were before their conversion, it was no concern of his; though, perhaps, was he disposed to inquire into their characters then, some blemishes might be found therein, as well as in his; but it is not what he and they had been, but what they now were: he could have observed, that they were persons formerly of a very low figure in life, of mean occupations, fishermen by employment, and very illiterate persons, when he was bred a scholar at the feet of Gamaliel; but he chose not to make such observations, he knew that God was no respecter of persons, nor was he influenced by any such external circumstances, but chose whom he pleased to such an high office; and that he, who of fishermen made them apostles, of a persecutor had made him one also. Or these false teachers perhaps had objected to him, that these valuable men had been with Christ from the beginning, were eye-witnesses of his majesty, heard the doctrines of the Gospel from his lips, and saw his miracles, had had a familiar conversation with him, when he was a preacher of much later date, and could not pretend to such advantages, and therefore ought not to be equalled to them: his answer is, that whatever privileges of this kind they had enjoyed, as could not be denied but they were considerable, yet this mattered not, nor did it make any great difference between him and them; he had seen Christ too, though as one born out of due time; had received an immediate commission from him to preach his Gospel, and was appointed an apostle by him as they were, without any respect of persons: and whereas it might have been urged, that these men had entertained different sentiments from him formerly, concerning the observance of the law, he signifies he had nothing to do with that, to their own master they stood, to whom they must give an account, who, without respect of persons, will render to every man according to his works: and, adds he, *for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me*; whatever opinions they formerly gave into, in their conversation with him, when he communicated the Gospel he preached to them, they found no fault with it; they did not go about to correct it; nor did they make any addition to it; the scheme of truths he laid before them, which had been the subject of his ministry, was so

complete and perfect, containing the whole counsel of God, that they had nothing to add unto it; which shews the agreement between them, that he did not receive his Gospel from them, the perfection of his ministry, and that he was not a whit behind them in knowledge and gifts.

Ver. 7. *But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel, &c.]* James, Cephas, and John, were so far from blaming or correcting any thing in the apostle's ministry, or adding any thing to it, that they highly approved of it; and as a token of their agreement with him and Barnabas, gave them the right hand of fellowship: the reasons of their so doing are interested here, and in the following verse, and in the next to that: the reason here given is, because *they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was to Peter*; by the *uncircumcision* and *circumcision* are meant the Gentiles and Jews; see Rom. ii. 26, 27. and iii. 30. by the Gospel of the one, and the Gospel of the other, two Gospels are not designed, for there is but one Gospel, and not another. Paul did not preach one Gospel unto the uncircumcised Gentiles, and Peter another to the circumcised Jews; but the same Gospel was preached by both, and is so called with respect to the different persons to whom it was preached by these apostles. The Apostle Paul was ordained a minister of the Gentiles, and he chiefly preached among them, though not to them only. Peter was principally employed among the Jews, though also as he had opportunity he sometimes preached to the Gentiles: however, the subject of both their ministrations was the Gospel, which is said to be committed to them, as a trust deposited in their hands, not by man, but by God; the management of which required both prudence and faithfulness, and which were eminently seen in these good stewards of the mysteries of God. This being observed by the apostles at Jerusalem, they came into an agreement that one part should discharge their ministry among the Gentiles, and the other among the Jews.

Ver. 8. *For he that wrought effectually in Peter, &c.]* The Syriac version renders it, *he who exhorted Peter to*; the Arabic version is, *he who strengthened Peter in*; the spirit of God is meant, who filled Peter with such eminent gifts, and inspired him with so much zeal and resolution to the apostleship of circumcision, to discharge his office as an apostle among the Jews; and who wrought by him such wonderful works for the confirmation of it, as curing the man that was lame from his birth, striking Ananias and Sapphira dead for telling lies, and raising Dorcas from the dead, and communicating miraculous gifts by the imposition of his hands; and which same spirit also made his ministrations effectual to the conversion of a large number of souls, as of three thousand by one sermon. *The same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles.* The spirit of God wrought as effectually in, and by him, as in Peter; filled him with extraordinary gifts for the discharge of his work among the Gentiles, and inspired him with equal zeal, constancy, and intrepidity of mind; wrought as many miracles by him to confirm his mission; such as striking blind Elymas the sorcerer, healing the crip-

ple at Lystra, raising Eutychus from the dead, with many other signs and wonders wrought by him among the Gentiles, through the power of the spirit of God, whereby they became obedient by word and deed. The same spirit also accompanied the Gospel preached by him, to the conversion of multitudes, by which means many famous churches were founded and raised among the Gentiles; and this is another reason which induced the apostles at Jerusalem to take Paul and Barnabas into an association with them.

Ver. 9. *And when James, Cephas, and John, &c.]* These are the persons all along designed, though not till now named. James was the brother of our Lord, the son of Alpheus, who wrote the epistle that goes by his name, made that famous speech in the synod at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 13. presided in that church, was a man of great holiness, and much esteemed of by the saints, and had a good report of them that were without. Cephas is Simon Peter. This name was given him by Christ, John i. 42. and in the Syriac language signifies a stone, as Peter does in the Greek, to which our Lord alludes, Matt. xvi. 18. John was the evangelist, and the same that wrote the epistles, was the beloved disciple, and who outlived all the rest: *who seemed to be pillars*; not as the Arabic version, *who thought themselves such*, but were esteemed so by others, and very rightly. They were pillars among the apostles of the highest note and greatest eminence among them; they were the very chief of the apostles; for though they were all in the same office, and had the same commission, and were employed in the same work, yet there were some who made a greater figure than others, as these did, and are therefore called pillars; they were more conspicuous, and to be observed, and taken notice of, than the rest; they were pillars in the church, set in the highest place there, and the ornaments of it; see Prov. ix. 1. Rev. iii. 12. They are called so for their constancy and stability in preaching the Gospel, and suffering for the sake of Christ; they were steadfast and immovable in his work, nor could they be shaken or deterred from it by the menaces, reproaches, and persecutions of men; and they were the means of supporting others that were feeble-minded, and of defending and maintaining the truths of the Gospel; and were set, as Jeremy was, as a defended city, an iron pillar, and brazen walls against all the enemies of Christ, and his Gospel; and were, as the church is said to be, *the pillar and ground of truth.* The apostle may have respect to the titles of this kind which were bestowed on the Jewish doctors. 'Tis said^a, "when R. Jochanan ben Zaccai was sick, his disciples went in to visit him; and when he saw them, he began to weep; his disciples said to him, lamp of Israel, עמור ודמיני, *the right-hand pillar, &c. why dost thou weep?*" So another of their Rabbins is said^{*} to be "one of the walls, עמורי, and pillars of the school." The character better agrees with these eminent apostles, who when they perceived the grace that was given unto me; meaning not so much the grace of the spirit of God that was wrought in him, or the good work of grace upon his soul, with which the church at Jerusalem, and the apostles there, had been made acquainted some

^a T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2.

^{*} Ganz Tzemaeh David, par. 1. fol. 46. 1.

years before; but the grace and high favour of apostleship, which was conferred upon him, and all those extraordinary gifts of grace, whereby he was qualified for the discharge of it; and particularly the efficacy and success of his ministry through the grace of God which went along with it, and was so visible in it: *they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship*; as a token of a covenant or agreement between them; they took them, as it were, into partnership with them, admitted them as apostles into their society, and gave their full consent, particularly to this article, *that we, Paul and Barnabas, should go unto the Heathen, preach among the Gentiles; and they, Peter, and those that were with him, unto the circumcision, and discharge their office among the Jews; and, to shew their joint agreement, used the above rite; and which ceremony was used as among other nations^f, so with the Jews, when covenants were made, or partnership was entered into; see Lev. vi. 2. where the phrase, בְּרִשְׁמוֹתַי, in putting of the hand, and which we render in fellowship, is, both by Onkelos, and Jonathan ben Uzziel, rendered בְּשֵׁרְפוֹת יָדַי, in fellowship of the hand, or by the right hand of fellowship; that being given in token of their agreement and consent to be partners together, to which the allusion seems to be here; or to the making of proselytes, to whom they stretch out the hand to bring them under the wings of the Shekinah^g, or in token of their being proselytes.*

Ver. 10. *Only they would that we should remember the poor, &c.*] Not in a spiritual sense, as some have thought, though these the apostle was greatly mindful of; but properly and literally the poor as to the things of this world; and may design the poor in general, everywhere, in the several churches where they should be called to minister, and particularly the poor saints at Jerusalem; who were become such, either through the frequent calamities of the nation, and a dearth or scarcity of provisions among them, and which affected the whole country; or rather through the persecutions of their countrymen, who plundered them of their goods for professing the name of Christ; or it may be through their having given up all their substance into one common stock and fund, as they did at first, and which was now exhausted, and that in a great measure by assisting out of it the preachers who first spread the Gospel among the Gentiles; so that it was but just that they should make some return unto them, and especially for the spiritual favours they received from them, as the Gospel, and the ministers of it, which first went out of Jerusalem: the remembering of them not only intends giving them actual assistance according to their abilities, which was very small, but mentioning their case to the several Gentile churches, and stirring them up to a liberal contribution: *the same which I also was forward to do*; as abundantly appears from his epistles to the churches, and especially from his two epistles to the Corinthians. Now since the apostles at Jerusalem desired nothing else but this, and said not a word concerning the observance of the rites and ceremonies of the law, and neither found fault with, nor added to the Gospel the

apostle communicated to them, it was a clear case that there was an entire agreement between them, in principle and practice, and that he did not receive his Gospel from them.

Ver. 11. *But when Peter was come to Antioch, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of *Peter*, read *Cephas*, who, by some ancient writers, is said to be not Peter the Apostle, named Cephas by Christ, but one of the seventy disciples. So Clemens^h says, that Cephas, of whom Paul speaks, that when he came to Antioch he withstood him to his face, was one of the seventy disciples who had the same name with Peter the Apostle: and Jerom saysⁱ, that there were some who were of opinion, that Cephas, of whom Paul writes that he withstood him to his face, was not the Apostle Peter, but one of the seventy disciples called by that name: but without any manner of foundation; for the series of the discourse, and the connexion of the words, most clearly shew, that that same Cephas, or Peter, one of the twelve disciples mentioned, ver. 9. with James and John, as pillars, is here meant. Our apostle first takes notice of a visit he made him, three years after his conversion, ch. i. 18. when his stay with him was but fifteen days, and, for what appears, there was then an entire harmony between them; fourteen years after he went up to Jerusalem again, and communicated his Gospel to Peter, and the rest, when they also were perfectly agreed; but now at Antioch there was a dissension between them, which is here related. However, the Papists greedily catch at this, to secure the infallibility of the bishops of Rome, who pretend to be the successors of Peter, lest, should the apostle appear blameworthy, and to be reproved and opposed, they could not, with any grace, assume a superior character to his: but that Peter the Apostle is here designed is so manifest, that some of their best writers are obliged to own it, and give up the other as a mere conceit. When Peter came to Antioch is not certain; some have thought it was before the council at Jerusalem concerning the necessity of circumcision to salvation, because 'tis thought that after the decree of that council Peter would never have behaved in such a manner as here related; though it should be observed, that that decree did not concern the Jews, and their freedom from the observance of the law, only the Gentiles; so that Peter and other Jews might, as it is certain they did, notwithstanding that, retain the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses; and according to the series of things, and the order of the account, it seems to be after that council, when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, and with others continued there for some time, during which time Peter came thither; see Acts xv. 30, 35, and the following contention happened, *I withstood him to the face*; not in shew, and outward appearance only, as some of the ancients have thought, as if this was an artifice of the apostle's, that the Jews, having an opportunity of hearing what might be said in favour of eating with the Gentiles, might be convinced of the

^f Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Hier. l. 9. c. 19. Cormel. Nepos, l. 2. c. 9 Gale's Court of the Gentiles, part 2. book 2 c. 6. sect. 9. & c. 9. sect. 2. ^g Vajikra Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 147. 4.

^h Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.

ⁱ In loc.

propriety of it, and not be offended with it: but this is to make the apostle guilty of the evil he charges Peter with, namely, dissimulation; no, the opposition was real, and in all faithfulness and integrity; he did not go about as a tale-bearer, whisperer, and back-biter, but reproved him to his face, freely spoke his mind to him, boldly resisted him, honestly endeavoured to convince him of his mistake, and to put a stop to his conduct; though he did not withstand him as an enemy, or use him with rudeness and ill manners; or as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and false teachers resist the truth; but as a friend and an apostle, and in an amicable manner, and yet with all uprightness: his reason for it was, *because he was to be blamed*; some read it, *was blamed, or condemned*, either by others, by the Jews, for his going into Cornelius's house formerly; but what has this to do with the present case? or by those who lately came from James to Antioch, for his eating with the Gentiles there; yet this could be no reason for the apostle's withstanding him, but rather a reason why he should stand by him; or he was condemned by himself, self-condemned, acting contrary to the sentiments of his mind, and what he had declared in the council at Jerusalem; though it is best to render the word, *to be blamed*, which shews that the apostle did not oppose him for opposition-sake, rashly, and without any foundation; there was a just reason for it, he had done that which was culpable, and for which he was blameworthy; and what that was is mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 12. *For before that certain came from James, &c.*] The Lord's brother, mentioned before with Cephas and John, who resided at Jerusalem, from whence these persons came; and who are said to come from James, because they came from the place and church where he was, though, it may be, not sent by him, nor with his knowledge. They were such as professed faith in Christ; they were *judaizing* Christians believing in Christ, but were zealous of the law. Now before the coming of these persons to Antioch, *he, Peter, did eat with the Gentiles*; which is to be understood, not of eating at the Lord's table with them, but at their own tables: he knew that the distinction of meats was now laid aside, and that nothing was common and unclean of itself, and that every creature of God was good, and not to be refused if received with thankfulness; wherefore he made use of his Christian liberty, and ate such food dressed in such manner as the Gentiles did, without any regard to the laws and ceremonies of the Jews; and in this he did well, for hereby he declared his sense of things, that the ceremonial law was abolished, that not only the Gentiles are not obliged to it, but even the Jews were freed from it, and that the observance of it was far from being necessary to salvation: all which agreed with the preaching and practice of the Apostle Paul, and served greatly to confirm the same, and for this he was to be commended: nor is this mentioned by way of blame, but for the sake of what follows, which was blameworthy: *but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself*; not from the church, and the communion of it, for then he had been guilty of schism, but from private conversation with the Gentiles: he did not visit them in their own houses, and sit down at table and eat with them,

as he was wont to do; which argued great inconstancy and instability, very unbecoming one that seemed to be, and was a pillar in the church of God, as well as much dissimulation, for he knew better than he acted; his conduct did not agree with the true sentiments of his mind, which he covered and dissembled; and which must be very staggering to the believing Gentiles, to see so great a man behave in such a manner towards them, as if they were persons not fit to converse with, and as if the observance of Jewish rites and ceremonies was necessary to salvation. What induced him to take such a step was, *his fearing them which were of the circumcision*; that is, the circumcised Jews, who professed faith in Christ, and were just now come from Jerusalem; not that he feared any danger from them, that they would abuse his person, or take away his life; but he might either fear he should come under their censure and reproofs, as he formerly had for going to Cornelius, and eating with him and his; or lest that they should be offended with him, and carry back an ill report of him, as not acting up to his character as an apostle of the circumcision. This led him into such a conduct; so true is that of the wise man, that *the fear of man bringeth a snare*, Prov. xxix. 25.

Ver. 13. *And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, &c.*] Not the men that came from James, for they never acted otherwise, and therefore could not be said to dissemble; but the Jews that were members of this church at Antioch from the beginning; or who came along with Paul and Barnabas, and stayed with them there; see Acts xv. 35. and who before had ate with the Gentiles, as Peter; but being under the same fear he was, and influenced by his example, concealed their true sentiments, and acted the very reverse of them, and of their former conduct: *insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation*; so good a man as he was, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost; who had been a companion of the Apostle Paul's in his travels among the Gentiles, had greatly assisted him in preaching the Gospel to them, was a messenger with him at the council in Jerusalem, heard the debates of that assembly, and the issue of them, returned with him to Antioch, and was one with him both in principle and practice; and yet so forcible was the example of Peter, and the other Jews, that, as with a mighty torrent, he was carried away with it, and not able to withstand it; such is the force of example in men who are had in great veneration and esteem: wherefore it becomes all persons, particularly magistrates, masters of families, and ministers of the Gospel, to be careful what examples they set, since men both of grace and sense are much influenced by them.

Ver. 14. *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, &c.*] Or *did not foot it aright*; or *walked not with a right foot*: they halted, as the Jews of old did, between two opinions, being partly for God, and partly for Baal; so these seemed, according to their conduct, to be partly for grace, and partly for the works of the law; they seemed to be for joining Christ and Moses, and the grace of the Gospel, and the ceremonies of the law together; they did not walk evenly, were in and out, did not make straight paths for their feet, but crooked ones, whereby the lame were turned out of the way; they did not walk in that sincerity, with that

uprightness and integrity of soul, they ought to have done: *nor according to the truth of the Gospel*; though their moral conversations were as became the Gospel of Christ, yet their Christian conduct was not according to the true, genuine, unmingled Gospel of Christ; which as it excludes all the works of the law, moral or ceremonial, from the business of justification and salvation, so it declares an entire freedom from the yoke of it, both to Jews and Gentiles. Now when, and as soon as this was observed, the apostle, without any delay, lest some bad consequences should follow, thought fit to make head against it, and directly oppose it: *I said unto Peter before them all.* The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read *Cephas*, as before. The reproof was given personally and principally to Peter, though Barnabas and others were concerned with him, because he was the first in it, the chief aggressor, who by his example led on the rest; and this was given publicly before Barnabas, and the other Jews that dissembled with him, and for their sakes as well as his; before the Jews that came from James for their instruction and conviction, and before all the members of the church at Antioch, for the confirmation of such who might be staggered at such conduct; nor was this any breach of the rule of Christ, Matt. xxviii. 15. for this was a public offence done before all, and in which all were concerned, and therefore to be rebuked in a public manner: and which was done in this expostulatory way, *if thou being a Jew*; as Peter was, born of Jewish parents, brought up in the Jews' religion, and was obliged to observe the laws that were given to that people: *livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews*; that is, he had done so, he had ate with the Gentiles, and as the Gentiles did, without regarding the laws and ceremonies of the Jews relating to meats and drinks; being better informed by the spirit of God, that these things were not now obligatory upon him, even though he was a Jew, to whom these laws were formerly made: *why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* he asks him, with what conscience, honour, and integrity, with what consistency with his own principles and former practice, he could compel, not by force, nor, it may be, even by persuasions and exhortations, but by his example, which was very strong and powerful, the Gentiles, to whom these laws were never given, and to observe which they never were obliged; how he could, I say, make use of any means whatever to engage these to comply with Jewish rites and ceremonies. The argument is very strong and nervous; for if he, who was a Jew, thought himself free from this yoke, and had acted accordingly, then a Gentile, upon whom it was never imposed, ought not to be entangled with it: and in what he had done, either he had acted right or wrong; if he had acted wrong in eating with the Gentiles, he ought to acknowledge his fault, and return to Judaism; but if right, he ought to proceed, and not by such uneven conduct ensnare the minds of weak believers.

Ver. 15. *We who are Jews by nature, &c.*] I Paul, and you Peter and Barnabas, and the rest of the Jews

at Antioch. Some are Jews by grace, in a spiritual sense, as all are that are Christ's, that are true believers in him, that are born again, and have internal principles of grace formed in their souls, of whatsoever nation they be; see Rom. ii. 28, 29. Rev. ii. 9. Others become Jews by being proselytes to the Jewish religion: such were the Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, that were dwelling at Jerusalem, when the spirit was poured down on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 5. but these here spoken of were such as were Jews by birth; they were born so, were descended of Jewish parents, and from their infancy were brought up in the Jewish religion, and under the law of Moses, and in the observance of it: *and not sinners of the Gentiles*: רשעי אומות העולם, *the wicked of the nations of the world*, as the Jews call them. Not but that the Jews also were sinners both by nature and practice, were involved in the guilt of sin, under the power of it, and defiled with it, as the apostle elsewhere most fully proves: nor is this said with regard to the vain opinion the Jews had of themselves, as very holy and righteous persons, who in their own apprehension needed neither repentance nor remission; and who looked upon the Gentiles as very unholy and unfit for conversation with them: but this more particularly respects that part of the character of the Heathens, that they were without the law, and were under no restraints, but lived in all manner of wickedness, without hope and God in the world, and so were notorious sinners, filled with all unrighteousness, profligate and abandoned to every evil work, and are therefore called emphatically *sinful men*, Luke xxiv. 7. And indeed the word εθνος, Gentiles, among themselves is sometimes used for *μεγος τῆς ἀνομίας*, *a certain most wicked part of Gentiles in a city*^m, and so may here design such who lived the most dissolute lives and conversations, to which the Jews are opposed, who had a written law, and were under a better regulation and discipline. The reason of this description, both in the positive and negative branch of it, is to observe, that since they, the apostles, and others, who were born Jews, and so under the law of Moses, and until Christ came, were under obligation to observe it, but had now relinquished it, and wholly and alone believed in Christ for righteousness and life; then it was the most unreasonable thing in the world, by any means whatever, to lead the Gentiles, who never were under the law, to an observance of it.

Ver. 16. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, &c.*] That is, Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and other believing Jews knew this, and that from the law itself, which requires perfect and sinless obedience, and accuses, holds guilty, and adjudges to condemnation and death for the least failure, both as to matter or manner of duty; and from the prophets, which declare that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in the sight of God, and who bear witness to the doctrines of remission of sin, and justification by the righteousness of Christ; and from the Gospel, in which this truth is most clearly revealed; and from the illumination of the blessed spirit, who led them into all truth; and from the revelation of Jesus Christ

^l Mattanot Celunah in Vajiskra Rabba, fol. 164. 2.

^m Harporcratian. Lex. p. 93.

they were favoured with; and from their own experience, being fully convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and of the necessity, suitability, and fullness of the righteousness of Christ. *By the works of the law* are meant, not only obedience to the ceremonial law, though this is included, but also to the moral law; for it can hardly be thought, that the men the apostle opposes could ever dream of justification by their compliance with the rituals of the ceremonial law, if they believed there could be no justification by their obedience to the moral law; for if there is no justification by the latter, there can be none by the former: the words are therefore to be taken in the largest sense, as rejecting all works of the law, of whatsoever kind, from justification in the sight of God; and such works are designed, as are performed by sinful men in and of themselves, otherwise men are justified by the works of the law as performed by Christ in their room and stead, but not by any as performed by themselves, for at best they are very imperfect, and so can't justify; they are opposed to the grace of God, to which the justification of a sinner is always ascribed, and therefore can't be by works; such a scheme would disannul the death of Christ, and promote boasting in men, and indeed is impracticable and impossible: *but by the faith of Jesus Christ*; not by that faith, which Christ, as man, had in God, who promised him help, succour, and assistance, and for which he, as man, trusted in him, and exercised faith upon him; but that faith of which he is the object, author, and finisher; and not by that as a cause, for faith has no causal influence on the justification of a sinner; it is not the efficient cause, for it is God that justifies; nor the moving cause, or which induces God to justify any, for that is his own free grace and good will; nor the meritorious or procuring cause, for that is the obedience and bloodshed of Christ; nor is faith the matter of justification; it is not a justifying righteousness; it is a part of sanctification; it is imperfect; as an act it is a man's own, and will not continue for ever in its present form, nature, and use; and is always distinguished from the righteousness of God, by which we are justified, which is perfect, is another's, and will last for ever. Men are not justified by faith, either as an habit, or an act; not by it as an habit or principle, this would be to confound justification and sanctification; nor as an act, for as such it is a man's own, and then justification would be by a man's works, contrary to the Scripture: but faith is to be taken either objectively, as it relates to Christ, the object of it, and his justifying righteousness; or as it is a means of receiving and apprehending Christ's righteousness; the discovery of it is made to faith; that grace discerns the excellency and suitability of it, approves of it, rejects a man's own, lays hold on this, and rejoices in it: *even we have believed in Jesus Christ*; we who are Jews by nature, being fully apprized that there is no justification by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ, received by faith, have quitted all confidence in our own works, and are come to Christ, and believe in him, not only as the Messiah, but as the Lord our righteousness: *that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law*; not that faith, as before observed,

has any causal influence on justification. These Jews did not believe in Christ, in order by their believing to procure their justification before God, and acceptance with him, but that they might receive, by faith, this blessing from the Lord in their own conscience, and enjoy the comfort of it, and all that spiritual peace which results from it, and which they could not find in the works of the law: *for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*; reference seems to be had to Psal. cxliii. 2. and contains a reason why these believing Jews relinquished Moses in his law, in whom they formerly trusted, and looked to, and depended on Christ for their justification, because that by obedience to the law of works no sinful mortal man can be justified in the sight of God.

Ver. 17. *But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, &c.*] As they did, and not only sought for, but obtained what they sought for, because they sought for it at the hands of Christ, and not as it were by works, but by faith, even a justifying righteousness in him. *We ourselves also are found sinners*; that is, either we should be so, were we not to rest here, but seek to join our own works with Christ's righteousness for our justification, and so make Christ the minister of sin, of an imperfect righteousness, which can't justify, which God forbid should ever be done by us; or we are reckoned sinners by you, judaizing Christians, for leaving the law, and going to Christ for righteousness; and if so, Christ must be the minister of sin, for he has directed and taught us so to do; but God forbid that any such thing should be said of him: or if we are still sinners, and unjustified persons, notwithstanding we seek to Christ to be justified by him, but need the law, and the works of it to justify us, then Christ, instead of being a minister of righteousness, is a minister of the law, the strength of sin, which accuses for it, and is the ministration of condemnation and death on account of it, which God forbid should ever be: or this is an objection of the adversary to the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, as if it made void the law, discouraged the performance of good works, opened a door to licentiousness that men might continue sinners, and live as they list, being under no restraints of the law, or under obligation to obedience it, and by such doctrine make *Christ the minister of sin*; who hereby teaches men to live in sin, and in the neglect of duty; to which the apostle answers, *God forbid*; as holding such consequences in the utmost abhorrence and detestation; see Rom. vi. 1, 2, 15, and vii. 7.

Ver. 18. *For if I build again the things which I destroyed, &c.*] Which must be understood not of good things, for formerly he destroyed the faith of the Gospel, at least as much as in him lay, and now he built it up, established, and defended it; in doing which he did no evil, or made himself a transgressor, but the reverse; he shewed himself a faithful minister of Christ: but of things not lawful, such as the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, which were now abrogated, and he had declared to be so all over the Gentile world; and therefore should he go about to establish these things as necessary to salvation, or teach men to join the observance of them with Christ's righteousness for justification, then, says he, *I make myself a*

transgressor: for he could not be otherwise, be the case how it would with respect to the abrogation, or non-abrogation of the law; for if the law was not abolished, then he made himself a transgressor of it; by neglecting it himself, and teaching others to do so; and if it was abolished, then it must be criminal in him to enforce the observance of it as necessary to a sinner's justification before God. Now though the apostle transfers this to himself, and spoke in his own person to decline all invidious reflections and characters; yet he tacitly regards Peter, and his conduct, who had been taught by the vision the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and acted accordingly by conversing and eating with the Gentiles, and had declared that law to be an insupportable yoke of bondage, which the Gentiles were not obliged to come under; and yet now, by his practice and example, built up and established those very things he had before destroyed, and therefore could not exculpate himself from being a transgressor: or these things may regard sins and immoralities in life and conversation; and the apostle's sense be, that should he, or any other, take encouragement to sin from the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, as if he was the author and minister of sin, and allowed persons in it; this would be to establish sin, which the righteousness of Christ justifies from, and engage in a living in sin, to which, by Christ's righteousness, they are dead unto; than which nothing can be a greater contradiction, and which must unavoidably make them not only transgressors of the law, by sinning against it, but apostates, as the word *μαρτυροῦμαι* here used signifies, from the Gospel; such must act quite contrary to the nature, use, and design of the Gospel in general, and this doctrine in particular, which teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that being dead to sin, they should live unto righteousness.

Ver. 19. *For I through the law am dead to the law, &c.*] The apostle further replies to the objection against the doctrine of justification, being a licentious one, from the end of his, and other believers, being dead to the law: he owns he was dead unto it, not in such sense as not to regard it as a rule of walk and conversation, but so as not to seek for life and righteousness by it, nor to fear its accusations, charges, menaces, curses, and condemnation: he was dead to the moral law as in the hands of Moses, but not as in the hands of Christ; and he was dead to it as a covenant of works, though not as a rule of action, and to the ceremonial law, even as to the observance of it, and much more as necessary to justification and salvation: and so he became *through the law*: that is, either through the law or doctrine of Christ; for the Hebrew word *תורה*, to which *νομος* answers, signifies properly doctrine, and sometimes evangelical doctrine, the Gospel of Christ; see Isa. ii. 3. and xlii. 4. Rom. iii. 27. and then the sense is, that the apostle by the doctrine of grace was taught not to seek for pardon, righteousness, acceptance, life, and salvation, by the works of the law, but in Christ; by the doctrine of the Gospel, which says, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved; he became dead to the law, which says, do this and live: or through the books of the law, and the prophets, the writings of the Old Testament, which

are sometimes called the law, he learnt that righteousness and forgiveness of sins were only to be expected from Christ, and not the works of the law; things, though manifested without the law, yet are witnessed to by the law and prophets: or through the law of his mind, the principle of grace formed in his soul, he became dead to the power and influence of the law of works, he being no longer under the bondage of that, but under grace, as a governing principle in his soul: or the word law, here twice used, may signify one and the same law of works; and the meaning be, either that through Christ's fulfilling the law in his room and stead, assuming an holy human nature the law required, and yielding perfect obedience to it, and submitting to the penalty of it, he became dead to it; that is, through the body of Christ, see Rom. vii. 4. and through what he did and suffered in his body to fulfil it; or through the use, experience, and knowledge of the law, when being convinced of sin by it, and seeing the spirituality of it, all his hopes of life were struck dead, and he entirely despaired of ever being justified by it. Now the end of his being dead unto it, delivered from it, and being directed to Christ for righteousness, was, says he, *that I might live unto God*: not in sin, in the violation of the law, in neglect and defiance of it, or to himself, or to the lusts of men, but to the will of God revealed in his word, and to his honour and glory; whence it most clearly follows, that though believers are dead to the law, and seek to be justified by Christ alone, yet they do not continue, nor do they desire to continue in sin, or indulge themselves in a vicious course of living, but look upon themselves as under the greater obligation to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

Ver. 20. *I am crucified with Christ, &c.*] Not literally, for so only the two thieves were crucified with him, but mystically; Christ was crucified for him in his room and stead, and so he was crucified with him, and in him, as his head and representative. Christ sustained the persons of all his people, and what he did and suffered was in their name, and on their account, and so they were crucified and suffered with him, as they are said to be buried with him, and to be risen with him, and to sit together in heavenly places in him. Moreover, their old man was crucified with him; when he was crucified, all their sins, the whole body of them, were laid upon him, and he bore them, and bore them away, destroyed and made an end of them; they received their mortal wound by his crucifixion and death, so as never to be able to have any damning power over them; and in consequence of this the affections and lusts are crucified, and the deeds of the body of sin mortified by the spirit and grace of God, in regeneration and sanctification, so as not to have the dominion over them; the world is crucified to them, and they to the world; and this is another reason proving that justification by Christ is no licentious doctrine. This clause is, in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, put at the end of the preceding verse. *Nevertheless I live*: which is to be understood, not of his natural, but of his spiritual life; the life of justification he lived, by faith, on the righteousness of Christ; and the life of sanctification which he had

from Christ, by the quickening influences of his spirit, by virtue of which he walked in newness of life. The believer is a mere paradox, he is dead to the law, and yet lives to God; he is crucified with Christ, and yet lives by him; yea, a crucified Christ lives in him. *Yet not I*; not the same I as before, but quite another man, a new creature: he did not now live as in his state of unregeneracy, and whilst in Judaism; he was not now Saul the blasphemer, the persecutor, and injurious person; nor did he now live Saul the Pharisee: or the life he had was not of his own obtaining and procuring; his life of righteousness was not of himself, but Christ; his being quickened, or having principles of life and holiness implanted in him, was not by himself, but by the Spirit; and the holy life and conversation he lived was not owing to himself, to his power and strength, but to the grace of God; or it was not properly himself, or so much he that lived, *but Christ liveth in me*: who was not only the author and maintainer of his spiritual life, but the life itself; he was formed in his soul, dwelt in his heart, was united to him, was one with him, whence all vital principles and vital actions sprung, and all the communion and comforts of a spiritual life flowed. *And the life which I now live in the flesh*; in the body, whilst in this mortal state, whereby he distinguishes that spiritual life he had from Christ, and through Christ's living in him, both from the natural life of his body, and from that eternal life he expected to live in another world; and which, he says, *I live by the faith of the son of God*: meaning, not that faith which Christ, as man, had, but that of which he is the author and object, by which the just man lives; not upon it, for the believer don't live upon any of his graces, no, not upon faith, but by faith on Christ, the object; looking to him for pardon, righteousness, peace, joy, comfort, every supply of grace, and eternal salvation: which object is described as *the son of God*; who is truly God, equal with his father; so that he did not live upon a creature, or forsake the fountain of living waters, but upon the only-begotten son of God, who is full of grace and truth: of whom he further says, *who loved me*; before the foundation of the world, from everlasting, prior to his love to him; and freely, without any regard to worth or merit, and though he was a blasphemer and a persecutor; and him personally, and particularly, in a distinguishing manner, of which he had a special knowledge and application by the spirit of God; and was a reason and argument constraining him, and prevailing on him to live to him who loved him, and died

for him, or, as he adds, *and gave himself for me*: his whole self, his soul and body, as in union with his divine person, into the hands of justice, and unto death, in his room and stead, as an offering and sacrifice for sin, and which he did freely and voluntarily; and is a strong and full proof of his love to him. Now though Christ gave his life a ransom for many, and himself for his whole church, and all the members of his mystical body, yet the apostle speaks of this matter as singularly respecting himself, as if almost he was the only person Christ loved and died for; which shews that faith deals with Christ not in a general way, as the Saviour of the world, but with a special regard to a man's self: this is the life of faith; and these considerations of the person, love, and grace of Christ, animate and encourage faith in its exercises on him.

Ver. 21. *I do not frustrate the grace of God, &c.]* Or *cast it away*, as the Vulgate Latin version reads it; or *deny it*, as the Syriac and Arabic; or *despise, reject, and make it void*, as other versions; meaning either the grace of the son of God in giving himself for him, just mentioned by him; or the particular doctrine of grace, justification, he is speaking of, as proceeding from the grace of God, upon the foot of the righteousness of Christ; or the whole Gospel, all and each of which would be denied, despised, rejected, made null and void, be in vain, fallen and departed from, should justification be sought for by the works of the law: but thus the apostle did not do, and therefore did not frustrate the grace of God: which to do would be to act the most ungenerous and ungrateful part to God, and Christ, and to that love and grace which are so largely displayed in the free justification of a sinner. *For if righteousness come by the law*; if a justifying righteousness is to be attained unto by the works of the law, or men can be justified by their obedience to it, *then Christ is dead in vain*: there was no necessity for his dying: he died without any true reason, or just cause; he died to bring in a righteousness which might have been brought in without his death, and so his blood and life might have been spared, his sufferings and death being entirely unnecessary; which to say is to cast contempt upon the wisdom, love, and grace of God in this matter, and to offer the greatest indignity to the person, character, sufferings, and death of Christ. Wherefore it may be strongly concluded, that there is no righteousness by the law of works, nor to be attained that way, otherwise Christ had never died; and that justification is solely and alone by his righteousness.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle reproves the Galatians for their disobedience to the Gospel, and departure from it; confirms the doctrine of justification by faith, by various arguments; shews the use of the law, and the abrogation of it, and makes mention of several privileges which belong to believers in Christ. He begins with a sharp reproof of the Galatians, and represents them as foolish and bewitched, and charges

them with disobedience to the truth of the Gospel, which is aggravated by the clearness of the Gospel ministry, in which a crucified Christ, and justification by him, had been so evidently set before them, ver. 1. and by the fruit and effect of it, they having received the spirit by it, and not by the preaching of the law of works, ver. 2. and it still increased their folly, that whereas they had begun with the spirit of God, and

set out in a dependence on him and his grace, they seemed now as if they would end in a carnal and legal way, ver. 3. To which is added, the consideration of their having suffered many things for the sake of the Gospel, which must be suffered in vain should they relinquish the Gospel, though the apostle hoped otherwise of them, ver. 4. nay, they had not only received through the preaching of the Gospel the spirit, and his graces, but even extraordinary gifts attended it, for the confirmation of it, ver. 5. so that this case of theirs was a very aggravated one, and they were guilty of great folly and madness: from hence the apostle passes to the main thing in dispute, the great truth of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, which these persons were departing from, and which he establishes by several arguments; and first from the instance and example of Abraham, who was justified by faith, as appears from that which he believed, being imputed to him as his justifying righteousness, ver. 6. and as many as are believers in Christ are his spiritual children, and so undoubtedly are justified the same way their father was, ver. 7. and particularly that the Gentiles are justified by faith is clear from the preaching of the Gospel to Abraham, and the promise made unto him, that in his seed all nations should be blessed; that is, with the blessing of justification, ver. 8. The conclusion of which instance and example is, that as faithful Abraham was blessed with a justifying righteousness through faith, so all that believe are blessed along with him with the same blessing, ver. 9. and that no man can be justified by the works of the law is certain, since the law is so far from justifying any on account of obedience to it, that it pronounces a curse upon all that do not perfectly and constantly fulfil it, ver. 10. And this is still further evident from a passage in the prophecy of Habakkuk, ch. ii. 4. which declares, that the just live by faith, or that those who are truly righteous are such who are justified by it, ver. 11. And this is illustrated by the law and faith being contrary; for if a just man lives by faith, then not by the law, for the law does not direct a man to believe, but to work, and to live by his works, ver. 12. And the apostle having spoken of the law as a cursing law, takes the opportunity of shewing how believers are delivered from the curse of it, which is done by Christ's being made a curse for them; and that he was, appears from his being crucified and hanged on a tree; the ends of which were, that the same blessing of justification Abraham had, might come upon the Gentiles through Christ, and that they might by faith receive the promise of the spirit, ver. 13, 14. so that it is clear from hence, that the blessing of justification is through Christ's being made a curse, and is received by faith, and is not by the works of the law. The apostle next argues from the inheritance being by covenant, testament, or promise, and therefore not by the law: he observes, that a man's covenant or testament, when confirmed, can neither be disannulled, nor have any thing added to it, and much less can the covenant or testament of God, confirmed of him in Christ, be disannulled by the law, or the promise in it be made of none effect by that which was several hundred years

after a declaration of it to Abraham, to whom, and to whose seed, the promises were made; so that it unavoidably follows, that since the inheritance or blessing of life is by promise, as is clear from its being given to Abraham by promise, then it is not of the law, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18. And whereas an objection might arise, if this be the case, of what use and service can the law be? to what purpose, or for what end, was that given? The apostle answers, that it was added because of transgressions; and that it was to endure until Christ should come, to whom the promise was made; and accordingly it was published in a very grand and solemn manner by angels, and was put into the hands of a mediator, Moses, who stood between God as one party, and the people of Israel as another, ver. 19, 20. Moreover, as it might be further objected, that, according to this way of reasoning, the law is against the promises; the apostle replies in a way of detestation and abhorrence of any such thing, and by an argument from the insufficiency of the law to justify, since it can't give life, ver. 21. And then proceeds to point out another use of the law, which is to conclude men under sin, or convince men of it, that they, seeing their need of righteousness and life by Christ, might receive the promise of it through faith in him, ver. 22. and so far were men from being justified by the law under the former dispensation, that they were kept under it as in a garrison, and shut up in it as in a prison, until Christ, the object of faith, was revealed, and released them, ver. 23. and was moreover as a rigid and severe schoolmaster; and so it continued until the times of Christ; and these therefore being the uses of the law, it is a clear case that justification is by faith, and not by that, ver. 24. Besides, Christ being now come, the Jews themselves are no more under this law as a schoolmaster; it is now abolished, and therefore there's no justification by it, ver. 25. And that this is the case of true believers in Christ is evident, because such are the children of God, and are taught and led by the spirit of God, and are free, and not under the law as a schoolmaster, ver. 26. Besides, as they are baptized into Christ, they have put him on, as the Lord their righteousness, and so profess to be justified by him, and him only, ver. 27. and these, let them be of what nation, sex, state, and condition soever, are all one in Christ, and are all justified in one and the same way; and being Christ's they are Abraham's spiritual seed, and so heirs of the same promise of righteousness and life as he, ver. 28, 29.

Ver. 1. *O foolish Galatians, &c.*] Referring not to any national character, as some have thought, by which they were distinguished from others for their rudeness in knowledge, their ignorance and folly, as the Cretians for their lying, &c. nor to their former state in unregeneracy, it being common to all men, to God's elect themselves, before conversion, to be *foolish* in a moral and spiritual sense; but to their present stupidity about the article of justification, it being an instance of most egregious folly to leave Christ for Moses, the Gospel for the law, and the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which brings so much solid peace and comfort with it, for the doctrine of justifica-

tion, by the works of the law, which naturally leads to bondage. Now this was said, not rashly, nor in anger, or on purpose to reproach and provoke, and so not at all contrary to Matt. v. 22. but in like manner as Christ said to his disciples, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe*, &c. Luke xxiv. 25. So the apostle here, as pitying the Galatians, grieved for them, and as one surprised and astonished that ever people of such light, that had had the Gospel so clearly preached to them, should ever give into such a notion. *Who hath bewitched you?* some false teacher or another had, or it can't be conceived how their heads should ever have been turned this way; which must be understood, not in a literal and proper sense, as Simon Magus bewitched the people of Samaria with his sorceries, but in a figurative and improper one; that as sorcerers and enchanters cast a mist before people's eyes, or, by some evil arts or juggling tricks, deceive their sight, and make objects seem to appear which do not, or in a different form than they really do, so these deceitful workers, who had transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ, as Satan sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, had set this doctrine in a false light before them, thereby to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. Though the apostle reproves the Galatians for their folly and weakness in giving in so easily to such deceptions, yet he imputes the chief fault unto, and lays the greatest blame on the false teachers; whom he represents as sorcerers and enchanters, and their doctrine, particularly that of justification by works, as witchcraft; it being pleasing to men, a gratifying of carnal reason, and operating as a charm upon the pride of human nature. What Samuel said to Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. may be applied to the present case, *to obey the truth is better than sacrifice*, than all the rituals of the ceremonial law: *and to hearken to the Gospel of Christ, than the fat of rams*, or any of the legal institutions; *for rebellion against, and opposition to any of the doctrines of the Gospel, and especially to this of justification by the righteousness of Christ, is as the sin of witchcraft*. The Greek word, *Βαρμαγία*, signifies *to envy*, and hence, *to bewitch*; because the mischief, by witchcrafts, generally proceeds from envy; and so the Syriac version, which the Arabic follows, renders it, *מנו חסם בכך*, *who hath envied you*, which suggests this sense, that the false apostles envying their light and knowledge in the Gospel, their faith, peace, comfort, and happiness, had endeavoured to introduce another doctrine among them, subversive of all this. *That ye should not obey the truth*. This clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Syriac version. *By the truth* is meant, either the whole Gospel, often so called, in opposition to the law, and the types and shadows of it; and because it is contained in the Scriptures of truth, and comes from the God of truth; the substance of it is Christ, who is the truth, and is what the spirit of truth leads into; or else particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which is the truth the apostle is establishing, and these Galatians seemed to be going off from, through the artful insinuations of the false teachers. Formerly these people had not only heard this truth, but embraced it: they received the love of

it, were strongly affected to it, and firmly believed it; but now they began to hesitate and doubt about it; they were not so fully persuaded of it as heretofore; they seemed ready to let it go, at least did not hold it fast, and the profession of it, without wavering as before; they were fallen from some degree of the steadfastness of their faith in, and of the obedience of it to this truth, which is what was the design of the false apostles, and is here charged upon the Galatians. The aggravations of which follow in this, and in some subsequent verses, *before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth*; meaning in the ministry of the Gospel, in the clear preaching of it by the apostle; Jesus Christ was the sum and substance of his ministry, in which he was set forth and described, and, as it were, painted to the life by him; the glories and excellencies of his divine person, the nature of his office, as Mediator, the suitability of him as a Saviour, the fullness of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, were so fully, and in such a lively manner expressed, that it was as if Christ was personally and visibly present with them; yea, he was so described in his sufferings and death, as hanging, bleeding, dying on the accursed tree, that he seemed to be as it were, as the apostle adds, *crucified among you*: for this can't be understood literally, for he was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem; nor does it respect the sin of the Galatians in departing from the Gospel, as if that was a crucifying of him again, and a putting him to open shame; nor their sufferings for the sake of Christ, as if he, in that sense, was crucified in them, and with them: but it intends the clear Gospel revelation of a crucified Christ, in the preaching of him by the apostle, which was such that no picture, no image, no crucifix would come up to, and which, where such preaching is, are altogether vain and needless; and the clear view these saints had, by faith, in the glass of the Gospel of Christ, and him crucified, which so realized the object, as if it was present and before the natural eye. Now this was an aggravation of their weakness and folly, that after such clear preaching, and clear sight, they had of the Gospel, and of Christ in it, that they should in the least degree depart from it.

Ver. 2. *This one thing would I learn of you, &c.* Though there were many things he could have put to them, yet he would only ask this one question, which, if rightly attended to, and honestly answered, must expose their folly, and put an end to the controversy upon this head: *received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* This question supposes they had received the spirit: that is, the spirit of God, as a spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of Christ; as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification; as a spirit of faith and adoption; and as the earnest, seal, and pledge of their future glory. Now the apostle asks, whether they received this spirit *by the works of the law*; meaning, either whether they could imagine, that they by their obedience to the law had merited and procured the spirit of God; or whether they thought that the spirit came to them, and into their hearts, through the doctrine or preaching of the law: the former could not be true, for if they could not obtain righteousness and

life by the works of the law, then not the spirit; besides, works done without the spirit of God, are not properly good works: not the latter, for though by the law is the knowledge of sin, yet this leaves nothing but a sense of wrath and damnation in the conscience; it is the killing letter, and a ministration of condemnation and death, and not of the spirit, and of life; this belongs to the Gospel, or *the hearing of faith*; for by *faith* is meant the Gospel, and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; and by *the hearing* of it, the preaching of it, the report of it, Isa. liii. 1. which, in the Hebrew text, is שמענו, *our hearing*, that by which the Gospel is heard and understood. Now in this way the spirit of God is received; while the Gospel is preaching he falls on them that hear it, conveys himself into their hearts, and begets them again by the word of truth: and in this way the Galatians came by the spirit, and which is another aggravation of their folly, that they should enjoy so great an advantage by the Gospel, and yet be so easily removed from it.

Ver. 3. *Are ye so foolish? &c.*] Is it possible you should be so stupid? and do you, or can you continue so? *having begun in the spirit*: that is, either in the spirit of God, whom they had received through the preaching of the Gospel. They set out in a profession of religion in the light, under the influence, and by the assistance of the spirit; they began to worship the Lord in spirit, and in truth, without any confidence in the flesh; they entered upon the service of God, and a newness of life, a different conversation than before, a spiritual way of living in a dependence on the grace and help of the divine Spirit: or in the Gospel, which is the spirit that gives life, is the ministration of the spirit of God, and contains spiritual doctrines, and gives an account of spiritual blessings, and is attended with the Holy Ghost, and with power. This was first preached unto them, and they embraced it; this they began and set out with in their Christian profession, and yet it looked as if they sought to end with something else: *are you now made perfect by the flesh?* or *in it*; not in carnality, in the lusts of the flesh, as if they now walked and lived after the flesh, in a carnal, dissolute, wicked course of life; for the apostle is not charging them with immoralities, but complaining of their principles: wherefore, by *the flesh* is meant, either the strength of mere nature, in opposition to the spirit of God, by which they endeavoured to perform obedience to the law; or else the law itself, in distinction from the Gospel; and particularly the ceremonial law, the law of a carnal commandment, and which consisted of carnal ordinances, and only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; and also their obedience to it; yea, even all their own righteousness, the best of it, which is but flesh, merely external, weak, and insufficient to justify before God. This is a third aggravation of their folly, that whereas they began their Christian race depending upon the spirit and grace of God, now they seemed to be taking a step as if they thought to finish it in the mere strength of nature; and whereas they set out with the clear Gospel of Christ, and sought for justification only by his righteousness, they were now verging to the law, and seeking to make their justifying righteousness per-

fect, by joining the works of the law into it, which needed them not, but was perfect without them.

Ver. 4. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain? &c.*] These Galatians had suffered great reproach, many afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, as all that embrace it must expect to do; and which to them that persevere in the faith of the Gospel will not be in vain, they will be followed with eternal life and glory; not that these things are meritorious of such happiness, or deserve such a reward; the reward of them is not of debt, but of grace. But, if such who have made a profession, and have suffered for it, should after all relinquish it, their sufferings for it are in vain; they'll come short of that glory which is promised to them that suffer for righteousness-sake: and this is another aggravation of the folly of these persons, that they should suffer so much persecution for the Gospel, which, if not true, they must have suffered in vain, and might as well have avoided it; and, if true, by relinquishing it not only sustain a great loss, but bring great hurt and damage to themselves: *if it be yet in vain*; by which words the apostle does, as it were, correct himself, and expresses his hope of them, that they would see their mistake, revoke their error, and abide by the truth of the Gospel.

Ver. 5. *He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit, &c.*] By whom he means not himself, nor any other minister of the Gospel, in whose power it does not lie to minister the spirit, either the ordinary or the extraordinary gifts of it unto men; but either God or Christ who had ministered, and still continued to minister the grace of the spirit through the preaching of the Gospel; or rather the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, which were ministered at the first preaching of the Gospel to them for the confirmation of it, and which they were still supplied with, as the following words shew: *and worketh miracles among you*; so that this is a distinct argument from that in ver. 2. and a further proof and aggravation of the folly and stupidity of the members of this church, who had not only received through the Gospel the spirit, as a spirit of regeneration, at least many of them, but had seen the Gospel confirmed by the extraordinary gifts, signs, and wonders of the Holy Ghost, and which were still among them; and yet they were departing from this Gospel, through which all this was done: for 'tis asked, *doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* and the apostle's meaning is, that these extraordinary gifts of the spirit, and these miracles done among them, did not attend the preaching of the law, or the doctrine of justification by works, taught by the false apostles, but the doctrine of faith, of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, delivered by him and others, for the truth of which he appeals to themselves; and therefore they must be guilty of the most egregious folly, once to think of, or take any one step towards a departure from that doctrine. The Alexandrian copy reads here, as in ver. 2. *received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Ver. 6. *Even as Abraham believed God, &c.*] The apostle having observed, that the special grace and extraordinary gifts of the spirit were received not through the preaching of the law, but through the doctrine of faith; by an easy transition, passes on to a

further confirmation of the doctrine of justification by faith, by producing the instance of Abraham, what the Scripture says of him, and the promise made unto him; which is very apposite to his purpose, since Abraham was certainly a righteous man, the first of the circumcision, and the head of the Jewish nation; and whom the false teachers much gloried in, and boasted of their being his seed, and of being circumcised as he was; and would fain have persuaded the Gentiles to the same practice, in imitation of him, and as necessary to their justification before God; whereas the apostle here shews, referring to Gen. xv. 6. that Abraham was justified by faith, and not by any works whatever, much less by circumcision; for what he here refers to, was many years before his circumcision; and since therefore he was a justified person, declared to be so, before it and without it, it was not necessary to his justification, nor is it to any other person's: he *believed God*. The object of faith is God, Father, Son, and Spirit; here Jehovah the Son seems principally intended, who in Gen. xv. 1. is called *the Word of the Lord*; the essential Word, who was with God from everlasting, and was God, and in the fullness of time was made flesh and dwelt among men; and *Abraham's shield*, the same the apostle in Ephes. vi. 16. calls *the shield of faith*; meaning not the grace of faith, but Christ the object of faith; which faith lays hold on, and makes use of as a shield against the temptations of Satan; and also his *exceeding great reward*; his all in all, being made to him, as to all believers, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: him he believed, not only that he was God, but he believed his word of promise, and in his power and faithfulness to fulfil it; which regarded not only his natural offspring, and a numerous race, the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, and many temporal good things in it, but the Messiah, and spiritual blessings in him: he *believed in the Lord*, Gen. xv. 6. in Jehovah the Word, in him as his shield, and exceeding great reward, in him as the Lord his righteousness: and it was accounted to him for righteousness; that is, by God, whom he believed; for the sense is, not that Abraham ascribed righteousness to God, and celebrated his justice and faithfulness, as some; nor, as others, that Abraham was accounted a righteous man by the world; but that something was accounted by God to Abraham as his righteousness, which could not be the act of his faith; for faith is not a man's righteousness, neither in whole nor in part; faith and righteousness are two distinct things, and are often distinguished one from another in Scripture: besides, that which was accounted to Abraham for righteousness, is imputed to others also; see Rom. iv. 23, 24. which can never be true of the act of his faith; but is of the object of it, the word of the Lord, his shield and exceeding great reward, the Lord his righteousness and strength, who is made or accounted, as to him, so to others, righteousness. The righteousness of Christ, whom he believed in, was accounted to him as his justifying righteousness: now for faith to be accounted for righteousness, is all one as to be justified by faith; that is, by Christ, or by his righteousness imputed and received by faith; and

if Abraham was justified this way, as he was, the apostle has his argument against the false teachers.

Ver. 7. *Know ye therefore, &c.*] Or *ye know*; this is a thing known by you, at least may, or should be; it ought not to be contradicted or disputed, it is so plain a case, and so clear a point: *that they which are of faith*; of the faith of Abraham, as in Rom. iv. 16. have the same faith as he had, for nature and kind; though it may not be to the same degree, yet exercised on the same object, Jehovah the Word, the Lord our righteousness, and wrought by the same spirit; or who are of the faith of Christ, believers in him with all their hearts, and for themselves; who look to him for righteousness and life, who seek for justification by his righteousness, and trust in him alone for it, and not in the works of the law: *the same are the children of Abraham*; his spiritual seed, though they may not be his natural offspring; for he is the father of all that believe, whether of the circumcision or the uncircumcision, and of none else in a spiritual sense: in this the apostle strikes at the false teachers, who boasted of their being the seed of Abraham, his natural descendants, which they might be, and yet not his spiritual children; for none are such, but they that are of faith, or seek for righteousness by faith; not they that are of the law, or seek for justification by the works of it, and so not heirs of the blessing; were they, faith would be made void, and the promise of none effect, Rom. iv. 14. and his view herein is to prove, that the Gentiles, who believe, are the true seed of Abraham, the children of the promise, those in many nations, he was promised to be the father of; and his further view is to observe, that as the father of the faithful was justified, so are all his children; and that as he was justified by faith, so are they.

Ver. 8. *And the Scripture foreseeing, &c.*] This seems to agree with the Jewish forms of citing passages of Scripture, *מה ראיה הכתוב, what does the Scripture foresee? כי ראוה תורה, what does the law foresee?* The Scripture here, by a *prosopopeia*, is represented as foreseeing an event that would come to pass, and accordingly spoke of it before-hand, and designs God the author of the Scripture; and so the Syriac version renders it, *for seeing ידע אלוקים, that God foreknew, &c.* and means either the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, is privy to all his counsels and decrees, and to this of the justification of the Gentiles; or God the father, who justifies the uncircumcision through faith, according to his own prevision and pre-determination of it, before the world was; for he was in Christ, reconciling the world, his elect among the Gentiles, from all eternity; when he resolved not to impute their sins to them, but to his son, who engaged to be their surety: or rather the son of God, since he was the preacher of this to Abraham; who lay in the bosom of the father, and was not only acquainted with all his purposes and determinations, but entered into a covenant with him, for, and on the behalf of the people, the chosen ones, among the Gentiles as well as Jews; and undertook to bring in a righteousness for them, by which, being received by faith, they should evidentially, manifestatively, in the

court of their own consciences, be justified: wherefore the wisdom of God, the eternal Logos, having such a certain foresight, both as God and as Mediator, concerned in the covenant of grace for his people, that *God would justify the Heathen through faith*: that is, that whereas a righteousness would be wrought out, and brought in, for the justification of all God's elect, and the doctrine of it be preached among the Gentiles, to whom faith would be given to lay hold on, and receive this righteousness, God would hereby, and hereupon pronounce the sentence of justification in the court of conscience; from whence follow peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; the Scripture, the author, and substance of it, God the Word, *preached before the Gospel unto Abraham*; for not to the Father or the Spirit, as to the Son, can preaching be so well ascribed: Christ was the first preacher of the Gospel that ever was; he first preached it to Adam and Eve in the garden, and afterwards to Abraham: it was Gospel, it was good news to him, that the Messiah should spring from him, and all nations be blessed in him; he rejoiced at it, and by faith saw Christ's day and was glad; and particularly that part of the Gospel, and which is a principal part of it, justification by faith; and that, as it concerned the Gentiles, was preached unto him; and before his circumcision, of which that was a sign and seal, namely, that the righteousness of faith should be upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; and before the law of works was given on Mount Sinai, and long before the doctrine of justification by faith was preached unto the Gentiles, and they enjoyed the comfort of it; which shews this to be the Gospel, and to be no new doctrine, nor different from what was so early taught; the sum and substance of which lies in these words, *in thee shall all nations be blessed*; the passage referred to, is in Gen. xii. 3. and is repeated ch. xviii. 18. and in ch. xxii. 18. is thus expressed, *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; which shews, that this is not to be understood of Abraham personally, but of his seed; and which cannot intend Isaac, the immediate seed of Abraham, in whom it was never verified; and besides, is carried down to his seed, Gen. xxvi. 4. as not terminating in him; and for the same reason it cannot design Jacob, the immediate seed of Isaac; see Gen. xxviii. 14. nor the whole body of the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, in whom it never had its completion; for when and how have the nations of the earth been blessed in them? either whilst in their own land, when they would have no conversation with them, neither on a civil or sacred account, unless they conformed to their rites; or since their dispersion, so far from it, that their name is used by way of reproach, and as a proverb, a taunt, and a curse everywhere; but it is to be understood of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the son of Abraham, took upon him the seed of Abraham, and to whom it is applied, ver. 16. as by the Apostle Peter, Acts iii. 25, 26. The phrase being *blessed in him*, does not signify a blessing of themselves or others, or a proverbial expression that should be used among the Gentiles, *God bless thee as Abraham, or the God of Abraham bless thee, or God bless you as he did the Israelites, or seed of Abraham*;

for no one instance can be produced of the nations of the world ever using such a form of blessing; no history, sacred or profane, makes mention that these, or any other Jewish forms of blessing, were ever used among the Gentiles; but here it designs blessings in Christ, and not temporal, but spiritual ones, even all spiritual blessings; as redemption, reconciliation, peace, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life, and particularly justification; this is the blessedness more especially intended, which comes not upon the circumcision only, but the uncircumcision also; and they that partake of this are blessed indeed; for they are justified from all sin, are free from condemnation, secure from the wrath of God, have a title to eternal life, and shall certainly be glorified: and when it is said that *all nations* shall be thus blessed, the meaning is, not that every individual of all nations shall enjoy this happiness, for all are not in Christ, nor have his righteousness imputed to them, nor have faith in him, there are many that will be condemned with the world; but some of all nations, that God will have saved, and Christ has redeemed by his blood; and these are the many he justifies, even all the elect of God, in the several nations of the world.

Ver. 9. *So then they which be of faith, &c.*] This is the apostle's conclusion upon the whole, from the instance of Abraham, and the promise made to him; and is an explanation of the preceding clause, and shews that it must be taken in a limited sense, and understood not of every individual; only of those who are of the same faith with Abraham, are believers in Christ, and seek for justification by faith in him, and not by the works of the law: these *are blessed with faithful Abraham*; in his seed Christ; they are blessed with a justifying righteousness in Christ as he was, and will be blessed with eternal life as he is; they shall sit with him, and with Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. The character of *faithful* given to him, respects not his uprightness and integrity among men, but his faith in God; and does not suppose that he was blessed for his faith, but that it was through faith that he received the blessing of justification, and not by the works of the law; and that in the same way, all that believe enjoy the same favour, for to them it is limited and restrained: nor can the Jews of all men find fault with this interpretation of the apostle's, since they themselves interpret the above clause of some particular persons of the nations of the world, and say in so many words, that "the meaning is, not that all the men of the world should be blessed, but that every family that is in the world, שנתקרב, למשמעתו ואמונתו, *that comes to the obedience and faith of him (God), to it shall adhere the blessing and providence.*"

Ver. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law, &c.*] The apostle does not say, *as many as were of the law*, to whom it belonged, who were born and brought up in it, and to whom it was given, the Jews; for there were some of them who believed in Christ, were blessed with Abraham, and not under the curse of the law; nor does he say, *as many as do the works of the law*: for the works of the law are to be done,

though not in order to obtain righteousness and life by them; yet it is not the doing of them, but the not doing of them, that entails the curse on men: his meaning is, that as many as seek for justification by the works of the law, and trust in their own righteousness for acceptance with God, these are so far from being blessed or justified hereby, that they are under the curse, that is, of the law; they are under its sentence of condemnation and death, they are deserving of, and liable to the second death, eternal death, the wrath of God, here meant by the curse; to which they are exposed, and which will light upon them, for aught their righteousness can do for them; for trusting in their works, they are trusting in the flesh, and so bring down upon themselves the curse threatened to the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm; not only that trusts in a man of flesh and blood, but in the works of man; his own, or any other mere creature's: besides, by so doing, he rejects Christ and his righteousness, whereby only is deliverance from the curse of the law; nor is it possible by his present obedience to the law, be it ever so good, that he can remove the guilt of former transgressions, and free himself from obligation to punishment for them: nor is it practicable for fallen man to fulfil the law of works, and if he fails but in one point, he's guilty of all, and is so pronounced by the law; and he stands before God convicted, his mouth stopped, and he condemned and cursed by that law he seeks for righteousness by the deeds of: *for it is written, Deut. xxvii. 26. cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* The law requires doing; it is not content with mere theory without practice; it is not enough to know it, or hear it, it must be done. The Jews boasted of their knowledge, and trusted much to the hearing of it read every sabbath-day; but not those who had a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law, or were hearers of it, were just before God, but the doers of it are justified; and it requires perfect obedience, an observance of all things contained in it, which can never be performed by fallen man. The Jews pretend^p, that Abraham their father כלה התורה קיים, fulfilled all the whole law; and the same they say^q of the Israelites in common, than which nothing is more untrue; for in many things all men offend: moreover, the law requires constant perfect obedience; not only that a man should do all things commanded in it, but that he should continue to do them from his infancy, to the day of his death; and in failure hereof, it pronounces every man cursed, without any respect to persons, or any regard to pleas, taken from the infirmity of human nature, the sincerity of the heart, or repentance for transgressions. It should be observed, that the word *all* is not in the Hebrew text, in Deut. xxvii. 26. but is manifestly implied, an indefinite proposition being equal to an universal one; and agreeably to the true sense of the words, it is inserted by the apostle here, as it is in the Septuagint and Samaritan versions there; and perfectly accords with the sense of the best interpreters among the Jews; one of them has this gloss

upon the words ' כחו כלל את כל התורה כולה, here he (Moses) comprehends all the whole law; and another^r says the same thing, almost in the same words; this (says he) includes all the commandments which are "in the law:" and the note of a third is^s, "there are some that say, this is to be understood כלה התורה על כל התורה: and there are others that say, it is to be understood of those things that are mentioned (above), but they say nothing, for it is written to do them; and it is right in my eyes, that he curses for the negative commands mentioned, and he curses him who does not keep even secretly the affirmative precepts, wherefore he says to do them:" to which may be added, the observation of another of them^t, that these words intimate, that a man ought to honour the law, במהשבה ובדיבור ובמעשה, in thought, and in word, and in deed: nor should this be thought to be too severe, that the law of God curses men for non-performance of the whole. The Athenians^u formerly condemned persons as guilty, though they had not broke the whole law, yet if they had transgressed but one syllable of it: upon the whole it is a clear point, that there can be no justification by the works of the law, since it curses in case of want of perfect and constant obedience to it.

Ver. 11. *But that no man is justified, &c.*] There are some that are justified, as all God's elect are, in his own mind and will from eternity; which will of his to justify them, upon the righteousness of his son, undertook by him to bring in, is their justification in the court of heaven; and all that believe in Christ are openly and manifestly justified in the court of conscience, under the testimony of the spirit of God: but no one is justified by the law; 'tis in the Greek text, in the law; there were many justified before the law was given, as Noah, Job, Abraham, and all the Ante-Mosaic believers; and there were many justified in, or under the legal dispensation; but none of them were justified by their obedience to the law, but by the righteousness they believed they had in the Lord: especially no man is justified in the sight of God; who sees the heart, knows the spring of actions, and whose judgment is according to truth; that is, by the law and the deeds of it, however they may before men: it is evident; 'tis a clear case, out of all dispute, as appears from Hab. ii. 4. *for the just shall live by faith;* which may be read either, *the just by faith, shall live;* that is, the man who is just by faith, or justified by faith, not by it as a principle or act, or as the cause or matter of his justification, but by the object of his faith, Christ and his righteousness apprehended by faith, and so not just or justified by works; he shall live a life of justification, through that righteousness his faith receives; he shall live comfortably, with much peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, as the result of his being justified by faith; and shall live eternally, and never die the second death: or *the just shall live by faith;* he that is righteous, not by his own works, but by the obedience of Christ, shall live not upon his faith, but by it on Christ, and his righteousness, which

^p Misn. Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 14. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 98. 9.

^q T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

^r Jarchi in loc.

^s Bepchai in loc.

^t Aben Ezra in loc.

^u R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 3.

^v Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5.

is revealed from faith to faith; and this makes it a clear point, that he is not justified by the law, for if he was, he would not live by faith on Christ, but in and by the deeds of the law.

Ver. 12. *And the law is not of faith, &c.*] The Arabic version adds, *but of man*; which as it is an addition to the text, so it contains false doctrine; for though the law is not of faith, yet not of man, but of God; the law does not consist of faith in Christ, nor does it require it, and that a man should live by it upon his righteousness; it is the Gospel that reveals the righteousness of Christ, and directs and encourages men to believe in him and be saved; nor does the law take any notice of a man's faith; nor has it any thing to do with a man as a believer, but as a doer, in the point of justification: *but the man that doth them shall live in them*; the passage referred to, is in Lev. xviii. 5. the word *them*, relates to the statutes and judgments, not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, which are equally obligatory on Gentiles as on Jews. The Jewish doctors² observe on those words, that "it is not said, "priests, Levites, and Israelites, but אֲדָמָה, *the man*; "lo, you learn from hence, that even a Gentile that "studies in the law, is as an high-priest:" so that whatever man does the things contained in the law, that is, internally as well as externally, for the law is spiritual, reaches the inward part of man, and requires truth there, a conformity of heart and thought unto it, and that does them perfectly and constantly, without the least failure in matter or manner of obedience, such shall live in them and by them; the language of the law is, do this and live; so life, and the continuation of that happy natural life which Adam had in innocence, was promised to him, in case of his persisting in his obedience to the law; and so a long and prosperous life was promised to the Israelites in the land of Canaan, provided they observed the laws and statutes which were commanded them: but since eternal life is a promise made before the world began, is provided for in an everlasting covenant, is revealed in the Gospel, and is the pure gift of God's grace through Christ, it seems that it never was the will of God that it should be obtained by the works of the law; and which is a further proof that there can be no justification in the sight of God by them, see ver. 21.

Ver. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, &c.*] The Redeemer is Christ, the son of God; who was appointed and called to this work by his father, and which he himself agreed to; he was spoken of in prophecy under this character; he came as such, and has obtained eternal redemption, for which he was abundantly qualified; as man, he was a near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption belonged; and as God, he was able to accomplish it. The persons redeemed are *us*, God's elect, both of Jews and Gentiles; a peculiar people, the people of Christ, whom the father gave unto him; some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: the blessing obtained for them is redemption; a buying of them again, as the word signifies; they were his before by the father's gift, and now he purchases them with the price of his own blood,

and so delivers them *from the curse of the law*; its sentence of condemnation and death, and the execution of it; so that they shall never be hurt by it, he having delivered them from wrath to come, and redeemed them from the second death, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The manner in which this was done was by being *made a curse for us*; the sense of which is, not only that he was like an accursed person, and looked upon as such by the men of that wicked generation, who hid and turned away their faces from him, as an abominable execrable person, calling him a sinner, a Samaritan, and a devil; but was even accursed by the law; becoming the surety of his people, he was made under the law, stood in their law-place and stead; and having the sins of them all imputed to him, and he answerable for them, the law finding them on him, charges him with them, and curses him for them; yea, he was treated as such by the justice of God, even by his father, who spared him not, awoke the sword of justice against him, and gave him up into his hands; delivered him up to death, even the accursed death of the cross, whereby it appeared that he was made a curse: *made*, by the will, counsel, and determination of God, and not without his own will and free consent; for he freely laid down his life, and gave himself, and made his soul an offering for sin: *for it is written*, Deut. xxi. 23. *curst is every one that hangeth on a tree*: it is in the Hebrew text, תָּלַי, *he that is hanged*; which is the very name the Jews¹ commonly call Christ by way of reproach; that is, *every one that hangeth*, as the apostle rightly renders it; which is always the sense of an indefinite phrase, unless a restriction is put: adding out of the same verse, *on the tree*, by way of explanation; for which he cannot upon any account be found fault with, since it is manifest one hanged on a tree is meant, who is *accursed of God*, or *the curse of God*; the curse of God, in vindicating his righteous law, was visibly on such a person; as it was on Christ, when he hung on the cross, in the room and stead of his people; for he was made a curse, not for himself, or for any sins of his own, but *for us*; in our room and stead, for our sins, and to make atonement for them: upon the whole, the Jew² has no reason to find fault as he does, either with the apostle's sense, or citation of this passage; for whether it be rendered *hangeth*, or is *hanged*, the sense is the same; and though the apostle leaves out the word *God*, it is clear from what he says, that his meaning is, that the curse of God lighted upon Christ as the surety of his people, standing in their law-place and stead, in order to redeem them from the law and its curse; since he says, he was *made a curse for them*, which must be done by the Lord himself: and whereas the Jew objects, that it is impossible that any one, even an Israelite, should be delivered from the curses of the law, but by the observance of it, this shews his ignorance of the law, which, in case of sin, requires a penalty, and which is its curse; and it is not future observance of the law will free from that: and as for the Gentiles, he says, to whom the law was not given, and who were never under it, they are free from the curses of it, without a

¹ T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

² Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Talmudic. col. 2566.

² R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 89. p. 469.

redemption; but as this is to be understood not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, it is a mistake; the Gentiles are under the moral law, and being guilty of the violation of it, are liable to its curse; and can't be delivered from it, but through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; by virtue of which, they have a part and portion in the blessings promised as follows.

Ver. 14. *That the blessing of Abraham, &c.*] The same blessing Abraham enjoyed, even justification by the righteousness of Christ; and what was promised to Abraham, that in him, his seed, that is Christ, the Gentiles should be blessed, or justified; for though this blessing may in general comprise every spiritual blessing, yet it chiefly regards that of justification; or a deliverance from the curse of the law, and which is the end of Christ's being made a curse, that this blessedness might come on the Gentiles; the uncircumcision, as well as the circumcision; see Rom. iv. 9. that is, upon as many of them as were ordained unto eternal life, and in consequence of that believe in Christ; quite contrary to a Jewish notion, that "no blessing dwells but upon an Israelite;" now though this blessing, as all other spiritual ones, were laid up in the covenant of grace, put into the hands of Christ, and God's elect blessed therewith, as considered in him, yet the curse of the law for their transgressions stood in the way of their personal enjoyment of it, to their peace and comfort in their own souls; wherefore Christ is made a curse for them, to make way for the blessing to take place upon them; which is by an act of God's grace imputed to them, and is received by faith: *through Jesus Christ; or in Jesus Christ*, as the words may be read; meaning either, that this blessing comes upon the Gentiles that were in Christ, chosen in him, in union with him, and represented by him, both in the covenant and on the cross; or else that Christ is the Mediator, as from whom, so through whom, this, as every blessing of grace, comes to the children of God: *that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith*; Beza puts the copulative *and* to this clause, reading it, *and that we*, &c. as does the Ethiopic version; thereby more clearly pointing out this to be another end of Christ's being made a curse for us: *by the promise of the spirit* may be meant, either by an *hypallage*, the spirit of promise, who opens and applies the promises; or the spirit promised, not as a spirit of regeneration, conversion, and faith; for, as such, he cannot be received by faith; since, antecedent to his being so, there can be no faith; but rather as a spirit of adoption, in respect to which he is said to be received, Rom. viii. 15. and this blessing of adoption, as in consequence of redemption from under the law, its curse and condemnation, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6. Or else a spiritual promise, in distinction from the temporal promise of the land of Canaan, made to Abraham and his natural seed, and means the promise of eternal life and happiness in the world to come; which promise is now received by faith, and that in consequence of the sufferings and death of Christ the testator; see Heb. ix. 15.

Ver. 15. *Brethren, &c.*] Whereas in ver. 1. he calls them *foolish Galatians*, which might seem too harsh and severe, therefore, to mitigate and soften their resentments, he styles them brethren; hoping still well of them, and that they were not so far gone, but that they might be recovered; and imputing the blame and fault rather to their leaders and teachers, than to them: *I speak after the manner of men*; agreeably to a Talmudic form of speech in use among the Jews, דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם, *the law speaks according to the language of the children of men*, or *after the manner of men*^a, when they argue from any Scripture, in which a word is repeated, and the latter word seems to point out something peculiar: but the apostle's meaning is, that the thing he was about to speak of was taken from among men, in common use with them, and what was obvious to the common sense and understanding of men, and might easily be applied and argued from, as it is by him: *though it be but a man's covenant, or testament, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto*; if a covenant made between men, or a man's will and testament, be confirmed, signed, sealed, and witnessed, in a proper manner, no other man can make them void, or take any thing from them, or add any thing to them, only the parties concerned by their own will and consent; and if this be the case among men, much less can the covenant of God, confirmed by two immutable things, his word and oath, or his will and testament, or any branch of it, be ever disannulled, or be capable of receiving any addition therunto. The apostle seems to have a particular respect to that branch of the covenant and will of God, which regards the justification of men in his sight by the righteousness of Christ, to which the false teachers were for adding the works of the law.

Ver. 16. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, &c.*] The promises design the promises of the covenant of grace mentioned in the next verse, which are exceeding great and precious, better than those of any other covenant; and which are all yea and amen in Christ, and are chiefly of a spiritual nature; though all the temporal blessings of God's people come to them in a covenant way, and by virtue of the promise; for godliness has the promise of this life, that God will verily feed them, withhold no good thing from them proper for them, sanctify all their afflictions, support under them, and never leave nor forsake them: but the promises here intended principally are such as these, that God will be their God, and they shall be his people, the promise of Christ as a Saviour and Redeemer of them; of the Spirit as their sanctifier, and the applier of all grace unto them; of justification by Christ's righteousness, and pardon by his blood; of adoption through free rich grace; of perseverance in grace, and of the eternal inheritance: now these promises were made, ερηθισαυ, *were said unto, or spoken of*, to Abraham and his seed; that is, they were discovered, made manifest, and applied to Abraham, the father of many nations; and were declared to belong to him and his spiritual seed, even all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; for the apostle is

^a Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 3.

^b T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 11. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 2. Sanhe-

drin, fol. 90. 2. Maccot, fol. 12. 1. Vid. Halicot Olam, tract. 4. c. 3. p. 199.

not speaking of the original make and constitution of the covenant of grace and its promises, which were made from all eternity; the grand promise of life was made before the world began, and Christ was set up as Mediator from everlasting, before ever the earth was, which suppose a covenant in which this promise was granted, and of which Christ was the Mediator as early; it was made long before Abraham, or any of his spiritual seed, were in being; nor was it made with any single person, any mere creature, Abraham, or any other, but with Christ, as the head and representative of the whole election of grace: but what is here treated of is, the declaration and manifestation of the covenant, and its promises to Abraham; which was frequently done, as upon the call of him out of the land of Chaldea, upon his parting with Lot, when he was grown old, and when Eliezar his servant was like to be his heir, and just before the giving of him the covenant of circumcision, and again upon the offering up of his son Isaac: *he saith not unto seeds, as of many*; in the plural number, as if Jews and Gentiles were in a different manner his spiritual seed: *but as of one*; using the singular number: *and to thy seed, which is Christ*; meaning not Christ personal, though he was of the seed of Abraham, a son of his, as was promised; but the covenant and the promises were not now made with, and to Christ, as personally considered, this was done in eternity; but Christ mystical, the church, which is the body of Christ, of which he is the head, and is called by his name, 1 Cor. xii. 12. and designs all Abraham's spiritual seed, both Jews and Gentiles; who are all one in Christ, and so Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; hence there's no room for the objection of the Jew to the apostle's application of this passage to Christ^c, that the Scripture speaks not of any particular person, but of seed in a general and collective sense, of a large and numerous offspring; since the apostle designs such a seed by Christ, as numerous as the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea-shore, even all believers in all nations, Abraham is the father of; though did the apostle mean Christ particularly, and personally considered, there are instances to be given, where the word *seed* is used, not in a collective sense, but of a single person, as in Gen. iv. 25. and xv. 3. and xxi. 13. Nor has the Jew^d any reason to charge him with a mistake, in observing that the word is not in the plural, but in the singular number, when it is the manner of the Hebrew language to speak of seed only in the singular number; but this is false, the word is used in the plural number, and so might have been here, had it been necessary, as in 1 Sam. viii. 15. concerning seed sown in the earth, from whence the metaphor is here taken. The first tract in the Jews' Misna, or oral law, is called, זרעים, *seeds*; and the word, even as spoken of the posterity of men, is used in the plural number in their Talmud^e; where they say, "pecuniary judgments are not as capital ones; in pecuniary judgments, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; in capital judgments, his blood, and the blood זרעונו, *of his seeds*, or posterity, hang on him to the end of the world;

"for we so find in Cain, who slew his brother; as it is said, *the bloods of thy brother crieth*; it is not said, *the blood of thy brother, but the bloods of thy brother, his blood, and the blood זרעונו, of his seeds.*"

Ver. 17. *And this I say, &c.*] Assert and affirm as a certain truth, that is not to be gainsayed; *that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul*; by the *covenant* is meant, not the covenant made with Adam, as the federal head of all his posterity; for this was made two thousand years before the law was given; nor that which was made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, for that itself is the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after this covenant; nor the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham, for that was not so long by some years, before the giving of the law, as the date here fixed: but *a covenant confirmed of God in Christ*; a covenant in which Christ is concerned; a covenant made with him, of which he is the sum and substance, the Mediator, surety, and messenger; and such is what the Scriptures call the covenant of life and peace, and what we commonly style the covenant of grace and redemption; because the articles of redemption and reconciliation, of eternal life and salvation, by the free grace of God, are the principal things in it. This is said to be *in Christ, in Χριστο, with respect to Christ*; though the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out this clause, nor is it in the Alexandrian copy, and some others; meaning either that this covenant has respect to Christ personal, he having that concern in it, as just now mentioned, and as it was made manifest and confirmed to Abraham, was promised in it to spring from him; or rather that it has respect to Christ mystical, as before, to all Abraham's spiritual seed, both Jews and Gentiles: and this is said to be *confirmed of God*, with respect thereunto; which must be understood, not of the first establishment of the covenant, in and with Christ, for that was done in eternity; nor of the confirmation of it by his blood, which was at his death; nor of the confirmation of it in common to the saints by the spirit of God, who is the seal of the covenant, as he is the spirit of promise; but of a peculiar confirmation of it to Abraham, either by a frequent repetition thereof, or by annexing an oath unto it; or rather by those rites and usages, and even wonderful appearances, recorded in Gen. xv. 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18. and which was *four hundred and thirty years before the law was given*, which are thus computed by the learned Pareus; from the confirmation of the covenant, and taking Hagar for his wife, to the birth of Isaac, 15 years; from the birth of Isaac, to the birth of Jacob, 60 years, Gen. xxv. 26, from the birth of Jacob, to his going down into Egypt, 130 years, Gen. xlvii. 9. from his going down to Egypt, to his death, 17 years, Gen. xlvii. 28. from the death of Jacob, to the death of Joseph in Egypt, 53 years, Gen. i. 26. from the death of Joseph, to the birth of Moses, 75 years; from the birth of Moses, to the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt, and the giving of the law, 80 years,

^c Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 13. p. 134.

^d Ib. par. 2. c. 90 p. 468.

^e T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 1.

in all 430 years. The Jews reckoned the four hundred years spoken of to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13. and mentioned by Stephen, Acts vii. 6. from the birth of Isaac; but they reckon the four hundred and thirty years, the number given by Moses, Exod. xii. 40. and by the apostle here, to begin from the confirming the covenant between the pieces, though somewhat differently counted; says one of their chronologers^f, we reckon the 430 years from the 70th year of Abraham, from whence to the birth of Isaac were 30 years, and from thence to the going out of Egypt, 400 years; and another^g of them says, "they are to be reckoned from the time " that the bondage was decreed, in the standing between " the pieces; and there were 210 years of them from " thence to the going down to Egypt, and these are " the particulars; the 105 years which remained to " Abraham, and the 105 years Isaac lived after the " death of Abraham, and there were 10 years from the " death of Isaac, to the going down to Egypt, and it remains that there were 210 years they staid in Egypt:" another^h of their writers says, "that from the time " that the decree of the captivity of Egypt was fixed between the pieces, to the birth of Isaac, were 30 years; " and from the birth of Isaac to the going down of the " children of Israel into Egypt, 400 years; take out " from them the 60 years of Isaac, and the 130 years " that Jacob had lived when he went into Egypt, and " there remain 210." Josephus reckonsⁱ these years from Abraham's coming into the land of Canaan, to the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and makes them 430, agreeably to Exod. xii. 40. and to the apostle here, and to the Talmud; see the note on Acts vii. 6. However, be these computations as they will, 'tis certain, that the law, which was so long after the confirming of the covenant to Abraham, could not make it null and void: or that it should make the promise of none effect; the particular promise of the covenant, respecting the justification of Abraham and his spiritual seed, by faith in the righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 18. *For if the inheritance be of the law, &c.*] By the inheritance is meant, either the eternal inheritance, everlasting life and happiness in heaven, which is the gift of God through Christ, and not attained to and enforced by the works of the law; or particularly the blessing of justification, promised in the covenant to Abraham, and his spiritual seed; even to the Gentiles, and inherited by them; which is not obtained through obedience to the law of works, nor does it belong to those who seek for it by the deeds of the law, for these are not heirs of it; see Rom. iv. 14. For was this the case, it is no more of promise; it can't be by merit and by promise, by works and grace too; these can never be reconciled, and consist together; if it is by promise, then not of the law; and if it is of the law, it is not by promise: but nothing is more certain than this, that God gave it, freely, without any consideration of the works of the law, to Abraham by promise; wherefore justification is not by works, but by the free grace of God, through faith in the righteousness of Christ; and in this way men be-

come heirs according to the hope of eternal life: all which is directly opposite to the notion of the Jews, who say, that, בשכר מצות ירשו נן ערן, "for the reward " of the commandments, men shall inherit paradise^k."

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then serveth the law? &c.*] If this be the case, might an objector say, why was the law given? what ends and purposes are to be served by it? of what use can it be? there had as good been no law at all, if the inheritance is not of it, and there's no justification by it. To which it is answered, it was added because of transgressions; four hundred and thirty years after the covenant made with Abraham; it did not succeed it, nor take the place of it, and so make it null and void; but was over and above added unto it, for the sake of restraining transgressions; which had there been no law, men would not have been accountable for them; and they would have gone into them without fear, and with impunity; but the law was given, to lay a restraint on men, by forbidding such and such things, on pain of death; and also for the detecting, discovering, and making known transgressions, what they are, their nature and consequences; these the law charges men with, sets them before them, in their true light and proper colours; and convicts them of them, stops their mouths, and pronounces them guilty before God: moreover, this law entered in, over and above any other revelation God was pleased to make, that the offence might abound, Rom. v. 20. either that particular offence, the sin of Adam, the apostle is there speaking of; the heinous nature of which, its aggravated circumstances, and the justness of its imputation to his posterity, were more clearly discerned by this law; and so the Syriac version here renders it in the singular number, מטל מטטנותא, because of transgression; or all other offences and transgressions, which are increased through the multiplicity of precepts, and attended with more aggravating circumstances, than if no law was given, and more eagerly pursued after, through the prohibition of them; such being the corrupt nature of man, that the more any thing is forbidden, the more desirous it is of it: add to all this, that the law was given for the punishing of transgressions, for which it curses, and threatens with death, and inflicts it on Christless sinners: hence it is clear there can be no justification by it, and yet it is not useless and insignificant: till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; either Christ the seed of the woman, and of Abraham, who was to come in the flesh, and is come; and to whom the grand promise of life, and all the promises of the covenant were made; not for himself, but for those he represented, and in whom they are all secure: until whose coming to finish transgression, and bring in everlasting righteousness, the law was to continue in the form in which, and the use for which it was added, and then to cease as the ministration of Moses; for through the coming of Christ it received its full accomplishment, and came to an end; the ceremonial law was utterly abolished, and the moral law ceased to be a covenant of works, though it continues a rule of walk and conversation; and the whole Mosaic eco-

^f Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 7. 1.

^g Juchasin, fol. 156. 2.

^h Jarchi in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 1.

ⁱ Antiqu. l. 2. c. 15. sect. 2.

^k Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 3.

nomy was no more: or else the seed here intends the spiritual seed of Abraham; particularly among the Gentiles, to whom the promise of blessedness, of justification, and eternal life was made; and the sense be, that till such time that a generation of faithful men, of believers in Christ, should arise among the Gentiles, the law was to continue with the Jews; but when they should spring up, the middle wall of partition should be broken down, and Abraham's spiritual seed among Jews and Gentiles make up one body, one people, and be fellow-heirs and partakers of the promise of God in Christ, through the Gospel: *and it was ordained by angels*; not Moses and Aaron, and Joshua, as some say; for though Moses was concerned in the giving of the law, yet not Aaron nor Joshua, nor are any of them ever called angels; but the holy elect angels are here meant, the ten thousands of saints, or holy ones, God came to Mount Sinai with, and the Lord was among, in the holy place; see Deut. xxxiii. 2. Psal. lxxviii. 17. and so the Jews say¹, that the Lord appeared on Mount Sinai gloriously, *עם כיתיה דמלאכי*, with companies, or troops of angels, to give the law to his people: and this may be said to be *ordained* by them, inasmuch as it might be written and spoken by them, as the instruments and ministers God made use of; for though the tables are said to be the work of God, and the writing the writing of God, and to be written with the finger of God, and he is said to speak all the words of it, yet this hinders not, but that all this might be done by the means of angels; who might be employed in disposing and fitting the stones in the form they were, and in writing the law upon them; hence it is said to be given by the disposition of angels, Acts vii. 53. and certain it is, that it was spoken by them, Heb. ii. 2. they forming in the air those articulate and audible sounds, when the law was delivered; who were also concerned in the thunders and lightnings, and in the blowing of the trumpet, that waxed louder and louder at that time: *in the hand of a mediator*: not Christ, as many interpreters, ancient and modern, have thought; for though he was present at the giving of the law, as appears from Acts vii. 38. and Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. and is the Mediator between God and man, and had the law in his hand, out of which it went forth as the lawgiver; and as the surety of his people has fulfilled it, and by so doing put an end to it, and delivered them from the curse and condemnation of it; yet he is the Mediator of the new and better covenant, not the ministration of death, but of life; and so Moses and Christ, the law and Gospel, the old and the new covenant, are continually opposed to each other; besides, the mediator here seems to be represented as inferior to the angels, and as receiving the law into his hands from them, by whom it was ordained; which to conceive of Christ, is very much to the demeaning and lessening of him. Moses is the mediator here meant, who stood between God and the people of Israel; not to make peace between them, but to shew the word of God from him to them, and this at their own request; see Deut. v. 5, 23—27. and in his hand the tables of the law were, when he came down from the mount, and was a typical media-

tor of Christ. So the Jews say of him, that "he was *אמצעי*, a mediator between them and God."

Ver. 20. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, &c.*] A mediator supposes two parties he stands between, and these at a distance from, or disagreeing with each other; where there is but one party, there can be no need of, nor any reason for, a mediator; so Christ is the Mediator between God and men, the day's man, that lays his hands upon them both; and Moses, he was the mediator between God and the Israelites: *but God is one*; not in person, for there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, in nature and essence; so that though there are three persons, there is but one God, and who is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; who is of one mind concerning them, and has taken them into one and the same covenant, and makes use of one and the same method in the justification of them: but the true sense of the phrase here is, that whereas a mediator supposes two parties at variance, *God is one of the two*; as the Ethiopic version reads the words; he is a party offended, that stands off, and at a distance, which the law given by angels in the hand of a mediator shews; so that that is rather a sign of disagreement and alienation, and consequently that justification is not to be expected by it.

Ver. 21. *Is the law then against the promises of God?*

&c.] If the law was added because of transgressions, and curses for them, and if the inheritance is not of it, but by promise, were it, it would not be by promise, then, says an objector, it is against the promises: these are contrary to one another, and God, in giving the one and the other, must contradict himself: to which it is replied, *God forbid*: a way of speaking the apostle uses, when he would express his abhorrence and detestation of any thing, as here; for though the law and promises are distinct things, and have their separate uses, yet they are not contradictory to each other; the law has its use, and so have the promises; the promises do not set aside the law as useless on all accounts, nor does the law disannul the promises, but is subservient to them: *for if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law*; but the law cannot give life, spiritual life to a dead sinner; God only can do this, Father, Son, and Spirit; so far is the law from giving it efficiently, that it is not so much as the means of it; it is not made use of this way; God makes use of the law to kill, but not to make alive; he makes use of the law to strike dead all a man's hopes of happiness, by the deeds of it; but 'tis the Gospel he uses to quicken and comfort; that is the spirit that giveth life. The law requires as much of a dead sinner, as it did of Adam in innocence, but gives him no life, activity, and strength to perform; could it quicken him, and enable him to do all its demands perfectly, then there would be righteousness, and so justification by it, as by the promise; whence it appears that there is no contrariety in the law to the promises: the reason why there is no righteousness is, because it can't give life, spiritual life and strength; and if so, then not eternal life; which is the free gift of God, and not the merit

¹ Targum in 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

² Tzeror Hammor, fol. 136. 1, 2.

of men's works: this is directly contrary to a notion of the Jews, who cry up the law as a life-giving law; say they, "great is the law, *שדאי נורנת חיים לעושיה*, *for it giveth life to them that do it*, in this world, and "in the world to come." and elsewhere, "the law is a tree of life to all that study in it, *למדיב לן דיי*, *to give unto them life in this world, and to give unto them life in the world to come.*"

Ver. 22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, &c.*] By the Scripture is meant, either the writing of the law in particular, the killing letter, or the whole Scripture, or God in it; and who by and in it has shewn, declared, and proved, that all the individuals of human nature, Jews and Gentiles, and all that is in them, and done by them, are under the power and dominion of sin, defiled by it, and involved in the guilt of it; for it is not *σαλας*, all persons, but *σαλας*, all things, belonging to all persons; all the members of their bodies, and faculties of their souls; all their thoughts, inclinations, and intentions; all their works and services, even their best righteousness, which is as filthy rags; all are declared to be sinful and polluted, and men on account of them to be guilty before God, and liable to punishment; from whence there can be no escape by the law of works; for they are like men concluded, or shut up in a prison, from which there is no apparent likelihood of deliverance: now the spirit of God, discovering to men this their wretched and desperate condition, under the law and sin, reveals Christ and his righteousness to them, and enables and encourages them to believe in him, by whom only they can be justified from all things, they cannot by the law of Moses, in which they see themselves shut up, as in a prison: *that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe*; by the promise is intended, the promise of life and salvation, and particularly of a justifying righteousness; which is given, not merited; righteousness is a gift, a gift of grace, a free gift, and so is eternal life; salvation in all its parts is of free grace; Christ is a free gift, and so are all things along with him; yea, faith itself, by which they are received, it is not of ourselves, 'tis the gift of God; Christ is the author and finisher, as well as the object of it; and therefore here called the *faith of Jesus Christ*; and such that have it, to them the promise, or the things promised, righteousness and life are given, which the law could not give; not to them that work, but to them that believe: thus the law is so far from being against the promises of God, that it is subservient to them; for though the law has no tendency in itself to bring persons to Christ, and to believe in him for righteousness, yet this concluding men under sin, shewing them their desperate, and hopeless, and helpless condition, the spirit of God takes occasion from hence to reveal Christ unto them, and to enable them as perishing creatures to venture on him, and lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel; and so they come to enjoy the grand promise of it, even life and salvation by Christ.

Ver. 23. *But before faith came, &c.*] This is to be understood, not of the grace of faith, which was under the former dispensation, as now; the Old-Testament

saints had the same spirit of faith, and the same grace of faith, as for its nature, object, and use, as New-Testament saints have; Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. believed in Christ, and were justified by faith in his righteousness, as we are. It is much better to understand it of the doctrine of faith, which though preached to Adam, and by Noah, and to Abraham, and by Isaiah, and others, yet not so clearly, largely, and fully, as by Jesus Christ and his apostles; so that the times of the Gospel may be called the times of faith, in comparison of the times of the law, and which some think is here meant; but it is best to interpret it of Christ, the object of faith, who was to come, and is come in the flesh, to fulfil the law; and, by so doing, has put an end to it; and to redeem his people from under it, and to save them with an everlasting salvation; for before this his coming in the flesh, the people of the Jews, of whom the apostle was one, were under the law: *we were kept under the law*; as persons in a garrison, as the word signifies; they were kept distinct and separate from the rest of the nations of the world, and had neither civil nor religious conversation with them; and so were preserved in some measure both from their impieties and idolatries, which otherwise they were naturally prone to; and as a distinct people, unto the coming of the Messiah, who was to arise from among them; so that their being kept under the law in this sense, was both for their honour and their safety: though the meaning may also be, that they were kept under it as persons under a military guard, as the word likewise imports; and signifies, that the law kept a strict guard and a watchful eye over them, as the Roman soldier had over Paul, that kept him, and held fast the chain in his hand, with which he was bound, that he might not get loose and escape from him; see Acts xxviii. 16, 20. to which the apostle seems here to allude; the law kept them close to the discharge of their duty, and held them fast as prisoners; and which is more fully expressed in the next clause, *shut up*. The Syriac version reads this in connexion with the former, thus, *נמוסא נמר, דרוא לן כד חבישינן*, *the law kept us shut up*, as in a prison; and the same way reads the Arabic version; which shews the state and condition the Jews were in under the law, and how they were treated by it; not as good and righteous persons, but as persons in debt, as criminals and malefactors; a prison is made, and so the law, for such sort of persons; the law considered and used them as sinners, as criminals convicted and condemned; it did itself accuse, convict, and pronounce them guilty, and adjudged them to punishment; and detained them as prisoners in its dark dungeon, where they had little light and comfort; and were as in a pit, wherein is no water; though they lay here as prisoners of hope, in expectation of the Messiah's coming; who was to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and to say to the prisoners, Come forth, and to them that sit in darkness, Shew yourselves. Also the allusion may be to the custom of the eastern nations, in the usage of their slaves and captives; who in the day-time used to grind at a mill in a prison-

* Pirke Abot, c. 6. sect. 6.

o Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 3. & in Num. fol. 69. 1.

house, and in the night-time were put down into a pit and shut up, and a mill-stone put to the mouth of the pit?; and so describes the state of bondage and slavery the Jews were in under the law, who differed nothing from servants, to whom the saints under the Gospel dispensation are opposed, ver 26. as being the children of God by faith in Christ. And in this uncomfortable condition they continued, *unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed*: that is, until Christ the object of faith came, who was to be revealed, or made manifest in the flesh; who, before his incarnation, not only lay in the bosom of the father, but was in a great measure hid under the types and prophecies of the Old Testament; which though they gave some hints of him, yet but obscure ones, in comparison of the revelation made of him by his appearance in human nature; by the testimonies of his father by a voice from heaven of angels, of John the Baptist, and others; and by his own doctrines and miracles, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Ver. 24. *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, &c.*] So the words should be read, as they are by the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; for the words to bring us are a supplement of our translators, and have nothing to answer to them in the original; and the sense of the passage is, that the law performed this office of a schoolmaster until the coming of Christ; which shews that till that time the church was in its minority, that the Jews were but children in knowledge and understanding, and therefore stood in need, and were under the care of a schoolmaster, the law, by which the whole Mosaic administration is designed. They were taught by the moral law, the letter, the writing on the two tables, with other statutes and judgments, their duty to God and men, what is to be done and to be avoided, what is righteousness and what is not, the nature of sin, its demerit and consequences; but these gave them no instructions about a Saviour, and life and righteousness by him. The ceremonial law gave them some hints of the Gospel scheme, and the way of salvation by Christ, but in a manner suited to their estate of childhood; by sights and shows, by types and figures, by rites and ceremonies, by shadows and sacrifices; it taught them by divers washings the pollution of their nature, their need of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin; by circumcision, the necessity of regeneration, and the internal circumcision of the heart; by the passover, the daily sacrifice and other offerings, the doctrines of redemption, satisfaction, and atonement; and by the brazen serpent, the necessity of looking to Christ for life and salvation, and by various other things in that branch of the legal economy: but besides the instruction the law gave, it made use of discipline as a schoolmaster does; it kept a strict eye and hand over them, and them close to the performance of their duty; and restrained them from many things their inclinations led them to, threatening them with death in case of disobedience, and inflicting its penalties on delinquents; hence they that were under its discipline, were through fear of death it threatened them with, all their life-time subject to bondage: even the ceremonial law had

something awful and tremendous in it; every beast that was slain in sacrifice was not only an instruction to them that they deserved to die as that creature did; but carried in it a tacit acknowledgment and confession of their own guilt; and the whole was an handwriting of ordinances against them. Moreover, the law being called a schoolmaster, shews that the use of it was but temporary, and its duration but for a time; children are not always to be under, nor designed to be always under a schoolmaster, no longer than till they are come to a proper age for greater business and higher exercises of life; so the law was to continue, and did continue, to be of this use and service to the Jewish church during its minority, until Christ came, the substance of all it taught and directed to: both the Jerusalem Targum and that of Jonathan ben Uzziel, on Numb. xi. 12. use the very Greek word the apostle does here, concerning Moses, rendering the words, as a *pedagogue* or *schoolmaster* bears a sucking child into the land, &c. *That we might be justified by faith*: by Christ the object of faith, by his righteousness, which faith looks unto and receives, and not by the law and the works of it; the people of the Jews were in such a state under the law, and the law of that use unto them before the coming of Christ, as above represented, that it might be made manifest, be a clear point, and out of all dispute, that there is no such thing as justification by the law; for how could ever such a blessing be expected from it, when men were kept under it as under a military guard; when they were shut up in it as in a prison, and were treated by it as malefactors, convicted and condemned; and when they were under the discipline of it, as a rigid and severe schoolmaster? this being their case till Christ came, when it ceased to be all this to them, he being the end of it for righteousness, it became a thing self-evident, that justification is only by him and his righteousness, and so the end here mentioned was answered.

Ver. 25. *But after that faith is come, &c.*] That is, since Christ the object of faith is come in the flesh, and has fulfilled the law, and redeemed them that were under it from its bondage, curse, and condemnation: *we are no longer under a schoolmaster*; under the law as such; as no longer under it as a military guard, nor in it as a prison, so neither under it as a schoolmaster; not needing its instructions, or its discipline; since Christ is come as a prophet to teach and instruct, as a priest to atone for sin, and make intercession for transgressors, and as a King to rule and govern; in whose hands, and not in the hands of Moses, the law now is, as a rule of walk and conversation.

Ver. 26. *For ye are all the children of God, &c.*] Not by nature, as Christ is the son of God, for he is the only-begotten of the father, and in such sense as neither angels nor men are the sons of God; nor by creation, as Adam and all mankind, and the angels are; but by divine adoption, by an act of God's rich and sovereign grace, putting them among the children; in saying this the apostle directs himself to the Gentiles for their comfort, and says this of them all in a judgment of charity, they being under a profession of faith; lest they should think, because they were not

Abraham's seed according to the flesh, nor were ever trained up under the law as a schoolmaster, that they were not the children of God: whereas they were such not by the law, as none indeed are, but *by faith in Christ Jesus*; not that faith makes any the children of God, or puts them into such a relation; no, that is God's own act and deed; of his free rich grace and goodness, God the Father has predestinated his chosen ones to the adoption of children, and has secured and laid up this blessing for them in the covenant of grace; Christ by redemption has made way for their reception and enjoyment of it; the spirit of God, in consequence of their sonship, as a spirit of adoption bears witness to it; and faith receives it, as it does all other blessings of grace made ready to its hand; and so such persons become evidently and manifestatively the children of God by faith in Christ; and which carries in it a strong reason and argument, proving that they are not under the law as a schoolmaster, in which light it is here set by the apostle; since they are sons and not servants, and so free from the bondage of the law; they are sons grown up into the faith of Christ, and are led and taught by the spirit of God, as they are that are the children of God by faith; and as is promised to the saints under the Gospel, that they shall be *all taught of God*; and therefore stood in no need of the law as a schoolmaster, which only was concerned with the Jews, whilst they were children under age; and has nothing to do with such, whether Jews or Gentiles, who believe in Christ, and are growing up into him their head, till they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of him.

Ver. 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, &c.*] Not that it is to be imagined that these churches of Galatia, or any of the primitive churches, consisted of baptized and unbaptized persons; for this would be acting contrary to the commission of Christ and the order of the Gospel: but this way of speaking supposes that there might be some of them, who though baptized in water, yet not into Christ; and that those who are truly and rightly baptized, who are proper subjects of it, and to whom it is administered in a proper manner, are baptized into Christ: not that by baptism they are brought into union with Christ, but into communion with him; for they are not merely baptized in his name, and by his authority, and according to his command, and into his doctrine, and a profession of him; but into a participation of the blessings of grace which are in him, and come through his sufferings and death; for they that are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death and resurrection from the dead; they are led by faith to behold the cleansing of their souls, and the remission of their sins by his blood, and their justification by his righteousness; how he was delivered for their offences, died for their sins, was buried in the grave, and their iniquities with him, and rose again for their justification; of all which, baptism, performed by immersion, is a lively emblem; and this is to be baptized into Christ, namely, being baptized believing in him, and calling on his name: and such *have put on Christ*; both before and at baptism: before it they put him on

as the Lord their righteousness; his righteousness is compared to a garment, is called the best robe, the wedding-garment, fine linen, clean and white, the robe of righteousness, a garment down to the feet; this is imputed to the elect of God by the Father, through a gracious act of his, and what they are clothed and covered with by the Son, and is put upon them and applied unto them by the Spirit; and which faith receiving puts off its own rags of righteousness, and makes use of this as its proper dress to appear in before the most High; and such through divine grace are enabled to put off the old man and put on the new; that is, walk in their outward lives and conversation, not according to the dictates of corrupt nature, but according to the principles of grace, of the new man formed in the soul, for righteousness and holiness, and in imitation of Christ; having him for an example, and desiring to walk as he walked; which is another sense of putting on Christ, namely, a following of him in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; see Rom. xiii. 14. and such persons, as they are the proper subjects of baptism, who have believed in Christ for righteousness, and walk worthy of him; so in baptism they may also be said to put him on; as they thereby and therein make a public profession of him, by deeds as well as words, declaring him to be their Lord and King; and afresh exercise faith upon him, as their Saviour and Redeemer, and imitate and follow him in it, as their pattern; who himself submitted to it, leaving them an example that they should tread in his steps; which when they do, they may be said to put him on. The allusion is either to the putting off and putting on of clothes at baptism, which being performed by immersion, required such actions, which no other mode does; or to the priests putting off their common clothes, and then bathing or dipping themselves in water, and putting on the garments of the priesthood before they entered on their service; concerning which take the following rules prescribed by the Misnic doctors¹; "no man may enter the court for service, though clean, ער שיטבל, *until he dips himself five times, and washes his hands and feet ten times;*" for every time he immersed himself, he washed his hands and feet before and after: again, "there is a veil of fine linen between him (the high-priest) and the people; he puts off his clothes, ירד ומטב עלה, *he goes down and dips himself, he comes up, and wipes himself; then they bring him the golden garments, and he puts them on, and washes his hands and his feet; then they bring him the daily sacrifice, &c.*" and a little after, "they bring him (the high-priest on the day of atonement) to the house of Parvah, and in the holy place there was a veil of fine linen between him and the people; he washes his hands and his feet, and puts off his garments: R. Meir says, he puts off his garments, and then washes his hands and his feet; *he goes down and dips himself, he comes up again, and wipes himself; then they bring him the white garments, and he puts them on, and washes his hands and his feet:*" all which may serve to illustrate this passage, and point out to us what the apostle al-

¹ Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3, 4, 6. Vid. Misn. Tamid, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

cludes unto, as well as to observe to us the distinction the Jews made between the immersion of the whole body, and a washing of a part of it.

Ver. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, &c.*] Not but that there were such in being; and in the churches of Christ, for the primitive churches consisted of both; but the meaning is, that there is no difference between them, the middle wall of partition being broken down, and that, in the business of justification and salvation, it signified nothing whether a man was a Jew or a Greek; he was never the better for being a circumcised Jew, nor never the worse for being an uncircumcised Gentile; both by nature are equally sinners, and stand in need of the justifying righteousness of Christ, and the regenerating grace of the spirit. The Gospel was equally preached to both, and was made useful to some of the one and of the other; and who, believing in Christ, had a right to the same ordinances and privileges of the Gospel, and shared in the same blessings of grace. *There is neither bond nor free.* There were such persons in the world then, and in the churches too; nor does the Gospel dissolve the civil and natural relations and obligations men are in and under to one another, it confirms and secures them; but the sense is, that God, in calling, justifying, and saving men, is no respecter of persons, as being high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, servants or masters: he calls, justifies, and saves men of every station and condition of life; and bond-slaves and servants called by grace are Christ's free men, and have an equal right as those that are free to all the immunities of the Gospel: in some Heathen nations bond-slaves and servants were not admitted, only freemen, to be present at the sacred service, and worship of their deities; but the Gospel makes no such distinction of men in its doctrine, worship, and ordinances, which lie open to all ranks and orders of men: *there is neither male nor female*; among the Heathens* also females were not admitted to some of their sacred rites and ceremonies; and among the Jews the males only were concerned in many things both of a civil and religious nature; no female might be heir to an inheritance with a male; females had no share in the civil government, nor in the priesthood; males were to appear three times a year before the Lord, and, according to their oral law, women and servants were exempted; the mark of circumcision, the sign of the covenant made with Abraham and his natural seed, was only upon the males; but now under the Gospel dispensation there is no distinction made between male and female as to divine things; as they are alike called by the grace of God, they have the same right to Gospel ordinances, baptism and the

Lord's supper, and to every spiritual privilege. The apostle's design is to shew the common right of believers, of every nation, condition, and sex, and to encourage the Gentiles, and demolish the pride, vanity, and boasting of the Jews, their men especially, who valued themselves upon these *three* very things which the apostle here makes no account of; as that they were Israelites and not Gentiles, freemen and not servants, men and not women; and in their public prayers they give thanks to God in this form, "blessed be the Lord our God, the King of the world, that he hath made me an Israelite; blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath not made me a Gentile; blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath not made me a servant; blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath not made me a woman;" instead of which last the woman say, "blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath made me as he pleased;"^v *for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*; being alike chosen in him, united to him, redeemed by his blood, justified by his righteousness, regenerated by his spirit, the children of God by faith in him, and heirs of the same grace and glory, they make, both Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, male and female, as it were but one new man in him; one body, of which he is the head, one spiritual seed of Abraham and of Christ.

Ver. 29. *For if ye be Christ's, &c.*] Or seeing ye are his, not by creation only, but by the father's gift to him, by the purchase of his own blood, by the power of his grace, making them willing to give up themselves to him; not only his by profession, saying they are the Lord's, calling themselves by his name; but by possession, Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, and they having his spirit as a spirit of regeneration and adoption: *then are ye Abraham's seed*; not his natural but his spiritual seed, the seed that should come, and to whom the promises were made, ver. 16, 19. and so were upon an equal foot even with the Jews that believed: *and heirs according to the promise*; being the children of God, they are heirs of God; and being the spiritual children of Abraham, the children of the promise, which are counted for the seed, they are, according to the promise made to Abraham and his spiritual seed, heirs of the blessings of the grace of life, and of the eternal inheritance; of the blessing of justification of life, and of everlasting salvation; of this world and of the world to come; of all the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, and of the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of the saints in light; to which they are begotten through the abundant mercy of God, for which they are made meet by the grace of Christ; and to which they have a right by his justifying righteousness.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial law, under which the

Old-Testament saints were, being as children under tutors; blames the Galatians for returning to it when

* Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum, l. 2. c. 14. Aurel. Victor. de orig. Gent. Rom. c. 8. Aristophania Thesmothor. & Bourdieu in ib. p. 782.

† Alex. ab Alex. ib. Aurel. Victor, c. 6.

‡ Maimon. Nechalot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

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* Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 1.

† Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 4. 1. Ed. Amst. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 2.

they were freed from it; puts them in mind of their former affection to him and to his ministry; describes the false apostles, who had been the occasion of their departure from the truth, and by a beautiful allegory sets forth the difference between the legal and Gospel dispensations. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter he had compared the law to a schoolmaster, under which the Jews were till Christ came; he here makes use of another simile to express the same thing by, which is that of an heir whilst under age being under tutors and governors, until the time fixed by the parents' will, ver. 1, 2. an accommodation of which simile is in ver. 3. by which the Jews under the former dispensation are represented as children, and as in a state of bondage to the ceremonial law, from which there is a deliverance by Christ at the appointed time of the father, by whom he was sent for that purpose; the act of sending is ascribed to God the father; the person sent is described as the son of God; the time when is called the fulness of time; and the circumstances under which he was sent were, that he was made of a woman, and made under the law, ver. 4. the ends of his being sent were to redeem his people from it, who were under it; and that they might receive the adoption of children, the privilege and spirit of it, ver. 5. Hence because they were the sons of God, and as a fruit and effect of the redemption of them by Christ, the spirit of God is sent down into their hearts, to make known and witness their adoption, ver. 6. and the benefits arising from hence are, that such are or should be no longer the servants of the law, but are children and free from it, and are heirs of God, ver. 7. and that the grace of God might appear the more illustrious in this privilege of sonship, and the folly of the Galatians be more manifest in returning to the ceremonial law, notice is taken of what they were and did before conversion, and what they were inclined to now; that whereas whilst they were ignorant of God, they served nominal fictitious deities, such as were not by nature gods; and yet now, though they knew God, and were known of him, seemed desirous of being in a state of servitude and bondage to the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, ver. 8, 9. of which instances are given in their observing days, months, times and years, ver. 10. which gave the apostle a great deal of concern, fearing his labour among them was in vain, and to no purpose, ver. 11. wherefore he entreats them as his brethren to imitate him, who being a Jew, yet had relinquished the observation of the ceremonial law, ver. 12. and then he reminds them of their former regard unto him; how that though he preached the Gospel to them through much weakness, yet they did not despise him and reject him on account of his infirmities, but received him with all the tokens of respect imaginable, as if he had been an angel; yea, as if he had been Christ himself, ver. 13, 14. who then reckoned themselves happy persons on account of the Gospel he preached to them, and then had such an affection for him, that if it had been needful they would have given their eyes unto him; and yet now he was become their enemy for preaching the same truths he did then, justification by faith in Christ's righteousness and the abrogation of the law, ver. 15, 16. next

he gives an account of the false apostles, who pretended a zealous affection for the Galatians; which was not a good one, nor with right views, ver. 17. though zeal in a good cause, and which continues, is very commendable, ver. 18. and such a constant and hearty attachment had the apostle to them; wherefore he calls them his little children, says he traveled in birth on their account, it being his earnest desire that Christ might appear to be formed in them, ver. 19. wherefore since he was in doubt and distress about them, he was very desirous of being with them, and to alter his way of arguing with them; and from the law, and not the Gospel, shew them their mistake and folly, ver. 20, 21. which he does in the following allegorical way, by observing that Abraham had two sons, the one by a servant maid, the other by his lawful wife; the one was after the flesh, the other by promise; which allegorically signified the two covenants of Sinai and of Sion, ver. 22, 23, 24. Agar the bond-maid represented the covenant made at Mount Sinai in Arabia, under which the carnal Jews and their posterity were in a state of bondage; and Sarah the free woman, the covenant of grace under the Gospel dispensation and the Gospel church-state, which is from above, free, fertile, and numerous, ver. 25, 26. which is confirmed, ver. 27. by a passage out of Isa. liv. 1. and as these two women were typical of the two covenants, so their respective offspring represented the two sorts of professors, legalists and evangelical Christians. True believers in Christ are like Isaac, the children of the promise; legalists are like Ishmael, men after the flesh, and of the same persecuting spirit with him: wherefore as it was then, that carnal Ishmael persecuted spiritual Isaac, so at this time the carnal Jews persecuted the real Christians, ver. 28, 29. nevertheless for the comfort of the latter, 'tis observed out of the Scripture that the former shall cast out, and not be heir with them, ver. 30. and the conclusion of the whole is, that the saints under the Gospel dispensation are not in bondage to the law, but are made free by Christ; to which freedom they are called, and in which they should stand, ver. 31.

Ver. 1. *Now I say, &c.*] To illustrate what he had said of the law's being a schoolmaster to the Jews until the coming of Christ, and then ceasing as such, he proposes the case of an heir during his minority, till he come to the proper time of enjoying his estate. *that the heir, as long as he is a child:* any one that is an heir to his father's estate, or another's, whilst under age, being reckoned as a child, as he is from his infancy to his manhood, *differeth nothing from a servant:* he is not his own man, nor at his own dispose; he can't do as he pleases; he is under restraint; he is kept to school or to business, and is liable to correction and chastisement according as he behaves; nor can he have the free use of his father's estate, *though he be Lord of all.* of all the servants, according to the Arabic version; or of the whole estate his father left him, of which he is Lord in right, but not in possession; he is right heir to it, though as yet it is not in his hands, nor can he do with it as he will.

Ver. 2. *But is under tutors and governors, &c.*] The word rendered *tutors*, is adopted by the Jewish Targumists and Rabbins into their language; and by the

former is used ^a for any ruler and governor, civil or domestic; and by the latter, for such as are guardians of infants, fatherless children, and such as are under age, as it is here used; and who were either appointed by the will of the deceased, or by the sanhedrim, of whom they say ⁷, אֲפוֹשְׂרוֹפָא לִידְקוּנֵי לֵא מוֹקְמִין, *we don't appoint a tutor or guardian for a bearded person*; that is, an adult person, one that is grown up to man's estate; but מוֹקְמִין לִיה אֲפוֹשְׂרוֹפָא לִינוּקָא, *we appoint a guardian for an infant*; and they had not used to appoint women or servants, or such as were minors themselves, or any of the common people; but men of substance, integrity, and wisdom ²; a fatherless child had two tutors ²; the power that guardians so appointed had, is at large described by Maimonides ^b. *Governors* were such ^a as acted under the tutors or guardians, and were employed by them for the improvement of their estates and minds, as stewards, schoolmasters, &c. *until the time appointed of the father*; by his last will and testament, which might be sooner or later, as he pleased; but if he died intestate, the time of minority, and so the duration of tutors and guardians, were according to the laws of the nation; which with the Romans was until a man was twenty-five years of age; and with the Jews, for a male, was until he was thirteen years of age and one day; and for a female, until she was twelve years of age and one day, if the signs of ripeness of age appeared; but if they did not, the time was protracted until they were twenty, and even sometimes till they were thirty-five years of age, before the matter was determined ^c.

Ver. 3. *Even so we, &c.*] Jews, for of such the apostle is only speaking, and to whom he applies the above case of heirs in minority; it was to the Jews he had spoken of the law, as being a military guard, a prison, and a schoolmaster to them; and then having addressed the Gentiles, as being the children of God, baptized into Christ, one in him, interested in him, the spiritual seed of Abraham, and heirs of all the blessings of grace and glory; he returns to the Jews, and represents their estate and condition under the law by the above simile, which he here makes an application of: *when we were children*; not in age, but in knowledge of divine, spiritual, and evangelical things; which must be understood not of every individual person among them, for there were some grown men, men of great faith, light, knowledge, and experience; but of the bulk and generality of the people of the Jews, and that also in comparison of the clear understanding of the saints under the Gospel dispensation. The Jews were like children, peevish, froward, and perverse, and often stood in need of correction and chastisement; and as children are pleased with pictures, shows, sights, and gaudy amusements, so they were taken with an external pompous form of worship, and which they had, and was suited to their infant state; and which infant state of the Jewish church commenced from the time of their coming up out of Egypt, and lasted until the times of the Messiah; see Hosea xi. 1. 3. *Were in bondage under the*

elements of the world; by which are meant, not the four elements of fire, water, earth, and air; nor the angels, who by some are thought to preside over them; nor the sun and moon, according to whose revolutions the festivals of the Jews were regulated; but the several institutions of the Mosaic economy, which were to the Jews what an A B C, or an alphabet of letters, is to one that is beginning to learn; or what an accidence and grammar be to such who are learning any language, and which contain the rudiments of it; as the physical elements are the first principles of nature, and the general rules of speech and language are the rudiments thereof, so the Mosaic institutions were the elements, rudiments, or first principles of the Jewish religion, taught them by the law, as their schoolmaster, and by which they were used as children: these are called *elements*, in allusion to the first principles of nature and learning; and the *elements of the world*, because they lay in outward worldly and earthly things, as meats, drinks, divers washings, &c. and because that hereby God instructed the world, at least a part of it, the world of the Jews: or as the word *κοσμος* may be rendered *beauty*, or *elegancy*, these were elegant elements, which in a most beautiful manner taught the people of the Jews the first principles of the doctrine of Christ: but nevertheless, whilst they were under the instructions and discipline of the law as a schoolmaster, they *were in bondage*; referring not to their bondage in Egypt, nor in the several captivities into which they were carried by their neighbours; nor to the bondage of sin and Satan, common to all men in a state of nature; but to the bondage which the law naturally gendered, led them to, induced upon them, and kept them in, through its sanctions and penalties; for, through fear of death, they were under a servile disposition, and were all their life-time subject to bondage; they carried a yoke of bondage upon their necks, and were under a spirit of bondage unto fear; they were like children closely kept to school to learn their letters, say their lessons, and perform their tasks; and, if not, receive due correction, which kept them in continual fear and bondage.

Ver. 4. *But when the fulness of time was come, &c.*] The time agreed and fixed upon between God and his son from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace, when the son of God should assume human nature; which time was diligently searched into by the prophets, was revealed unto them, and predicted by them; as more generally that it should be before the civil government ceased from Judah, and before the destruction of the second temple; and more particularly by Daniel in his prophecy of the *seventy weeks*, towards and about the close of which there was a general expectation among the Jews of the Messiah's coming; and was the fulness of time here referred to, and what is sometimes called the dispensation of the fulness of time, the end of the Mosaic dispensation and Jewish church-state, the last days of that state, and the end of the Jewish world, as to their ecclesiastical and civil polity. The Jews themselves

^a Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. xxxix. 4. & xli. 34. 35. & xliii. 15. Targum in Esther i. 8. & 2. 3.

⁷ T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 29. 1. 2.

^z Maimon. Kileh. Nechalot. c. 10. r. c. 6.

^a Bartenora in Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 1.

^b Hilch. Nechalot, c. 11.

^c Ib. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 1. 2.

own that the time of the Messiah's coming is fixed, and that at that time he shall come, whether they are worthy or not, for so it is asserted in their Talmud⁴; "says R. Jochanan, the son of David does not come, but in an age which is all worthy, or all wicked; in a generation which is all worthy, as it is written, Isa. lx. 21. in a generation that is all wicked, as it is written, Isa. lxiii. 5. and it is written, *for my name's sake will I do it*; says R. Alexander, R. Joshua ben Levi objects what is written, Isa. lx. 22. *in its time*; and it is written, *I will hasten it*; if they are worthy I will hasten it, if they are not worthy it shall be *בְּעֵתָהּ*, *in its time*." And accordingly a more modern writer of theirs says, "our redemption upon all accounts shall be *בְּוֹמָתָהּ*, *in its time*, whether worthy or wicked; but if worthy its time will be hastened;" it must be owned they do not always say so: this phrase, *the fulness of time*, is an Hebraism, and is the same with *בְּלֵאֲתֵי יְמֵי*, in Ezek. v. 2. which the Septuagint render *τῶν ὡραίων τῶν ἡμερῶν*, *the fulness of days*, and we, *when the days were fulfilled*, when the time was up; and the same sense it has here, and it is also the same with *בְּוֹרֵן*, *the appointed time*, Hab. ii. 3. and answers to *αὐτοῦ χρόνου τοῦ αὐτοῦ*, *the time appointed of the father*, ver. 2. *God sent forth his son*; God not absolutely and essentially, but personally and relatively considered, is here meant, namely, God the father, as appears from the relation the person sent stands in to him, *his son*; not by creation, as angels, Adam, and all men are the sons of God; nor by adoption, as saints are; or by office, as magistrates be; or on account of his incarnation or resurrection from the dead, for he was the son of God before either; but by divine generation, being the only-begotten of the father, of his divine nature and essence, equal to him, and one with him: and who was *sent* by him, not out of disrespect to him, but love to us; nor without his consent or against his will, he readily and heartily agreeing to it; nor does it imply any local motion or change of place, but only designs the assumption of human nature; nor does it suppose any superiority and inferiority, for though Christ, as man, and in his office capacity, as Mediator, is inferior to the father, yet not as to his divine nature, or as the son of God; but it suggests, that he existed before he was sent, and that as a person, and as a distinct person from the father, otherwise he could not with any propriety be said to be sent by him; and also that there was an entire harmony and agreement between them in this matter, the father agreed to send his son, and the son agreed to be sent; and that as to his taking upon him the office of Mediator, and his assumption of human nature in order to obtain eternal redemption: all this was not of himself, but done in concert with his father, from whom as Mediator he had his mission and commission: *made of a woman*; *made*, not created as Adam was; nor begotten by man, as men in common are; nor is he said to be born, though he truly was, but *made*; which word the Holy Ghost chooses, to express the mighty power of God, in his mysterious incarnation, wonderful conception, and birth; though some copies read, *born of a woman*; and so the Arabic

and Ethiopic versions: *of a woman*; whose seed he was from the beginning said to be; of a woman, without a man; of a woman, a virgin, as was foretold; and not only made and formed in her, but of her, of her flesh and blood, of which he took part; and which denotes the low estate and great humiliation of Christ, and shews that as sin came into the world by the woman, the Saviour from sin came also the same way: *made under the law*; under the civil and judicial law as a Jew, to which he was subject, paying tribute to the collectors of it; and which was necessary; that it might appear he sprung from that nation, to whom he was promised; and that he came before the civil government of that people was at an end; and to teach us subjection to the civil magistrate: and as a son of Abraham he was made under the ceremonial law, was circumcised the eighth day, kept the several feasts of tabernacles, passover, &c. and which was proper, since he was the principal end of it, in whom it centres, and for whose sake it was made; and that he might completely fulfil it, and by so doing put a period to it: and he was made under the moral law, both as a man and the surety of his people, and was subject to all the precepts of it, and bore the penalty of it, death, in their room and stead, and thereby fulfilled it, and delivered them from its curse and condemnation. So the Targumist⁵, joins the incarnation of the Messiah and his subjection to the law together, as the apostle here does; "the prophet saith to the house of David, because a child is born unto us, and a son is given to us, *קָבִיל אֲדֹרֵיתָא*, *and he hath taken upon him the law to keep it*, and his name shall be called, &c."

Ver. 5. *To redeem them that were under the law, &c.*] By whom are meant chiefly the Jews, who are elsewhere represented as in and under the law, in distinction from the Gentiles who were without it; see Rom. ii. 12. 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21. the Gentiles indeed, though they were not under the law of Moses, yet were not without law to God, they were under the law of nature. The law was given to Adam as a covenant of works, and not to him as a single person, but as a federal head to all his posterity; hence he sinning, and they in him, they all came under its sentence of condemnation and death, God's elect not excepted, and who are the persons said to be redeemed; for Christ was not sent to redeem all that were under the law; for as all mankind were included in it as a covenant of works made with Adam, and all are transgressors of it, the whole world is pronounced guilty before God by it, and liable to the curse of it; but not all mankind, only some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, are redeemed by Christ, even all the elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles. The chosen among the Jews seem to be here principally designed; the redemption of them, which is the end of Christ's being sent, intends not only a deliverance of them from sin and Satan, and the world, to whom they were in bondage, but from the law under which they were; from the bondage of the ceremonial, and from the curse and condemnation of the moral law: *that we might receive the adoption of children*; by which may be meant, both the grace,

⁴ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Isa. lx. 22.
⁵ Kimchi in Psal. cviii. 4.

⁵ In Isa. ix. 6.

blessing, and privilege of adoption, and the inheritance adopted to; both are received, and that in consequence of redemption by Christ; and such as receive the one will also receive the other. Adoption, as a blessing of grace, exists before it is received; nor does the reception of it add any thing to the thing itself; it was in God's designation from all eternity, who predestinated his chosen ones unto it by Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will; it was provided, laid up, and secured for them in the everlasting covenant; and is part of that grace given them in Christ before the world began; but sin intervening, whereby the law was broken, obstacles were thrown in the way of God's elect receiving and enjoying this privilege in their own persons; wherefore Christ was sent to redeem them from sin and the law, and by so doing remove these obstructions, that so they might receive this privilege in a way consistent with the righteousness and holiness of God, as well as with his grace and goodness: receiving of it shews it to be a gift, a free-grace gift, and not owing to any merit of the creature; faith is the hand which receives it, as it does all other blessings, as Christ himself, grace out of his fulness, righteousness, pardon, &c. and has no more causal influence on this than on any of these; faith does not make any the sons of God, or put them among the children; but receives the power, the authority, the privilege from God through Christ, under the witnessings of the spirit of adoption; whereby they become such, and have a right to the heavenly inheritance, which they shall hereafter enjoy.

Ver. 6. *And because ye are sons, &c.* That is of God, so some copies read; and the Ethiopic version, *inasmuch as ye are his sons*; not in so high a sense as Christ is the son of God; nor in so low a sense as all men are his offspring; nor in such sense as magistrates are the children of the most High; nor merely on account of a profession of religion, as the *sons of God* was a phrase very early used of the worshippers of the true God; but by virtue of adoption, and which is not owing to the merits of men, who are by nature children of wrath, but to the free rich sovereign grace of God. 'Tis a privilege and blessing of grace in which all the three persons are concerned. The father has predestinated to it, and in the covenant has provided and laid it up; he set up his son as the pattern to which these sons should be conformed, and proposed the glory of his own grace, as the end; by virtue of which act of grace they were considered as the children of God, as early as the gift of them to Christ; and so by him when he partook of their flesh and blood, and died to gather them together who were scattered abroad; see Heb. ii. 13, 14. John xi. 52. The son of God has also an hand in this affair; for through his espousing their persons, they become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; and through his assumption of their nature they become his brethren, and so to be in the relation of sons to God; through his redemption they receive the adoption of children, and at his hands the privilege, the power itself, to become such. The spirit of God not only regenerates them, which is an

evidence of their sonship, but as a spirit of adoption manifests it to them, works faith in them to receive it, and frequently witnesses to the truth of it; all which shew how any come and are known to be the sons of God. This is a privilege that exceeds all others; it is more to be a son than to be a saint; angels are saints, but not sons, they are servants; it is more to be a child of God, than to be redeemed, pardoned, and justified; it is great grace to redeem from slavery, to pardon criminals, and justify the ungodly; but it is another and an higher act of grace to make them sons; and which makes them infinitely more honourable, than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest potentate upon earth; yea, gives them an honour which Adam had not in innocence, nor the angels in heaven, who though sons by creation, yet not by adoption. The consequence, and so the evidence of it, follows, *God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying Abba, father.* The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *our father*; all the three divine persons here appear, as having a concern in this business, as before observed; here are God and his son, and the spirit of his son, said to be sent; by whom is designed not any work of his upon the heart, nor any of his gifts and graces; but he himself in person, even the same spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters at the creation of the world, and moved holy men of God to write the Scriptures; who formed and filled the human nature of Christ, and descended on him as a dove; and by whom Christ and his apostles wrought their miracles; and who is called the *spirit of his son*; as he is frequently by the Jews ^a, רוחו של מלך משיח, *the spirit of the King Messiah*; and sometimes ^b, רוח בנימין, *the spirit of his word*, the essential word of God; because he proceeds from him as from the father, and because he dwells in him, in an eminent manner, as Mediator, and is sent by virtue of his mediation and intercession; and he is the rather mentioned under this character, because adoption proceeds upon the natural sonship of Christ, and is what is the peculiar office of the spirit to testify. When he is said to be *sent*, it does not suppose any local motion or change of place in him, who is a spirit infinite, immense, and omnipresent; nor any inferiority to the father that sends him, or to the son whose spirit he is; for he is one God with the father and son, and with the father is the sender of Christ, Isa. xlviii. 16. but it regards his peculiar office in this affair of adoption, by agreement of all the three persons; the father predestinated to it, the son redeems, that it might be received, and the spirit is sent to discover, apply, and bear witness to it; which is a wondrous instance of the grace of God. The place where he is sent is *into the heart*; where he is as a principle of spiritual life, and which he furnishes and supplies with all grace; where he dwells as in his temple, and is the evidence of God's dwelling there, and also of interest in Christ; is there as a pledge and an earnest of future glory; and the whole is a surprising instance of condescending grace. The work he does there is various, and consists of divers parts; as convincing of sin, and righteousness, working faith, and acting the part of a comforter; but

^a Bereshit Rabba, fol. 2. 4. & 6. 3. Vajikra Rabba, fol. 156. 4. Sec note on Rom. viii. 9.

^b Targum in 2 Chron. ii. 6.

what is here referred to, is the discharge of his office as a spirit of adoption, *crying Abba, father*. The word *Abba* is an Hebrew, or rather a Syriac or Chaldee word, signifying *father*; and which is added for explanation-sake; and its repetition may denote the vehemency of filial affection, the strength of faith and confidence as to interest in the relation; and being expressed both in Hebrew and Greek, may shew that God is the father both of Jews and Gentiles, and that there is but one father of all; and if it might not be thought too curious an observation, it may be remarked that the word *Abba*, read backwards or forwards, is the same pronunciation, and may teach us that God is the father of his people in adversity as well as in prosperity. The act of *crying*, though it is here ascribed to the spirit, yet is not properly his, but the believers'; and is attributed to him because he excites, encourages, and assists them as a spirit of adoption to call God their father; and may be understood both of the secret internal crying of the soul, or exercise of faith on God as its father, and of an open outward invocation of him as such, with much confidence, freedom, and boldness.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, &c.*] This is a benefit resulting from adoption, and the manifestation of it to the children of God, and supposes them to have been formerly servants; as whilst in a natural state they were the servants of sin, the vassals of Satan, slaves to the world, and the lusts of it, and in bondage to the law; but now being declared to be the sons of God under the witnessings of the spirit, they are freed from the servitude of sin, from the captivity of Satan, from the slavery of the world, and particularly from the law, and that spirit of bondage which it brought upon them, which is chiefly designed; and from which they are delivered by the spirit of adoption, enabling and encouraging them to cry *Abba, father*; so that they are now no more under the former servile spirit, the spirit of a servant, *but a son*; whose spirit, state, and case, are vastly different from those of a servant: the servant has not that interest in his master's affections as the son has; nor that liberty of access to him; nor is he fed and clothed as he is, or shares in the same privileges he does; nor is his obedience performed in the same free generous manner, from a principle of love and gratitude, but in a servile and mercenary way; and though he may expect his wages, he can't hope for the inheritance; nor does he always abide in the house as the son does. He that is once a son, is always so, and no more a servant: predestination to sonship is immutable; 'tis God's act to put any among the children, and none can put them out; the covenant of grace, in which this blessing is secured, is unalterable; union with Christ, the son of God, on which it is founded, is indissoluble; the spirit of adoption, wherever he witnesses, abides as such. They that are the sons of God may be corrected and chastised, as they often are, in a fatherly way; but these corrections are proofs for, and not against their sonship; they may indeed judge themselves unworthy to be called the sons of God, and may be in such frames of soul as to con-

clude, at least fear, they are not; but still the relation abides, and ever will. They'll never more be servants, but always sons. The very learned Mr. Selden¹ thinks the apostle alludes to a custom among the Jews, who allowed only freemen, and not servants and handmaids, to call any *Abba*, Father such-an-one, or *Imma*, Mother such-an-one: but this seems to proceed upon a mistaken sense, and rendering of a passage in the Talmud², which is as follows, *אבות ואמהות אין קורין אותם עבדים ושפלות אין קורין אותם*; which he thus renders, *neither servants nor handmaids use this kind of appellation, Abba, or Father such-an-one, and Imma, or Mother such-an-one*; whereas it should be rendered, *servants and handmaids, they don't call them Abba, Father such-an-one, and Imma, Mother such-an-one*; this is clear from what follows. *The Family of R. Gamaliel used to call them Father such-an-one, and Mother such-an-one*; which in the other Talmud³ is, *the family of R. Gamaliel used to call their servants and their handmaids Father Tabi, and Mother Tabitha*: which were the names of the servant and handmaid of Gamaliel. Rather therefore reference is had to a tradition^m of theirs, that "a servant, who is carried captive, when others redeemed him, if under the notion of a servant, or in order to be one, he becomes a servant; but if under the notion of a freeman, *לא ישתעבד*, *he is no more a servant*." Or to the general expectation of that people, that when they are redeemed by the Messiah, they shall be servants no more; for so they sayⁿ, "your fathers, though they were redeemed, became servants again, but you, when ye are redeemed, *עד אין אבות*, *משותעבדין*, shall be no more servants;" which in a spiritual sense is true of all that are redeemed by Christ, and through that redemption receive the adoption of children, and is what the apostle here means. *And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ*; which is another benefit arising from adoption. Such as are the children of God, they are heirs of God himself; he is their portion and exceeding great reward; his perfections are on their side, and engaged for their good; all his purposes run the same way, and all his promises belong to them; they are heirs of all the blessings of grace and glory, of righteousness, of life, of salvation, and a kingdom and glory; and shall inherit all things, and all *through Christ*: he is the grand heir of all things; they are joint heirs with him; their sonship is through him, and so is their heirship and inheritance; their inheritance is in his possession, it is reserved safe in him; and by him, and with him they shall enjoy it. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, only read, *an heir through God*, and so the Vulgate Latin version; and the Ethiopic version only, *an heir of God*.

Ver. 8. *Howbeit then, when ye know not God, &c.*] Whilst in Gentilism, and in a state of unregeneracy, they had no true knowledge of God; though they might know by the light of nature, and works of creation, that there was a God, yet they did not know who he was, but called either mortal men, or some one or other of the creatures, or stocks, and stones, and

¹ De Successionibus ad Leg. Ebr. c. 4. p. 39.

² T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 4. sect. 5.

³ T. Hieros. Niddal, fol. 49. 2. Vid. Massech. Semachet, c. 1. sect. 13.

^m Misn. Gittin, c. 4. sect. 4.

ⁿ T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 2.

images of men's device, by this name; they knew not the God of Israel; they did not know God in Christ, and are therefore said to be without him; and a common description of them it is, that they knew not God: and whilst this was their case, what follows was true of them, *ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods*; only by name, and in the opinion of men, but have no divinity in them, are only called gods, mere nominal, fictitious deities, who have nothing of the nature and essence of God in them; for there is but one God by nature and essence, the Father, Son, and Spirit; all others have only the name and appearance, but not the truth of deity; and these the Gentiles in their times of ignorance did *service* to, which is what the Jews call עבודה זרה, *strange service*; that is, idolatry, concerning which there is a whole treatise in the Talmud, and which bears that name°. This service lay in paying homage to them, worshipping of them, and performing various rites and ceremonies in a way of adoration, and which they reckoned religious service; and which, comparatively speaking, whilst in this state of blindness, was excusable in them; though it is a wonderful instance of grace that such idolaters should be the sons of God.

Ver. 9. *But now, after that ye have known God, &c.*] God in Christ, as their covenant God and father, through the preaching of the Gospel, and in the light of divine grace; God having caused light to shine in their dark hearts; and having given them the light of the knowledge of himself in the face of Christ, and having sent down into their hearts the spirit of his son, crying *Abba, father*. Or rather *are known of God*; for it is but little that the best of these, that have the greatest share of knowledge, know of him; and what knowledge they have, they have it first, originally, and wholly from him: that knowledge which he has of them is particular, distinct, and complete; and is to be understood, not of his omniscience in general, so all men are known by him; but of his special knowledge, joined with affection, approbation, and care: and the meaning is, that they were loved by him with an everlasting love, which had been manifested in their conversion, in the drawing of them to himself, and to his son; that he approved of them, delighted in them, had an exact knowledge, and took special care of them: but, oh, folly and ingratitude! *how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?* meaning the ordinances of the ceremonial law, he before calls *the elements of the world*, and here *weak*, because they could not give life, righteousness, peace, joy, comfort, and salvation; and, since the coming of Christ, were become impotent to all the uses they before served; and *beggarly*, because they lay in the observation of mean things, as meats, drinks, &c. and which were only shadows of those good things, the riches of grace and glory, which come by Christ. The Galatians are said to turn again to these; not that they were before in the observation of them, except the Jews, but because there was some likeness between these, and the ceremonies with which they carried on the service of their idols; and by shewing an inclination to them, they discovered a good will to

come into a like state of bondage they were in before; than which nothing could be more stupid and ungrateful in a people that had been blessed with so much grace, and with such clear Gospel light and knowledge.

Ver. 10. *Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.*] Lest the apostle should be thought to suggest, without foundation, the inclination of these people to be in bondage to the ceremonies of the law, he gives this as an instance of it; which is to be understood, not of a civil observation of times, divided into days, months, and years, for which the luminaries of the heavens were made, and into summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, which is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary; but of a religious observation of days, &c. not of the lucky and unlucky days, or of any of the festivals of the Gentiles, but of Jewish ones. By *days* are meant their seventh-day sabbaths; for since they are distinguished from months and years, they must mean such days as returned weekly; and what else can they be but their weekly sabbaths? These were peculiar to the Israelites, and not binding on others; and being typical of Christ, the true rest of his people, and he being come, are now ceased. By *months* are designed their new moons, or the beginning of their months upon the appearance of a new moon, which were kept by blowing trumpets, offering sacrifices, hearing the word of God, abstaining from work, and holding religious feasts; and were typical of that light, knowledge, and grace, the church receives from Christ, the sun of righteousness; and he, the substance, being come, these shadows disappeared. By *times* are intended the three times in the year, when the Jewish males appeared before the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the three feasts of tabernacles, passover, and pentecost, for the observance of which there was now no reason; not of the feast of tabernacles, since the word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us; nor of the passover, since Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us; nor of pentecost, or the feast of weeks, or of the first fruits of the harvest, since the spirit of God was poured down in a plenteous manner on that day upon the apostles; and when the first-fruits of a glorious harvest were brought in to the Lord, in the conversion of three thousand souls. And by *years* are to be understood their sabbatical years; every seventh year the land had a rest, and remained untilled; there were no ploughing and sowing, and there was a general release of debtors; and every fiftieth year was a jubilee to the Lord, when liberty to servants, debtors, &c. was proclaimed throughout the land: all which were typical of rest, payment of debts, and spiritual liberty by Christ; and which having their accomplishment in him, were no longer to be observed; wherefore these Galatians are blamed for so doing; and the more, because they were taught to observe them, in order to obtain eternal life and salvation by them.

Ver. 11. *I am afraid of you, &c.*] Which shews the danger he apprehended they were in, by taking such large steps from Christianity to Judaism, and expresses the godly jealousy of the apostle over them; intimates he had some hope of them, and in the whole declares his great love and affection for them; for love is a thing

° Aveda Zara.

full of care and fear: *lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain*; in preaching the Gospel among them with so much diligence and constancy, though so many afflictions and pressures lay upon him. Faithful ministers of the word are laborious ones; and such an one was the apostle; and who indeed laboured more abundantly than the rest in all places wherever he came; and such will be concerned, as he was, lest their labours should be in vain, not to themselves, but to the souls of others, whose everlasting good and welfare they are seeking. But how is it that the apostle should fear that his labour in preaching the Gospel would be in vain, and become of no effect through their observance of days, months, times, and years? because that hereby the pure spiritual and evangelic worship of God was corrupted, they bringing into it that which God had removed, and so became guilty of will-worship; their Christian liberty was infringed, and they brought into bondage, a deliverance from which the Gospel proclaims; the doctrine of free grace in pardon, justification, and salvation, was made void, they observing these things in order to procure them thereby; and it was virtually and tacitly saying, that Christ was not come in the flesh, which is the main article of the Gospel; for since these things had respect to him, and were to continue no longer than till his coming, to keep on the observance of them, was declaring that he was not come; which is in effect to set aside the whole Gospel, and the ministration of it; so that the apostle might justly fear, that by such a proceeding all his labour, and the pains he had took to preach the Gospel, and salvation by Christ unto them, would be in vain.

Ver. 12. *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am, &c.*] Though they had gone so far backwards, yet still hoping well of them that they would be reclaimed, he styles them *brethren*: not in a carnal but spiritual relation, as being born of God, and belonging to his family; and out of his sincere and hearty love for them as his brethren in Christ, he exhorts them to be as he was; which some understand of affection, as desiring them to shew the same love to him as to themselves, that he might be to them as another I, as a part of themselves; so true friendship makes, and true friends look upon each other to be, as Jonathan and David, and the first Christians were, of one heart and soul. But this phrase rather seems to have regard to likeness and imitation; and the sense is, that he would have them to be as he was, and do as he did; to be as free from the law, and the servitude and bondage of it, as he was; to reckon themselves dead unto it, as he did; and to relinquish the observance of days, and months, and times, and years, and any and every part of the ceremonial law, and to account all these things, as he had done, loss and dung for Christ; and this he presses, not in an authoritative way, laying his commands as an apostle upon them, but in a kind and gentle manner entreating them: and which he backs with the following reason or argument, *for I am as ye are*; as your very selves; I have the same love for you, you have for yourselves; I love you as I do myself; this way go such interpreters that understand the exhortation to regard love and affection: but rather the meaning is, be as I am, and do as I do, *because I was as you are*; so the Syriac

and Arabic versions read the words. Some think that the apostle particularly addresses the Jews in these churches; and that his sense is, that he was born a Jew, as they were, was brought up in the Jewish religion, and in the observance of these things, as they had been, and yet he had relinquished them, therefore would have them do so likewise: or rather his intention is, that he had been as zealous for the observance of the ceremonial law, and all the rituals of it, as they now were; and though he was a Jew by birth, and had had a Jewish education, and so had been prejudiced in favour of these things, yet he had renounced them all; and therefore they who were Gentiles, and were never under obligation to them, should never think of coming into bondage by them; and since he had accommodated himself to them, and had become all things to all, that he might gain some, whether Jews or Gentiles, so he hoped they would condescend to him, and follow his example: or this may have respect, not to his former but present state, according to our version; and the sense be, I am as you are, and you are as I am with respect to things spiritual; we are both alike in Christ, chosen in him, and redeemed by him; are equally regenerated by his spirit, and are all the children of God by faith in him, and no more servants; are all equally Christ's free men, and have a right to the same privileges and immunities; and therefore be as I am, as free from observing the ceremonies of the law, and so from the bondage of it, since we are upon an equal foot, and upon the same foundation in Christ. *Ye have not injured me at all*; what injury they had done was to God, whose will it was that these things should be abolished; and to Christ, who had broken down the middle wall of partition; and to the Gospel, which proclaimed liberty to the captives; and to their own souls, by entangling themselves with the yoke of bondage; but no personal private injury was done to the apostle by their compliance with the law. This he says, lest they should think that he spoke out of anger and resentment, and on account of any personal affront offered to him; which leads him to take notice of their former kindness and respect to him, and which he designs as a reason why they should pay the same deference to him now as then.

Ver. 13. *Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh, &c.*] Meaning either their infirmity, to which the apostle accommodated himself in preaching the Gospel to them, delivering it in such a manner as suited with their capacities, feeding them with milk, and not with strong meat; or his own infirmity, respecting either some particular bodily infirmity and disorder, as the head-ach, with which he is said to be greatly troubled; or the weakness of his bodily presence, the mean outward appearance he made, the contemptibleness of his voice, and the great humility with which he behaved; or rather the many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions which attended him, when, says he, *I preached the Gospel unto you at the first*; not the law, but the Gospel; and this he did at his first entrance among them, and was the first that preached it to them, and was the means of their conversion; and therefore, being their spiritual father, they ought to be as he was, and follow him as they had him for an example.

Ver. 14. *And my temptation which was in my flesh,*

&c.] The same with the infirmity of his flesh, and which was a trial of his faith and patience, and every other grace, as the afflictions of the saints be. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, *your temptation in my flesh*; that which was a trial of them, whether they would receive him or no. This *ye despised not*; nor the apostle on the account of it, nor his ministry; they thought never the worse of him, nor of the Gospel he preached, because of this: *not rejected*; him, nor the counsel of God declared by him, *but received me*; as they did, into their cities and places of worship, into their houses, and into their hearts and affections: and that *as an angel of God*; with all that reverence and respect, that high esteem, veneration, and affection, as if one of the celestial inhabitants had been sent down from heaven to bring them the good tidings of the Gospel: or *as a messenger of God*, as the phrase may be rendered: as one that had his mission and commission from God, which was not at all disputed by them: but they looked upon him under that character, and regarded him as such, *even as Christ Jesus*: as his ambassador, as personating him, as being in his stead; yea, if he had been personally present as man among them, they could not have shewn greater respect to him as such, than they did to the apostle; for as for any religious worship and adoration, that they did not offer to him; and had they, he would have addressed them in like manner he did the inhabitants of Lystra, Acts xiv. 14, 15. Now since they shewed him so much respect, notwithstanding all his infirmities, temptations, and afflictions, when he first preached the Gospel; what should hinder that they should not pay the same regard to him now, by abiding in his doctrine and following his example, since he was the same man in his principles and practices now as then?

Ver. 15. *Where is then the blessedness you spake of?* &c.] Or, as some copies read, *what was then your blessedness?* what, and how great was it? meaning, when the Gospel was first preached to them by him; when Christ was revealed to them as God's salvation; when the doctrines of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, and full pardon by his blood, and atonement and satisfaction by his sacrifice, were published among them; when the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, and the spirit of Christ was sent thither, crying *Abba, father*: but, alas! where was this blessedness now, since they were turning to the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, and were inclined to observe its ordinances, and bring themselves hereby into a state of bondage? They were happy persons whilst under the ministry of the apostle; as a Gospel ministry is a great happiness to any that enjoy it; for this is the way to find eternal life, to have spiritual peace and pleasure, joy and comfort, light and liberty, whereas a contrary doctrine leads to all the reverse. The apostle hereby puts them in mind how they were looked upon as happy persons by himself at that time, whom they received with so much respect and reverence, and his ministry with so much readiness and cheerfulness, and to so much profit and advantage; and also by other churches who were sensible of the high favour they enjoyed, by having so great a preacher of the Gospel

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among them; and even at that time they thought themselves the happiest persons in the world, and that they could not have been more so, unless they had had Christ himself in person among them; so beautiful were the feet of this bringer of glad tidings to them: *for I bear you record, that if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me*; so fully persuaded was the apostle of their strong and sincere affection for him at that time, that he was ready to attest the truth of this in any form to any persons; that were it a possible thing for them, and could it have been of any advantage to him, they would even have plucked out their eyes, than which nothing is dearer, or more useful to a man, and have parted with them to him, and for his sake; and doubtless persons so affected would cheerfully have laid down their lives for him; but things had taken another turn since.

Ver. 16. *Am I therefore become your enemy, &c.]* Not that he was an enemy to them, he had the same cordial affection for them as ever; he had their true interest at heart, and was diligently pursuing it; but they, through the insinuations of the false teachers, had entertained an ill opinion of him, and an aversion to him, and treated him as if he had been an enemy to them, and as if they had a real hatred of him: and that for no other reason, as he observes, *but because I tell you the truth*; the Gospel so called, because it comes from the God of truth, is concerned with Christ, who is truth itself, and is dictated, revealed, and blessed by the spirit of truth; and is opposed unto, and is distinct from the law, which is only an image and shadow, and not truth itself: it chiefly respects the great truths of salvation alone by Christ, and justification by his righteousness; and may also regard what he had said concerning the abrogation of the law, blaming them for the observance of it, and calling its institutions weak and beggarly elements; all which he told or spoke publicly, plainly, honestly, fully, and faithfully, boldly, constantly, and with all assurance, consistently, and in pure love to their souls; and yet it brought on him their anger and resentment. Telling the truth in such a manner often brings many enemies to the ministers of Christ; not only the men of the world, profane sinners, but professors of religion, and sometimes such who once loved and admired them.

Ver. 17. *They zealously affect you, &c.]* Or *are jealous of you*; meaning the false apostles, whose names, in contempt, he mentions not, being unworthy to be taken notice of, and their names to be transmitted to posterity. These were jealous of them, not with a godly jealousy, as the apostle was, lest their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity of the Gospel; but they were jealous, lest they should love the apostle more than they, and therefore represented him in a very bad light, and expressed great love and kindness for them themselves: *but not well*; their zeal and affection were not hearty, and sincere, and without dissimulation, but were all feigned, were only in word and in tongue, not in deed, and in truth: this zealous affection neither proceeded from right principles, nor with right views; they sought themselves, and their own carnal worldly interest, their own pleasure and profit, and not the good and welfare of the

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souls of these Galatians: *yea, they would exclude you*: that is, either from the apostle, from bearing any love unto, and having any respect for him. What they were wishing and seeking for was to draw off the minds and affections of these persons from him; or they were desirous of removing them from the Gospel of Christ unto another Gospel, and did all they could to hinder them from obeying the truth; and particularly were for shutting them out of their Christian liberty, and bringing them under the bondage of the law; *yea, were for separating them from the churches, that they might set up themselves at the head of them.* Some copies read *us*, instead of *you*; and then the meaning is, that they were desirous of excluding the apostle from their company, and from having any share in their affections, which makes little alteration in the sense; and others, instead of *exclude*, read *include*: and which is confirmed by the Syriac version, which renders the word *למחבשכון*, but they would include you: that is, either they would include, or imprison you under the law, and the bondage of it; or they would monopolize you, and engross all your love to themselves; and which is also the sense of the Arabic version: *that you might affect them*; love them, shew respect to them, be on their side, follow their directions, imbibe their doctrines, and give up yourselves wholly to their care, and be at their call and command.

Ver. 18. *But it is good to be zealously affected, &c.*] A zealous affection when right is very commendable, as the instances of Phinehas, Elijah, John the Baptist, and our Lord Jesus Christ shew, and a contrary spirit is very disagreeable. But then it must be expressed in a good thing: in a good cause, for God, and the things of Christ; for the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and for the discipline of God's house, and against immorality and profaneness, errors and heresies: and it should be *always*; not at certain times, and upon some particular accounts, but it should be constant, and always continue; it should be ever the same towards God, Christ, and his ministers: *and not only when I am present with you*; by which the apostle suggests, that whilst he was with them they were zealously attached to him and truth; but no sooner was he gone from them, but their zealous affection abated, and was fixed on others, which discovered their weakness, fickleness, and inconstancy; whereas he was always the same to them, and bore the same love to them, as the following words shew.

Ver. 19. *My little children, &c.*] A soft and tender way of speaking, used by Christ to his disciples, and frequently by that affectionate and beloved disciple, John. It is expressive of the apostle's strong love and affection for them, and points out their tenderness in the faith, and that small degree of spiritual light and knowledge they had, as well as signifies that he had been, as he hoped, and in a judgment of charity believed, an instrument of their conversion, and was their spiritual parent: hence it follows, *of whom I travail in birth again*; he compares himself to a woman with-child, as the church in bringing forth souls to Christ sometimes is; and all his pains and labours in the ministry of the word to the sorrows of a woman during the time of child-bearing, and at the birth.

When he first came among them, he laboured exceedingly; he preached the Gospel in season, and out of season; he followed his indefatigable endeavours with importunate prayers; and his ministry among them was attended with much weakness of body, and with many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, comparable to the birth-throes of a woman in travail: however, as he hoped he was the means of their being born again, of the turning of them from Heathenism to Christianity, and from serving idols to serve the living God, and believe in his son Jesus Christ; but the false apostles coming among them had so strangely wrought upon them, and they were so much gone back and degenerated, that they seemed to be like so many abortions, or as an unformed fœtus; wherefore he laboured again with all his might and main, by writing to them, using arguments with them, sometimes giving them good words, at other times rough ones, and fervently praying for them, if possible, to recover them from Judaism, to which they were inclined, to the pure Gospel of Christ. *Until Christ be formed in you*: which is the same as to be created in Christ, to be made new creatures, or new men in him; or, in other words, to have the principle of grace wrought in the soul, which goes by the name of Christ formed in the heart; because it is from him, he is the author of it, and it bears a resemblance to him, and is that by which he lives, dwells, and reigns in the souls of his people. Now though, as he hoped, this new man, new creature, or Christ, was formed in them before, when he first preached the Gospel to them; yet it was not a perfect man; particularly their knowledge of Christ, of his Gospel, and Gospel liberty, was far from being so, in which they went backwards instead of forwards; and therefore he was greatly concerned, laboured exceedingly, and vehemently endeavoured, which he calls *travailing in birth again*, to bring them to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. It is also the same as to be conformed to the image of Christ, which in regeneration is instamped upon the saints, and is gradually increased, and will be perfected in heaven; and that this might more manifestly appear, over which a veil was drawn, by their departure in any degree from the truths of the Gospel, was what he earnestly sought after: once more, it is the same as to have the form of Christ; that is, of the Gospel of Christ upon them, or to be cast into the form of doctrine, and mould of the Gospel, and to receive a Gospel impression and spirit from it; which is to have a spirit of liberty, in opposition to legal bondage; to live by faith on Christ, and not on the works of the law; to derive comfort alone from him, and not from any services and duties whatever; to have repentance, and the whole course of obedience, influenced by the grace of God, and love of Christ; and to be zealous of good works, and yet have no dependence on them for justification and salvation. This is what the apostle so earnestly desired, when, instead of it, these Galatians seemed to have the form of Moses, and of the law.

Ver. 20. *I desire to be present with you now, &c.*] His meaning is, either that he wished he was personally present among them; that he had but an oppor-

tunity of seeing them face to face, and telling them all his mind, and in such a manner as he could not in a single epistle; or that they would consider him, when they read this epistle, as if he was really among them; and as if they saw the concern of his mind, the agonies of his soul, the looks of his countenance, and heard the different tone of his voice: *and to change my voice*; when present with them, either by a different way of preaching; that whereas before he preached the Gospel of the grace of God unto them, and his voice was charming to them like that of an angel, and even of Jesus Christ himself; but they having turned their backs upon it, and slighted it, he would now thunder out the law to them they seemed to be so fond of; even that voice of words, which when the Israelites on Mount Sinai heard, entreated they might hear no more; as these Galatians also must when they heard the true voice of it, which is no other than a declaration of wrath, curse, and damnation; or by using a different way of speaking to them, as necessity might require, either softly or roughly, beseeching or chiding them, which might more move and affect them than an epistle could: *for I stand in doubt of you*; The Vulgate Latin reads it, *I am confounded in you*; and the Syriac, דרמוי, *I am stupified*; and to the same sense the Arabic. He was ashamed of them for their apostacy and degeneracy; he was amazed and astonished at their conduct; or, as the word may be rendered, he was *perplexed* on their account; he did not know what to think of them, and their state; sometimes he hoped well of them, at other times he was ready to despair; nor did he well know what course to take with them, whether to use them roughly or smoothly, and what arguments might be most proper and pertinent, in order to reclaim them.

Ver. 21. *Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, &c.*] Not merely to obey it, as holy, just, and good, from a principle of love, and to testify subjection and gratitude to God; so all believers desire to be under the law: but these men sought for justification and salvation by their obedience to it: they desired to be under it as a covenant of works, which was downright madness and folly to the last degree, since this was the way to come under the curse of it; they wanted to be under the yoke of the law, which is a yoke of bondage, an insupportable one, which the Jewish fathers could not bear; and therefore it was egregious weakness in them to desire to come under it: wherefore the apostle desires them to answer this question, *do ye not hear the law?* meaning either the language and voice of the law of Moses, what it says to transgressors, and so to them; what it accused them of, and charged them with; how it declared them guilty before God, pronounced them accused, and ministered sententially condemnation and death unto them; and could they desire to be under such a law? or rather the books of the Old Testament, particularly the five books of Moses, and what is said therein; referring them, as Christ did the Jews, to the Scriptures, to the writings of Moses, and to read, hear, and observe what is in them, since they professed so great a regard to the law; from whence they might learn, that they ought

not to be under the bondage and servitude of it. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *have ye not read the law?* and so one of Stephens's copies; that is, the books of the law; if you have, as you should, you might observe what follows.

Ver. 22. *For it is written, &c.*] In Gen. xvi. 15. and xxi. 2. *that Abraham had two sons*, not two sons only; for besides the two referred to, he had six more, Gen. xxxv. 2. but it being only pertinent to the apostle's purpose to take notice of these two, he mentions no more, though he does not deny that he had any more. These two sons were Ishmael and Isaac: *the one by a bondmaid*. Ishmael was by Hagar, Sarah's servant, who represented the covenant the Jewish nation was under the bondage of. *The other by a free woman*. Isaac was by Sarah, Abraham's proper and lawful wife, who was mistress of the family, and figured out the covenant, and Gospel church-state, and all believers, Gentiles as well as Jews, as under the liberty thereof.

Ver. 23. *But he who was of the bondwoman, &c.*] Ishmael, who was begotten and born of Hagar, *was born after the flesh*; after the common order and course of nature, through the copulation of two persons, the one able to procreate, and the other fit for the conception of children; and was typical of the Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, who, as such, and upon that account, were not the children of God, nor heirs of the eternal inheritance: *but he of the free woman was by promise*; by a previous promise made by God to Abraham, that he should have a son in his old age, when his body was now dead, and when Sarah his wife, who had always been barren, was now grown old, and past the time of bearing children; so that Isaac was born out of the common order and course of nature; his conception and birth were owing to the promise and power of God, and to his free grace and favour to Abraham. This son of promise was a type of the spiritual seed of Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles, the children of the promise that are counted for the seed; who are born again of the will, power, and grace of God, and are heirs, according to the promise, both of grace and glory, when they that are of the law, and the works of it, are not. All which is further illustrated in the following verses.

Ver. 24. *Which things are an allegory, &c.*] *Or are allegorized*: so Sarah and Hagar were allegorized by Philo the Jew^p, before they were by the apostle. Sarah he makes to signify virtue, and Hagar the whole circle of arts and sciences, which are, or should be, an handmaid to virtue; but these things respecting Hagar and Sarah, the bondwoman and the free, and their several offspring, are much better allegorized by the apostle here. An allegory is a way of speaking in which one thing is expressed by another, and is a continued metaphor; and the apostle's meaning is, that these things point at some other things; have another meaning in them, a mystical and spiritual one, besides the literal; and which the Jews call מדרש, *Midrash*, a name they give to the mystical and allegorical sense of Scripture, in which they greatly indulge themselves. An allegory is properly a fictitious way of speaking; but here it designs an accommodation of a real history, and matter

of fact, to other cases and things, and seems to intend a type or figure; and the sense to be, that these things which were literally true of Hagar and Sarah, of Ishmael and Isaac, were types and figures of things to come; just as what befell the Israelites were types and figures of things that would be under the Gospel dispensation, 1 Cor. x. 11. *for these are the two covenants, or testaments; that is, these women, Hagar and Sarah, signify, and are figures of the two covenants; not the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace.* Hagar was no figure of the covenant of works, that was made and broke before she was born; besides, the covenant she was a figure of was made at Mount Sinai, whereas the covenant of works was made in paradise: moreover, the covenant of works was made with Adam, and all his posterity, but the covenant which Hagar signified was only made with the children of Israel; she represented Jerusalem, that then was with her children. Nor was Sarah a figure of the covenant of grace, for this was made long before she had a being, even from everlasting; but they were figures of the two administrations of one and the same covenant, which were to take place in the world successively; and which following one the other, are by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews called the first and the second, the old and the new covenants. Now these are the covenants or testaments, the old and the new, and the respective people under them, which were prefigured by these two women, and their offspring. *The one from the Mount Sinai; that is, one of these covenants, or one of the administrations of the covenant, one dispensation of it, which is the first, and now called old, because abolished, took its rise from Mount Sinai, was delivered there by God to Moses, in order to be communicated to the people of Israel, who were to be under that form of administration until the coming of the Messiah.* And because the whole Mosaic economy was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, it is said to be from thence: hence, in Jewish writings, we read, times without number, of *הליכה למשה מסיני*, a rite, custom, constitution, or appointment given to Moses from Mount Sinai, the same phrase as here. Sinai signifies *bushes*, and has its name from the bushes which grew upon it¹; in one of which the Lord appeared to Moses; for Horeb and Sinai are one and the same mount; one signifies waste and desolate, the other bushy; as one part of the mountain was barren and desert, and the other covered with bushes and brambles; and may fitly represent the condition of such that are under the law. *Which gendereth to bondage; begets and brings persons into a state of bondage; induces on them a spirit of bondage to fear, and causes them to be all their life-time subject to it; as even such were that were under the first covenant, or under the Old-Testament dispensation: which is Agar; or this is the covenant, the administration of it, which Hagar, the bondwoman, Sarah's servant, represented.*

Ver. 25. *For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, &c.]* The Arabic version, instead of Arabia, reads *Balca*. The Syriac version makes Hagar to be a mountain, reading the words thus, *for Mount Hagar is Sinai, which is in Arabia*: and some have been of opinion

that Sinai was called Hagar by the Arabians. It is certain, that *הגרה*, which may be pronounced Hagar, does signify in the Arabic language a stone or rock; and that one part of Arabia is called Arabia Petraea, from the rockiness of it; the metropolis of which was *הגרת*, or *Agara*, and the inhabitants Agarenes; and Hagar was the name of the chief city of Bahrein, a province of Arabia²: and it may be observed, that when Hagar, with her son, was cast out, they dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, Gen. xxi. 21. which was near to Sinai, as appears from Numb. x. 12. Deut. xxxiii. 2. so that it is possible that this mount might be so called from her, though there is no certainty of it; and near to it, as Grotius observes, was a town called Agra, mentioned by Pliny³ as in Arabia. However, 'tis clear, that Sinai was in Arabia, out of the land of promise, where the law was given, and seems to be mentioned by the apostle with this view, that it might be observed, and teach us that the inheritance is not of the law. It is placed by Jerom⁴ in the land of Midian; and it is certain it must be near it, if not in it, as is clear from Exod. iii. 1. And according to Philo the Jew⁵, the Midianites, as formerly called, were a very populous nation of the Arabians: and Midian, or Midian, is by Mahomet spoken of as in Arabia; and it may be observed, that they that are called Midianites in Gen. xxxvii. 36. are said to be Ishmaelites, Gen. xxxix. 1. the name by which the Arabians are commonly called by the Jews. The apostle therefore properly places this mountain in Arabia. But after all, by Agar, I rather think the woman is meant: and that the sense is, that this same Agar signifies Mount Sinai, or is a figure of the law given on that mount. *And answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children; that is, agrees with and resembles the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of all the cities and towns in Judea; and she, being a bondwoman, represented that state of bondage the Jews were in, when the apostle wrote this, who were in a state of civil, moral, and legal bondage; in civil bondage to the Romans, being tributaries to the empire of Rome, and under the jurisdiction of Cæsar; in moral bondage to sin, to Satan, to the world and the lusts of it, whose servants they in general were; and in legal bondage to the ceremonial law, which was a yoke of bondage: they were in bondage under the elements or institutions of it, such as circumcision, a yoke which neither they, nor their forefathers could bear, because it bound them over to keep the whole law; the observance of various days, months, times, and years, and the multitude of sacrifices they were obliged to offer, which yet could not take away sin, nor free their consciences from the load of guilt, but were as an hand-writing of ordinances against them; every sacrifice they brought declaring their sin and guilt, and that they deserved to die as the creature did that was sacrificed for them; and besides, this law of commandments, in various instances, the breach of it was punishable with death, through fear of which they were all their life long subject to bondage: they were also in bondage to the moral law, which required perfect obedience of them, but gave*

¹ Pirke Eliezer, c. 41.

² Castel. Lex. Polyglot. col. 604.

³ Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.

⁴ De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. H.

⁵ De Fortitudine, p. 741.

⁶ Kuran, c. 7. p. 126.

them no strength to perform; shewed them their sin and misery, but not their remedy; demanded a complete righteousness, but did not point out where it was to be had; it spoke not one word of peace and comfort, but all the reverse; it admitted of no repentance; it accused of sin, pronounced guilty on account of it, cursed, condemned, and threatened with death for it, all which kept them in continual bondage: and whereas the far greater part of that people at that time, the Jerusalem that then was, the Scribes, Pharisees, and generality of the nation, were seeking for justification by the works of the law, this added to their bondage; they obeyed it with mercenary views, and not from love but fear; and their comforts and peace rose and fell according to their obedience; and persons in such a way must needs be under a spiritual bondage.

Ver. 26. *But Jerusalem which is above, &c.*] This Sarah was a type and figure of; she answered to, and agreed with this; which is to be understood, not of the church triumphant in heaven, but of the Gospel church-state under the administration of the new covenant; and that, not as in the latter-day glory, when the new Jerusalem shall descend from God out of heaven, but as it then was in the apostle's time, and has been since. Particular respect may be had to the first Gospel church at Jerusalem, which consisted of persons born from above, was blessed with a Gospel spirit, which is a spirit of liberty, out of which the Gospel went into all the world, and from among whom the apostles and first preachers of the word went forth everywhere, and were the means of the conversion of multitudes, both among Jews and Gentiles, and so might be truly said to be the mother of us all. The church in general, under the Gospel, may be, as it often is, called Jerusalem, because of its name, the vision of peace; being under the government of the Prince of peace; the members of it are sons of peace, who are called to peace, and enjoy it; the Gospel is the Gospel of peace, and the ordinances of it are paths of peace; and the new covenant, under the administration of which the saints are, is a covenant of peace. Jerusalem was the object of God's choice, the palace of the great King, the place of divine worship, was compact together, and well fortified: the Gospel church-state consists of persons, who, in general, are the elect of God, among whom the Lord dwells, as in his temple. Here his worship is observed, his word is preached, and his ordinances administered; saints laid on the foundation, Christ, and being fitly framed together, grow up unto an holy temple in him, and are surrounded by him, as Jerusalem was with mountains, and are kept by his power unto salvation. This is said to be *above*, to distinguish it from the earthly Jerusalem, the inhabitants of which were chiefly men of the world, carnal men; but this heavenly Jerusalem, or Gospel church-state, chiefly consists of persons born from above, called with an heavenly calling, and who bear the image of the heavenly one, whose conversation is in heaven, who are seeking things above, and in

a little time will be there themselves; its constitution and form of government are from above, and so are its doctrines, and its ordinances. The Jews often speak of *Jerusalem above* ^{ז, על מערה, or עלאה, or ירושלים דעילא}, as distinguished from Jerusalem below: and to this distinction the apostle seems to have respect here, who further says concerning this Jerusalem, that she is *free*; from the servitude of sin, Satan, and the world, from the yoke of the law, and from a spirit of bondage; having the spirit of God, the spirit of adoption, who is a free spirit, and makes such free that enjoy him; and where he is, there is true liberty. He adds, *which is the mother of us all*: that are born again, whether Jews or Gentiles, as particularly the church at Jerusalem was, and the Gospel church-state in general may be said to be; since here souls are born and brought forth to Christ, are nursed up at her side, and nourished with her breasts of consolation, the word and ordinances. This form of speech is also Jewish: thus it is said ^ז, that "Zion, ^{אמן דישאל}, the mother of Israel, shall bring forth her sons, and Jerusalem shall receive the children of the captivity." Again, explaining Prov. xxviii. 24. 'tis observed ^ז, that there is no father but the ever-blessed God, ^{ואין אמו}, and no mother but the congregation of Israel. Some copies leave out the word *all*; and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and only read, *the mother of us, or our mother.*

Ver. 27. *For it is written, &c.*] Isa. liv. 1. which is cited to prove, that the heavenly Jerusalem, or Gospel church-state, is the mother of us all, and has brought forth, and still will bring forth, many souls to Christ, even many more than were under the legal dispensation by the Jewish church, though the Lord was an husband to them, Jer. xxxi. 32. The words are, *rejoice thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband*; by her that was barren, and bore not, and travailed not, and was desolate, is not meant the Gentile world, which before the coming of Christ was barren and destitute of the knowledge of him, and from among whom very few were called by grace; but the Gospel church in the first beginnings of it, in Christ's time, and especially about the time of his death, and before the pouring forth of the spirit on the day of Pentecost, when the number of its members were few; for the names of the disciples together were but 120, when it seemed to be barren, and desolate, and deprived of its husband Christ, but was quickly to have a large accession to it, both of Jews and Gentiles; and therefore is called upon to *rejoice, break forth, and cry*: that is, to break forth into songs of praise, and express her spiritual joy, by singing aloud, and setting forth in hymns and spiritual songs the glory of powerful and efficacious grace, in the conversion of such large numbers of souls, the like of which had never been known under the former administration. Three thousand were converted under one sermon, and added to this first Gospel church;

^z Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 2. & 16. 2. & 75. 4. & 77. 1. & 78. 2. & 114. 3. & 121. 1. & in Exod. fol. 6. 1. & 92. 2. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 1. Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. Cupthor, fol. 14. 2. & 25. 2. & 65. 1. & 68. 2. & 71. 2. & 118. 2. Raziel, fol. 13. 1. & 27. 1. Tzeror Hammor;

fol. 61. 3. & 150. 2. Nishmat Chayim, fol. 86. 2. Kimchi in Hos. xi. 9.

^y Targum in Cant. 8. 5.

^z Sithre Tora in Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 1.

and the number of its members still increased, and the number of the men that afterwards believed was about five thousand; and after this we hear of more believers being added to the Lord, both men and women; and also that a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith; and when out of this church, the apostles, and other preachers of the Gospel went everywhere into the Gentile world, thousands of souls were converted, and a large number of churches formed, and a spiritual seed has been preserved ever since; and in the latter day Zion will travail in birth, and bring forth a numerous offspring; a nation shall be born at once, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in. Agreeably to this sense the Jewish writers, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra, understand this passage of Jerusalem; as does also the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders it thus: "Praise, O Jerusalem, which wert as a barren woman that bringeth not forth; rejoice in praise, and be glad, who wert as a woman which conceives not, for more are the children of Jerusalem forsaken than the children of the habitable city," saith the Lord."

Ver. 28. *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *you, brethren*; and so one of Stephens's copies. As the two women, Hagar and Sarah, might be, and are allegorized; so likewise their respective offspring. Isaac signified, and was a type and figure of Abraham's spiritual seed, whether Jews or Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation: and as he was, so they are, *the children of promise*; as Isaac was promised unto Abraham, so were this spiritual seed, when it was said unto him, that he should be the father of many nations, as he is the father of us all, even of all them that believe, be they of what nation soever; and as Isaac was born by virtue, and in consequence of a promise made to Abraham of God's free good will and pleasure, and his generation and conception were beyond the strength and course of nature, were the effects of a divine power, and were something supernatural; so this spiritual seed are born again, by virtue, and in consequence of a promise, not only made to Abraham, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the covenant, that he should see his seed, enjoy a numerous offspring, and which should endure for ever; and also to the church, of whom it is said, that this and that man should be born in her; and particularly in consequence of the promise cited in the foregoing verse, from whence these words are an inference, deduction, or illustration: and these children of the promise, so called from hence, are born again, above and beyond the strength of nature; not through the power and free will of man, but through the abundant mercy and sovereign will of God, by his powerful and efficacious grace, and by the word of promise, the Gospel, as a means. Moreover, to these children, or spiritual seed of Abraham, signified by Isaac, do all the promises belong, as that of God, as a covenant God unto them; of Christ, as a Saviour and Redeemer; of the Holy Spirit, as a sanctifier and comforter; and of all good things, of temporal mercies, so far as are for their real good; and of all spiritual blessings, as righteousness, peace, pardon, comfort, all supplies of grace, and

eternal life: and these likewise receive these promises; the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of promise, opens and applies them to them, puts them into the hand of faith, and enables them to plead them with God, and to believe the performance of them; so that this character in all respects agrees with them.

Ver. 29. *But as then, &c.*] In the times of Abraham, when Hagar and Sarah, the types of the two dispensations of the covenant, and Ishmael and Isaac, the figures of the two different seeds, the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham, legalists and true believers, were living: *he that was born after the flesh*; which was Ishmael, who was a type, or an allegorical representation of such who were under the Sinai covenant, and were seeking for righteousness by the works of the law; as he was born after the flesh, according to the ordinary course of nature, and was, as he was born, a carnal man; so are self-justificaries, notwithstanding all their pretensions to religion and righteousness, just as they were born; there is nothing but flesh in them; they are without God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and have neither true faith, nor hope, nor love, nor any other grace; they have no internal principle of goodness in them; flesh, or corrupt nature, has the government of them, is the reigning principle in them; their minds are fleshly, and so are their tenets; and such is their conversation, they trust in the flesh, in outward performances, in their own righteousness, and so come under the curse; for as many as trust in an arm of flesh, or are of the works of the law, are under the curse of it: *persecuted him that was born after the spirit*; by whom is meant Isaac, who, though he was not conceived under the over-shadowings of the Holy Spirit, without the help of man, as Christ was; yet because of the divine power which was so eminently displayed in his conception and generation, under all the difficulties, and disadvantages, and seeming impossibilities of nature, he is said to be born after the spirit: and besides, he was also regenerated by the spirit of God, was a good man, and one that feared the Lord, as the whole account of him shews; and in this also fitly pointed out the spiritual seed, true believers, under the Gospel dispensation, who are born again of water, and of the spirit, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds; in whom the work of the spirit is begun, and grace is the governing principle; in whom the spirit of God dwells and operates; and whose conversation is spiritual, and who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. The persecution of Isaac by Ishmael was by *mocking* him, Gen. xxi. 9. the Hebrew word there made use of is in allusion to Isaac's name, which signifies *laughter*: and Ishmael laughed at him, jeered and derided him. The Jewish doctors are divided about the sense of this: some say that the word rendered *mocking* is expressive of idolatry, according to Exod. xxxii. 6. and that Ishmael would have taught Isaac, and drawn him into it; others that it signifies uncleanness, according to Gen. xxxix. 17. and that he talked to him in a lascivious and indecent manner, in order to corrupt his mind: others that it designs murder, according to 2 Sam. ii. 14. and that he intended to kill him, and attempted it^a; it is pretty much received

^a Jarchi in Gen. xxi. 9. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 53. fol. 47. 4.

by them, that either he finding him alone, or they going out to the field together, he took his bow and drew it, and shot an arrow at him, with an intention to kill him^b, though he pretended it was but in play: and one of their writers on the text says^c, that the word used, by gematry, that is, by the arithmetic of the letters, signifies לָרַיִג, *to slay*; so that this persecution was not by words only, but by deeds: but others^d of them more rightly think, that it means a contention about the inheritance, which Sarah's words to Abraham seem to confirm; and that Ishmael claimed the birthright, and despised Isaac as the younger son; insisted upon the right to the inheritance, and mocked at the promise of God, with respect to Isaac; and might threaten what he would do to him, should he claim it thereupon: mocking has been always reckoned a species of persecution; so the Old-Testament saints, among other instances of persecution, had trial of *cruel mockings*; thus our Lord was persecuted, and also his apostles: *and even so it is now*. The carnal Jews, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, persecuted the spiritual seed that believed in Christ, both by words and deeds; they confiscated their goods, imprisoned their persons, and even put them to death; and the false teachers, though they did not, and could not go such lengths, yet as persons fitly represented by Ishmael, they derided the apostles, and mocked at the doctrines of grace preached by them, and despised those that embraced them; and pleaded that the inheritance belonged to them, upon the foot of the works of the law: and so it is at this day; though there is no persecution of men's persons and estates, yet there never was a greater persecution of the doctrines of grace, and of the righteousness of Christ, and the saints more mocked at and derided for maintaining them; and that by persons just of the same complexion as those in the apostle's time, signified by Ishmael, carnal professors, and self-righteous persons.

Ver. 30. *Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? &c.*] This is a Talmudic form of citing Scriptures, and answers to קראתה בואי קראתה, *what says the Scriptures?*^e the passage referred to is Gen. xxi. 10. and which are the words of Sarah to Abraham; but inasmuch as she spake them under divine inspiration, and they were approved of and confirmed by God, as appears from ver. 12. they are ascribed to God speaking in the Scripture: *cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman*. There is very little difference in the citation from the original. The apostle omits the word *this* in both clauses, which though very proper to be expressed by Sarah, to point out the person she meant, and as being in a vehement passion, was not absolutely necessary to be retained by the apostle, since by the context there is no difficulty of knowing who is meant by her; though the Alexandrian copy has the word in it: and instead of *with my son, with Isaac*, the apostle says, *with the son of the free woman, Sarah*; there speaking of herself, whose character the apostle gives,

in opposition to the bondwoman: in like manner a Jewish writer^f reads and interprets it, "for the son of " this woman shall not be heir הנבירה עַבְדָּה בְּנוֹת הַמִּסְתָּה, *with " the son of the mistress*." The casting of Hagar and Ishmael out of Abraham's family was a type and emblem of the rejection of the carnal and self-righteous Jews from the Gospel-church state; nor ought any carnal persons, any that are after the flesh, unregenerate ones, or that trust to their own righteousness, to be in a Gospel church; as they will also be excluded and thrust out of the kingdom of heaven, into which no unregenerate and unrighteous, or self-righteous persons shall enter. The Jews make this ejection of Hagar and her son to be both out of this world and that which is to come^g. The reason given why the one should not be heir with the other perfectly agrees with the Jewish canons; which was not because he was the son of a concubine, for the sons of concubines might inherit, if they were Israelites, and free, but because he was the son of a bondwoman, for thus they run^h; "all that are near of kin, though by iniquity, " are heirs, as they that are legitimate; how? thus " for instance, if a man has a son that is spurious, or a " brother that is spurious, lo, these are as the other " sons, and the other brethren for inheritance; but if, " בנו מן שפחה, *his son is by an handmaid*, or by a " strange woman, he is no son in any of these matters, " ואינו יורש כלל, *and no heir at all*;" and againⁱ, "an " Israelite that hath a son by an handmaid, or by a " Gentile, seeing he is not called his son, he that he " has after him by an Israelitish woman, בכור לנחלה, *is the first-born for inheritance*, and takes the double " portion." The reason assigned for non-inheritance in the text implies that the children of the free woman, the spiritual seed of Abraham, shall inherit the privileges of God's house, the blessings of grace, and eternal glory; they are children of the promise, and heirs according to it; when the children of the bondwoman, self-righteous ones, shall not; for the inheritance is not of the law, neither are they heirs who are of the works of it; nor is it to be enjoyed by mixing the law and Gospel, grace and works, in the business of salvation.

Ver. 31. *So then, brethren, &c.*] This is the conclusion of the whole allegory, or the mystical interpretation of Agar and Sarah, and their sons: *we are not children of the bondwoman*; the figure of the first covenant, which gendered to bondage, and typified the Jews in a state, and under a spirit of bondage to the law; New-Testament saints are not under it, are delivered from it, and are dead unto it: *but of the free*; of Sarah, that was a type of the new and second covenant; and answered to the Gospel church, which is free from the yoke of the law; and whose children believers in Christ are, by whom they are made free from all thralldom and slavery; so the children of the mistress and of the maid-servant are opposed to each other by the Jews^k. The Vulgate Latin version adds to this verse from the beginning of the next chapter, *with the liberty where-*

^b Jarchi & Bereshit Rabba, sect. 53. fol. 47. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 30.

^c Baul Hatturim. in loc.

^d Jarchi & Bereshit Rabba, ut supra.

^e T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2.

^f R. Abraham Seba. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 31. 1.

^g Pirke Eliezer, c. 30.

^h Maimon. Hich. Nechalot, c. 1. sect. 7.

ⁱ Jb. c. 9. sect. 12.

^k Tzeror Hammor, fol. 159. 1.

with Christ hath made us free; and the Ethiopic version, because Christ hath made us free; and begin the next chapter thus, therefore stand, and be not en-

tangled, &c. and so the Alexandrian copy, and three of Stephens's.

C H A P V.

IN this chapter the apostle exhorts to stand fast in Christian liberty, and warns against the abuse of it; and directs to shun various vices, and encourages to the exercise of several graces, and the observance of several duties; and concludes with a caution against vain glory, provocation to wrath, and envy: and whereas, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had made it appear that the believers under the Gospel dispensation were free from the bondage of the law, he begins this with an exhortation to continue steadfastly in the liberty of the Gospel; and the rather, since it was what Christ obtained for them, and bestowed on them; and to take care, that they were not again brought under the bondage of the ceremonial law, particularly the yoke of circumcision, ver. 1. and dissuades from submitting to it, by observing, that it tended to make Christ unprofitable to them, ver. 2. and that it laid them under an obligation to keep the whole law, ver. 3. and that it made Christ wholly useless to them; and that such who sought for justification by obedience to the ceremonial law were apostates from the Gospel of the grace of God, ver. 4. as also by shewing, that it was contrary to the general faith and expectation of the saints, who were looking for and expecting eternal glory and happiness, not by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, ver. 5. nor were circumcision or uncircumcision of any avail, but the true faith in Christ, which shews itself by love to him and to his people, ver. 6. and likewise by reminding them how well they set out at their first conversion, and proceeded; nor had they any to hinder them from obeying the truth, and therefore it was shameful in them to go back to the beggarly elements they had first relinquished, ver. 7. nor was the present opinion they had imbibed, of God that called them, or what they received when first effectually called by grace, but what had been since taken up, ver. 8. and whereas it might be objected, that it was only in a single article concerning the ceremonial law, and which was embraced only by a few persons, and therefore not to be regarded, the apostle puts them in mind of a proverb, that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, and therefore not to be connived at, ver. 9. however, a little to mitigate the sharpness of his reproof, he expresses his good opinion and confidence of them, that upon a mature consideration of things, they would not be otherwise minded than they formerly had been, or he now was; and lays the blame of all upon the false teacher, or teachers, that troubled them, and who should bear their own judgment or condemnation, ver. 10. and whereas it was insinuated, that the apostle himself had preached up circumcision as necessary to salvation, he removes this calumny by observing, that were it true, he would not suffer persecution as he did, nor would the Jews be offended at his preach-

ing as they were, ver. 11. and then out of zeal for the glory of God, and hearty affection to the Galatians, he wishes those false teachers that troubled them with their pernicious doctrines were cut off, either by the Lord, or from the church, ver. 12. and next he directs to the right use of Christian liberty, to which they were called; and cautions against the abuse of it; that they should not use it as an occasion to the flesh, but, on the contrary, serve one another in love, ver. 13. giving this as a reason, because love is the fulfilling of the law, ver. 14. whereas a contrary spirit and conduct are attended with pernicious consequences, even the destruction of each other, ver. 15. and therefore advises them to walk in the spirit, whose fruit is love, and then they would not fulfil the lust of the flesh, ver. 16. for these two, flesh and spirit, are contrary the one to the other, and the spirit hinders the performance of the lusts of the flesh, ver. 17. besides, such who give up themselves to the conduct of the spirit, and are led thereby, are not under the law, the bondage of it, nor liable to its curse, ver. 18. and having made mention both of flesh and spirit, he takes notice of the works and fruits of the one, and of the other, by which they are known; and as for the works of the flesh he observes, that they are manifest, and gives an enumeration of them in *seventeen* particulars; and to deter from them declares, that whoever lives in the commission of them, shall not inherit the kingdom of God, ver. 19, 20, 21. and as for the fruits of the spirit, these are also well known by spiritual men, *nine* of which are particularly mentioned, and against which there is no law, ver. 22, 23. and from the whole concludes, that such as are true believers in Christ, and are led by his spirit, and have the fruits of it, have the flesh with its affections and lusts crucified, ver. 24. and ends the chapter with some exhortations to walk in the spirit, and not be ambitious of worldly honour, nor provoke one another to wrath, nor envy each other's happiness, ver. 25, 26.

Ver. 1. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty, &c.*] There is the liberty of grace, and the liberty of glory; the former of these is here meant, and lies in a freedom from sin; not from the in-dwelling of it, but from the dominion, guilt, and damning power of it; from the captivity and tyranny of Satan, though not from his temptations and insults; from the law, the ceremonial law, as an hand-writing of ordinances, a rigid severe schoolmaster, and a middle wall of partition, and from all its burdensome rites and institutions; from the moral law as a covenant of works, and as administered by Moses; and from the curse and condemnation of it, its bondage and rigorous exaction, and from all expectation of life and righteousness by the deeds of it; but not from obedience to it, as held forth by Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; and from the judicial law, or those laws which concerned the Jews as Jews: moreover, this liberty lies in the free use of

things indifferent, as eating any sort of food without distinction, so that it be done in faith, with thankfulness to God, in moderation, and with temperance, and so as that the peace and edification of fellow-Christians are not hurt; also in the free use of Gospel ordinances, which they that are fellow-citizens with the saints have a right unto, but not to lay aside or neglect at pleasure; which is not to use, but to abuse their liberty: again, another branch of it is access to God, with freedom and boldness at the throne of grace, through the Mediator, under the influences of the divine Spirit; to which may be added, a deliverance from the fears of death corporeal, who is a king of terrors to Christless sinners, and which kept Old-Testament saints, all their life-time subject to bondage; and eternal, or the second death, by which Christ's freemen are assured they shall not be hurt: now, in this liberty, the children of the free woman, believers under the Gospel dispensation, are very pertinently exhorted to *stand fast*, in consequence and consideration of their character; that is, they should highly prize and esteem it, as men do their civil liberty; and maintain it and defend it, at all hazards; abide by the doctrine of it without wavering, and with intrepidity; not giving up any one part of it, however, and by whomsoever, it may be opposed, maligned, and reproached; and keep up the practice of it, by obeying from the heart the doctrine of it, by becoming the servants of righteousness, by frequent attendance at the throne of grace, and continual observance of the ordinances of Christ; and then should take heed of every thing that tends to break in upon it, as any doctrine or commandment of men; particularly the doctrine of justification by works, and all sorts of superstition and will-worship: and the rather, because of the concern Christ has in this liberty, ¹is that *wherewith Christ hath made us free*; we are not free-born, but on the contrary home-born slaves, as Ephraim was; nor could this liberty in any of its branches be obtained by us, by any merit, righteousness, act, or acts of ours, but is wholly of Christ's procuring for us, both by price and power; whereby he has ransomed and delivered us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the law, and death; and it is of his proclaiming in the Gospel, and of his applying by his spirit, whom he sends down into our hearts as a free spirit, to acquaint us with it, and lead us into it, who works faith in us to lay hold upon, and receive this blessing of grace as others: *and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*. The metaphor is taken from oxen put under a yoke, and implicated with it, from which they cannot disengage themselves: some of the members of this church had been Jews, who had formerly been under the yoke of the law, and seemed desirous to return to their former state of bondage, from which the apostle dissuades, and therefore uses the word *again*; or else he may refer to the bondage of corruption and idolatry, which they as Gentiles were in, before their conversion; and intimates, that to give into the observance of Jewish rites and ceremonies would be involving themselves in a state of bondage again; for by *the yoke of bondage*

he means the law, which the Jews frequently call *עול מצות*, *the yoke of the commandments*¹; particularly the ceremonial law, as circumcision; which Peter, Acts xv. 10. represents as a yoke intolerable; the observation of days, months, times, and years; the multitude of sacrifices, and which could not take away sin; but proclaimed their guilt and obligation to punishment, and were an hand-writing of ordinances against them, and thereby they were held and kept in bondage: and such a yoke is the moral law, as delivered by Moses, requiring perfect obedience, but giving no strength to perform, nor pointing where any is to be had; shewing a man his sin and misery, and so working wrath in his conscience, but giving not the least intimation of a Saviour, or of life and righteousness by another; accusing, pronouncing guilty, cursing, and condemning; hence such as seek for righteousness by it are in a miserable subjection to it, and are sadly implicated and entangled with the yoke of it: every doctrine and ordinance of men is a yoke of bondage which should not be submitted to; nay, any action whatever, performed in a religious way, and in order for a man's acceptance with God, and to obtain his favour, and according to his observance of which he judges of his state, and speaks peace and comfort to himself, or the reverse, is a yoke of bondage: as, for instance, prayer at such and so many times a day, reading such a number of chapters in the Bible every day, fasting so many times in the week, and the like; so that what are branches of Christian liberty, such as frequent prayer to God, reading the sacred writings for instruction and comfort, and the free use of the creatures, are turned into a yoke of bondage, which should be guarded against.

Ver. 2. *Behold, I Paul say unto you, &c.*] The apostle proceeds to give some reasons and arguments to enforce the above exhortation and dissuasion; the first of which is introduced with a note of attention, *behold*; what he was about to say being matter of great moment and importance; and also mentions himself by name, as the assessor of it; and that either because his name was well known to them, and the rather because of his apostolical authority; and to shew his full assurance of this matter, and his intrepidity, and that he was no ways ashamed of it, they might, if they pleased, say it to whomsoever they would, that Paul the apostle affirmed, *that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*: he speaks of circumcision, not as when it was an ordinance of God, but as it was now abolished by Christ; and that not as singly performed on some certain accounts, for he himself circumcised Timothy for the sake of the Jews; but as done in order to salvation, or as necessary unto it; which was the doctrine the false apostles taught, and these Galatians were ready to give into: now circumcision submitted to on this consideration, and with this view, rendered Christ unprofitable, made his death to be in vain, his sacrifice of no effect, and his righteousness useless: besides, Christ is a whole Saviour, or none at all; to join any thing with him and his righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation, is interpreted by him as a contempt and neglect of

¹ Misn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 2.

him, as laying him aside, and to such persons he is of no profit; and if he is not, what they have, and whatsoever they do, will be of no advantage; wealth and riches, yea, the whole world could it be gained, their works and righteousness, whatever shew they make before men, God has declared shall not profit them; and trusting to these renders Christ unprofitable to them. This is directly contrary to the notions of the Jews, who think they shall be saved for their circumcision, and that that will secure them from hell; they say^m no circumcised person goes down to hell, and that whoever is circumcised shall inherit the land; but there's none shall inherit the land, save a righteous person; but every one that is circumcised is called a righteous manⁿ; so that circumcision is their righteousness, on account of which they expect heaven and happiness.

Ver. 3. *For I testify again to every man, &c.*] This is the form of an oath, a calling God to witness, swearing by the living God, and declaring as in his presence to every man, whether Jew or Gentile, whoever he be: *that is circumcised*; in order to obtain salvation, and as necessary to it: *that he is a debtor to do the whole law*; and this it is that made circumcision an insupportable yoke, for that itself might be bore, and was bore by children of eight days old; but the fulfilling of the whole law cannot be done by any man; and yet every one that is circumcised, in order to procure righteousness and life, is bound to keep the whole law; because the law is only his righteousness, when he observes all that is required in it, and as the Lord has commanded; if he does not, he is pronounced accursed: and this proves what was before said, that Christ is of no profit to such persons; because they reject him and his righteousness, and, as much as in them lie, make void his obedience, sufferings, and death: hence the same thing is repeated, though not in the same words, in the next verse.

Ver. 4. *Christ is become of no effect unto you, &c.*] Or *ye are abolished from Christ*; or as others by an *hypallage* read the words, *Christ is abolished unto you*: for by their seeking for justification by their own works, it was all one to them as if there was no Christ, and no righteousness in him, and no salvation by him; they had nothing to do with him, nor he with them: *whosoever of you are justified by the law*; that is, who sought to be justified by their obedience to the law, or who thought they were, and trusted in themselves that they were righteous; for otherwise, by the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified: *ye are fallen from grace*; that is, either from that grace which they professed to have; for there might be some in these churches, as in others, who were only nominal Christians, and formal professors; who had declared they saw themselves lost and undone sinners, destitute of a righteousness, and professed to believe in Christ alone for righteousness and strength, but now trusted in themselves, and in the works of the law: or from the scheme of grace in the whole of man's salvation, which will admit of no mixture of works; either 'tis one or the other, it can't be both; wherefore by their taking on the side of works, they shewed that they had en-

tirely dropped the scheme of grace: or else from the Gospel of the grace of God, from whence they were removed, through the influence of false teachers; particularly the doctrine of free justification by the grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ; which was entirely set aside by their seeking to be justified by the works of the law; and from this they might be said to be fallen, who were on such a bottom.

Ver. 5. *For we through the spirit wait, &c.*] Who have believed in Christ, Christians in general, and the apostle and the brethren with him in particular; who also were Jews born, and brought up as such; and yet they did not look for, and expect heaven and happiness through circumcision, or any of the works of the law, but through the righteousness of Christ received by faith, under the influence and testimony of the spirit of God, and therefore much less should Gentiles: *for the hope of righteousness by faith*; by which is meant, not the believer's justifying righteousness, as if it was something future he is waiting for; for this is already wrought out, and brought in by Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith; is discovered and applied to the saints by the spirit of God; is put upon them, and imputed to them by the father; and is what they now have, not in hope, but in hand; their faith having received it, as their justifying righteousness; in which they will ever be found, living and dying: but eternal glory and felicity is here intended, called *hope*; because it is the object of hope, or is what is hoped for; it is unseen, as what is hoped for is: it is future, and what is to be enjoyed hereafter, and therefore hoped for; it is certain, possible to be enjoyed, though with difficulty; which gives room for hope, and exercises and tries that grace; the foundation and encouragement of hope in it are the person, blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, who is our hope: and hence it is styled *the hope of righteousness*, because none but righteous persons shall enjoy it: and that by virtue, and in consequence of their being justified by the righteousness of Christ, which gives them their title to it; and hence they look for it, and shall enjoy it, on the foot of justice, as well as of grace and goodness: *waiting* for it supposes it to be certain, real, solid, substantial, valuable, and worth waiting for; which, when possessed, will be with the utmost pleasure, and be abundantly satisfying; and that the persons that wait for it have knowledge, and at least hope of interest in it; and do highly value and esteem it, having their hearts set on it, and looking with contempt on the things of time and sense, in comparison of it: the manner in which they wait is, *through the spirit*, and *by faith*; the Syriac version reads, *through the spirit, which is of faith*: that is, by the spirit received through faith; see ch. iii. 14. but it is best to consider them apart; believers look and wait for heaven, under the influence and encouragement of the spirit of God; who is the author of the faith by which they look for it, and of the hope which is concerned with it; and who is the revealer and applier of the righteousness of Christ, the foundation of it; and which gives some glimpses of the heavenly glory to the saints, shews them

^m Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4.

ⁿ Zohar in Exod. fol. 10. 2.

their interest in it, witnesses to their sonship, and so to their heirship; and is the pledge and earnest of their inheritance; all which gives great strength and encouragement to *faith*, by which they also expect it; believing not only the reality of it, but their own interest in it; and so walk by faith in the believing views thereof, until they receive the end of it.

Ver. 6. *For in Christ Jesus, &c.*] The Arabic version reads, *in the religion of Christ*; in the religion of Moses, or of the Jews under the former dispensation, the things after mentioned were of some moment and consideration; but are of no account in the Christian religion, and under the Gospel dispensation: circumcision and uncircumcision make no difference in the church of Christ, or are any bar to communion with it; nor do they make any alteration in the love and favour of Christ, who is all in all to his people, whether Jews or Gentiles; nor have they any influence at all on salvation, Christ being a common Saviour to the circumcised and uncircumcised; nor are they any evidence for or against a person's being in Christ, or having an interest in him: *neither circumcision availeth any thing*; not now as a command and ordinance of God, being abolished by Christ; nor as a type, having its accomplishment in him, and his people; nor as a privilege, giving any preference in any respect to the Jew above the Gentile; nor is it of any weight or consequence, or has any concern in the business of salvation: *nor uncircumcision*; it is no hinderance to the enjoyment of the Gospel, to entrance into a Gospel church-state, or to admission to the ordinances of it; nor to the participation of the blessings of grace, as justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life: *but faith which works by love*; faith has a concern in justification and salvation, not by way of causal influence, but as it is that grace which receives the righteousness of Christ, through which we are saved, and kept by the power of God unto salvation; yet not any sort of faith, but that which is operative, is attended with good works; and which works itself by love to God, to Christ, to his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances. The Syriac version renders it, *דמותמריא*, which is *perfected by love*; that is, is shewed to be right, true, and genuine thereby; see James ii. 22.

Ver. 7. *Ye did run well, &c.*] In the Christian race; when they first set out in a profession of religion, they embraced and held fast, and were zealously attached to the truths of the Gospel; they were in the lively exercise of grace on its proper object, and very diligent in the discharge of duty; they made great proficiency in the knowledge of divine things, and ran with cheerfulness and without weariness in the ways of Christ, and in the paths of truth and holiness. The metaphor is taken from runners in a race; see 1 Cor. ix. 24. so far this is said to their commendation, but this should have been persisted in: *who did hinder you*; not the apostle, or any of his brethren; no, they encouraged them to go on, and gave them all the assistance they could, to help them forward; but it was the false apostles that hindered them, who did all they could to remove them to another Gospel, and turn them aside out of the right way: *that ye should not obey the truth?* of the Gospel, particularly the truth of justification by the righteousness of Christ; which

they did not so cheerfully embrace, and shew such a respect unto, as they had formerly done; see ch. iii. 1. and which he says not by way of inquiry, but of complaint and concern; and with some indignation against the persons who had been the means of hindering their Christian progress, and with a view to reclaim the Galatians if possible.

Ver. 8. *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*] That is, the opinion they were persuaded to believe; and which the Syriac version renders, *פיסכון*, *your persuasion*; this is not of God, who had called them into the grace of Christ; nor of Christ, who had called them to the knowledge of himself, and communion with him; nor of the spirit of Christ, who had called them with an holy calling, and who still continued to call them to repentance; nor of any faithful minister of the Gospel, who had been concerned as an instrument in their effectual vocation; meaning the notion they were persuaded to give into, that circumcision and the works of the law were necessary to salvation, and that these were to be joined with the righteousness of Christ for justification; such a conceit as this could never be of God, nor any evangelical minister, but must be of Satan or his emissaries, the false apostles.

Ver. 9. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*] A proverbial expression pretty much in use with the Jews; see 1 Cor. v. 6. respecting either persons or things; and is in answer to, or prevents an objection that might be made, or something that might be said, in favour of these churches; that their case was not so bad, or the danger they were in so great, as was represented by the apostle; since they were only a few persons that propagated this notion, and but few that received it, at least thoroughly gave into it; and that, if it was an error, it was but a small one, and only regarded a single ritual, or a few rituals of the law; to which the apostle replies, by supposing, but not granting this to be the case, since they were pretty generally declined, and the error was not a slight one, that as a little sour leaven influences and ferments a large mass, or lump of dough, and makes it of the same nature with it, so a small error in doctrine, as it may be thought to be, increases to more ungodliness, and eats as doth a canker; and though a few hands may be first concerned in propagating it, and but few be infected with it, yet these may soon spread the contagion through the whole society: wherefore errors and false teachers should be nipped in the bud, and stopped in their beginnings, how inconsiderable soever they and their tenets may be judged to be.

Ver. 10. *I have confidence in you through the Lord, &c.*] Though the apostle had said many things which carried in them the appearance of roughness and severity, yet he still entertained hopes of them that they were not so far gone, but that they might be brought back again; and he here expresses his confidence of it. This confidence in them is not of faith, for no trust is to be put in men; no, not in the best; but of charity, or love, which hopes all things, and believes all things; and which proceeded upon a thorough persuasion he had, that there was some good thing in them; and therefore was confident, that he that had begun the good work would perform it, and not suffer them to

be carried away finally and totally with the error of the wicked: and this confidence he had *through the Lord*; either through the spirit of the Lord, whose office it is to lead into all truth, as it is in Jesus; and who had suggested this to the apostle, and possessed him of this confidence; so that it was not a conjecture and fancy of his, but an intimation from the spirit of the Lord: or through the Lord Jesus Christ, or *in the Lord*, Christ, as the phrase may be rendered; that is, on account of their being in Christ, which the apostle hoped and believed; where they were safe and secure from a final and total seduction; he was confident, that whatever they might seem to be now, things would take a different turn in time: *that you will be none otherwise minded*; than he was, and they formerly were, when the Gospel was first preached to them, and embraced by them; and particularly in the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which was the doctrine then called in question, and in debate: *but he that troubleth you*; he seems to have respect to some particular person, who was the principal of the false teachers, and most famous for his learning, knowledge, gifts, and abilities; and who had done, and was likely to do, the most mischief among them; and was a troubler of God's Israel, and of the pure waters of the sanctuary; he unsettled their minds, and caused them to halt between two, Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, and the doctrines of justification by works, and by the righteousness of Christ; the one being what gave true solid peace and comfort, the other introduced confusion, distress, and fears: the apostle threatens him, and declares that he *shall bear his judgment*; or condemnation, or damnation, his punishment in this, or the other world; for the judgment, or condemnation, of such that bring in damnable heresies, and pernicious errors, lingereth not, will not be long delayed; and their damnation slumbereth not, but in a little time will seize upon them; when as they have rejected Christ as a sin-bearing and atoning Saviour, and his righteousness as the justifying one, they will, agreeably to their own doctrine, be left to bear their punishment themselves, which will be intolerable, and to all eternity; nor shall any escape it, *whosoever he be*; though ever so knowing and learned, and let his parts and abilities be what they will; or he be ever so famous among men, and cried up as a most excellent preacher.

Ver. 11. *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, &c.*] The apostle was traduced by the false teachers, as a preacher of circumcision himself in some places; and this they did partly to shew him to be a variable and inconstant man, who preached one doctrine in one place, and another in another place, and so not to be attended to; and partly with others, to draw them into their scheme upon his authority: what might give them the handle, or at least what they improved to this purpose, might be his circumcising of Timothy; but though he did this as a thing indifferent, and for the sake of the Jews, to make them easy; yet he never preached it after his conversion, and much less as necessary to justification and salvation, as these men did. This calumny he refutes by putting the follow-

ing question or questions; *why do I yet suffer persecution?* as is clear he did, for being against it, and preaching it down; great part of the persecutions the apostle endured was from the Jews, and that on account of his teaching them everywhere, that were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, and that they should not circumcise their children, and walk after the customs of their nation; a clear point this, that he did not preach it; had he, persecution from this quarter would not have followed him; and he could have done it with a good conscience, he must act a very weak part in suffering persecution on that account. The Arabic version gives the words a very different turn, and yet furnishes an answer to the calumny; *why do I persecute him that uses it?* that is, if I am a preacher of it, why am I so warm and violent an opposer of those that submit to it? these things are so opposite that there is no reconciling them; to the same purpose is the Ethiopic version: *then is the offence of the cross ceased*. The last-mentioned version reads it, *the cross of Christ*; and so the Alexandrian copy; meaning not the cross of affliction, reproach, and persecution, which Christ has enjoyed every follower of his to take up and bear for his sake, and is offensive to the carnal man; nor the cross on which he suffered, or the sufferings of the cross; but the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, which was an offence and a stumbling-block to the Jews; now if the apostle had preached circumcision as necessary to salvation, the other doctrine must have been dropped, and consequently the offence taken at it must have ceased, whereas it was not. The Syriac version reads by way of question, *is the offence of the cross ceased?* no it is not, a plain case then this, that the apostle did not preach circumcision, but only a crucified Christ, as necessary to salvation. Moreover, the Jews that believed would not have been so offended as they were at his preaching, had he preached the one as well the other; their offence was not that he preached Christ crucified, but that he preached, that, by the cross of Christ, circumcision and the other rituals of the ceremonial law were not abolished.

Ver. 12. *I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*] These words are a solemn wish of the apostle's with respect to the false teachers, or an imprecation of the judgment of God upon them; that they might be cut off out of the land of the living by the immediate hand of God, that they might do no more mischief to the churches of Christ: this he said not out of hatred to their persons, but from a concern for the glory of God, and the good of his people. The word here used answers to the Hebrew word קָטַף, and which is often made use of by the Jews in solemn imprecations; we read^o of a righteous man, בְּקַטְפָּה אֶת בְּנָיו, *that cut off his children*; the gloss upon it is, "he used to say, "when he made any imprecation, אֶקְטַף אֶת בְּנָי, *may I cut off my children*;" that is, may they die, may they be cut off by the hand of God, and I bury them; "says R. Tarphon^r, may my children be cut off, if "these books of heretics come into my hands, that "I will burn them;" and says the same Rabbi^q may

^o T. Bab. Eava Metzua, fol. 65. 1.

^r T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 116. 1.

^q T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 17. 1. Misn. Oholot, c. 16. sect. 1. & Maimon. in Barteuora in lib.

I cut off my children, or may my children be cut off, if this sentence or constitution is cut off, or should perish. There is another use of this word, which may have a place here, for it sometimes signifies to confute a person, or refute his notion'. " 'Tis a tradition of the Rabbins, that after the departure of R. Meir, R. Judah said to his disciples, let not the disciples of R. Meir come in hither, for they are contentious; and not to learn the law do they come, but לקפחני בהלכות, to cut me off; (i. e. as the gloss says, to shew how sharp they are that none can stand against them;) to confute and overcome me, by their sentences, or constitutions." So the apostle here might wish that the mouths of these false teachers were stopped, their notions refuted, that they might give them no more trouble; to which agrees the Arabic version; they that trouble you I wish they were dumb; or that their mouths were stopped, as such vain talkers should be; see Tit. i. 10. 11. or the sense of the apostle is, that it was his will and desire that these men should be cut off from the communion of the church; with which views he mentions the proverbial expression in ver. 9. with which compare 1 Cor. v. 6, 7. or that they would cut themselves off, by withdrawing from them, going out from among them, and leaving them as these men sometimes did.

Ver. 13. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, &c.] He calls them brethren, to testify his affection to them, and to put them in mind of their relation to one another, which required mutual love, a thing he is about to press them to; he asserts that they were called not merely externally, but internally, by the effectual grace of God, out of bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, unto the liberty of the Gospel and of the grace of God; that liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, ver. 1. this he said in a judgment of charity, hoping well of them: only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; corrupt nature, which in unregenerate men takes encouragement from, and makes an ill use of the best of things, as the mercy and patience of God; and not only takes an occasion by the law, forbidding sin to work and stir up all manner of concupiscence; but also by the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, such as eternal election, free justification, &c. which though the source and fountain, the barrier and security, of all true and real holiness, are improved and abused by wicked minds, under the influence and instigation of Satan, to vile purposes; and though regenerate persons are not in the flesh, and don't live after it, yet that is in them, and there is a proneness in them to sin; and Satan is watching all opportunities and advantages against them; so that there is need for such a caution as this, that they do not misuse their Christian liberty by indulging the flesh and the lusts of it, which is apt to take an occasion to cherish its lusts, and especially when given: Christ's free men should not do so, for that is to disgrace the doctrine of Christian liberty, to intrall themselves in bondage instead of using their liberty aright, and to give the enemy occasion to blaspheme: the doctrine of Christian liberty may be abused, or used as an

occasion to the flesh, and to fulfil the lusts of it; when under a pretence thereof men think themselves exempt from obedience to the civil magistrate, which is using this liberty as a cloak of maliciousness; or that they are free from obedience to the law of God, as a rule of walk and conversation; or from subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel; or when they use the creatures God has given them the free use of without thankfulness, and in an immoderate manner; and when they make things indifferent which are not, or use indifferent things to the prejudice of others; and their liberty becomes a stumbling-block to weak Christians, which the apostle seems greatly to regard here; since he adds, but by love serve one another: the Vulgate Latin version reads, by the love of the spirit; and so some copies; Gospel liberty and the service of the saints are not at all inconsistent; as it becomes them to love one another, as the new command of Christ, their profession of religion, and their relation to each other, require, so they should shew their love by their service; as by praying one with and for another, by bearing each other's burdens, sympathizing with and communicating to each other in things temporal and spiritual; in forbearing with and forgiving one another; by admonishing each other when there is occasion for it, in a meek, tender, and brotherly way; by instructing and building up one another on their most holy faith, and by stirring up one another to all the duties of religion, private and public.

Ver. 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, &c.] Not the ceremonial law, to which acts of mercy, kindness, and love are opposed, and from which they are distinguished; but the law of the decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and by him to the people of the Jews; and intends either only the second table of it, since only love to the neighbour is mentioned; or else the whole of it, both tables, since 'tis said, all the law; which by Christ is reduced to two heads, love to God, and love to the neighbour; and though the former is not here expressed, it is implied as a cause in the effect, for the love of God is the cause, and so the evidence of love to the neighbour; nor can there be the one without the other. The two tables of the law consist of עשרת הדברות, ten words; as the Jews commonly call them, and we the decalogue, and yet they are fulfilled in one; that is, they are to be brought into such a compendium, reduced to such an head; or as the apostle in a parallel place says, they may briefly be comprehended in this saying, Rom. xiii. 9. The Jews make the commandments of the law to be a very large number indeed, but at last reduce them to one, as the apostle here does, " six hundred and thirtien commandments (they say) were given to Moses — David came and reduced them to eleven, Psal. xv. Isaiah came and reduced them to six, Isa. xxxiii. 15. Micah came and reduced them to three, Mic. vi. 8. Isaiah came and reduced them to two, Isa. lvi. 1. Amos came and reduced them to one, Amos v. 4. but this being objected to, 'tis observed that Habbakkuk came, ורומעידני על אחת, and reduced them to one, Hab. ii. 4." that is faith, as here the apostle re-

† T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 52. 2. Nezir, fol. 49. 2. Exod. xxxiv. 29. Vid. Targum Onk. & Jon. in ib.

† T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2. & 24. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 161. 1.

duces them to love: *even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: these words are taken out of Lev. xix. 18. and which R. Akiba says**, agreeably with the apostle, whose cotemporary he was, is כלל גדול ברורה, *the grand general rule in the law; or the grand comprehensive of the law: the object of love, the neighbour, signifies not only, as there the Jews explain it, those of their own people, or proselytes to their religion; but all sorts of men, whether in a natural, civil, or spiritual relation; and whether those that do us good or do us ill, friends or enemies: the measure or rule of love is, as thyself: and designs not an equality of affection, but a likeness of effects; that is, to do the same kind acts of love to others, one would choose to have done to ourselves: and this is the fulfilling of the law; that is, so far as a man loves aright, so far he fulfils the law; not that he does it perfectly, for man in his fallen state is unable to do that, for the law is exceeding broad, and reaches to thoughts, desires, and inclinations, as well as to words and deeds; and besides, love said to be the fulfilling of it, is imperfect; hence then there can be no justification by works of charity, nor by any services of men, which at best are imperfect; nor are they done in their own strength, and without the grace of God; nor is there any that can be said to have fulfilled the law perfectly but Christ, and to him must we look for a justifying righteousness. These words contain a reason engaging to love one another, and to do all kind of offices of love to each other; since 'tis a main and principal thing contained in the law, and to which that may be reduced.*

Ver. 15. *But if ye bite and devour one another, &c.]*

Another reason inducing to love is taken from the pernicious consequences of a contrary spirit and conduct. The allusion is to beasts of prey falling upon and devouring one another: for wolves or dogs to worry sheep is not strange; but for sheep to distress one another is unnatural. The apostle does not say, if grievous wolves should enter in among you and not spare the flock; but suggests if they themselves should act the part of wolves to one another; having reference to their controversies about the law and circumcision, and the necessity thereof to justification and salvation; which were managed with great heat and bitterness, occasioned great contentions, and threatened them with divisions, parties, and factions; and were attended with envy and malice, with reproachful words, biting sarcasms, scandalous invectives, and injurious actions, which must be of bad consequence: hence he adds, *take heed that ye be not consumed one of another; that is, either beware lest each other's particular peace and comfort be destroyed, which is oftentimes done this way, though a person's state and condition Godward may be safe; or lest their church-state should be destroyed and come to nothing, since love is the cement of it, which being loosened, threatens a dissolution; for as no civil community, either public or private, divided against itself, can stand long, so no religious one; and for want of love the Lord threatens to remove, and sometimes does remove, the candlestick out of its place.*

Ver. 16. *This I say then, walk in the spirit, &c.]*

The advice the apostle thinks fit to give, and which

he would have observed, is, *to walk in the spirit*, that is, either after the spirit of God; making the word inspired by him the rule of behaviour, which as it is the standard of faith, so of practice, and is the lamp unto our feet, and the light unto our path; taking him himself for a guide, who not only guides into all truth, but in the way of holiness and righteousness unto the land of uprightness; and depending upon his grace and strength for assistance throughout the whole of our walk and conversation: or in the exercise of the graces of the spirit of God; as in the exercise of faith upon the person and grace of Christ, of which the spirit is the author; and in love to God, Christ, and one another, which is a fruit of the spirit; and in humility, lowliness of mind, meekness and condescension; all which is to walk in the spirit, or spiritually, and strengthens the argument for love the apostle is upon: and this he encourages to by observing, *and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*; he does not say there shall be no flesh, nor any lust of the flesh in them if they walk spiritually; or that the flesh should not act and operate in them; or that they should do no sinful action; all which is only true of Christ; and the contrary is to be found and observed in all true Christians, though ever so spiritual; but that they should not fulfil or perfect the lust of the flesh; should not give up themselves entirely to the power and dictates of the flesh, so as to be under it and at its command, and be obedient servants and slaves unto it; for, in this sense only, such that are spiritual do not commit sin, they don't make a trade of it, it is not their constant employ or course of conversation.

Ver. 17. *For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c.]*

By *flesh* is meant, not the carnal or literal sense of the Scripture, which is Origen's gloss, as militating against the spiritual sense of it; nor the sensual part of man rebelling against his rational powers; but the corruption of nature, which still is in regenerate persons: and is so called because it is propagated by carnal generation; has for its object carnal things; its lusts and works are fleshly; and though it has its seat in the heart, it shews itself in the flesh or members of the body, which are yielded as instruments of unrighteousness; and it makes and denominates men carnal, even believers themselves so far as it prevails: by *the spirit* is meant the internal principle of grace in a regenerate man, and is so called from the author of it, the spirit of God, whose name it bears, because it is his workmanship; and from the seat and subject of it, the soul or spirit of man; and from the nature of it, it is spiritual, a new heart and a new spirit; its objects are spiritual, and it minds, savours, and delights in spiritual things: and the meaning of the *lusting* of the one against the other, for it is reciprocal, hence it follows, *and the spirit against the flesh*, is that the one wills, chooses, desires, and affects what is contrary to the other; so the flesh, or the old man, the carnal I, in regenerate persons, wills, chooses, desires, and loves carnal things, which are contrary to the spirit or principle of grace in the soul; and on the other hand, the spirit or the new man, the spiritual I, wills, chooses, desire, approves, and loves spiritual things, such as

* In Jarchi in Lev. xix. 18.

are contrary to corrupt nature; and this sense is strengthened by the Oriental versions. The Syriac version reads, *for the flesh desires that נכחה, which hurts, or is contrary to the spirit; and the spirit desires that which hurts, or is contrary to the flesh; and much in the same way the Arabic version renders it, for the flesh desires that which militates against the spirit, and the spirit desires that which militates against the flesh; to which the Ethiopic version agrees, reading it thus, for the flesh desires what the spirit would not, and the spirit desires what the flesh would not; the reason whereof is suggested in the next clause: and these are contrary the one to the other: as light and darkness, fire and water, or any two opposites can be thought to be; they are contrary in their nature, actings, and effects; there is not only a repugnancy to each other, but a continued war, conflict, and combat, is maintained between them; the flesh is the law in the members or force of sin, which wars against the spirit, the law in the mind, or the force and power of the principle of grace; these are the company of two armies, to be seen in the Shulamite, fighting one against the other. So the Jews say * of the good imagination, and of the evil one, by which they mean the same as here, that they are like Abraham and Lot; and that "though they are brethren, joined in one body, הם אחים, "הם לוח, they are enemies to one another;" hence it follows, so that ye cannot do the good that ye would which may be understood both of evil things and of good things. The former seems to be chiefly the apostle's sense; since the whole of this text is a reason given why those who walk spiritually shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, because they have a powerful governing principle in them, the spirit, or grace; which though the flesh lusts against, and opposes itself unto, yet that also rises up against the flesh, and often hinders it from doing the works and lusts of it. There is in regenerate men a propensity and inclination to sin, a carnal I, that wills and desires sin, and wishes for an opportunity to do it, which when it offers, the flesh strongly solicits to it; but the spirit, or the internal principle of grace, opposes the motion; and like another Joseph says, how can I commit this great wickedness and sin against a God of so much love and grace? it is a voice behind and even in a believer, which, when he is tempted to turn to the right hand or the left, says, this is the way, walk in it, and will not suffer him to go into crooked paths with the workers of iniquity; and so sin cannot have the dominion over him, because he is under grace as a reigning principle; and the old man cannot do the evil things he would, being under the restraints of mighty grace. This is the apostle's principal sense, and best suits with his reasoning in the context; but inasmuch as the lusting and opposition of these two principles are mutual and reciprocal, the other sense may also be taken in; as that oftentimes, by reason of the prevalence of corrupt nature, and power of in-dwelling sin, a regenerate man does the evil he would not, and cannot do the good he would; for he would always do good and nothing else, and even as the angels do it in heaven; but he cannot, because of this opposite principle, the flesh.*

Ver. 18. *But if ye be led by the spirit, &c.*] That is, of God, who is the guide and leader of his people. *Tis a metaphor taken from the leading of persons that are blind; as such are before conversion, and whom the spirit of God leads in ways they knew not, and in paths they had not known: or from the leading of children, and teaching them to go; so the spirit leads regenerate persons, and teaches them to walk by faith in Christ. This act of leading supposes life in the persons led, for dead men can't be led; the spirit is first a spirit of life from Christ before he is a leader; and also it supposes some strength, though a good deal of weakness; were there no spiritual strength derived from Christ, they could not be led; and if there was no weakness, there would be no need of leading; it is an instance of powerful and efficacious grace upon them, yet not contrary to their wills, though they are led, they are not forced; they go freely, being led, as there is good reason for it; for the spirit of God always leads for their profit and advantage, and for the spiritual delight, pleasure, and comfort of their souls; he leads out of the ways of sin, and so of ruin and destruction, and from Mount Sinai, and all dependence on a legal and moral righteousness; he leads to Christ, to his person, for shelter, safety, and salvation, to his blood, for pardon and cleansing, to his righteousness, for justification, and to his fulness, for every supply of grace; he leads into the presence of God, and to his house and ordinances; he leads into the covenant of grace, to the blessings, promises, and Mediator of it; he leads into all truth as it is in Jesus, in the ways of faith and truth, and in the paths of righteousness and holiness, and always in a right way, though sometimes in a rough one, to the city of their habitation; he leads from one degree of grace to another, and at last to glory: all which he does gradually; he leads by little and little into a man's sinfulness, and to see his interest in Christ, and by degrees into the doctrines of the Gospel, and the everlasting love of the three Persons; and proportionably to the strength he gives, and as they are able to bear: now such persons as these have nothing to fear from the law of God: *ye are not under the law*: such are not only delivered from the law in fact, but in their own apprehensions; they have the comfortable knowledge and experience of it; the law is no terrifying law to them; it works no wrath in them; they are delivered from the spirit of bondage to fear, by the spirit of God, by whom they are led; nor are they under it, nor do they need it as a pressing forcing law to duty; they delight in it, and cheerfully serve it, being constrained by love, and not awed by fear; nor are its accusations and charges regarded, or to be regarded, by such who are led by the spirit to Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; and they are entirely freed from its curse and condemnation, though they are under it, and desire to be under it, as held forth by Christ the King of saints; and, under the spirit's influence and guidance, yield a cheerful and evangelical obedience to it.

Ver. 19. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, &c.*] By *flesh* is meant corrupt nature, as before, and by *the works* of it, not only external acts of sin, but in-

ward lusts; for such are here mentioned among its works, as *hatred, wrath, envyings, &c.* and both external and internal acts are so called, because they spring from the flesh, or corrupt nature, and are what that urges and solicits to, and are wrought thereby, and are what denominate and shew men to be carnal: these are said to be *manifest*: not that they are all, and always publicly done, and are open to the sight of men; for they are works of darkness, and often done in secret, though they are always manifest to God the searcher of hearts, and will be brought to light in the day of judgment; but they are known to be sins in some measure by the light of nature, and especially by the law of God; and a clear case it is, that they are contrary to the spirit, both to the spirit of God, and to the principle of grace he forms in the heart; and that such who live in the commission of them are not led by him, nor are under the influence of his grace: *which are these*; though all are not mentioned, only some of the chief, by which judgment may be made of the rest: *adultery*: this is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy; it is a defilement of the marriage-bed, and is the sin of uncleanness committed by two persons, one of which at least is in a married state, and is condemned by the law of God and light of nature: *fornication*: which though by many of the Gentiles was reckoned no sin, or a very small one, stands here among the works of the flesh, that are manifest and to be avoided; it is the sin of uncleanness committed by persons in a single state; *uncleanness*: it is a general name for all unchastity, in thought, word, or action; and may here design more especially all unnatural lusts, as *sodomy, self-pollution, &c. lasciviousness*: or wantonness, all lustful dalliance, every thing that leads on to acts of uncleanness, or attends them, as impure words, filthy gestures, and the like.

Ver. 20. *Idolatry, &c.*] Which some understand of covetousness, which is so called; but rather it means the worshipping of other gods, or of graven images: *witchcraft*: any real or pretended league and association with the devil, seeking to converse with familiar spirits, to gain unlawful knowledge, or to do hurt to fellow-creatures; which, as it is doing honour to Satan, detracts from the glory of God, and rightly follows idolatry; conjuration, soothsaying, necromancy, and all kind of magic are included and condemned hereby: *hatred*: internal hatred of any man's person, even of our very enemies, is forbidden; in the original text it is *emities*: as the carnal mind is nothing else but enmity against God and Christ, against law and Gospel, and all good men, and every thing that is good: *variance, or contentions*: fighting and quarreling, by words scandalous and reproachful, what we commonly call scolding: *emulations or zeds*: not good, but bad: a boiling and rising up of the spirits and passions, at the honour and happiness of another: *wrath or wraths*: violent emotions of the mind, moving to revenge, and seeking the hurt and mischief of others: *strife or strifes*: perpetual contradictions and cavillings, either expressed by words, or working in the mind; for this strife may be in a man's heart, according to Jam. iii. 14, 16. *seditions or divisions*: schisms and factions, discensious in things domestic, civil, and religious:

heresies: bad principles and tenets, relating to doctrine, which are subversive of the fundamentals of the Gospel and the Christian religion; and are the produce of a man's own invention, and the matter of his choice, without any foundation in the word of God; and these are works of the flesh, for they spring from a corrupt and carnal mind, and are propagated with carnal views, as popular applause, worldly advantage, and indulging the lusts of the flesh.

Ver. 21. *Envyings, &c.*] Uneasy distressing tortures of the mind, grieving at the good of others, that any should be in an equal, or in a better condition than themselves: *murders*, destroying of men's lives, which is often the consequence of the above evils: *drunkenness*; excess in drinking of wine or strong drink, whereby the stomach is overcharged, the mind is intoxicated, and the body enfeebled and unable to perform its office; this is often the source of many, or all of the works of the flesh before mentioned: *revellings*; excess in feed, nocturnal riotings in eating, drinking, dancing, singing, chambering and wantonness. The Syriac version renders it, *בגרות, lascivious singing*; and the Arabic version, *songs*: which are a part of the nightly revels: and such like: which are of the same nature and kind; so the apostle shuts up the account, it being too tedious to give an enumeration of all the works of the flesh; nor was it necessary, judgment may be made of the rest by these; nor might it be so proper, since the carnal heart is but the more pleased with, and irritated by, the mention of evil things: of the which I tell you before: before the judge comes and the awful judgment proceeds, when these will all be made manifest, and every man will be judged according to his works: this the apostle did, as putting them in mind of the evil nature of these things, and assuring them of the bad consequences that would follow, if grace prevented not: as I have also told you in time past; when he first preached among them, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come; he then laid before them the evil nature of these things, the dreadful effects of them, and shewed that there was no salvation from them, but by Christ: and that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God: by which is meant the heavenly glory, called a kingdom, because of the grandeur and magnificence of that state; and of God, because it is of his preparing and giving, what he calls his to by his grace, and puts them into the possession of, and where he reigns and will reign for ever, and shew forth the glory of his majesty: this is possessed in a way of inheritance, which shews it to be a bequest of our heavenly father's, a free-grace gift of his, and not to be obtained by the works of the law, or merits of men; but what belongs, and is peculiar to the children of God, who are so by adopting grace: now they that do such works of the flesh as before enumerated; that is, that live in the commission of these things, whose whole lives are employed in such work, living and dying in such a state, without repentance towards God and faith in Christ, shall never enjoy eternal life and happiness; though such who have done these things, being brought to a sense of them, and to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon and justification, for life and salvation; such,

notwithstanding the works of the flesh done by them, shall, through the free grace of God, and the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, inherit the kingdom and glory of God.

Ver. 22. *But the fruit of the spirit, &c.*] Not of nature or man's free will, as corrupted by sin, for no good fruit springs from thence; but either of the internal principle of grace, called the spirit, ver. 17. or rather of the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads it; the graces of which are called *fruit*, and not *works*, as the actions of the flesh are; because they are owing to divine influence efficacy, and bounty, as the fruits of the earth are, to which the allusion is; and not to a man's self, to the power and principles of nature; and because they arise from a seed, either the incorruptible seed of internal grace, which seminally contains all graces in it, or the blessed Spirit, who is the seed that remains in believers; and because they are in the exercise of them acceptable unto God through Christ, and are grateful and delightful to Christ himself, being *his pleasant fruits*; which as they come from him, as the author of them, they are exercised on him as the object of them, under the influence of the spirit; and because they are profitable to them that are possessed of them, seeing the promise of this life and that which is to come is annexed to them; and the good works which are done in consequence of them are profitable to men: once more, as the works of the flesh are the unfruitful works of darkness, and make men so, and therefore can't be called fruit properly; these, as they are fruits, and are rightly and properly so called, so they make men fruitful, and to abound in divine things, and are as follow: *Love*. This the apostle begins with, it being the fulfilling of the law, the bond of perfectness, and without which a profession of religion is insignificant; it may be understood of love to God, of which every man's heart is destitute, being enmity against God, until regenerated by the spirit of God; when he sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, and which is the ground and reason of any man's truly loving God: and also of love to Christ, which the natural man feels nothing of till the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, opens his eyes to see the loveliness of his person, the suitableness of his grace, righteousness, and fullness, and the necessity of looking to him for life and salvation; and likewise of love to the saints, which a carnal man is a stranger to, until he is renewed by the Holy Ghost, who in regenerating him teaches him to love the brethren; and which is the evidence of his having passed from death to life, through the mighty power of his grace. Moreover, love to the house and worship of God, to the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, all which men have naturally an aversion to, may be included in this first fruit of the spirit: the next follows, which is *joy*, even that which is in the Holy Ghost, and has him for its author. The object of it is God, not as an absolute God, but as a covenant God and father in Christ; as the God of salvation, as clothing with the robe of his son's righteousness, and as pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, full atonement being made by the sacrifice of Christ; who also is the object of this joy in his person, fullness, righteousness, offices, relations, and when beheld, embraced, and enjoyed in a way of com-

munion. This joy, likewise, which is the produce of the spirit, lies in spiritual things, and arises from an apprehension or good hope of interest in them, as justification, pardon, peace, adoption, and eternal glory; and is peculiar to such who have the spirit, for a stranger intermeddles not with this joy, nor can he form any judgment of it, and is even unspeakable by the believer himself. Moreover, joy in the good of others, of fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians, in their outward and inward prosperity, in their temporal, spiritual, and eternal good, which, as it is a grace of the spirit, may well enough be thought to be at least part of the sense of the word here; since it follows upon, and is joined with love, and stands between that and *peace*, which is another fruit of the spirit: and designs peace with God in a man's own conscience, produced there by the spirit of God, in consequence of peace being made by the blood of Christ; and that through the application of the blood of Christ for pardon, and of his righteousness for justification to the soul of a sensible sinner by the blessed Spirit, the effect of which is peace, quietness, and tranquillity of mind; also peace with men, with the saints, and with all others; for such who are under a work of the spirit of God, and are influenced and led by him, seek after the things which make for peace and edification among the brethren, and are desirous if possible to live peaceably with all men: hence appears another grace in them, *long-suffering*: which intends not so much a patient waiting for good things to come, for more grace, and for glory, through the spirit; but a patient bearing and enduring of present evils with joyfulness, being strengthened by the spirit with all might, according to his glorious power; being slow to anger, ready to forgive injuries, put up with affronts, and bear with, and forbear one another: and which is usually accompanied with *gentleness*, humanity, affability, courteousness, shewn both in words, gestures, and actions; in imitation of the gentleness of Christ, and agreeably to that wisdom, that heavenly doctrine of the Gospel, which, among other things, is said to be gentle, and easy to be entreated. To which is added *goodness*: and what else can come from the good spirit of God, the author of the good work of grace upon the soul? and which disposes it to acts of goodness unto men, in a natural, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelic way, for the benefit both of soul and body; and which must here be understood, and which is well-pleasing to God when done in the exercise of the following *grace, faith*: for though fidelity, both in words and actions, which is very ornamental to the Gospel, and a profession of religion may be meant; yet faith in Christ is not to be excluded, as it is generally by interpreters; for this is not of a man's self, nor have all men it: it is a gift of God, the operation of his power, and the work of his spirit, whence he is styled the spirit of faith; and which therefore must have a place among his fruits; and which lies and shews itself in believing in Christ for salvation, in embracing the doctrines of the Gospel, and making a profession of them, which is called the profession of faith; all which, when right, comes from the spirit of God.

Ver. 23. *Meekness, &c.*] Humility and lowliness of mind, of which Christ is an eminent example and pattern; and which the Holy Spirit from him transcribes

into the heart of a regenerate person ; and lies in having mean thoughts of himself, in walking humbly with God, acknowledging every favour, being thankful for every blessing, and depending on his grace, and in behaving with modesty and humility among men. The last of the fruits of the spirit mentioned is *temperance*, or *continnence* ; and designs both chastity and sobriety, and particularly moderation in eating and drinking. It may be observed, that these fruits of the spirit are opposed to the works of the flesh. So love is opposed to hatred ; joy to emulations and envying ; peace to variance, strife, and seditions ; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness, to wrath and murders ; faith to idolatry, witchcraft, and heresies ; and temperance to adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, and revellings. *Against such there is no law* ; meaning, against such fruits, graces, and good things ; these being perfectly agreeable to the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, and spiritual ; and are so far from being forbidden by it, that they are highly esteemed and approved of by it : or against persons that are possessed of such fruits ; for these appear to be in the spirit, and to be led by the spirit ; and therefore are not under the law, and have nothing to fear from it, as a terrifying, accusing, cursing, and condemning law. The works of the flesh, and they that are of the flesh, are such that come under the notice and lash of the law ; and not the fruits of the spirit, and they that are after the spirit, as such are who partake of his fruit.

Ver. 24. *And they that are Christ's, &c.* Not all as yet that are secretly so, who are chosen in him, and by him, are given by the father to him in covenant, and whom he has purchased by his blood, and considers as his people, his sheep, and his children, though as yet they are not called by his grace ; of these, as yet, what follows cannot be said, and therefore must mean such as are openly Christ's, whom he has laid hold on as his own in effectual vocation, who have his spirit as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, who have truly believed in Christ, and have given up themselves unto him. *Have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts* : by the *flesh* is meant, not the natural body to be macerated and afflicted with fastings, watchings, &c. but the corruption of nature, the old man and carnal heart. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *their own flesh* ; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions ; their concern lying with their own, and not with the corruptions, affections, and lusts of others. By the *affections and lusts* are intended, not the natural affections and passions of the soul, and the desires of it ; but its vile and inordinate affections, its corrupt inclinations, evil desires, and deceitful lusts ; all which are *crucified first with Christ*, as the Arabic version reads ; see Rom. vi. 6. and which are so abolished, done away, and destroyed, by the sacrifice of Christ, that the damning power of them over his people is entirely gone. And in consequence of this crucifixion of the body of sin, with Christ upon the cross, when he finished and made an end of it, sin, with its passions and lusts, is cruci-

fied by the spirit of God in regeneration and sanctification ; so that it loses its governing power, and has not the dominion it had before : not but that the flesh, or corrupt nature, with its evil affections, and carnal lusts, are still in being, and are alive ; as a person fastened to a cross may be alive, though he can't act and move as before, being under restraints, so the old man, though crucified, and under the restraints of mighty grace, and can't reign and govern as before, yet is alive, and acts, and operates, and oftentimes has great sway and influence ; but whereas he is deprived of his reigning power, he is said to be crucified : and though this act is ascribed to them that are Christ's, yet not as done by them in their own strength, who are not able to grapple with one corruption, but as under the influence of the grace of Christ, and through the power of his spirit ; see Rom. viii. 13.

Ver. 25. *If we live in the spirit, &c.* Or *by the spirit*, as all do that are spiritually alive. Sin has not only brought on men a corporeal death, and made them liable to an eternal one, but has also induced upon them a spiritual or moral death ; they are dead in trespasses and sin, nor can they quicken themselves, nor can any creature give them life ; not the ministers of the word, nor the angels in heaven, only the blessed Spirit is the spirit of life from Christ ; who entering into them, frees them from the law of sin and death, and implants a principle of spiritual life in them, whereby they live a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, and communion with him : and this the apostle makes use of, as an argument with believers to walk after the spirit, *let us also walk in the spirit* : or *by the spirit* ; by his help and assistance, according to the rule of his word, and under his influence and direction as a guide, to which he had before advised in ver. 18.

Ver. 26. *Let us not be desirous of vain glory, &c.* Ambitious of being thought wiser, and richer, and more valuable than others ; of having the pre-eminence in the management of all affairs, and of having honour, esteem, and popular applause from men : this may well be called vain glory, since it is only in outward things, as wisdom, riches, strength, and honour, and not in God the giver of them, and who can easily take them away ; and therefore is but for a time, and is quickly gone, and lies only in the opinion and breath of men. *Provoking one another* ; not to good works, which would be right, but to anger and wrath, which is contrary to Christian charity, or true love ; which, as it is not easily provoked, so neither will it provoke others to evil things. The Syriac version renders it by *מקלץ*, *slighting*, or *despising one another* ; and the Arabic version, *insulting one another* ; vices to which men, and even Christian brethren in the same communion, are too prone. *Envyng one another* ; their gifts and abilities, natural and spiritual ; their rank and station in the world, or in the church. These were sins the Galatians very probably were subject to ; and where they prevail, there's confusion, and every evil work, and are therefore to be watched and guarded against.

C H A P. VI.

IN this chapter the apostle exhorts to the exercise of various things, which greatly become professors of religion, such as meekness towards backsliders, love to the saints, modesty in themselves, and beneficence to others; exposes the hypocrisy and ambition of the false teachers, in order that the Galatians might beware of them, and not be ensnared by them; and gives an account of his own disposition, conduct, and sufferings, as a rule and example to them, and by which they might judge of the difference between him and the false apostles; and concludes the epistle with his apostolical salutation and benediction. Having mentioned the fruits of the spirit in the preceding chapter, he singles out some of them, and a little enlarges upon them; and begins with meekness, as that should be used by spiritual men to fallen believers, which he persuades to, not only because they are brethren, and but men, and have been overtaken in sin unawares; but because, though they themselves are spiritual, yet should consider they are liable to be tempted, ver. 1. And next he advises to shew their love to one another, by bearing each other's burdens, which he enforces by this argument, it being a fulfilling the law of Christ, ver. 2. And whereas pride and haughtiness lie in the way of such a deportment, he dissuades from a vain opinion of a man's self, that being no other than self-deception, ver. 3. and observes, that a man will have the best view of himself, and see what occasion he has for glorying, when he considers himself simply and nakedly, and not in comparison with others, ver. 4. and there is good reason why he should do so, seeing every man must give an account of his own actions, be judged according to them, and receive his reward or punishment, ver. 5. Hence the apostle passes to liberality and beneficence, and first to teachers of the word, to whom such as are taught by them should communicate, and that in good things, and in all good things, ver. 6. The arguments used to enforce this exhortation are, that to do otherwise is a deception of themselves, and is a mocking of God; and besides, they shall be treated according to their actions, the use or abuse of what God has given them, signified by a proverbial expression, what a man sows, that shall he reap, ver. 7. which is enlarged upon and illustrated, by observing, that he that spends his substance merely on himself, and on carnal pleasures, and to indulge the flesh, the issue of things to him will be ruin, temporal and eternal; but he that lays out his substance on spiritual things, and for spiritual purposes, the issue will be life everlasting, ver. 8. Wherefore the apostle renews the exhortation to be bountiful without weariness, seeing there is a reaping-time a-coming, ver. 9. and then points out the persons in general to whom good is to be done as opportunity offers, even all men, but especially such as are believers in Christ, are of his family, and particularly stewards there, as ministers of the Gospel are, ver. 10. And thus the apostle, having finished what he chiefly intended in this epistle, observes to the Galatians the great regard he had to

them, shewn in writing to them so long a letter, and that with his own hand, ver. 11. And as his chief view was to detect the false apostles, he can't conclude without taking some further notice of them, which he does by exposing their hypocrisy and ambition; they only made a shew of religion outwardly, and obliged others to do that, which they did not choose themselves, namely, to be circumcised; and their ends in all this were, that they might be free from persecution, and have matter of glorying in the proselytes they made, ver. 12, 13. but the apostle was of a quite different temper and disposition; so far was he from glorying in his own flesh, or others, that his determination was to glory only in Christ, and in his cross, and that for this reason, because the world thereby was crucified to him, and he unto the world, ver. 14. as also, because circumcision, which the false teachers obliged to, and gloried in, and likewise uncircumcision, were of no avail in religious, spiritual, and eternal affairs, but a new creature, ver. 15. and this is what every one ought to attend unto as the rule of his walk and conduct, since upon such shall be mercy and peace, as upon the Israel of God, ver. 16. And whereas the false apostles boasted of the flesh, and circumcision in it, the apostle opposes thereunto the marks of his sufferings for Christ, which he bore in his body; and therefore with great gravity and authority charges, that no man should give him any further trouble about what had been the subject-matter of this epistle, ver. 17. and closes it with his usual salutation, expressing his affection for the Galatians, as his brethren, wishing the best of blessings for them, the grace of Christ, and that this might be in their hearts, and with their spirits, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, &c.*] Or *be taken before* in one; not, as Grotius thinks, before this epistle should come to them, which is a very jejune and empty sense of the words; nor before the conversion of the man, because sins before conversion don't come under the notice and cognizance of a church, or are liable to its reproofs and censures; but before the man is aware, through negligence and imprudence, for want of caution and circumspection. and so is carried away, either through the treachery of his own heart, and the power of corruption; or through the temptations of Satan, who goes about, and comes on the back of them, lays snares for them, and attacks them unawares, and takes all advantages of them; or by the ill examples of others, whereby they are drawn aside, and into sin. The apostle has no particular respect by a *fault* to schisms in the church, or to any errors or heresies in doctrine, though the restoration of such in meekness should be endeavoured; but rather to immorality in life and conversation, and indeed to any of the works of the flesh mentioned in the preceding chapter; and especially he means any *fall* of professors, as the word used signifies, into sin, through inadvertency and want of care and watchfulness, in distinction from a wilful, ob-

stinate, and continued course of sinning; and intends not any man in the world, for those that are without, churches and members of churches have nothing to do with in a church-way; but any man that is a brother, a church-member, that stands in such a relation to them, when he falls into sin, is to be taken notice of by them. And so the Syriac version reads, *any one of you*; as does one of Stephens's copies. *Ye that are spiritual*: meaning not such who had greater spiritual gifts than others, their ministers, pastors, and ecclesiastical governors, though these may be so called; and to them it belongs to reprove and rebuke, recover and restore backsliders, which they should do in gentleness and meekness; but the apostle here addresses the brethren in general, the several members of the church, even all but those that were fallen: nor does he mean such as have more spiritual knowledge than others, in opposition to babes; nor regenerate persons, and such as had the spirit of God, in distinction from carnal men; but such as live and walk in the spirit, and are strong, and stand by the power and grace of the spirit of God, as opposed to the weak, and who were fallen through the prevalency of the flesh, and force of temptation; whose duty it is, and on whom it lies, to *restore such an one*, that is overtaken and fallen. The allusion is to the setting of bones that are broken, or out of joint, which is done with great care and tenderness. Professors fallen into sin are like broken and dislocated bones; they are out of their place, and lose both their comfort and usefulness, and are to be restored by gently telling them of their faults, and mildly reproving them for them; and when sensible of them, and troubled for them, by speaking comfortably to them, and by bringing them again, and resettling them in their former place in the church, and restoring them to their former usefulness and good conduct: and which is to be done *in the spirit of meekness*: in the exercise of that grace which is a gift and fruit of the spirit of God; or with a meek and humble spirit, not bearing hard upon them, and treating them in a supercilious and haughty manner, upbraiding them with their faults, aggravating them, and using them roughly, and with sharpness, which in some cases is necessary, but not in this: *considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*; a spiritual man should consider himself as in the body, and as carrying about with him a body of sin, a corrupt and treacherous heart, that is full of deceitful lusts, by which he may be tempted also, and drawn away and enticed; and as being liable to the temptations of Satan, and of being overcome by them, against which he should watch and pray; and should think with himself what he would choose, and should desire to be done to him in such a case, and do the like to others that are in it. This is a reason enforcing the exhortation; and indeed almost every word in the text carries an argument engaging to it. The relation the saints stand in to one another, as *brethren*, should excite them to seek each other's welfare, and to restore any that are fallen, and to abstain from all roughness and severity. The persons addressed are *spiritual*, and therefore should behave as such as have the fruits of the spirit, and, among the rest

that of meekness; and, since they are strong, should help the weak, and raise up the fallen: the persons recommended to them, as the objects of their pity, care, and concern, are not such who have given up themselves to sin, but are circumvented by it, and overtaken in it, suddenly, and at unawares. And besides, are *men*, frail sinful men, liable to sin, encompassed with infirmities, and exposed to snares and temptations, which are common to human nature, and therefore should be used gently and tenderly: The apostle having given an enumeration in the foregoing chapter, of the works of the flesh, and fruits of the spirit, directs such as are in the exercise of the latter, how to behave towards those that fall into the commission of any of the former, which may be expected, since there is flesh as well as spirit in the best.

Ver. 2. *Bear ye one another's burdens, &c.*] Which may be understood either of sins, which are heavy burdens to sensible sinners, to all that are partakers of the grace of God; Christ is only able to bear these burdens, so as to remove them and take them away, which he has done by his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; saints bear one another's, not by making satisfaction for them, which they are not able to do, nor by conniving at them, and suffering them upon them, which they should not do, but by gently reproving them, by comforting them when overpressed with guilt, by sympathising with them in their sorrow, by praying to God for to manifest his pardoning grace to them, and by forgiving them themselves, so far as they are faults committed against them: or else the frailties and infirmities of weak saints, which are troublesome, and apt to make uneasy, are meant; and which are to be bore by the strong, by making themselves easy with them, and by accommodating themselves to their weakness, and by abridging themselves of some liberties, which otherwise might be lawfully taken by them; or afflictions may be designed, which are grievous to the flesh, and are bore by others, when they administer help and relief under them, whether in a temporal or spiritual way; and when they condole them, and sympathise with them, bear a part with them, and make others' griefs and sorrows their own: *and so fulfil the law of Christ*: which is the law of love to one another, John xiii. 34, 35. in opposition to the law of Moses, the *judaising* Galatians were so fond of, and by which Christ's disciples may be distinguished from those of Moses, or any others. This is a law or doctrine which Christ has clearly taught, and recovered from the false glosses of the Pharisees; it is his new commandment, which he has strengthened and enforced by his own example in dying for his people, and which he, by his spirit, inscribes upon their hearts. The Jews speak of the law of the Messiah as preferable to any other. "The law (they say²) which a man learns in this world is vanity, in comparison of *משיח של משיח*, "the law of the Messiah, or Christ." by fulfilling it is meant, doing it, acting in obedience to it, and not a perfect fulfilling it, which can't be done by sinful creatures.

Ver. 3. *For if a man think himself to be something, &c.*] Of himself; to have any thing of himself, to

² Midrash Kohélet, fol. 83. 1.

do any thing of himself, and of himself to attain to life and salvation: *when he is nothing*: of himself; not even as a creature, but owes his being and preservation, and all the mercies of life, to another, even to God; has no grace nor gifts of himself, but what he has received, and can do no good thing, not think a good thought, or perform a good action, of himself, and much less of himself procure eternal life and salvation: *he deceiveth himself*: and will find himself sadly mistaken, and wretchedly disappointed another day; or whoever thinks himself to become famous and excellent person, to be something more, and better than others, of a more excellent nature, and of greater abilities, that he is free from sin, or at least holier than others, and not liable to fall as others, whom he looks upon with disdain and contempt, wanting that charity which the law, and new commandment of Christ, requires, when he is nothing but sin and vanity, he's destitute of the grace of God, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him. This the apostle says to depress pride, and a swelling conceit of themselves, and all uncharitable, rough, and severe usages of others. A saying like this the Jews have: "whoever he is that is something, or thinks in himself that he is *כלום*, something, it would be better for him if he had never been created.

Ver. 4. *But let every man prove his own work, &c.* Not concern himself about the actions and works of others; let him review his own heart and actions; let him examine, try, and prove his whole conduct in life by the rule of God's word, when he'll find enough at home, without bearing hard upon, and censuring others: *and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another*: which is either ironically said, he'll then see what reason he has to rejoice and glory in his own works, and vaunt over others, and to boast of his performances, and despise others; so far from it, that he'll have reason to be ashamed of himself, and to own and acknowledge his unworthiness and unprofitableness: or if, upon such a review, examination, and probation of his works, it shall appear that he has had his conversation in the world, by the grace of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity, this testimony of his conscience will be his rejoicing; see 2Cor. i. 12. He may rejoice *in himself*, in his own works, as the fruits of grace, but not as the effects of his own power and strength; and may glory and boast of them before men, in vindication of his cause and character, and as evidences of the truth of grace, but not before God, as if they were the matter of his justification and acceptance: *and not in another*; that is fallen into sin; making use of his sins and faults to set off himself, and to increase his own praise and condemnation; rejoicing in this, that he is better than others, and is not, as the Pharisee said, as other men are, as wicked as they, or has not fallen into such sins as others have done. He'll have occasion to take such a method as this, if his conversation will bear the test; he'll have rejoicing in the testimony of his own conscience, and will have no need to compare himself with others; his glorying will be on account of his own actions, and not through a comparison of other men's. This no ways

contradicts a man's glorying in God, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus alone, in the business of salvation. It only regards a man's glorying before men, in a modest and humble manner, of what he is enabled to do, by the grace of God, without fetching in the characters of other men that are wicked, or have fallen, to illustrate his own.

Ver. 5. *For every man shall bear his own burden.* That is, either do his own work, which God has allotted him to do, whether in a more public or private station of life; which, because it is generally troublesome to the flesh, is called a *burden*, and *his own*, being peculiar to himself, and in which no other is concerned; and which he should patiently bear, cheerfully attend to, and constantly and faithfully perform whilst in this world: or he shall give an account of his own actions, and not another's, to God, in the other world; he shall be judged according to his own works, what they are in themselves, and not by a comparison of other men's, who have been more wicked than he; which will be no rule of judgment with God, nor of any advantage to man. Every wicked man will bear his own burden; that is, the punishment of his own sins, and not another's; so the judgments of God, inflicted on men in this world, are often called *כבשן*, a burden; see Isa. xiii. 1. and xv. 1. and xvii. 1. and xix. 1. and xxi. 1. 11. and so may the punishment of the wicked in another world, which will be grievous and intolerable. The saints will be exempt from bearing this burden, because Christ has bore it for them, even all their sins, and all the punishment due unto them; but another burden, if it may be so called, even an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, shall be bore by them; and every man shall receive his own reward, and not another's; and that according to his own works and labour, and not another's; not indeed for his works, but according to them, the nature of them, according to the grace of God, from whence his works spring, and by which they are performed. This the apostle says to take off men from dwelling upon, and censuring the actions of others, and from making use of them to set off their own, and buoy themselves up with vain hopes, because they are better than others; and also to engage them to attend strictly to their own actions, and consider them simply and absolutely as in themselves, and not as compared with other men's, since they will be accountable for their own actions, and not other men's; and will be judged according to their own works, and not in a comparative view to others.

Ver. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, &c.* Instructed in the knowledge of the word, either of the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, of his person, office, and grace; or rather of the written word, particularly the Gospel, which is sometimes called the word, without any additional epithet, which distinguishes it, and directs to the sense of it; and sometimes with such, as the words of truth, the word of faith, the word of righteousness, the word of reconciliation, and the word of this salvation, so called from the nature, use, and subject-matter of it. He that is taught in this, is, according to the original word used here, a *catechumen*; and which designs not one that is just beginning to learn the first principles of the oracles of God, but any one

that is instructed in it, as this word is rendered in Rom. ii. 18. whether more or less, or whether internally or externally; one that is internally taught in and by the word, is one that has been taught to know himself, and his lost state by nature; to know Christ, and salvation by him; to know the truths of the Gospel, and to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. It may include every one that is only outwardly taught, that is but an external hearer; and so the Syriac version renders the clause, *דשמע מלתא*, *he that hears the word*: of which there are many sorts, and on whom it is an incumbent duty to *communicate to him that teacheth*: who is commissioned, and qualified and sent forth by Christ, and whose office in the church is to teach the word, to preach the Gospel, to instruct men in the truths of it, and teach them their duty also to God and men, such are to be communicated to; that is, such as are under their instructions ought to impart of their worldly substance to them, for their honourable and comfortable support and maintenance; for since they spend their time, and make use of their talents, gifts, and abilities, for their instruction in spiritual things, it is but reasonable, and no such great matter, that they partake of their carnal things; and especially since it is the will and ordinance of Christ, that they that preach the Gospel should live of it. The apostle adds, *in all good things*; which may be either connected with the word *teacheth*, and so be descriptive of the teacher, as the Arabic version reads, *him that teacheth all his good things*; good doctrines, excellent truths, the wholesome words of Christ, which he is intrusted with, has a knowledge and experience of; and who freely and faithfully imparts them, and conceals and keeps back nothing, but declares the whole counsel of God, all that he knows, and that is good and profitable; and carries in it a very strong argument why he should be communicated to: or else with the word *communicate*; and the sense either be, let him be a partaker of, and join with him in every thing he says or does that is good, but not in any thing that is evil, which is a sense some give into; or rather let him impart of his temporal good things unto him: temporal things are good as they are of God, and in themselves, and when rightly used answer good purposes; all a man's good things are not to be communicated, only a part, according to his ability, and in proportion to others; and yet the communication should be large and liberal, sufficient to support the teacher in an honourable manner, and to supply him with all the necessities of life, that his mind may be free from secular cares, and he be at leisure to attend to the instructing of others.

Ver. 7. *Be not deceived, &c.*] By false teachers, who, in order to engross all to themselves, dissuaded the Galatians from communicating to their honourable pastors, and faithful ministers of the word; or by themselves, who being of a tenacious and covetous disposition, devised various things to excuse them from performing this their duty to the preachers of the Gospel; as that they had families of their own to maintain, that their circumstances were such that they could give little or nothing this way, and that others, who were of better abilities in life, ought to bear this

charge; and with such-like things endeavoured to satisfy their consciences in the neglect of their duty: but this was all self-deception, for *God is not mocked*; nor will he be; men may deceive themselves, and others, with such excuses and false appearances, yet they cannot deceive God, who knows their hearts as well as their worldly substance, and that the omission of their duty arises not from want of ability, but from a covetous temper; and who looks upon withholding from his ministers that which is due unto them as a mocking of him, and which he will not suffer with impunity: *for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*: as to kind, quality, and quantity, generally speaking; if he sows wheat he reaps wheat, if he sows barley he reaps barley; no man can expect to reap another sort than what he sows; and if it is good seed he may hope for a good crop; and if he sows bountifully, he shall reap bountifully; but if he sows sparingly, he shall reap sparingly; and if he sows nothing, he can never reap anything. This is a proverbial expression, and may be applied to all actions, good and bad, and the reward and punishment of them, and particularly to acts of beneficence, and the enjoying of the fruits thereof; see the note on 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Ver. 8. *For he that soweth to his flesh, &c.*] Not that taking due care of a man's body, seeking the preservation of its health, providing proper food and raiment for himself, and all necessaries for the good and support of his family, is to be called sowing to his flesh, nor is he to be called a carnal sower; but he is such an one that pampers his flesh, gratifies and indulges the lusts of it, who minds the things of the flesh, lives after it, and does the works of it, who spends his substance in a luxurious way upon himself and family; or whose whole bent, and study, and employment, is to increase his worldly riches, to aggrandize himself and posterity, to the neglect of his own soul, the interest of religion, the poor of the church, and ministers of the Gospel: *shall of the flesh reap corruption*; shall by such carnal methods procure for himself, in this world, nothing but what is corruptible, as silver and gold be, and such treasure as moth and rust corrupt; such substance as will not endure, but is perishing, and may be by one providence or another taken from him; so that all his care in sowing comes to nothing, and is of no advantage to himself, nor to his posterity; see Hagg. i. 4, 5, 6. and shall fall into the pit of corruption, and be punished with everlasting destruction, and die the second death in the world to come. *But he that soweth to the spirit*; not his own, but the spirit of God; or that soweth spiritual things, that minds and savours the things of the spirit, lives in the spirit, and walks in the spirit; that lays out his worldly substance in promoting spiritual things, in encouraging the spiritual ministers of the word, in supporting the interest of spiritual religion, in relieving the poor of Christ's churches, in contributing to the spread of the Gospel, and the administration of the word and ordinances in other places, as well as where he is more immediately concerned: *shall of the spirit reap life everlasting*; in the use of such spiritual means, though not as meritorious, or as causes, he shall attain to, and enjoy eternal happiness in the other world;

or of, and by the spirit of God, by whose grace and strength he sows, and does all the good things he does, by and of him sanctifying him, and making him meet for it, and not of himself, or any works of righteousness done by him, shall he inherit eternal life; which is the pure gift of God through Jesus Christ, and bestowed as a reward of his own grace.

Ver. 9. *And let us not be weary in well doing, &c.*] This may be understood of well doing, or doing good works in general, of every sort; which are such as are done according to the will of God, from a principle of love to him, in faith, and in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God: or else acts of beneficence to Christ's ministers and poor in particular; which are agreeable to the mind of God, and well-pleasing in his sight: and in doing which men should not be weary; nor are they, when their spiritual strength is renewed, and grace is in exercise, though they may meet with many things which tend to discourage and make them weary; such as change in their own circumstances, losses in the world, the multitude of objects, the ungratefulness of some, and unworthiness of others: *for in due time we shall reap*; either in this world, sooner or later; in proper time, in God's own time, by enjoying an increase of the fruits of righteousness; for the seed sown shall spring up again; the bread that is cast on the waters will be found after many days; and such as honour the Lord with their substance shall be blessed with plenty of temporal good things, either they or theirs: or else in the other world, or at the end of this; which will be the harvest-time, the reaping-time, the time of enjoying eternal life: *if we faint not*; but continue to the end, persevere constantly in doing acts of beneficence, and patiently wait, as the husbandman does, for the precious fruits of the earth; for there must be a distance of time between sowing and reaping; men must not expect to reap as soon as they sow; and therefore should not be weary of sowing, nor impatient in waiting, though they don't see as yet the appearance of the fruits thereof; for in their season they'll be seen and enjoyed.

Ver. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, &c.*] Or *ability*, so the phrase is sometimes used*; as occasion requires, objects offer, as there is ability of well doing, and that continues; while the time of life lasts, which is the time for sowing, or doing good works: *let us do good unto all men*: not only to our relations, friends, and acquaintance, but to all men; to them that are strangers to us, of whatsoever nation, Jew or Gentile; and of whatsoever religion or sect, yea, even to our very enemies: *especially unto them who are of the household of faith*: the children of God, that belong to his family, are true believers in Christ, hold the doctrine of faith, make a profession of it, and keep it fast; these are more especially to be the objects of Christian beneficence and liberality. The apostle may have some reference to a practice among the Jews, who took a particular care of the children of good men that were poor; "there were two chambers in the temple, the one was called the chamber of secrets, and the " other the chamber of vessels: into the chamber of

" secrets, religious men used to put privately, where-
" by were privately maintained the poor נְבוֹיִם
" of the children of good men". The Targumist on Jer. v. 3. has a phrase much like to this applied to God, paraphrasing the passage thus; is it not, O Lord, revealed before thee, לאומתא לעבדי דימנרה, *to do good to the servants of faith?*

Ver. 11. *Ye see how large a letter, &c.*] Whether it be read as imperative, *see ye*, observe, take notice; or as indicative, *ye see*, ye do see, or you may see with your own eyes, it is of no great consequence: *how large a letter*, or *with what letters*; which some understand of the largeness of the characters he wrote in; others of the deformity of them, he not writing a good hand, being an Hebrew, and not used to writing Greek; others of the grand and sublime matter which it contained; though neither of these seem to be the apostle's meaning; but he intends the length of the epistle, the prolixity of his writing; and which he mentions, as an instance and expression of his love to them, care of them, and concern for them: inasmuch as he took so much pains to write so long a letter to them, in order to set things right in their view, and recover them from error: not but that he had sent as long, or longer letters to other churches, as to the Romans, the Corinthians, and Hebrews: but then it is to be observed what follows, *I have written unto you with my own hand*. The epistle to the Romans was written by Tertius, though dictated by the apostle, Rom. xvi. 22. as very likely the others were by Timothy, or some other amanuensis. The apostle only put his name, and wrote his salutation, which was his token, in all his epistles, of the truth and genuineness of them; 2 Thess. iii. 17. but this was not only dictated by him, but wrote with his hand, which very probably the Galatians knew; and since it was not usual for him to do so, it was the greater proof of his affection for them; that amidst so much work, and such labours as he was employed in, he should sit down and write so long an epistle to them with his own hand, in order to expose the errors of the false teachers, and reclaim them.

Ver. 12. *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, &c.*] By whom are meant the false apostles, who are here described, and their views, aims, and ends, opened and exposed. These were very desirous to carry a good face of things outwardly, of appearing outwardly righteous before men, and to be accounted so by them; and therefore did all they did to be seen of them, and gain applause from them. They were such, as the Syriac version renders the words, as desired דְּנִשְׁתַּבְּחָהוּ, *to glory in the flesh*: in their carnal descent and privileges, in their being Hebrews, the seed of Abraham, of the stock of Israel; and in the circumcision of their flesh; or in their external gifts, their natural parts, acquired abilities, learning, eloquence, and the like: moreover, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, *they were willing to please in the flesh*: to please carnal men, Israel after the flesh, in carnal and fleshly things; they sought not to please God or Christ, but men, and so were not the servants of either. They were desirous, as the Arabic version renders the words, *that honour should be done them in*

* See Hammond on Phil. iv. 10.

* Misn. She'qulim, c. 5. sect. 6.

the flesh; they sought external glory from men, and to be outwardly and publicly honoured by them; and all their religion was a mere outward shew, a piece of pageantry; which lay in the observation of carnal ordinances, such as respected meats and drinks, circumcision in the flesh, and other carnal commandments: *they constrain you to be circumcised*; not by using any outward force and violence; but either by their example, which had great influence, as that has both with respect to the embracing of evil principles, and giving in to bad practices: or by their doctrine; the arguments they made use of to persuade them to it, being formed and managed with great art and subtlety, wrought strongly upon them: or rather by overawing them, with threatenings of hell and damnation; affirming, that unless they were circumcised, they could not be saved: and their end was, *only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ*, or by the cross of Christ; meaning either the manner in which persecution might be suffered, as by being reproached, ill used, and suffering death as Christ did; or by bearing the cross of affliction and tribulation Christ has appointed for, and calls his followers to; or else the object for which it is endured, the preaching of the cross, or the Gospel of salvation by a crucified Christ; for this doctrine, and the preaching and professing of it, and living a life answerable to it, always bring persecution with them: and that persecution, which is more especially here regarded, was what came from the Jews, who in general were greatly offended at the preaching of a crucified Christ; and particularly from the professing part among them, who though they believed in Christ, and were not displeas'd at preaching in his name; yet were greatly affronted at, and highly resented, and as much as in them lay, by reproaches and hard censures, and the like, persecuted those who oppos'd circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law; and to avoid the ill will, contempt, and persecution of these, the false teachers preach'd up circumcision, and oblig'd their people to submit to it.

Ver. 13. *But neither they themselves that are circumcised, &c.*] That is, the pleaders for, and preachers of circumcision, whether they themselves were actually circumcised, or no; it means those that were of the circumcision, on that side of the question, whether heartily or not: *keep the law*: of circumcision, as persons may preach up that, which they themselves don't practise; as did the Pharisees, the predecessors of these men; or if they did keep the law, and submit to it, yet this might be done, not out of regard unto it, and zeal for it, but for some other end; as Simon Magus submitted to baptism, and others preach'd Christ of envy and contention, and not of good will; or if they did do it in obedience to the law, yet this was not keeping the whole law, which circumcision oblig'd to; and which, unless they did so keep it, would signify nothing; and this no man is capable of keeping perfectly, and consequently no righteousness, life, and salvation, can be had hereby: besides, though these men were so zealous for the lighter matters of the law, the rites and ceremonies of it, as circumcision, &c. they disregarded the weightier and more material parts of it, as judgment, mercy, and faith; these they kept not, nor attended to: and many of them lived very dissolute lives and

conversations, at least secretly, if not openly; which abundantly prov'd that they were far from keeping the law; and that their pleading for it, and submitting to some of the rituals of it, were not out of pure love and strict regard to it, but for some other end: *but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh*; that is, in the circumcision of it; or, as the Ethiopic version, *in your bodies*. Their view in bringing persons to submit to circumcision was, that they might have occasion to glory among the Jews, and boast to them of the numbers of proselytes they brought, and of the service they did to Judaism, and so increase their fame and glory among them.

Ver. 14. *But God forbid that I should glory, &c.*]

The apostle, on the contrary, expresses his aversion to glorying in any thing these men did; not in his outward carnal privileges, as a Jew; nor in his moral, civil, and legal righteousness; nor in his gifts and attainments; nor in his labours and success, as of himself; nor in the flesh of others, or in any outward corporeal subjection to any ordinance, legal or evangelical; his glorying and rejoicing were rather in the spirituality, the faith, hope, love, patience, order, and steadfastness of the saints, than in any thing in the flesh, either his own or others: and indeed he chose not to glory in any thing, *save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*; meaning either the infirmities, reproaches, tribulations, and persecutions, which he endured for the sake of Christ, and the preaching of his Gospel; or the Gospel, the doctrine of the cross of Christ, and salvation by it: or rather a crucified Christ himself, whom he preach'd; though count'd foolishness by some, and was a stumbling to others: he gloried in him, and determin'd to know, and make known, none but him, in the business of salvation; he gloried in him as crucified, and in his cross; not in the wood of the cross, but in the effects of his crucifixion; in the peace, pardon, righteousness, life, salvation, and eternal glory, which come through the death of the cross; he gloried in Christ as his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: *by whom the world is crucified to me*: so that he feared not the worst men, and things in it, any more than he would one that was fasten'd to a cross, or dead; since Christ, by his crucifixion and death, had overcome the world, the prince of it, the men and malice of it, the sin that was in it, and had made him more than a conqueror also; his faith in a crucified Christ overcame the world likewise; so that he look'd upon it as the Israelites saw the Egyptians, dead on the sea-shore; nor did he affect and love, but trampled upon and despised, as crucified persons generally are, those things in it which are the most alluring to the flesh, the lusts of it; the doctrine of grace, of a crucified Christ, taught him to deny the riches, honours, pleasures, profits, and applause of the world; which were to him as dross, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord: the ceremonial law also, the elements of the world, were dead unto him, being nail'd to the cross of Christ, to be of no further use and service unto men: *and I unto the world*: that is, am crucified to the world, as the Syriac and Arabic versions express it; that is, he was despised by the world for the sake of a crucified Christ, as the world was by him, in comparison

of him; the world had no affection for him, as he had none for the world; and as the ceremonial law was dead to him, so he was dead to that, through the body of Christ, and had nothing to do with these beggarly elements, nor they with him, which sense is confirmed by the following words.

Ver. 15. *For in Christ Jesus, &c.*] These words are omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; see the note on ch. v. 6. and 1 Cor. vii. 19. they contain a reason why the apostle gloried in a crucified Christ, and looked upon the world as dead to him, and he to that, in every sense of it; particularly as it may design the worldly sanctuary of the Jews, and all the rites and ceremonies appertaining to it; and among the rest *circumcision, which availeth not any thing*; neither as a command, type, or privilege; or in the business of salvation, being abolished by Christ: *nor uncircumcision*; being now no bar to the Gospel, Gospel ordinances, or a Gospel church-state; or to any of the blessings of the everlasting covenant, which come upon the uncircumcision, as well as the circumcision. But to apply these words to baptism and non-baptism is a wretched perversion, and making a very ill use of them, whereby the minds of men are worked up to an indifference to a Christian institution; for though baptism is of no avail in the business of salvation, yet it can't be said of it, as of circumcision, that it avails not any thing as a command; for it is a standing ordinance of Christ; or as an emblem and sign, for it is significative of the death and burial, and resurrection of Christ; or as a privilege, for it is of use to lead the faith of God's people to his blood and righteousness for pardon and justification; for he that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved; and it is necessary to church-communion: and, on the other hand, it can't be said that non-baptism avails not; it is a bar to church-fellowship; and a neglect of baptism in those who are the proper subjects of it, is resented by Christ, and is a rejecting of the counsel of God against themselves; which was the case of the Pharisees, in the time of John the Baptist: *but a new creature*. The phrase is Rabbinical; see the note on 2 Cor. v. 17. by which is meant, not a new creation of a man, as a man, of the members of his body, or of the faculties of his soul; nor of an external reformation, or a walking in newness of life, which is the fruit and effect of this new creation-work; but an internal principle of grace, a good work of God begun in the soul, called the hidden man of the heart, the new man, Christ formed in us, of which faith that works by love is a part: this is called a *creature*, and so not of man, but God; for none can create but himself; and in which work man is purely passive, as the heavens and the earth were in their creation: 'tis *but a creature*, and therefore needs divine support, fresh strength from God, and frequent supplies of grace to maintain and preserve it; nor is it to be trusted in, but the grace which is in Christ, from whence it comes, and by which it is secured. This is a *new creature*, in opposition to the old man; and because it is a principle in man, which never was there before; it consists of a new heart and spirit, of new eyes, ears, hands, and feet, expressive of new principles and actions, of new light, life, love, desires, joys, comforts, and duties:

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now this is of avail; 'tis a branch of the new covenant of grace, which God has therein promised to bestow on his people; 'tis an evidence of interest in Christ, the new and living way to the father, and eternal life; such are new-born babes, regenerated persons, and have a right and meetness for the kingdom of God; shall possess the new Jerusalem, shall dwell in the new heavens and new earth; they are called by the Lord's new name, the adopted children of God; and have a new song put into their mouths, which none but redeemed and new-born souls can sing; and shall drink the new wine of endless joys and everlasting pleasures with Christ, in his father's kingdom. These words are said to be taken out of the Apocalypse of Moses, a spurious book, but without any foundation.

Ver. 16. *And as many as walk according to this rule, &c.*] Or *canon*; meaning not the canon of the Scriptures in general, which is the perfect rule, and only standard of faith and practice; according to which we are to walk, believe, and act; but either the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, the subject of this epistle, the truth the apostle had been explaining, vindicating, and confirming; and which to depart from, is going out of the way of truth; and an abiding by it, is walking in it; and is a good rule and standard, by which to distinguish between truth and error; for whatever is contrary to that article of faith cannot be true: or else the rule delivered in the preceding verse, declaring circumcision and uncircumcision to be of no avail in salvation, but a new creature; and to walk according to this rule, is to renounce all trust in, and dependence upon any outward things; to believe alone in Christ, for righteousness and life; to live by faith upon him, and to walk in newness of life, under the influences of his spirit and grace: *peace be on them, and mercy*. This is the apostle's godly wish, unfeigned desire, and hearty prayer for all such persons, be they who they will; Jews or Gentiles, circumcised or uncircumcised: by *peace* he means, a view of their peace with God, made by the blood of Christ; peace in their own consciences, which passes all understanding, and arises from a comfortable sense of justification by the righteousness of Christ, of pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and which is enjoyed in a way of believing; and also peace with one another, among themselves as brethren, which is a very desirable blessing: in short, it includes all prosperity and happiness, inward and outward, temporal, spiritual, and eternal: and by *mercy*, he designs the love and grace of God, to sinful miserable creatures in themselves, which is the spring and fountain of all peace and prosperity; and which is displayed in the covenant of grace, and all the blessings of it; in the mission and incarnation of Christ, and redemption by him; in regeneration, forgiveness of sin, and complete salvation; and intends a fresh discovery, manifestation, and application of the mercy of God to his children; who often stand in need thereof, being distressed with the guilt of sin, or are under deserts or afflictive providences, at which time to have mercy shewed them, is exceeding suitable and agreeable: when the apostle wishes these to be *on them*, it signifies that these blessings come from above, as every good gift

does; that they descend as a cloud, and rest upon them, and abide with them, refreshing, comforting, and protecting them: he adds, *and upon the Israel of God*; which is a further description of the persons, for whom he prays for these blessings; and is not to be understood by way of distinction from them, but as an amplification of their character; and as pointing out the Israel, by way of emphasis, the Israel, or Israelites indeed, the spiritual Israel, as distinct from Israel according to the flesh; see 1 Cor. x. 18. *The Israel of God*, or as the Arabic version reads it, *Israel the propriety of God*; which he has a right unto, and a claim upon; who are chosen by him, Israel his elect; who are redeemed by him, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; who are called by his grace, and are styled Israel his called; who are justified in his son, and by his righteousness; and for whose sake he is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give them repentance and remission of sin; and who are, or will be saved by him, with an everlasting salvation; and is a name that includes all God's elect, whether Jews or Gentiles: though it may have a particular respect to such of the Israelites, or Jews, God had foreknown and reserved for himself; and who believed in Christ, and walked as new creatures, without confidence in the flesh. The Jews themselves own, that strangers, or proselytes, shall be called by the name of Israel; so they^b explain Isa. xlv. 5. latter part.

Ver. 17. *From henceforth let no man trouble me, &c.*] Having so clearly stated and explained the doctrine of justification, and so largely proved that it is not by works, but by faith, and that circumcision and other rituals of the ceremonial law were not necessary to it, he desires, nay, in an authoritative way he requires, that they give him no further trouble on that head; signifying, that he expected they would be satisfied with what he had wrote, and abide by the truth and obey it, as they had formerly done; that he should hear no more objections from them, or complaints of them: nor need they further inquire his sense of these things; by this they would fully know his faith and practice; as indeed they might also by his suffering persecutions on the account of his faith, and his preaching the Gospel of Christ, and particularly this part of it: *for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*; by which he means, not the marks in Christ's hands, feet, and side; but the reproachful characters the apostle was stigmatized with; or the real scars in his body, made by beating, scourging, and stoning of him; or his sufferings and persecutions in general, which he endured for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; see 2 Cor. xi. 23—28. The allusion is either to servants and soldiers, who, when taken into service, used to have some particular mark put upon them, that they might be known to be such an one's servant, or soldier; as the Hebrew servant, who was willing to serve his master, had his ear bored through with an

awl, Exod. xxi. 6. so the apostle was known to be a firm and faithful servant, and a good soldier of Christ, by the reproaches and afflictions which he underwent for his sake; or else to those marks which, by way of reproach and punishment, were made upon fugitive servants, or soldiers, that deserted; as the sufferings of the apostle were designed as reproaches to him, and punishments of him, for preaching the Gospel of Christ; but these he gloried in, and bore and carried as trophies and marks of honour. Just as veteran soldiers shew the scars and wounds they have received in battle, as tokens of their valour and courage, in facing and fighting the enemy in greatest danger: these he is said to bear *in his body*; not in the bodies of others, he gloried not in their flesh, as the false apostles did; nor in the circumcision of his own flesh, the scar that left there the mark of Moses and of a Jew; but in those things which were marks of his being a disciple of Christ, and not of Moses, and which he bore for his sake; and since therefore it was so easy to discern on which side of the question he was, from his suffering persecution for the cross of Christ; and since he had so many and such great trials and exercises, he, with apostolical gravity and authority, commands them to give him no more trouble, from the time of their reception of the epistle, henceforward.

Ver. 18. *Brethren, &c.*] So he calls them, to testify his affection for them, notwithstanding their infirmity and instability, and the roughness with which he had treated them; and to shew his great humility and condescension in owning the relation, and putting them on a level with himself, which the pride of the false teachers would not suffer them to do. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit*; which is his concluding benediction and usual salutation and token in all his epistles: he wishes that more gifts of grace might be bestowed upon them; that the Gospel of the grace of God might be continued with them; that the love of Christ might be shed abroad in their hearts; that they might receive out of his fulness grace for grace; that there might be an increase of grace in their souls; that it might abound in them, and they grow in the exercise of it: he does not pray that the law of Moses, or the righteousness of works, but that the grace of Christ might be with them; not in the mere notion of it, but in the spiritual experience of it; that it might be in their hearts, and with their spirits, quickening, comforting, and strengthening them; making them more spiritual and evangelical in their frames and duties, and freeing them from a carnal and legal spirit: to all which he sets his *Amen*: signifying his desire that so it might be, and his faith that so it would be. The subscription of the letter follows, *unto the Galatians, written from Rome*; where perhaps he was then a prisoner; the Arabic version adds, *by Titus and Luke*; who might be sent with it, but the subscriptions of the epistles are not to be depended on.

^b Jarchi & Abarbanel in Isa. xlv. 5.

^c Vid. Lydium de re militare, l. 1. c. 6.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE EPHESIANS.

THE city of Ephesus is, by Pliny ^a, called the other light of Asia; Miletus was one, and Ephesus the other: it was the metropolis of the lesser Asia, and one of the twelve cities of Ionia, and the first and chief of them: it is said to be built by the Amazons ^b: it was famous for the magnificent temple of Diana; and the inhabitants of it were very much given to superstition and idolatry, and even to devilish arts, Acts xix. 19. It abounded with orators and philosophers, and men of great wisdom and learning ^c; and was formerly a very rich, trading, flourishing city, but now a village, and a poor desolate place; it retains the name of Efeso, though the Turks call it Aia Salik. Hither the Apostle Paul first went after he had been at Corinth, though he then made but a short stay; when he came thither again, he found twelve disciples, and was the instrument of making a great many more: here he continued two or three years, and formed a Gospel church, very large and flourishing, to whom he writes this epistle; and which was written by him when he was a prisoner at Rome, as appears by several passages in it, ch. iii. 1. and iv. 1. and vi. 20. and seems to have been written much about the same time as were the epistles to the Philippians, and to the Colossians, and to Philemon.

Dr. Hammond thinks it was written about the year 58, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in 59, and the fifth year of Nero. The occasion of it was the foresight the apostle had of false teachers that would spring up in this church, after his death, and spread their pernicious doctrines, and draw away disciples after them, and do great mischief in the church; wherefore the design of this epistle is to establish the saints in the doctrines of the Gospel, that so they might not be carried away with the errors of the wicked: the subject-matter of it is most excellent; it treats of the most sublime doctrines of grace, of divine predestination, and eternal election, of redemption by Christ, and of peace and pardon by his blood, of conversion by the power of efficacious grace, and of salvation by the free grace of God, in opposition to works: it also very largely treats of the nature and usefulness of the Gospel ministry, and of gifts qualifying for it, and of the several duties of religion incumbent on Christians; and the method which is used is exceeding apt and beautiful, for the apostle first begins with the doctrines of the Gospel, which he distinctly handles and explains, and then proceeds to enforce the duties belonging to men, both as men and Christians.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter are contained the inscription of the epistle, the salutation of the persons to whom it is written, the apostle's thanksgiving for blessings received by him, and them; in which the efficient, moving, procuring, and final causes of salvation are taken notice of, and the several parts and branches of it observed; and the whole is concluded with prayers for the Ephesians; in which mention is made of various things to the comfort of the saints, and to the glory of Christ. The inscription is in ver. 1. in which the author of the epistle puts his name, declares his office, and how he came into it; and describes the persons to whom he wrote it, by their religious characters, and the place of their abode. The salutation is in ver. 2. which is common to all his epistles: and in ver. 3 is the thanksgiving to God, as the God and father of Christ, for spiritual blessings in Christ in general; and then he proceeds to

particulars, and begins with election, which is represented as an act of God the father, as of particular persons, as done in Christ, and from the foundation of the world, the end of which is perfect holiness and love, ver. 4. and which is further illustrated under the name of predestination; the blessing which that is an appointment to, is the adoption of children; the moving cause of it, is the good pleasure of the divine will; the instrumental cause, or means, is Christ Jesus; the end with God is for himself, ver. 5. and which, in the next verse, is explained of the glory of his grace; to which grace, acceptance with him in Christ is owing; and which is another spiritual blessing, or a branch of election and predestination, ver. 6. To which is added another, and that is redemption; the author of which is Christ; the price, or procuring and meritorious cause of it is his blood; a branch of which is forgive-

^a L. 5. c. 29.

^b Plin. ib. Justin ex Trogo, l. 2. c. 4.

^c Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 8. c. 3.

ness of sins; and the whole is according to the plentiful and free grace of God, ver. 7. the entire plan and scheme of which is the produce of abundant wisdom and prudence, ver. 8. and is no other than the mystery of the will of God revealed in the Gospel, according to his sovereign will and purpose, ver. 9. which lay hid within himself until the fulness of times, or the Gospel dispensation, in which Christ being sent, has gathered all together in himself, ver. 10. through whom the saints enjoy the inheritance they are adopted to in predestination, which is the effect of an unfrustrable purpose, and a wise counsel and will, ver. 11. The end of which is, that those predestinated, redeemed, and adopted ones, should be to the praise and glory of God, ver. 12. and who are described as such, who first trusted in Christ upon hearing the Gospel; and after they had believed in him, were sealed by the Holy Spirit, said to be the spirit of promise, ver. 13. and who is also spoken of as the earnest and pledge of the saints' inheritance, and who will continue so until all the people of God are redeemed from the grave in the resurrection-morn, which will also issue in the praise and glory of God, ver. 14. and now on account of all these blessings of predestination, adoption, redemption, vocation, and the sealing of the spirit; as also, because of their faith in Christ, and love to the saints, these believers were possessed of, the apostle gave thanks, and continued to give thanks to God in his prayers to him, ver. 15, 16. The object of his prayers is described as the God of Christ, and father of glory; the petitions to him are for an increase of knowledge of Christ from the spirit, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, ver. 17. and that they might have a clearer view of the nature of that glory they were called unto, and were hoping for, ver. 18. and observe the wonderful display of the power of God in their conversion and faith; which is illustrated by comparing it with that power which was shewn in raising Christ from the dead, ver. 20. which leads the apostle to take notice of the exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God in heaven, consequent on his resurrection; where he is advanced above angels and men, and has all things in subjection to him for the good of his church, of which he is the head, and which is his body and fulness, ver. 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, &c.*] See the notes on Rom. i. 1. 1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. and Gal. i. 1. *To the saints which are at Ephesus;* of this place, see the note above upon the title of the epistle, and on Acts xviii. 19. The persons residing there, to whom the epistle is written, are described by their character, as *saints*; being separated by the grace of God the father in eternal election; whose sins were expiated by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and to whom he himself was made sanctification; and who were internally sanctified by the spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, *to all the saints*; whether officers of the church, or private members, whether rich or poor, bond or free, strong or weak believers, of greater or lesser abilities. *And to the faithful in Christ Jesus:* who were in Christ, not only by electing grace, but were openly and manifestatively in him, through con-

verting grace; and abode in him as branches in the vine; continued constant, and persevered in faith and holiness; and were faithful to the cause and interest of Christ, and to his Gospel and ordinances; and were hearty and sincere in the profession of their faith in Christ, and love to him and his: or, as the Arabic version renders it, *and to them that believe in Jesus Christ*; with all their hearts, to the saving of their souls; who look unto him, venture on him, rely upon him, and trust in him for life and salvation, and who shall certainly be saved; of such the church at Ephesus consisted, to whom this epistle was written: of the church there, see the note on Acts xx. 17.

Ver. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace from God, &c.*] See the note on Rom. i. 7.

Ver. 3. *Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*] God, the first person in the Trinity, is the God of Christ, as Christ is man and Mediator; he chose and appointed him to be the Mediator, and made a covenant with him as such; he formed and prepared an human nature for him, and anointed it with the Holy Ghost above measure, and supported it under all his trials and sufferings, and at last glorified it: and Christ, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed, hoped, and trusted in him as such, and loved him as in such a relation to him, and cheerfully obeyed his commands. And the same is the father of Christ, as Christ is God; as such he is the son of God; not by creation, as angels and Adam, nor by adoption, as saints, but by natural generation; he being the only-begotten of the father, his own proper son, of the same nature and perfections with him, and equal to him. Now to *bless* God is neither to invoke nor confer a blessing on him; for there is none greater than he to be called upon; nor does he need any thing, nor can he receive any thing from his creature; but it is either to congratulate his greatness and goodness, to ascribe blessing, glory, and honour to him, or to give thanks unto him, both for temporal and spiritual mercies. And the reasons why he is blessed, or praised by the saints as the God and father of Christ, are; because these are his New-Testament titles, under which he is more clearly made known, and in which he delights; and because he is their God and father in Christ; nor can they come to him in any other way, but through him; and because it is through him that all their blessings come to them, and therefore all their praises must go this way, as follows: *who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:* God is the author and giver of all blessings; and he blesses his people with them, as he is the God and father of Christ, and as he is their covenant-God and father in Christ; and he only can bless; if he blesses not, none can; and if he blesses, they are blessed indeed: the *us* that are blessed, are such who deserve, according to the tenour of the law, to be cursed; and are not all men, but some distinct from others; and who are before described as saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus; and include both Jews and Gentiles, who belong to the election of grace. And the blessings such are blessed with are *spiritual*, so called to distinguish them from temporal blessings. The Jews have the like distinction of *בְּרִיּוֹת וְנִיּוֹת*, *temporal blessings*; and *בְּרִיּוֹת רִדְחָנִית*, *spiritual blessings*^d; which

^d Tzeror Hamoor, fol. 79. 2.

latter are solid, substantial, and lasting blessings; and which concern the good of the soul or spirit of man; and are agreeable to, and desired by a spiritual man; and are applied by the Holy Spirit of God; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *with every blessing of the Holy Spirit*: and which are very comprehensive, and take in all the fullness of grace in Christ; all the blessings and sure mercies of the everlasting covenant; all things pertaining to life and godliness, such as justification, peace, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life: and with these the saints are blessed *in heavenly places*; God that blesses them is in heaven, and so is Christ, in whom they are blessed; and the completion of their blessedness will be in heaven, where their hope is laid up, and their inheritance is reserved: and this phrase may denote the safety of them, being out of the reach of any enemy, sin, Satan, or the world, to deprive them of them, as well as the nature of them; for it may be read, *in heavenly things*, and so distinguishes these blessings from such as are of an earthly kind; and points at the original of them, being such as descend from above, come down from heaven; and also the tendency of them, which is to heaven; and being what give a right unto, and a meetness for the kingdom of heaven: and these they are blessed with *in Christ*; as he is their head and representative, and as they are members in him, and partakers of him; through whom, and for whose sake, they are conveyed unto them, and who himself is the sum and substance of them. Agreeably to this way of speaking, the Targumist, Jonathan ben Uzziel, on Numb. vi. 27. paraphrases the last clause thus, *I will bless them, בְּיֵשׁוּעַ, in my word*. The date of these blessings, *hath blessed us*, may respect either first conversion, when the discovery and application of the blessings of grace are made to God's people; or the making of the covenant with Christ, their head, to whom all grace was then given, and to them in him, and their election was in Christ, as follows.

Ver. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him, &c.*] This choice cannot be understood of a national one, as Israel of old were chosen by the Lord; for the persons the apostle writes to were not a nation; nor does he address all the inhabitants of Ephesus, only the saints and faithful in Christ that resided there; nor are they all intended here, if any of them. However, not they only, since the apostle includes himself, and perhaps some others, who did not belong to that place, nor were of that country: nor does this choice regard them as a church; for though the saints at Ephesus were in a church-state, yet the apostle does not write to them under that formal consideration, but as saints and faithful; nor are these persons said to be chosen to church-privileges, but to grace and glory, to be holy and blameless: besides, from ver. 3. to ver. 12. inclusive, the apostle seems to speak of himself, and some others, who first trusted in Christ, as distinct from the believers at Ephesus, ver. 13. nor is this choice of persons to an office, for all that are here intended were not apostles, or pastors, or deacons: nor can it design effectual vocation, or the call of persons in time by efficacious grace; because this was before the foundation of the world, as follows: but it intends an eternal election of particular persons to everlasting

life and salvation; and which is the first blessing of grace, and the foundation one, upon which all the rest proceed, and *according* to which they are dispensed; for according to predestination are vocation, justification, and glorification. The author of this choice is God, God the father, who is distinguished from Christ, in whom this act is made; and it is according to his fore-knowledge, and is an act of his grace, and is entirely sovereign: the objects of it, *us*, are not angels, but men, considered as unfallen with respect to the end, and as fallen with respect to the means; and these not all mankind: to choose, implies the contrary; and they that are chosen are distinguished from others, and are represented as few; nor do all men partake either of the means or end appointed in the decree of election; and yet some of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, are included in it; though none for any previous qualifications in them, as not for their good works, faith, holiness, or perseverance therein; for these are fruits and effects of election, and therefore can't be causes or conditions of it: and this choice is made in Christ; and the persons chosen are chosen in him, and by being chosen they come to be in him; for this refers not to their open being in him at conversion, as believers, but to their secret being in him before time. Christ, as Mediator, is the object of election himself; and all the elect were chosen in him as their head, in whose hands their persons, grace, and glory are, and so are safe and secure in him: the Arabic version renders it, *by him*; not as the meritorious cause, for Christ's merits are not the cause of election, though they are of redemption and salvation; but as the means, in order to the end: the Ethiopic version renders it, *to him*; to salvation by him, and to the obtaining of his glory; as if he and his benefits, being the end of this choice, were intended; which was made *before the foundation of the world*: and that it was so early, is certain, from the love of God to his people, which this is the effect of, and which is an everlasting love; and from the covenant which was made with Christ from everlasting, on account of these chosen ones, when Christ was set up as the head and representative of them; and from the provision of all spiritual blessings for them in it, which proceeds according to this choice; and from the preparation of a kingdom for them from the foundation of the world; and from the nature of God's decrees, which are eternal; for no new will, or act of will, can arise in God, or any decree be made by him, which was not from eternity: God's fore-knowledge is eternal, and so is his decree, and is no other than himself decreeing. The end of this choice follows, *that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love*; the objects of it are not chosen because they were holy, but that they might partake of the sanctification of the spirit; that they might be sanctified by him here, and be perfectly holy hereafter; and be without fault and blame, both in this life, as justified by the righteousness of Christ, and as washed in his blood; and in the life to come, being entirely freed from all sin, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and appear so in the sight of Christ, who will present them to himself, and in the sight of his father, to whom they will also be presented by him, even in the sight of divine justice: and this will be all

in love, or through love, as the Syriac version renders it; or *through his love*, as the Arabic version; for the love of God is the source and spring of election itself, and of holiness and happiness, the end of it; and which is shed abroad in the hearts of God's people now, and will be more fully comprehended and enjoyed in the other world; and which causes love again in them to him. A phrase somewhat like this is used by the Targumist on Eccl. xi. 6. where, speaking of a man's children, he says; "it is not known unto thee which of them *אתבחר למהוי טוב*, *is chosen to be good*, this, or that, "or both of them, to be alike good." Some copies put the stop at *before him*; and read the phrase, *in love*; in connexion with the words following, thus, *in love, or by love hath predestinated us*; so the Syriac version.

Ver. 5. *Having predestinated us, &c.*] Predestination, taken in a large sense, includes both election and reprobation, and even reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world; to the persons, lives, and circumstances of men; to all mercies, temporal or spiritual; and to all afflictions, whether in love or in wrath: and indeed providence, or the dispensations of providence, are no other than the execution of divine predestination; but here it is the same with election, and is concerned with the same persons, and has regard to a special blessing, the elect are appointed to, as follows; *unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself*; by which is meant, either the grace of adoption, which is an act of the father's love, a blessing provided and secured in the covenant of grace; and is of persons to an inheritance, to which they have no legal right; and is entirely free, there being no need on the adopter's part, and no worth on the part of the adopted: or rather the inheritance they are adopted to; which exceeds all others, is incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away; and lies among the saints in light, and belongs to all the children of God: and this they are predestinated unto by God the father, who takes them into his family, puts them among the children, and gives them a goodly heritage: and that *by Jesus Christ*; or through him; for both the grace of adoption, and the kingdom and glory they are adopted to, come by and through him as Mediator; through his espousing their persons, assuming their nature, and redeeming them from under the law and its curses; through his giving them a power and privilege openly to be the sons of God; and through faith in him, whereby they are manifestatively such: the phrase *unto himself*, either refers to God the father, who has chosen, set apart, formed and reserved his people and children for himself, for his peculiar treasure, and for his own glory; or to Jesus Christ, that he might have some brethren, and they be conformed to him, and he be the first-born among them, and in all things have the pre-eminence; and that they might be with him, and behold his glory, and he be glorified in them: and this act of divine predestination was *according to the good pleasure of his will*: the will of God is the rule of all his actions, and of all his acts of grace and goodness; and the good pleasure of it appears in the predestination of men to grace and glory: and from hence it is manifest, that foreseen faith, holiness, and good works, are excluded from being the moving causes of predestinating grace; and

that it is wholly to be resolved into the good will and pleasure of God; the view in it being entirely as follows,

Ver. 6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace, &c.*] The *grace* of God manifestly appears in the predestination of men to adoption; in that God had no need of sons, he having a dear and well-beloved one, in whom he is well pleased; and in that those he adopts are so unworthy of the relation; and in that men, and not angels, should be taken by him into his family; and that some, and not others of the same race; and that this should be before the world was; and in providing Christ as a Redeemer, to open the way for the reception of this grace and happiness; and in appointing the grace of faith to be the receiver of it: and the *glory* of the grace of God appears herein; the glory of God is the supreme end of all he does; and the glory of his grace, and not his power, or other perfections of his, and the manifestive glory of that is here intended; yea, the *praise* of that glory: and this end is answered, when the children of God ascribe their adoption to the free grace of God; and when they admire it, and are thankful for it, and walk worthy of the relation they are brought into: *wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, *his own beloved son*, and so the Claromontane exemplar; the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the beloved of God the father; and was so from everlasting, and will be so to everlasting; which has appeared by his nearness to him, lying in his bosom; by his being privy to all his counsels, purposes, and designs; in putting all things into his hands, and in shewing him all that he does; and by his giving him honour and glory, as man and Mediator: and he is the beloved of the saints, for the transcendent excellencies that are in him, and for his love to them, and for what he has done for them, and is unto them; and in him is their acceptance: which is to be understood of the acceptance of their persons, as founded in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and so of their services in him; of God's act of delight and complacency in them, as considered in Christ; who looks upon them, and is well pleased with them, and rests in his love towards them; which is an amazing instance of grace: it was grace that gave them a being in Christ, and which has provided in predestination every thing to make them grateful to God; and the very act of acceptance is of mere grace; for internal grace, or grace infused, is not here meant, but the free favour of God: some read not *in which*, but *which* *ἡχαριστος*, *he freely gave us in the beloved*; so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, &c.*] Redemption supposes captivity and slavery, and is a deliverance out of it; God's elect by nature are in bondage to sin, Satan, and the law; through the grace of Christ, they are redeemed from all iniquity; ransomed out of the hands of him that is stronger than they; and are freed from the law, its bondage, curse, and condemnation, and from every other enemy: and this benefit Christ is the author of; he was called to be the Redeemer of his people from all eternity; and he was sent in the fulness of time, to procure the redemption of them; to which he had a right, being their near kinsman; and for which he was every way fit, being

God as well as man; and which he has obtained by his obedience, sufferings, and death: and *in whom* it resides, as in its proper subject and author; who, by imputation, is made redemption to all the chosen ones; for not angels, but men, share in this redemption; and not all men, but elect men; such as are chosen in Christ, predestinated to the adoption of children by him, and who are accepted in the beloved: and this comes to them through the blood of Christ, which was freely shed on the cross to procure it; and was a sufficient ransom, or redemption-price; it being not only the same blood with those who are redeemed, but the blood of an innocent person; and not of a mere man, but of one who is truly and properly God, as well as man; see more of this in the note on Col. i. 14. A branch of this redemption follows, or a blessing that comes by it, and along with it, *the forgiveness of sins*: of all sins, original and actual, past, present, and to come; and this is through the blood of Christ, which was shed for the same: and yet is *according to the riches of his grace*: for God of his rich grace found the ransom-price, and gave his son, as well as he gave himself, his life, a ransom for many; and how much soever it cost Christ to procure redemption and pardon, they are free to his people; who are redeemed without money and price of theirs, and whose sins are forgiven freely for Christ's sake.

Ver. 8. *Wherein he hath abounded toward us, &c.*] That is, in the grace which is so abundantly displayed in redemption and forgiveness of sin, through the blood of Christ: *in all wisdom and prudence*: this may be understood, either of the abounding of grace in the Gospel; which may be called all wisdom and prudence, because it is the wisdom of God; it is the produce of his wisdom, and a display of it; the doctrines it contains are full of wisdom, and are the means of communicating it to men, and of making them wise unto salvation; and it may be so called, to set forth the excellency and perfection of it, as greatly transcending all human wisdom; and in this the grace of God has much abounded, for the Gospel is a declaration of the free grace of God, in the salvation of sinners by Christ; in the free justification of them by his righteousness; and in the full pardon of their sins through his blood; and is a kind invitation and free promise of grace to all sensible sinners: or else of the abounding of grace in conversion; all men by nature are foolish and unwise; in conversion God makes men to know wisdom in the hidden part, which he puts there; and for which purpose the spirit is given as a spirit of wisdom; and some part of the work of sanctification lies in spiritual light, knowledge, and understanding; and the Syriac version reads the last clause, *and in all spiritual understanding*; and faith particularly may be intended, which is sometimes expressed by knowledge; and now the grace of God is exceeding abundant with faith and love, in regeneration, sanctification, and conversion; or rather this may be understood of the display of divine wisdom, in the work of redemption and salvation by Christ; and which is to be seen, in pitching upon a proper person to be the Mediator, to become a sacrifice, and make intercession, who is the son of God, truly God and man, and so every way able to perform the business of salvation; and in the

manner of its being effected, in a way wherein grace and mercy are highly exalted, and yet in no wise reproachful to the holiness of God, or injurious to his justice, but to the honour of them, in which Satan is greatly mortified, and sin is condemned, and yet the sinner saved; and in the several parts of it, in the justification of the ungodly without works, by the righteousness of another, in pardoning their sins in a way of justice and faithfulness, and yet according to the riches of grace, and in the security of the persons of God's elect, and of their grace and glory in Christ; and in the subjects of this salvation, who are the foolish things of this world, ungodly sinners, the chief of sinners; and lastly, in making faith the receiver of all the blessings of salvation, that so it might appear to be all of grace.

Ver. 9. *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, &c.*] The Gospel, which is a mystery, a hidden mystery, the mystery of God and of Christ, and the mystery of the Gospel; the several doctrines of it are called the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; such as are concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Christ, his sonship and incarnation, the saints' union and communion with him, the work of the spirit of God upon the soul, the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, the resurrection of the dead, and the change of living saints: and the Gospel is the mystery of the will of God; of his will in saving sinners by Christ; and it declares that he does all things in salvation, according to his sovereign will and pleasure; chooses, redeems, justifies, pardons, and calls whom he pleases; and this is made known by the ministry of the word, and by the spirit, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel: the discovery of which is, *according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself*; both with respect to the persons to whom it is made known, and with respect to the time when he makes it known; both these are as he pleases, and as he has purposed in his own breast; the Gospel is sent when and where he has determined within himself it shall go; and persons are called by it according to his purpose and grace.

Ver. 10. *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, &c.*] Or *according to the dispensation, &c.* as the Alexandrian copy reads; the fulness of time appointed by God, and fixed in the prophets; after many times and seasons were elapsed, from the creation of the world; at the most suitable and convenient time, when a new economy or dispensation began, within which all this was to be effected, hereafter mentioned: *he might gather together in one all things in Christ*; this supposes, that all things were once united together in one; angels and men were united to God by the ties of creation, and were under the same law of nature, and there were peace and friendship between them; and this union was in Christ, as the beginning of the creation of God, in whom all things consist: and it supposes a disunion and scattering of them; as of men from God, and from good angels, which was done by sin; and of Jews and Gentiles from one another; and of one man from another, every one turning to his own way; and then a gathering of them together again: the word here used signifies to restore, renew, and reduce to a former state;

and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; and according to this sense, it may seem to have respect to the times of the restitution of all things, the restoration and renovation of the universe; when there will be new heavens and a new earth, and new inhabitants in them: the word is also used to recapitulate, or sum up the heads of a discourse; and according to this sense, it may intend the meeting together, and summing up of all things in Christ, that had been before; as of all the promises and blessings of the covenant; of all the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament; of all the types and shadows, and sacrifices of the former dispensation; yea, all the sins of Old-Testament saints, and all the curses of the law, met on him: the word is likewise used for the collection of numbers into one sum-total; and Christ is the sum-total of elect angels and men; or the whole number of them is in him; God has chosen a certain number of persons unto salvation; these he has put into the hands of Christ, who has a particular and personal knowledge of them; and the exact number of them will be gathered and given by him: once more, it signifies to reduce, or bring under one head; and Christ is an head of eminence and of influence, both to angels and men: and there is a collection of these together in one, in Christ; by virtue of redemption by Christ, and grace from him, there is an entire friendship between elect angels and elect men; they are social worshippers now, and shall share in the same happiness of the vision of God and of Christ hereafter: hence it follows, *both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him*; by things in heaven are not meant the souls of saints in heaven; though it is true that the souls of departed saints are in heaven; and that the saints in heaven and on earth were gathered together in Christ, and represented by him, when he hung upon the cross; and that they all make up one body, of which Christ is the head; and that they will be all collected together one day; and that their souls which are in heaven, and their bodies which are in the earth, will come together and be reunited, and dwell with Christ for ever; but rather the angels are meant, whose original is heaven; where they have their residence, and from whence they never fell; and whose employment is in heaven, and of an heavenly nature: and by things on earth, are not intended every creature on earth, animate and inanimate; nor all men, but all elect men, whether Jews or Gentiles, and some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees; whose origin is of the earth, and who are the inhabitants of it: all these angels in heaven, and elect men on earth, are brought together under one head, even in him, in Christ Jesus, and by him; and none but he was able to do it, and none so fit, who is the Creator of all, and is above all; and was typified by Jacob's ladder, which reached heaven and earth, and joined them together, and on which the angels of God ascended and descended.

Ver. 11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, &c.*] Or a part and lot; that is, have obtained one in Christ, in his person, and in his fulness of grace, in the blessings and promises which are in him; or have obtained to be the Lord's clergy, or heritage, to be his portion and inheritance; or rather to have

an inheritance in him by lot, meaning the incorruptible and eternal inheritance of glory and happiness in heaven; to which elect men are chosen in Christ, and are begotten to a lively hope of through his resurrection from the dead; and which his righteousness gives a right unto, and his grace a meetness for; and which is now in his hands, and will be given to them through him: and this is said to be obtained by lot, as the word signifies, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was divided by lot to the children of Israel; and to shew that it is not by works of righteousness done by men, but by the sovereign disposal of God; and that every one shall have his share, and that certainly; for this is not designed to represent it as a casual, or contingent thing. The Alexandrian copy reads, *in whom also we are called*; and so the Vulgate Latin version, *in whom also we are called by lot*; and the Syriac version, *in him, or by him we are chosen*, which agrees with the next clause: *being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*; predestination is not only to sonship, but to an inheritance; it not only secures the grace of adoption, but prepares and provides an heavenly portion: and this act of predestination proceeds according to a purpose; according to a purpose of God, which can never be frustrated; and according to the purpose of *that God*, as one of Stephens's copies reads, that is the author of all things but sin; of the works of creation and of providence, and of grace and salvation; and who works all these according to his will, just as he pleases, and according to the counsel of it, in a wise and prudent manner, in the best way that can be devised; for he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working; wherefore his counsel always stands, and he does all his pleasure; and hence the inheritance which the saints obtain in Christ, and are predestinated to, is sure and certain.

Ver. 12. *That we should be to the praise of his glory, &c.*] This is the end of predestination to the inheritance; and the sense is, either that the praise of the glory of God, in his grace and goodness, might be discovered and made known unto the saints, as it is displayed in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal salvation; or that they should praise and glorify him on account of these things, by ascribing all to his grace, and nothing to themselves; by giving him thanks for all his benefits; by ordering their conversations aright as become the Gospel; and by doing all things with a view to his glory: *who first trusted in Christ*; the Jews, the apostle, and others of the Jewish nation; *who before hoped in Christ*, as the words may be rendered; who hoped in Christ before the Gentiles did; and indeed the people of Israel hoped for Christ before he came; the promises of the Messiah were made to them, and he was the peculiar hope and expectation of that people; and to them he first came, and to them the Gospel was first preached; and some of them first believed in Christ, and trusted in him, and not in their own righteousness, strength, wisdom, and riches, nor in their own hearts, nor in any mere creature, nor in their carnal privileges; all which they renounced confidence in, and dependence on, when they came to the knowledge of Christ; in whose per-

son they trusted for acceptance, and in his righteousness for justification, and in his blood for pardon, and in his fulness for supply, and in his power for protection and perseverance: this supposes knowledge of him, and a seuse of the frailty and vanity of all other objects; and was a betaking themselves to him, a leaning and staying on him, a committing all unto him, and an expectation of all good things from him.

Ver. 13. *In whom ye also trusted, &c.*] The Gentile believers, the Ephesians, whom the apostle now particularly addresses; and who participated of the same grace and privileges with the believing Jews; the same promise belonged to all that God called, whether afar off or nigh; and the same common salvation was sent to one as to another; and the same faith was wrought in one as in the other; and they were interested in the same Christ, and were heirs of the same inheritance; the Alexandrian copy reads *we*: *after that ye heard the word of truth*; the Gospel; and which is so called, on account of its divine original, coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie; and because of the concern which Christ has in it, who is truth itself, and was the author, subject, and preacher of it, and who confirmed it by his miracles, and his death; and on account of the spirit of God, the dictator of it, and who leads into all truths, and owns and blesses them for conversion and comfort; and because it contains nothing but truth, and particularly that eminent one, salvation alone by Christ, for the chief of sinners; and in contradistinction from the law, which was typical and shadowy; מלה רקשות, *the word of truth*, is a phrase used by the Jews; for sublime and heavenly doctrine: now, by the hearing of this, faith came; and this the Ephesians heard, not only externally, but internally; so as to understand, approve, and believe it, and to put it in practice: and which is also called *the Gospel of your salvation*; because it is a declaration and publication of salvation by Christ, and gives an account of the author of salvation, of his ability and willingness to save, and of the nature of this salvation, and describes the persons who shall be saved; and because it is the means of salvation, when attended with the spirit and power of God; and the instrument, in God's hand, of shewing to souls their special and particular interest in salvation: *in whom also after that ye believed*; which may refer either to the Gospel of salvation, in which they believed upon hearing it; or rather to Christ, the Saviour revealed, in whom they believed to the saving of their souls: and this shews, that the sealing work of the spirit after mentioned, and with which this stands in connexion, is a distinct thing from faith, or indeed any other work of the spirit; as illumination, regeneration, sanctification, &c. it is what follows believing, and is a work that passes upon the soul after it; and so is something over and above, and more than faith, at least than first believing; and from hence it also appears, that there may be true faith, where this is not as yet; and that none but believers in Christ enjoy the following privilege: *ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*. This cannot have respect to the father's sealing his people in election, with the seal of his fore-knowledge, 2 Tim. ii. 19. for that is before

faith, and is within himself, and not on them, and is distinct from the spirit's work; and for the same reasons it cannot design the son's affection to them, setting them as a seal on his arm and heart, Cant. viii. 6. or his asserting his property in them, and the security and protection of them, Cant. iv. 12. Rev. vii. 3. nor the spirit's finishing and completing his own work of grace upon the soul, in which sense the word is used, Rom. xv. 28. for this as yet was not done upon these believing Ephesians; nor the confirming the Gospel, and the saints in it, by the extraordinary effusion of the spirit on the day of Pentecost, or by his extraordinary works which attended the ministry of the word, to the establishing of it, and the faith of men in it; since these were not common to believers, nor did they continue; whereas the believing Ephesians, in common, were sealed; and the spirit of God continues still as a sealer of his people, and as an earnest and pledge of their inheritance until the day of redemption; but it is to be understood of the confirming, certifying, and assuring the saints, as to their interest in the favour of God, and in the blessings of grace, of every kind, and their right and title to the heavenly glory; see the note on 2 Cor. i. 22. and the seal of these things is not circumcision, nor baptism, nor the Lord's supper, nor even the graces of the spirit; but the spirit himself, who witnesses to the spirits of believers the truth of these things, and that as a *spirit of promise*: so called, both because he is the spirit promised, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, whom the Father and Christ had promised, and who was sent by them; and because he usually seals, or certifies believers of the truth of the above things, by opening and applying a word of promise to them: and which he does also, as the *Holy Spirit*; for this sealing work of his leaves a greater impress of holiness upon the soul, and engages more to acts of holiness; wherefore the doctrine of assurance is no licentious doctrine; no persons are so holy as those who are truly possessed of that grace; and as for such who pretend unto it, and live in sin, it is a certain thing that they in reality know nothing of it.

Ver. 14. *Which is the earnest of our inheritance, &c.*] The incorruptible and never-fading one in heaven, or the heavenly kingdom; this is the father's gift, his bequest, and belongs only to children; it comes to them through the death of the testator, Christ, and is for ever; and of this the spirit of God is the pledge and earnest: an earnest, is what confirms an agreement, and assures the right to the thing agreed to, and is a part of it, and lesser than it, and is never returned; so the spirit of God certifies the right to the heavenly inheritance, as well as gives a meetness for it; he is the first-fruits of eternal glory and happiness, and of the same kind with it; and as he is enjoyed in measure by the saints now, is lesser than the communion which they shall have with him, and with the father, and the son, hereafter, for the best things are reserved till last; and being once given into the heart as an earnest, he always continues, he never removes more, or is ever taken away: *until the redemption of the purchased possession, or of the peculiar people*; see 1 Pet. ii. 9.

for this is not to be understood of heaven, which is never said to be purchased, nor can it with any propriety be said to be redeemed; but of saints, of the church of God, who are bought with a price, and are purchased with his blood; and who, as they were redeemed from sin, Satan, and the law, when they were purchased, so will be redeemed again in the resurrection-morn, which is called the day of redemption, ch. iv. 30. see Luke xxi. 28. and which will be a redemption of them from the weakness, corruption, and mortality of the body; from their present state of absence and pilgrimage; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions, both inward and outward; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from a tempting devil, and an unbelieving heart; from all doubts and fears; and from death and the grave; and so the Syriac version very justly renders it, *until the redemption of them that are saved*. Now till such time, the spirit of God abides as an earnest, even until the whole felicity is enjoyed both in soul and body; and this shews the perpetuity of the spirit's inhabitation, and grace, the final perseverance of the saints, and the security of the inheritance to them. *Unto the praise of his glory*; as to the glory of the Father, by whom the saints are chosen and predestinated, ver. 6. and to the glory of the Son, by whom they are redeemed, in whom they obtain the inheritance, and in whom they trust, ver. 12. so to the glory of the Holy Spirit, by whom they are sealed, and who is their earnest; for he must have his share of glory in the salvation of the elect, as well as the other two persons.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore I also, &c.*] As well as others: *after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus*; who is the immediate object of faith, and a very proper and suitable one; having every thing in him that is agreeable to the case and circumstances of those that trust in him. And the grace of faith, which terminates on him, is a seeing him, a beholding the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace; a going to him, and venturing on him; a laying hold upon him, and embracing of him; a committing all unto him, and a leaning and depending on him, and a living upon him, and a walking on in him. *And love unto all the saints*: whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, of meaner gifts, or larger abilities; and which love was unfeigned, fervent, active, and laborious; and which is the evidence of regeneration, and without which a profession is in vain. These two graces, faith and love, are inseparable; they always go together, and are to be found in the same persons; and where they are, they can't be hid, as they were not in these Ephesians; their faith was professed by them, and was made public, and their love shewed itself in deeds, as well as in words, to the saints: hence the apostle came to hear of them both, upon the certain relation of others; for these things were come abroad, and were talked of; see the notes on Col. i. 3, 4. and Philem. ver. 4, 5.

Ver. 16. *Cease not to give thanks for you, &c.*] On account of their faith and love; which were gifts of grace bestowed upon them, and not the produce of their own free will and power; and therefore thanks are given to God for them: *making mention of you in my prayers*; which shews the apostle to be a praying

person, and that he was constant at the throne of grace, where he prayed for others as well as for himself; and it points out the time and way, when, and in which he gave thanks to God for them; and is mentioned, not only to testify his great affection for them, but also to excite them, by his example, to the practice of those duties themselves.

Ver. 17. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*] In what sense God the Father is the God of Christ, see the note on ver. 3. *The father of glory*; or the glorious father; who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his nature, and in the works of his hands; and as a father, he is a glorious father to Christ, and is a father to him, as he is to none else; and has been honoured and glorified by Christ, and from whom Christ as man has received much honour and glory; and he is a glorious father to the saints, to whom he has shewn inexpressible love, by adopting them into his family; and pities them, as a father does his children; takes care of them, and protects them, and makes a glorious provision for them; not only of good things now, but of an eternal inheritance hereafter: and he may be so called, because he is the author and giver of eternal glory and happiness; and because all glory is due unto him: the Arabic version reads, *God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory*, making all these epithets to belong to Christ: *may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him*: this was one part of the apostle's prayers for the saints at Ephesus, that they might increase in divine knowledge; either in the knowledge of God, as the God of Christ, and the father of glory, and as their God and father in Christ; or of God, as considered in Christ the Mediator; or else of Christ himself: and designs not a notional and speculative knowledge of Christ, but what is practical and experimental; and which is joined with love of him, faith in him, and obedience to him; and which is not only approbative, but fiducial and appropriating; and though it is but imperfect, yet is progressive; and for the progression of it, the apostle prays; for it is certain, that these saints had a knowledge of Christ, but this was not perfect; and a larger measure of it was desirable: and in order to this, he prays for the spirit, as a *spirit of wisdom*; who implants spiritual wisdom in the hearts of men, and instructs them in the Gospel, the hidden wisdom of God, leads them into all truths, and opens to them the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which are hid in Christ, the wisdom of God; and as a *spirit of revelation*; who reveals Christ and the things of Christ, at first conversion; and afterwards reveals him and his righteousness, and other benefits of his more largely, even from faith to faith; and gives a clearer view of interest in them: hence it appears, that the spirit is the gift of God; and that all spiritual light and knowledge, and the increase of it, are owing to him.

Ver. 18. *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, &c.*] By the spirit of God already, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin; the insufficiency of their own righteousness; the beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, as a Saviour; the excellency, truth, and usefulness of the doctrines of the Gospel; in which their understandings were before dark, but now had light into them: wherefore these

words are not to be considered as part of the apostle's petitions, but rather as what was taken for granted by him; and are to be put into a parenthesis, and the following words to be joined in connexion with the preceding verse; unless it should be thought, that the apostle prays for greater illuminations, and for more spiritual light, and that the eyes of their understandings might be more and more enlightened; the phrase, עֵין הַשְּׂכֵל, *עין השכל*, *ομμα της διανοιας*, *the eye of the understanding*, is Rabbinical, and often to be met with in Jewish writings^f; the Alexandrian copy, and several others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *the eyes of your heart*; and עֵיני הַלְּבָבוֹת, *עניי הלבבות*, *the eyes of the hearts, or minds*, is a phrase used by the Jewish writers^g: that *ye may know what is the hope of his calling*: by which is meant, the effectual vocation of the saints; which is not a call to an office, or a call merely by the external ministry of the word; but which is internal, special, powerful, high, and heavenly: and this is the calling of God, of which he is the author; who calls with an holy calling, unto eternal glory by Christ Jesus; and which is without repentance: and the hope of this calling, is either eternal happiness, which is the thing hoped for; or Christ, who is the ground and foundation of it; or the grace of hope, which is exercised on both; or all three: for hope of eternal glory, as it is founded on Christ, may be said to be the hope of the calling of God, because it is wrought in the soul at the time of effectual vocation, and what saints are then called to the exercise of; and calling grace, is an encouragement to hope for eternal life; since whom God calls, he justifies and glorifies: and now the apostle prays, that these saints who were called by the grace of God, might know more of Christ, the foundation of their hope; and what that is they are hoping for, and more and more what it is to hope for the same, upon the view of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness: and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints: the saints themselves are the Lord's portion, and the lot of his inheritance, in whom he is, and will be abundantly glorified; but here it rather seems to design the heavenly inheritance before spoken of, of which the spirit is the earnest; and this is the Lord's, it is of his preparius, and it is his gift, and a very rich and glorious inheritance it is: hence it is not only signified by mansions, and everlasting habitations, by an house, and by a city, but by a kingdom; the riches of grace are preparatory to it, and the riches of glory are comprised in it; and this is in, or among the saints, who only have a right unto it, and a meetness for it; and what this inheritance is, with the riches and glory of it, will not be fully known in this life; and indeed but little of it is known; so that such a petition as this is always proper and pertinent.

Ver. 19. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, &c.*] The objects of the divine power here intended, are believers in Christ; which distinguishes this power from that which was put forth in creation, and from that which will be displayed in the resurrection of the dead, and from the power of divine wrath, which will appear in the damna-

tion of sinners; and shews, that this power is that which is exerted in the implantation of faith, and in the continuance of it, and in the finishing of that work; and that this is a great power, an exceeding great one, a supereminent one; which is attended with energy and efficacy, and is irresistible and insuperable: the greatness of this power as displayed in the work of conversion and faith appears, if it be considered what the work itself is called, a creation, a resurrection from the dead, a regeneration, and a transformation of the man into another man, which must needs require almighty power; as well as what is then done, some things are removed, Satan is dispossessed, the stony heart is taken away, the enmity is slain, the old man is put down from his throne, and put off with his deeds; and there are some things wrought, Christ is formed in the soul, his grace is implanted, his image is instamped, a new heart is given, and principles of light and life, of grace and holiness are put; the understanding is enlightened, the will is subdued, the affections are set on other objects, and the mind and conscience are cleansed and purified; and the means of this are the ministers, and ministry of the word, which are weak, foolish, and contemptible, in the eyes of men; to which may be added, the opposition made both from within and from without, from a sinful heart, a tempting devil, and an ensnaring, reproaching, and persecuting world: so that this work of faith cannot be ascribed to any thing short of the exceeding greatness of divine power; and which is seen in supporting faith when it is wrought, under great discouragements; in delivering believers out of divers temptations; in assisting them to discharge their duty, and in their final perseverance: and to increase the idea of this power it is added, according to the working of his mighty power, or according to the energy of the might of his power: the strength of his power, in all the mighty energy of it, is exerted towards and upon believers; and which they should know, own, and acknowledge, to the glory of the grace of God: and this is in proportion, and agreeably to that power.

Ver. 20. *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, &c.*] There are many articles of faith contained in this passage; as that Christ died, that he is raised from the dead, that he was raised from the dead by God the father, and that his resurrection was by the power of God: the resurrection of any person is an instance of great power, but Christ's resurrection from the dead was an instance of peculiar and special power; for he was raised from the dead as a public person, representing all his people, for whom he became a surety; and he was raised again for their justification, and to great glory in himself, after he had been brought into a very low estate indeed: moreover, this passage in connexion with the preceding verse suggests, that there is some proportion between the power put forth on Christ in raising him from the dead, and that which is exerted in the work of conversion and faith: there is some likeness between the things themselves, as well as in the display of power in them; Christ's resurrection is called a begetting, and he is styled the first-begotten from the dead, and the rege-

^f Zohar in Deut. fol. 119. 3. Jetzirah, p. 29. 78. Ed. Rittangel. ^g Levi ben Gerson in Gen. fol. 14. 3. & Philo de opificio Dei, p. 15.

^h Bechinat Olam, p. 260.

neration of men is signified by a resurrection from the dead; as Christ's body was really dead, lifeless, and without motion, antecedent to his resurrection, so men, previous to conversion, are dead in trespasses and sins, and are destitute of spiritual life and motion; and as Christ's human nature could not help itself, could not raise itself, so neither can dead sinners convert themselves, or bring themselves out of that state and condition, in which they are by nature; and as the resurrection of Christ was the pure work of God, and a display of his almighty power, so the work of faith, of grace and conversion, is the entire work of God, which is begun, carried on, and finished wholly by his power; and as Christ's resurrection was in order to his glorification, so is the regeneration and conversion of men, in order to their enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance, as it follows: *and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places*; which is expressive of the great honour conferred upon the human nature of Christ, such as never was given to any of the angels, and of the glory it is exalted to; and shews that he has done his work on earth with acceptance, which he came about; and therefore is set down at his father's right hand, where he enjoys rest and ease from his labours, and is out of the reach of every enemy; will never die more, but live for ever, to intercede for his people, to assist and protect them, and bring them where he is; and in whom, as their head and representative, they are already set down in the same heavenly places.

Ver. 21. *Far above all principality and power, &c.*] Good angels and bad angels, and civil magistrates, who also may be intended by the following words: *and might and dominion*; good angels may be so called, because of their employment under God in the affairs of Providence, and the government of this world; and Christ is not only above them, as he is God, being their Creator, who has made them, and on whom they depend, and is the Lord whom they serve, and is the object of their worship and adoration, and as he is Mediator, to whom they minister, and so is above them in nature, name, and office; but also as he is man, in union with the son of God; and chiefly he here is said to be above them on account of place, being at the right hand of God, where they are not, Heb. i. 13. And evil angels may be so called, because of the government which subsists among themselves, and the power and influence they have over mankind; Christ was above them when here on earth, as appears by his resisting the temptations of Satan, and defeating him in them; by his dispossessing devils from the bodies of men; by his spoiling and destroying them and their works at his death; and by his leading them captive, and triumphing over them at his ascension; and by delivering souls out of his hands at conversion, through his power attending the ministration of his Gospel; and his being above them will still be more manifest, in the binding of Satan a thousand years, and in the final condemnation of him, and of all his angels under him: civil magistrates are sometimes called by these names, and Christ is above them; they receive their governments from him, they rule by him, and are accountable to him, and are set up and put down at his pleasure; all these senses may be taken in; but the first seems chiefly designed: *'tis added, and every name*

that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; persons of authority and dignity, of fame and renown, whether in earth or heaven; as emperors, kings, princes, nobles, generals of armies, &c. in this world, and cherubim, seraphim, &c. in the other world: this phrase denotes both the extensiveness of Christ's kingdom, and the eternity of it; as reaching to both worlds, and being over every thing in them, and as lasting to the end of this, and unto that which is to come.

Ver. 22. *And hath put all things under his feet, &c.*] These words are taken out of Psal. viii. 6. see the note on 1 Cor. xv. 27. *And gave him to be the head over all things to the church*; the Vulgate Latin version reads, *and gave him to be the head over every church, or all the church*; the Ethiopic version, *the whole church*; which intends not barely professors of religion, or a family of faithful persons, or a particular congregation, in which sense the word is sometimes used; but the whole body of God's elect, the church, which is built on Christ the rock, for which he gave himself, and which is the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven: Christ is an head to this church; in what sense he is so, see the note on 1 Cor. xi. 3. *And this headship of Christ is the gift of God*; and it is an honourable gift to him, as Mediator; it is a glorifying of him, and a giving him in all things the pre-eminence; and it is a free grace-gift to the church, and a very special, valuable, and excellent one, and of infinite benefit and advantage to it; and which is expressed in his being *head over all things* to it; to overrule all things for its good; to communicate all good things to it; and to perform all the good offices of an head for it: the Syriac version reads, *and him who is above all things, he gave to be the head to the church*; even him who is God over all, blessed for evermore.

Ver. 23. *Which is his body, &c.*] That is, which church is the body of Christ; as an human body is but one, consisting of various members, united to each other, and set in an exact proportion and symmetry, and in a proper subservience to one another, and which must be neither more nor fewer than they are; so the church of Christ is but one general assembly, which consists of many persons, of different gifts and usefulness, and are all united together under one head, Christ, whose name they bear, and are made to drink of the same spirit; and these are placed in such order, as to throw a glory and comeliness on each other, and to be useful to one another, so that it cannot be said of the meanest member, that there is no need of it; and the number of them can neither be increased nor diminished; and this is Christ's body, his mystical body, which becomes his by the father's gift to him, and by his own purchase; to which he is united, and of which he is the only head; and which he loves as his own body, and supplies, directs, and defends: *the fulness of him that filleth all in all*; besides the personal fulness which Christ has as God, and his fulness of ability and fitness for his work as Mediator, and his dispensatory fulness, which dwells in him for the use of his people, the church is his relative fulness, which fills him, and makes up Christ mystical; and which is filled by him, and is complete in him; and then will the church appear to be Christ's fulness, when all the elect

both Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in; and when these are all filled with the grace designed for them; and when they are all grown up to their full proportion, or are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; which will be a glorious sight to see, and very desirable: and this shews the certainty of the saints' perseverance and salvation: for if any one member, even the meanest, could be lost, the church would not be the fulness of Christ: and this may be further concluded, from its being his fulness, who *filleth all in all*; which may be understood either more extensively; for he fills both worlds with inhabitants; he fills all places with his omnipresence, and all creatures with proper food and sustenance: or with a limitation to the church and people of God; he fills all his churches and ordinances with his gracious pre-

sence; and he fills the several societies of his saints with members and with officers; and these with the gifts and graces of his spirit, suitable to their place and station; he fills all and every of the saints, all the vessels of mercy, whether greater or lesser, all sorts of them, of larger or meaner capacities; he fills all the powers and faculties of their souls, their hearts with joy, their minds with knowledge, their consciences with peace, their wills with spiritual desires, submission and resignation, and their affections with love to himself and people: in short, he fills them with all grace and goodness, and the fruits of righteousness; and so makes them meet for usefulness here, and for happiness hereafter; the fulness of the earth in Psal. xxiv. 1. is by the Jews interpreted of the souls of the righteous, and of the congregation of Israel^a.

C H A P. II.

THE design of the apostle in this chapter, is to magnify the riches of divine grace, in the effectual vocation and salvation of sinners, by Christ Jesus; in order to which, he describes the sad estate they are in by nature, and before conversion, even God's elect among the Jews, and especially among the Gentiles; and then observes how peace is made for and between them both, by Christ the peacemaker; and the various privileges and blessings which both enjoy, in consequence of it: he begins with the Ephesians, and expresses the former state they were in by a death, which is ascribed to trespasses and sins, ver. 1. and represents their walk and conversation to have been according to the world, and after Satan; who is described by his dominion over other devils that dwell in the air, and by his influence upon disobedient men, ver. 2. and that it might not be thought that the case of these Gentile Ephesians was worse than others, the apostle observes of himself, and other saints among the Jews, that their conversation before conversion was among the men of the world, and so according to the course of it, as the Gentiles; and that it was a very carnal conversation they had spent, in fulfilling the desires and lusts of the flesh; and that they were as deserving of, and as liable to the wrath of God in themselves, as other persons, ver. 3. to which former state he opposes their present one; they were not now dead in sin, but were quickened; which is ascribed to God as the efficient cause, and to his rich mercy and great love as the moving cause; and to Christ as the meritorious and procuring cause, by whose grace they were saved, and in whom they were not only quickened, but raised, and made to sit together in heavenly places; and the final cause and end of all this was, to shew forth the abundant grace and kindness of God, through Christ, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. The doctrine of salvation by grace, the apostle takes up again from ver. 5. and to the moving cause of salvation, the grace of God, he adds the mean, or instrument by which it is received and enjoyed, which is faith; and that is denied to be owing to the power of men, but is said to be a gift of God, ver. 8. and the

end in view, in putting salvation upon the foot of grace and not works, is to prevent boasting in the creature, ver. 9. and that works cannot be the causes of salvation, either efficient, moving, or procuring, is evident; since though they are to be performed as being agreeable to the purposing, as well as commanding will of God, yet they are effects, both of the work of grace upon the soul in time, called a creation, and of the decrees of God from eternity, ver. 10. when the apostle goes on to put the Ephesians in mind of their former state in unregeneracy, with the same view as before, to magnify the grace of God, but in a different manner; not as common to them with the Jews, but as peculiar to them as Gentiles; as that they were had in contempt by the Jews, and were in a state of alienation, not only from them, but from God and Christ, and the enjoyment of various privileges, ver. 11, 12. wherefore the grace of God was the more conspicuous in their present state of nearness both to God and to his people, brought about by the blood of Christ, ver. 13. who, as the peacemaker, not only made peace by the blood of his cross between God and them, but between them and the true Israel of God among the Jews; which was done, partly by abolishing the ceremonial law, which occasioned enmity, and kept up a division among them, ver. 14, 15, 16. and partly by sending, and preaching the Gospel of peace to them both, ver. 17. and by opening a way of access for them both unto the father through himself, under the direction and influence of the spirit, ver. 18. from all which it appeared, that they were not in a state of distance and alienation as before, but all belonged to the same city and family, and were built on the same foundation, and were united together in the same corner-stone, Jesus Christ, ver. 19, 20. and as the apostle compares Christ to a foundation, and a corner-stone, so the church of Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, to a temple; which being fitly put together, becomes an holy one in the Lord, and a suitable habitation for God through the spirit, ver. 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *And you hath he quickened, &c.*] The de-

^a Zohar in Gen. fol. 50. 2. & in Exod. fol. 21. 2.

sign of the apostle in this and some following verses, is to shew the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to set forth the sad estate and condition of man by nature, and to magnify the riches of the grace of God, and represent the exceeding greatness of his power in conversion: the phrase *hath he quickened*, is not in the original text, but is supplied from ver. 5. where it will be met with and explained: here those who are quickened with Christ, and by the power and grace of God, are described in their natural and unregenerate estate, *who were dead in trespasses and sins*; not only dead in Adam, in whom they sinned, being their federal head and representative; and in a law sense, the sentence of condemnation and death having passed upon them; but in a moral sense, through original sin, and their own actual transgressions: which death lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit, such are without God, and are alienated from the life of God, and they are without Christ, who is the author and giver of life, and they are sensual, not having the spirit, who is the spirit of life; and in a deformation of the image of God, such are dead as to their understandings, wills, and affections, with respect to spiritual things, and as to their capacity to do any thing that is spiritually good; and in a loss of original righteousness; and in a privation of the sense of sin and misery; and in a servitude to sin, Satan, and the world: hence it appears, that man must be in himself unacceptable to God, infectious and hurtful to his fellow-creatures, and incapable of helping himself: so it was usual with the Jews to call a wicked and ignorant man, a dead man; they say¹, "there is no death like that of those that transgress the words of the law, who are called, *מתים*, *dead men*, and therefore the Scripture says, *turn and live*." And again², "no man is called a living man, but he who is in the way of truth in this world.—And a wicked man who does not go in the way of truth, is called, *מת*, *a dead man*." And once more³, "whoever is without wisdom, lo, he is *כמת*, *as a dead man*:" see the note on 1 Tim. v. 6. The Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and one of Stephens's, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, *dead in your trespasses and sins*; and the Syriac version, *dead in your sins and in your trespasses*; and the Ethiopic version only, *dead in your sins*.

Ver. 2. *Wherein in time past ye walked, &c.*] Sins and transgressions are a road or path, in which all unconverted sinners walk; and this path is a dark, crooked, and broad one, which leads to destruction and death, and yet is their own way, which they choose, approve of, and delight to walk in; and walking in it denotes a continued series of sinning, an obstinate persisting in it, a progress in iniquity, and pleasure therein: and the time of walking in this path, being said to be in time past, shews that the elect of God before conversion, walk in the same road that others do; and that conversion is a turning out of this way; and that when persons are converted, the course of their walking is altered, which before was according to the course

of this world: meaning this world, in distinction from the world to come, or the present age, in which the apostle lived, and designs the men of it; and the course of it is their custom, manner, and way of life; to which God's elect, during their state of unregeneracy, conform, both with respect to conversation and religious worship: great is the force that prevailing customs have over men; it is one branch of redemption by Christ, to deliver men from this present evil world, and to free them from a vain conversation in it; and it is only the grace of God that effectually teaches to deny the lusts of it; and it is only owing to the prevalent intercession and power of Christ, that even converted persons are kept from the evil of it: according to the *prince of the power of the air*: which is not to be understood of any supposed power the devil has over the air, by divine permission, to raise winds, &c. but of a posse, or body of devils, who have their residence in the air; for it was not only the notion of the Jews⁴, that there are noxious and accusing spirits, who fly about *באוויר*, *in the air*, and that there is no space between the earth and the firmament free, and that the whole is full of a multitude of them; but also it was the opinion of the Chaldeans⁵, and of Pythagoras⁶, and Plato⁷, that the air is full of demons: now there is a prince who is at the head of these, called Beelzebub, the prince of devils, or the lord of a fly, for the devils under him are as so many flies in the air, Matt. xii. 24. and by the Jews called⁸, *רבוך רדחיא*, *the prince of spirits*; and is here styled, *the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*: by which spirit is meant, not the lesser devils that are under the prince, nor the spirit of the world which comes from him, and is not of God; but Satan himself, who is a spirit, and an evil, and an unclean one; and who operates powerfully in unbelievers, for they are meant by children of disobedience, or unbelief; just as *בני מדינותא*, *children of faith*⁹, in the Jewish dialect, designs believers; and over these Satan has great influence, especially the reprobate part of them; whose minds he blinds, and whose hearts he fills, and puts it into them to do the worst of crimes; and indeed, he has great power over the elect themselves, whilst in unbelief, and leads them captive at his will; and these may be said in their unregeneracy to walk after him, when they imitate him, and do his lusts, and comply with what he suggests, dictates to them, or tempts them to.

Ver. 3. *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, &c.*] What the apostle says of the Gentile Ephesians before conversion, he says of himself and other Jews; and this he does, partly to shew that it was not from ill will, or with a design to upbraid the Gentiles, that he said what he did; and partly to beat down the pride of the Jews, who thought themselves better than the sinners of the Gentiles; as well as to magnify the grace of God in the conversion of them both: the sense is, that the apostle and other Jews in the time of their unregeneracy, had their conversation according to the customs of the world, and

¹ Zohar in Gen. fol. 41. 3.

² Ib. in Num. fol. 76. 1. Vid. ib. in Exod. fol. 44. 2.

³ Capitor, fol. 30. 2.

⁴ Shaare Ora, fol. 4. 1.

⁵ Laert. Proem. in Vit. Philos. p. 3.

⁶ Ib. in Vit. Pythagor. p. 587.

⁷ Apuleius de Deo Socratis, p. 331.

⁸ T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 21. 2.

⁹ Zohar in Gen. fol. 21. 2. & 22. 4. & 27. 4. & 29. 2. & 35. 2. & 44. 1.

to the prince of the air, and among unbelievers, as well as the Gentiles; and that they were equally sinners, and lived a like sinful course of life: *in the lusts of our flesh*; by *flesh* is meant, the corruption of nature; so called, because it is propagated by natural generation; and is opposed to the spirit, or principle of grace; and has for its object fleshly things; and discovers itself mostly in the body, the flesh; and it makes persons carnal or fleshly: and this is called *our*, because it belongs to human nature, and is inherent in it, and inseparable from it in this life: and the *lusts* of it, are the inward motions of it, in a contrariety to the law and will of God; and are various, and are sometimes called fleshly and worldly lusts, and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: and persons may be said to have their conversations in these, when these are the ground of their conversation, when they are solicitous about them, and make provision for the fulfilling of them, and constantly employ themselves in obedience to them, as follows: *fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind*; or the *wills* of them; what they incline to, will, and crave after: various are the degrees of sin, and its several motions; and universal is the corruption of human nature; not only the body, and the several members of it, are defiled with sin, and disposed to it, but all the powers and faculties of the soul; even the more noble and governing ones, the mind, understanding, and will, as well as the affections; and great is the power and influence which lust has over them: *and were by nature children of wrath, even as others*; by which is meant, not only that they were wrathful persons, living in malice, hateful, and hating one another; but that they were deserving of the wrath of God, which comes upon the children of disobedience, among whom they had their conversation; and which is revealed from heaven against such sins as they were guilty of, though they were not appointed to it: and they were such *by nature*; really, and not in opinion, and by and from their first birth: so a Jewish commentator* on these words, *thy first father hath sinned*, Isa. xliii. 27. has this note; "how can'st thou say thou hast not sinned?" and behold thy first father hath sinned, and he is "the first man, for man *בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּחַטָּאת*, is naturally *in sin*;" or by nature a sinner, or sin is naturally impressed in him; and hence being by nature a sinner, he is by nature deserving of the wrath of God, as were the persons spoken of: *even as others*; as the rest of the world, Jews as well as Gentiles; and Gentiles are especially designed, in distinction from the Jews, the apostle is speaking of; and who are particularly called in the Jewish dialect *אֲחֵרִים*, *others*; see the note on Luke xviii. 11.

Ver. 4. *But God, who is rich in mercy, &c.*] Mercy is a perfection of the divine nature, and is essential to God; and may be considered with respect to the objects of it, either as general, extending to all men in a providential way; or as special, reaching only to some in a way of grace; for though mercy is his nature, yet the display and exertion of it towards any object, is the act of his will; and special mercy, with all the blessings and benefits of it, is only exhibited in Christ

Jesus: and God is said to be *rich* in it, because he is free and liberal in dispensing it, and the effects of it; and that to a large number of persons, in great abundance and variety, by various ways, and in divers instances; as in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, in redemption by him, in regeneration, in pardon of sin, and in eternal salvation; and yet it is inexhaustible and perpetual; and this sets forth the excellency and glory of it: *for his great love wherewith he loved us*; the love of God to his chosen people is very great, if it be considered who it is that has loved them, God and not man; who is an infinite, unchangeable, and sovereign Being; and his love is like himself, for God is love; it has heights and depths, and lengths and breadths immeasurable; it admits of no variation nor alteration; and is altogether free, arising from himself, and not from any motives and conditions in men: and if the persons themselves are considered, who are the objects of it, men, sinful men, unworthy of the divine notice and regard; and that these are loved personally, particularly, and distinctly, and not others; nakedly, and not theirs, or for any thing in them, or done by them, and that notwithstanding their manifold sins and transgressions: to which may be added, that this love is represented as a past act; and indeed it is from everlasting, and is antecedent to their being quickened, and was when they were dead in trespasses and sins; and is the source and spring of the blessing next mentioned: so the divine love is often called in the Cabalistic writings of the Jews[†], *אֱהוּבָה רַבָּה*, *great love*.

Ver. 5. *Even when we were dead in sins, &c.*] See the note on ver. 1. *Hath quickened us together with Christ*; which may be understood either of regeneration, when a soul that is dead in a moral or spiritual sense, is quickened and made alive; a principle of life is infused, and acts of life are put forth; such have their spiritual senses, and these in exercise; they can feel the load and weight of sin; see their lost state and condition, the odiousness of sin, and the beauty of a Saviour, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and the fulness and suitableness of Christ's; breathe after divine and spiritual things; speak in prayer to God, and the language of Canaan to fellow-Christians; move towards Christ, exercise grace on him, act for him, and walk on in him: and this life they have not from themselves, for previous to it they are dead, and in this quickening work are entirely passive; nor can regenerate persons quicken themselves, when in dead and lifeless frames, and much less unregenerate sinners; but this is God's act, the act of God the Father; though not exclusive of the Son, who quickens whom he will; nor of the Spirit, who is the Spirit of life from Christ; and it is an instance of the exceeding greatness, both of his power and love; and this may be said to be done with Christ, because he is the procuring and meritorious cause of it, by his death and resurrection from the dead; and is the author and efficient cause of it; and he is the matter of it, it is not so much the quickened persons that live, as Christ that lives in them, and it is the same life he himself lives; and because he lives, they shall live also; it is in him as in the fountain, and in

* Kimchi in loc.

† Zohar in Gen. fol. 2. 4. & in Exod. fol. 102. 3. Lcx. Cabal. p. 44. 45.

them as in the stream : or else this may be understood of justification ; men are dead in a law sense, and on account of sin, are under the sentence of death ; though they naturally think themselves alive, and in a good state ; but when the spirit of God comes, he strikes dead all their hopes of life by a covenant of works ; not merely by letting in the terrors of the law upon the conscience, but by shewing the spirituality of it, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin ; and how incapable they are of satisfying the law, for the transgressions of it ; and then he works faith in them, whereby they revive and live ; they see pardon and righteousness in Christ, and pray for the one, and plead the other ; and also lay hold and live upon the righteousness of Christ, when the Spirit seals up the pardon of their sins to them, and passes the sentence of justification on them, and so they reckon themselves alive unto God ; and this is the justification of life, the Scripture speaks of ; and this is in consequence of their being quickened with Christ, at the time of his resurrection ; for when he rose from the dead, they rose with him ; when he was justified, they were justified in him ; and in this sense when he was quickened, they were quickened with him : *by grace ye are saved* ; the Claromontane copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, *by whose grace* ; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, *by his grace* ; either by the grace of him that quickens, or by the grace of Christ with whom they were quickened ; the Syriac version renders it, *by his grace he hath redeemed us* ; which seems to refer to the redeeming grace of Christ ; and so the Ethiopic version, *and hath delivered us by his grace* ; and there is a change of the person into *us*, which seems more agreeable to what goes before, and follows after ; see the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 6. *And hath raised us up together, &c.* Which refers either to a spiritual resurrection, to a resurrection from a death in sin, to a spiritual life ; and which is the effect of almighty power, and of rich grace and mercy ; and in which Christ is concerned : he is the efficient cause of it, he raises the dead in this sense, and quickens whom he will ; and his resurrection is the virtual cause of it ; and also the exemplar, between which there is a great likeness ; both bear the same name ; both are a declaration of sonship ; and both the first step to glory in Christ and in his people ; and both are instances of the exceeding greatness of God's power : or it may refer to a corporeal resurrection, said to be already, because it is in faith and hope, and because of the certainty of it ; and to be together with Christ, because of the conformity of it to his resurrection, and to the influence of which it is owing ; and chiefly because that when Christ rose from the dead, all his people rose in him, and with him, as their head and representative, he being the first-fruits of them that slept ; so called, in allusion to the first-fruits of the harvest under the law, which represented and sanctified the whole : *and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus* : Christ is entered into heaven as the forerunner, to take possession of it for his people, in their name ; and to prepare mansions of glory for them, and in these they sit ; which imports honour, pleasure, rest from labour and weariness, and safety and security : and what adds to the happiness of this is, that it is together with all the saints, and with Christ himself ; and in these they are

made to sit already ; which is so said, because of the certainty of it, for the same glory Christ has, they shall have ; and because of their right to such a blessing ; and chiefly because Christ their head is set down therein, who sustains their persons, bears their names on his heart, and represents them.

Ver. 7. *That in the ages to come, &c.* This is the end of God's permitting sin, in which men are morally dead ; and of his suffering them to go on in sin, in a state of unregeneracy ; and of his quickening them with Christ, and raising them up, and causing them to sit together with him : namely, that *he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace* : riches being added to grace, denote the valuableness of it, as well as its plenty and abundance ; and also the freeness and liberality of God in giving it ; and likewise the enriching nature of it : and these riches are exceeding ; they exceed the riches of this world, in the immenseness of them, being unsearchable ; and in the inexhaustibleness of them, for though such large treasures have been expended upon such numbers of persons, yet there is still the same quantity ; and in the duration of them, they last for ever ; and in the profit and satisfaction they yield, when other riches fade away, are not profitable nor satisfying ; and they exceed the conception, knowledge, and comprehension of men ; and intend the utmost stretch of the grace of God : and which are evidently and remarkably displayed, *in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus* ; in providing him as a Saviour for his people ; in the mission of him into this world ; in not sparing, but giving him up as a sacrifice to justice for their sins ; and in blessing them with all spiritual blessings in him : all which God designed to shew forth, *in the ages to come* ; meaning either the ages following to the end of time, in distinction from the ages that were past : hence it appears, that the world was not expected to be immediately at an end ; and that the writings of the New Testament were to be continued, and the Gospel preached unto the end of time, in which the riches of divine grace are held forth to view ; and that these ages to come, are seasons and days of grace ; for a day of grace will never be over, as long as the Gospel of grace is preached ; and that the instances of grace through Christ, and in the times of the apostles, are encouraging to men in ages succeeding ; and that the same grace that was displayed then, is shewn forth in these : or else the world to come is meant, which will take place at the end of this ; and may lead us to observe, that there will be ages in the other world ; and that God has not only prepared a great deal of grace and glory for his people, but he has appointed ages now for them to enjoy it in ; and that their riches lie in another world, and are in some measure hid ; and that these are the produce of the grace of God ; and that the exceeding riches of that will be then manifested, when it will also appear that God's giving grace to men, is not only with a view to his own glory, but is an act of kindness to them ; and that eternal happiness will be heartily and freely bestowed upon them, and that through Jesus Christ their Lord : the Syriac version renders it, *that unto ages to come he might shew, &c.* that is, to men in ages to come ; the sense is much the same.

Ver. 8. *For by grace are ye saved, &c.* This is to be

understood, not of temporal salvation, nor of preservation in Christ, nor of providential salvation in order to vocation, and much less of being put in a way of salvation, or only in a salvable state; but of spiritual salvation, and that actual; for salvation was not only resolved upon, contrived and secured in the covenant of grace, for the persons here spoken to, but it was actually obtained and wrought out for them by Christ, and was actually applied unto them by the spirit; and even as to the full enjoyment of it, they had it in faith and hope; and because of the certainty of it, they are said to be already saved; and besides, were representatively possessed of it in Christ their head: those interested in this salvation, are not all mankind, but particular persons; and such who were by nature children of wrath, and sinners of the Gentiles; and it is a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation, and from eternal death, and wrath to come; and includes all the blessings of grace and glory; and is entirely owing to free grace: for by grace is not meant the Gospel, nor gifts of grace, nor grace infused; but the free favour of God, to which salvation in all its branches is ascribed; as election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal glory: the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *by his grace*, and so some copies; and it may refer to the grace of all the three Persons; for men are saved by the grace of the Father, who drew the plan of salvation, appointed men to it, made a covenant with his Son, in which it is provided and secured, and sent him into the world to obtain it; and by the grace of the Son, who engaged as a surety to effect it, assumed human nature, obeyed and suffered in it for that purpose, and has procured it; and by the grace of the Spirit, who makes men sensible of their need of it, brings it near, sets it before them, and applies it to them, and gives them faith and hope in it: hence it follows, *through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*; salvation is through faith, not as a cause or condition of salvation, or as what adds any thing to the blessing itself; but it is the way, or means, or instrument, which God has appointed, for the receiving and enjoying it, that so it might appear to be all of grace; and this faith is not the produce of man's free will and power, but it is the free gift of God; and therefore salvation through it is consistent with salvation by grace; since that itself is of grace, lies entirely in receiving grace, and gives all the glory to the grace of God: the sense of this last clause may be, that salvation is not of ourselves; it is not of our desiring, nor of our deserving, nor of our performing, but is of the free grace of God: though faith is elsewhere represented as the gift of God, John vi. 65. Phil. i. 29. and it is called the special gift of faith, in Wisdom iii. 14.

Ver. 9. *Not of works, &c.*] Of any kind, moral or ceremonial, before or after conversion, done without faith or in it, nor of these in any sense; works are neither the moving causes, nor the procuring causes, nor the helping causes, nor *causa sine qua non*, or conditions of salvation; the best works that are done by men, are not done of themselves, but by the grace of God, and therefore can never merit at his hand: and salvation is put upon such a foot, *lest any man should boast*: of his works before God, and unto men; wherefore he has denied works any place in justification and

salvation, in order to exclude all boasting in man; and has fixed it in a way of grace, and has chosen and called poor sinful worthless creatures to enjoy it, that whoever glories, may glory in the Lord.

Ver. 10. *For we are his workmanship, &c.*] Not as men only, but as Christians; not as creatures merely, but as new creatures; the work of grace upon the soul seems chiefly designed, which like a *poem*, as the word may be rendered, is a very curious work; the king's daughter is all glorious within, for this is an internal work, and is a good and excellent one; it is not indeed perfected at once, but is gradually carried on, till the finishing stroke is given to it by that hand which begun it; the author of it is God, it is not man's work; nor is it the work of ministers, no, nor of angels, but it is God's work: sometimes it is ascribed to the Spirit, who regenerates and sanctifies; and sometimes to the Son of God, who quickens whom he will; and sometimes to the Father, who reveals his Son, and draws men to him, and who seems to be meant here: the subjects of this divine operation, are the persons described in ver. 1, 2, 3. and include both Jews and Gentiles; and express the distinguishing grace of God, that they and not others, and who were by nature children of wrath as others, should be his workmanship: and this is mentioned to shew, that salvation cannot be by any works of men, since all their works are either wrought for them, or in them, by God; salvation is a work wrought for them without them; and sanctification is a work wrought in them by God, of his good pleasure; and all their good works are fruits of his grace, as follows: *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*; the work of grace is a creation, or a creature, a new creature; not a new vamp of old Adam's principles, but an infusion of new ones, and is a work of almighty power; and such who have it wrought in them, are said to be created in Christ; because as soon as a man becomes a new creature, he is openly and visibly in Christ; and by these new principles of grace which are created in him, he is fit and ready, and in a capacity to perform good works; the new man formed in him, is formed for righteousness and true holiness; the internal principle of grace both excites unto, and qualifies for, the performance of righteous and holy actions: *which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, or has before prepared*; for the preparation of good works to be performed by saints, and the preparation of them for the performance of them; are both from the Lord; God has appointed good works to be done by his people, and in his word he has declared what they are he would have done; and it is his will not only that they should do them, but continue to do them; not only that they should do a single act or more, but walk in them; their conversation and course of life should be one continued series of good works; but the intention is not that they should be saved by them, but that they should walk in them; and this being the pre-ordination of God, as it shews that predestination is not according to good works, since good works are the fruits and effects of it, so likewise that it is no licentious doctrine; seeing it provides for the performance of good works, as well as secures grace and glory.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, &c.*] This, with what fol-

lows in the next verse, the apostle puts the converted Ephesians in mind of, in order to magnify the grace of God in their conversion; and to humble them in a view of their former state and condition; and to teach them that they could never be saved by any works of theirs: particularly he would have them call to mind, that they were *in time past Gentiles*; which does not so much regard the nation and country they were of, for in that sense they were Gentiles still; but their state and condition; they had been very blind and ignorant, were Gentiles that knew not God; they had been very wicked and profligate sinners of the Gentiles; and they had been *Gentiles in the flesh*; not according to the flesh, or by birth, for so they were then; but in the time of their unregeneracy they were carnal, and minded the things of the flesh, walked after it, and fulfilled the lusts, and did the works of it; particular respect seems to be had to their uncircumcision in the flesh, to which circumcision in the flesh is opposed in the next clause: *who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands*; that is, they were by way of reproach and contempt called uncircumcised persons; than whom none were more abominable to the Jews, and hated by them, who were called circumcised persons from that circumcision which is outward, in the flesh, in a particular part of the body; and which is done by the hands of a man, who was called *מורדל*, *the circumciser*; which any one might be, except a Gentile²; an Israelite adult and skilful was preferred; yet these were not circumcised persons with that circumcision that is inward, and is of the heart, in the spirit, and is made without the hands of men, and by the spirit and power of God.

Ver. 12. *That at that time ye were without Christ, &c.*] Or separate from him: they were chosen in him and were preserved in him, and were redeemed by him before; but they were without any knowledge of him, faith in him, love to him, communion with him, or subjection to him, his Gospel, government, laws, and ordinances; and particularly they were without any promises of him, or prophecies concerning him, which were peculiar to the Jews; hence the Messiah is called *משיחא דישׂראל*, *the Christ of Israel*³, and who as he was promised, so he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: hence it follows, *being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*; both from their civil and church state; the Gentiles might not dwell among them, nor have any dealings with them in things civil, unless they conformed to certain laws; nor might the Jews go into any, nor eat or converse with any, that were uncircumcised; so great an alienation and distance were there between these two people; and much less might they eat the passover and join with them in religious worship: the word for *commonwealth* here used, Harpocratian says⁴, is commonly used by Greek writers for a *democracy*: though the original constitution of the Israelites was properly a *theocracy*: *strangers to the covenants of promise*; to the covenant of circumcision given to Abra-

ham; and to the covenant at Mount Sinai, made with Israel; and to the dispensation of the covenant of grace to that people, sometimes called the first covenant and the old covenant, and which peculiarly belonged to them, Rom. ix. 4. one copy reads, *strangers to the promises of the covenant*; which is natural enough; the Vulgate Latin version joins the word *promise* to the next clause, and reads, *having no hope of the promise*; of the promised Messiah: *having no hope*: of the Messiah and salvation by him, of the resurrection of the dead, of a future state, and of eternal life; none that is sure and steadfast, that is purifying, and makes not ashamed; or which is a good hope through grace, is the gift of God, the fruit of his love, and the effect of his power; and this is to be in a miserable condition: Philo, the Jew⁵, observes, that "the Chaldeans call a man Enos, as if he only was truly a man that expects good things, and supports himself with good hopes; and adds, hence it is manifest that one without hope is not reckoned a man, but a beast in an human form; since he is destitute of hope, which is the property of the human soul;" and *without God in the world*; without the knowledge of God in Christ; without the image of God, which was defaced by sin; without the grace and fear of God; and without communion with him, and the worship of him; and whilst they were so they were in the world, among the men of it, and were a part of it, not being yet called out of it: the word signifies *atheists*; so some of the Gentiles were in *theory*, as they all were in *practice*; and they were by the Jews reckoned no other than *atheists*: it is a common saying with them⁶, that "he that dwells without the land (of Israel) is like one *שׂאין לוֹ אלהים*, *who has no God*."

Ver. 13. *But now in Christ Jesus, &c.*] Being openly and visibly in Christ, created in him, and become believers in him; as they were before secretly in him, as chosen and blessed in him before the foundation of the world: *ye who sometimes were far off*: who in their state of unregeneracy were afar off from God, and from his law, and from any spiritual knowledge of him and fellowship with him; and from Jesus Christ, and from the knowledge of his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and from the spirit, and any acquaintance with the things of the spirit, and from minding them, and from walking after him; and from the saints and people of God, and from any love to them, and communion with them; and from any solid hopes of happiness, or real peace and comfort; which distance was owing both to Adam's sin and to their own transgressions: it is an observation of a Jewish writer⁷ on Gen. iii. 9. *where art thou?* he (God) knew where he was, but he said so to shew him that he was *מרוחק*, *afar off from God by his sin*: see Isa. lix. 2. and yet are *made nigh by the blood of Christ*: so as to have nearness of access to and communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the saints, in virtue of the blood of Christ; which gives boldness and speaks peace; by which their persons are justified, the pardon of their sins is procured, reconciliation is made,

² Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 2. sect. 1.

³ Targum in Isa. xvi. 1. 5.

⁴ Lex. Decem Orator. p. 246.

⁵ De Abrahamo, p. 350, 351.

⁶ T. Bab. Cetsubot, fol. 110. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 1. Cossi, par. 2. sect. 23. fol. 85. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 129. 4 & 135. 2 & 153. 3. & 168. 3.

⁷ R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 9.

and their garments are washed, and made white; and so they draw nigh with confidence by the faith of him.

Ver. 14. *For he is our peace, &c.*] The author of peace between Jew and Gentile: there was a great enmity of the Jew against the Gentile, and of the Gentile against the Jew; and chiefly on account of circumcision, the one being without it, and the other insisting on it, and branding one another with nick-names on account of it; but Christ has made peace between them by abrogating the ceremonial law, which was the occasion of the difference, and by sending the Gospel of peace to them both, by converting some of each, and by granting the like privileges to them all, as may be observed in the following verses: and Christ is the author of peace between God and his people; there is naturally in man an enmity to God; sin has separated chief friends; nor can man make his peace with God; what he does, or can do, will not do it; and what will, he cannot do; Christ is the only fit and proper person for this work, being a middle person between both, and is only able to effect it, being God as well as man; and so could draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and agree to them, and perform them; and which he has brought about by his blood, his sufferings and death; and which is made on honourable terms, by a full satisfaction to the law and justice of God; and so is a lasting one, and attended with a train of blessings: moreover, Christ is the donor of peace, of external peace in his churches, and of internal peace of conscience, and of eternal peace in heaven: this is one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews^b; “ Jose the Galilean, even the name of the Messiah is called שלום, peace: as it is said, Isa. ix. 6. the ever-lasting Father, the Prince of peace;” see Mic. v. 5. where it is said, *and this man shall be the peace*; which the Jewish^c writers understand of the Messiah: *who hath made both one*: Jews and Gentiles, one people, one body, one church; he united them together, and caused them to agree in one, and made them to be of one mind and judgment by the above methods; as well as he gathered them together in one, in one head, himself, who represented them all: *and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us*: the ceremonial law, which was made up of many hard and intolerable commands, and distinguished, and divided, and kept up a division between Jews and Gentiles: so the Jews call the law a wall, *if she be a wall*, Cant. 8, 9. זו תורה, *this is the law*, say they^d: and hence we read of חומת התורה, *the wall of the law*^e; and sometimes the phrase, a *partition-wall*, is used for a division or disagreement; so R. Benjamin says^f, that between the Karaites and Rabbanites, who were the disciples of the wise men, there was מחיצה, *a middle wall of partition*; a great difference and distance; and such there was between the Jew and Gentile, by reason of the ceremonial law; but Christ removed it, and made up the difference: the allusion seems to be to the wall which divided the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles, in the temple, and which kept them at a distance in worship.

Ver. 15. *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, &c.*] The ceremonial law, as appears by what follows, even *the law of commandments contained in ordinances*; which consisted of many precepts, and carnal ordinances; and is so called because it was an incarnation of God's hatred of sin, by requiring sacrifice for it; and because it was an occasion of stirring up the enmity of the natural man, it being a burden and a weariness to the flesh, by reason of its many and troublesome rites; and because it was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile: the Jews say^g, that Sinai, the mount on which the law was given, signifies *hatred*; and that it is so called because from it descended שנאת, *hatred* or *enmity* to the nations of the world: now this Christ abolished, *in his flesh*, or by it; not by his incarnation, but by the sacrifice of his flesh, or human nature, and that as in union with his divine nature; but not until he had fulfilled it in himself, which was one end of his coming into the world; and then he abolished it, so as that it ought not to be, and so as that it is not, and of no use and service; and that because it was faulty and deficient, weak and unprofitable, as well as intolerable; and because there was a change in the priesthood; and because it was contrary to a spirit of liberty, the great blessing of the Gospel; and that there might be a reconciliation and a coalition between Jew and Gentile, as follows: *for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace*; which explains what is meant before by making both one; and expresses the strictness of the union between Jew and Gentile, they became as one man; and points at the manner in which they became so strictly united; and that is by being made new men, or new creatures, by having a work of grace upon their souls, and so baptized into one body, and made to drink of one and the same spirit: the foundation of which union is in himself; for Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus; he is the corner-stone in which they all meet, and the head to which the whole body is joined.

Ver. 16. *And that he might reconcile both unto God, &c.*] This is another end of the abrogation of the ceremonial law: the Jews had run up a long score against the ceremonial law, as well as against the moral law; and Christ by fulfilling it for them, and thereby abrogating it, reconciled them; and the Gentiles could not be reconciled together with them, without the abrogation of it: and this reconciliation of them is made to God, who was the person offended; and who yet first set on foot a reconciliation, in which his glory is greatly concerned; and reconciliation with others depends upon reconciliation with him: and this is made *in one body by the cross*; by which *body* is meant, the human body of Christ, which the father prepared for him, and he assumed, and that in order to make reconciliation for his people; and is said to be *one body*, because it was in one and the same body, in which he reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God, and in or by one sacrifice of that body; reconciliation being so effectually made by it that there is no need of a reiteration: or the sense is, he reconciled them.

^b Perek Shalom, fol. 20. 1. Baal Hatturim in Numb. xxv. 14.

^c Vid. Kimchi in loc.

^d T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 87. 1.

^e Caphtor, fol. 95. 1. & 101. 1.

^f Itinerar. p. 28.

^g T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 92. 4.

into one body; into one mystical body, the church, of which he is head; and this he did *by the cross*, that is, by his blood shed on the cross, or by his suffering the death of the cross; which shews that reconciliation is made in a way of satisfaction to the law and justice of God, by Christ's bearing the penalty of the law, and suffering the strokes of justice on the cross; and expresses the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice, and the greatness of his condescension and love: *having slain the enmity thereby*; the ceremonial law, as before; and the slaying it is the same with abolishing it; unless the enmity between God and man is meant, which was slain by removing the cause of it, sin; and which laid a foundation for the slaying of it in the hearts of his people in regeneration, when sin is made odious to them, and they are reconciled to God's way of salvation; hence being slain in both senses, peace with God can never be broken.

Ver. 17. *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, &c.*] Which is to be understood not of Christ's coming in the flesh; for when he came in the flesh, he came only to the Jews that were nigh, and preached the Gospel in his own personal ministry to them, and not to the Gentiles, who are the persons afar off; see ver. 12, 13. but of his coming by his spirit in the ministry of his apostles, to whom he gave a commission after he had made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in the furthest parts of the earth; and on whom he bestowed gifts, qualifying them for such service, and succeeded them in it by his power and grace: and the subject of their ministry was peace, Christ who is our peace, and peace made by his blood, and the Gospel of peace, which declares both these; and it is the means of making persons of peaceable dispositions; its doctrines and promises, when powerfully applied, give peace to distressed minds, and quiet to doubting saints; and it shews the way to eternal peace: *and to them that were nigh*; to the Jews, to whom the Gospel of peace was preached in the first place, not only by Christ and his apostles, before his death; but by his apostles after his resurrection, and after the commission was given to preach it to the Gentiles; though they are mentioned last, because the apostle was speaking to Gentiles; and this also verifies what Christ says, the first shall be last, and the last first: the Alexandrian copy, some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read *peace*, in this clause, as in the former; the apostle seems to have respect to Isa. lvii. 19. a like description and distinction of Jews and Gentiles may be observed in the writings of the Jews^b; so they say, "the Israelites are near unto the holy King, and the rest of the nations are far from him."

Ver. 18. *For through him we both have an access, &c.*] That is, both Jews and Gentiles; the Arabic version reads, *we both factions*: being made one, and reconciled unto God, and having the Gospel of peace preached to both, they have through Christ freedom of access and boldness in it: *by one spirit unto the father*: they may come to God as the father of spirits, and of mercies, who has made their souls or spirits,

and bestowed his mercies on them in great abundance; and as the father of Christ, and as their God and father in Christ: and the rather they should consider him in this relation to them, in order to command in them a reverence and fear of him; to secure a freedom and liberty in their approach to him; and to encourage an holy boldness, and a fiducial confidence in him; and to teach them submission to his will: and their access to him is *through Christ*, who has made peace for them, and atonement for their sins; who has satisfied law and justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for them; so that there is nothing lies in their way to hinder them; and besides, he takes them as it were by the hand, and leads them into the presence of his father, and presents their petitions for them, on whose account they have both audience and acceptance with God: and this access is also *by one spirit*: the *Holy Spirit*, as the Ethiopic version reads; and who is necessary in access to God, as a spirit of adoption, to enable and encourage souls to go to God as a father; and as a spirit of supplication, to teach both how to pray, and for what, as they should; and as a free spirit to give them liberty to speak their minds freely, and pour out their souls to God; and as a spirit of faith to engage them to pray in faith, and with holy boldness, confidence, and importunity; and he is said to be *one*, both with respect to the persons to and by whom access is had, the father and Christ, for he is the one and the same spirit of the father and of the son; and with respect to the persons who have this access, Jews and Gentiles, who as they make up one body, are actuated and directed by, and drink into one and the same spirit: hence this access to God is of a spiritual kind; it is a drawing nigh to God with the heart, and a worshipping him in spirit; and is by faith, and may be with freedom, and should be with reverence, and ought to be frequent; and is a peculiar privilege that belongs to the children of God; and who have great honour bestowed upon them, to have access to God at any time, as their father, through Christ the Mediator, and under the influence, and by the direction and assistance of the Holy Spirit: this is a considerable proof of persons in the Godhead, of their deity and distinct personality.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers, &c.*] Alluding to the name כַּרְרִי, a stranger, by which the Jews called the Gentiles; meaning that they were not now strangers to God, to the grace of God, the love of God, and communion with him, nor to the throne of his grace; nor to Christ, to his person, his work and office, to his righteousness, to his voice, and to believing in him; nor to the Holy Spirit, as an enlightener, a comforter, the spirit of adoption, and as a seal and earnest of future glory; nor to their own hearts, the corruption and deceitfulness of them; nor to the devices of Satan; nor to the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises: *and foreigners*: in the commonwealth of Israel, in the church of God; *but fellow-citizens with the saints*: the city they belong to is either the church below, which is the city of God, of his building, and where he dwells, of which Christ is the foundation, which is strongly fortified with the walls

^b Zohar in Namb. fol. 89. 3.

and bulwarks of salvation, is delightfully situated by the river of divine love, and is endowed with various privileges; or heaven above, which is a city of God's preparing and building also, and where he has his residence, and which is the habitation of angels and saints; of this city in either sense saints are citizens; such who are saints by separation, who are set apart by the father's grace, and by imputation, or through Christ's being made sanctification to them, and by the regenerating grace of the blessed Spirit; and these, as they have a right to a name and a place in the church on earth, have also their citizenship in heaven; and which they have not by birth, nor by purchase, but by the free grace of God, which gives them both a right and a meetness; and believing Gentiles are upon equal foot of grace and privilege with believing Jews: *and of the household of God*: and which is sometimes called the household of faith, the church of God consisting of believers, the family in heaven and in earth named of Christ; in which family or household God is the father, Christ is the first-born, ministers are stewards; and here are saints of various growth and size, some fathers, some young men, some children: and to this family all believers belong, whether Gentiles or Jews; and which they come into, not by birth, nor by merit, but by adopting grace: and happy are they that belong to this city and house! they are freed from all servitude and bondage; they can never be arrested, or come into condemnation; they have liberty of access to God, and share in the fulness of grace in Christ; they are well taken care of; they are richly clothed, and have plenty of provisions; and will never be turned out, and are heirs of a never-fading inheritance.

Ver. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, &c.*] The prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, who agree in laying ministerially the one and only foundation, Jesus Christ; for not the persons of the apostles and prophets, nor their doctrines merely, are here meant; but Christ who is contained in them, and who is the foundation on which the church, and all true believers are built: he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, of all the blessings and promises of it, of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, of salvation and eternal happiness; on this foundation the saints are built by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the efficient causes, and by the ministers of the Gospel as instruments: these lie in the same common quarry with the rest of mankind, and are singled out from thence by efficacious grace; they are broken and hewn by the word and ministers of it, as means; and are ministerially laid on Christ the foundation, and are built up thereon in faith and holiness; yea, private Christians are useful this way to build up one another: *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*; which cements and knits together angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above, and saints below, saints on earth, in all ages and places, and of every denomination; and which is the beauty and glory, as well as the strength of the building, which keeps all together; and Christ is the chief, the head-stone of the corner, and who is superior to angels and men. This phrase is used by the Jews to denote excellency in a person;

so a wise scholar is called *אבן פינה*, a *corner-stone*¹; see Psal. cxviii. 22. Isa. xxviii. 16. Zech. x. 4. It may be rendered, *the chief cornering-stone*. it being such an one that is a foundation-stone, as well as a corner-stone; and reached unto, and lay at the bottom of, and supported the four corners of the building; for the foundation and corner stone in this spiritual building, is one and the same stone, Christ: it is said of the temple of Latona, at Buto, in Egypt, that it was made, *εξ ενός λίθου, of one stone*, as Herodotus^k, an eye-witness of it, attests.

Ver. 21. *In whom all the building fitly framed together, &c.*] This building is to be understood of all the saints, and people of God; of the whole universal church, which is God's building; and is a building of a spiritual nature, and will abide for ever: and this is fitly framed together; it consists of various parts, as a building does; some saints are comparable to beams, some to rafters, others to pillars, &c. and these are joined and united to one another, and are set in an exact symmetry and proportion, and in a proper subserviency to each other; and so as to make for the good, the strength, and beauty of the whole. And it all centres in Christ; he has a great concern in this building; he is the master-builder, and the foundation and corner-stone; and it being knit together in him, *groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord*: it grows by an accession of new stones, or of souls called by grace, and added to it; for this building is not yet openly and visibly completed, as it will be; in order to which the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances are continued; and this will be in the latter day, when the number of God's elect, among Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in: and this growth may be understood also of an increase of those, who are openly laid in the building; of their spiritual growth into their head, Christ; and of an increase of grace in them; which the word and ordinances are means of, under a divine blessing: and this building grows unto an *holy temple*, the Gospel church-state, called a *temple*, in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem; whose materials were stones made ready and hewn, before they were brought thither; and whose magnificence, beauty, and glory, were very great; and it was the place of public worship, and of the divine abode, and was a very significant emblem of the church of God; see 2 Cor. vi. 16. which is an *holy* one, set apart for holy uses, and internally sanctified by the spirit of God; and which is discovered by external holiness of life, and conversation in the members of it: and this is said to be *in the Lord*; which phrase may refer to the word *groweth*, and denotes that growth and increase, both of persons and grace, the church has in, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; or to the word *holy*, and intimates, that the holiness of the church, and every member of it, is also in and from the Lord; or to the word *temple*, which is built for him to dwell in.

Ver. 22. *In whom you also are builded together, &c.*] As the church universal, so every particular church is a building that is compact together, in and upon Christ, as the church at Ephesus was: God is the builder of it; Christ is the foundation; true believers are the proper materials; the door, or entrance into it, is

¹ Abot R. Nathan, c. 28.

^k Euterpe, c. 155.

Christ, and faith in him; the ministers of the Gospel are pillars in it; the ordinances are its windows; its furniture is of various sorts, there are vessels of small, and of great quantity; and its provisions are large and entertaining. A church is a building compact together; it consists of many parts; and these are joined together, by agreement, and are knit and cemented in love; and being thus joined together, they are designed for social worship, and their great concern should be to edify one another. The phrase, *in whom*, may either refer to the holy temple before spoken of, the church universal, of which a particular church is a part; or to Christ, who is the master-builder, by whom they are built together, and the foundation on whom they are built, and the corner-stone in whom they meet and are united. And the end of their being thus built together is, *for an habitation of God through the spirit*; which may be understood of God the father,

since he is distinguished from Christ, in whom, and from the Holy Spirit, through whom, they are built for this purpose, though not to the exclusion of either of them; for a particular church is an habitation of father, Son, and Spirit: and it being the habitation of God, shews his great grace and condescension, and the great value and regard he has for it; and this makes it a desirable, delightful, and pleasant habitation to the saints; and hence it is a safe and a quiet one, and they are happy that dwell in it; and hither should souls come for the enjoyment of the divine presence: and whereas it is said to be such *through the spirit*; hence it appears, that the spirit is concerned with the other two persons in the building of it; and that hereby it becomes a spiritual house; and is, through his grace, a fit habitation for the holy God to dwell in; and that God dwells in his churches by his spirit.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle hints at his state and condition as a prisoner, and at the afflictions he endured for the sake of the Gospel; and whereas he knew these would be objected to his ministry, and be discouraging to the saints, he chiefly insists on these two things; namely, to assert his office of apostleship, and observe the knowledge of divine mysteries, and gifts of grace bestowed on him, which he does with all modesty and humility; and also to exhort the saints to constancy and perseverance, notwithstanding his tribulations; for which purpose he puts up several petitions for them; and the whole is concluded with a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God. In ver. 1. he declares himself a prisoner of Christ, for the sake of the Ephesians; and which was no objection to his being an ambassador of Christ, and an apostle of his, seeing he had a commission from him to dispense the word of his grace, ver. 2. of which, his knowledge in the mystery of Christ, he had by revelation, was an evident proof, ver. 3. which might easily be understood by what he had written in the former part of his epistle, ver. 4. and was such as had not been given to the saints in former times, as it was to him, and others, now, ver. 5. particularly the knowledge of the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles by the Gospel, ver. 6. of which Gospel to the Gentiles he was made a minister, through the gift of grace, and the energy of divine power, ver. 7. of which high honour he was unworthy, being, in his own esteem, the meanest of all the people of God; and the grace and favour was the greater, inasmuch as it was the unsearchable riches of Christ he was sent to publish, and that among the Gentiles, ver. 8. and to give men light into a mysterious affair, which from eternity had been hid, and kept a secret in the heart of God, the Creator of all things, ver. 9. but was now committed to him with this view, not only to be made known to the church, but by that to the heavenly principalities and powers, even that wise scheme of things which displays the manifold wisdom of God, and was formed according to an eternal purpose in Christ, ver. 10, 11. through whom a way of access is

opened to God, with boldness, faith, and confidence, as the Gospel declares, ver. 12. Wherefore, though he endured much tribulation for the sake of preaching this Gospel, this should not at all sink their spirits, or move them away from the hope of it; but they should rather glory that they had such a faithful preacher and defender of it, ver. 13. And as he desired their perseverance, so he prays for it, and for several things in order to it: the posture in which he prayed was by bowing the knee; the person to whom he prayed is described by his relation to Christ, as his father, of whom, or of Christ, the whole family of God in heaven and earth are named, ver. 14, 15. The petitions made by him are for internal strength from the spirit of God, that so they might be enabled to persevere, ver. 16. and also, that Christ might continue to dwell in their hearts by faith, which would keep them from falling; and likewise, that they might have a lively sense, and a full persuasion of their interest in the love of God; even so as to comprehend with others its breadth, length, depth, and height, which would engage them to press forward, and to hold on, and out, and not faint at tribulations, ver. 17, 18. And particularly he prays, that they might know more of the love of Christ, which is not fully to be known, and which would constrain them to follow him, and cleave to him with full purpose of heart; and that they might have a full supply of all grace to support, influence, and assist them, ver. 19. and for his own, and their encouragement, with respect to having the petitions made, the apostle ascribes glory to God by Christ, as it should be done in the church throughout all ages of time, under this consideration, as being able to do for his people abundantly more than they are able to ask of him, or can think of asking of him, or receiving from him, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, &c.* Not actively, whom Christ had apprehended by his grace, and made a prisoner of hope; but passively, who was made a prisoner for Christ, on account of preaching Christ, and his Gospel: he was

not a prisoner for any capital crime, as theft, murder, &c. and therefore he was not ashamed of his bonds, but rather gloried in them; and a prison has often been the portion of the best of men in this world: from hence we learn, that this epistle was written when the apostle was a prisoner at Rome; and the consideration of this his condition serves much to confirm the truths he had before delivered, seeing they were such as he could, and did suffer for; and which must engage the attention of the Ephesians to them, and especially since his sufferings were on their account: *for you Gentiles*; because he preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, which the Jews forbid, that they might not be saved; and because he taught them, that circumcision and the rest of the ceremonies of the law were not binding upon them; which gave great offence to the Jews, who were the means of bringing of him into these circumstances, and particularly the Asiatic Jews, the Jews of Ephesus; who having seen and heard him there, knew him again when in the temple at Jerusalem, and raised a mob upon him, having bore a grudge against him for his ministry at Ephesus, by which means he became a prisoner; so that he might truly say, he was a prisoner for the sake of them; see Acts xxi. 27—33. One of Stevens's copies adds, *an ambassador*, as in ch. vi. 20. and another of them, *glory, or rejoice*; see Phil. ii. 16, 17.

Ver. 2. *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, &c.*] Not the free love and favour of God in his heart towards his people; nor internal grace wrought in the heart of the apostle; but either the gift of grace, as in ver. 7. qualifying him for the work of the ministry; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *if ye have heard the gift of the grace of God*: or rather the doctrine of grace, the Gospel, the subject-matter of which is the grace of God; it is a declaration of the free grace of God in the salvation of men; and it is the means of conveying the grace of God into their hearts. Now the apostle had a dispensation to preach this Gospel committed to him; he acted by authority, and as a steward of the mysteries of God; and which he faithfully dispensed to the family of Christ, who appointed him to this service: this the Ephesians had heard of, from the relations of the apostle, and others, and knew it themselves, having often heard him preach, for he was with them for the space of three years; wherefore this is not said as if he questioned, whether they had heard or no, but as taking it for granted that they had: *if, or seeing ye have heard, &c. which is given me to you-ward*: it was not for his own private use, that the Gospel was committed to him, or gifts were given him to qualify him for the dispensation of it, but for the sake of others, especially the Gentiles, and particularly the Ephesians.

Ver. 3. *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, &c.*] Or *is made known unto me*: so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version. The Gospel, which is sometimes called a mystery, the mystery of the Gospel, the mystery of godliness, and the mystery of faith: the several doctrines of the Gospel are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; such as a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Christ, the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the

resurrection of the dead, and the change of living saints, and the whole doctrine of salvation by Christ, of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and this was made known to the apostle, not in a mere notional and speculative way, but in a spiritual and saving manner; not by men, for he was not taught by men, nor did he receive it from them, but had it by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: *as I wrote afore in few words*; in the two first chapters of this epistle, which are a compendium of the mystery of the Gospel, in its several parts; as predestination, election, redemption, regeneration, and salvation by free grace.

Ver. 4. *Whereby when ye read, &c.*] The above chapters, and seriously consider what is contained in them: *ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*: of his person, office, and grace; and which knowledge was very large indeed.

Ver. 5. *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, &c.*] That is, which mystery of Christ, and of the Gospel, was not made known to men in general, nor so clearly as under the Gospel dispensation. Some hints were given of it to Adam, immediately after his fall; and the Gospel was before preached to Abraham, Moses, and David, and others knew something of it; and it was still more fully dispensed in the times of the prophet Isaiah, and other following prophets: but then the knowledge of it was not so extensive, nor so clear as now; it lay hid in types and shadows, in obscure prophecies and short hints. Moreover, this may have respect particularly to the calling of the Gentiles, as appears from the following words; this was, in some measure, made known, as that in Christ all the nations of the earth should be blessed; that when Shiloh came, to him should the gathering of the people be; that the Messiah should be an ensign of the people, and to him should the Gentiles seek; that he should be the covenant of the people, and a leader and a commander of them; and that there should be great flocking to him; but then this was not known to many, and the time, mode, and circumstances of it were but little understood, and comparatively speaking, it was not known: however, it was not so known, *as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit*. the apostles and prophets were the superior officers in the Gospel dispensation; the former design the twelve apostles of Christ, and the latter such who had the gift of interpreting the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of foretelling things to come, having received gifts from Christ to fit them for such offices, some apostles, some prophets; and to these a revelation was made of the mystery of the Gospel in general, and of the calling of the Gentiles in particular, by the spirit, who searches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and leads into all truth; and who, by falling upon the Gentiles, as upon Cornelius and his family, and by the success which he gave to the Gospel in the Gentile world, made their calling clear and manifest. The Complutensian edition reads, *by the Holy Spirit*; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 6. *That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, &c.*] With the Jews, of all the blessings of grace, of ever-

lasting salvation, and of the eternal, incorruptible, and never-fading inheritance in heaven; that they should be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, and inherit all things: and heirs they are by being Christ's, and on account of their special adoption through him, and their justification by his righteousness; and which appears by their regeneration to a lively hope of the inheritance reserved for them in heaven: *and of the same body*; coalesce in one and the same church-state, with the believing Jews, under one and the same head, Christ Jesus, and participate of the same grace from him, being all baptized into one body, and made to drink of the same spirit, and enjoy the same privileges and immunities. *And partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel*; as of God, being their covenant-God, which is the great promise of the covenant; or of the spirit, his gifts and graces, called the promise of the spirit; or of eternal life and happiness, as the gift of grace through Christ. Now all these promises, and all others, are in Christ, yea and amen, safe and secure; and it is through being in Christ that any come to partake of them; and that by the means of the Gospel, as these Gentiles were to do, and did: the Gospel is a declaration of what God has promised in covenant to his people; this was carried among the Gentiles, and was made effectual to their participation of the things contained in it.

Ver. 7. *Whereof I was made a minister, &c.*] That is, of the Gospel, not by men, but by God: and he is a true minister of the Gospel who is called of God to the work of the ministry, and is qualified by him with grace and gifts for it; and who faithfully discharges it according to the ability God has given; and such an one was the apostle: *according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me*; not according to his natural capacity, his liberal education, or acquired learning; but according to a gift, a ministerial gift bestowed upon him, for such service: for this gift of grace does not design the grace of God wrought in his soul; nor the doctrines of grace, the subject of the Gospel ministry; nor the efficacious grace of God, which makes that successful and useful to the souls of men; but a gift of interpreting the Scriptures, and of explaining the truths of the Gospel to the edification of men; and which is a distinct thing from natural abilities, human learning, or internal grace; for there may be all these, and yet a man not fit to be a minister of the Gospel; what qualifies men for that is the above gift, which God, of his sovereign good will and pleasure, gives to some of the sons of men: *by the effectual working of his power*; the power of God is seen in working grace in the hearts of men, thereby making them believers in Christ; and it is also displayed in the gifts of the spirit bestowed on men, which is called a being endued with a power from on high; thereby making men, and not angels, and these oftentimes the meanest and weakest, ministers of Christ; and likewise in assisting them in their work, and in carrying them through it, and in making them successful in it, to the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints.

Ver. 8. *Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, &c.*] This is an instance of the great humility

of the apostle; and indeed the greatest saints are, generally speaking, the most humble souls, as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and others; these have the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; they rejoice in the grace of God manifested to others; they are willing to receive instruction, nay admonition, from the meanest believer; they have the least opinion of their own works, and are the greatest admirers of the grace of God; and do most contentedly submit to the sovereign will of God: the reasons of their great humility are, because they have the largest discoveries of the love and grace of God and Christ, which are of a soul-humbling nature; they are the most sensible of their own sinfulness, vileness, and unworthiness, which keeps them low in their own sight; they are commonly the most afflicted with Satan's temptations, which are suffered to attend them, lest they should be exalted above measure; they are the most fruitful souls, and boughs laden with fruit hang lowest; and they are the most conformable to Christ, who is meek and lowly. The phrase seems to be Jewish: there was one R. Jose *the little*, who was so called, 'tis said, because he was *קטן הסדריים*, *the least of saints*¹: but the apostle uses a still more diminutive word, and calls himself less than the least of them; and adds, *is this grace given*; that is, the gift of grace, as before, the ministerial gift: *that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*; the riches of Christ, as God, lie in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his empire and dominion over all, and in the revenues of glory, which result from thence; and these riches are undervalued and incommunicable, and are ineffable, yea inconceivable: his riches, as Mediator, lie in the persons of the elect, in the grace that is laid up in him for them, called the riches of grace, and in the inheritance he is possessed of for them, called the riches of glory; and these rich things are communicable, as well as solid, satisfying, and lasting; and they are unsearchable to the natural man, and can't be fully investigated by believers themselves; they will be telling over to all eternity: and they will appear unsearchable, when it is considered what they have procured, and what blessings have been dispensed according to them; what a large family Christ has maintained by them, and how richly and fully he has provided for them, and to what honour and grandeur he raises them all. Now it was great grace to intrust the apostle with such a ministry, to put such treasure into an earthen vessel; it was great grace that qualified him for it; and it was great grace in particular to the Gentiles, that he should be appointed to publish these among them; and so the apostle esteemed it, and himself unworthy of such honour.

Ver. 9. *And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, &c.*] Or *the dispensation of the mystery*, as the Complutensian, and several copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read. The mystery is the Gospel; the fellowship of it is the communication of grace by it, a participation of the truths and doctrines of it, communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, which the Gospel calls and leads unto, and that equal concern and interest which both Jews and Gentiles

¹ T. Hieros. Bava Kama, fol. 3, 4. Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. Juchasin, fol. 79. 2.

have in the privileges of it. Now men are naturally in the dark about these things, and the ministry of the word is the means of enlightening them, and is indeed the grand design of it; and the ministers of the Gospel do instrumentally enlighten persons, though it is God only that does it efficiently; and for this, gifts of grace were bestowed upon the apostle, even for the enlightening of all men, not every individual person in the world, but some of all sorts, particularly Gentiles, as well as Jews. The word *παντας*, rendered *all men*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy. *Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God*; in the heart of God, in his counsel and covenant; which shews the original and source of the Gospel, and expresses the richness and valuableness of it, as well as its safety and secrecy: here it was hid in some measure from the elect angels, and from Old-Testament saints, and altogether from natural men, and especially from the Gentiles, whose times of ignorance God winked at, or overlooked; and this was kept so from ages past, from the beginning of time, till now, and was laid up in the breast of God from all eternity; for it was ordained before the world for the glory of his people. What the apostle says of the Gospel, the Jews say of the law, that it was hid and treasured up two thousand years before the world was created^m; yea, they sayⁿ, that many ages before the creation of the world it was written and left, *בְּחִזְקוֹ שֶׁל הוֹקֵם בְּרֵיחַ*, *in the bosom of God*: and he is here described, as *he who created all things by Jesus Christ*; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause: and this is to be understood, not of the new creation, but of the old, and of all things in it; for without Christ, was not any thing made that is made. The phrase, *by Jesus Christ*, is left out in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 10. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, &c.*] By whom are meant, not civil magistrates, much less evil angels, but the good angels, the angels in heaven; see the note on ch. i. 21. *might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God*; not the perfection of wisdom, nor Jesus Christ the wisdom of God, nor the holy Scriptures; but the Gospel, which is the pure produce of the wisdom of God; which is gloriously displayed in the several doctrines of it; as in election, in choosing men in Christ for the security of their persons, in founding it not upon their works, but his own grace, for the security of his purpose, and in pitching on such persons as he has, for the magnifying of his grace: and in redemption, which is seen in the person of the Redeemer, who is both God and man; and in the manner in which it is effected, being both for the glory of God's grace and mercy, and for the honour of his justice and holiness; and wherein Satan is mortified, sin is condemned, and the sinner saved: and in justification, whereby sinful men become just with God: God is just, and yet the justifier of him that believes; the ungodly is justified, and yet not justified in his ungodliness, but from it: and in the pardon of sin, in which iniquity is forgiven, and yet vengeance is taken on men's inventions; it is

an act of mercy, and yet of justice; it is by price, and yet of free grace; and the like may be observed of all other doctrines of the Gospel. And it may be called *manifold*, because of its various doctrines and promises, and because of the various instances of wisdom in them, and the various persons to whom it is made known, and the various times in which it is displayed: and now under the Gospel this is more clearly known, or made known to the angels by the church of God, through the ministry of the word in it, on which angels attend, being desirous to look more diligently into the mysteries of it; and by the displays of the wisdom and grace of God unto his church and people.

Ver. 11. *According to the eternal purpose, &c.*] The whole of salvation, in which is displayed the great wisdom of God, is according to a purpose of his; the scheme of it is fixed in the council of peace; the thing itself is effected in pursuance of it; Christ, the Redeemer, was set forth in it; his incarnation, the time of his coming into the world, his sufferings and death, with all their circumstances, were decreed by God; and the persons for whom Christ became incarnate, suffered, and died, were appointed unto salvation by him; and the application of it to them is according to his purpose; the time when, the place where, and the means whereby souls are converted, are all settled in the decrees of God; the Gospel itself, the preaching of it by such and such persons, its use to make men see the mysteries of grace, and the fellowship of them, and to make known these things to the angels of heaven, are all according to a divine purpose: and this purpose is eternal, or was in the mind of God from all eternity; for no new will can arise in him; no purpose, resolution, or decree can be made by him in time, which was not in his breast from everlasting; and his purpose concerning the salvation of men must be eternal, since a council of peace was held, a covenant of peace was made, a promise of life was given, persons were fixed upon to be saved, a Saviour was appointed for them, and grace, and the blessings of it were put into his hands before the world began. *Which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*: the constitution of it was in him; God was in Christ contriving the scheme of salvation; his eye was upon him, his thoughts centred in him, and in him are all his promises, and blessings of grace designed and provided for his people; and the execution of this purpose is by him; though some refer this clause to the church in ver. 10. which he has made in Christ, or by Christ, has built upon him, and united to him; and others, to the manifold wisdom of God displayed in Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.

Ver. 12. *In whom we have boldness and access, &c.*] Into the holy of holies, to the throne of grace there, and to God the father, as seated on it: Christ is the way of access; union to him gives right of access; through his mediation his people have audience of God, and acceptance with him, both of person and service: and this access is with boldness; which denotes liberty of coming, granted by God, and a liberty in their own

^m Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 4. & in Numb. fol. 66. 3. Targ. Jon. & Jerus. in Gen. iii. 24.

ⁿ Abot R. Nathan, c. 31. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

souls to speak out their minds plainly and freely; and an holy courage and intrepidity of soul, being free from servile fear, or a spirit of bondage; which is owing to the heart being sprinkled from an evil conscience, to an act of faith, on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and to a view of God, as a God of peace, grace and mercy: and this access may be had *with confidence by the faith of him*; with confidence of interest in the everlasting love of God; of relation to him, as a covenant-God and father; of his power, faithfulness, and willingness to fulfil his promises; of his hearing and answering prayer; of the fullness of Christ, the prevalence of his mediation, and of the acceptance of persons and performances through him; and of the work of grace being carried on till the day of Christ; and of entrance at last into the heavenly glory: and this access is not local, but spiritual; it is by faith, and so is peculiar to believers; and the confidence with which it may be had, arises from its being by the faith of Christ; not that faith which Christ himself had, and exercised as man, but that of which he is both the object and author; or that by which souls believe in him for acceptance, for righteousness, for pardon, for every supply of grace, and for eternal life and happiness.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, &c.*] The apostle was a man attended with many tribulations, and great afflictions, which he did not suffer as an evil doer, either from God or men; wherefore he was not ashamed of them, but gloried in them; yea, he took pleasure in them, having much of the presence of God in them; they did not come to him unawares, he always expected them, and was helped to look to the glory which should follow them, the view of which greatly supported him under them; and these tribulations were endured for the sake of the elect, for Christ's body's sake, the church, and among others, for the Ephesians, for the sake of preaching the Gospel among them, and for the confirmation of their faith in it; and yet they were a stumbling to them, they were ready to faint at them; but he desires they would not, since they were on account of the Gospel, which he had such a distinct knowledge of, and so clear a call to; and since they were for their sakes, and since he and they had such nearness of access to God by the faith of Christ, with so much boldness and confidence; and seeing also they turned to their account: *which is your glory*; meaning either that it was matter of glorying to them, and what they might boast of, that the apostle's afflictions were not for any crime that was found in him, but for preaching the Gospel to them, and that it was an honour to suffer in such a cause; or that their perseverance and constancy in the doctrines of the Gospel, notwithstanding the scandal of the cross, would be an honour to them.

Ver. 14. *For this cause I bow my knees unto the father, &c.*] That is, pray unto him for the perseverance of the saints; for nothing is more desirable to the ministers of Christ than that; which is the pure gift of God, and is what he has promised, and therefore should be prayed for it; for, for what God has designed and promised to his people, he will

be sought to; and the apostle's view might be also to stir up these saints to pray for themselves: the gesture he used in prayer was bowing the knees; a man is not tied to any particular gesture or posture in prayer, the main thing is the heart; mere postures and gestures are insignificant things with God; though where the mind is affected, the body will be moved; and this gesture may be expressive of reverence, humility, and submission in prayer: the object he prayed unto is the father; that is, as follows, *of our Lord Jesus*; though these words are wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and Ethiopic version, yet are rightly retained in others; for God is the father of Christ, not by creation, nor adoption, but by generation, being the only-begotten of the father; and as such he is rightly prayed to, since not only Christ prayed to him as such; but he is the father of his people in and through Christ; and there is no other way of coming to him but by Christ; and all spiritual blessings come through Christ, and from God, as the father of Christ.

Ver. 15. *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.*] This may refer either to God, the father of Christ; who is the father of the whole family in heaven and in earth; not only the father of Christ, but the father of spirits, of angelic spirits, as well as of the souls of men; and the father of all the saints by adopting grace, whether above or below; they are all the household of God: or else to Jesus Christ, who is the everlasting father, the son over his own house, and the first-born among many brethren: and this family consists either of elect angels and elect men, who are both under one head, Christ, and are in one family, only with this difference, the one are servants, the other sons; or else only of elect men, of saints in heaven and in earth, who all make up but one family; and that part of it, which is on earth, consists of persons of various sizes and growth, as fathers, young men, and children, though they are all the children of God, and partake of the same privileges: and this family is named of Christ; they are called Christians from him, and he is the master and governor of them; they have their laws, directions, and instructions from him; and he is the great provider for them, and the support of them; they have their food and clothing from him, as well as are called by his name. Frequent mention is made in the Jewish writings* of the family of the holy angels, and of the family above, and the family below, to which here may be some reference.

Ver. 16. *That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, &c.*] Or according to, and out of that rich, plenteous, and glorious fulness of grace and strength in Christ Jesus. *To be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man*; this is the petition which the apostle puts up on his bended knees to the father of Christ, that he would strengthen these saints, that so they might not faint at the tribulations which either he or they endured. Believers in Christ need fresh supplies of strength to enable them to exercise grace, to perform duties, to resist Satan and his temptations, to oppose their corruptions, and to bear the cross, and undergo afflictions cheerfully, and

* *Targ. in Cant. i. 15. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Zohar in Exod.*

fol. 105. 4. Raziell, fol. 42. 1. & 45. 2. Caphtor, fol. 58. 2. Shnare Ore, fol. 14. 3.

to hold on and out to the end: this is a blessing that comes from God, and is a gift of his free grace; a *grant* from him who is the strength of the lives of his people, of their salvation, of their hearts, and of the work of grace in their hearts: the means whereby the saints are strengthened by God, is *his spirit*; who strengthens them by leading them to the fulness of grace and strength in Christ, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by applying the promises of the Gospel to them, and by making the Gospel itself, and the ordinances of it, useful to them, causing them to go from strength to strength in them: the subject of this blessing is the *inner man*, or the spirit, or soul of man, which is the seat of grace; and this shews that this was spiritual strength which is here desired, which may be where there is much bodily weakness, and for which there should be the greatest concern; and that this strength is not naturally there, it must be given, or put into it. This last phrase, *in the inner man*, is joined to the beginning of the next verse in the Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, *in the inner man Christ may dwell, &c.*

Ver. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, &c.*] This is another petition put up by the apostle for the Ephesians, which is for the inhabitation of Christ in them: the inhabitant Christ is he who dwells in the highest heavens, who dwells in the father, and the father in him, in whom all fulness dwells, the fulness of the Godhead, and the fulness of grace; so that those in whose hearts he dwells cannot want any good thing, must be in the greatest safety, and enjoy the greatest comfort and pleasure; and this inhabitation of Christ prayed for is not to be understood in such sense, as he dwells everywhere, being the omnipresent God; or as he dwells in the human nature; nor of his dwelling merely by his spirit, but of a personal in-dwelling of his; and which is an instance of his special grace: he dwells in his people, as a king in his palace, to rule and protect them, and as a master in his family to provide for them, and as their life to quicken them; it is in consequence of their union to him, and is expressive of their communion with him, and is perpetual; where he once takes up his residence, he never totally and finally departs: the place where he dwells is not their heads, nor their tongues, but their hearts; and this is where no good thing dwells but himself and his grace; and where sin dwells, and where he is often slighted, opposed, and rebelled against: the means by which he dwells is faith; which is not the bond of union to Christ, nor the cause of his being and dwelling in the hearts of his people; but is the instrument or means by which they receive him, and retain him, and by which they have communion with him: *that ye being rooted and grounded in love*; either in love to God, and one another; for faith and love go together; and love is sometimes weak, and needs establishing; and what serves to root and ground persons in it, are the discoveries of God's love, views of Christ's loveliness, the consideration of blessings received, and the communion they have with God, and Christ, and one another, and a larger insight into the doctrines of the Gospel: or rather in the love of God to them; which is the root and foundation of salvation; this is in it-

self immovable and immutable; but saints have not always the manifestations of it, and sometimes call it in question, and have need to be rooted and grounded in it; which is to have a lively sense of it, and to be persuaded of interest in it, and that nothing shall be able to separate from it.

Ver. 18. *May be able to comprehend with all saints, &c.*] This is the end of their being rooted and grounded in love, that they, together with the rest of the saints interested in it, might have a larger and more comprehensive view of *what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*; not of God himself, who is incomprehensible by finite minds, and is not to be found out to perfection; see Job xi. 7, 8, 9. but either of the great mystery of salvation, particularly the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles mentioned in the beginning of the chapter; or of the spiritual building, the church, the dimensions of which are given, Rev. xxi. 15, 16. or rather of the love of God, which in its length reaches from one eternity to another; in its breadth to all the elect, in all ages, places, and nations; and in its depth to saints in the lowest state of life; and in its height to bring them to an exalted state in glory.

Ver. 19. *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, &c.*] The love of Christ to his own, to his church and people, is special and peculiar; free and sovereign; as early as his father's love, and is durable and unchangeable; the greatest love that ever was heard of; it is matchless and unparalleled; it is exceeding strong and affectionate, and is wonderful and surprising: the instances of it are, his engaging as a surety for them; his espousing both their persons and their cause; his assumption of their nature; his dying in their room and stead; his payment of their debts, atoning for their sins, and bringing in for them an everlasting righteousness; his going to prepare a place for them in heaven; his intercession for them there; his constant supply of all their wants, and the freedom and familiarity he uses them with. The saints have some knowledge of this love, some tastes of it; their knowledge is a feeling and experimental one, fiducial and appropriating, and what influences their faith, and love, and cheerful obedience, but it is but imperfect; though the knowledge they have of it is super-eminent, it exceeds all other knowledge, yet this love passes knowledge; not only the knowledge of natural men, who know nothing of it, but the perfect knowledge of saints themselves, in the present life, and of angels also, who desire to look into it, and the mysteries of it; and especially it is so as to some instances of it, such as the incarnation of Christ, his becoming poor who was Lord of all, being made sin, and a curse, and suffering, the just for the unjust. Now the apostle prays, that these saints might know more of this love; that their knowledge, which was imperfect, might be progressive. *That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God*; this is the last petition, and is to be understood, not of a full comprehension of the divine Being, nor of a communication of his divine perfections, nor of having in them the fulness of grace, which it has pleased God should dwell in Christ; but either of that fulness of good things, which they may receive from God in this life; as to be filled with a sense of the love and grace of

God; with satisfying views of interest in the righteousness of Christ; with the spirit, and the gifts and graces thereof; with full provisions of food for their souls; with spiritual peace, joy, and comfort; with knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, of Christ, of the Gospel, and of the will of God; and with all the fruits or righteousness, or good works springing from grace; or else of that fulness which they shall receive hereafter, even complete holiness, perfection of knowledge, fulness of joy and peace, entire conformity to God and Christ, and everlasting communion with them.

Ver. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, &c.*] This is the conclusion of the apostle's prayer, in which the power of God is celebrated, a perfection which is essential unto God, and is very large and extensive; it reaches to all things, to every thing that he wills, which is his actual or ordinative power; and to more things than he has willed, which is his absolute power; and to all things that have been, are, or shall be, and to things impossible with men; though there are some things which God cannot do, such as are contrary to his nature, inconsistent with his will, his decrees and purposes, which imply a contradiction, and are foreign to truth, which to do would be to deny himself: but then he can do *above all that we ask or think*; he can do more than men ask for, as he did for Solomon: God knows what we want before we ask, and he has made provisions for his people before they ask for them; some of which things we never could, and others we never should have asked for, if he had not provided them; and without the spirit of God we know not what to ask for, nor how to ask aright; this affords great encouragement to go to God, and ask such things of him as we want, and he has provided; and who also can do more than we can think, imagine, or conceive in our minds. *According to the power that worketh in us*: either in believers in common, meaning the spirit of God, who is the finger and power of God, who begins, and carries on, and will finish the work of grace in them, and which is an evidence of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; or in the apostles in particular, in fitting and furnishing them for their work, and succeeding them in it;

which is another proof and demonstration of the abundant power of God, and shews what he can do if he pleases.

Ver. 21. *Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, &c.*] This is a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God, with which the apostle concludes his prayer; glory is to be given to God on account of his perfections, which are to be celebrated; and on account of the works of creation and Providence, which are to be commended and acquiesced in; and on account of temporal mercies, for which thanks should be given; and especially for spiritual mercies, and above all for Jesus Christ: the glory of salvation, from first to last, is to be ascribed to his free grace; and his worship is to be regarded and constantly attended on; faith is to be exercised on him, as a promising and covenant-keeping God; and our lives and conversations are to be ordered aright according to his word; and we are cheerfully and patiently to suffer for his cause and interest, in all which instances he is glorified: and the place where this glory is to be given, is the church; for the church, and true believers, only know the blessings and mysteries of divine grace; and they only know how to glorify God aright; and besides, glory must be given to God by believers, not only separately and apart, but conjunctly and together, in a church-state; because there the Lord appears glorious, grants his presence, and displays his mighty grace: and this is to be done by *Christ Jesus, or in him*; and may refer either to the church, which is in Christ; or to him as the medium by whom praise and glory are to be given to God; for all blessings are in Christ, and come to us through him, and he is the only way of access to God; nor can our praises and thanksgivings be acceptable unto God, but through him: and this glory is to be given *throughout all ages, world without end, Amen*; for the church will abide for ever, in which it is to be given; the blessings of grace will be for ever dispensing, for which it is to be given; and Jesus Christ, the Mediator, will continue for evermore, by whom it is given: to all which is added the word *Amen*, signifying his wish, that so it might be, and his faith, that so it would be.

C H A P. IV.

THE apostle having in the three former chapters treated of the doctrines of grace, and explained and established them, proceeds in the three following to exhort to the duties of religion; and in this advises to a becoming conversation in general, and to brotherly concord and unity in particular; and dehorts from several vices, and encourages to the contrary virtues. And inasmuch as these Ephesians were called with an holy calling, he entreats them, if they had any regard for him as a prisoner of Christ, that they would walk worthy of it, ver. 1. and directs to the manner in which they should act becoming it, with all humility, patience, forbearance, and love; seeking to preserve a spiritual harmony, unity, and peace, one among another, ver. 2, 3. for the encouragement of which, he

makes use of various arguments, taken from the unity of the body, of which they were members; from their being quickened and influenced by one and the same spirit; from having the same hope of eternal happiness, to which they were called; from their having one Lord over them, who is Christ; from their having the same like-precious faith in him; from their being baptized with the same baptism in him; and from their having one and the same God and father, ver. 4, 5, 6. and from all of them having gifts, though different, for mutual usefulness; which gifts are described by the author and donor of them, Christ, ver. 7. which is proved, ver. 8. out of a passage in Psal. lxxviii. 18. which is explained of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, of his descent from heaven, and ascension

thither; the end of which latter was to fill all things, or persons, with gifts, ver. 9, 10. of which a particular enumeration is given, ver. 11. the design of which is, to fit men for the work of the ministry, and by them to convert sinners, and edify saints, ver. 12. which ministry is to be continued, until all the saints arrive to a perfection of spiritual knowledge, and make up one perfect man, or body of men in Christ, ver. 13. for the use and end of the Gospel ministry is not, that such who are converted by it should continue children, be in suspense about truth, and under the deceptions of men, ver. 14. but that through speaking the truth in love, they should grow up into Christ their head; from whom supplies of grace are communicated, for the increase and edification of every member of the body, ver. 15, 16. and seeing these Ephesians to whom the apostle writes were separated in effectual vocation from the rest of the Gentiles, they ought not to walk as the others did; whose minds were vain, their understandings darkened, and their hearts blinded, hardened, and ignorant; and had no sense of things, but were given up to all manner of wickedness, ver. 17, 18, 19. whereas they had learned Christ, and through hearing had been taught the truth of the Gospel, as it was in him, ver. 20, 21. wherefore it became them in their conversation, not to follow the dictates of corrupt nature, called the old man, that being full of lusts, corrupt, and deceitful, but to act becoming the renewing work of the spirit upon their souls, and agreeably to the new principles of the grace of God created in them, in order to righteousness and holiness, ver. 22, 23, 24. and in particular it became them to avoid lying, and on the contrary to speak truth to one another; and that for this reason, because they were members of the same body, and of one another, ver. 25. and likewise to abstain from sinful anger, and not continue a wrathful disposition, ver. 26. nor was it advisable to yield to the suggestions, solicitations, and temptations of Satan, ver. 27. nor to commit theft, but on the other hand give themselves to manual labour at some commendable calling, that they might have for their own use, and others too, ver. 28. and it was also right to be careful not to suffer corrupt and unchaste words to come out of their mouths, but such as would be grateful and useful to others, ver. 29. and the rather this, and all the rest of the things mentioned, and likewise what follows, should be attended to; since by such evil lusts, words, and actions, the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, who should not, since he is the sealer of the saints unto the day of redemption, ver. 30. And the chapter is concluded with a dehortation from several vices of the mind and tongue, respecting wrath and revenge; and an exhortation to the contrary virtues, kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness; to which encouragement is given, by the example of God, who forgives for Christ's sake, ver. 31, 32.

Ver. 1. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, &c.] Or in the Lord: that is, for the Lord's sake; see the note on ch. iii. 1. Some connect this phrase, in the Lord, with the following word, beseech; as if the sense was, that the apostle entreated the believing Ephesians, in the name of the Lord, and for his sake,*

to take heed to their walk and conversation, that it be as became the calling by grace, and to glory, with which they were called: and this exhortation he enforces from the consideration of the state and condition in which he was, a prisoner, not for any wickedness he had been guilty of, but for the Lord's sake, which seems to be the true sense of the word; and that, if they would not add afflictions to his bonds, as some professors by their walk did, he beseeches them, as an ambassador in bonds, that they would attend to what he was about to say; and the rather, since such doctrines of grace had been made known to them, which have a tendency to promote powerful godliness; and since they were made partakers of such privileges as laid them under the greatest obligation to duty, which were made mention of in the preceding chapters. *That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;* by which is meant, not that private and peculiar state and condition of life, that the saints are called to, and in: but that vocation, by the grace of God, which is common to them all; and is not a mere outward call by the ministry of the word, with which men may be called, and not be chosen, sanctified, and saved; but that which is internal, and is of special grace, and by the spirit of God; by whom they are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, and from the company and conversation of the men of it, into the fellowship of Christ, and his people, to the participation of the grace of Christ here, and to his kingdom and glory hereafter; and which call is powerful, efficacious, yea, irresistible; and being once made is unchangeable, and without repentance, and is holy, high, and heavenly. Now to walk worthy of it, or suitable to it, is to walk as children of the light; to walk in the liberty wherewith Christ and his spirit make them free; to walk by faith on Christ; and to walk in the ways of God, with Christ, the mark, in their view, and with the staff of promises in their hands; and to walk on constantly, to go forwards and hold out unto the end: for this walking, though it refers to a holy life and conversation, a series of good works, yet it does not suppose that these merit vocation; rather the contrary, since these follow upon it; and that is used as an argument to excite unto them: but the phrase is expressive of a fitness, suitability, and agreeableness of a walk and conversation to such rich grace, and so high an honour conferred on saints.

Ver. 2. *With all lowliness and meekness, &c.]* In the exercise of humility, which shews itself in believers, in entertaining and expressing the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; in not envying the gifts and graces of others, but rejoicing at them, and at every increase of them; in a willingness to receive instruction from the meanest saints; in submission to the will of God in all adverse dispensations of Providence; and in ascribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God: and so to behave, is to walk agreeably to their vocation of God; and what the consideration of that may engage them to, when they observe the low estate and condition out of which they are called, in which they were before vocation: and that in effectual calling they have nothing but what they have received; and that others are called with

the same calling that they are : and to walk humbly before God and man, is to walk according to the will of God that calls ; and 'tis walking as Christ walked, who is meek, and lowly ; and is agreeable to the blessed Spirit, one of whose fruits is meekness ; and is what is very ornamental to the saints, and is well-pleasing in the sight of God. *With long-suffering* : bearing much and long with the infirmities of each other ; without being easily provoked to anger by any ill usage ; and not immediately meditating and seeking revenge for every affront given, or injury done ; and so to walk, is to walk worthy of the grace of calling, or agreeable to it, to God that calls by his grace, who is long-suffering both with wicked men, and with his own people. *Forbearing one another in love* ; overlooking the infirmities of one another, forgiving injuries done, sympathizing with, and assisting each other in distressed circumstances, the spring of all which should be love ; by that saints should be moved, influenced, and engaged to such a conduct, and which should be so far attended to, as is consistent with love ; for so to forbear one another, as to suffer sin to be on each other, without proper, gentle, and faithful rebukes for it, is not to act in love.

Ver. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit, &c.*] That is, a spiritual union : there is an union between God and his people, and between Christ and his members, and between saints and saints, and the bond of each union is love ; and that it is which knits and cements them together ; and it is the last of these which is here intended : the saints are united under one head, and are members of one and the same body, and should be of the same mind and judgment, and of one accord, heart, and affection : and this may be called *the unity of the spirit* ; because 'tis an union of spirits, of the spirits or souls of men ; and that in spiritual affairs, in the spiritual exercises of religion ; and it is effected by the spirit of God, by whom they are baptized into one body. Now to endeavour or study to keep and preserve this, supposes that this union does already exist ; that it is very valuable, as making much for the glory of God, the mutual comfort and delight of saints, and is worth taking some pains about ; and that it is very difficult to secure, there being so many things which frequently arise, and break in upon it, through the devices of Satan, and the corruptions of men's hearts : but though it is difficult, and may sometimes seem to be impossible, yet it becomes the saints to be diligent in the use of means to keep it up, and continue it ; and which they may be said to endeavour after, when they abide with one another, and don't forsake each other upon every occasion ; when they perform all offices of love to one another, and stir up each other to the like : and the way and manner in which this is to be kept, is *in the bond of peace* ; the Arabic version reads, *by the bond of love and peace* ; by maintaining peace among themselves, and seeking those things which tend to, and make for peace, and spiritual edification ; and which is called a *bond*, in allusion to the Greek word used, which comes from one that signifies to knit, join, and bind together, and because it is of a knitting and uniting nature. Now so to act is to walk worthy of calling grace, or agreeably

to it : peace is what the saints are called unto in effectual vocation : and what is suitable to God, who is the God of peace ; and to Christ, who is the Prince of peace ; and to the Holy Spirit, whose fruit is peace ; and to the Gospel, which is the Gospel of peace ; and to the character which the saints bear, which is that of sons of peace.

Ver. 4. *There is one body, &c.*] The church ; in what sense that is a body, and compared to one, see the note on ch. i. 23. It is called *one* with relation to Jews and Gentiles, who are of the same body, and are reconciled in one body by Christ, and are baptized into it by the spirit ; and with respect to saints above and saints below, who make up one general assembly ; and with regard to separate societies ; for though there are several particular congregations, yet there is but one church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven ; and saints of different ages, places, states, and conditions, are all one in Christ Jesus, who is the one, and only head of this body : and this is an argument to excite the saints to unity of spirit ; since they are, as one natural body is, members one of another, and therefore should not bite and devour one another ; they are one political body, one kingdom, over which Christ is sole King and lawgiver, and a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand ; they are one economical body, one family, they are all brethren, and should not fall out by the way. *And one spirit* : the Holy Spirit of God, who animates, quickens, and actuates the body : there is but one spirit, who convicts of sin, enlightens, regenerates, and makes alive ; who incorporates into the body, the church ; who comforts the saints ; helps them in their access to God through Christ ; makes known the things of Christ to them, is a spirit of adoption, and the seal and earnest of the heavenly glory ; and the consideration of this should engage to unity, because a contrary conduct must be grieving to the spirit of God, unsuitable to his genuine fruits, and very unlike the true spirit of a Christian : and by one spirit may be meant the spirit of themselves, who, as the first Christians were, should be of one heart, and of one soul, of the same mind, and having the same affections for one another ; which sense is favoured by the Syriac and Arabic versions ; the former rendering the words, *that ye may be one body and one spirit*, making this to be the issue and effect of their endeavours after union and peace ; and the latter reads them as an exhortation, *be ye one body and one spirit* ; that is, be ye cordially and heartily united in your affections to one another : *even as ye are called in one hope of your calling* ; that is, the glory hoped for, and which is laid up in heaven, and will be enjoyed there, to which the saints are called in effectual vocation, is one and the same : there are no degrees in it ; it will be equally possessed by them all ; for they are all loved with the same love, chosen in the same head, and secured in the same covenant ; they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness ; they are all equally the sons of God, and so heirs of the same heavenly inheritance ; and are all made kings and priests unto God, and there is but one kingdom, one crown, one inheritance for them all ; and the holiness

and beatific vision of the saints in heaven will be alike; and therefore they should be heartily affected to one another here on earth, who are to be partners together in glory to all eternity. So the Jews say ^P, that in the world of souls, all, small and great, stand before the Lord; and they have a standing alike; for in the affairs of the soul, it is fit that they should be all אֵין שוֹוִים, equal, as it is said Exod. xxx. 15. *the rich shall not give more.*

Ver. 5. *One Lord, &c.*] The Lord Jesus Christ, who, by right of creation, is Lord of all; and by right of marriage, and redemption, is the one and only Lord of his church and people; he has betrothed them to himself, and is their husband, and so their Lord, whom they are to worship and obey; he has redeemed them, he has bought them with the price of his blood, and therefore they are not their own, but his, and should glorify him both with their bodies and souls, which are his; he is the head of his body the church, the King of saints, and father and master of the family named of him, and therefore they ought to agree among themselves, and not be many masters, and usurp a domination over one another. The Ethiopic version reads, *one God*, but that is expressed in the following verse. *One faith*: there is but one grace of faith; there are indeed different sorts of faith; there is the faith of miracles, and an historical, temporary faith, but there is but one true grace of faith; and which, though it is in different subjects, and its degrees and acts are various, yet as to its nature, it is like-precious faith in all; and has the same author and object, Jesus Christ, and springs from the same cause, the free grace of God, and has equally in all everlasting salvation connected with it, and consequent upon it: and there is but one doctrine of faith; the Gospel is so called, because it consists of things to be believed, is the means of implanting faith, it proposes the object to be believed in, and requires the exercise of it upon it, and should be mixed with faith whenever heard. Now this is but one, and is all of a piece, and consistent with itself, and so should the professors of it be, and love one another in the faith. *One baptism*: there were divers baptisms under the law, but there is but one baptism under the Gospel; for John's and Christ's are the same: there are, besides, figurative or metaphorical ones, which are so in an improper sense, as the baptism of the spirit, and the baptism of blood, or of sufferings; but there is but one baptism, literally and properly so called, which is water-baptism; and which is to be administered in one and the same way, by immersion in water; and on one and the same subjects, believers in Christ; and in one and the same name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and to be performed but once, when rightly administered.

Ver. 6. *One God and father of all, &c.*] That there is but one God is the voice of nature and of revelation; and may be concluded from the perfections of deity, for there can be but one eternal, infinite, immense, omnipotent, all-sufficient, perfect, and independent Being; and from one first cause of all things, and the relations he stands in to his creatures: there is but one God, who is truly, and really, and properly God, in opposition to all nominal and figurative deities, and

which are not gods by nature, and to the fictitious deities and idols of the nations; and there is but one God of Jews and Gentiles; nor is the unity of the God-head inconsistent with a trinity of persons in it: and this one God is the father of all; the father of all mercies, and of all spirits, both angels and souls of men; and he is the father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of all the elect in him: and seeing that they have all one covenant-God and father, who has predestinated them to the adoption of children, and who has put them among the children, and adopted them into his family, and stand in the same relation to him, and enjoy the same privileges, they ought to love as brethren: *who is above all*: which may denote the super-excellency of his nature, not above his Son and Spirit, who are of the same nature with him, but above angels and men; and the extensiveness of his government, over all creatures in general, and over his church and people in particular: *and through all*: the Arabic version renders it, *taking care of all*; which may have respect to his providence, which is either universal, and reaches to all creatures his hands have made; or special, and concerns his own chosen people, who belong to his family, and to whom he stands in the relation of a covenant-God and father: or this clause may refer to the perfections of his nature, which appear through the whole of the salvation of all the chosen ones; as his wisdom, love, grace, mercy, justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness: *and in you all*: which is to be understood, not of his being in his creatures, by his powerful presence, which is everywhere supporting them; but of the gracious union there is between him and his people, and of his gracious inhabitation in them by his spirit. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read, *in us all*: and the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version, read only, *in all*.

Ver. 7. *But unto every one of us is given grace, &c.*] Which may refer to the saints in common, and may be interpreted of justifying, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, and persevering grace, bestowed upon them all, freely and liberally, not grudgingly, nor niggardly, and without motive and condition in them; or to the ministers of the Gospel, and so design gifts fitting for the ministry, which every one has, though differing one from another, and all of free grace: *according to the measure of the gift of Christ*: either according to the gift of grace to Christ before the world began, and the measure of it, which he communicates to them in time, even grace for grace; or according to that measure of gifts which Christ received from men at his ascension: it may be observed that every member of Christ, and minister of his, receive more or less grace and gifts from him; and that what they receive is all of free grace, and in measure; and though they may have gifts differing one from another, yet all are useful; so that there is no room for pride, envy, and contempt, which would break in upon the unity of the spirit; for what is said from ver. 3. contains so many arguments to stir up the saints to endeavour to preserve that.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore he saith, &c.*] God in the Scrip-

ture, Psal. lxxviii. 18. *when he ascended up on high*; which is not to be understood of Moses's ascending up to the firmament at the giving of the law, as some Jewish writers⁴ interpret it; for though Moses ascended to the top of Mount Sinai, yet it is never said that he went up to the firmament of heaven; nor of David's going up to the high fortresses of his enemies, as another of those writers⁵ would have it; nor of God's ascent from Mount Sinai, when he gave the law, of which there is no mention in Scripture; but of the Messiah's ascension to heaven, which may very well be signified by this phrase, *on high*; see Psal. cii. 19. and Jer. xxv. 30. and which ascension is to be taken not in a figurative, but literal sense, and as real, local, and visible, as Christ's ascension to heaven was; being from Mount Olivet, attended by angels, in the sight of his apostles, after he had conversed with them from the time of his resurrection forty days; and which ascension of his was in order to fulfil the type of the high-priest entering into the most holy place; and to make intercession for his people, and to send down the spirit with his gifts and graces to them, and to make way and prepare mansions of glory for them, and receive the glory promised and due to him: in the Hebrew text it is, *thou hast ascended*; there the psalmist speaks to the Messiah, here the apostle speaks of him; though the Arabic and Ethiopic read there, *he ascended*, as here: *he led captivity captive*; which is expressive of Christ's conquests and triumph over sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave; and indeed, every spiritual enemy of his and his people, especially the devil, who leads men captive at his will, and is therefore called captivity, and his principalities and powers, whom Christ has spoiled and triumphed over; the allusion is to the public triumphs of the Romans, in which captives were led in chains, and exposed to open view⁶; and gave gifts unto men; meaning the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and particularly such as qualify men for the work of the ministry; these he received בָּאֲדָמָה, *in man*; in human nature, in that nature in which he ascended to heaven; בָּאֲדָמָה הוֹרֵד לְמַעְלָה, *in the man that is known above*⁷, as say the Jews; and these he bestows on men, even rebellious ones, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and make them useful to others: wherefore the Jews have no reason to quarrel with the version of the apostle as they do⁸; who, instead of *received gifts for men*, renders it, *gave gifts to men*; since the Messiah received in order to give, and gives in consequence of his having received them; and so Jarchi interprets the words, לְתַתֵּן, *to give them* to the children of men; and besides, as a learned man has observed⁹, one and the same Hebrew word signifies to give and to receive; to which may be added that their own Targum renders it הִבְתִּינָה, *and hast given gifts to the children of men*; and in like manner the Syriac and Arabic versions of Psal. lxxviii. 18. render the words; very likely the apostle might use the Syriac version, which is a very ancient one: it was customary at triumphs to give gifts to the soldiers¹⁰, to which there is an allusion here.

Ver. 9. *Now that he ascended, &c.*] These words are a conclusion of Christ's descent from heaven, from his ascension thither; for had he not first descended from thence, it could not have been said of him that he ascended; for no man hath ascended to heaven but he that came down from heaven, John iii. 13. and they are also an explanation of the sense of the psalmist in the above citation, which takes in his humiliation as well as his exaltation; which humiliation is signified by his descent into the earth: *what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?* this the Papists understand of his descent into a place they call Limbus Patrum, which they make to be contiguous to hell; and where they say the patriarchs were detained till Christ's coming; and that he went thither to deliver them out of it; and that these are the captivity he led captive; all which is fictitious and fabulous: for certain it is, that the place where Abraham was with Lazarus in his bosom was not near to hell, but afar off, and that there was a great gulf between them, Luke xvi. 23, 26. and the spirits or souls of the patriarchs returned to God that gave them, when separated from their bodies, as the souls of men do now, Eccles. xii. 7. nor did Christ enter any such feigned place at his death, but went to paradise, where the penitent thief was that day with him; nor were the patriarchs, but the principalities and powers Christ spoiled, the captivity he led captive and triumphed over: some interpret this of Christ's descent into hell, which must be understood not locally, but of his enduring the wrath of God for sin, which was equivalent to the torments of hell, and of his being in the state of the dead; but it may rather design the whole of his humiliation, as his descent from heaven and incarnation in the virgin's womb, where his human nature was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; and his humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, when he was made sin and a curse for his people, and bore all the punishment due to their transgressions; and his being in Hades, in the state of the dead, in the grave, in the heart of the earth, as Jonas in the whale's belly: reference seems to be had to Psal. cxxxix. 15. where *the lower parts of the earth*, is interpreted by the Targum on the place of מְאִימָה רַמְבִּי, *his mother's womb*; and so it is by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melec. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version leave out the word *first* in this clause.

Ver. 10. *He that descended is the same also that ascended, &c.*] It was the same divine Person, the son of God, who assumed human nature, and suffered in it, which is meant by his descent, who in that nature ascended up to heaven: this proves that Christ existed before he took flesh of the virgin; and that though he has two natures, yet he is but one person; and disproves the Popish notion of the descent of Christ's soul into Limbus or hell, locally taken: and this ascension of his was, *up far above all heavens*: the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens; Christ ascended far above these, and went into

⁴ Targum & Jarchi in Psal. lxxviii. 18.

⁵ Aben Ezra in loc.

⁶ Alex. ab Alex. Genial. l. 1. c. 6.

⁷ Zohar in Numb. fol. 61. 4.

⁸ R. Isaac. Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 91.

⁹ Pooeck. not. Misc. p. 24.

¹⁰ Alex. ab Alex. ib. ut supra.

the third heaven, the holiest of all ; and this is expressive of the exaltation of Christ, who is made higher than the heavens ; and the end of his ascension was, *that he might fill all things, or fulfil all things* ; that were types of him, or predicted concerning him ; that as he had fulfilled many things already by his incarnation, doctrine, miracles, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead ; so he ascended on high that he might accomplish what was foretold concerning his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, and answer to the type of the high-priest's entering once a year into the holiest of all : or that he might complete, perfect, and fill up all his offices ; as the remainder of his priestly office, his intercession for his people ; and more fully his prophetic office by the effusion of his spirit ; and more visibly his kingly office, by sending forth the rod of his strength out of Zion, and subduing the people under him : or that he might fill all places ; as God he fills all places at once, being infinite, immense, and omnipresent ; as man, one after another ; at his incarnation he dwelt with men on earth ; at his crucifixion he was lifted up between heaven and earth ; at his death he descended into the lower parts of the earth, into hell, *Hades*, or the grave ; and at his resurrection stood upon the earth again, and had all power in heaven and in earth given him ; and at his ascension he went through the airy and starry heavens, into the highest heaven ; and so successively was in all places : or rather that he might fill all persons, all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles ; and so the Arabic version renders it, *that he might fill all creatures* ; as the Gentiles were called ; particularly that he might fill each and every one of his people with his grace and righteousness, with his spirit, and the fruits of it, with spiritual knowledge and understanding, with food and gladness, with peace, joy and comfort ; and all his churches with his gracious presence, and with officers and members, and all with gifts and graces suitable to their several stations and work.

Ver. 11. *And he gave some apostles, &c.* That is, he gave them gifts by which they were qualified to be apostles ; who were such as were immediately called by Christ, and had their doctrine from him, and their commission to preach it ; and were peculiarly and infallibly guided by the spirit of God, and had a power to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine ; and had authority to go everywhere and preach the Gospel, and plant churches, and were not confined to any one particular place or church ; this was the first and chief office in the church, and of an extraordinary kind, and is now ceased ; and though the apostles were before Christ's ascension, yet they had not received till then the fulness of the spirit, and his extraordinary gifts to fit them for their office ; nor did they enter upon the discharge of it in its large extent till that time ; for they were not only to bear witness of Christ in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, but in the uttermost parts of the earth : *and some prophets* ; by whom are meant, not private members of churches, who may all prophesy or teach in a private way ; nor ordinary ministers of the word ; but extraordinary ones, who had a peculiar gift of interpreting the Scriptures, the

prophecies of the Old Testament, and of foretelling things to come ; such were Agabus and others in the church of Antioch, Acts xi. 27. and xiii. 1. *and some evangelists* ; by whom are designed, not so much the writers of the Gospels, as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, some of which were also apostles ; as preachers of the Gospel, and who yet were distinct from the ordinary ministers of it ; they were below the apostles, and yet above pastors and teachers ; they were the companions of the apostles, and assistants to them, and subserved them in their work ; such were Philip, Luke, Titus, Timothy, and others ; these were not fixed and stated ministers in any one place, as the following officers be, but were sent here and there as the apostles thought fit : *and some pastors and teachers*, or doctors ; these may be thought to differ, but not so much on account of the place where they perform their work, the one in the church, the other in the school ; nor on account of the different subject of their ministry, the one attending to practical, the other to doctrinal points ; but whereas the pastors are the shepherds of the flock, the overseers of it, and the same with the bishops and elders, and the teachers may be the gifted brethren in the church, assistants to the pastors, bare ministers of the word ; so the difference lies here, that the one has the oversight, and care, and charge of the church, and the other not ; the one can administer all ordinances, the other not ; the one is fixed and tied to some certain church, the other not : though I rather think they intend one and the same office, and that the word *teachers* is only explanative of the figurative word *pastors* or shepherds ; and the rather because if the apostle had designed distinct officers, he would have used the same form of speaking as before ; and have expressed himself thus, *and some pastors, and some teachers* ; whereas he does not make such a distribution here as there ; though the Syriac version reads this clause distributively as the others ; and among the Jews there were the singular men or wise men, and the disciples of the wise men, who were their companions and assistants ; and it is asked ^γ, “ who is a singular man ? ” and who is a disciple ? a singular man is every one “ that is fit to be appointed a pastor or governor of a congregation ; and a disciple is one, that when he is “ questioned about any point in his doctrine, gives an “ answer : ” wherefore if these two, pastors and teachers, are different, it might be thought there is some reference to this distinction, and that pastors answer to the wise men, and teachers to their disciples or assistants ; and so Kimchi in Jer. iii. 15. interprets the *pastors* there of *ישראל*, *פרנסים*, *the pastors of Israel*, which shall be with the King Messiah, as is said in Micah v. 5. and undoubtedly Gospel ministers are meant : from the whole it may be observed, that as there have been various officers and offices in the Gospel dispensation, various gifts have been bestowed ; and these are the gifts of Christ, which he has received for men, and gives unto them ; and hence it appears that the work of the ministry is not an human invention, but the appointment of Christ, for which he fits and qualifies, and therefore to be regarded ; and that they only are the ministers of Christ, whom he makes ministers of

the New Testament, and not whom men or themselves make and appoint.

Ver. 12. *For the perfecting of the saints, &c.*] The chosen ones, whom God has sanctified or set apart for himself in eternal election: the ministry of the word is designed for the completing the number of these in effectual vocation; and for the perfecting of the whole body of the church, by gathering in all that belong to it, and of every particular saint, who is regenerated and sanctified by the spirit of God: for the best of saints are imperfect; for though there is a perfection in them, as that designs sincerity, in opposition to hypocrisy, and as it may be taken comparatively with respect to what others are, or they themselves were; and though there is a perfection of parts of the new man in them, yet not of degrees; and though there is a complete perfection in Christ, yet not in themselves, their sanctification is imperfect, as their faith, knowledge, love, &c. sin is in them, and committed by them, and they continually want supplies of grace; and the best of them are sensible of their imperfection, and own it: now the ministration of the word is a means of carrying on the work of grace in them unto perfection, or for the restoring or jointing in of the saints: the elect of God were disjointed in Adam's fall, and scattered abroad, who were representatively gathered together in one head, even in Christ, in redemption; and the word is the means of the visible and open jointing of them into Christ, and into his churches, and also of restoring them after backslidings: for the work of the ministry; gifts are given unto men by Christ to qualify them for it: the preaching of the Gospel is a work, and a laborious one, and what no man is sufficient for of himself; it requires faithfulness, and is a good work, and when well performed, those concerned in it are worthy of respect, esteem, and honour; and it is a ministering work, a service and not dominion: for the edifying the body of Christ; not his natural body the father prepared for him; nor his sacramental body in the supper; but his mystical body the church; and gifts are bestowed to fit them for the preaching of the Gospel, that hereby the church, which is compared to an edifice, might be built up; and that the several societies of Christians and particular believers might have spiritual edification, and walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and their numbers be increased, and their graces be in lively exercise.

Ver. 13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, &c.*] These words regard the continuance of the Gospel ministry in the church, until all the elect of God come in: or to the unity of the faith; by which is meant, not the union between the saints, the cement of which is love; nor that which is between Christ and his people, of which his love, and not their faith, is the bond; but the same with the one faith, ver. 5. and designs either the doctrine of faith, which is uniform, and all of a piece; and the sense is, that the ministration of the Gospel will continue until the saints entirely unite in their sentiments about it, and both watchmen and churches see eye to eye: or else the grace of faith, which as to its nature, object, author, spring, and cause,

is the same; and it usually comes by hearing; and all God's elect shall have it; and the work and office of the ministry will remain until they are all brought to believe in Christ; and of the knowledge of the son of God; which is but another phrase for faith in Christ, for faith is a spiritual knowledge of Christ; it is that grace by which a soul beholds his glory and fulness, approves of him, trusts in him, and appropriates him to itself; and such an approbatory, fiducial, appropriating, practical, and experimental knowledge of Christ, is here intended; and which is imperfect in those that have it, and is not yet in many who will have it; and inasmuch as the Gospel ministry is the means of it, this will be continued until every elect soul partakes of it, and arrives to a greater perfection in it: for it follows, *unto a perfect man*; meaning either Christ, who is in every sense a perfect man; his human nature is the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and he is perfectly free from sin, and has been made perfect through sufferings in it; and coming to him may be understood either of coming to him now by faith, which the Gospel ministry is the means of, and encourages to; or of coming to him hereafter, for the saints will meet him, and be ever with him, and till that time the Gospel will be preached: or else the church, being a complete body with all its members, is designed; for when all the elect of God are gathered in and joined together, they will be as one man; or it may respect every individual believer, who though he is comparatively perfect, and with regard to parts, but not degrees, and as in Christ Jesus, yet is in himself imperfect in holiness and knowledge, though hereafter he will be perfect in both; when he comes *unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*; not of Christ's natural body, but of his mystical body the church, which will be his fulness when all the elect are gathered in; and when they are filled with his gifts and graces, and are grown up to their proportion in it, they will be come to the measure and stature of it: or it may be understood of every particular believer, who has Christ formed in him; who when the work of grace is finished in him, will be a perfect man in Christ, and all this will be true of him; till which time, and during this imperfect state, the Gospel ministry will be maintained: the phrase is taken from the Jews, who among the forms and degrees of prophecy which the prophets arrived to, and had in them the vision of God and angels, make *מִשְׁעָר קוֹמָה*, the measure of the stature², a principal one; and is here used for the perfection of the heavenly state in the vision, and enjoyment of God and Christ.

Ver. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children, &c.*] Meaning not children of men, for grace does not destroy natural relations; nor children of God, which is a privilege, and always continues; nor indeed children of disobedience, though the saints cease to be such upon conversion; but in such sense children, as they were when first converted, new-born babes, little children: there are some things in which they should be children still, namely, with respect to an ardent and flaming love to God and Christ, and to the saints; and with regard to their eager desire after the sincere milk

² Mainou. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Cosi, par. 4. sect. 3. p. 213. 2.

of the word; and as to pride, malice, envy, evil speakings, guile and hypocrisy; in these things it becomes them to be children: but not in understanding; they should not always remain ignorant, imprudent, or be always fed with milk, and not able to digest meat; nor be unable to go unless led, and be tender and incapable of bearing hardships for Christ and his Gospel, and of defending it, and his cause and interest; but should play the man, and quit themselves as such and be strong, which the Gospel ministry is a means of, and encourages to: *tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*; false doctrine, which may be compared to wind for its lightness and emptiness, and for its swelling and puffing nature, and for the noise and bluster it makes, and for its rapidity and force, with which it sometimes comes and bears all before it, and for its infectiousness, which is the nature of some winds; and to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with it, is expressive of much ignorance and want of a discerning spirit, and implies hesitation, and doubts and scruples, and shews credulity, fickleness, and inconstancy: and which is brought on *by the sleight of men*; either through the uncertain and changeable state of things in life; the mind of man is fickle, the life of man is uncertain, and all the affairs of human nature are subject to change, by reason of which men are easily imposed upon; or rather through the tricking arts of false teachers; the word here used is adopted by the Jews into their language, and with them קרובי signifies the game at dice^a; and קרוביטשוס, is a gamester at that play, and is interpreted by them, one that steals souls^b, and deceives and corrupts them; and may be fitly applied to false teachers, who make use of such-like artifices and juggling tricks, to deceive the hearts of the simple, as the others do to cheat men of their money: hence it follows, and *cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; or unto the deceitful methods or wiles of the devil*, as the Alexandrian copy reads; which not only suggests that their principal end in view is to deceive, but their insidious, private, and secret way of deceiving, and their expertness in it, which they have from the devil; and now the ministration of the Gospel is the best and surest guard and antidote against such fluctuations and deceptions.

Ver. 15. *But speaking the truth in love, &c.*] Either Christ himself, who is the truth, and is to be preached, and always spoken of with strong affection and love; or the Gospel, the word of truth, so called in opposition to that which is false and fictitious; and also to the law, which is shadowish; and on account of its author, the God of truth, and its subject-matter, Christ, and the several doctrines of grace; and because the spirit of truth has dictated it, and does direct to it, and owns and blesses it: this, with respect to the ministers of the Gospel, should be spoken openly, honestly, and sincerely, and in love to the souls of men, and in a way consistent with love, in opposition to the secret, ensnaring, and pernicious ways of false teachers; and with respect to private Christians, as they are to receive it in love, so to speak of it to one another from a principle of love, and an affectionate concern for

each other's welfare, to the end that they *may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ*: the work of grace upon the soul is a gradual work, and an increase of this in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and spiritual knowledge, is a growth; and this is a growth in all things, in all grace, as in those mentioned, so in others, as humility, patience, self-denial, resignation of the will to the will of God, and especially the knowledge of Christ; for it is a growing into him, from whom souls receive all their grace and increase of it; for he is the head of influence to supply them, as well as the head of eminence to protect them; see ch. i. 22. and now the preaching of the Gospel, or the sincere speaking of the truth, is the instrumental means of such growth.

Ver. 16. *From whom the whole body fitly joined together, &c.*] By which is meant, the church; see ch. i. 23. sometimes it designs all the elect of God in heaven and in earth, but here the church-militant, which only can admit of an increase; this body is from Christ, as an head, and the phrase denotes the rise and original of the church from Christ, her dependence upon him, and union to him, and of its members one to another; she has her being and form from him, and all her blessings, as her life and light, righteousness and holiness, her grace and strength, her joy, peace, and comfort, her fruitfulness and final perseverance; and her dependence is upon him for subsistence, sustenance, protection and safety, and for grace and glory; and her union to him is very near, strict and close, and indissoluble; and the union between the several members is also very close, and both are very beautiful: *and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part*. The Alexandrian copy reads, *of every member*; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the author of the union of the members of Christ's body to one another is the spirit of God, by him they are baptized into one body; the cement or bond of this union is the grace of love wrought in their souls by him; and the means are the word and ordinances, and these convey a supply from Christ the head to every member, suitable to the part it bears in the body, according to the energy of the spirit, who makes all effectual: and so *maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love*; the increase of the body the church, is either in numbers, when persons are converted and added to it; or in the exercise of grace, under the influence of the spirit, through the ministration of the word and ordinances; and both these tend to the edifying or building of it up; and nothing is of a more edifying nature to the church than love, which bears the infirmities of the weak, and seeks for, and follows after those things which make for peace and godly edification, 1 Cor. viii. 1.

Ver. 17. *This I say therefore and testify in the Lord, &c.*] These words may be considered either as an assertion, and so a testimonial of the different walk and conversation of the saints at Ephesus, from the rest of the Gentiles; or as an exhortation in the name of the Lord to such a walk, the apostle here returning to what

^a T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 82. 1. Misna Roshhashana, c. 1. sect. 8. & Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 2.

^b T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 91. 2. & Jarchi & Tosephot in ib. & Juchasin, fol. 89. 1.

he stirs them up to in ver. 1. *that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind*; every natural man walks in a vain shew; the mind of man is vain, and whoever walk according to the dictates of it, must walk vainly: the phrase is expressive of the emptiness of the mind; it being naturally destitute of God, of the knowledge, fear, and grace of God; and of Jesus Christ, of the knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him; and of the Spirit and his graces; and it also points at the instability and changeableness of the human mind, in which sense man at his best estate was altogether vanity; as also the folly, falsehood, and wickedness of it in his fallen state: and the mind discovers its vanity in its thoughts and imaginations, which are vain and foolish; in the happiness it proposes to itself, which lies in vain things, as worldly riches, honours, &c. and in the ways and means it takes to obtain it, and in words and actions; and the Gentiles shewed the vanity of their minds in their vain philosophy¹ and curious inquiries into things, and in their polytheism and idolatry: to walk herein, is to act according to the dictates of a vain and carnal mind; and it denotes a continued series of sinning, or a vain conversation maintained, a progress and obstinate persisting therein with pleasure: now God's elect before conversion walked as others do, but when they are converted their walk and conversation is not, at least it ought not to be, like that of others: the Alexandrian copy and some others, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word *other*, and only read, *as the Gentiles, &c.*

Ver. 18. *Having the understanding darkened, &c.*] Not that the natural faculty of the understanding is lost in men, nor the understanding in things natural and civil, and which is quick enough, especially in things that are evil; but in things spiritual it is very dark and ignorant, as about the nature and perfections of God, his holiness and righteousness; about sin and the consequences of it; about Christ, his person, office, and work, and salvation by him; about the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the soul; and about the Scripture, and the doctrines contained in it; and so it came to be by sin: the understanding of man was at first filled both with natural and divine knowledge; but man was not content with this, and being ambitious of more, even of being as God, lost what he had; for on account of his sin he was banished the divine presence, which brought not only a darkness upon him, but upon all his posterity; and which is increased by personal iniquity, and oftentimes by Satan the god of this world, who blinds the minds of men; and sometimes men are given up in just judgment by God, to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and which issues in utter darkness, in blackness of darkness for evermore: *being alienated from the life of God*; not that which God lives in himself, but that which he lives in his people; nor that natural life which men receive from him, but a spiritual life, a life of grace, faith and holiness; and which may be called the life of God, because it is infused by the spirit of God, and the word of God is the means of it, and it is supported and secured by the power of God, and is according to the will of God, and

is directed to his glory: now wicked and unconverted men are alienated from this life; they are estranged from God the fountain of it; and go astray from the law, the rule of an holy life; and are entirely destitute of a principle of life, from whence men can only act right; and are utterly unacquainted with the pleasures and sweetness of the life of faith and holiness; nor do they approve of such a life, but have the utmost aversion to it: *through the ignorance that is in them*; every unregenerate man is an ignorant man, and especially the Gentiles were very ignorant of God, and of divine things; ignorance is natural to men, it comes by sin, and is itself sinful, and is sometimes the punishment of sin, and also the cause of it, as here of alienation from the life of God; for where is ignorance of God, there can be no desire after him, no communion with him, no faith in him, and dependence on him; no true worship of him, or living according to his will, and to his glory: and this ignorance is, *because of the blindness of their hearts, or the hardness of it*; there is a natural hardness of the heart, the heart is naturally stony, and so it remains till grace takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh; it is insensible and inflexible, and not susceptible of any impression; and there is a voluntary hardness of it, men willingly harden themselves against the Lord, and make their hearts like an adamant stone, all sin is of an hardening nature; and there is a judicial hardness, which God gives up men unto; and when and where this is the case, in either sense, it is no wonder men should be so ignorant of God, and so alienated from the life of him: סמיות הלב, *blindness of heart*^c, is a Rabbinical phrase.

Ver. 19. *Who being past feeling, &c.*] Their consciences being cauterized or seared as with a red hot iron, which is the consequence of judicial hardness; so that they have lost all sense of sin, and don't feel the load of its guilt upon them, and are without any concern about it; but on the contrary commit it with pleasure, boast of it and glory in it, plead for it and defend it publicly, and openly declare it, and stand in no fear of a future judgment, which they ridicule and despise: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Claromontane exemplar read, *who despairing*: of mercy and salvation, saying there is no hope, and therefore grow hardened and desperate in sin; *have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness*; by *lasciviousness* is meant all manner of lusts, and a wanton and unbridled course of sinning; and their *giving themselves over* unto it denotes their voluntariness in sinning, the power of sin over them, they being willing slaves unto it, and their continuance in it; and this they do in order *to work all uncleanness*; to commit every unclean lust, to live in a continued commission of uncleanness of every sort; and that *with greediness*: being like a covetous man, never satisfied with sinning, but always craving more sinful lusts and pleasures.

Ver. 20. *But ye have not so learned Christ, &c.*] Some distinguish these words, and make two propositions of them, *but ye not so, or ye are not so, ye have learned Christ*: the first of these propositions has respect to what goes before, and suggests that regenerate persons

are not as other men: they don't walk in the vanity of their minds as others, their minds are not empty and vain; but are filled with God, with a saving knowledge of God in Christ, with the fear and love of God, and with Christ, with a spiritual knowledge of him, with faith in him and love to him, and with the Spirit, with his graces and fruits of righteousness; and though there is a great deal of vanity, instability, treachery, and sinfulness in them, yet their walk and the course of their conversation is not according to this: nor are their understandings darkened as others; they are enlightened to see their lost state and condition by nature, the plague of their own hearts, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, the way of life and salvation by Christ, and that salvation from first to last is all of grace; they have some light into the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of glory; and their light is of an increasing nature: they are not alienated from the life of God as others, but live a life of communion with him, a life of faith upon him, and a life of holiness according to his mind; they are not past feeling as others, they are sensible of sin, and are often pressed down with the weight of it, and groan, being burdened by it; they cannot sin with that delight and pleasure as others do, nor will they plead for it, but confess it with shame and sorrow; nor do they give up themselves to it, and continue in it, and in an insatiable pursuit of it: the reason of all which is, they *have learned Christ*: so as to know him as God over all blessed for ever; as the Lord and heir of all things; as the Alpha and Omega of the covenant of grace; as intrusted with all that is near and dear to his father; as the father's free gift to men, and as the sinner's Saviour; as the way of access to God and acceptance with him; as the church's head and husband; as the saints' prophet, priest, and King, and as the only Mediator between God and men; and so as to receive him, believe in him, and commit their souls unto him; and so as to embrace his truths, and submit to his ordinances: and this lesson they learn, not in the book and school of nature, nor of carnal reason, nor of the law; but in the book of the covenant, and of the Scripture; and in the school of the church, and under the ministry of the Gospel; for the ministers of the Gospel are the instructors, the instruments of teaching; though the spirit of God is the efficient cause, the anointing which teacheth all things, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus: and this lesson being truly learnt, will teach men to walk differently from others; to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

Ver. 21. *If so be that ye have heard him, &c.*] Not heard him preach, but heard him preached; and that not merely externally, with the outward hearing of the ear; though oftentimes spiritual conviction and illumination, true faith in Christ, real comfort from him, and establishment and assurance of interest in him, come this way, as to these Ephesians, ch. i. 13. but internally, so as to know him, understand his word, and distinguish his voice; so as to approve of him and love him, and believe in him; feel the power of his Gospel, relish his truths, and obey his ordinances, and so bring forth fruit to his glory; as such do, who are quickened by him, whose ears are unstopped, and

their hearts opened, and their understandings enlightened; and who have hearing ears, and understanding hearts given them: *and have been taught by him*: not personally, but by his spirit and ministers; for Christ is not only the subject of the ministry of the word, and whom the spirit of God teaches and directs souls to for righteousness, pardon, cleansing, and for every supply of grace; but he is the efficient cause of teaching; and there is none teaches like him: and those who are taught by him, are taught *as the truth is in Jesus*; as the Gospel is in him, as in its original and subject; for he is truth itself, and grace and truth came by him; and as it was preached by him, and so is pure and unmingled.

Ver. 22. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, &c.*] Which is the corruption of nature; why this is called a man, and an old man, see the note on Rom. vi. 6. the putting him off, is not a removing him from the saints, nor a destroying him in them, nor a changing his nature; for he remains, and remains alive, and is the same old man he ever was, in regenerate persons; but it is a putting him off from his seat, and a putting him down from his government; a shewing no regard to his rule and dominion, to his laws and lusts, making no provision for his support; and particularly, not squaring the life and conversation according to his dictates and directions; and therefore it is called a putting him off, concerning the former conversation: the change lies not in the old man, who can never be altered, but in the conversation; he is not in the same power, but he retains the same sinful nature; he is put off, but he is not put out; and though he does not reign, he rages, and often threatens to get the ascendant: these words stand either in connexion with ver. 17. and so are a continuation and an explanation of that exhortation; or else they point out what regenerate souls are taught by Christ to do, to quit the former conversation, to hate the garment spotted with the flesh, and to put it off; for the allusion is to the putting off of filthy garments, as the works of the flesh may be truly called, which flow from the vitiosity of nature, the old man: *which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*; the old man, or the vitiosity of nature, has its lusts; and these are deceitful; they promise pleasure and profit, but yield neither in the issue; they promise liberty, and bring into bondage; they promise secrecy and impunity, but expose to shame, and render liable to punishment; they sometimes put on a religious face, and so deceive, and fill men with pride and conceit, who think themselves to be something, when they are nothing: and through these the old man is corrupt; by these the corruption of nature is discovered; and the corruption that is in the world is produced hereby; and these make a man deserving of, and liable to the pit of corruption; and this is a good reason, why this corrupt old man, with respect to the life and conversation, should be put off.

Ver. 23. *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*] Or by the spirit that is in your mind; that is, by the Holy Spirit; who is in the saints, and is the author of renovation in them; and who is the reviver and carrier-on, and finisher of that work, and therefore that is called the renewing of the Holy Spirit, Titus

iii. 5. or rather the mind of man, which is a spirit, of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal, and is the seat of that renewing work of the spirit of God; which shews, that the more noble part of man stands in need of renovation, being corrupted by sin: and this renewing in it, designs not the first work of renovation; for these Ephesians had been renewed, and were made new creatures in Christ; but the gradual progress of it; and takes in, if not principally intends, a renewal, or an increase of spiritual light and knowledge, of life and strength, of joy and comfort, and fresh supplies of grace, and a revival of the exercise of grace; and in short, a renewal of spiritual youth, and a restoration of the saints to that state and condition they were in, in times past: and the exhortation to this can only mean, that it becomes saints to be concerned for such revivings and renewings, and to pray for them, as David did, Psal. li. 10. for otherwise, this is as much the work of the spirit of God, as renovation is at first; and he only who is sent forth, and renews the face of the earth, year by year, can renew us daily in the spirit of our minds.

Ver. 24. *And that ye put on the new man, &c.*] Which some understand of Jesus Christ, who is truly and really man, and a new or extraordinary one, Jer. xxxi. 22. and as such is God's creature, and is made after his image, and which appears in his perfect holiness and righteousness; and the phrase of putting on well agrees with him, Rom. xiii. 14. Gal. iii. 27. whose righteousness is a garment, pure and spotless, and which is put on by the hand of faith: though rather by the *new man* is meant, the new nature, the new principle, or work of grace in the soul, elsewhere called a new creature; and it bears this name in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, or corruption of nature, before spoken of; and because it is *de novo*, or anew, put into the hearts of men; it is not what was in them naturally; nor is it any old principle renewed, or wrought up in another and better form; but it is something that is infused, that was never there before: and because it is new in all its parts; such who have it, have new hearts and new spirits given unto them; they have new eyes to see with, and new ears to hear with, and new hands to handle and work with, and new feet to walk with; and they live a new life and conversation: so the Jews says of a man that truly repents of sin, and does not return to it, that he is *איש חדש*, a *new man*^d: now to put on this new man, is not to make ourselves new creatures; for this is not by the power of man, but by the spirit of God; this is God's work, and not man's; 'tis he who made us at first, re-makes us, and not we ourselves; besides, these Ephesians the apostle writes to, were already made new men, or new creatures; but to put on the new man, is to walk in our lives and conversations agreeably to the new man, or work of grace upon the soul; as to put off the old man, respects the former conversation, or a not walking as formerly, and agreeably to the dictates of corrupt nature, so to put on the new man, is to walk according to the principles of grace and holiness formed in the soul: and of this new man it is further said, *which after God is created in righteousness and true*

holiness; the principle of the soul is *created*, and therefore is not the effect of man's power, which cannot create; it is peculiar to God only to create; it is a creature, and therefore not to be trusted in, and depended on; for not grace, but the author of grace, is the object of trust: it is created *after God*; by his power, according to his mind and will, and after his image, and in his likeness; which greatly consists in *righteousness and true holiness*; called *true*, in opposition to the typical and ceremonial holiness of the Jews, and to the pretended holiness of hypocrites; and denotes the truth and genuineness of the spirit's work of sanctification upon the heart; unless this should rather be considered as the effect of his grace upon the soul; for so the words may be rendered, *unto righteousness and true holiness*; for the new man is of such a nature, and so formed, as to tend to acts of righteousness and holiness, and to engage men to the performance of them: some copies read, *in righteousness, and holiness, and truth*; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read.

Ver. 25. *Wherefore putting away lying, &c.*] Which is one of the deeds of the old man, and a branch of the former conversation agreeable to him: a lie is a voluntary disagreement of the mind and speech, with a design to deceive; it is to speak that which is false, contrary to truth shining in the mind; and it is spoken knowingly and willingly, and with a design to impose upon others; hence a man may speak what is false, and not be a liar, if he does not know it to be so; and hence parables, fables, tropes, figures, hyperboles, &c. are not lies, because they are not used to deceive, but to illustrate and enforce truth: there are several sorts of lies; there is an officious lie, which is told for the service of others, but this is not lawful; for evil is not to be done, that good may come of it; and a man may as well tell a lie to serve himself, as another; and any other sin by the same rule may be allowed of, and tolerated; besides, it is not lawful to lie for God, and therefore not for a creature: and there is a jocose lie; this ought not to be encouraged; all appearance of evil should be abstained from; every idle word must be accounted for; and hereby also an evil habit of lying may be acquired: and there is a lie which is in itself directly hurtful, and injurious; as is every false thing, said with a design to deceive: and there are religious lies, and liars; some practical ones, as those who do not sincerely worship God, and who are dissolute in their lives, and their practice is not according to their profession; and there are others who are guilty of doctrinal lies, as antichrist and his followers, who are given up to believe a lie; and such who deny the deity, incarnation, Messiahship, work, office, grace, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and who profess themselves to be Christians, and are not: the springs and causes of lying are a corrupt heart and the lusts of it, which prompt unto it; such as covetousness, malice, and the fear of men; and also a tempting devil, the father of lies; and who is a lying spirit, in the hearts and mouths of men; this is a vice which ought to be put away, especially by professors of religion; the effects of it are sad; it

^d Tzeror Hammor. fol. 156. 4.

brings infamy, disgrace, and discredit, upon particular persons; and has brought judgments upon nations, where it has in general obtained; and has been the cause of corporeal diseases and death; and even makes men liable to the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death: it is a sin exceeding sinful; it is a breach of God's law; an aping of the devil; it is against the light of nature, and is destructive of civil society, and very abominable in the sight of God: wherefore *speake every man truth with his neighbour*; both with respect to civil and religious affairs, in common conversation, in trade and business, and in all things relating to God and men: *for we are members one of another*; as men, are all of one blood, descended from one man, and so are related one to another; and as in civil society, belong to one body politic; and in a religious sense, members of the same mystical body, the church; of which Christ, who is the truth itself, is the head; and therefore should not attempt to deceive one another by lying, since there is such a near relation and close union of one to another.

Ver. 26. *Be ye angry, and sin not, &c.*] There is anger which is not sinful; for anger is found in God himself, in Jesus Christ, in the holy angels, and in God's people; and a man may be said to be angry and not sin, when his anger arises from a true zeal for God and religion; when it is kindled not against persons, but sins; when a man is displeas'd with his own sins, and with the sins of others: with vice and immorality of every kind; with idolatry and idolatrous worship, and with all false doctrine; and also when it is carried on to answer good ends, as the good of those with whom we are angry, the glory of God, and the promoting of the interest of Christ: and there is an anger which is sinful; as when it is without a cause; when it exceeds due bounds; when it is not directed to a good end; when it is productive of bad effects, either in words or actions; and when it is soon raised, or long continues: the Jews have a like distinction of anger; they say*, "there is an anger and an anger; there is an anger which is blessed above and below, and it is called blessed, as it is said Gen. xiv. 19. and there is an anger which is cursed above and below, as it is said Gen. iii. 14. and xlix. 7." And these two sorts are compared to *Ebal* and *Gerizzim*, from the one of which proceeded blessing, and from the other cursing: anger for the most part is not only sinful, but it tends to sin, and issues in it; hence that saying of the Jews, *לא תררח ולא תחשי*, *be not angry, and thou wilt not sin*†: the spring of it is a corrupt heart, it is stirred up by Satan, encouraged by pride, and increased by grievous words and reproachful language: *let not the sun go down upon your wrath*; there is an allusion to Deut. xxiv. 12, 13, 14, 15. it seems to be a proverbial expression; and the design of it is to shew, that anger should not be continued; that it should not last at furthest more than a day; that when the heat of the day is over, the heat of anger should be over likewise; and that we should not sleep with it, lest it should be cherished and increased upon our pillows; and besides, the time of the going down of the sun, is the time of

evening prayer, which may be greatly interrupted and hindered by anger. R. Jonah‡ has an expression or two like to this; "let not the indignation of any one abide upon thee; and let not a night sleep with thee, and anger be against any one:" it should be considered, that as God is slow to anger, so he does not retain it for ever; and that to retain anger, is to gratify the devil; wherefore it follows,

Ver. 27. *Neither give place to the devil.*] Or to the accuser, or slanderer; that is, to any adversary, that takes delight in slandering and reproaching the saints; give such no room, nor reason, to calumniate the doctrine and ways of Christ, through an unbecoming conversation, by lying and sinful anger, or by other means; or rather the devil, the great accuser of the brethren is meant; and the Ethiopic version renders it, *do not give way to Satan*; which is done, when men indulge any lust or corruption; and when they easily fall in with his suggestions and temptations; when they are off of their watch and guard; and when they do not resist, but quietly yield unto him.

Ver. 28. *Let him that stole steal no more, &c.*] Stealing, or theft, is a fraudulent taking away of another man's goods, without the knowledge and will of the owner, for the sake of gain; to which evil may be reduced, not making good, or not performing payments, all unjust contracts, detention of wages, unlawful usury, unfaithfulness in any thing committed to trust, advising, encouraging, and receiving from thieves: theft is a very great evil; it is a breach of the common law of nature, to do to others, as we would be done by; it is contrary to particular laws of God, and is against common justice, and ought not to be continued in, and is punishable by God and man; it springs from a corrupt heart, and often arises from poverty, idleness, sloth, covetousness, and prodigality: the remedy against it follows, *but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good*; labouring with diligence and industry, at any manufacture, trade, or business, which is honest, lawful, and of good report, is a proper antidote against theft; and ought to be preferred to such a scandalous way of living, and to be constantly attended to: and that for this end among others, *that he may have to give to him that needeth*; and not take away another man's property; needy persons are the objects of charity; and what is given to them, should be a man's own; and what a man gets by his hand-labour, he should not prodigally spend, or covetously lay up, but should cheerfully distribute it to indigent persons.

Ver. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, &c.*] As unsavoury speech, foolish talking, light and frothy language, that which is filthy, unprofitable, noxious, and nauseous, and all that is sinful; such as profane oaths, curses, and imprecations, unchaste words, angry ones, proud, haughty, and arrogant expressions, lies, perjury, &c. which may be called *corrupt*, because such communication springs from a corrupt heart; is an evidence of the corruption of it; the subject-matter of it is corrupt; and it conveys corruption to others, it corrupts good manners; and is the cause of men's going down to the pit of

* Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 1.
† T. Bab. Beracot fol. 90

‡ Apud Capell. in Matt. v. 29.

corruption: wherefore a restraint should be laid upon the lips of men; men have not a right to say what they please; good men will be cautious what they say, otherwise their religion is in vain; and conscious of their own weakness, they will pray to God to set a watch before their mouth, and to keep the door of their lips, and not suffer any thing to come out, *but that which is good for the use of edifying; or for edification*, as the Syriac version renders it; the Arabic version reads, *for the edification of all*; that is, that hear; and the Vulgate Latin version and Claromontane exemplar, *for the edification of faith*: for the building up of saints on their most holy faith, and for the encouragement and increase of the grace of faith: in the Greek text it is literally, *for the edification of use*: for useful edification, or what is useful for edification; and is suited to the present want or opportunity, as the word is by some rendered: and that must be *good*, which answers such an end; meaning not that the language should be formally and grammatically good, though to speak with propriety is useful and serviceable, and tends the more to instruction and edification; but that which is materially good, or the subject of it is good; that which is true, pure, pleasant, and profitable: *that it may minister grace unto the hearers*; may be grateful and acceptable to them, or may minister the grace of God to them; that is, the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of the grace of God; and be a means of conveying the principle of grace into the hearts of the hearers, and of drawing it forth into exercise where it is; and such speech or communication which springs from a gracious heart, and from a principle of grace in the heart, and is upon the subject of the grace of God, is most likely to be thus useful and edifying: agreeably to all this are some sayings of the Jews^b, "says R. Joshua ben Levi, for ever let not a man suffer any thing בנייה, *that is filthy*, or unseemly, to proceed out of his mouth; says R. Ishmael, for ever let a man discourse נקייה בלשון, *in a pure language*;" not corrupt.

Ver. 30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, &c.* Not a believer's own spirit, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, which is grieved by sin; nor the spirit of a good man, that hears our words and sees our actions, and is displeased and troubled at them; but the third person in the Trinity: and this is said of him by an anthropopathy, and supposes something done that is offensive to him; and he may be grieved, not only by unconverted persons, by their stubborn resistance and opposition to the Gospel and means of grace, and by their contempt of his person, office, and grace, but by believers themselves, and who are here spoken to; and which may be done both by their words, lying, angry, and corrupt ones, before cautioned against, ver. 25, 26, 29. and by their actions, their behaviour towards God, their conversation in the world, and by their carriage to one another, which is suggested in the following verse: also he may be grieved by their thoughts, their vain and sinful thoughts, and that they are no better employed; and especially when they entertain any undervaluing ones of Jesus Christ, whose glorifier he is; and by the unbelief of their hearts,

and by their unmindfulness of the things of the spirit; and when they disregard the rules, dictates, and advice of the spirit, and make no use of him: and his being grieved appears by his departure from them; which is to be perceived by the darkness of their souls, the prevailings of corruption, the weakness of grace, and their backwardness to duty: and now there are many reasons why he should not be grieved; as because he is God, and the author of the new birth, the planter and applier of all grace, and the finisher of it; because he is the saints' comforter, their advocate, helper, and strengthener; and their constant companion, who dwells in them, and will remain in them, until death: and it follows, *whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*; of the sealing work of the spirit, see the note on ch. i. 13. *By the day of redemption* may be meant, either the day of death, when the saints have a deliverance from the incumbrance of the body; from their present state of exile and banishment; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from the temptations of Satan; from doubts, fears, and unbelief; and from all fear of death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal: or the day of the resurrection, when the body will be redeemed from mortality, corruption, weakness, and dishonour; when it will be refined and spiritualized, so that it will not stand in need of natural sustenance; will be endowed with great agility, like that of spirits; and will be subject to the soul, or spirit, and will be suited to spiritual objects; to which may be added, the day of judgment, Luke xxi. 28. when Christ shall appear in glory, and his saints with him, and he will put them, soul and body, into the possession of everlasting happiness; which will consist in the vision of Christ, in conformity to him, and in that happy company and conversation that will then be enjoyed, and that delightful employment they will be taken up in: and now the saints being sealed up by the spirit unto this time, shews the perpetual in-dwelling of the spirit in them; and that it will continue even after death, who will give them confidence at the day of judgment; and that it is the spirit which works up the saints, and makes them meet for glory; and gives them the assurance of it, and therefore they should not be grieved.

Ver. 31. *Let all bitterness, &c.* These words are a dehortation from several vices good men are liable to, by which the spirit of God is grieved: *bitterness* sometimes designs the corruption of nature, which is the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and sometimes actual sins and transgressions, even those of God's own people, which are evil and bitter things; and sometimes heretical doctrines, which are roots of bitterness; and sometimes sinful words spoken by the saints, one against another; and here perhaps it signifies, the first offence taken in the mind, against any person, upon any account, which should at once be put away, and not encouraged: *and wrath*: heat of spirit, which follows upon bitterness, or upon the spirit being imbibtered and offended; see Ezek. iii. 14. *And anger*; a sinful one, cautioned against before, ver. 26. *And clamour and evil speaking*; such as brawlings, conten-

^b T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 2. 1.

tions, contumelies, reproaches, slanders, &c. arising from an embittered, wrathful, and angry disposition: these should all *be put away from you, with all malice*; being the deeds of the old man, unbecoming such as are born again, and grieving to the spirit of God.

Ver. 32. *And be ye kind one to another, &c.*] Good, affable, courteous; which appears in looks, words, and actions; by looking pleasantly on each other, speaking kindly to one another, and mutually doing every good office that lies in their way, and in their power: *tender-hearted*: which is opposed to a being hard-hearted to them that are in distress, and close-handed to the needy; to cruelty and severity to such who are subject to them, or have injured them; and to a rigid and censorious spirit to them that are fallen: *forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*: whatever offences are given, or injuries done by the saints one to another, and so far as they are committed against them, they should forgive, and should pray to God for one another, that he would manifest his forgiveness of them, as committed against

him; and this should be done in like manner as God forgives in Christ, and for his sake; that is, fully and freely, and from their hearts; and so as to forget the offences, and not to upbraid them with them hereafter; yea, they should forgive them before they repent, and without asking for it, and that for Christ's sake, and because they are members of his: the Complutensian edition reads, *even as Christ hath forgiven us*: the Arabic version also reads *us*, and so some copies: the words may be rendered, *giving freely to one another, even as God in Christ has given freely to you*; saints should give freely to one another, for outward support, where it is needful; and should impart spiritual gifts and experience for inward comfort, where it is wanted, and as they have ability; and that from this consideration, that all they have, whether in temporals or spirituals, is freely given by God in Christ, and for his sake; with whom he freely gives them all things; in whom he has given them grace, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings; as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life.

C H A P. V.

THE apostle, in this chapter, goes on with his exhortations to the duties of religion; and such in general as relate to purity of life, and against uncleanness; and particularly treats of the duties of married persons. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had exhorted to kindness and tenderness, and which he enforced by the example of God himself, he here repeats and urges it; and to it adds the example of Christ in loving his people, and giving himself for them a propitiatory sacrifice, acceptable to God, ver. 1. 2. then follows a dehortation from several vices of the impure kind, some as being filthy actions, and unbecoming saints, and not to be named by them, and much less done, ver. 3. others, and such as are vices of the tongue, as being inconvenient, and to which thanksgiving is preferred, ver. 4. and the former especially, as excluding from having any part or portion in the kingdom of God and Christ, ver. 5. and all of them, as bringing the wrath of God upon men, ver. 6. wherefore professors of religion should avoid such sins, and not join with the children of disobedience in the commission of them, ver. 7. to which exhortation they should the rather give heed, from the consideration of their present state, illustrated by their former one; who were once darkness, but now light, and therefore should walk as enlightened persons, ver. 8. and as having the spirit of God, which is known by its fruits, ver. 9. studying to know, approve of, and do that which is acceptable to God, ver. 10. and on the contrary, should have no society and communion with men in the commission of sins, the works of darkness, but should remove them for them, ver. 11. since the things done by them were such, that it was a shame to relate them, and much more to commit them, ver. 12. and the rather this was incumbent upon them, since it was agreeable to their character, as being made light in the Lord; seeing it is the property of light to make

manifest and detect what is done in the dark, ver. 13. which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture pertinently produced, to stir up drowsy and lifeless professors to the discharge of their duty, ver. 14. and from hence the apostle enforces a wise and circumspect walk and conversation, one part of which lies in redeeming time; and which should be done for this reason, because the present days were evil ones, ver. 15, 16. and that they might avoid a foolish walk, and order their conversation wisely and aright, he suggests it would be proper to learn what was the will of the Lord, which is the rule of a Christian's walk and conversation, ver. 17. and whereas drunkenness is oftentimes the cause of all the above-mentioned vices, the apostle cautions against that, and on the contrary advises them to be concerned for a larger measure of the spirit of God; that under his influence they might sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in a melodious manner, and heartily to the Lord; and so express their thankfulness to him, for all mercies from him; and not abuse their mercies and themselves, and spend their time in singing lewd and profane songs, as drunkards often do, ver. 18, 19, 20. and hence he passes to the special duties of wives and husbands, to which he premises a general exhortation to submission to one another, ver. 21. and begins with the subjection of wives to their husbands, this being the will of the Lord, ver. 22. and besides, the relation which the wife stands in to her husband, being her head, requires it; and which is illustrated by Christ being the head and Saviour of his body, the church, ver. 23. and which is further urged and enforced by the instance and example of the church's subjection to Christ, ver. 24. and next the apostle exhorts husbands to love their wives, in imitation of Christ, who has loved his church; and as an instance of it, has given himself to death for her; than which, there cannot be a greater instance of love, ver. 25. the ends of which were, the sanctification and

cleansing of the church with his blood, by means of water and the word; and the presentation of her to himself, all glorious and beautiful, ver. 26, 27. and then another argument is used, to engage the affections of husbands to their wives, they being their own bodies; so that loving them, is loving themselves, ver. 28. nor was it ever known, and it would be unnatural, for a man to hate his own flesh, but on the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it; and therefore seeing the wife is a man's own flesh, he ought not to hate her, but to nourish and cherish her; and this is also enforced by the example of Christ, who does not hate his church, but nourishes and cherishes her, ver. 29. the reason of which is, because the saints which make up the church are members of him, one flesh and blood with him, ver. 30. which is the case of a man and his wife; and hence it is, that according to the original law of marriage, a man was to leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, ver. 31. the whole of which is a mystery, and typical of the marriage relation and union between Christ and his church, ver. 32. and the chapter is closed with a recapitulation of the mutual duties of husband and wife, love in the one, and reverence in the other, ver. 33.

Ver. 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God, &c.*] Not in his works of infinite wisdom and almighty power, which is impossible; but in acts of righteousness and holiness, and particularly in acts of mercy, goodness, and beneficence; as in forgiving injuries and offences, and in freely distributing to the necessities of the saints; as the connexion of the words with the preceding chapter, and the instance and example in the following verse shew: and this should be done by the saints, *as dear children*; and because they are such by adopting grace; being predestinated unto the adoption of children, in the eternal purpose of God, and taken into that relation in the covenant of grace; and which is declared and made manifest in regeneration, and by faith in Christ Jesus: and they are *dear*, or beloved children, being loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and which is the spring and source of their adoption; and their being dear to him is seen by what he is unto them, their covenant God and father; and by what he has done for them, in giving his son to them, and for them; as well as in choosing, calling, and quickening them by his grace, and by the account he makes of them, as his jewels, his peculiar treasure, and the apple of his eye; and by the pity and compassion he has for them, and the care he takes of them; and therefore it becomes them to imitate him; for who should they imitate and follow after, but their father, and especially when they are so dear unto him?

Ver. 2. *And walk in love, &c.*] To God; to which the saints are obliged, not only by the law of God, which requires it, but by the goodness of God, and the discoveries of his love to them; and which shews itself in fearing to offend him, in a conformity to his will, in making his glory the chief end of all actions, and in loving all that belong to him: and also the saints should walk in love to Christ; who is to be loved fervently, constantly, in sincerity, with all the heart, and above all creatures and things; because of the loveliness of his person, the love he bears to them, and the things he has done for them, and the

relations he stands in to them; and which is manifested in keeping his commands, in delighting in his presence, and in a concern at his absence: and also they should walk in love to one another, which is chiefly designed; which is Christ's new commandment, and is an evidence of regeneration; and without which a profession of religion is in vain: and to *walk* in love, is not merely to talk of it, but to exercise it; and to do all that is done for God, and Christ, and the saints, from a principle of love; and to advance, increase, and abound in it, and to go on and continue therein: the example to be copied after, and which carries in it an argument engaging to it is, *as Christ also hath loved us*; with a love exceeding great and strong, which is wonderful, inconceivable, and unparalleled; and even as the father has loved him; with a love that is free and sovereign, unchangeable and everlasting, of which he has given many instances; and a principal one is hereafter mentioned: the *as* here is a note of similitude, not of equality; for it cannot be thought that the saints should love God, or Christ, or one another, with a love equal to Christ's love to them, but only that theirs should bear some likeness to his: the Alexandrian copy and Ethiopic version, instead of *us*, read *you*: and *hath given himself for us*; not the world, and the things of it, which are his; not men, nor angels, nor animals, but himself; he gave away his time, service, and strength; his name, fame, and reputation; all the comforts of life, and life itself; his whole human nature, soul and body, and that as in union with his divine person; and that not only for the good of his people, but in their room and stead; not for angels, nor for all men, but for his chosen ones, the church, his sheep, his people, and when they were sinners; in the following manner, and for the said purpose: *an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour*; Christ was both priest and sacrifice; he offered up himself a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people, to expiate them, and make reconciliation and satisfaction for them; and this he offered up to God, against whom they had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, who called him to this work, and engaged him in it; and which was well-pleasing to him, he smelled a sweet savour of rest in it, it being an unblemished sacrifice, and voluntarily offered up; and was complete, full, and adequate to the demands of his justice; by it sin was put away, finished, and made an end of, and his people perfected for ever; see Gen. viii. 20, 21.

Ver. 3. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, &c.*] The apostle proceeds to dehort from several vices, which are unbecoming the dear children and followers of God; and which the love of Christ should constrain them to avoid: the first of these, which is simple *fornication*, is the sin which is committed between single or unmarried persons; and is contrary to the law of God, is a work of the flesh, and is against a man's own body; it renders persons unfit for church-communion, brings many temporal calamities upon them, and exposes them to divine wrath, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, without repentance; and the reason why it is so often taken notice of is, because it was very frequent among the Gentiles, and not thought criminal: *all uncleanness*

takes in adultery, incest, sodomy, and every unnatural lust; and *covetousness* seems not so much to design that sin which is commonly so called, namely, an immoderate desire after worldly things, as a greedy and insatiable appetite after the above lusts: *let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints*; that is, neither one or other of them; the sense is, that they should not be committed; so that there might be no occasion to speak of them, even though with abhorrence, as if there were no such vices in being; and much less should they be named with pleasure, and pleaded for: for thus it becomes such who are set apart by God the father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and whose hearts are sanctified by the spirit of God; who profess the Gospel of Christ, and have a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.

Ver. 4. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, &c.*] The former of these may include all filthy gestures and behaviour, every indecent habit and attire, and all actions which have a tendency to excite lust; and also all impure words, these discover an impure heart, and are the means of corrupting men's minds and manners; filthy speaking, is a verbal commission of the things that are spoken of; and it may include all impure songs and books, and the reading or hearing of them; this is what the Jews call *בבל פה*, *filthiness of the mouth*, obscene words; which they say they don't use on feast-days, as the Gentiles do: *foolish talking* does not so much design every imprudent thing that is said, as that which is wicked, corrupt, unsavoury, light, vain, idle, and unprofitable; and takes in all fabulous stories, and mimicking of fools in words and gestures: and *jesting*, when it is with wantonness, and excites unto it, and is inconsistent with truth, and when the Scriptures are abused by it, and not our neighbour's edification, but hurt, is promoted by it, ought not to be used: *which are not convenient*; are disagreeable to the will of God, and unsuitable to the characters of the saints, and are very unbecoming them to practise: *but rather giving of thanks*; instead of these, as the Syriac version renders it; it is much more suitable and becoming to give thanks to God for temporal and spiritual mercies, and to speak those things which are grateful to good men; this is to use the tongue to much better purpose, than in an obscene, foolish, or jocose way: one of Stephens's copies read, *but only of giving of thanks*.

Ver. 5. *For this ye know, &c.*] Or, *know ye this*, as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: *that no whoremonger, nor unclean person*; any one that is guilty of fornication, adultery, incest, &c. *Nor covetous man, who is an idolater*: as every man is, that indulges his lusts, the idols of his own heart; and who serves divers lusts and pleasures, and gives up himself to work all uncleanness with greediness; never having his fill of sin, but is ever craving and coveting it; as well as he who is immoderately desirous of worldly things: the covetous man may be called an idolater, because the idolater and he worship the same in substance, gold and silver, and brass, or what is made of them;

the covetous man admires his gold, lays it up, and will not make use of it, as if it was something sacred; and through his over-love to mammon, whom he serves, he neglects the worship of God, and the good of his own soul, and puts his trust and confidence in his riches: now no such person *hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God*; meaning either a Gospel church-state, in which persons of such characters, and living in such sins, ought not to be; or else the kingdom of heaven and of glory, which may be called the kingdom of Christ, because it is in his hands, for his people; and it is his righteousness that gives a title to it, and his spirit and grace which make meet for it; and it is by his power saints are preserved unto it; and he will put them into the possession of it; and which will greatly consist in the enjoyment of him: and this is also the kingdom of God, either of Christ who is God, or of God the father; it being of his preparing and giving, and which he calls unto, and makes meet for; and this may be said to be an inheritance, because it is peculiar to children, the bequest of their heavenly father, and is not purchased or acquired by them, but comes to them from the free donation of God, through the death of Christ; and to have an inheritance in it, is to have a right unto it, a meetness for it, and to be possessed of it: now the meaning of these words is, not that all who have been guilty of these sins shall be excluded the kingdom of God, but all such who live and die in them, without the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words, &c.*] With vain philosophy, vain babblings, with foolish and filthy talking; suggesting that these were not sinful the apostle had condemned; or that they were small sins, the frailties of human life; and that God would take no notice of them, and they might continue in them with impunity: such deceivers there were, doctrinal and practical ones, who lay in wait to deceive men with such vain pretences; and there was danger of being carried away with their error; for the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and is easily taken in such snares: wherefore the apostle cautions against such deceptions, adding, *for because of these things*: fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting: *the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience*; in temporal judgments, and in eternal ruin; there have been instances of it; it is usually the case, and always if grace prevents not; this wrath comes down from above, and sometimes suddenly, with great force and power, like a mighty flood; and there's no standing up under it, and against it; and though it falls upon the children of disobedience, such as are disobedient both to law and Gospel, are unbelievers in Christ, and unpersuadable by his ministers, are stubborn, obstinate, and rebellious; yet it shews how much these things are displeasing to God, and resented by him, and therefore should be avoided by his people; and the consideration of their not being appointed to this wrath, though deserving of it as others, and of their deliverance from it by Christ, should engage them the more to abstain from these sins.

⁴ Jerchi in Psal. lxxv. 3. Vid. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 24. fol. 165. 3.

Ver. 7. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*] In their sins, and acts of disobedience; by keeping needless company with them; by abetting and encouraging sinful practices; by conniving at them, and not reproving for them; or by committing the same things.

Ver. 8. *For ye were sometimes darkness, &c.*] Not only dark, but darkness itself; exceeding blind, dark, and ignorant, respecting spiritual things; so the Gentiles were wont to be called by the Jews, דְּרוֹשֵׁר, *darkness*^k itself; of this darkness, see the note on ch. iv. 18. *But now are ye light in the Lord*; either in, or by the Lord Jesus Christ, the light of men, from whom all spiritual light comes; or by the Lord the spirit, by whom the eyes of their understandings were enlightened, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in heart and life; the insufficiency of their own righteousness and moral virtues, to justify them before God; and the true and right way of righteousness, life and salvation by Christ; and to have some light into the several doctrines of the Gospel, and even a glimpse of the invisible glories and realities of another world: and this light is so great, that they are not only said to be enlightened, but to be light itself; and this they have not of, and from themselves, but the Lord; and therefore should *walk as children of light*; not in sins, which are works of darkness, but in faith, truth, and holiness.

Ver. 9. *For the fruit of the spirit, &c.*] Either of the spirit of man, as renewed, or rather of the spirit of God; the allusion is to fruits of trees: the believer is a tree of righteousness; Christ is his root; the spirit is the sap, which supports and nourishes; and good works, under the influence of his grace, are the fruit: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read *the fruit of light*: which agrees with the preceding words: and the genuine fruit of internal grace, or light, is *in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*; the fruit of *goodness*, lies in sympathizing with persons in distress; in assisting such according to the abilities men have; in a readiness to forgive offences and injuries; and in using meekness and candour in admonishing others: *righteousness* lies in living in obedience to the law of God; in attending the worship and service of him; and in discharging our duty to our fellow-creatures; and this as goodness, is very imperfect, and not to be boasted of, or trusted to, nor is salvation to be expected from it: *truth* is opposed to lying, to hypocrisy, to error and falsehood; and where the spirit of God, and the work of grace are, there will be more or less an appearance of these fruits.

Ver. 10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*] There are many things that are acceptable to God, as the person of Christ, his righteousness, sacrifice, sufferings, death, and mediation; the persons of his people, their services, sufferings, sacrifices of prayer, and praise to him, and of bounty and liberality to the poor; their graces, and the exercise of them; and the actions of their lives and conversations, when they are becoming the Gospel, are according to the will of God, and are done in faith, and are directed to his glory: and

these things which are acceptable to God, as all the truths of the Gospel, and duties of religion are, should be proved, or tried by men; and in order to the trial of spiritual things, it is necessary that the mind be renewed, the understanding be enlightened, the spiritual senses be in exercise, and all be under the influence and directions of the spirit of God: and the trial is to be made, not according to human reason, which is corrupt and fallible; and besides, there are some things in revelation above it; but according to the Scriptures, which are the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice; and whither the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, always sent men for the trial of divine things; and things being here tried, and found to be right, should be approved of, valued, and esteemed, cleaved to and held fast.

Ver. 11. *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, &c.*] It is not said with the workers of darkness, or with the men of the world, who are in darkness, and are darkness itself; to have fellowship with them in a civil way, or to dwell among them, is not prohibited; it is allowed of, and countenanced by the greatest examples; and especially it is lawful and right, when there is any prospect of doing good to the souls of men; and even when natural right, relation, and necessity require it; and indeed, the contrary is impracticable: conversation with them in things sinful and superstitious should be abstained from; and when it tends to draw off the soul from Christ and his interest, and is infectious; and when weak ones are offended, and sinners are hereby hardened and confirmed in sin; and the name of God is blasphemed, and the Gospel is evil-spoken of: but fellowship is not to be maintained *with the works of darkness*; which are sins, so called, because they are opposite to light; to the light of nature, to the light of the divine word, both law and Gospel, to the light of grace, to God the fountain of light, and to Christ the light of the world; and because the source and spring of them are the original darkness of the mind, and Satan the prince of darkness; and because they are generally committed in the dark; and because the effect and consequence of them is utter darkness, and blackness of darkness: and these are *unfruitful*; they are of no profit and advantage, they bring forth no fruit, unless it be guilt, fear, shame, corruption, and death; wherefore no fellowship should be had with them, by committing the same, by assisting in them, by consenting to them, by approving of them, by receiving any worldly advantage from them, and by winking and conniving at them: it is contrary to the character of saints to have fellowship with such, as the apostle says, 2 Cor. vi. 14. where he gives the mystical explanation of the law, in Deut. xxii. 10. agreeably to which, and to the passage here, is the sense of a Jewish commentator^l; who upon it observes, that that law "intimates that a righteous man, שְׂלֵמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, should *have no fellowship with a wicked man*;" this is to be unequally yoked, signified by the ox and the ass ploughing together: *but rather reprove them*; both by words and by deeds, by an agreeable life and conversation, which last seems to be the design of the apostle

^k Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 2.

^l Eaal Hatturim in Deut. xxii. 10.

here; because it is not a brother, but such who are in darkness, and live in works of darkness; yea, not sinners, but sins are to be reprov'd, which can be done no other way; nor are all saints proper to reprove verbally, nor are they qualified for it; but all should, and may by facts; and the light discovers darkness, by its own splendour; and this appears from the apostle's reasoning in the next words.

Ver. 12. *For it is a shame ever to speak of those things, &c.*] This is a reason, why persons should walk as children of light; why they should prove what is acceptable to God; why they should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; why the apostle exhorts to reprove them, and yet does not express what they are; and why they should be reprov'd rather by deeds than by words: and he tacitly intimates, that if it is a shame to speak of those sins *which are done of them in secret*, it is much more shameful to commit them; the persons the apostle refers to, are the unconverted Gentiles in general; such who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, who deceive men with vain words, who are children of disobedience, who are in darkness, and destitute of the spirit; and it may be that respect may be had to the followers of Simon Magus, the Gnostics, and such like impure professors, by whom the vilest things were done in secret; for sins, works of darkness, will not bear the light; there is a consciousness in men of the evil of sin, unless past feeling, and therefore they don't care that others should know their crimes; and besides, there is an imaginary pleasure in committing sin secretly; but then though these things are secret to men, they are not to God; nor will they always remain secrets, they will be brought to light, and therefore no fellowship should be had with them; and especially when they are of such a scandalous nature, that it is a shame to mention the very names of them.

Ver. 13. *But all things that are reprov'd, &c.*] As all sins should be, by the ministers of the Gospel, and by other saints, and will be by God; either by his spirit convincing of them, or by his judgments, and the letting out of his wrath and fury, either here or hereafter, for the punishment of them: *are made manifest by the light*: either by the saints, who are made light in the Lord, and detect and reprove the sins of others; or by the word of the Lord, which discovers the heinousness of sins; or by Christ the light of the world, who as Judge will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; or by the omniscience of God, to whom darkness and light are both alike: *for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light*; this is true in things natural and spiritual, whether of the sun in the firmament, or of Christ the sun of righteousness; or of the divine word, or of good men.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore he saith, &c.*] Either the man that is light in the Lord, who reproveth the unfruitful works of darkness; or else the Holy Ghost by Paul, who here speaks after the manner of the prophets; or God, or the Spirit, or the Scripture; see James iv. 6. but where is it said? some think the apostle refers to Isa. ix. 2. others to Isa. xxvi. 19. others to Isa. lx. 1. some are of opinion the words are cited out of an

apocryphal book of Jeremy, or from some writing now lost; and some have thought them to be a saying of Christ, that was fresh in memory: it may not be improper to observe what Maimonides says^m, that "the blowing of the trumpet in the beginning of the year had an intimation in it, as if was said, *עורו ישנים*, *awake ye that sleep*, from your sleep, and ye that slumber rouse up from your slumber, and search into your actions, and return by repentance, and remember your Creator;" whether any reference may be had to this, may be considered: the words are spoken not to unregenerate men, for though they are asleep, and dead in sin, and need awaking out of sleep, and raising from the dead, yet they are never called upon to awake and arise of themselves; such a sense would countenance the doctrine of man's free will and power, against the preventing and efficacious grace of God; but to regenerate persons, professors of religion, to whom the epistle in general was written; and who are spoken to, and exhorted in the context: *awake thou that sleepest*; the children of God are sometimes asleep, and need awaking; of the nature, causes, and ill consequences of such sleeping, and of the methods by which they are sometimes awaked out of it, see the note on Rom. xiii. 11. *And arise from the dead*; living saints are sometimes among dead sinners, and it becomes them to arise from among them, and quit their company, which is oftentimes the occasion of their sleepiness: besides, the company of dead sinners is infectious and dangerous; it is a means of hardening in sin, and of grieving of the people of God, who observe it; and by abstaining from their company, a testimony is bore against sin, and conviction is struck into the minds of sinners themselves; to which add, that so to do is well-pleasing to God, who promises to receive such who come out from among them, and separate themselves from them: and it follows here as an encouragement, *and Christ shall give thee light*; for such who are made light in the Lord, stand in need of more light; and by keeping close to the word, ways, ordinances, and people of Christ, they may expect more light from Christ: they need fresh light into pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ; they want more to direct them in the way they should go; and they are often without the light of God's countenance; and they may hope for light from Christ, since it is sown in him, and promised through him; and he is given to be a light unto them, and he is the giver of it himself.

Ver. 15. *See then that ye walk circumspectly, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, *see then, brethren*; it being an exhortation to the saints at Ephesus, upon the foregoing discourse and citation, to take heed to their walk: the believer's walk is both inward and outward; his inward walk is by faith on Christ; his outward walk is his conversation among men: this supposes life; requires strength and prudence; denotes continuance and progression; with patience and courage: this walk should be seen to, and watched over; a man should see to it that he does walk, and to the way in which he walks, and how he walks; that he walks cir-

^m Hilchot Heshuba, c. 3. sect. 4.

cumspectly, with his eyes about him; that he walks with diligence, caution, accuracy, and exactness, to the uttermost of his strength and power; and with wisdom and prudence, looking well to his going: *not as fools, but as wise*; such walk like fools, whose eyes are not upon their ways; who walk in their own ways, which are crooked, and ways of darkness, and lead to destruction; who walk after the flesh, and naked, without the garments of a holy life and conversation; and with lamps, but no oil in them: and such walk as wise men, who walk according to the rule of God's word, make Christ their pattern, have the spirit for their guide, and walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ; inoffensively to all men, in wisdom towards them that are without, and in love to them that are within; and as pilgrims and strangers in this world, looking for a better country; and so as to promote the glory of God, and the good of souls.

Ver. 16. *Redeeming the time, &c.*] Or *buying time*; a like expression is used in Dan. ii. 8. which we render, *gain time*; but in the Chaldee text it is, *buy time*; and so Jacchiades, a Jewish commentator on the place, renders it, *דעת הזאת אתם נמכרים, ye buy this opportunity*; and the Septuagint version uses the same phrase the apostle does here; but there it seems to signify a study to prolong time, to put off the business to another season; but here taking time for a space of time, it denotes a careful and diligent use of it, an improvement of it to the best advantage; and shews that it is valuable and precious, and is not to be trifled with, and squandered away, and be lost, as it may be; for it can neither be recalled nor prolonged: and taking it for an opportunity of doing good to ourselves or others, it signifies that no opportunity of discharging our duty to God and man, of attending on the word and ordinances of the Gospel, and to the private and public exercises of religion, of gaining advantage to our own souls, or of gaining the souls of others, and of doing good either to the bodies or souls of men, should be neglected; but even all risks should be run, and means used to enjoy it: in the Syriac and Chaldee languages, *זמנה, time*, comes from *זמן, to redeem*: the reason the apostle gives for the redemption of time is, *because the days are evil*; as such are, in which iniquity abounds, and many wicked men live, and errors and heresies prevail, and are days of affliction or persecution; see Gen. xlvii. 9.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore be ye not unwise, &c.*] No one would be thought to be unwise, but such are, who do not redeem time, and are ignorant of the will of the Lord; believers should not act the unwise part, neither in their talk, nor in their walk and conversation, nor in their use of time: *but understanding what the will of the Lord is; or of God*, as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: there is the secret will of God, which is the rule of all his proceedings; and is unknown to men, till facts make it appear; this is always fulfilled, and sometimes by persons who have no regard to his revealed will; to this the wills of the people of God should be always resigned: and there is his revealed will, which lies partly in the Gospel; which declares it to be his will, that Christ should work out the salvation of his people, which is what he came to do; that whoever believes in

him shall be saved; that all that are redeemed shall be sanctified; and that they shall persevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the law, in the precepts and commands of it, which contain the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God: and the understanding of it is not a mere speculative knowledge of it, but a practical one; when a man not only knows, but does the will of God, and his heart and actions agree with it; and this is to be done in faith, in virtue of grace and strength received, with a view to the glory of God, having no dependence on what is done; and to the right understanding of it, so as to act according to it, as should be, the word of God, and the illuminations, instructions, and grace of the spirit, are necessary: the Alexandrian copy, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read the words as an exhortation, *understand ye the will of God*.

Ver. 18. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, &c.*] The sin of drunkenness here deformed from, is a custom, or habit, of voluntary excessive drinking of any strong liquor, whereby the mind is disturbed, and deprived of the use of reason: though wine is only here mentioned, that being the usual liquor drank in the eastern countries, yet the same holds good of any other strong liquor, as of that; nor is drinking wine for necessary use prohibited, nor for honest delight and lawful pleasure; but excessive drinking of it, and this voluntary, and with design, and on purpose; otherwise persons may be overtaken and intoxicated, through ignorance of the strength of the liquor, and their own weakness; and it is a custom, or habit of excessive drinking, for not a single act, but a series of actions, a course of living in this sin, denominates a man a drunkard; and generally speaking, excessive drinking deprives persons of the use of reason, though not always; and such are criminal, who are mighty to drink wine, and strong to mingle strong drink; as are also such, who though not guilty of this sin themselves, are the means of it in others: the sin is very sinful; it is one of the works of the flesh; it is an abuse of the creature; it is opposed to walking honestly; for it persons are to be excluded from the communion of the church; and, without the grace of true repentance, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven: many things might be said to dissuade from it; it hurts the mind, memory, and judgment; deprives of reason, and sets a man below a beast; it brings diseases on the body, and wastes the estate; it unfit for business and duty; it opens a door for every sin, and exposes to shame and danger; and therefore should be carefully avoided, and especially by professors of religion: *but be filled with the spirit*; that is, *with the Holy Spirit*, as read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; with the gifts and graces of the spirit: some have been filled with them in an extraordinary way, as the apostles on the day of Pentecost; and others in an ordinary manner, as common believers; and who may be said to be filled with the spirit, as with wine, or instead of it, or in opposition to it, when the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the spirit, which is compared to wine, for its antiquity, purity, and refreshing nature; and they are filled with it, who have a comfortable sense of it, and a firm persuasion of interest in it, and are delighted with the views of it, and are as it were in-

briated with it; and they are filled with the spirit, in whom his grace is a well of living water, and out of whose belly flow rivers of it; and who have a large measure of spiritual peace and joy, expressed in the following inanner.

Ver. 19. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, &c.*] By *psalms* are meant the Psalms of David, and others which compose the book that goes by that name, for other psalms there are none; and by *hymns* we are to understand, not such as are made by good men, without the inspiration of the spirit of God; since they are placed between psalms and spiritual songs, made by men inspired by the Holy Ghost; and are put upon a level with them, and to be sung along with them, to the edification of churches; but these are only another name for the Book of Psalms, the running title of which may as well be the Book of Hymns, as it is rendered by Ainsworth; and the psalm which our Lord sung with his disciples after the supper, is called an hymn; and so are the psalms in general called hymns, by Philo the Jew^a; and songs and hymns by Josephus^b; and שירית ותשבחות, *songs and praises*, or *hymns*, in the Talmud^c; and by *spiritual songs* are meant the same Psalms of David, Asaph, &c. and the titles of many of them are songs, and sometimes a psalm and song, and song and psalm, a song of degrees; together with all other Scriptural songs, written by inspired men; and which are called *spiritual*, because they are indited by the spirit of God, consist of spiritual matter, and are designed for spiritual edification; and are opposed to all profane, loose, and wanton songs: these three words answer to שירים תהלים מוכורים, the several titles of David's Psalms; from whence it seems to be the intention of the apostle, that these should be sung in Gospel churches; for so he explains speaking to themselves in them, in the next clause: *singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord*; singing, as it is a distinct thing from prayer, so from giving of thanks, which is mentioned in the next verse as another duty; it is not a mental praising of God, for it is called speaking, and teaching, and admonishing, but it is a praising of God with the modulation of the voice; and is rightly performed, when the heart and voice agree; when there is a melody in the heart, as well as in the tongue; for singing and making melody in the heart, is singing with, or from the heart, or heartily; or as elsewhere, *with grace*, and which the Alexandrian copy reads here; that is, either with gratitude and thankfulness, or with grace in exercise; and the end in view should be the glory of God.

Ver. 20. *Giving thanks always for all things, &c.*] For things temporal, for our beings, and the preservation of them, and for all the mercies of life; for things spiritual, for Christ, and for all spiritual blessings in him; for electing, redeeming, sanctifying, adopting, pardoning, and justifying grace; for a meetness for heaven, and for eternal life itself; for the Gospel, promises, truths, ordinances, and ministry; and this is to be done always, at all times, in times of adversity, desertion, temptation, affliction, and persecution, as well as in prosperity: *unto God, and the father; to God*

who is, and as he is the father of mercies, and of all creatures; and as he is the father of Christ, and of all the elect in him: *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*; for all the mercies of God's people, both temporal and spiritual, come through him, and for his sake; and thanksgivings for them are only acceptable to God as they are offered up by him; nor is there any other way of bringing them to God, but through him: this duty, as it stands connected with the former, shews that praise and thanksgiving are the principal subject-matter of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, to be sung; and that the manner of singing is with thanksgiving; and that the end of it is to give thanks to God.

Ver. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another, &c.*] Which may be understood either in a political sense, of giving honour, obedience, and tribute, to civil magistrates, since they are set up by God for the good of men, and 'tis for the credit of religion for the saints to submit to them; or in an economical sense; thus the wife should be subject to the husband, children to their parents, and servants to their masters, which several things are afterwards insisted on, as explanative of this rule; or in an ecclesiastic sense, so the Ethiopic version renders it, *subject yourselves to your brethren*: thus members of churches should be subject to their pastors, not in the same sense as they are to Christ, the head, nor are they obliged to believe or do every thing they say, right or wrong; yet honour and esteem are due to them, and submission and obedience should be yielded to their doctrines, precepts, and exhortations, when they are agreeably to the word of God; since God has set them in the highest place in the church, called them to the highest service, and most honourable work, and bestowed on them the greatest gifts; the younger members should also submit to the elder, and the minority to the majority; one member should submit to another, to the superior judgment of another, and to the weakness of another, and to the admonitions of others, and so as to perform all offices of love: and the manner in which this duty is to be performed, is *in the fear of God*; which may be considered as the moving cause of submission, or as the rule of it; submission should be on account of the fear of God, and so far as is consistent with it; and indeed, the fear of God is that which should influence and engage to every duty; and which should be before our eyes, and in exercise in our hearts, in all concerns, civil and religious: the Alexandrian copy and some others, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, *in the fear of Christ*; who is the head of the church, and King of saints, and as such to be feared and revered; and for his sake there should be a submission to one another; the Syriac version reads, *in the love of Christ*, which should constrain the saints to this duty.

Ver. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, &c.*] This is an instance, explaining the above general rule; which subjection lies in honour and reverence, ver. 33. and in obedience; they should think well of their husbands, speak becomingly to them, and respectfully of them; the wife should take

^a De Mutat. Nomin. p. 1062. & alibi.

^b Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 2.

^c T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.

care of the family, and family affairs, according to the husband's will; should imitate him in what is good, and bear with that which is not so agreeable; she should not curiously inquire into his business, but leave the management of it to him; she should help and assist in caring and providing for the family; and should abide with him in prosperity and adversity, and do nothing without his will and consent: and this subjection is only to her husband; not to any other man, nor to her children, nor to her servants, or any brought into her house; and this consideration should render the subjection more easy, voluntary, and cheerful: and which is but reasonable that it should be; as may be gathered from the time, matter, and end of the woman's creation, she was made after him, out of him, and for him; and from her fall, and being first in the transgression; and from her being the weaker and inferior sex; and from the profitability and comeliness of it; and the credit of religion requires it, that so the word of God be not blasphemed: wherefore it follows, *as unto the Lord*; that is, either as the Lord has commanded, that so it should be, shewing a regard to his precepts; or as in the sight of the Lord, and so yielding it sincerely and heartily; or in things pertaining to the Lord, which are consistent with the law of the Lord, and the Gospel of Christ; and in like manner as the church is subject to Christ, her Lord and husband, as follows.

Ver. 23. *For the husband is the head of the wife, &c.*] See the note on 1 Cor. xi. 3. *even as Christ is the head of the church*; all the elect; see the note on ch. i. 22. *And he is the Saviour of the body*; not of our body, as the Ethiopic version reads, of that part of man, which is called the body; though that indeed is redeemed and saved by Christ, as well as the soul; but of his body, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, of the church, which is his body; see ch. i. 23, of which he is the Saviour; he provides every thing for it, preserves and protects it, and has wrought out salvation for it, which every member of it partakes of.

Ver. 24. *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, &c.*] Her head, being wholly dependent upon him, and entirely resigned to him, and receiving all from him; from whom alone is all her expectation of provision, protection, comfort, and happiness; wherefore she has respect to all his commands, and esteems all his precepts concerning all things to be right; and yields a cheerful, voluntary, sincere, and hearty obedience to them; arising from a principle of love to him, and joined with honour, fear, and reverence of him: *so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing*; political, domestic, and ecclesiastic; that is consistent with the laws of God, and the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 25. *Husbands, love your wives, &c.*] Which consists in a strong and cordial affection for them; in a real delight and pleasure in them; in shewing respect, and doing honour to them; in seeking their contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure; in a quiet, constant, and comfortable dwelling with them; in providing all things necessary for them; in protecting them from all injuries and abuses; in concealing their faults, and covering their infirmities; in entertaining the best opinion of their persons and actions; and in

endeavouring to promote their spiritual good and welfare: this love ought to be hearty and sincere, and not feigned and selfish; it should be shewn in private, as well as in public: it should be chaste and single, constant and perpetual; it should exceed that which is bore to neighbours, or even to parents, and should be equal to that a man bears to himself; though not so as to hinder, and break in upon love to God and Christ: many are the reasons why husbands should love their wives; they are given to be helps unto them; they are companions of them; they are wives of covenant; they are their own wives, yea, their own bodies, their own flesh, nay, as themselves; they are their image and their glory; and especially the example of Christ, in his love to his church and people, should engage to it: *even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*: see the note on ver. 2. the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *his own church*; his bride and spouse, whom he betrothed to himself from all eternity, the father having given her to him; and is no other than the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, even all the elect of God.

Ver. 26. *That he might sanctify and cleanse it, &c.*] Being defiled, both with original sin and actual transgressions; for God's elect, whom Christ loved and espoused from everlasting, fell in Adam with the rest of mankind; and, in their nature-state, live in sin as others do; and so are under the guilt, and in the pollution of it, as others be: Christ gave himself for them, that he might deliver them out of this state; he gave himself a sacrifice for them, that he might expiate their sins and make atonement and satisfaction for them; he shed his blood that he might cleanse them from them; and he wrought out a righteousness that he might justify them from all their iniquities; and which being put upon them, makes them to appear pure and spotless in the sight of divine justice; for this sanctifying and cleansing does not so much refer to the inward work of sanctification of the spirit, though that is a fruit and effect of the death of Christ, and is brought about by the following means, as to the justification of them by the blood and righteousness of Christ: which is said to be, *with the washing of water*; not baptism, which is never expressed by washing; nor does it purify or cleanse from sin; nor is it the means of sanctification and regeneration, which ought to be before it; nor the grace of the spirit, though that is often compared to water, and regeneration and sanctification are owing to it; yet the saints are not so cleansed from sin by it, as to be without spot or wrinkle; but the blood of Christ, which is the fountain to wash in, and which cleanses from all sin: *by the word*; not the form of words in baptism; but either the Gospel, which brings the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, atonement, and justification by Christ; or the sentence of justification pronounced upon the conscience by him; see John xv. 2.

Ver. 27. *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, &c.*] There is a presentation of the church by Christ to his father, at his death, when he gathered the elect together in one, brought them nigh, and reconciled them to God, and presented them to him holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight;

and now in heaven, where he represents their persons, appears and makes intercession for them; and at the last day, when he will deliver the whole number of them complete and perfect, in consequence of his suretyship-engagements: but this is a presentation of them to himself; and is either in this life, when they are brought to him in raiment of needle-work, clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood, and he beholds them all fair, and without spot; or at the first resurrection, and during the thousand-years' reign; as well as in the ultimate glory, when the open marriage of the Lamb will be come, when his bride will be arrayed with fine linen, clean and white; and have the glory of God upon her, and appear in glory with Christ, and will be a glorious church indeed: *not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*; the bodies of the saints will be like to Christ's glorious body, and will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father; and in their souls they will be completely conformed to the image of Christ, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, and have perfect knowledge of him; they will be always in his presence, and he will take unspeakable delight and complacency in them, which his presentation of them to himself is expressive of; the church will then be free from all spots and blemishes; from all hypocrites and formal professors; and all heresies and heretics; from all declensions and infirmities, and from all sin and iniquity: the allusion seems to be to the customs and practices of the Jews, in their espousals: if a man espoused a woman on condition that she had no spots in her, and afterwards spots were found in her, she was not espoused; for spots or blemishes, as in priests, so in women, render them unfit; and the one for service, so the other for marriage; and they reckon up eight several spots or blemishes, for which they may be rejected¹: but Christ's church has no spots or blemishes, nor any thing like them; and will never be rejected by him, but will be always pleasing in his sight: *but that it should be holy and without blemish*; as it is, being justified by his righteousness, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his spirit.

Ver. 28. *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies, &c.*] It is a common saying with the Jews, that a man's wife is כְּגוּפוֹ, *as his own body*²; and it is one of the precepts of their wise men, that a man should honour his wife more than his body, וְאִהְבָהּ כְּגוּפוֹ, *and love her as his body*³; for as they also say, they are but one body⁴; the apostle seems to speak in the language of his countrymen; however, his doctrine and theirs agree in this point: *wherefore he that loveth his wife loveth himself*; because she is one body and flesh with him.

Ver. 29. *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, &c.*] This is unnatural, contrary to the first principles of nature; see Isa. lviii. 7. which the Jews understand of one that is near akin, and there is none nearer than a wife: *but nourisheth and cherisheth it*; feeds and clothes it: *even as the Lord the church*; who never hated her,

but nourishes and cherishes her: Christ *never hated* his church and people; for his love is not only a love of benevolence, but of complacency and delight: there is a difference between anger and hatred, Christ may be angry with them, but not hate them; and there is a difference between persons and actions, Christ may hate their actions, but not their persons; and there is a difference between desert and fact, they may be deserving of his wrath and hatred, but are not the objects of it in fact; and there is a difference between what is real, and what is imaginary, they may imagine themselves to be hated by him, when they are not; and there is a difference between hatred, and a non-discovery of love, Christ may not manifest his love, and yet not hate; as he never does his own people, for his love is everlasting and unchangeable: and he *nourishes* them, as a father his child, as a shepherd his flock, and as an husband his wife; he feeds them with that which is nourishing, and with himself the bread of life, with his covenant and promises, with the Gospel and the doctrines of it, and with his love and grace; and by his spirit, ministers, word, and ordinances: and he *cherishes* them, he grants them near and intimate communion with himself, than which nothing is more desirable by them, or joyful to them; nor is there any thing that more revives and encourages faith, hope, and love; he clothes them suitable to their dignity and character, as his spouse and bride; and with which they are well contented, and in which they look exceeding comely in his sight: these phrases are expressive of the whole care Christ takes of his church, in furnishing her with every thing pertaining to life and godliness; for her comfort and happiness in this world, and that to come: instead of the *Lord*, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, *Christ*; and the Arabic version reads, *as the Lord loves the church*.

Ver. 30. *For we are members of his body, &c.*] Not of his natural body, for this would make Christ's human nature monstrous; Christ, as man, is of our flesh and of our bones, or a partaker of the same flesh and blood with us; or otherwise, his incarnation would have been of no service to us; and had our human nature been from Christ, it would not have been corrupted; but our bodies, flesh, and bones, are from the first, and not the second Adam, and so corrupt and sinful; Christ indeed, as God, is the former of all human nature, and, as man, was set up in God's thoughts as the pattern of it; but the apostle is here speaking of the saints, not as men, but as Christians, as new creatures in Christ; and of what is peculiar to them; and therefore this must be understood of Christ's mystical body the church; which is his by the father's gift, and his own purchase; and of which he is the head, and which is united to him; now of this saints are members; see Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 18, 27. *Of his flesh and of his bones*; for so the church may be called, his own flesh, his flesh and bones, on account

¹ Misa. Cetubot, c. 7. sect. 7, 8. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

² T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 1. & Beccerot, fol. 35. 2. Maimon. Hilehot Beccerot, c. 2. sect. 17. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 2.

³ T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 2. Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 4. Maimon Hilehot Ishot, c. 15. sect. 19.

⁴ Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 3.

⁵ Jarchi in loc. & R. Sol. Urbin. in Ohel Moed, fol. 85. 1.

of the marriage-relation she stands in to him, and that spiritual union there is between them, which these phrases are expressive of; and which the near relation of man and wife is an emblem of; these words are wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 31. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, &c.*] These words contain the law of marriage, and are cited from Gen. ii. 24. and declare what ought to be, and are a prophecy of what should be; and are observed against polygamy, and to stir up mutual affection; see the note on Matt. xix. 5.

Ver. 32. *This is a great mystery, &c.*] It has something mysterious in it; it is a figure and emblem of the mysterious union between Christ and his people: for so it follows, *but I speak concerning Christ and the church*; or mention this law and institution of marriage, with respect to them; for the leaving of father and mother prefigured Christ's coming forth from the father, and coming into this world in human nature, and his disregard to his earthly parents, in comparison with his people, and his service for them; the man cleaving to the wife very aptly expresses the strong affection of Christ to his church, and the near communion there is between them; and their being one flesh denotes the union of them; and indeed, the marriage of Adam and Eve was a type of Christ and his church; for in this the first Adam was a figure of him that was to come, as well as in being a federal head to his posterity: Adam was before Eve, so Christ was before his church; God thought it not proper that man should be alone, so neither Christ, but that he should have some fellows and companions with him: the formation of Eve from Adam was typical of the church's production from Christ; she was made of him while he was asleep, which sleep was from the Lord, and it was not an ordinary one;

which may resemble the sufferings and death of Christ, which were from the Lord, and were not common; and which are the redemption of his church and people; and which secure their comfort and happiness, and well-being: she was taken out of his side, and built up a woman of one of his ribs; both the justification and sanctification of the church are from Christ, from the water and the blood which issued out of his side, when on the cross: the bringing and presentation of Eve to Adam has its mystery; it was God that brought her to him; and she was the same that was made out of him; and to the same Adam was she brought of whose rib she was made, and that not against her will: so it is God that draws souls to Christ, and espouses them to him, even the same that he has chosen in him, and Christ has redeemed by his blood; and to the same are they brought, who was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their sins; and they are made willing in the day of his power upon them, to come and give themselves to him. Adam's consent and acknowledgment of Eve to be his wife shadow forth Christ's hearty reception and acknowledgment of the saints, as being of him, and his, when they are brought unto him under the influences of his grace and spirit.

Ver. 33. *Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular, &c.*] The apostle returns to his former subject, and recapitulates the mutual duties of husband and wife, after he had enforced them from the instance and example of Christ, and his church; and would have every married person in particular take the directions and instructions given, to themselves: as that the husband *so love his wife even as himself*: since they two are one flesh: *and the wife see that she reverence her husband*: since he leaves father and mother for her, and is the head of her; see the note on ver. 22.

C H A P. VI.

IN this chapter the apostle goes on with his exhortations to relative and domestic duties, and considers those of children and parents, and of servants and masters; and next he exhorts the saints in general to constancy and perseverance in the exercise of grace, and the performance of duty in the strength of Christ, and with the use of the armour of God described by him; entreats them to pray for him; gives the reasons of sending Tychicus, who brought them this epistle, and closes it with his apostolical salutation. He begins with the duties of children to their parents, which are submission and obedience to them, honour, fear, and reverence of them; the arguments engaging thereunto are taken from the light of nature and reason, from the command of God, and the promise annexed to it, ver. 1, 2, 3. Then follow the duties of fathers to their children, who are exhorted not to use them with too much rigour, and so provoke them to wrath, but to bring them up in a religious manner, that they may serve the Lord, ver. 4. Next he observes the duties of servants to their masters, which are subjection and obedience, which should be done with reverence of

them, with simplicity of heart, as unto Christ, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but with the heart, and with good will, as doing the will of God, and as if it was to the Lord, and not men; to which they are encouraged by a promise of reward which is given without respect to bond or free, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. And masters, they are exhorted to do what is right and just to their servants, and not terrify them with menaces; to which they are moved by the consideration of their having a master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons, ver. 9. From hence the apostle passes to a general exhortation to the saints to behave with firmness and constancy of mind, though they had many enemies, and these mighty and powerful, and an overmatch for them; relying on the power and strength of Christ, and making use of the whole armour of God, which he advises them to take, that they might stand and withstand in the worst of times, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13. the several parts of which he enumerates, as the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, whereby the fiery darts of Satan are quenched,

the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit the word of God, and spiritual prayer of every sort for all saints, attended with watching and perseverance, ver. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. which last part of the spiritual armour being mentioned, leads on the apostle to entreat the Ephesians to pray for him, that he might freely and boldly preach the Gospel; which he commends from the mysterious nature and subject of it, from his character as an ambassador for it, or for Christ, the sum and substance of it, and from his being in bonds for it; which shewed how great an esteem he had of it, and how heartily concerned he was to preach it without fear, ver. 19, 20. And then adds, that the reasons of his sending Tychicus, whom he describes by his relation to him as a brother, and his affection for him, and by his office as a minister, and his faithfulness in it, were, that they might be acquainted with his circumstances, in what state and condition he was, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, and that their hearts might be comforted by him, ver. 21, 22. And the epistle is concluded with the apostle's salutation; and the persons saluted are the brethren of this church, and all that love Christ Jesus sincerely; and the blessings wished for are peace, love, with faith and grace; the persons from whom they are desired are God the father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 23, 24.

Ver. 1. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, &c.*] The persons whose duty this is, *children*, are such of every sex, male and female, and of every age, and of every state and condition; and though the true, legitimate, and immediate offspring of men may be chiefly respected, yet not exclusive of spurious children, and adopted ones, and of children-in-law; and the persons to whom obedience from them is due, are not only real and immediate parents, both father and mother, but such who are in the room of parents, as step-fathers, step-mothers, guardians, nurses, &c. and all who are in the ascending line, as grandfathers, grandmothers, &c. to these, children should be subject and obedient in all things lawful, just, and good; in every thing that is not sinful and unlawful, by the word of God; and in things indifferent, as much as in them lies, and even in things which are difficult to perform: and this obedience should be hearty and sincere, and not merely verbal, and in show and appearance, nor mercenary; and should be joined with gratitude and thankfulness for past favours: and it should be *in the Lord*; which may be considered either as a limitation of the obedience, that it should be in things that are agreeable to the mind and will of the Lord; or as an argument to it, because it is the command of the Lord, and is well-pleasing in his sight, and makes for his glory, and therefore should be done for his sake: *for this is right*; it appears to be right by the light of nature, by which the very Heathens have taught it; and it is equitable from reason that so it should be; and it is just by the law of God, which commands nothing but what is holy, just, and good.

Ver. 2. *Honour thy father and mother, &c.*] This explains who parents are, and points at some branches

of obedience due unto them; for they are not only to be loved, and to be feared, and revered, their corrections to be submitted to, offences against them to be acknowledged, their tempers to be bore with, and their infirmities covered; but they are to be honoured in thought, word, and gesture; they are to be highly thought of and esteemed; they are to be spoken to, and of, very honourably, and with great veneration; and to be behaved to in a very respectful manner; and they are to be relieved, assisted, and maintained in a comfortable way when aged, and in necessitous circumstances; and which may be chiefly designed. So the Jews explain כבוד, *the honour* due to parents, by, &c. במאכל, *giving them food, drink, and clothing*, unloosing their shoes, and leading them out and in*. Compare with this 1 Tim. v. 4, 17. see the note on Matt. xv. 4. *which is the first commandment with promise*: it is the fifth commandment in the decalogue, but the first that has a promise annexed to it: it is reckoned by the Jews the weightiest of the weightiest commands of the law; and the reward bestowed on it is length of days, as follows.

Ver. 3. *That it may be well with thee, &c.*] In this world, and that which is to come; see Deut. v. 16. The Jews* say, "there are four things, which if a man does, he eats the fruit of them in this world, and the capital part remains for him in the world to come; and they are these, כיבוד אב ואם, *honouring father and mother*, doing acts of beneficence, making peace between a man and his neighbour, and learning of the law, which answers to them all." *And thou mayest live long on the earth*: length of days is in itself a blessing; and though men's days can't be lengthened beyond God's purpose and decree; and though obedient children don't always live long; yet disobedience to parents often brings the judgments of God on children, so that they die not a common death, 2 Sam. xviii. 14. Prov. xxx. 17. On those words in Deut. xxxii. 47. the Jews* have this paraphrase; "because it is your life, זה כיבוד אב ואם, *this is honouring father and mother*; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days, this is beneficence." It may be observed, that the words in this promissory part are not the same as in the decalogue, where they stand thus, *that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*; referring to the land of Canaan; for the law in the form of it, in which it was delivered by Moses, only concerned the people of the Jews; wherefore to suit this law, and the promise of it, to others, the apostle alters the language of it.

Ver. 4. *And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, &c.*] Neither by words; by unjust and unreasonable commands; by contumelious and reproachful language; by frequent and public chidings, and by indiscreet and passionate expressions: nor by deeds; preferring one to another; by denying them the necessaries of life; by not allowing them proper recreation; by severe and cruel blows, and inhuman usage; by not giving them suitable education; by an improper disposal of them in marriage; and by profusely spending their estates, and leaving nothing to them: not but

* T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 2. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 31. 1, 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 7.

† Debarim Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 241. 3.

* Misna Peab, c. 1. sect. 1. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1. & Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1.

† T. Hieros. Peab, fol. 15. 4.

that parents may, and ought to correct and rebuke their children; nor are they accountable to them for their conduct; yet they should take care not to provoke them to wrath, because this alienates their minds from them, and renders their instructions and corrections useless, and puts them upon sinful practices; wrath lets in Satan, and leads to sin against God; and indeed it is difficult in the best of men to be angry and not sin; see Col. iii. 21. *Fathers* are particularly mentioned, they being the heads of families, and are apt to be too severe, as mothers too indulgent. *But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; instructing them in the knowledge of divine things, setting them good examples, taking care to prevent their falling into bad company, praying with them, and for them, bringing them into the house of God, under the means of grace, to attend public worship; all which, under a divine blessing, may be very useful to them: the example of Abraham is worthy of imitation, Gen. xviii. 19. and the advice of the wise man deserves attention, Prov. xxii. 6.

Ver. 5. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, &c.*] The apostle enlarges on the duty of servants, as well as frequently inculcates it in his epistles; because, generally speaking, they were more rude and ignorant, and less pains were taken with them to instruct them; they were apt to be impatient and weary of the yoke; and scandal was like to arise from servants in the first ages of Christianity through some libertines, and the licentiousness of the false teachers, who insinuated, that servitude was inconsistent with Christian freedom: the persons exhorted are *servants*, bond servants, and hired servants; who are to be subject to, and obey their *masters*, of each sex, whether male or female, of every condition, whether poor or rich, believers or unbelievers, good or bad humoured, gentle or froward: such as are their masters *according to the flesh*; or *carnal masters*, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; even though they are unregenerate men, and are in a state of nature, and only mind the things of the flesh, yet they are to be obeyed in their lawful commands; or *in things pertaining to the flesh*, as the Arabic version renders it; in things temporal, which concern the body, and this temporal life; not in things spiritual and religious, or that belong to conscience, and which are contrary to them: or *according to your flesh*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; signifying that they are only masters over their bodies, not their consciences; and that their power only extends to corporeal things, and can last no longer than while they are in the flesh; see Job iii. 19. and obedience is to be yielded to them *with fear and trembling*; with great humility and respect, with reverence of them, and giving honour to them, with carefulness not to offend them, with submission to their reproofs and corrections, and with fear of punishment; but more especially with the fear of God, being by that influenced and constrained to obedience: *in singleness of heart*; with readiness and cheerfulness, without hypocrisy and dissimulation, and with all integrity and faithfulness: *as unto Christ*; it being agreeable to his will, and what makes for his glory, and serves to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Ver. 6. *Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, &c.*] Doing nothing but when under the master's eye, and then pretending a great deal of diligence and industry, in order to ingratiate themselves into his affections, and neglecting his business when he is absent; whereas they ought to attend his service in his absence, as well as in his presence, and so seek to please him, which is commendable. *But as the servants of Christ*; acting in like manner as the servants of Christ, who are not men-pleasers; or as if they themselves were serving Christ, as indeed they are, when they are doing that which is the will of Christ: *doing the will of God from the heart*; meaning not the will of God in a religious, but in a civil sense, yielding a cheerful and hearty obedience to their own masters.

Ver. 7. *With good will doing service, &c.*] To their masters; not grudgingly, with an ill will; no otherwise, nor longer than when they are forced to it; but of a ready mind, and with a cheerful spirit, taking delight in their work, and reckoning it a pleasure to serve their masters; as an Israelite that is not sold, who does his work *בְּרֵצוֹנוֹ*, with his good will, and according to his own mind^b; doing what they do *as to the Lord, and not to men*; not merely because it is the will of men, and they are commanded by them, and in order to please them, but because it is the will of the Lord, and is well-pleasing in his sight.

Ver. 8. *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, &c.*] According to the will of God, from right principles in his heart, and with a view to God's glory: *the same shall he receive of the Lord*; that is, he shall receive the fruit and advantage of it, in a way of grace, whether he be bond or free; a bondman or a free man, a master or a servant.

Ver. 9. *And ye masters do the same things unto them, &c.*] This does not refer to service and obedience, but to singleness of heart, benevolence, humanity, and a regard to Christ, and the will of God, and to the doing of good things, and to the performance of their duty, as they would have their servants do theirs; whose duty, if religious masters, is, with respect to their souls, to instruct them in, and use them to religious exercises, to pray with them, and for them, to set them good examples, to prevent them falling into bad company, and to allow them proper time for religious duties; and with respect to their bodies, and outward concerns, to provide sufficient food and proper raiment for them, or to give them their due wages, to take care of them when sick or lame, and shew compassion and humanity to them, to encourage those that are prudent, faithful, and laborious, and to correct the disobedient, and expel the incorrigible: *forbearing threatening*; not that they may not in any sense threaten, but not always, nor too often, nor too much, and with great things on light occasions; nor should they be too forward to execute their threatenings, especially when their servants repent and amend; they should then forbear them and forgive; and so the Syriac version renders it, *forgive their offences*: this is opposed to all hard rigour, and ill usage, either by words or blows. And this is a rule given by the Jews^c; that a master should not multiply clamour and anger, but should speak to him (his servant) quietly, and in a still manner, and he

^b Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 1. sect. 7.

^c Maimon. ib. c. 9. sect. 8.

will hear his objections, or arguments and reasons: *knowing that your master also is in heaven*; meaning Christ, who employs, provides for, and uses well all his servants, and to whom masters must be accountable for their usage of servants; for he is the common master of masters and servants; and so the Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version, read, *their and your master*: and the place of his habitation is mentioned, to distinguish him from earthly masters; and the more to move and excite masters to their duty, since he being in heaven overlooks and takes notice of all their actions, as the omniscient God; and being omnipotent, has it in his power to plead and avenge the cause of the injured: *neither is there respect of persons with him*; as whether they are of this, or the other nation, Jew or Gentile; whether in this, or that state and condition, or in such and such circumstances of life; whether masters or servants, bond or free, or whether Canaanitish or Hebrew servants; between which the Jews^d made a difference, and allowed of rigour to be used to the one, but required mercy and kindness to be shewed to the other; and so were respecters of persons.

Ver. 10. *Finally, my brethren, &c.*] This is the conclusion of the apostle's exhortations, in which he addresses the saints as his brethren; which appellation he uses, not merely as a familiar way of speaking among the Jews, but in regard to them as regenerate persons, and of the same family and household of God with himself; and he calls them so, to shew his humility, and as a proof of his affection to them, and with a design to encourage them to their duty, as follows: *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; which is directed to, partly on account of the things before exhorted to, which could not be performed in their own strength; and partly with respect to their many and potent enemies hereafter mentioned, against whom they had no might nor power of their own; and therefore the apostle points out the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, in whom are strength, power, and might, even everlasting strength, to enable them to perform their duty, and to fight against every enemy, sin, Satan, and the world; for though they are weak, and without strength in themselves, and can do nothing of themselves, and without Christ; yet since there is strength in him, which is communicable to them, they may expect it from him, and depend upon it; and they may come at, or strengthen themselves in it, and by it, by meditation on it, by prayer for it, by waiting on Christ in his own ways, by exercising faith upon him, and through the spirit, who strengthens them from him with might in the inward man.

Ver. 11. *Put on the whole armour of God, &c.*] Not that which God himself is sometimes clothed with, and uses against his enemies; but what he has provided for his people, and furnishes them with; the particulars of which are after mentioned: and it is called the *armour of God*, because it is prepared by him for his people, and is bestowed on them by him; and because it is in its own nature divine and spiritual, and not carnal; and because it is provided for fighting the Lord's battles, and is used in them; and because the efficacy of it is from him, and the execution it does is owing to

him: and it is *whole*, complete, and perfect; and all of it is useful, and no part to be neglected, but all to be taken and *put on*: which is not to make and provide this armour, but to take it, as in ver. 13. as being ready made and provided, and to expect and prepare for battle, and make use of it; and this supposes saints to be in a warfare state, and that they are in the character of soldiers, and have enemies to fight with, and therefore should be accoutred with proper and suitable armour, to meet them: *that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*; who is the grand enemy of Christ and his people, and a very powerful and cunning one he is; so that the whole armour of God should be put on, which is proof against all his might and craft, in order to stand against him, oppose him, and fight, and get the victory over him, which in the issue is always obtained by believers; for they not only stand their ground in the strength of Christ, and by the use of their armour confound his schemes, and baffle all his arts and stratagems, but are more than conquerors through him that has loved them.

Ver. 12. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, &c.*] The Syriac, Arabic, and Æthiopic versions, and some copies, read *you*, instead of *we*. This is a reason why saints should be strong in the Lord, and why they should put on the whole armour of God, and prepare for battle, since their enemies are such as here described: *not flesh and blood*; frail mortal men, such as were wrestled against in the Olympic games, to which the apostle alludes. For this wrestling, as Philo the Jew says^e, concerning Jacob's wrestling, is not of the body, but of the soul; see Matt. xvi. 17. Gal. i. 16. and the meaning is, not with men only, for otherwise the saints have a conflict with men; with profane men, and wrestle against them, by bearing a testimony against their enormities, and by patiently enduring their reproaches, and conquer them by a constant adherence to Christ, and an exercise of faith upon him, which gets the victory over the world; and with heretical men, and maintain a conflict with them, by watching and observing the first appearance of their errors and heresies, and declaring against them, and by using Scripture arguments to confute them, and by rejecting the stubborn and incorrigible from church-communion: yet they wrestle not against these only, *but against principalities, against powers*; by whom are meant not civil magistrates, or the Roman governors, though these are sometimes so called, Tit. iii. 1. and may be said to be the rulers of the darkness of this world, or of the dark Heathen world, and were in high places, and were of wicked and malicious spirits, against the people of Christ; yet these can't be opposed to flesh and blood, or to men, since they were such themselves; and though they were in high, yet not in heavenly places; and the connexion with the preceding verse shews the contrary, the enemy being the devil, and the armour spiritual; wherefore the devils are here designed, who are described from their power, rule, and government, see the note on ch. i. 21. both in this clause, and in the next: *and against the rulers of the darkness of this world*; that is, over wicked men in it, who are in a state of darkness itself; and so Satan is called the

^d Maimon, Hilchot Abadim, c. 9. sect. 3.

^e Leg. Allegor. l. 2. p. 96.

prince, and god of the world, John xii. 31. 2 Cor. iv. 4. The Jews use this very word, the apostle does here, of the angel of death, who is called darkness^f; and the devil is called by them, *שר של דיושך*, the *prince of darkness*^g; and mention is made by them of *דיושכי עלמאי*, the *darkness of the world*^h; from whom the apostle seems to have taken these phrases, as being in common use among the Jews; who also use it of civil governorsⁱ, and render it, as here, *the rulers of the world*, and say it signifies monarchs, such as rule from one end of the world to the other^k: some copies, and the Ethiopic version, leave out the phrase, *of this world*. It follows, *against spiritual wickedness in high places*; or wicked spirits, as the devils are, unclean, proud, lying, deceitful, and malicious; who may be said to be in *high or heavenly places*; not in places super-celestial, or in the highest heavens, in the third heaven, where God, angels, and saints are; but in the aerial heavens, where the power or posse of devils reside, and where they are above us, over our heads, overlooking us, and watching every advantage against us; and therefore we should have on our armour, and be in a readiness to engage them; and so the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, *under, or beneath heaven*; and the Arabic version, *in the air*.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, &c.*] This is a repetition of the exhortation in ver. 11. which repetition seems necessary by reason of the many powerful enemies mentioned in the preceding verse, and serves to explain what is meant by putting it on: and leads on the apostle to give an account of the several parts of this armour: the end of taking it is much the same as before, *that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day*; that is, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles and stratagems of Satan, against his power and might, to oppose his schemes, and resist his temptations: and so the Syriac version renders it, *that ye may be able to meet the evil one*; to face him, and give him battle, being accoutred with the whole armour of God; though the Greek copies, and other versions, read, *in the evil day*; in which sin and iniquity abound, error and heresy prevail, Satan is very busy, trials and afflictions come on, persecution arises because of the word, and God's judgments are in the earth: *and having done all to stand*; or having overcome, having routed the enemy, stand as conquerors; or rather, having took and put on the whole armour of God, in order to stand, and withstand the enemy.

Ver. 14. *Stand therefore, &c.*] Keep your ground, don't desert the army, the church of Christ, nor his cause; continue in the station in which you are placed, keep your post, be upon your watch, stand upon your guard: *having your loins girt about with truth*; by which is meant the Gospel, and the several doctrines of it; see ch. i. 13. and iv. 15. and to have the loins girt with it, shews, that it should be near and close to the saints, and never departed from; and that it is a means of keeping them close to God and Christ, and of strengthening them against the assaults and attacks of

Satan; and is of great use in the Christians' spiritual conflict with their enemies; the girdle is a part of armour, and so considerable as sometimes to be put for the whole, Isa. v. 27. and here it is mentioned in the first place: *and having on the breast-plate of righteousness*; in allusion to Isa. lix. 17. meaning not works of righteousness done by men, though these are a fence when rightly used against the reproaches and charges of the enemy, as they were by Samuel, 1 Sam. xii. 3. but rather the graces of faith and love, 1 Thess. v. 8. though faith has another place in the Christian armour, afterwards mentioned; wherefore it seems best to understand this of the righteousness of Christ, which being imputed by God, and received by faith, is a guard against, and repels the accusations and charges of Satan, and is a security from all wrath and condemnation.

Ver. 15. *And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*] The Gospel is so called, because it makes men to be of peaceable tempers and behaviour, and gives peace to distressed minds: it directs the way to eternal peace, and publishes peace made by the blood of Christ; and has a much better claim to this name, and epithet, than the law has, which is often called *peace* by the Jews^l: the *preparation* of it does not design a promptitude or readiness to preach the Gospel, or to receive it, or profess it, or to give a reason of faith in it, or to endure reproach and persecution for it; nor that readiness which the Gospel is a means of, as for every good work, for the spiritual warfare, for the Christian's journey heavenward, or for heaven itself: but the word *σπουδαία* signifies a *base, or foundation*; and so it is used by the Septuagint interpreters on Zech. v. 11. and here it designs a firm and solid knowledge of the Gospel, as it publishes peace by Jesus Christ, which yields a sure foundation for the Christian soldier to set his foot upon, and stand fast on; it being that to him, as the shoe is to the foot, its base or foundation: and for the *feet* to be *shod with* it, does not mean the outward conversation being agreeably to the Gospel, though such a walk and conversation is very beautiful and safe, and such may walk and war with intrepidity: but it designs the constant and firm standing of believers in the faith of the Gospel, and so striving and contending for it, without being moved from it, that it may continue with them. Shoes or boots, which were sometimes of iron, and sometimes of brass, are reckoned among the armour of soldiers^m.

Ver. 16. *Above all, taking the shield of faith, &c.*] Which may be understood either of the grace of faith, which is like a golden shield, precious, solid, and substantial; and like a shield of mighty men, by which mighty things are done, and by which the believer not only repels, but conquers the enemy. The Jews sayⁿ, that repentance and good works are as a shield against divine vengeance: or rather of the object of faith, that which faith makes use of as a shield; so God himself is a shield, Gen. xv. 1. his divine perfections, as his power, faithfulness, truth, and immutability, which

^f Vajikra Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 160. 1. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4.
^g Pesikta in Kettoth Haassammim in Targum in Gen. fol. 9. 4.
Raziel, fol. 13. 1.

^h Zohar in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

ⁱ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 58. fol. 51. 2.

^k Tanchuma & Aruch in Tugdon. Dict. Syr. Chal p. 169.

^l Zohar in Numb. fol. 73. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 3.

^m Pausan. l. 6. p. 362, 378. Julian. Orat. 2. p. 105. Alex. ab Alexandro, l. 6. c. 22.

ⁿ Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11.

encompass the saints as a shield, and are opposed by faith to the temptations of Satan; also the love and favour of God, Psal. v. 12. and particularly God in his word, Prov. xxx. 5. which is a shield against false doctrines, and the wiles of Satan. Moreover, Christ is a shield, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. and faith makes use of him as a shield, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; which it holds up and opposes to all the charges and objections of Satan; and who is the saints' protection, and security from the wrath of God, divine justice, and eternal death. The disciples of the wise men are said to be ° תריסין, *shielded men*, who, as the gloss says, fight in the war of the law; but they are not like Christ's disciples, who have on the shield, and fight the fight of faith: and this is *above all* to be taken, as being the most useful part of the Christian armour; or *with all*, with the rest, this is to be taken, and by no means to be neglected; and it is to be used *in all*; in every temptation of Satan, in every conflict with that enemy, or any other. *Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*; of the wicked one, Satan; who was the first wicked one, and the tempter of others to wickedness; and is emphatically the wicked one, being wickedness itself; and his temptations are *fiery darts*: they may be compared to *darts*, because they sometimes come suddenly and swiftly, and thick and fast, are very numerous, and where they stick are very troublesome and grieving; see Gen. xlix. 23, 24. And they may be said to be *fiery*, because they serve to inflame the mind, and excite to sin, as lust, anger, revenge, and the like; and were they not repelled, would be the occasion of bringing into everlasting burnings. The allusion is to βελεσι πυρροφαιμοις, *the fiery darts*, cast by enemies into towns, and upon houses, in order to burn them? Mention is also made of נירי ראטה, *fiery darts*, with the Jews¹, and of Satan's casting a dart at David²: from these customs, and ways of speaking, the apostle borrows his phrases; and suggests, that the shield of faith is of use to quench the fiery darts of Satan's temptations; so that they may not have the malignant influence they are designed for; which is chiefly done by faith's dealing with the blood of Christ. And there were ways of quenching the fiery darts alluded to; which was done by skins and hides of beasts made wet, or anointed with alum³.

Ver. 17. *And take the helmet of salvation, &c.*] Meaning either Christ himself, the Saviour; and so the Arabic version renders it, *the helmet of the Saviour*: or the salvation itself, which he is the author of, and a well-grounded hope of it; see 1 Thess. v. 8. the allusion is to Isa. lix. 17. and such an hope of salvation by Christ is a defence of the head against false doctrines; for the helmet is a piece of armour for the head; and it is an erector of the head in times of difficulty, affliction, and distress; and it covers the head in the day of battle, when engaged with Satan, the enemy of souls: *and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God*: the word of God is compared to a *sword*, for its two edges, the law and Gospel; the one convicts of

sin, and cuts to the heart for it, and the other cuts down all the goodness of man; and the Scriptures in general are a sharp sword, in convicting of sin, reproving for it, and threatening with wrath and ruin, in refuting error and heresy, and repelling Satan's temptations, and will be used in the destruction of antichrist: and this word may be called *the sword of the spirit*, because it is not carnal, but of a spiritual nature; and is used by the spiritual man; and because the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version here expresses it, is the author of it; and which he furnishes the saints with, and teaches them how to make use of, and makes it powerful and effectual. So the Jews say⁴, the words of the law are like to a sword, and speak of חרב תורה, *the sword of the law*⁵.

Ver. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, &c.*] The last weapon is prayer, and takes in all sorts of prayer, mental and vocal, public and private; and every branch of it, as deprecation of evils, petitions for good things, and thanksgiving for mercies: and which should be used *always*; this stands opposed to such who pray not at all, or who have prayed, but have left it off, or who pray only in distress, and it suggests, that a man should pray as often as he has an opportunity; and particularly, that he should make use of it in times of darkness, desertion, and temptation: and this, when performed aright, is performed *in the spirit*; with the heart, soul, and spirit engaged in it; it is put up with a true heart, and a right spirit, and without hypocrisy; in a spiritual way, and with fervency, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the spirit of God. *And watching thereunto*: either to the word, as a direction for prayer, or to prayer itself; for opportunities to pray, for the assistance of the spirit in prayer, for an answer of it, and to return thanks for blessings when bestowed; and against all dependence on it, and against Satan's temptations, and our own corruptions with respect to it: *with all perseverance*; in it, notwithstanding what Satan and an unbelieving heart may suggest to the contrary: *and supplication for all saints*; of every nation, age, sex, and condition, in all places, and of every denomination. So Christ taught his disciples to pray, saying, *our father*, suggesting, that they were not only to pray for themselves, but for all the children of God.

Ver. 19. *And for me, &c.*] This shews the great humility of the apostle, and the sense he had of the greatness of the work of the ministry; and that it is the duty of people to pray for their ministers; and that no man is perfect in this life; and that the more superior members need the assistance of the inferior ones; for this request is made by the apostle not in dissimulation, or as feigning humility and modesty; but in the sincerity of his heart, and from a real sense of his need of fresh supplies of gifts and grace, to fit him for the work and service of Christ: *that utterance may be given unto me*: or *that the word*; meaning not the subject-matter of the ministry, the word of the Gospel, the word of faith, truth, and reconciliation, for that was committed to him; unless he should

¹ T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 36. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

² Apollodorus de Orig. Deorum, l. 2. p. 89.

³ Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xix. 13.

⁴ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. & 107. 1.

⁵ Anmian. Marcellin. l. 20. c. 11.

⁶ Targum in Cant. 3. 8.

⁷ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 19. 1.

mean an increase of light and knowledge in it; but rather a faculty of speaking it freely and aptly, and what is commonly called elocution; not speaking with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but with the words of the Holy Ghost: or else an opportunity of preaching the word, and liberty to do it, as follows; *that I may open my mouth boldly; or in the opening of my mouth*; the phrase is Rabbinical. The Jews say, that when Moses came to write that passage, *let us make man in our image*, &c. he said before the Lord of the world, why dost thou give פתרון פה, *opening of the mouth*, to heretics? i. e. an occasion to them of speaking, objecting to us, and of reproving and convincing us with respect to a plurality of persons in the Deity: and a little after they say, "wherever you find פתרון פה, *an opening of the mouth* to heretics, you will find an answer by its side, or along with it." Now the apostle desired he might have something to say, to object to, and to reprove and convince the unbelieving Jews; that he might do this with boldness, with all faithfulness, with courage, and intrepidity, and with freedom of speech; or *openly and publicly*, as the Syriac version renders it: *to make known the mystery of the Gospel*; or the mysterious doctrines of it, such as the doctrines of a trinity of persons, of the union of the two natures in Christ, justification by his righteousness, regeneration by his spirit and grace, the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the dead, &c. which are called mysteries, because they were hid until revealed; and though revealed, the *modus and ratio* of them are not to be accounted for. Now the apostle's work was to make known these mysteries, to prove the truth of them from the word of God, and to defend them against the opposers of them; and that he might be able to do this, he entreats the prayers of the saints.

Ver. 20. *For which I am an ambassador in bonds*, &c.] The character the apostle bore was that of an ambassador; and he was an ambassador from and for Christ, in his room and stead; he represented him, he was sent by him, and entrusted by him with the Gospel; he gave him it, and a commission to preach it, and furnished him with qualifications for it; such as knowledge and faithfulness, wisdom and prudence, courage and greatness of mind; and made his embassy successful: and he was chiefly an ambassador to the Gentiles, which shewed great condescension in Christ to send him to them, and base ingratitude in the despisers and rejecters of the Gospel, for which he was an ambassador; for the embassy Christ's ministers are sent on, is the embassy of the Gospel of peace: their business is to declare that men by nature are enemies to God; that peace is made by the blood of Christ for such; by which means they are made useful to conciliate the minds of men to God's way of salvation, and to bring them to submit to his government and laws; and when he adds, *in bonds*, or *in a chain*, he means, that he was in such circumstances, not for any crime, but for the Gospel, for which he was an ambassador; and therefore was not ashamed of his bonds, or chain, but rather gloried in them; and he makes mention of them to engage persons to a regard to him as an am-

bassador, and to his embassy; for an ambassador, especially an ambassador of Christ, that comes with his Gospel, and more especially that is suffering for it, ought to be received, heard, and honoured. *That therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak*; that is, the apostle beseeches the saints to pray for him, that since he was an ambassador for the Gospel, and in bonds, that he might speak in it, or rather of it boldly and freely; that he might have both liberty from his bonds, and liberty in his soul, and freedom of speech; and that he might use boldness in delivering his message, as became an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 21. *But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do*, &c.] Both his temporal and spiritual affairs; as that he was in bonds, and how he was supported under them, and of what use they were to others; how that he preached in his own hired house, and with what success; and what ministering brethren he had with him to assist him; and in what condition was the church at Rome where he now was: the apostle's life and actions would bear the light, and what he did was worthy of imitation, and must be both delightful and useful to know; and the account he sends, by a messenger hereafter named, of whom he gives the following character, that credit might be the more readily given to his relation: *Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things*. This Tychicus was of Asia, who accompanied the apostle in his travels, and went with him to Rome, from whence he sent him to several places to relate his case, and to know the state of the churches, Col. iv. 7, 8. 2 Tim. iv. 12. Tit. iii. 12. He calls him *a beloved brother*: he was a brother, because he was a partaker of the same grace, was of the same family and household of God, and was of the same function, being a minister of the Gospel, and was a *beloved one*: he was beloved of God and Christ, and of all the saints that knew him, and especially a brother beloved of the Apostle Paul; and where there is brotherhood, there should be love: he also styles him *a faithful minister in the Lord*; he was a minister in the work and service of the Lord, in things pertaining to him; he was one of his appointing, qualifying, and sending; and he preached Christ, and him crucified; and was a *faithful one*, to his Lord or master, in whose name he ministered, to the Gospel which he ministered, and to the souls of men to whom he ministered; and a greater character he could not well have; and therefore it need not be doubted but that he would faithfully relate all things concerning the apostle, and what he said might be depended on as truth.

Ver. 22. *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose*, &c.] Which shews the great concern the apostle had for the churches, being willing to inform them of every thing that might be for their use and service: *that ye might know our affairs*; temporal and spiritual, and not only the apostle's affairs, but the affairs of those that were with him, who were concerned in the same common cause: *and that he might comfort your hearts*; both by such a relation, and by the ministry of the Gospel to them: believers in Christ are sometimes disconsolate, by reason of in-dwelling sin,

Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, afflictions and persecutions, their own sufferings, and those of others; and it is the business of the ministers of Christ to comfort them; their commission is to speak comfortably to them; and they are qualified for it, by inward comforts in their own souls; the Gospel they preach, and the message they bring, is of a comfortable nature; the spirit of God acts by them, and with them as a comforter; and sad indeed is the state of Zion, or the church of Christ, when it has no comforters.

Ver. 23. *Peace be to the brethren, &c.*] The members of the church at Ephesus, who stood in a spiritual relation to each other; meaning all prosperity outward and inward, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; especially peace of conscience under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and a view of peace made with God by that blood: *and love with faith from God the father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*; that is, an increase of these graces, and of the exercise of them, is wished for; for otherwise these brethren had both these graces, faith and love; see ch. i. 15. which go together; faith works by love, and love discovers faith, and both are imperfect; faith has something lacking in it, and love is apt to grow cold, and need reviving and increasing; and these, and the increase of them, are from God the father, who is the God of all grace, and from Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness of grace is; and these things are equally desired from the one as from the other, and shews a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and the equality of Christ with the father; and such a wish expresses the apostle's great love and affection for the brethren, and points out the things they stand in need of; and which, being asked for such, might be expected to be enjoyed.

Ver. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*] Christ is the object of love, and a lovely object he is: he is to be loved because of the loveliness of his person, and the transcendent excellencies that are in him; because of his suitableness and fulness as a Saviour; and because of his great love shewn to his church and people; and because of the relations he stands in to them, and the communion

they have with him: love to Christ is a grace of the spirit, and is in all believers; and though it is imperfect, and sometimes cold, it will abide for ever; it ought to be universal and superlative; all of Christ is to be loved, and he is to be loved above all: and it shews itself in a value for his Gospel, and the truths of it; in an esteem of his ordinances, and a regard to his commands; in parting with all for Christ, when called for; and in bearing all for his sake; in a well-pleas'dness in his company and presence, and in a concern for his absence, and in an uneasiness until he is enjoyed again: it should be fervent, and constant, and cordial, and, as here said, *in sincerity*; from the heart, and with all the heart, and without hypocrisy; not in word only, but in deed and in truth; which appears when he is loved, as before observed: and the apostle wishes *grace* to all such sincere and hearty lovers of him; by which may be meant a fresh discovery of the free grace, love, and favour of God in Christ to them; and a fresh supply of grace from the fulness of it in Christ; and a larger measure of the grace of the spirit to carry on the good work begun in them; as well as a continuation of the Gospel of the grace of God with them, and an increase of spiritual gifts. *Grace* may be connected with the word translated *sincerity*, and be rendered *grace with incorruption*: or incorruptible grace, as true grace is an incorruptible seed; or *grace with immortality*; and so the apostle wishes not only for grace here, but for eternal happiness and glory hereafter; and then closes the epistle with an *Amen*, as a confirmation and asseveration of the truth of the doctrines contained in it, and as expressive of his earnest desire that the several petitions in it might be granted, and of his faith and confidence that they would be fulfilled.

The subscription, *written from Rome to the Ephesians by Tychicus*, seems to be right; for that this epistle is written to the Ephesians, the inscription shews; and that it was written when the apostle was at Rome, appears from ch. iii. 1. and iv. 1. and vi. 20. and that it was sent by Tychicus, seems very likely from ch. vi. 21, 22.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE PHILIPPIANS.

PHILIPPI was a Roman colony, and the chief city of one part of Macedonia, Acts xvi. 12. it is by Appianus called Datos, which was its original name; and by Diodorus Siculus it is called Crenide^a, from the fountains about it; and it took its name Philippi, from Philip king of Macedon, father of Alexander

the great, who rebuilt and fortified it; near this place a famous battle was fought, and a victory obtained by Augustus Cæsar and Mark Antony, over Brutus and Cassius; it is now called Chrioxopolis, properly Chrysopolis, from the plenty of golden mines near it: here the apostle was directed by a vision, to go and preach the Gospel; and which was succeeded, to the conversion of Lydia, and the jailer, and their families; which laid the foundation of a Gospel church in this place, to whom this epistle is written; and which was written by the apostle when he was a prisoner at Rome, as many things in it shew; for he more than once makes mention of his bonds, and of these being made manifest in Cæsar's palace, and of some of Cæsar's household sending their Christian salutations to this church: Dr. Hammond makes the date of this epistle to be the year 59, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year 60, and the sixth of Nero: the occasion of it was this, the Philippians, to whom the apostle was very

dear, he being the first preacher of the Gospel to them, and the instrument of their conversion, hearing that he was a prisoner at Rome, send their minister and pastor Epaphroditus to him, to visit him, and by him a present to support him under his afflicted circumstances, and who related to him the case of this church; and at his departure he sent by him this letter; the design of which is, to express his love and affection to them; to give them an account of his bonds, and the usefulness of them, and how he was supported under them; to encourage them under all the afflictions and persecutions, they endured for the sake of Christ; to excite them to love, unity, and peace, among themselves; to caution them against false teachers, judaizing Christians, that were for joining Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, works and grace together, in the business of salvation; to exhort them to a holy life and conversation, and to return them thanks for their kind present.

C H A P. I.

THIS chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's salutation of the Philippians; an account of his thanksgivings, prayers, and affection for them, and confidence of them; a narrative of his sufferings, and the use of them; and an exhortation to a conversation becoming the Gospel, to abide by it, and suffer cheerfully for it. The inscription is in ver. 1. in which are mentioned by name the persons that subscribed the epistle, Paul and Timothy; and who are described by their character, servants of Jesus Christ; and also the persons to whom the epistle was sent, by the place of their abode, Philippi; the members of the church by their general character, saints in Christ Jesus; and the officers of it, by those that are peculiar to them as such, bishops and deacons: the salutation is in ver. 2. and then follows a thanksgiving for them to God, which was made in prayer, and upon every remembrance of them at the throne of grace, and that for their constant fellowship in the Gospel, ver. 3, 4, 5. and the apostle expresses his strong confidence of the good work of grace being begun in them, and of the performance of it, until the day of Christ; grounded upon a judgment of charity, and a belief of their being partakers of the same grace with himself, ver. 6, 7. and declares the most tender and affectionate love to them, for the truth of which he calls God to witness, ver. 8. and as a proof of it; puts up several petitions for them; that they might have an increase of love, and spiritual knowledge, judgment, and sense, that so they might be capable of trying and approving things that differ, and which are the most excellent of them; that they might be sincere and harmless in their lives, and always doing good works in the strength of Christ, and to the glory of God, ver. 9, 10, 11. next follows an account of his bonds and imprisonment, and the usefulness of them, as that they were for the further spread of the Gospel in many places, and even in Cæsar's palace, ver. 12, 13. yea, by means of them several of the ministering brethren were the more em-

boldened to preach the Gospel without fear of men; though there was a difference among them, some preached Christ of envy, strife, and contention, thinking to add to the apostle's troubles, and others, of good will, and of love to the apostle, who they knew was set for the defence of the Gospel, ver. 14, 15, 16, 17. upon all which the apostle gives his sentiments, and makes his reflections, that whatever were the views of some men in preaching, it was, and ever would be, constant matter of joy to him that Christ was preached, ver. 18. yea, he was satisfied, that the ill designed by some to him would be overruled for his good, by means of the prayers of the saints, and the supply of the spirit; for he had a pure and well-grounded hope and expectation, that he should never be brought to shame and confusion, but that Christ would be magnified in him living and dying; for he knew that both his life, and his death, would be gain to Christ, or that it would be for the glory of Christ for him to live, and his own gain should he die, ver. 19, 20, 21. which put him in a strait what was most eligible in this case, whether to live in the flesh, or depart out of the world; seeing to live in the flesh, and labour in the ministry, were fruitful and profitable, and more necessary and useful for the churches of Christ, and to die, and be with Christ, were better for himself, ver. 22, 23, 24. but upon maturely weighing things on both sides, like one of a truly noble public spirit, he inclines to the former; nay, is persuaded, that he should continue longer to be an instrument of increasing the faith and joy of the Lord's people, which he knew would abound in Christ on his account, should he be restored again, ver. 25, 26. and then he concludes the chapter with an exhortation to the Philippians, to order their conversation agreeably to the Gospel of Christ, and to continue firm and unanimous in it, and use their utmost endeavours to keep it themselves, and spread it among others, ver. 27. being not daunted and intimidated by the persecutions of men, which to the

persecutors was a sign of perdition, looked darkly, and with an ill aspect upon them, but to the persecuted was a token that they had an interest in that salvation which is of God, ver. 28. for as it is a gift of grace to believe in Christ, so likewise to suffer for him, ver. 29. to which the apostle animates them by his own example, that which they were called unto being no other than what they had seen endured by him, and had heard concerning him, ver. 30.

Ver. 1. *Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, &c.*] The apostle sets his own name first, as being not only superior to Timothy in age, in office, and in character, but the sole writer of this epistle. The reasons of his joining Timothy with him are, because he was with him when he first preached at Philippi, and so was known unto the Philippians, and respected by them; and because he was about to send him to them again, whose commendations he enlarges on in the epistle itself; and to let them see, that there was a continued agreement between them in affection and doctrine. It shews indeed great humility in the apostle to join with him one so young, and so much inferior to him on all accounts; though it must be observed, that Timothy was not a partner with him in composing the epistle; he only joined in the salutation to this church, and approved of the letter to it, and might be the amanuensis of the apostle; but had no hand in the epistle itself, which was dictated by Paul under divine inspiration. He chooses a character which agreed to them both; he does not say apostles, for Timothy was no apostle, though he himself was, but *servants of Jesus Christ*; not of men; nor did they seek to please men by preaching the doctrines and commandments of men, and which are suited to the carnal reasonings, lusts, and pleasures of men; for then the character here assumed would not belong to them: but servants of Christ; and that not in such sense only as all mankind are, or in right ought to be, since all are his creatures, and therefore ought to serve him; nor merely as all the saints in common are, being bought with the price of Christ's blood, and being effectually called by his grace, and so made willing to serve him from a principle of love, without servile fear, and with a view to his glory; but as ministers of the word, and preachers of the Gospel; they were his servants in the Gospel, they served him under the ministerial character, and as such were the servants of the most high God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; so that this title is far from being mean and despicable, it is high, honourable, and glorious. *To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.* The persons to whom this epistle is inscribed are here described by the place of their abode, Philippi, and by the various characters they bore in the church; which was at this time very numerous, consisting of many members, and of proper officers, and are both taken notice of here. The members are meant by *all the saints in Christ Jesus*; they were saints or holy persons, not by Moses and his law; not by ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, which only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, but could not take away sin, or cleanse from it; nor by themselves and their moral righteousness; for though thereby men may outwardly appear holy and righteous, yet

they remain inwardly unholly and impure; nor by baptism, which has no regenerating nor sanctifying virtue in it; if persons are not saints before that, they are never by it; it leaves them as it finds them, and neither takes away original or actual sin: but these were saints in and by Christ; they were become holy in consequence of being in Christ; men are first in Christ, and then saints in him; they are chosen *in him* before the world began to be holy, and in time are made new men, new creatures, are created in him unto good works by virtue of their being in him; hence he sanctifies his church and people by his blood, they being so nearly related to him, and interested in him, and he in them; hence they being first of God in Christ, he is made sanctification to them; and hence internal holiness is wrought in them from Christ, by his spirit; which being begun is carried on, and will be performed until the day of Christ; and which was the happy case of these Philippians, as the apostle was confident of. The officers of this church were *the bishops and deacons*. The *bishops* were the pastors, elders, and overseers of the church, for a bishop and an elder is one and the same; see Acts xx. 17, 28. where the elders of the church at Ephesus are called *overseers* or *bishops*; for the same word is used there as here; and the Syriac version here renders the word by קשיש, *elders*; and they design no other than common and ordinary pastors; who have the name of elders from their age, gravity, and seniority; and that of bishops and overseers from the nature of their office, which is to feed, watch, inspect, and take the oversight of the flock, minister sound doctrine to them, and preserve them from error and heresies. It seems by this, and the instance of the church at Ephesus, that there were, and so may be, where there is necessity for it, more pastors or bishops than one in a church; unless it can be thought that there were more churches than one in each of these cities; or that the pastors of adjacent churches are here included; neither of which seem to be a clear case, but the contrary: but then these pastors or bishops were all upon an equal foot; one had not any authority or power over another, or more authority than another; they were not metropolitan or diocesan bishops, but pastors of a particular church; and were neither lords over one another, nor of God's heritage. The *deacons* were such as served tables, the Lord's table, the minister's table, and the poor's table; took care of the secular affairs of the church, received and disbursed moneys, kept the church's accounts, and provided every thing necessary for its temporal good. The one sort of these officers were concerned with the souls and spiritual estate of the members of the church; the others with their bodies and temporal estate, by visiting the sick, relieving the poor, &c. and both these exhibit the true primitive plan of church-offices and discipline; there being no other order of offices or officers, in a Christian church of divine institution, but pastors and deacons; whatever else is introduced is without warrant, and comes from the man of sin. These officers are mentioned by the apostle, not only to shew his respect to them, but to observe to the members of this church, that they ought to esteem them highly for their works' sake; these being offices of great importance and usefulness

to the church, which, by having such, was a truly organized church of Christ.

Ver. 2. *Grace be unto you, &c.*] This form of salutation is used by the apostle in all his epistles; see the note on Rom. i. 7.

Ver. 3. *I thank my God, &c.*] After the inscription and salutation follows a thanksgiving, the object of which is God; to whom thanks is to be given at the remembrance of his name, and the perfections of his nature, and for all his mercies, temporal and spiritual. The apostle expresses his propriety and interest in him, calling him *my God*; thereby distinguishing him from all others, the nominal and fictitious gods of the Gentiles, and the idols and lusts of men's hearts; he was the God whom he served in the Gospel, by whom he was sent, and from whom he received all his furniture, and to whom he was accountable. He had a special, particular, covenant interest in him, had knowledge of it, and faith in it; and therefore could draw nigh to God with freedom, use confidence, plead promises, expect favours, and do all he did, whether in a way of prayer, or praise in faith, and therefore was acceptable unto God. This work of thanksgiving he was often employed in on account of these Philippians, even, says he, *upon every remembrance of you*; that is, as often as I remember you, or make mention of you to God at the throne of grace, it being a customary thing with the apostle to mention by name the several churches, the care of which was upon him, in his prayers to God; see Rom. i. 9. Eph. i. 16. 1 Thess. i. 2. and so he used to mention this church; and whenever he did, it was with thankfulness. The Arabic version reads it, *for, or concerning all your remembrance*; meaning of himself, and as if the sense was, that he gave thanks to God for their remembrance of him at all times, and particularly at that time, by sending him relief in his present circumstances. But the former sense is preferable.

Ver. 4. *Always in every prayer of mine for you all, &c.*] The apostle was a praying believer, and a praying minister: notwithstanding all his gifts, and graces, and high attainments, he was not above the work and duty of prayer, and in which he was sensible he stood in need of the assistance and direction of the spirit of God. As soon as he was converted he prayed, and continued to do so without ceasing, as he himself directs; he was constant and assiduous at the throne of grace, and was concerned for others, as well as himself, for all the churches, and for this church, and all the saints in it. *Making request with joy*; for what God had done for them, and continued with them. Requests are to be made known to God with thanksgiving. When we request a favour of him, it becomes us to return thanks for what we have received from him. Thanksgiving is a branch of prayer; as we have always mercies to ask for, we have always mercies to be thankful for.

Ver. 5. *For your fellowship in the Gospel, &c.*] Or *for your communication unto the Gospel*; that is, to the support of it. These Philippians were one of the churches of Macedonia the apostle so highly commends for their liberality in 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3. they had been very communicative to him, and those that were with him, from the beginning of the Gospel

being preached to them: as the instances of Lydia and the jailer shew, and which are taken notice of in this epistle, ch. iv. 15, 16. And this same generous spirit still continued, of which their present by Epaphroditus was an evidence; and for this the apostle gives thanks, not only that they had an ability to support the Gospel, and assist Gospel ministers, but that they were willing to communicate, and did communicate, readily and cheerfully, largely and liberally; or this may intend their *participation in the Gospel*, as the Arabic version renders it. The Gospel was in a very wonderful and providential manner brought unto them, and it was attended with mighty power to the conversion of them; they received it with joy and gladness, and cheerfully submitted to the ordinances of it; they had much light into it, and spiritual knowledge of it; and were made partakers of the blessings of grace, which are revealed and exhibited in it, and of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, for which the apostle gives thanks to God; for all this was from him, and a wonderful instance of his grace it was. Moreover, through the Gospel being thus brought unto them, and succeeded among them, they became a Gospel church, and had, through the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, fellowship one with another; yea, they had fellowship with the father, and his son Jesus Christ, unto which they were called by the Gospel; and in this they remained *from the first day until now*; they continued in the Gospel which they were made partakers of, and in fellowship with one another, in breaking of bread, and in prayer, and in hearing the word, which they constantly attended to, and were blessed with communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, to that time; and therefore the apostle continued from the first of their receiving the Gospel, to that moment, to give thanks to God for them on that account: for this last clause may be connected with the words in ver. 3. *I thank my God*, as well as with those immediately preceding, *your fellowship in the Gospel*; and shews not only their *perseverance in the Gospel*, from the first to the present time, as the Ethiopic version renders it, for which he was abundantly thankful; but the continuance of his thankfulness on that account, from his first acquaintance with them to that time.

Ver. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, &c.*] The reason of his thanksgiving, and of his making request with joy continually on the behalf of this church, was the confidence and full persuasion he had of this same thing, of which he could be as much assured as of any thing in the world: *that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*: by this *good work* is not meant the preaching of the Gospel among them, nor a Gospel church-state set up in the midst of them: for though the preaching of the Gospel was a good work, and issued well in the conversion of many, in their edification and comfort, and which was still continued; and though a Gospel church-state was erected among them, and was now flourishing, yet the apostle could not assure himself of the continuance of either of them, especially until the day of Christ; and both have been removed from thence many hundreds of years ago: nor is their liberal communication to the support of the Gospel intended; for though this was a good work, yet this was not wrought

by God, but by themselves, and was not wrought in them, but done by them; nor their good lives and conversations. The Syriac version indeed renders it *good works*: but these can't be designed, for the same reasons as before; for though they are good things, and answer many valuable ends and purposes, yet they are external works done by men, and not internal ones wrought in them by God; wherefore by it is undoubtedly meant the work of grace upon their hearts, sometimes called the work of faith, because that is a principal part of it: this is God's work, and not man's, as may be concluded from the nature of the work itself, which is the transforming of a man by the renewing of him, a regeneration, a resurrection, and a creation, and therefore requires almighty power; and from the condition man is in by nature, he is dead in sin, and has no power to act spiritually, and much less what is equal to such a work as this; he has no will, desire, and inclination to it, but all the reverse; and if he had, he could no more effect it, than the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision could cause themselves to live. This is the work of God. Sometimes it is ascribed to the father, who regenerates, calls by his grace, reveals his son, and draws souls unto him; and sometimes to the son, who quickens whom he will, whose spirit is given, whose image is instamped, and out of whose fulness grace is received; but more commonly it is attributed to the spirit, who is a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, and faith: and this is a *good work*, as it must needs be, since it is God's work; he is the efficient cause of it; his good will and pleasure, his grace and mercy are the moving cause of it, and not men's works; and his good word is the means of it. The matter of it is good; it is an illumination of the understanding, a subduing of the will, a taking away of the stony heart, and a giving of an heart of flesh, an infusion of spiritual life, a formation of Christ in the soul, and an implantation of all grace there: it is good in its effects; it makes a man a good man, and fits and qualifies him to perform good works, which without it he cannot do; it makes a man a proper habitation for God, and gives him meetness for the heavenly inheritance. And this is an internal work, a work begun *in* the saints; nothing external is this work; not an outward reformation, which, when right, is the fruit of this good work; nor external humiliation for sin; nor a cessation from the grosser acts of sin; nor a conformity and submission to Gospel ordinances; all which may be where this work is not; but it is something within a man; as appears from the names by which it goes; such as spirit, so called, because it is of a spiritual nature, wrought by the spirit of God, and has its seat in the spirit of man; it is called the inward man, which is renewed day by day; a seed that remains in him, and a root which is out of sight, and oil in the vessel, the heart, as distinct from the lamp of an outward profession: as also from the several things, which, together, make up the subject of it; it is the understanding which is enlightened; the will which is subdued; the heart and inward parts in which the laws of God are written; the mind and conscience, which are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and cleansed; and the affections, which are set on divine objects. This is a *begun* work, and but a

begun one. It may be said to be begun as soon as light is let into the soul by the spirit of God; when it sees its lost state, and need of a Saviour, for as the first thing in the old creation was light, so in the new; when the fear of God is put into the heart, which is the beginning of wisdom; when love appears in the soul to God, to Christ, to his people, word, and ordinances; and when there are the seeing, venturing, and relying acts of faith on Christ, though there is a great deal of darkness, trembling, and unbelief; and when it is got thus far, and even much further, it is but a begun work; 'tis not yet finished and perfect: this appears from the several parts of this work, which are imperfect, as faith, hope, love, knowledge, &c. from the in-dwelling of sin, and corruption in the best of saints; from their various continual wants and necessities; from their disclaiming perfection in this life, and their desires after it. But the apostle was confident, and so may every good man be confident, both for himself and others, that God who has, and wherever he has begun the good work of grace, will *perform*, finish it, or bring it to an end, as the word here used signifies: and this the saints may assure themselves of, from many considerations; as from the nature of the work itself, which is called living water, because it always continues, a well of it, because of its abundance, and is said to spring up to eternal life; because it is inseparably connected with it, where there is grace, there will be glory; grace is the beginning of glory, and glory the perfection of grace; this work of grace is an incorruptible seed, and which remains in the saints, and can never be lost; it is a principle of life, the root of which is hid in Christ, and that itself is maintained by him, and can never be destroyed by men or devils: and also from the concern God has in it, who is unchangeable in his nature, purposes, promises, gifts, and calling; who is a rock, and his work is perfect sooner or later; who is faithful, and will never forsake the work of his hands, and has power to accomplish it; and who has promised his people, that they shall grow stronger and stronger, that they shall not depart from him, and he will never leave them. Moreover, this may be concluded from the in-dwelling of the spirit, as a spirit of sanctification, as the earnest and seal of the inheritance, and that for ever; and from the intercession and fulness of grace in Christ, and the saints' union to him, and standing in him; as well as from the impotency of any to hinder the performance of this work, as sin, Satan, or the world: to which may be added the glory of all the three Persons herein concerned; for if this work is not finished, the glory of God the Father in election, in the covenant of grace, in the contrivance of salvation, in the mission of his Son, the glory of Christ in redemption, and of the Spirit in sanctification, would be entirely lost: wherefore it may be depended on, this work will be performed wherever 'tis begun, and that *until the day of Jesus Christ*; meaning either the day of death, when Christ takes the souls of believers to himself, and they shall be for ever with him, when this work of grace upon the soul will be finished; for God, who is the guide of his people, will be their God and guide even unto death: or else the last day, the day of judgment, the resurrection-day, when Christ

shall appear and raise the dead, and free the bodies of the saints from all their bondage, corruption, vileness, and weakness, which will be putting the last and finishing hand to this good work; nor will even the bodies of the saints be quitted by the spirit of God till this is done.

Ver. 7. *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, &c.*] Some connect these words with ver. 3, 4, 5. as if the apostle's sense was, that it became him to be thus affected to them, and mindful of them in his prayers, to make request for them with joy, and give thanks for their fellowship in the Gospel, and continuance in it; but they seem rather to refer to his confidence of the good work begun in them, being performed until the day of Christ, and which was but just and right in him to entertain and assert; and may be understood either of a judgment of faith, or a judgment of charity: in a judgment of faith the apostle might be confident, and so may every other man, that all that believe in Christ truly, and have a good work begun in them, that shall be finished; for nothing is more certain, nor is there any thing that a man can be more confident of, than this, that he that believes in Christ shall be saved; and this the apostle was fully persuaded of with respect to every one in this church, that was a believer in Christ; and in a judgment of charity, it was meet and proper, just and right, to think, judge, hope, and believe so of every one of them, since there was nothing in their profession, conduct, and conversation, shewing the contrary: *because I have you in my heart; or you have me in your heart;* and either reading carries in it a reason why it was fit and right that he should so think and judge concerning them; because they were, as the Syriac version renders it, *put or laid upon his heart;* whenever he was at the throne of grace, his heart was enlarged on their account, his affections were wonderfully drawn out towards them, and they were ever in his mind, *both in his bonds, and in the defence of the Gospel;* whether in the prison, or in the pulpit, or whatever he was about in the cause or affairs of religion, they were in his heart and thoughts; from whence he concluded they must belong to God, the good work must be in them, and would be performed; 'tis a token for good when the Lord lays the case of any upon the hearts of his ministers, or any of his people; and also, because they had him in their hearts, they were affectionate to him, ever thoughtful and mindful of him; and had lately given a specimen of their love to him, as a servant of Christ, and prisoner of the Lord; and as they, so he might know, that they had passed from death to life, because they loved the brethren, and him in particular for his works' sake, who had been an useful instrument in the hand of God among them: and another reason follows, *inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace; or partakers with me of grace:* meaning either that they were partakers of the same electing, redeeming, adopting, justifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace, as he was; had obtained the same like-precious faith in Christ, and knowledge of him, as he had, though not to the same degree; and therefore might well be assured of the performance of

the good work in them, having no more to doubt of their salvation than of his own: or rather by *grace*, or as the Vulgate Latin version reads it, *joy*, he designs his sufferings for Christ, and the sake of his Gospel; which he so calls, because it was given him by God, as a token of his favour, and a mark of honour and respect, to suffer for Christ, as well as believe in him; and therefore rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Now these Philippians were partakers with him of this, both in his *bonds*, by sympathizing with him; praying for him, sending relief unto him, and by suffering such-like things themselves; and in the *defence and confirmation of the Gospel*, whether by suffering, preaching, or writing; they stood by him, encouraged and assisted him, when others forsook him, and laid difficulties and discouragements in his way; on account of all which it was but meet and proper he should entertain such sentiments of them as before expressed.

Ver. 8. *For God is my record, &c.*] Which is all one as swearing by him; 'tis in form of an oath, being a solemn appeal to him as the searcher of hearts, for the uprightness of his mind, the sincerity of his expressions, and the strength of his affections: *how greatly I long after you all;* the common members, as well as the bishops and deacons, the weak as well as the strong believers, the poor as well as the rich; the apostle's respects were universal, and without distinction: he longed after their spiritual welfare, an increase of gifts and grace among them; he was their spiritual father, and he hankered after them, as parents after their children; he longed to see them, that he might enjoy their company and conversation, have communion with them, and impart some spiritual gift unto them: and this he did in the *bowels of Jesus Christ;* not with an human and carnal affection, but with a Christian and spiritual one; with a love which came from Christ, and was in imitation of him, and on account of their being in him, loved by him, belonging to him, and being believers in him: it was in the most tender manner that he loved them, and was affected to them; the phrase denotes, that his love towards them was internal, in his heart, and was most tender and strong; and like to that tender concern Christ had for them, and which he stirred up in him.

Ver. 9. *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, &c.*] As a proof of his great affection for them, he puts up this petition on their account; which supposes that they had love, as they must certainly have, since the good work of grace was begun in them; for wherever the work of the spirit of God is, there is love, which is a fruit of the spirit; and where there is not love, there cannot be that good work; for it signifies nothing what a man says, nor what he has, nor what he does, if love be wanting; but this grace was in these Philippians, they had love to God, to Christ, to one another, to all the saints, and to the ministers of the Gospel, and particularly to the apostle, of which they had lately given him a proof: and it also supposes, that this grace, which was implanted in them in regeneration, was in exercise, which is meant by its *abounding*: it was not only a principle in the heart, and expressed by the mouth, but it was in action; it lay not in word, and in tongue,

but shewed itself towards the objects of it in deed and in truth; and it was in a very large and lively exercise; it abounded, it flowed and overflowed; it rose up out of the heart, as water out of a fountain; it was as grace is said to be, a well of living water, springing up, and spreading itself various ways; wherefore the apostle did not pray that they might have love, nor merely that their love might abound, but that it might abound *yet*, might continue to abound, that there might be no stop put to its flow and exercise, and so concerns the perseverance of it, and its actings; and that it might abound *more and more*; which regards the increase of it, and enlargement of its exercise. The Syriac version reads it, that it *may be multiplied and abound*; intimating, that spiritual love can't be exceeded in; there's no going to an extreme in the exercise of it; natural love may, but not spiritual; God and Christ can never be loved too much, nor saints, as saints, though they may as men: wherefore let love abound ever so much to these objects, it is capable of abounding more and more, without any danger of excess; and it is to be wished for; for where it is ever so large and abundant in its actings, it is not perfect, nor will it be in this life; so that there is always room for such a petition; besides, the apostle knew how apt love is to grow cold, and saints to sink in their spiritual affections through the prevalence of sin, the cares of the world, and temptations of Satan: he adds, *in knowledge and in all judgment*; that is, either *with knowledge and judgment*; and the sense be, that as their love abounded, so their knowledge might be increased, and their judgment in spiritual things be better informed and established. Some Christians are more affectionate, and less knowing; others are more knowing, and less affectionate; it is well when love and knowledge go and keep pace together: or it may be rendered by *knowledge*, suggesting, that love is increased thereby, which is true; for the more saints know of God and Christ, the more they love them; and the more they know of one another's grace and experience, the more they love each other: by *knowledge* may be meant the knowledge of God; not that which is general, is by the light of nature, and is very obscure and insufficient to salvation; but that which is special, is of God in Christ, as a God gracious and merciful, as a covenant God and father in him; and which at best is imperfect, and needs increasing: and also knowledge of Christ; not general, notional, and speculative, as that he is the son of God, the Messiah, and Saviour of the world in common; but that which is special, spiritual, and saving; and which is a knowledge of approbation, whereby a soul approves of Christ above all others, as a Saviour; a fiducial one, whereby it trusts in him, and commits itself to him; an experimental and practical one, to which is joined a cheerful obedience to his commands and ordinances, and becomes an appropriating one; yet is in this life imperfect, and so needs increasing; and all means should be used in order thereunto: moreover, the knowledge of one another may be included; an increase of which is necessary to promote brotherly love, and make communion with one another delightful and profitable. By all *judgment, or sense*, as in the Greek text, is designed a spiritual apprehension, judg-

ment, and sensation of things. The Syriac version renders it, *all spiritual understanding*, and may intend a spiritual perception, and sense of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, an enlarged experience of the grace of God, and particularly faith, which is expressed by all the five senses; as by *seeing* the son, the glory, fulness, suitableness, and excellency of him, and the unseen glories of another world; by *hearing* the joyful sound, the voice of Christ in the Gospel, so as to understand and distinguish it; by *smelling* a sweet smell in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, which are of a sweet-smelling savour to faith, as are also the things of God, and of the spirit of God; and by *tasting* how good the Lord is, how sweet is his word, and delicious his fruit; and by *feeling*, laying hold on Christ, embracing and handling him, the word of life: and now a believer having these his spiritual senses exercised, he is capable of discerning between good and evil, and so of approving things most excellent; which is the end of this petition, as appears from the following words.

Ver. 10. *That ye may approve things that are excellent, &c.*] Or *try things that differ*. There are some things that differ one from other; as morality and grace, earthly things, and heavenly things, carnal and spiritual, temporal and eternal things, law and Gospel, the doctrines of men, and the doctrines of Christ; all which differ as much as chaff and wheat, as gold, silver, precious stones, and wood, hay, stubble. These are to be tried and proved; they are not to be received without distinction, but should be examined, which is right and best to be chosen and preferred; and to such trial and examination 'tis necessary that a man should be transformed, by the renewing of his mind, that he should have spiritual light, knowledge, and experience, have his spiritual senses exercised to discern the difference of things, and also the guidance, direction, and influence of the spirit of God: and this trial must be made, not according to carnal reason, and the judgment and dictates of it; for the most excellent things are above it, and out of its sphere, and therefore judged foolish, and rejected by it; but according to the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, in the light of the divine spirit, and with spiritual judgment and sense; when some things will be found excellent, as Christ, and the knowledge of him in his person, offices, grace, righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction, and the several truths of the Gospel relating to peace, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; and of the several doctrines of the Gospel, some will appear in their nature and use more excellent than others, more grand and sublime; such as concern the sovereign and distinguishing grace of God, the glory of Christ, and the salvation of the elect; some being milk for babes, others meat for strong men. And these being tried and proved, first by the word of God, and then by the experience of the saints, are to be approved above thousands of gold and silver, and esteemed more than our necessary food; even the sincere milk of the word, as it is by new-born babes, as well as the strong meat of it by the adult, and all to be highly valued and abode by, and held fast. *That ye may be sincere; or pure*, as the Syriac version renders it: pure as the sun discov-

judged by the light of it, as the word signifies, which discovers moles, faults, and flaws; in which, some think, is a metaphor taken either from the eagle, which holds up its young against the sun, and such as can bear the light of it she retains as her own, but such that cannot she rejects as a spurious brood; or from persons in traffic, who hold up the goods they are buying to the sun, to see if they can observe any fault in them: so such may be said to be sincere, or pure, who are pure in heart, life, and conversation, whose principles and practices will bear the test of light; such are sincere, who are like honey without wax, and fine flour without leaven, that have no mixture of corruption in doctrine, life, or manners; whose grace is genuine and right; whose faith is unfeigned; whose love to God, and Christ, and one another, is without dissimulation; whose hope is lively, and of a soul-purifying nature, and is built on a good foundation; and whose repentance is attended with genuine effects, and proper fruits; whose principles are unmixed; who don't corrupt or adulterate the word of God, but desire and retain the sincere milk of it, and hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; whose worship is also pure and spiritual, who worship God in spirit and truth, under the influence, and by the assistance of the spirit of God, and with their whole hearts and spirits, and according to the truth of the Gospel; who keep the ordinances as they were delivered, without any human inventions, corruptions, and mixtures; who are sincere in their hearts, pure and sound in heart, simple, plain-hearted, and single-eyed; choose to be good, rather than seem to be so; whose desires after God, and divine things, and whose affections for them, are true and real, and proceed from the bottom of their hearts; and who have their conversation in the world by the grace of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity; and such the apostle wishes these saints to be, and adds, *and without offence until the day of Christ*; to God, as considered in the righteousness of Christ, in which they are perfectly without offence, and will always continue so; or in their walk and conversation before God, in which, though they may in many things offend, yet not be guilty of any notorious iniquity, and much less of living in it: and to themselves, to their own consciences, exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and men; acting according to that light they have received, and those principles they have embraced and professed; desiring to be kept from all evil, that it might not grieve and wound them; and doing nothing in things of an indifferent nature, with offence, or against the dictates of conscience, and to the violation of it: and also to others, to Jew or Gentile, to the world, or to the church of God, by avoiding every thing that is offensive to either; not good things, but evil ones, and those that are indifferent; that peace may be preserved, and their own good may not be evil-spoken of; that the children of God may not be grieved, staggered, and stumbled, nor sinners hardened, or have any occasion to blaspheme. The phrase denotes an harmless life and conversation, and a continuance in it to the end, to the day of death, or coming of our Lord, which is to be loved, longed, wished, and looked for, and to be always had in view; and that to engage to a becoming

life and conversation, with sincerity, and without offence, since in that day all hearts and actions will be exposed and laid open.

Ver. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, &c.*] Good works. Some think alms-deeds, or acts of liberality and bounty, are here particularly intended; and that respect is had to the generosity of these Philippians to the apostle, and others: and true it is, that these are sometimes so called, as in 2 Cor. ix. 10. but rather good works in general are meant, which are called *fruits*, because, like fruits, they spring from a seed, even from the incorruptible seed of grace in the heart, implanted there in regeneration; and because they are owing, as the fruits of the earth are, to divine bounty and goodness, to the dews of grace, the rising and bright-shining of the sun of righteousness, and to the south gale of the blessed Spirit, when brought forth aright; and also because they are pleasant and delightful, they are well-pleasing to Christ, and are acceptable to God through Christ; and likewise, because they are profitable, not to God, but to men: and they are styled fruits of *righteousness*, either of imputed righteousness, the righteousness of Christ imputed without works, the effects of which are good works; for nothing more strongly influences and engages men to the performance of good works, than a view of their free justification by the righteousness of Christ; hence there can be no justification by works, since these are the fruits and effects of justification, and not the cause: or of righteousness and holiness implanted in the soul by the spirit of God, the new man, which is created unto good works, and in or unto righteousness and true holiness; and which naturally tends thereunto, and which stimulates and qualifies men for the performance of the same: or good works are so called, because they are performed by a righteous man; for as none but a good tree can bring forth good fruit, so none but a tree of righteousness can bear fruits of righteousness; or none but a righteous man do works of righteousness, which are truly such: or because they are such as are done according to the righteous law of God; for this is a necessary requisite of a good work, that it be according to the command and will of God; for otherwise, let it have never such a shew of religion and goodness, 'tis no good work. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, *fruit*, in the singular number, but other copies and versions, read, *fruits*; and the apostle wishes, that these saints might be *filled* with them; that is, that they might be like trees laden with fruit, which have fruit on every branch, bough, and twig; that they might abound in the performance of them, be ready to, and fruitful in every good work; not doing a few of one sort only, but performing continually all manner of good works; and so be like fruitful trees that yield their fruit in their season, and do not cease from so doing, but still bring forth fruit, and that in large quantities: *which are by Jesus Christ*: who is the green fir-tree, from whom all fruit, as of grace, so of good works, is found; for all good works, which are truly and properly so, spring from union to Christ, and are owing to his grace: souls are married to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God; they are created in him unto good

works, and are ingrafted in him the true vine; and through abiding in him, and deriving life, grace, and strength from him, bear fruit, which otherwise they could not do: without Christ no good work can be performed; 'tis through him, strengthening his people, they do all they do; for they are insufficient to do any thing of themselves, but his grace is sufficient for them, and his strength is made perfect in their weakness. He is the exemplar and pattern, according to which they do their good works; and they are motives drawn and taken from him, from his love, from the doctrines of grace relating to him, which are the most powerful, and do most strongly work upon the saints to perform these things; and which, under his grace, and the influence of it, are directed *unto the glory and praise of God*: they are done by believers in Christ, not in order to obtain eternal life and happiness for themselves, which they know is the gift of God, and entirely owing to his free grace and abundant mercy; nor to gain honour and applause from men, but to glorify God; who is glorified when his people bring forth much fruit, and which also is the occasion of others glorifying him likewise: and this end is necessary to a good work, that it be done to the glory of God; for if any thing else is in view and not that, let it have ever such an appearance of a good work, it is none at all: and indeed, here we have all the requisites of a good work; as that it should be done according to the righteous law and will of God; that it springs from a principle of grace and holiness; that it be performed in the name, grace, and strength of Christ, and with a view to the honour and glory of God. The Ethiopic version reads, *in or to his (Christ's) glory, and the praise of God*; and the Arabic version thus, *to the glory of God and his praise*: and so the design of the clause is to shew, either that both the glory of Christ and the praise of God are concerned in every truly good work; or that the glory of God secretly, and his praise openly, are to be sought therein; even all honour and glory, an abundance of it, and that continually; ascribing nothing to ourselves, but attributing all to him, acknowledging, when we have done all we can, we are but unprofitable servants.

Ver. 12. *But I would ye should understand, brethren, &c.*] The church at Philippi having heard of the apostle's troubles, he was very desirous that they should have a true and right understanding of them, and especially of the use they had been of, and were like to be of more and more; and that partly that such as were weak among them might not be offended and staggered, and partly that all might be comforted; as also that they might be animated and encouraged hereby to endure, with patience and cheerfulness, whatsoever afflictions might befall them for the sake of Christ: his sufferings are more obscurely expressed in the next clause, and more clearly in the following verse, *that the things which happened unto me*; by which he intends, not any thing done by him, or his labour in the ministry, which had been greatly succeeded for the spread of the Gospel; as the Syriac version suggests, rendering the phrase, *דילי דרעוני דילי*, *that my work makes more abundant progress in the Gospel*: but his sufferings on account of the Gospel, which though said to happen, were not things of chance but of appointment;

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for as all the sufferings of Christ the head, were by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, so are those of all the members of his mystical body, and of his ministers who are appointed to these things, and they for them; of which Christ has given previous notice, so that they do not come unexpected, but are looked for by them; nor are they over-distressed with them, being supported with the presence, spirit, grace, and favour of God; hence they can rejoice in them, in hope of the glory of God; and as the afflictions of Gospel ministers, the quality and quantity of them, are fixed and settled by divine appointment, and which accordingly come upon them, so the use of them is also determined, and which have their sure and certain effect as the apostle's had; for the very things by which men designed to have hindered the spread of the Gospel, he says, *have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel*. The Gospel, though it is good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; yet is very disagreeable to carnal men, they are enemies to it, and do all they can to stop its progress, to shut the open door of it, and hinder its course by speaking reproachfully of it, and writing against it, and especially by persecuting its professors, and particularly its ministers; which oftentimes proves rather a furtherance than an hinderance of it; for hereby the Gospel, like gold and silver tried in the fire, shines out the more brightly, with more lustre and glory, and has the greater influence on the minds of men; persecution in one place has often been the means of carrying and spreading the Gospel in many others; see Acts viii. 1, 5, 6. and xi. 19, 20, 21. and has been God's ordinance for the conversion of multitudes of souls, where it has been the fiercest and hottest; insomuch that it became a common saying in primitive times, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church; and hereby also the Gospel has been confirmed, and they that have embraced it have been the more established in it. The apostle's sufferings and bonds were for the confirmation and defence of the Gospel.

Ver. 13. *So that my bonds in Christ, &c.*] What he had more darkly hinted before, he more clearly expresses here; the things that happened to him were his bonds; he was now a prisoner at Rome and in chains; though he had the liberty of dwelling alone in his own hired house, and of his friends coming to see him and hear him, yet he was bound with a chain, and under the care and guard of a soldier continually, who held one end of it. These bonds of his were not for debt, which he took care not to run into, but chose rather to work with his own hands, and so ministering to his own and the necessities of others, that he might not eat any man's bread for nought; nor for any capital crime, as murder, or theft, or any thing that was worthy of death or of bonds; but his bonds were in Christ, or for Christ's sake, for professing Christ and preaching his Gospel; he was a prisoner in the Lord, or for his sake; see Ephes. iv. 1. The use of his sufferings, which is more generally signified in the preceding verse, is here and in the next more particularly related, and the several instances of it given. These his bonds for the sake of Christ, he says, *are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places, or my bonds are manifest in Christ*, as the words may be read; that is, by the

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means of Christ, he causing them to be taken notice of by men, and some of the first rank : by his bonds being manifest may be meant he himself who was bound ; who by his bonds became known to persons, to whom in all probability he would otherwise have remained unknown ; as to Felix, and Festus, and King Agrippa, and others in Cæsar's court : or the Gospel for the sake of which he was bound ; this was made manifest and became known, not barely notionally, but savingly and experimentally ; and even Christ himself the substance of it, for whom he was laid in bonds, by this means came to be known, *in all the palace*. The Arabic version reads it, *in the palace of the emperor*. The word *prætorium*, here used, signifies sometimes the judgment-hall, or court of judicature belonging to the Roman governors, as Herod and Pilate ; see Acts xxiii. 35. John xviii. 28, 33. and xix. 9. and if it designs any such court at Rome, then the sense is, that through the apostle's being sent a prisoner to Rome, and his cause heard in the *prætorium*, or judgment-hall, he and the cause of his bonds came to be known by the judges in that court ; and which might be the means of the conversion of some of them : sometimes it signifies the general's pavilion in the camp, and sometimes the emperor's palace at Rome, he being the chief *prætor*, or magistrate ; and so here it seems to design Nero's house or court, where the Gospel, through the apostle's bonds, had made its way to the conversion of many there ; see ch. iv. 22. and *in all other places* ; or as the Arabic version renders it, *with all other men* ; for it may be understood either of men or places ; and that Christ and his Gospel came to be known through the apostle's sufferings, not only in the court of judicature where his cause was tried, or in Cæsar's palace, and to many of his courtiers, but in other places in Rome, and parts of the empire, and to many persons there, both Jews and Gentiles ; so that what was intended for the disadvantage of the Gospel, proved for the service of it.

Ver. 14. *And many of the brethren in the Lord, &c.*] This is another instance of the usefulness of the apostle's sufferings, and another proof of their being for the furtherance of the Gospel ; they were not only the means of the conversion of many that were without, but were very encouraging and strengthening to them that were within the church, and to many that were in the ministry ; who are called *brethren*, some real, others nominal ; being partakers of the grace of God, at least in profession, or otherwise they would not have been fit to have been ministers of the word, nor members of a Gospel church, which was necessary to their being regularly sent forth ; and whom the apostle calls and owns as brethren in the ministry, being sent forth by Christ, at least some of them, and having the same commission to preach the Gospel as he had ; though they had not equal gifts and qualifications with him : he styles them brethren *in the Lord*, to distinguish them from the Jews at Rome, who were his brethren according to the flesh ; and to express their spiritual character and relation, and point out the work of the Lord, in which they were jointly concerned with him : now though not all the brethren, yet many of them were greatly affected with, and influenced by the apostle's patient and cheerfully suffering for Christ ; inasmuch that, as he says, *waxing confident by my bonds, are much*

more bold to speak the word without fear ; or as some read it, *waxing confident in the Lord* ; connecting the phrase, *in the Lord*, with this word, and so make the ground and object of their confidence the Lord ; whose presence, power, grace, and spirit, emboldened them the more by the apostle's bonds to preach the Gospel with courage and intrepidity ; the Lord being on their side, and their helper, they feared not what men could do unto them ; or else being animated by the apostle's patience and firmness of mind in suffering, and by the use they saw his bonds were of for the spread of the Gospel, they took heart and courage to *speak the word* ; the word of God, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read ; and so the Alexandrian, Claromontane, and two of Stephens's copies : meaning either the essential word, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the subject of their ministry ; or the written word, the writings of Moses and the prophets, the books of the Old Testament, according to which they spoke ; or the Gospel, called often the word, and sometimes with an addition, the word of truth, the word of faith, the word of reconciliation, the word of righteousness, the word of life, and the word of our salvation, from the several subjects of it : this they spake boldly and freely, as it ought to be spoken, and *without fear* ; not without fear and reverence of God, whose word it is ; nor of themselves and their own weakness and inabilities, which cause much fear and trembling ; but without the fear of man, which brings a snare ; they had no regard to the threats and menaces, the reproaches and persecutions of men ; none of these things moved them ; they feared God and not man, and so went on boldly, preaching the Gospel ; which is related with pleasure, as a fruit and effect of the apostle's sufferings, and which he doubted not would be very delightful to the Philippians to hear of.

Ver. 15. *Some, indeed, preach Christ, &c.*] That is, some of them, as the Arabic version reads ; some of the brethren, that were only so in profession ; wherefore, these could not be the unbelieving Jews, who preached the Messiah in general, but did not believe Jesus of Nazareth to be he, and opened the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to him, to the Gentiles ; at which the apostle is by some thought to rejoice ; inasmuch as this might be a means of giving light to them that were without any knowledge of the Messiah, and of leading them into an inquiry concerning him, whereby they might come to know the true Messiah, and believe in him : for these men were brethren, were members of the church, and whom the apostle owned as brethren in the ministry ; neither of which could have been admitted had they been unbelievers to Jesus being the Messiah ; nor would the apostle have rejoiced in their ministry ; and besides, they preached the same Christ as other Gospel ministers, only on different principles and with different views ; they preached the pure Gospel of Christ, they did not preach themselves, or any doctrines of their own, but Christ, nor the doctrines of other men ; nor did they read lectures of mere morality, as the Gentiles did ; nor were they legalists, as the Jews ; they did not insist on the doctrine of works, or preach up justification and salvation by the works of the law, a doctrine the apostle always militated against, nor would he ever express any pleasure

and satisfaction in it; nor did they preach a mixed Gospel, partly of grace and partly of works; they were not such as joined Moses and Christ, the law and Gospel, works and grace, together in men's salvation; nor did they corrupt and adulterate the word of God, or blend it with their own, or other men's inventions; but they preached Christ clearly and fully; he was the sum and substance of their ministry; they preached up his person as the true God, the Son of God equal with the Father, and possessed of all divine perfections; as truly man, having assumed a true body and a reasonable soul, and as God and man in one person; they preached him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; justification by his righteousness alone, pardon through his blood, atonement and satisfaction by his sacrifice and salvation alone by him; they directed souls to him for all grace, and every supply of it; and assured them that though he died, he rose again from the dead, is ascended on high, is set down at the right hand of God, is an advocate with the father, and ever lives to make intercession for his people; and when he has gathered them all in, he will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness, and take them to himself, that they may be ever with him: and yet all this they did, *even of envy and strife*; not of *envy* to Christ, whom they preached, but of *envy* to the apostle; they envied his gifts, his usefulness and success in the ministry; and he being now in bonds, they thought it a proper opportunity to exert themselves, and set up preaching Christ as he had done, in the clearest manner; hoping they should meet with the same success, and gain great honour and applause in the church, and even be able to transfer to themselves that glory which belonged to the apostle: as for their *strife and contention*, of which they also preached Christ; it was not with other faithful ministers of the word, about the doctrines of the Gospel; for in these they were agreed with them, at least, in appearance and profession, and in their ministry ever did they raise strifes and contentions about words, from which comes envying among the brethren; for this would not have answered their ends, which were vain glory and popular applause; but they strove and contended one with another, who should preach Christ best and clearest, or with the apostle to get his glory and honour from him; they strove to outvie one another, and particularly him in preaching Christ: but there were others of the brethren who were truly such, who preached Christ as well as they, and upon better principles, and with better views; and some also of *good will*; or *willingly and freely*, as the Arabic version renders it; without any selfish end or sinister view of vain glory; not moved unto it by envy or ambition; not doing it in a contentious manner, and with an ill design; but of pure *good will* to the Gospel, having a real liking of it, an hearty love for it, a sincere desire to spread it, and promote the interest of a Redeemer, and the good of souls by it; having in a spiritual and experimental manner felt the power, and tasted the sweetness of it themselves: and so were inwardly affected and truly disposed to preach it, clear of all external motives and ambitious views; and as having a good will to the apostle himself, whose heart they knew was in the Gospel, though he was now hindered

from the ministry of it; and therefore to the best of their abilities were desirous of supplying his place without the least injury to his character.

Ver. 16. *The one preach Christ of contention, &c.*] That is, those that preached of envy and strife, and not of good will to Christ, to the Gospel, to the souls of men, or to the apostle; and though they preached Christ, yet *not sincerely or purely*; not but that they delivered the sincere milk of the word, and preached the pure Gospel of Christ, without any mixture and adulteration; but then they did not preach it with a sincere heart, and a pure intention; for this respects not the doctrine they preached, but their views in it, which were not honest and upright; they did not preach Christ from a principle of love to his person, and from an inward experience of the power of his Gospel, and a zealous affection for it, and firm attachment to it, and with a view to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of immortal souls; but were influenced by avarice, ambition, and envy: they had very evil designs upon the apostle, *supposing to add affliction to my bonds*: imagining that by their free and bold way of preaching Christ openly in the city without control, and with impunity, it might be thought that the apostle did not lie in bonds for preaching Christ, but for some other crime; or otherwise why were not they laid hold on and put under confinement also? or thinking that by such numbers of them frequently preaching Christ about the city, it would either incense and stir up the Jews, Paul's accusers, to prosecute him more vigorously; or excite Nero to take more cognizance of his case, and either more closely confine him, or hasten the bringing his cause to a hearing, and him to punishment, as the ringleader of this sect, to the terror of others; but this they could not do without exposing themselves to great danger, unless they were determined to recant, as soon as they should be taken up; wherefore it should rather seem that their view was in preaching Christ to carry away the glory of it from the apostle, and take it to themselves; and fancying that he was a man of the same cast with them, desirous of vain glory, they thought it would afflict and distress him, he being in bonds, and not at liberty to exert himself, and make use of his superior gifts and abilities; but in this they were mistaken, he was so far from being made uneasy hereby, that he rejoiced at the preaching of Christ, let their intentions be what they would; and therefore he does not say that they did add affliction to his bonds; but they *supposed*, or thought, that the method they took would do it.

Ver. 17. *But the other of love, &c.*] Those that were truly brethren in the Lord, who had received the grace of God in truth, to whom the Gospel was come in power, and who had a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, and of the mysteries of his grace; these preached Christ of love, *out of the love of him*, as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, out of love to Christ, who to them was exceeding precious, altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousands, and their hearts being hot and burning with love to him, they therefore spoke of him with their tongues; and out of love to the Gospel of Christ, which with them was the pearl of great price, and every truth of it more

valuable than gold, silver, and precious stones; and out of love to the church of Christ and the members of it, that their souls might be fed and nourished with the wholesome words of Christ, might be comforted with the doctrines of grace, and be established and built up in their most holy faith; and out of love to the souls of others, knowing their miserable estate by nature, and the danger they were in, and therefore preached Christ as the only way of salvation, whereby they could escape the wrath to come; and out of love to the apostle likewise, which the following clause shews; *knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel*; meaning either that they knew he was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ, and preach his Gospel in the world; that he was ordained and appointed a minister of it before the world was; separated to it from his mother's womb, and was called unto, and sent to preach it by Christ, and was set apart for it by the church; and was in a very eminent manner qualified to defend it, by preaching, disputing, writing, and suffering: or that they knew that he was laid, or lay, as the words may rendered, in prison, for defending the Gospel of Christ; yea, they knew that his lying in prison was in defence of the Gospel; and therefore, out of love to him, they joined issue with him to defend the Gospel; as he by suffering for it, so they by preaching it, which they knew full well would be matter of great joy to him.

Ver. 18. *What then? notwithstanding every way, &c.*] What follows from hence? what is to be concluded from all this? what is to be thought or said in this case? this, that notwithstanding these brethren acted on those different principles, and with those different views: *whether in pretence*; of love to Christ, zeal for the Gospel, and concern for the good of souls; though their real views were their own applause, and detriment to the apostle's character; or *בְּעֵלְוֹתָא*, by occasion, as the Syriac version renders the word, and as many interpreters think is the sense of it; occasionally preaching Christ, and making a handle of this to gain some other points, and get advantages to themselves as some: *or in truth*; as the hearty friends of Christ and the apostle did; they not only preached Christ who is the truth, and the truth as it is in Jesus, and every truth of the Gospel; and especially that fundamental one, salvation alone by a crucified Christ, and that without any adulteration or concealing any part of it; but with great purity of mind, with integrity of heart, and in the uprightness of their souls; as of sincerity, and in the sight of God; without selfish and sinister ends, and any ambitious views and evil designs: whether it was now in the one or the other way, upon the one or the other principles and views, the apostle stood thus affected; and these were his sentiments, reflections, and resolutions, that inasmuch as *Christ is preached*; in the glory of his person, in the fulness of his grace, in the suitableness of his offices and great salvation, in the excellency of his righteousness, and the virtue of his blood, and the efficacy of his sacrifice: *and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice*; not that it was an indifferent thing with him, whether Christ was sincerely or hypocritically preached; or that he could take any pleasure in the manner of preaching, and in the principles and

views of one sort of these preachers; for nothing was more disagreeable to him than envy and ambition, strife and contention, hypocrisy and insincerity; but he rejoiced in the subject-matter of their ministry, which was Christ Jesus the Lord, whom he dearly loved, and whose interest, if served by any means, or any sort of persons, was a pleasure to him; and also in the effects and consequences of their ministry, the establishing of the saints, the conversion of sinners, the spread of the Gospel, and the enlargement of the interest of Christ: all which may be answered through the preaching of Christ, by evil-designing men; for Christ and his Gospel are the same by whomsoever preached, and God may make use of his own truths to answer his ends and purposes, whoever are the dispensers of them, and though they themselves may be cast away, as Judas and others.

Ver. 19. *For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, &c.*] *Or to salvation*, to the salvation of others; that is, the preaching of Christ by these men, though designed by them to the hurt of the apostle; yet he knew that by the power and grace of God it should be made useful to the conversion, and for the salvation of many souls; and this was matter of rejoicing to him: or that affliction which they thought to have added to his bonds, should it befall him, he knew either from a divine revelation, or from the word of God in general, which gives reason to believe that all things work together for good to the saints, and from his own experience; that this also would turn to his advantage, and be for his good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal, and would work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the world to come; and even in this world, he knew that every reproach, indignity, and suffering he endured, did but increase his fame and his honour, and make his name the more illustrious among the saints; which was the very thing these men envied in him, and strove to take from him; yea, he knew that the method they took would, quite contrary to their expectation, be the means of his enlargement and liberty, of his salvation and deliverance from his bonds: see ver. 25, 26. and which he believed would be brought about by the prayers of the saints, and particularly these Philippians: *through your prayer*; as Peter was delivered out of prison through the incessant prayer of the church for him. The apostle knew that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much with God, and is very prevalent with him, and much more the prayers of a whole church; wherefore he frequently desired them for him on many accounts; and among others, that he might be delivered out of the hands of unreasonable men; and he firmly believed that he should be delivered by such means: *and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ*; which he had reason to expect and hope would be given him through their prayers for him; for though God has made large provisions for the supply of the wants of his people, in his son and in his covenant, to be dispensed unto them by his spirit, yet for these will he be sought unto by them: the supply of the spirit is a supply of gifts from Christ, fitting and qualifying men for his service, and which are ministered by the spirit to them severally as he will; and a supply of grace out of the fulness of Christ, which the spirit of grace is the applicer

of; and a supply of strength from the same by him, to enable the saints both to do and suffer whatever he is pleased to call them to; 'tis in short a supply of all their need, which the spirit of God helps them to, according to the riches of grace, in glory by Christ: this the apostle knew would be sufficient for him, to support him under his present troubles, to deliver him out of them, and to fit him for whatever future work and service his Lord and master had for him to do.

Ver. 20. *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, &c.*] These words are so placed as that they may refer both to what goes before and what follows after; and the sense be either that the apostle had an earnest expectation and hope, even a strong confidence of his salvation, or deliverance from his confinement; and also of his having an interest in the prayers of the saints, and that hereby a supply of the spirit would be given him; for as he knew and was sure that his God would supply the wants of others, he had great reason to believe he would supply his own; and especially since he had been told by Christ that his grace was sufficient for him: or as in connection with what follows; he had a full persuasion that he should not be put to shame on any account; *that in nothing I shall be ashamed*; not of his hope, neither the grace of hope, which makes not ashamed; nor the object of hope, Christ Jesus; nor the thing hoped for, eternal life and happiness, or any of the above things about which this grace was conversant; nor of his reproaches and sufferings for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, which he esteemed as an honour to him, as jewels in his crown, as chains of gold about his neck, and as great riches; nor of the Gospel which he preached, so as to retract and deny it, drop the whole, or conceal any part of it, lay down his profession of it, or cease to preach it: *but* his earnest desire and his firm hope and faith were, *that with all boldness, as always*; that as he had, so he should continue to use boldness in the exercise of faith at the throne of grace, come with freedom thither, and stand before God with intrepidity, through the blood and righteousness of his son; and that as he had met with afflictions and sufferings for Christ's sake, with cheerfulness and an undaunted spirit, none of these things had moved him, so he believed he never should; and that as he had all along, throughout the whole course of his ministry, preached the Gospel with plainness, openness, and freedom, without any guise or reserve, and that with an holy courage and boldness in the face of all opposition; *so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body*: for this being Christ's, his great concern was to glorify him in it; and though it was a poor, weak, and crazy body, yet rich treasure being put into this earthen vessel, Christ had been greatly magnified, extolled, and made very high in it; never was there, as the apostle, such a magnifier of Christ, by preaching him in the transcendent glories of his person as the son of God, in the riches of his grace as Mediator, in all his offices of prophet, priest, and King; and particularly in the justification and salvation of men, where he made him to be all in all. Christ was also magnified by him, by his life and conversation, which was influenced by his grace, was in obedience to his will,

and was directed to his glory, was as became his Gospel, and what adorned his doctrine in all things; and also by enduring such hardships and so great sufferings on his account; the power of Christ was greatly magnified in supporting him under them, and carrying him through them; and as this had been the case ever since he was in the ministry, it being the main thing he had in view, he had a well-grounded hope and confidence, that it would ever be so: *whether* it be *by life or by death*; that is, should he live longer, should he be delivered from his present confinement, and be spared a little longer among men, he was comfortably assured Christ would be magnified by him in his body, and as long as he was in it; for his determination was to preach him and him only, to spend his life in his service, and to seek not his own things, but the things of Christ; or should he be put to death quickly by the order of Nero, he doubted not but Christ would have some glory thereby; he should die calling upon his name with fervency, professing his constant and unshaken faith in him, and sealing the Gospel by his blood, with the greatest cheerfulness.

Ver. 21. *For to me to live is Christ, &c.*] Christ was his life, *efficiently*, the efficient cause and author of his spiritual life; he spoke it into him, produced it in him, and imprincipled him with it: and he was his life, *objectively*, the matter and object of his life, that on which he lived; yea, it was not so much he that lived, as Christ that lived in him; he lived by faith on Christ, and his spiritual life was maintained and supported by feeding on him as the bread of life: and he was his life, *finally*, the end of his life; what he aimed at throughout the whole course of his life was the glory of Christ, the good of his church and people, the spread of his Gospel, the honour of his name, and the increase of his interest; and this last seems to be the true sense of the phrase here; *and to die is gain*; to himself, for death is gain to believers: it is not easy to say what a believer gains by dying; he is released thereby, and delivered from all the troubles and distresses of this life, arising from diseases of body, losses and disappointments in worldly things; from the oppressions and persecutions of wicked men; from in-dwelling sin, unbelief, doubts, and fears, and the temptations of Satan; he as soon as dies enters into the presence of God, where is fulness of joy, and is immediately with Christ, which is far better than being here, beholding his glory and enjoying communion with him; he is at once in the company of angels and glorified saints; is possessed of perfect holiness and knowledge; inherits a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and wears a crown of life, righteousness, and glory; enters upon an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; is received into everlasting habitations, into mansions of light, life, love, joy, peace, and comfort; is at perfect rest, and surrounded with endless pleasures. This is the common interpretation, and is countenanced by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which read, *to die, or if I die, it is gain to me*: but instead of reading the words as consisting of two propositions, they may be considered as one, and the sense be either this; Christ is gain to me living or dying, in life or in death; *for*

Christ is the believer's gain in life; he is all in all, his righteousness, his wisdom, his sanctification, his redemption, his life, his light, his food, his raiment, his riches, his joy, peace, and comfort; he is every thing to him he wants, can wish for, or desire: and he is his gain in death; the hope he then has is founded on him, and the triumphs of his faith over death and the grave arise from redemption by him; his expectation is to be immediately with him; and the glory he will then enter into will lie in communion with him, in conformity to him, and in an everlasting vision of him: or thus, for me to live and to die is Christ's gain; his life being spent in his service, in living according to his will, in preaching his Gospel, serving his churches, and suffering for his sake, was for his glory; and his death being for his sake, in the faith of him, and the steady profession of it, would be what would glorify him, and so be his gain likewise; and this seems to be the genuine sense of the words, which contain a reason of the apostle's faith, why he was persuaded Christ would be magnified or glorified in his body, whether by life or by death.

Ver. 22. *But if I live in the flesh, &c.*] To be in the flesh sometimes signifies to be in a state of nature and unregeneracy, and to live in and after the flesh, to live according to the dictates of corrupt nature; but here it signifies living in the body, or the life which is in the flesh, as the Syriac version renders the phrase here, and as the apostle expresses it in Gal. ii. 20. and the sense is, if I should live any longer in the body, and be continued for some time in this world: *this is the fruit of my labour; or I have fruit in my works*, as the above version renders it: *yet what I shall choose I wot not, or know not*; whether life or death; since my life will be for the honour and glory of Christ, and though a toilsome and laborious one, yet useful and fruitful: by his *labour*, he means his ministerial work and service; the ministry is a work, a good and honourable work, and a laborious one. Christ's faithful ministers are labourers; they labour in the word and doctrine, both in studying and preaching it; and such a labourer was the apostle, who by the grace of God laboured more abundantly than others; the *fruit* of which was the conversion of many sinners, the edification, comfort, and establishment of the saints, their fruitfulness in grace and works, the spread of the Gospel far and near, the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, and the weakening of Satan's kingdom, and the glorifying of Christ in his person, offices, and great salvation; all which was a strong and swaying argument with him, to desire to live longer in the body, and made it on the one hand so difficult with him what to choose: for as a certain Jew^b says, "the righteous man desires to live to do the will of God whilst he lives;" but not with that view, he adds, "to increase the reward of the soul in the world to come."

Ver. 23. *For I am in a strait betwixt two, &c.*] Life and death; or between these *two counsels*, as the Arabic version reads; two thoughts and desires of the mind, a desire to live for the reasons above, and a

desire to die for a reason following. The apostle was pressed with a difficulty in his mind about this, as David was when he was bid to choose which he would, either seven years' famine, or three months' flight before his enemies, or three days' pestilence; upon which he said, *I am in a great strait*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. to which passage 'tis thought the apostle alludes; the same word as here is used by Christ, Luke xii. 50. *having a desire to depart*; to die, a way of speaking much in use with the Jews, as expressive of death; thus Abraham is represented by them speaking after this manner on account of his two sons Isaac and Ishmael, the one being righteous and the other wicked; "says he, if I bless Isaac, lo, Ishmael will seek to be blessed, and he is wicked; but a servant am I, flesh and blood am I, and to-morrow כִּנְיָנוּ הָעוֹלָם, *נִכְשֶׁר*, *I shall depart out of the world, or die*; and what pleases the holy blessed God himself in his own world, let him do: כִּנְיָנוּ, *when Abraham was dismissed or departed*, the holy blessed God appeared to Isaac and blessed him:" and again it is said, "iniquities are not atoned for, until דְּאִתְפַּשְׁר מֵעֲלָמָא, *a man is dismissed, or departs out of the world*;" and once more, "when a man מִחוּץ הָעוֹלָם, *נִפְתָּר*, *departs out of this world*; according to his merit he ascends above;" see the note on John xiii. 1. the same word is used in the Syriac version here; death is departing out of this life, a going out of the body, a removal out of this world; it is like moving from one place to another, from the world below to the world above; with the saints 'tis no other than a removing from one house to another, from the earthly house of their tabernacle, the body, to their father's house, and the mansions of glory in it, preparing for them. Death is not an annihilation of men, נִכְשֶׁר of soul nor body; it is a separation of them, but not a destruction of either; it is a dissolution of the union between them for a while, when both remain in a separate state till the resurrection: now this the apostle had a desire unto, which was not a new and sudden motion of mind; it was a thought that had long dwelt with him, and still continued; and this desire after death was not for the sake of death, for death in itself is a king of terrors, very formulable and terrible, and not desirable; 'tis an enemy, the last enemy that shall be destroyed; it is contrary to nature, and to desire it is contrary to a first principle in nature, self-preservation; but death is desired for some other end; wicked men desire it, and desire others to put an end to their lives, or do it themselves to free them from some trouble they are in; or because they are not able to support under a disappointment of what their ambition or lust have prompted them to: good men desire death, though always when right, with a submission to the will of God, that they may be rid of sin, which so much dishonours God as well as distresses themselves; and that they may be clothed upon with the shining robes of immortality and glory; and as the apostle here, to be with Christ: for the former clause is to be strictly connected with this: he did not desire merely to depart this life, but chiefly to be with Christ, and

^b Kimchi in Psal. vi. 5.

^c Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 2.

^d Zohar in Numb. fol. 51. 3.

^e Tzeror Hammer, fol. 2. 1.

the former only in order to the latter; the saints are in Christ now, chosen in him, set upon his heart, and put into his hands, are created in him, and brought to believe in him, and are in him as branches in the vine; and he is in them, formed in their hearts, lives and dwells in them by faith, and they have sometimes communion with him in private duties and public worship; he comes into them and sups with them, and they with him: but this is only at times, he is as a wayfaring man that continues but for a night; hence the present state of the saints is a state of absence from Christ; whilst they are at home in the body, they are absent from the Lord, especially as to his bodily presence; but after death they are immediately with him, where he is in his human nature; and their souls in their separate state continue with him till the resurrection-morn, when their bodies will be raised and re-united to their souls, and be both for ever with him, beholding his glory, and enjoying uninterrupted communion with him; which will be the completion and full end of Christ's preparations and prayers: hence it appears that there is a future being and state after death: the apostle desires to depart this life, and *be, exist, be somewhere, with Christ*; for the only happy being after death is with him; if souls are not with him, they are with devils and damned spirits, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: and it is also manifest that souls don't sleep with the body in the grave until the resurrection; the souls of the saints are immediately with Christ, in the enjoyment of his presence, in happiness and glory, hoping, believing, and waiting for the resurrection of their bodies; had the apostle known that he must have remained after death in a state of inactivity and uselessness, deprived of the communion of Christ and of his church, it would have been no difficulty with him to determine which was most eligible, to live or die; and it would have been much better for him, and more to the advantage of the churches, if he had continued upon earth to this day, than to be sleeping in his grave, senseless and inactive; whereas he adds, *which is far better*: to depart and be with Christ is better than to live in the flesh in this sinful world, in the midst of a variety of sorrows and troubles, and in which communion with Christ is but now and then enjoyed, though such a life is better than sleeping in the grave; but upon a soul's departure and being with Christ, it is free from sin and sorrow, and in the utmost pleasure, enjoying communion with him without interruption; and this is better than labouring in the ministry: for though no man took more pleasure in the work of the ministry than the apostle did, and no man's ministry was more profitable and useful; yet it was toilsome, laborious, and wearisome to the flesh; wherefore dying and being with Jesus could not but be desirable, since he should then rest from his labours, and his works would follow him; at least it was better for him, and so the Syriac version adds, *לי, to me, far better for me*; and so the Arabic: to live longer might be better and more to the advantage of Christ, the glory of his name, the good of his churches, it might be better for others; but leaving the world and being with Christ

were better for him; and this was an argument swaying on the side of death, and inclining him to desire that, and made it so difficult with him what to choose.

Ver. 24. *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh, &c.*] To continue in the body, not always, but a little longer, is *more needful for you*; for their comfort, edification, and instruction, their further profiting and increase in faith, and the joy of it. The Syriac version renders the words thus, *but business for you, or a good will towards you compels me to abide in the body*; and the Arabic version thus, *notwithstanding I choose to remain in the flesh, and this I think very necessary for you*; so that upon the whole, the argument for living longer on consideration of glorifying Christ, and of being more useful to the good of souls, preponderated with him; inclined him to desire rather to live than die; though the latter was better for him, and more to his personal advantage; and thus, like a brave and good man, he prefers a public good to a private one.

Ver. 25. *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, &c.*] In the flesh, in the body, live a little longer in the world. These words must be understood either of a certain infallible knowledge, arising from a divine revelation, and a firm persuasion and confidence founded upon that which the apostle had, of his being delivered from his bonds, and spared a little longer for further usefulness among the churches; and accordingly some have thought that he was after this set at liberty, and travelled through several countries preaching the Gospel, and after that was committed to prison and suffered death; but of this there is no sufficient proof: or rather therefore of a conjectural knowledge arising from the present state of things, and his view of it; being willing to hope, and persuade himself that he should be delivered from his confinement, and his life be spared for the good of the interest of Christ, and the glory of his name; it being what his heart was set upon, and he was very desirous of: *and continue with you all*; not only with the Philippians, but other saints, and other churches, who were dear to him, and he to them; though he may mean more especially these believers: *for your furtherance, or profiting*; in divine and spiritual things, in the knowledge of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel: *and joy of faith*; for the furtherance, or increase of that joy which faith is attended with, and which springs from it; for true solid joy springs from faith in the person, blood, righteousness, and atonement of Christ; and is what may be increased, and is often done by and through the ministry of the word, and the ministers of the Gospel; who don't pretend to a dominion over the faith of men, only to be helpers of their joy, as they sometimes are, as also of their faith, which as it comes by hearing is increased the same way. The phrase is Jewish; mention is made in the writings of the Jews^f of *הדורה דרמיה כמותה, the joy of faith*.

Ver. 26. *That your rejoicing may be more abundant, &c.*] They had rejoiced greatly on his account already, blessing God that ever they had seen his face, or heard his voice; as they had great reason to do, he being the

^f Zobar in Gen. fol. 113. 4. & in Exod. fol. 36. 4.

happy instrument of first bringing the Gospel to them, and of their conversion; and now he hoped he should be delivered out of prison, and see them again, that their joy might be increased and abound yet more and more, upon his deliverance, they had so earnestly prayed and so much longed for, and at the sight of him they so dearly loved: and yet to shew that this their joy was not looked upon by him as a carnal one, or as arising from a natural affection, he observes that it was *in Jesus Christ*; though they rejoiced in him as an instrument, and therefore he adds, *for me*: yet it was on account of Jesus Christ, the subject of his ministry; their joy did not centre in the apostle, but had Christ for its object, whose person, righteousness, and salvation were held forth by him to their view and comfort; and though they would still more and more rejoice should he return to them once more, *by my coming to you again*: yet still it would be in Christ, and because of the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, in which he should come to them.

Ver. 27. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, &c.*] Or *behave as citizens worthy of the Gospel*: for not so much their outward conversation in the world is here intended, which ought to be in wisdom towards them that are without; so as to give no offence to any, and to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and then to confusion and shame who falsely accuse their good conversation in Christ; though this is what is highly becoming professors of the Gospel; and a moral conversation proceeding from principles of grace, under the influence of the spirit of God, is very ornamental to the Gospel, being what that requires and powerfully teaches; but the conversation of the saints one with another, in their church-state, is here meant. The allusion is to cities which have their peculiar laws and rules, to which the citizens are to conform; and such as behave according to them act up to the character of good citizens, and becoming, and worthy of the charter by which they hold their privileges and immunities. A church of Christ is as a city, and is often so called; the members of it are citizens, fellow-citizens, one with another, and of the household of God, and have laws and rules according to which they are to conduct themselves; as such do who walk worthy of their vocation, and becoming the charter of the Gospel by which they have and hold their freedom and privileges, as citizens of the new Jerusalem: and such a Gospel walk and conversation lies in such things as these; constant attendance on the preaching of the Gospel, and on the administration of Gospel ordinances; a strict observation of the rules of behaviour towards persons that have given offence, either in public or private; a just regard to the discipline of Christ's house, in admonitions, reproofs, censures and excommunications, as cases require; cultivating love, unity, and peace; keeping the ordinances as they were delivered; retaining and striving for the doctrines of the Gospel; holding the mysteries of it in a pure conscience, and adorning it by a becoming life and conversation. This the apostle recommends as the *only*, the main and principal thing these saints should attend to; and as what would give him the greatest joy and pleasure to hear of, whether he should ever come and see them again or no: *that whether I come and see*

you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs. The Vulgate Latin version reads *hear of you*; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions: *that ye stand fast in one spirit*; meaning either the Gospel, which is the spirit that giveth life; so called because it is from the spirit of God, and that by which he is conveyed into the souls of men, and contains spiritual things: this is one, uniform, consistent scheme of truths; and in this believers ought to stand fast, and should abide by it, and never give up, or part with any one branch of it; and so to do is one part of their Gospel conversation; for the apostle in this and the following things points out the several parts of that conversation he exhorts to: or else the holy spirit of God is intended, who as he is the beginner of the good work of grace on the soul, is he also who carries it on and will perfect it; and therefore to him should the people of God look for grace and strength, to enable them to stand fast in the profession of their faith, to hold it fast without wavering, and to persevere to the end; who is that one spirit by which they are baptized into one body, and become fellow-citizens with the saints: or the spirit of love, unity, and peace is here meant: true Christian love makes the saints to be of one heart and soul; and in this single affection to one another should they stand fast; brotherly love should continue, and all endeavours be used to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; which is another branch of becoming Gospel conversation: the apostle adds, *with one mind, or soul*; either signifying the same as before, or else that they should be of one judgment in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and abide therein; which is necessary to their harmonious walk and conversation together, as citizens of Zion: *striving together for the faith of the Gospel*; by the *faith of the Gospel*, may be designed the grace of faith, which comes by the Gospel, as the means of it, and by which the Gospel becomes useful and beneficial to the souls of men, and which has the Gospel for its object; for faith comes by hearing the word, and that is only profitable when it is mixed with it, and is that grace which gives credit to every truth of it, upon the testimony of divine revelation: now as the doctrine of faith is that which the saints are to strive for, the grace of faith is that by which they strive for it; by which they resist Satan, oppose false teachers, and overcome the world; and agreeably to this sense the Arabic version reads, *by the faith of the Gospel*: though rather the doctrine of faith is intended, that word of faith, or faith, which is the Gospel itself, and which is often so called; and for this, in all its parts and branches, believers should strive; as for all those doctrines of faith, which concern the unity of God, the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the divine sonship of Christ, the proper deity and distinct personality of him and the blessed Spirit; and for all such doctrines as regard the state and condition of men by the fall of Adam, as that the guilt of his sin is imputed to all his posterity, the pollution of nature by it derived and communicated to them, that the bias of man's mind is naturally to that which is evil, and is averse to that which is good, and that he is impotent to every thing that is spiritually good; and for all those doctrines which regard the free and distinguishing grace of God; of election, as eternal, personal, and irrespective of faith, holiness, and

good works, as motives and conditions of it; of the covenant of grace, as from everlasting, absolute and unconditional, sure and firm; of redemption, as particular, and as proceeding upon a full satisfaction for sin to law and justice; of justification by the righteousness of Christ; of peace and pardon by his blood; of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, as entirely owing to powerful and efficacious grace, and not to man's free will; of the saints' final perseverance, the resurrection of the dead, a future judgment, and eternal life, as the free gift of God: *striving* for these, as wrestlers do with one another, to which the allusion is, supposes persons to strive and wrestle against; and they are such as oppose truth and themselves unto it; as all such that deny divine revelation, or the authority of the Scriptures; that say that Jesus is not the Messiah; or that Christ is not the natural and eternal son of God; or that deny his proper deity, his satisfaction and righteousness; that reject the efficacious grace of God, and the operations of the spirit as unnecessary to regeneration and conversion; that advance and plead for the purity of human nature, the power of man's free will, and ascribe justification and salvation to the works of men: all such are to be contended with and strove against, and that not with carnal weapons, but with spiritual ones, with the Scriptures of truth; by which a good warfare with them may be waged, and the good fight of faith fought with much success; and the whole requires great care and solicitude, earnestness, zeal, constancy, and courage: *striving together* for these, intends either striving with the apostle, and as they had him both as a fellow-soldier, and for an example; or rather striving one with another, their ministers with their members, and their members with their ministers; the one by preaching, writing, and disputing more especially, the other by bearing a constant testimony to truth, and praying for the success of it; and both by dying for it when required; and so to do is to have the conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 28. *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, &c.*] Not by Satan, though a roaring lion, for Christ is greater than he; nor by the world which Christ has overcome; nor by false teachers, though men of art and cunning; nor by violent persecutors, who can do no more than kill the body; let not the power, the rage, the cunning, or the violence of one or the other, move, discourage, or affright from a close attachment to the Gospel and the truths of it: *which is to them an evident token of perdition*; when men wilfully oppose themselves to the truth, and shew a malicious hatred to it, and hold it in unrighteousness, and either turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, or persecute it with rage and fury, it looks as if they were given up to reprobate minds, to say and do things not convenient; as if they were fore-ordained to condemnation, and were consigned over to destruction and perdition; and very rare it is that such persons are ever called by grace: *but to you of salvation*; when men are reproached and ridiculed, are threatened and persecuted for the sake of the Gospel, and are enabled to take all patiently, and persevere in the truth with constancy, it is a manifest token that such are counted worthy of the kingdom of God; that God has a design of salvation for them, and that they shall be saved with an everlasting

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one: so that the different effects of the opposition of the one, and the constancy of the other, are made use of as so many reasons why the saints should not be terrified by their enemies: 'tis added, *and that of God*; meaning either that the whole of this is of God, as that there are adversaries, heretics, and persecutors; this is by divine permission, and in order to answer some ends and purposes of God, and the perdition or everlasting punishment of such persons will be righteously inflicted upon them by him; and that the constancy, faith, patience, and perseverance of the saints and their salvation, are all of God: or it particularly respects the latter, the salvation of those who persevere to the end; this is not of themselves, or merited by their constancy, patience, and perseverance, but is God's free gift. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, join this clause to the beginning of the next verse thus, *and this is given of God to you, &c.*

Ver. 29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, &c.*] For the sake of his Gospel, for the good of his interest, and the glory of his name. The Alexandrian copy reads, *to us it is given, &c. not only to believe in him*; for faith in Christ, which is not merely believing that he is the Christ, and all that is said of him, or all that he himself says, but is a seeing of the son, a going to him, receiving, embracing, leaning, relying, and living upon him, as God's salvation, is a pure gift of grace; it is not in nature, nor in every man, and in whom it is, it is not of themselves, it is the gift of God; the first implantation of it, all its acts and exercise, its increase, and the performance of it at last with power, are all owing to the grace of God; and this is only given to the elect, for it is a distinguishing gift; 'tis given to them, and them alone, and therefore called the faith of God's elect: *but also to suffer for his sake*; for the sake of Christ personal; for the sake of Christ mystical, for his body's sake the church; for the sake of his Gospel, and for the sake of his cause and interest in the world: now to suffer in name and character, in estate or person, not as an evil-doer, but as a Christian, is a gift of God, as faith in Christ is; all the sufferings of the saints are appointed by God; their being called forth to suffer shame for the sake of Christ, is an high honour conferred upon them; all the grace and strength by which they are supported under sufferings for Christ are given to them; and all the glory consequent upon them is not merited by them, which are by no means to be compared with it, but is the free gift of God through Christ. The same persons to whom it is given to believe in Christ, to them it is given to suffer for him; and they all do in some shape or another, though some more, others less; yet all are partakers of sufferings for Christ, and so are conformed to him their head, and hereby enter the kingdom: now all this is said, as containing so many reasons to encourage believers to have their conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ, by a steady adherence to it, and a joint contention and striving for it, without being intimidated by their enemies.

Ver. 30. *Having the same conflict, &c.*] For it seems that the Philippians were now under persecution for the Gospel of Christ; but this was no new or strange thing; it was the same the apostle was under formerly, and at that time: *which ye saw in me, and now hear to*

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be in me: when he and Silas were at Philippi, and first preached the Gospel there, they were exceedingly ill-used, and shamefully entreated; they were dragged to the market-place, or court, were beaten and scourged, and put into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, Acts xvi. 19, 22, 23, 24. 1 Thess. ii. 2. of all this the Philippians were eye-witnesses, and to which he here refers when he says, *which ye saw in me*: and now he was a prisoner at Rome, as they had heard,

hence he says, *and now hear to be in me*; for they had sent Epaphroditus to him with a present, as a token of their love to him, and to support him under his affliction; and which he mentions, in order to animate them to bear their sufferings patiently for Christ's sake, since the same were accomplished in him, as well as in the rest of their brethren and fellow-Christians in the world.

C H A P. II.

THIS chapter contains several exhortations to unity, love, and concord, to humility, and lowliness of mind, and to a becoming life and conversation; and concludes with commendations of two eminent ministers of Christ, Timothy and Epaphroditus. The arguments engaging to harmony and mutual affection, are taken from the consolation that is in Christ, the comfort there is in love, the fellowship of the spirit, and the bowels and mercies which become saints, ver. 1. as also from the joy this would fill the apostle with; and the things exhorted to are expressed by likeness of mind, sameness of love, and unity of soul, ver. 2. and the manner directed to for the preservation of such a spirit, is to do nothing in a contentious and vain-glorious way, but in an humble and lowly manner, having a better opinion of others than themselves; and observing their superior gifts and graces, and so submit things unto them, ver. 3, 4. and which humble deportment is further urged, from the instance and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 5. which is illustrated by the dignity of his person, the glorious divine form in which he was, and his indisputable equality with his father, ver. 6. and yet such was his great condescension, that he became man, appeared in the form of a servant, and was humbled to the lowest degree, even to die the death of the cross, ver. 7, 8. nevertheless God exalted him as man, and gave him superior honour to all creatures; and will oblige all to be subject to him, and acknowledge his dominion over them, to the glory of his divine Father, ver. 9, 10, 11. hereby suggesting, that in like manner, though not to the same degree, such who are humble and lowly-minded shall be exalted by the Lord; and then with the greatest affection to the Philippians, and with high commendations of them, the apostle renews his exhortation to do all the duties of religion with humility and modesty; knowing that all the grace and strength in which they performed them was owing to the internal operation of divine power in them, ver. 12, 13. and therefore should be done without murmuring against God, or disputings among themselves, ver. 14. and next he proceeds to exhort to an unblemished and inoffensive life and conversation, as the end and issue of a modest and humble behaviour; and this he enforces on them, from the consideration of their relation to God, being his children, which would appear hereby; and from the wickedness and perverseness of the people they lived among; and therefore should be careful, lest they be insnared by them, to the dishonour of God, and the grief of themselves; and from their cha-

racter as lights in the world, whose business it was to hold forth the word of life; and also from this consideration, that it would be the joy of the apostle in the day of Christ, that his labours among them had not been fruitless, ver. 15, 16. yea, such was his love to them, that if even he was to die on their account, it would be matter of joy and gladness to him; and he desires they would express the same joy with him, ver. 17, 18. and though he could not be with them in person, he hoped in a little time to send Timothy, for this end, that he might know how things stood with them; which if well, would be a comfort to him, ver. 19. the reasons why he pitched upon Timothy as a messenger to them were, because there were none like him, for the sincere regard he had for their spiritual good, ver. 20. and which is illustrated by the contrary disposition and conduct of others, who sought themselves, and not Jesus Christ, his honour and interest, ver. 21. and besides, they themselves were witnesses of his filial affection to the apostle, and of his faithful service with him in the Gospel, ver. 22. and then he repeats his hopes of sending him quickly, as soon as ever he knew how it would go with him, whether he should be released or suffer, ver. 23. the former of which he had some confidence of, and that he should be able to see them himself in a little time, ver. 24. however, in the mean while he thought it proper to send Epaphroditus to them, whom he commends as a brother of his, a co-worker, a fellow-soldier, a messenger of theirs, and a minister to his wants, ver. 25. the reasons of sending him were, because he longed to see them, and because he was uneasy that they had heard of his sickness; which was not only true that he had been sick, but his sickness was very dangerous, and threatened with death; however, through the mercy of God to him, he was recovered; and which was a mercy also to the apostle, who otherwise would have had an additional sorrow; wherefore another reason of sending him was, that upon the sight of him they might be filled with joy, and the apostle himself have less sorrow, ver. 26, 27, 28. and then he exhorts them, that when he was returned to them, they would gladly receive him, and highly esteem of him; and the rather, since the dangerous illness he was attended with was brought upon him through his laboriousness in the service of Christ, and also of the apostle, which he performed in their stead, even to the neglect of his health and life, ver. 29, 30.

Ver. 1. *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, &c.*] Or *exhortation*, as the word is sometimes ren-

dered; that is, either if there is any exhortation of Christ to love and unity, as there is in John xiii. 34. and xv. 11, 17. and this is of any weight and value; or if an exhortation hereunto made in the name of Christ, by any of his ministers, messengers, and ambassadors, will be regarded, as it ought to be, then *fulfil ye my joy*, &c. but as the word is frequently translated *consolation*, as it is here in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the sense may be either, if there is any comfort to be given to them that are in Christ Jesus, as every converted man is, and as the apostle was, and especially to them that are afflicted and persecuted for the sake of Christ, are prisoners in him, and on his account, which was the apostle's case, then he desired they would attend to his following request: or if there was any consolation for them, and they had had any comfort in and from Christ; as all true, solid, strong, and everlasting consolation is only in Christ, and is founded on the greatness of his person, as God our Saviour, on the fulness of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, the perfection of his righteousness and sacrifice, and on the great salvation he is the author of: agreeably the Syriac version renders it, *if therefore ye have any consolation in Christ*; and the Arabic version, *if therefore ye enjoy any consolation from the grace of Christ*; which is displayed in the Gospel, as undoubtedly they did; and since then all this comfort was enjoyed by them, through the Gospel the apostle preached to them, the argument from hence must be strong upon them, to attend to what he desired of them: *if any comfort of love*: in it, or from it; as from the love of God the Father, which is everlasting and unchangeable, and must be comforting, when shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; and from the love of the Son, which is the same, and equally immovable and lasting, and which passeth knowledge; and from the love of the Spirit, in applying the grace of the Father, and of the Son, whereby he becomes a glorifier of them, and a comforter of his people; and from the love of the saints to one another, which renders their communion with each other comfortable, pleasant, and delightful: or the apostle's sense is, if they had so much love for him, as to wish and desire he might be comforted in his present situation, and that they would be willing to make use of any methods to comfort him, then he desires this; and this is all he desires, mutual love, peace, harmony, and agreement among themselves: *if any fellowship of the spirit*: of the spirit of one saint with another; if there is such a thing as an union of spirits, an oneness of souls, a tasting of each other's spirits, and a communion with one another, then care should be taken to keep this unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace: or if there is any fellowship of the Holy Spirit of God, any communion with him, any such thing as a witnessing of him to, and with our spirits, or as fellowship with the Father and the Son by him, and saints are baptized into one body by one spirit, and have been made to drink of the same spirit, then it becomes them to be of one mind, and to stand fast in one spirit: *if any bowels and mercies*; as there are in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, moving towards the saints; or such as become Christians, who, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to put on bowels of mercies to one another;

express the most hearty, inward, tender, and compassionate concern for each other's welfare, temporal and spiritual. Thus the apostle premises the most moving and pathetic arguments, leading on to the exhortations and advice, to love, harmony, and unity, given in the following verse.

Ver. 2. *Fulfil ye my joy*, &c.] The Arabic version adds, *by these things*; meaning not his joy in the Lord Jesus Christ, which arose from views of interest in his person, blood, and righteousness; which was had by believing in him, by enjoying communion with him, and living in hope of the glory of God; this is a fruit of the spirit, and is called joy in the Holy Ghost; who, as he was the author, must be the finisher of it, and not the Philippians; much less does he mean that fulness of joy in the presence, and at the right hand of God in heaven, which he expected to have; but that which arose from the state, conduct, and mutual respect of the saints to each other; he had much joy in them, on account of the good work being begun, and carrying on in their souls; and because of their steadfastness in the faith, notwithstanding the persecutions they met with; and on account of their continued love to him, and the late fresh instance of it they had given, in sending their minister with a present to him, and who had given him a particular account of their affairs; but his joy was not yet full, there were some things which damped it; as the unbecoming walk and conversation of some, of whom he spoke with grief of heart, and tears in his eyes; and the inclination of others to listen to the false teachers, those of the concision, or circumcision; and the murmurings, disputings, and divisions of others among them, that were contentious and quarrelsome; wherefore to crown his joy, and fill it brimful, he signifies that their unity in affection, judgment, and practice, would do it, for so he explains it as follows: *that ye be like-minded*, or *equally affected to one another*: that since they were but as one man, were one body, and had but one head, and one spirit, that quickened and comforted them, and had but one faith and one baptism, they ought to be one in affection, practice, and judgment; this is the general, of which the following are the particulars: *having the same love*; both for quality, being hearty, sincere, and unfeigned; and for quantity, returning the same that is measured to them; and with respect to objects, loving the same Christ, the same doctrines of Christ, the same ministers of the Gospel, and all the saints, rich and poor, high and low, weak or strong believers, without making any difference, by which means unity is preserved: for if one loves Christ, and another anti-christ; one loves one doctrine, and another the opposite to it; one loves a teacher of the law, and another a preacher of the Gospel, one loves one Gospel minister, and one loves another, in distinction from, and opposition to the other; one loves the rich and not the poor, men of great gifts and grace, and neglects the meaner saints; when this is the case, they can't be said to have the same love, nor can there be harmony, concord, and agreement: *being of one accord*, or *being alike in soul*; having the same soul, not in substance and number, as some philosophers have asserted, but having the same affection, judgment, and will, as the first Christians are said to be of one heart and of one

soul; or *unanimous* in their sentiments about doctrines and ordinances, being all of a piece in their practices; and agreeing in all their counsels, debates, acts, and votes, in their church-meetings: of *one mind*; in the doctrines of grace, in the ordinances of the Gospel, and in the discipline of the church: the means of preserving and increasing such affection, unity, and agreement, are next directed to.

Ver. 3. Let *nothing* be done through *strife*, &c.] About words merely; otherwise they were to strive for the faith of the Gospel, the purity of Gospel ordinances, worship and discipline; but the apostle would not have them strive merely to carry a point determined on, without having any regard to reason and truth, or yielding to the infirmities of the weak; which is the case and conduct of contentious persons; than which nothing can be more contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, or the peace of churches: the apostle adds, or *vain glory*; for where this is predominant, persons will always be singular in their sentiments, and never relinquish them, let what reason soever be given against them; nor will they give way to the judgment of others, but right or wrong will have their own wills; Diotrophes-like, loving to have the pre-eminence in all things; and such persons and conduct are very injurious to the comfort and harmony of the saints: *but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves*; not as to the things of the world, in respect of which one man may be a better man than another, and he must know and think himself so; nor with respect to the endowments of the mind, and acquired abilities, which one man may have above another; and the difference being so great in some, it must be easily discerned, that one is more learned and knowing, in this or the other language, art, or science; but with regard to grace, and to spiritual light, knowledge, and judgment: and where there is lowliness of mind, or true humility, a person will esteem himself in a state of grace, as the great apostle did, the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; one in whom this grace reigns will pay a deference to the judgment of other saints, and will prefer their experience, light, and knowledge, to his own; and will readily give way, when he sees such that are of longer standing, of greater experience, and more solid judgment, as he has reason to think, than himself, are on the other side of the question; and so peace, love, and unity, are preserved. This grace of humility is an excellent ornament to a Christian, and wonderfully useful in Christian societies.

Ver. 4. *Look not every man on his own things*, &c.] Not but that a man should take care of his worldly affairs, and look well unto them, and provide things honest in the sight of all men, for himself and his family, otherwise he would be worse than an infidel; but he is not to seek his own private advantage, and prefer it to a public good; accordingly the Syriac version reads it, *neither let any one be careful of himself, but also every one of his neighbour*; and the Arabic version thus, *and let none of you look to that which conduces to himself alone, but let every one of you look to those things which may conduce to his friend*; but this respects spiritual things, and spiritual gifts: a Christian should not seek his own honour and applause, and to have

his own will, and a point in a church carried his own way, but should consult the honour of Christ, the good of others; and the peace of the church; he should not look upon his own gifts, he may look upon them, and ascribe them to the grace of God, and make use of them to his glory, but not to admire them, or himself for them, and pride himself in them, and lift up himself above others, neglecting and taking no notice of the superior abilities of others: *but every man also on the things of others*; not on their worldly things, busying himself with other men's matters, and which he has nothing to do with, but on the sentiments and reasons of others; which he should well weigh and consider, and if they outdo and overbalance his own, should yield unto them; he should take notice of the superior gifts of others, and own and acknowledge them; which is the way to submit to one another in the fear of God, and to promote truth, friendship, and love.

Ver. 5. *Let this mind be in you*, &c.] The Arabic version renders it, *let that humility be perceived in you*. The apostle proposes Christ as the great pattern and exemplar of humility; and instances in his assumption of human nature, and in his subjection to all that meanness, and death itself, even the death of the cross in it; and which he mentions with this view, to engage the saints to lowliness of mind, in imitation of him; to shew forth the same temper and disposition of mind in their practice, *which also was in Christ Jesus*; or as the Syriac version, *think ye the same thing as Jesus Christ*; let the same condescending spirit and humble deportment appear in you as in him. This mind, affection, and conduct of Christ, may refer both to his early affection to his people, the love he bore to them from everlasting, the resolution and determination of his mind in consequence of it; and his agreement with his father to take upon him their nature in the fulness of time, and to do his will, by obeying, suffering, and dying in their room and stead; and also the open exhibition and execution of all this in time, when he appeared in human nature, poor, mean, and abject; condescending to the lowest offices, and behaving in the most meek and humble manner, throughout the whole of his life, to the moment of his death.

Ver. 6. *Who being in the form of God*, &c.] The father; being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. This form is to be understood, not of any shape or figure of him; for as such is not to be seen, it is not to be supposed of him; or any accidental form, for there are no accidents in God, whatever is in God, is God; he is nothing but nature and essence, he is the *αὐτός*, the Jehovah, I am what I am; and so is his son, which is, and was, and is to come, the fountain of all created beings: nor does it intend any outward representation and resemblance of him, such as in kings; who, because of the honour and dignity they are raised unto, the authority and power they have, and because of the glory and majesty they are arrayed with, are called gods: nor does it design the state and condition Christ appeared in here on earth, having a power to work miracles, heal diseases, and dispossess devils, for the manifestation of his glory; and so might be said to be in the form of God, as Moses for doing less miracles is said to be a

god unto Pharaoh; since this account does not regard Christ as he was on earth in human nature, but what he was antecedent to the assumption of it; or otherwise his humility and condescension in becoming man, and so mean, will not appear: but this phrase, *the form of God*, is to be understood of the nature and essence of God, and describes Christ as he was from all eternity; just as the form of a servant signifies that he was really a servant, and the fashion of a man in which he was found means that he was truly and really man; so his being in the form of God intends that he was really and truly God; that he partook of the same nature with the father, and was possessed of the same glory: from whence it appears, that he was in being before his incarnation; that he existed as a distinct person from God his father, in whose form he was, and that as a divine person, or as truly God, being in the glorious form, nature, and essence of God; and that there is but one form of God, or divine nature and essence, common to the Father and the Son, and also to the Spirit; so that they are not three Gods, but one God: what the form of God is, the Heathens themselves^g say cannot be comprehended nor seen, and so not to be inquired after; and they use the same word the apostle does here^h: and now Christ being in this glorious form, or having the same divine nature with the father, with all the infinite and unspeakable glories of it, *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*: the father; for if he was in the same form, nature, and essence, he must be equal to him, as he is; for he has the same perfections, as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability, and self-existence: hence he has the same glorious names, as God, the mighty God, the true God, the living God, God over all, Jehovah, the Lord of glory, &c. the same works of creation and providence are ascribed to him, and the same worship, homage, and honour given him: to be *in the form of God*, and to be *equal with God*, signify the same thing, the one is explanative of the other: and this divine form and equality, or true and proper deity, he did not obtain by force and rapine, by robbery and usurpation, as Satan attempted to do, and as Adam by his instigation also affected; and so the mind of a wicked man, as Philo the Jew saysⁱ, being a lover of itself and impious, *οπισθεος σπουδαισιν θεω, thinks itself to be equal with God*, a like phrase with this here used; but Christ enjoyed this equality by nature; he thought, he accounted, he knew he had it this way; and he held it hereby, and of right, and not by any unlawful means; and he reckoned that by declaring and shewing forth his proper deity, and perfect equality with the father, he robbed him of no perfection; the same being in him as in the father, and the same in the father as in him; that he did him no injury, nor deprived him of any glory, or assumed that to himself which did not belong to him: as for the sense which some put upon the words, that he did not *affect*, or *greedily catch* at deity; as the phrase will not admit of it, so it is not true in fact; he did affect deity, and asserted it strongly, and took every proper opportunity of declaring it, and in express

terms affirmed he was the son of God; and in terms easy to be understood declared his proper deity, and his unity and equality with the father; required the same faith in himself as in the father, and signified that he that saw the one, saw the other, Mark xiv. 61, 62. John v. 17, 18. and x. 30, 33. and xiv. 1, 10. Others give this as the sense of them, that he did not in an ostentatious way shew forth the glory of his divine nature, but rather hid it; 'tis true, indeed, that Christ did not seek, but carefully shunned vain glory and popular applause; and therefore often after having wrought a miracle, would charge the persons on whom it was wrought, or the company, or his disciples, not to speak of it; this he did at certain times, and for certain reasons; yet at other times we find, that he wrought miracles to manifest forth his glory, and frequently appeals to them as proofs of his deity and Messiahship: and besides, the apostle is speaking not of what he was, or did in his incarnate state, but of what he was and thought himself to be, before he became man; wherefore the above sense is to be preferred as the genuine one.

Ver. 7. *But made himself of no reputation, &c.*] Or *nevertheless emptied himself*: not of that fulness of grace which was laid up in him from everlasting, for with this he appeared when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men; nor of the perfections of his divine nature, which were not in the least diminished by his assumption of human nature, for all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily; though he took that which he had not before, he lost nothing of what he had; the glory of his divine nature was covered, and out of sight; and though some rays and beams of it broke out through his works and miracles, yet his glory, as the only-begotten of the father, was beheld only by a few; the minds of the far greater part were blinded, and their hearts hardened, and they saw no form nor comeliness in him to desire him; the form of God in which he was, was hid from them; they reputed him as a mere man, yea, as a sinful man, even as a worm, and no man: and to be thus esteemed, and had in such account, he voluntarily subjected himself, though so infinitely great and glorious; as he did not assume deity by rapine, he was not thrust down into this low estate by force; as the angels that sinned when they affected to be as God, were drove from their seats of glory, and cast down into hell; and when man, through the instigation of Satan, was desirous of the same, he was turned out of Eden, and became like the beasts that perish; but this was Christ's own act and deed, he willingly assented to it, to lay aside as it were his glory for a while, to have it veiled and hid, and be reckoned any thing, a mere man, yea, to have a devil, and not be God: O wondrous humility! astonishing condescension! and *took upon him the form of a servant*: this also was voluntary; he *took upon him*, was not obliged, or forced to be in the form of a servant; he appeared as one in human nature, and was really such; a servant to his father, who chose, called, sent, upheld, and regarded him as a servant; and a very prudent, diligent, and faithful one he was unto him:

^g Socraticus, Xenophon, & Aristo Chius, apud Minuc. Felic. Octav. p. 20. & Hostaues apud Cæcil. Cyprian. de Idol. van. p. 46.

^h Laetii præm. ad Vit. Philosoph. p. 7.

ⁱ Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 48, 49.

and he was also a servant to his people, and ministered to men; partly by preaching the Gospel to them, and partly by working miracles, healing their diseases, and going about to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men; and chiefly by obtaining eternal redemption for his chosen ones, by being made sin and a curse for them; which though a very toilsome and laborious piece of service, yet as he cheerfully engaged in it, he diligently attended it, until he had finished it: so he was often prophesied of as a servant, in Isa. xlii. 1. and lii. 13. Zech. iii. 6. in which several places he is called in the Targum, עֶבֶר מְשִׁיחָא, *my servant the Messiah*: put these two together, *the form of God, and the form of a servant*, and admire the amazing stoop! and was made in the likeness of men; not of the first Adam, for though, as he, he was without sin, knew none, nor did any; yet he was rather like to sinful men, and was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was traduced and treated as a sinner, and numbered among transgressors; he was like to men, the most mean and abject, such as were poor, and in lower life, and were of the least esteem and account among men, on any score: or he was like to men in common, and particularly to his brethren the seed of Abraham, and children of God that were given him; he partook of the same flesh and blood, he had a true body, and a reasonable soul, as they; he was subject to the like sorrows and griefs, temptations, reproaches, and persecutions; and was like them in every thing, excepting sin: a strange and surprising difference this, that he who was equal to God, should be like to sinful men!

Ver. 8. *And being found in fashion as a man, &c.* Not that he had only the shew and appearance of a man, but he was really a man; for *as* here, denotes not merely the likeness of a thing, but the thing itself, as in Matt. xiv. 5. John i. 14. *as* here, answers to the Hebrew כִּי, which is sometimes by the Jews^k said to be כִּי הִדְמִיךָ, and signifies likeness, and sometimes כִּי הִאֲמַרְתָּ, and designs truth and reality; which is the sense in which the particle *is* to be taken here: though he was seen and looked upon as a mere man, and therefore charged with blasphemy when he asserted himself to be the son of God, he was more than a man; and yet found and known by men in common to be no more than a man, than just such a man as other men are; and so far is true, that his scheme, his habit, his fashion, his form, were like that of other men; though he was not begotten as man, but conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet he lay nine months in his mother's womb, as the human fetus ordinarily does; he was born as children are, was wrapped in swaddling-bands when born, as an infant is; grew in stature by degrees, as men do; the shape and size of his body were like other men's, and he was subject to the same infirmities, as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, grief, sorrow, and death itself, as follows: *he humbled himself*: by becoming man, and by various outward actions in his life; as subjection to his parents, working at the trade of a carpenter, conversing with the meanest of men, washing his disciples' feet, &c. and the whole of his deportment both to God and man, his compliance with

his father's will, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, his behaviour towards his enemies, and his forbearance of his disciples, shewed him to be of a meek and humble spirit; he humbled himself both to God and man: *and became obedient unto death, or until death*: for he was obedient from the cradle to the cross, to God, to men, to his earthly parents, and to magistrates; he was obedient to the ceremonial law, to circumcision, the passover, &c. to the moral law, to all the precepts of it, which he punctually fulfilled; and to the penalty of it, death, which he voluntarily and cheerfully bore, in the room and stead of his people: *even the death of the cross*: which was both painful and shameful; it was an accursed one, and shewed that he bore the curse of the law, and was made a curse for us: this was a punishment usually inflicted on servants, and is called a servile punishment; and such was the form which he took, when he was found in fashion as a man: this is now the great instance of humility the apostle gives, as a pattern of it to the saints, and it is a matchless and unparalleled one.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, &c.* The apostle proceeds to observe the exaltation of Christ, for the encouragement of meek and humble souls; that whereas Christ, who so exceedingly demeaned himself, was afterwards highly exalted by God, so all such who, in imitation of him, behave to one another in lowliness of mind, shall be exalted in God's due time; for whoso humbleth himself, shall be exalted. The first step of Christ's exaltation was his resurrection from the dead, when he had a glory given him as man; his body was raised in incorruption, in glory, in power, and a spiritual one; it became a glorious body, and the pledge and exemplar of the saints at the general resurrection, of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and prelude; and he was also glorified then as Mediator, he was then justified in the spirit, and acquitted and discharged from all the sins of his people, he took upon him and bore, having satisfied for them; and all God's elect were justified in him, for he rose as a public person, as their head, for their justification; yea, in some sense he was then glorified, as a divine person; not that any new additional glory was, or could be made to him as such; but there was an illustrious manifestation of his natural, essential, and original glory; he was declared to be the son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead: the next step of his high exaltation was his ascending on high up to the third heaven, where he is made higher than the heavens; when he was accompanied by an innumerable company of angels, and by those saints whose bodies rose out of their graves after his resurrection; and was received and carried up in a bright glorious cloud; and passing through the air, the seat of the devils, he led captivity captive, and triumphed over principalities and powers, having before spoiled them on his cross; and then entering into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God, which is another branch of his exaltation; and shews that he had done his work, and that it was approved and accepted of; and had that glory and honour bestowed on him, which never was on any mere crea-

^k Vid. Kimchi in Josh. iii. 4.

^l Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1. c. 19.

ture, angels or men, to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; which as it is the highest pitch of the exaltation of the human nature of Christ, so by it there is a most illustrious display of the glory of his divine person as the son of God; who was with God, as one brought up with him from all eternity; and was so likewise when here on earth, but not so manifestly; but now he is openly and manifestatively glorified with himself, with that glory he had with him before the world began: moreover, Christ's exaltation lies in his having the gifts of the spirit without measure, to bestow on his ministers and churches, in all succeeding generations, for the carrying on of his interest, and the enlargement of his kingdom; in having all power in heaven and in earth, to complete his work and great designs; in having dominion and authority over all creatures and things, which are made to be subservient to the execution of his mediatorial office; and in having the right and power of judging the world at the last day, when there will still be a more glorious display of his eternal deity and divine sonship; for he'll come in his father's glory, and in his own, and with his holy angels: now the causes of Christ's exaltation are these: the efficient cause is God; though he made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself, these were voluntary acts of his own; yet he did not exalt himself, but God exalted him, even God the father; with him the covenant of grace and redemption was made, in which glory was promised Christ, in consideration of his obedience, sufferings, and death; and which he prayed to him for, and pleaded for with him, having done his work; and which exaltation of Christ is always ascribed to God, even the father; see Acts ii. 33. and iii. 13. and v. 31. the impulsive or moving cause, and indeed the meritorious cause, were the humiliation of Christ; because he, though he was originally so great and glorious, yet made himself as it were nothing, humbled himself to become man, and was contented to be accounted a mere man, and went up and down in the form of a servant; and because he became so cheerfully obedient to the whole law, and to death itself, for the sake of his people, and out of love to them, therefore God exalted him: the exaltation of Christ was not only a consequence of his obedience and death, and his humiliation merely the way to his glory; but his high and exalted estate were the reward of all this; it was what was promised him in covenant, what was then agreed upon, what he expected and pleaded, and had as a recompense of reward, in consideration of his having glorified God on earth, and finished the work he undertook to do: it follows as an instance of the exaltation of Christ, *and hath given him a name which is above every name.* The Syriac version renders it, *which is more excellent than every name;* and the Arabic version translates it, *which is more eminent than every name;* and the Ethiopic version thus, *which is greater than every name;* by which is meant, not any particular and peculiar name by which he is called; not the name of God, for though this is his name, the mighty God, and so is even the incommunicable name Jehovah, and which may be truly said to be every name; but neither of these are given him, but what he has

by nature; and besides were what he had before his exaltation in human nature: 'tis true indeed, upon that this name of his became more illustrious and manifest unto men; it is a more clear point, that he is God over all blessed for evermore; and it will still be more manifest at his glorious appearing, that he is the great God, as well as our Saviour: to which may be added, that the name Jehovah in the plate of gold on the high-priest's forehead, was set above the other word; so says Maimonides^m, "the plate of gold was two fingers broad, and it reached from ear to ear; and there was written upon it two lines, *holiness to the Lord;* קדש, *holiness,* was written below, and *לְיְהוָה מְלִמְעֵלָה,* *to the Lord, or to Jehovah,* above:" whether here may not be an allusion to this, I leave to be considered: nor do I think that the name of the son of God is meant; this is indeed a name of Christ, and a more excellent one than either angels or men have; for he is in such sense the son of God, as neither of them are; but this is a name also which he has by nature, and is what he had before his exaltation; and was before this attested by his father, and confessed by angels, men, and devils; though indeed upon his exaltation, he was declared more manifestly to be the son of God, as he will be yet more clearly in his kingdom and glory: much less is the name Jesus intended, which was given him by the angel before his conception and birth, and was a name common to men among the Jews; but it seems to design such fame and renown, honour, glory, and dignity, as were never given unto, and bestowed upon creatures; as his rising from the dead as a public person, his ascending on high in the manner he did, his session at the right hand of God, his investiture with all gifts, power, dominion, authority, and with the judgment of the world; and whatever name of greatness there is among men or angels, Christ has that which is superior to it. Was a priest a name of honour and dignity among the Jews? Christ is not only a priest, and an high-priest, but a great high-priest; a priest not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedec, and a greater than he himself. Is a king a great name among men? Christ has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Is a deliverer of a nation a title of great honour? Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour of men of all nations; nor is there any other name but his, that is given among men, whereby we must be saved. Is a mediator between jarring princes and kingdoms accounted a name of greatness and glory? Christ is the one only Mediator between God and man, and of a new and better covenant. Are angels, seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, great names in the other world? Christ is the Angel of God's presence, an increated one, the Angel of the covenant, the head of all principality and power. These are all subject to him, and he is set at God's right hand far above them.

Ver. 10. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, &c.]* Which is to be understood, not of the outward act of bowing the knee upon hearing the name, and the syllables of the mere name Jesus pro-

^m Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 1.

nounced; for in the bare name there can be nothing which can command such a peculiar respect; it was a name common with the Jews: Joshua is so called in Heb. iv. 8. and the name of Elymas the so-cerer was *Bar-Jesus*: that is, the son of Jesus, Acts xiii. 6. Now, how monstrously ridiculous and stupid would it be, for a man, upon hearing these passages, and upon the pronouncing of this word, to bow the knee? Moreover, the words ought not to be rendered *at*, but *in the name of Jesus*: that is, in and by reason of the power, authority, and dignity of Jesus, as exalted at God's right hand, every creature is to be subject to him: add to this, that there are several creatures included in the following account, who, in a corporeal sense, have not knees to bow with, as angels, the souls of men departed, and devils; and therefore an external corporeal bowing of the knee, cannot be meant. The Jews indeed, upon hearing the name Jehovah pronounced by the high-priest, in the holy of holies, used to bow: they say, "that the priests, and the people, "that stand in the court, when they hear *Shenham-phorash* (*i. e.* the name *Jehovah*) pronounced by the high-priest, רְחוּ כַרְעֵיכֶם, bowed, and worshipped, and fell upon their faces, and said, blessed be the name "of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever:" though it can hardly be thought there's any reference to this here. But inasmuch as this action is a token of reverence, worship, and subjection, it is used for those things themselves; and the sense is, that Christ is exalted as before described, that every creature may give him reverence, worship, and adoration, submit and be subject to him, as all do, and shall, either freely or forcedly. Some really and heartily trust in his name, are baptized in his name, and ascribe honour, and glory, and blessing to him from their whole hearts; and others feignedly, and whether they will or no, are subject to him, and sooner or later shall acknowledge his authority over them: and he shall be owned to be *Lord of things in heaven*: the angels there, and the souls of departed saints, with those who are already clothed with their bodies: *and things in earth*: both good men, and bad men: *and things under the earth*: or *in the abyss*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; meaning either the devils in the bottomless pit; or rather the dead bodies of men in the grave, which shall come forth and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Ver. 11. *And that every tongue should confess, &c.* Whether of angels or men, or of men of whatsoever nation. Confession is either true and hearty, as when the mouth and heart agree in confessing, and which is made only by true believers; or verbal only, or in mere outward form, and by force, as in hypocrites, wicked men, and devils themselves; who all either have confessed, or will confess, *that Jesus Christ is Lord*: the holy angels confess him to be Lord, and their Lord truly, and are unfeignedly subject to him; and true believers heartily own him as their Lord, and cheerfully submit to his commands and ordinances; and the foolish virgins, and the goats on Christ's left hand, will, at the last-day, call him Lord, Lord; and the worst of men, yea, even devils, will be obliged to own

his lordship and dominion; which will be *to the glory of God the father*. The Syriac reads, *his father*, who has chose and constituted him as the Mediator, invested him with his office, ordained him to be Judge of quick and dead, and given him all power and authority, and exalted him at his own right hand; so he that honoureth the son, honoureth the father also. The Vulgate Latin version renders the words, *because the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the father*: being in the form of God, of the same nature and essence with him, and equal to him; as he will appear to be at his second coming, for then he'll come in the glory of his father.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore, my beloved, &c.* This is an inference from the instance and example of Christ; that since he, who was God over all, blessed for ever, made himself so low in human nature, in which he is now so highly exalted, having done the work and business he came about with such condescension, humility, and meekness; therefore it becomes those who profess to be his followers, to do all their affairs as men and Christians, with, and among one another, in all lowliness of mind. The apostle calls the saints here, *my beloved*, he having a strong affection for them, which he frequently expresses in this epistle; and he chooses to make use of such an endearing appellation, that it might be observed, that what he was about to say to them sprung from pure love to them, and a hearty desire for their welfare, and from no other end, and with no other view; and to encourage them to go on in a course of humble duty, he commends them for their former obedience, *as ye have always obeyed*: not *me*, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply; but either God, acting according to his revealed will, they had knowledge of; or Christ, by receiving him as prophet, priest, and King, by submitting to his righteousness, and the sceptre of his grace; or the Gospel, by embracing the truths of it, professing them, and abiding in them, and by subjecting to the ordinances of it, and doing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded: and this they did *always*; they were always abounding in the works of the Lord, doing his will; they abode by Christ, and continued steadfastly in his doctrines, and kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them, and walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. *Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence*; which clause may either be referred to the foregoing, which expresses their obedience; and so signifies that that was carefully and cheerfully performed, not only whilst the apostle was with them, but now when he was absent from them, and much more when absent than present; which shews, that they were not eye-servants, and men-pleasers, but what they did they did sincerely and heartily, as to the Lord: or to the following exhortation, that they would attend to it; not only as they had done when he was among them, of which he was witness, but that they would much more do so now he was absent from them, namely, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*; which is to be understood not in such a sense as though men could obtain and procure for themselves spiritual and

eternal salvation by their own works and doings; for such a sense is contrary to the Scriptures, which deny any part of salvation, as election, justification, and vocation, and the whole of it to be of works, but ascribe it to the free grace of God; and is also repugnant to the perfections of God, as his wisdom, grace, and righteousness; for where are the wisdom and love of God, in forming a scheme of salvation, and sending his son to effect it, and after all it is left to men to work it out for themselves? and where's the justice of God in admitting of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one, which must be the case, if salvation is obtained by men's works? for these are imperfect, even the best of them; and is another reason against this sense of the passage; and were they perfect, they could not be meritorious of salvation, for the requisites of merits are wanting in them. Moreover, was salvation to be obtained by the works of men, these consequences would follow; the death of Christ would be in vain, boasting would be encouraged in men, they would have whereof to glory, and their obligations to obedience taken from the love of God, and redemption by Christ, would be weakened and destroyed: add to all this, that the Scriptures assure us, that salvation is alone by Christ; and that it is already finished by him, and not to be wrought out now by him, or any other; and that such is the weakness and impotence of men, even of believers, to whom this exhortation is directed, that it is impossible for them ever to affect it; therefore, whatever sense these words have, we may be sure that this can never possibly be the sense of them. The words may be rendered, *work about your salvation*; employ yourselves in things which accompany salvation, and to be performed by all those that expect it, though not to be expected for the performance of them; such as hearing of the word, submission to Gospel ordinances, and a discharge of every branch of moral, spiritual, and evangelical obedience, for which the apostle before commends them, and now exhorts them to continue in; to go on in a course of cheerful obedience to the close of their days, believing in Christ, obeying his Gospel, attending constantly to his word and ordinances, and discharging every duty in faith and fear, until at last they should receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls: agreeably the Syriac version renders the words, פלחון פולחנא דדייכון, *do the work, or business of your lives*; the work you are to do in your generation, which God has prescribed and directed you to, which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ constrains to. Do all that *with fear and trembling*; not with a slavish fear of hell and damnation, or lest they should fall away, or finally miscarry of heaven and happiness; since this would be a distrust of the power and faithfulness of God, and so criminal in them; nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the apostle would exhort to such a fear, when he himself was so confidently assured, that the good work begun in them would be performed; and besides, the exhortation would be very oddly formed, if this was the sense, *work out your salvation with fear of damnation*: but this fear and trembling spoken of, is such as is consistent with the highest acts of faith, trust, confidence, and joy, and is opposed to pride and

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vain glory; see Psal. ii. 11. and cxv. 11. Rom. xi. 20. and intends modesty and humility, which is what the apostle is pressing for throughout the whole context; and here urges to a cheerful and constant obedience to Christ, with all humility of soul, without dependence on it, or vain-glorying in it, but ascribing it wholly to the grace of God, for the following reason.

Ver. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you, &c.*] Which is both an encouragement to persons conscious of their own weakness to work, as before exhorted to; see Hagg. ii. 4. and a reason and argument for humility and meekness, and against pride and vain-glory, since all we have, and do, is from God; and also points out the spring, principle, and foundation of all good works; namely, the grace of God wrought in the heart, which is an internal work, and purely the work of God: by this men become the workmanship of God, created unto good works, and are new men, and fitted for the performance of acts of righteousness, and true holiness; and this grace, which God works in them, is wrought in a powerful and efficacious manner, so as not to be frustrated and made void. The word here used signifies an inward, powerful, and efficacious operation: and the *king's manuscript*, mentioned by Grotius and Hammond, adds another word to it, which makes the sense still stronger, reading it thus, *which worketh in you, δυναμις, by power*; not by moral suasion, but by his own power, the power of his efficacious grace. The Alexandrian copy reads, δυναμις, *powers, or mighty works*: God works in his people *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*: God works in converted men a *will* to that which is spiritually good; which is to be understood, not of the formation of the natural faculty of the will; or of the preservation of it, and its natural liberty; or of the general motion of it to natural objects; nor of his influence on it in a providential way; but of the making of it good, and causing a willingness in it to that which is spiritually good. Men have no will naturally to come to Christ, or to have him to reign over them; they have no desire, nor hungerings and thirstings after his righteousness and salvation; wherever there are any such inclinations and desires, they are wrought in men by God; who works upon the stubborn and inflexible will, and, without any force to it, makes the soul willing to be saved by Christ, and submit to his righteousness, and do his will; he sweetly and powerfully draws it with the cords of love to himself, and to his son, and so influences it by his grace and spirit, and which he continues, that it freely wills every thing spiritually good, and for the glory of God: and he works in them also to *do*; for there is sometimes in believers a will, when there wants a power of doing. God therefore both implants in them principles of action to work from, as faith and love, and a regard for his glory, and gives them grace and strength to work with, without which they can do nothing, but having these, can do all things: and all this is *of his good pleasure*: the word *his* not being in the original text, some have taken the liberty to ascribe this to the will of man; and so the Syriac version renders it, *both to will and to do that, דיצבון אנתון, which ye will, or according to your good will*; but such a sense is both bad and senseless; for if they have a good will of

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themselves, what occasion is there for God to work one in them? no; these internal operations of divine power and grace are not owing to the will of men, nor to any merits of theirs, or are what God is obliged to do, but what flow from his sovereign will and pleasure; who works when, where, and as he pleases, and that for his own glory; and who continues to do so in the hearts of his people; otherwise, notwithstanding the work of grace in them, they would find very little inclination to, and few and faint desires after spiritual things; and less strength to do what is spiritually good; but God of his good pleasure goes on working what is well-pleasing in his sight.

Ver. 14. *Do all things, &c.*] Not evil things, these are to be abhorred, shunned, and avoided, even all appearance of them, they are not to be done, even for the sake of good; nor all indifferent things at all times, and under all circumstances, when the peace and edification of others are in danger of being hurt by so doing; but all good things, all that are agreeable to the righteous law and good will of God; all those good things which accompany salvation, as hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; all church-affairs relating to public worship, private conference, every thing at church-meetings, and which concern the discipline and laws of Christ's house; and all things that are civilly, morally, spiritually, and evangelically good; even all things that God would have done, or we would desire should be done to us by fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians: let all these be done *without murmurings*; either against God and Christ, as if any thing hard and severe was enjoined, when Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, and none of his commands grievous; and because their presence is not always enjoyed, and that communion and comfort in ordinances had, which may be desired: or against the ministers of the Gospel, in whose power it is not to give grace, comfort, and spiritual refreshment; any more than it was in Moses and Aaron to give bread and water to the Israelites in the wilderness, for which they murmured against them, and in so doing against God himself; or against one another, because of superior enjoyment in nature, providence, and grace; but all things, both of a moral, civil, and religious nature, with respect to God, and one another, should be done readily, freely, cheerfully, and heartily; and also *without disputings*; or *without hesitations*, as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it. Whatever appears to be agreeable to the will of God, should be done at once without dispute upon it, or hesitation about it, however disagreeable it may be to carnal sense and reason; the will of God is not to be disputed, nor flesh and blood to be consulted, in opposition to it; nor should the saints enter into any carnal reasonings, and contentious disputations, either at their public or private meetings, but do all they do decently, and in order, and in the exercise of brotherly love.

Ver. 15. *That ye may be blameless, &c.*] This, and what follows, shew the end to be answered, by observing the above exhortation. This respects not their being blameless in the sight of God, which the saints are not in themselves, being not without sin, though they are, as considered in Christ, clothed with his

righteousness, and washed in his blood; but their being blameless before men: and this may be understood both actively and passively; actively, that they might be without blaming others; some are so unhappy in their disposition and conduct, as to be always finding fault with, and blaming all persons they are concerned with, and all things in them, and done by them, right or wrong, without any just reason; and this ought not to be, and may be prevented by doing all things, as before directed: or passively, that they might not be blamed by others justly; for no man can escape the blame and censure of every one; our Lord himself did not, nor this our apostle; but doing, as before exhorted to, will, in a great measure, preclude any just reason for blame and complaint: 'tis added, *and harmless*: that is, that they might be, and appear to be so; harmless as doves, in imitation of Christ, who was holy in his nature, and harmless in his conversation, as his followers should be; doing no injury to any man's person or property, behaving in an inoffensive manner to all men, to Jew and Gentile, and to the church of God: it follows, *the sons of God*: not that they might be sons by so doing; but be *as the sons of God*, as the Syriac version renders it, be like them, and behave as such; for they were the sons of God already; not by creation only, as angels, and all men are, not merely by profession of religion, but by adopting grace: they were predestinated to the adoption of children, and were taken into this relation in the covenant of grace, Christ had redeemed them from under the law, that they might receive this blessing, and it was actually bestowed upon them by him in conversion: but the sense is, that they might appear to be the children of God, by acting as becomes such; not that they might appear so to themselves, for they were openly and manifestatively to themselves the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and through the testimony of the spirit, witnessing to their spirits that they were in such a relation to God; but that they might appear so to others, that they were the adopted sons of God, and also begotten again by him, and made partakers of the divine nature; by their being followers of God as dear children, and by their being obedient ones to him in all holiness and godly conversation, yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to his will, without repining at it, or disputing about it; and to be *without rebuke*; not without the rebuke of their heavenly Father, for whom he loves he rebukes, and every son that he receives into his family he scourges and chastises, not in wrath and anger, or with rebukes of fury, but of love; but without the rebuke of men, both of the churches and ministers of Christ, whose business it is to reprove and rebuke, publicly and privately, as cases and their circumstances require; and of the men of the world, who when they have any occasion, make use of it to speak reproachfully, as a railing Rabshakeh did, when it is a time of rebuke and blasphemy, and to be shunned and guarded against as much possible: especially since the saints live *in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation*; or age and generation, as every age is; saints are like lilies in the valleys, liable to be trampled upon by the foot of every wild beast; like roses among thorns, to be scratched and torn; and like Lots in the midst of

Sodom, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: the whole world lies in sin, and the saints are enclosed on every side with wicked men. Philippi, where these saints lived, was a place of wickedness, and so no doubt was the whole region of Macedonia; the inhabitants were evil for the most part; their ways were crooked, and their works perverse, being contrary to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; and therefore the following exhortation to the saints there was very suitable. *Among whom ye shine; or shine ye*, as it may be rendered, *as lights in the world*. This world is, in a moral sense, what the original chaos was in a natural sense, covered with darkness; the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, of impiety and superstition, has spread itself over the far greater part of the world; the men of it are children of the night, and of darkness; their works are works of darkness, and they are going on in darkness, not knowing where they are going. The saints are the lights of the world, they were once darkness itself, but are made light in and by the Lord; they are called into marvellous light, and are filled with light spiritual and evangelical; they are like the moon and stars, that give light to the world in the night; and as they receive their light from the sun, and communicate it to the world, so do the saints receive theirs from Christ, the sun of righteousness, and shew it forth to others, both by doctrine and practice: or rather the churches of Christ are as candlesticks, in which the light of the Gospel is put, and held forth to men, as follows, see Matt. v. 14, 15, 16.

Ver. 16. *Holding forth the word of life, &c.*] By which may be meant, either Christ the essential Word, in whom life was, and is, and who is called the quick or living Word, John i. 1, 4. Heb. iv. 12. and here may be styled the Word of life, because he has all life in him; he has a divine life in him, as God, he is the living God; and it is given to him to have life in himself, as Mediator, for all his people; and he ever lives as man to make intercession for them: and because he is the author of life in every sense, of natural life to all men, of spiritual and eternal life to as many as the father has given him: or else the Gospel is intended, and the doctrines of it; and which are sometimes called the words of eternal life, and of this life, John vi. 68. Acts v. 20. and that because they are a means of quickening dead sinners, they are a savour of life unto life, and the spirit that giveth life, and of enlivening and comforting living saints; they treat of Christ who is the life; by the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light; that gives an account of everlasting life; points out Christ as the way to it, shews that meetness for it lies in regenerating grace, and a right unto it is in the righteousness of Christ. Now this Word of life is held forth, partly by the preaching of it to a dark world, as by some; and partly by professing it publicly, as it should be by all who are enlightened with it; and also by living lives and conversations becoming and suitable to it. *That I may rejoice in the day of Christ*. The apostle having observed the advantages that would accrue to themselves, and the benefit they might be of to the men of the world, by regarding the several exhortations he had given them, and which ends he mentions as reasons and arguments to enforce them, closes with taking

notice of the use and service it would be to himself; it would give him joy and pleasure when Christ should come a second time to judge the world; and when the dead in Christ would be raised, and set at his right hand, and these among the rest, to whom the apostle had been useful; and who continued to bear an honourable testimony in the world to Christ, and his Gospel, to the end: *that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain*; being blessed with such converts under his ministry, as were a credit to religion, an honour to the Gospel, and a crown of rejoicing to him. He expresses his ministerial function, and the discharge of it, by running in a race, as the ministry of a person is sometimes called his *course*, Acts xiii. 25. and xx. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 7. in allusion to the Olympic games, which the apostle often refers to, when the conqueror obtained a crown; and it was enough for our apostle, and a crown of rejoicing to him, that his spiritual children walked in the truth, and as became it, to the end: and also by labour, and hard service, as the ministerial work is, when faithfully performed; and especially as his was, which was attended with so many difficulties, and yet with such constancy, diligence, and indefatigableness, all which was not in vain; and he could look back upon it with pleasure, when his followers stood fast in the faith, and adorned the doctrine of Christ.

Ver. 17. *Yea, and if I be offered, &c.*] Or *poured out*, as the drink-offerings of wine or oil were; meaning the effusion of his blood, which he compares to a libation, or drink-offering, which was poured upon the sacrifice; and the laying down of his life for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, which he knew not how soon might be, though he was in some hopes of a deliverance for the present, and therefore speaks of it in an hypothetical way: yet he expected it sooner or later; and that whenever it was, it would be as the libation upon the offering. *Upon the sacrifice and service of your faith*; he had been the means of bringing them to the faith of Christ, in which they were an offering acceptable to God, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; see Rom. xv. 16. and should he suffer and shed his blood in the cause of Christ, it would be as a libation on them, as a sacrifice; it would be for the sake of preaching the doctrine of faith, by which they were brought to believe on Christ; and it would be for the further confirmation of their faith, and as a drink-offering acceptable unto God; upon all which accounts it would be matter of joy to him. *I joy and rejoice with you all*; meaning at his sufferings and death, and the advantages thereof to Christ, to his churches, and to himself.

Ver. 18. *For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me.*] He would not have them be sorrowful, should they hear of his death for the sake of the Gospel, and of his blood being poured out in such a cause, since it was as a libation on their faith, and for the confirmation of it, and would be gain to Christ, and his interest, and to the apostle also: and therefore they should be so far from indulging grief and sorrow on that account, that they should rather joy and rejoice with him, who was ready to be offered up, or poured out; since he had run out his race, and that not in vain, but to so good a purpose, and especially among them.

Ver. 19. *But I trust in the Lord Jesus, &c.*] Or *hope*; not in himself, his wisdom, will, resolutions, and purposes; nor in an arm of flesh, in any human aid and power; nor in princes, nor in Nero, the Roman emperor, as expecting a release from bonds by him, when he could the more easily part with Timothy; but in the Lord Jesus, in the Lord whom every tongue shall confess to be so; and in that Jesus, in whose name every knee shall bow; who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the only Saviour and Deliverer of his people; who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and all power in heaven and in earth: he hoped and trusted, that through the goodness and power of Christ, opening a way for him, he should be able to send *Timotheus shortly unto you*; one that had known the Scriptures from his youth, and was very early converted to the Christian faith, was an eminent preacher of the Gospel, and well known to the Philippians. The apostle hoped to send him to them *shortly*, in a very little time; this he said in order to encourage them, and thereby suggesting, that he thought his own deliverance was at hand: this hope did not arise from a sure and certain persuasion of the thing, but from love to these saints; he had a very great affection for them; he knew that a Gospel minister, and particularly Timothy, would be of great comfort and service to them; wherefore, from that love which hopes all things, he hoped he should, in a short time, be able to serve them in love that way: the end he proposed in it is next expressed, *that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state*: not their worldly estate, their secular affairs, and whether they prospered in their trades and business, and increased in riches; nor their corporeal estate, or state of health, and whether they prospered in their bodies, not but that the knowledge of each of these would be welcome to the apostle; nor every one's personal spiritual estate, what was the particular case and state of each member; for though it is the business of a pastor of a church to look diligently to the state of his flock, and learn the case of every particular member, the apostle could not be thought to come at such an exact knowledge of things, who had the care of all the churches upon him; but their ecclesiastical state, their church-state in general; how the Gospel stood with them, and they in that; whether they held it fast, and strove for it, and what ground the false teachers got among them; how the ordinances of the Gospel were regarded and attended on by them; with what life and light, and liberty and zeal, their ministers preached the word; and what success they had to the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints; and how they behaved towards them, in honouring, obeying, and submitting to them, and esteeming them highly for their works' sake; what an increase of gifts, grace, and numbers there was among them; and what harmony, love, peace, and concord subsisted between them; and what afflictions and persecutions they endured for the sake of Christ; and with what patience, faith, and cheerfulness they bore them. By the return of Timothy he hoped to have knowledge of these things, that so he might *also be of good comfort*: as they would be by the coming of Timothy to them, by his preaching among them, and relating to them the case and circumstances of the apos-

tle, how cheerful he was under his afflictions, and of what use they were to the cause of Christ. The comfort and pleasure of Gospel ministers lie in the good of the churches of Christ; it puts them in good heart and soul, as the word here used signifies, when they hear of their steadfastness in the faith of Christ, of their love to one another, and all the saints, and of their patience under sufferings.

Ver. 20. *For I have no man like-minded, &c.*] With myself; *as my soul*, so the Syriac version renders it. Timothy had a soul like the apostle's, which none that were with him, besides him, had; he was of the same judgment with him in the doctrines of grace; he received and preached the same Gospel as he did; he preached the same Christ, the son of God, without yea and nay; he had the same affection for the apostle, and the souls of men, as he had; his soul was knit to his, and they had, as it were, but one soul in two bodies; he was engaged in the same work of the Lord, and pursued it with the same zeal and diligence; he was a second Paul in the pulpit; and there was no man like-minded as he, or so well-disposed to the Philippians as he was, that had their good and cause at heart, and was willing to take so long a journey to do them service; for he had a particular affection for them, having been among them with the apostle, when he first preached the Gospel to them: *who will naturally care for your state*. There were none like him that would; many were like the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves and not the flock; but he was one that was diligent to know the state of the flock, and looked well to the herd under his care; and had an anxious care and solicitude, as the word signifies, for the good of souls. The work of a faithful Gospel minister is a work of care; one of his characters is, that he cares for the church of God; and though anxious care in worldly things is forbidden, yet in the affairs of Christ's house it is highly commendable, and especially when it is natural, or genuine and sincere, as Timothy's was: he had a sincere love, an hearty and real concern for their good; and which he would shew by delivering to them the sincere milk of the word, by preaching the Gospel in the power and purity of it, with all sincerity and uprightness, with a single eye to the glory of Christ, and the good of their souls; and which is the apostle's reason for sending him unto them.

Ver. 21. *For all seek their own, &c.*] Meaning not every individual, but the greatest part; and not merely such as were manifestly false teachers, but such as were with the apostle, as ministers of the word; and we may suppose him to be stripped, by one means or another, of the more valuable preachers of the Gospel, and to be in much such a case as he describes himself to be, in 2 Tim. iv. 10, 11, 12. He had none with him, excepting a very few, but such as he speaks of in the preceding chapter, that preached Christ of envy, strife, and contention; and these chiefly sought their own worldly interest and advantage; they sought great things for themselves, and looked every man for his gain from his quarter, Demas-like, loving this present world; they sought for dominion and authority over men, and their faith, to lord it over God's heritage, as Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence; they sought for popular applause, for honour and glory of

men, as the Pharisees of old did; and particularly their own ease and health, and did not choose to undertake such a fatiguing journey as from Rome to Philippi: *not the things which are Jesus Christ*; they had no true regard to the Gospel of Christ, to the continuance, establishment, and spread of it in the world, or in any particular place; nor any hearty affection for the ordinances of Christ, and the retaining and preserving of them in their purity and simplicity; nor for the churches of Christ, and their spiritual good and welfare, as the Jews formerly, they cared not if the house of God lay waste, provided they dwelt in their ceiled houses; nor had they any concern for the honour and glory of Christ. But Timothy was a man of a quite different spirit and complexion; and which is another reason of the apostle's sending him to this place and people.

Ver. 22. *But ye know the proof of him, &c.*] They had had an experiment of him, a trial of his spirit, and a proof of his gifts and ministry, when he was among them with the apostle at his first preaching the Gospel to them, to the conversion of Lydia, and of the jailer, and their households, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church-state among them, see Acts xvi. 3, 12. The Vulgate Latin version reads in the imperative, *know ye the proof of him*; but the former reading is to be preferred: *that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel*; he served not the apostle, but with him; he served God as the apostle did, in the Gospel of his son; he served Jesus Christ, whose Gospel he preached, the interest and spread of which he greatly laboured in with him, as a fellow-servant or work-fellow; see Rom. xvi. 21. which expresses the modesty of the apostle, and the great honour put upon Timothy, and which was not abused by him; for as a son honours, obeys, and imitates his father, so did he honour the apostle, and give him all respect and reverence that was due to him on account of his office, age, and usefulness; and obeyed his orders cheerfully, going wherever he sent him, and doing whatever he bid him; and imitated him in his ministry, in his constancy, diligence, and zeal, having a true filial affection for him.

Ver. 23. *Him therefore I hope to send presently, &c.*] For the reasons now given: *so soon as I shall see how it will go with me*; whether he should be released from his bonds or no; whether he should live or die; whether he should be set free, or be called to suffer martyrdom for the sake of Christ; for he expected, that the matter would be determined in a very short time, when, be it as it would, Timothy would be spared.

Ver. 24. *But I trust in the Lord, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *in my Lord*: *that I also myself shall come shortly*; this he adds, partly to let them see, that he still retained a secret hope and persuasion in his own mind of a deliverance, though he could not be certain of it, how things would go with him; and partly, that he might not be thought to put them off with sending Timothy to them; for notwithstanding that, his intention still was, should he be released, to pay them a visit himself. The Alexandrian copy adds, *to you*: so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 25. *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, &c.*] In the mean while, before either he or Timothy could come to them. This man was sent by the Philippians to the apostle with a present, and had been detained at Rome for some time, partly through business, and partly through sickness; but now the apostle thought it proper, he being recovered, to send him to them, who was one of their ministers. One of this name lived at Rome about this time, and was one of Nero's freemen, but not the same person here intended. This person has a very high character. The apostle calls him, *my brother*; not in a natural relation, or as being his countryman, and so according to a way of speaking with the Jews, and himself, his brother and kinsman according to the flesh; for by his name and country he seems to be a Greek; but in a spiritual relation, being born again of the same father, belonging to the same household and family, and also a brother in the ministry, as it follows: *and companion in labour*; in the laborious work of preaching the Gospel. The ministry of the word is a work; it is called the work of the ministry; and it is a laborious one when diligently and faithfully performed: the apostle was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, a labourer in Christ's vineyard, and one that laboured more abundantly than others; and he was not alone, he had companions in his work, and this good man was one of them: he adds, *and fellow-soldier*; the life of every believer is a warfare; he's always engaged in a war with sin, and Satan, and the world; and is often called to fight the fight of faith, to contend earnestly against false teachers for the faith once delivered to the saints, to stand up for it, and fast in it; and is provided for with the whole armour of God, with weapons of warfare, which are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty, being enlisted as a volunteer under the great Captain of his salvation, Jesus Christ, under whose banner he fights, and is more than a conqueror through him: but though this is the common case and character of all the saints, it more especially belongs to ministers of the Gospel; who are set for the defence of it, and at the front of the battle, and are called to meet the enemy at the gate, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and such an one was the apostle; and he had other fellow-soldiers, and this person among the rest, who were engaged in the same common cause with the same enemies, under the same Captain, and would enjoy the same crown: *but your messenger*; or *apostle*; meaning either that he was the pastor of them, a preacher to them, a minister among them; for ordinary ministers of the word were sometimes called apostles, as well as extraordinary ones, see Rom. xvii. 7. or rather, that he was their messenger to him, to relieve, comfort, and assist him in his bonds; and such persons were called the messengers of the churches, 2 Cor. viii. 23. which sense is strengthened by what follows: *and he that ministered to my wants*; to his personal wants in prison, and to the wants of the poor saints, which the apostle reckoned as his own, and which he used to supply; but now not able; and to his ministerial wants, filling up his place in preaching the Gospel to the saints at Rome.

* Arrian. Epictet. l. 1. c. 19, 26. & Aurel. Victor. Epitome Rom. Imp. in Nerone.

Ver. 26. *For he longed after you, &c.*] This, and a following verse, contain the reasons of the apostle's sending him; and the first is, because he had a very vehement and longing desire after all of them; to see them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, and as it is read in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in others: it was not the city of Philippi he longed to see, which might be his native place, nor his natural relations and family, but the church there; and not the officers of it only, the bishops and deacons, but all the members of it, rich and poor, high and low, strong and weak believers: *and was full of heaviness*; almost pressed down, quite disheartened and dispirited, ready to sink and die away, not so much with his own disorder and illness, as with sorrow on account of the church at Philippi: *because that ye had heard that he had been sick*: he understood that the news of his sickness had reached them, and he knew how distressing it would be to them, that it would cut them to the heart, and press them heavily, fearing they should never see his face, nor hear his voice more. We have here an instance of that mutual love, tender affection and sympathy, which were in the first churches, and what subsisted between ministers and people; see how they loved one another! but, alas! this first love is left.

Ver. 27. *For indeed he was sick nigh unto death, &c.*] It was not a mere rumour, or a false alarm, but was real matter of fact; and it was not a light disorder, a slight indisposition, but a very dangerous illness; though the sickness was not unto death, yet near it. Good men, such as Christ loves, as he did Lazarus, are sometimes sick; though their spiritual diseases are healed, and their sins forgiven, so that the inhabitants of Zion have no more reason to say that they are sick, since Christ has took their infirmities, and bore their sickness, yet they are not exempt from bodily disorders; and which are sometimes such as bring them to the brink of the grave, and, as it were, to the gates of death; and such was this good man's case: *but God had mercy on him*; his disorder was such as was out of the reach of man; his recovery was not by man, but by God, and owing to his power, mercy, and goodness; and indeed, whenever means are made use of, and they succeed to the restoration of health, it ought to be ascribed to the divine blessing on them. The raising up of this man is reckoned as an instance of mercy to him; as it was the removing of a grievous affliction, a return of him to his delightful work of the ministry, and the continuation of an useful life for the good of others; and so a mercy to him, and to the churches of Christ, and to the apostle also: who adds, *but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow*: one affliction added to another; the death of this brother of his to his bonds: moreover the sickness of this companion of his filled him with sorrow: and had he died, it would have greatly increased it, and which would have had a fresh addition by the loss this church would sustain, and the grief and trouble they would be overwhelmed with: grace, and the doctrine of grace, though they regulate the passions, and restrain them from immoderate sorrow, they do not destroy them, nor deny the proper use of them. Christianity does not countenance a stoical apathy, but requires and en-

courages a Christian sympathy, and directs us to weep with them that weep within due bounds.

Ver. 28. *I sent him therefore the more carefully, &c.*] Or in greater haste, and as soon as possible: *that when ye see him again ye may rejoice*; for this must greatly increase their joy, to see him again after he had been so long from them, and under such a disorder, which had made them to fear they should never see him more. The Syriac version renders it, *that when ye see him ye may rejoice again*: as they had done heretofore in his conversation and ministry, when among them: *and that I may be the less sorrowful*; when he should hear of his safe arrival among them, and of their joyful reception of him to their mutual satisfaction, which would be an alleviation of the apostle's sorrow in his present circumstances; for he did not expect to be wholly without sorrow whilst in this life.

Ver. 29. *Receive him therefore, &c.*] Not only into their houses, where such as bring the doctrine of Christ should be admitted, and not others; but into their bosoms, into their hearts and affections, as he had reason to believe they would, and into their fellowship and communion, and to the exercise of his office among them, as their minister: *and that in the Lord*; or *for the Lord*, as the Arabic version renders it; for his sake, because he was one that was put into the ministry by him, was called unto it, and qualified for it, and sent forth to minister in it by him; or in the name of the Lord, as an ambassador of his, as representing him, and as if he himself was present; for he that receives a minister of Christ, receives Christ himself; see Luke x. 16. Gal. 4. 14. *with all gladness*; with sincere affection, undissembled joy, perfect pleasure, and with all demonstrations of respect unto him, and delight in him at his return to them. *And hold such in reputation*: account such as he precious and valuable; highly esteem of them for their works' sake; reckon them worthy of double honour, and give it to them.

Ver. 30. *Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, &c.*] Meaning either the work the church sent him about, and which he cheerfully undertook, and faithfully performed in carrying of a present to, and visiting the apostle in prison; which is called the work of Christ, because taken by Christ as if it was done to himself; and which, what with the long and fatiguing journey from Philippi to Rome, and the frequent visits he made to the apostle, and the much business besides that lay upon his hands, brought upon him a disorder which greatly threatened his life, and had almost issued in his death: or else the work of preaching the Gospel so frequently and constantly, and with so much zeal and vehemency at Rome; and which may be called the work of Christ, because it is what he calls unto, and qualifies for, and in which his glory is greatly concerned; and on which this good man was so intent, gladly spending himself, and being spent in it, that he was brought through it to the brink of the grave: *not regarding his life*: he was careless of that, and of his health; he loved not his life, nor counted it dear to himself; he rather despised it, and made no account of it, being very willing to deliver it up, and sacrifice it in such a good work and cause: *to supply your lack of service towards me*; to do that in their name, room, and stead, which they, through ab-

sence, could not do in person; signifying, that what was done to him, and for him, was but a piece of service and duty to him; and which this good man and faithful minister and messenger of theirs having done

for them to the hazard of his life, he ought therefore to be received by them with great joy, and to be highly honoured and respected.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle cautions the Philippians against false teachers, whom he describes as evil men, and exhorts them to walk as they had him, and other faithful ministers for an example. And whereas these judaizing teachers were for drawing them off from Christ, and weakening their joy and glorying in him, he exhorts them in the first place to rejoice in Christ, ver. 1. and to beware of them, whom he describes as dogs, as evil workers, as the concision, ver. 2. and opposes to them the characters of real saints, who are truly what they vainly boasted of, really circumcised persons in a Gospel sense, spiritual worshippers of God, joyful believers in Christ, and such as placed no confidence in outward things, ver. 3. Thus the apostle illustrates in his own case, who had as much reason for trusting in such things as any man whatever, ver. 4. of which he gives an enumeration in several particulars, ver. 5, 6, upon which he passes his judgment, and shews of what account, and in what esteem they were with him before, and now; that formerly they were reckoned gain, but now loss, ver. 7. and which he explains as referring to every thing short of Christ, and in comparison of the knowledge of him, and which he preferred to every thing; and this he confirms by his willingness to suffer the loss of all things for him; his ends in which were, that he might win him, and be found in him, without his own righteousness, that legal one the false teachers extolled, and with the righteousness of God which faith receives, and is the only justifying one; and that he might know more of him, feel more of his power, have more fellowship with him, and conformity to him, ver. 8, 9, 10. His view in all which was, that he might attain to that glorious and happy state of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, ver. 11. and to prevent mistakes, and anticipate an objection that might be made to him, as if he ascribed perfection to himself in the present state, he owns he had not arrived to it: all he meant was, that it was his desire to enjoy that which Christ had laid hold on him for; in order to which he buried in oblivion what was past, looking and pressing to things before him, even to Christ, and the glory he was called unto, which was with him, ver. 12, 13, 14. Next follow various exhortations, as to be of the same mind with the apostle in pressing after spiritual and heavenly things, to which he exhorts those that had a greater knowledge of them than others; and who, though otherwise minded, the apostle was persuaded would have the same revealed to them, ver. 15. and both he exhorts, according to their different attainments, to walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing, ver. 16. and to be followers of him, and of them that walked after his example, ver. 17. giving this as a reason, because there were men who walked otherwise, to the grief of him, to the dishonour of Christ, and to their own shame and destruction,

whom he describes as sensual and earthly-minded men, ver. 18, 19. and to engage them to follow him, and others, and not such persons, he draws a character of them opposite unto them; that whereas the minds of those others were carnal and earthly, their minds were spiritual and heavenly; their conversation was in heaven, and they were waiting for Christ from hence, ver. 20. and the blessedness they expect from him then, is the resurrection of their bodies, which is illustrated by the efficient cause of it, Christ; the subject of it, their vile bodies, as in this life, and in the grave; the exemplary and pattern of it, the glorious body of Christ; and the means by which it will be effected, the energy and power of Christ, who is omnipotent, ver. 21.

Ver. 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord, &c.*] The Syriac version reads, *in our Lord*, i. e. Christ. The apostle seems as if he was about to conclude his epistle; and therefore, as if he was taking his farewell of this church, and giving his last advice to them, he exhorts them in a most affectionate manner, as his dear brethren in a spiritual relation, that they would make Christ their chief joy; that whatever sorrow they might have on account of his bonds, or the sickness of Epaphroditus, yet, he observes, they had reason to rejoice in their Lord and Saviour; and however, it might be matter of rejoicing to them to hear of his hope of coming once more to them, and of the recovery of their minister, and his return to them, yet Christ should be the principal object of their joy. A believer has always reason to rejoice in Christ; in the greatness of his person, he being in the form of God, and equal to him, and therefore able to save his to the uttermost, by his obedience and death, and has interest enough in heaven to make his intercession prevalent and successful, and power to keep safe all that are committed to him; and in the fitness of his person to be a Mediator, and day's man, to take care of things pertaining to the glory of God, and to make reconciliation for sin; and in the fulness of his person, he having all grace in him for his people, which is all theirs, and with joy may they draw water out of the full wells of salvation in him; and in the beauty of his person, which surpasses all others, a sight of which fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. They may, and should rejoice, as they sometimes do, in his salvation; in the contrivance of it by infinite wisdom; in the impetration of it by himself; and in the application of it by his spirit; and that because hereby justice is satisfied, the law is magnified and made honourable, sin is finished, and an everlasting righteousness brought in. Also, they are called upon to rejoice in his resurrection, which is for their justification; in his ascension, seeing he then received gifts for men; and in his session at the right hand of God, which is in their nature; and in his intercession, which is to their advantage; and in all the relations he stands

in to them, as head, husband, father, brother, friend; and in every thing that is his, and that belongs unto him, as his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and worship. *To write the same things to you.* The apostle finding he had more time on his hands, or fresh thoughts occurred to him, writes on, and makes an apology for writing the same things, which he had either wrote to other churches, or which he had delivered when first among them, or which he had since wrote to them. For sometimes it is necessary to say and write the same things over and over again, partly that they may be the better understood, and partly that they may be more strongly fixed in the memory; as also, that the saints may be the more established in the present truth: and which he says, *to me indeed is not grievous; or troublesome; he found no backwardness to it, nor sluggishness in it; he was not loth to do it, nor was it wearisome to him; or made him slothful, as the Arabic renders it; nor was he afraid to repeat what he had wrote, or again to warn them against false teachers, of whom he stood in no fear: but for you it is safe; or necessary, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, being a means of preserving them from the error of the wicked; for though the saints are safe in Christ, and can never finally and totally be deceived, yet the Gospel, and the frequent ministration of it, are a means of keeping them from the deception of evil men; for as the Syriac version renders it, they make you more cautious; when truth is repeated, and afresh confirmed, it guards against falling in with damnable heresies. And so the Arabic version renders it, is a guard, or garrison to you.*

Ver. 2. *Beware of dogs, &c.*] By whom are meant the *judaising* teachers, who were for imposing the works and ceremonies of the law upon the Gentiles, as necessary to salvation; and they have the name retorted on them they used to give to the Gentiles; see Matt. xv. 26, 27. nor should they think it too severe, since the Jews themselves say, "the face of that generation (in which the Messiah shall come) shall be, כפני הכלב, *as the face of a dog.*" The apostle calls them so, because they returned to judaism, as the dog to its vomit; and because of the uncleanness in which many of them lived, and the impudence they were guilty of in transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and putting themselves upon an equal foot with them; as also for their calumny and detraction, their wrangling with the apostles, snarling at their doctrines, and biting them with the devouring words of reproach and scandal: likewise, they may be styled dogs for their covetousness, being such greedy ones as in Isa. lvi. 10. with feigned words making merchandise of men; and for their love of their bellies, which they served, and not Christ, and made a god of. Moreover, because they were without, as dogs are, Rev. xxii. 15. having gone out from the communion of the saints, because they were not of them; or if among them, yet not true members of Christ, nor of his mystical body; all which are so many arguments why the saints should beware of them, and why their persons, conversation, and doctrine should be avoided. *Beware of evil-workers:* meaning the same persons, who were deceitful workers, did the work of the Lord unfaithfully, walked

in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully, endeavoured to subvert the Gospel of Christ, and the faith of men in it; who worked from bad principles, and with evil views; and notwithstanding their large pretensions to good works, teaching that justification and salvation were by them, which notion the apostle tacitly refers to in this character; yet were bad livers, and such as Christ will reject another day as workers of iniquity; a character they deservedly bear, if there was no other reason for it than their preaching the doctrine of salvation by men's own works of righteousness, and who, and their ministry, are by all means to be shunned. *Beware of the concision;* the men of the concision, as the Arabic version renders it; they chose to be called so, but the apostle would not give them that name, but calls them the *concision;* or the *concision of the flesh,* as the Syriac version renders it; referring either to the cuttings in the flesh, forbidden Lev. xxi. 5. or to the circumcision of the flesh rather, which they valued themselves upon, and were for introducing among the Gentiles, whereby they made sad divisions, and cutting work among the churches; and were some of them at least cut off, as the Ethiopic version renders it, from the churches; and who, as much as in them lay, cut themselves off from Christ, and rendered him unprofitable to them; see Gal. v. 2, 4.

Ver. 3. *For we are the circumcision, &c.*] And not they; they have the name, and we the thing, or that which legal circumcision was a shadow of, namely, circumcision of the heart; which lies in being pricked to the heart under a true sense of sin; in having the hardness of the heart removed, and the iniquity of it laid to open view; in pain and contrition of heart about it, joined with shame for it, and loathing of it, the consequence of which is, a putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, according to the former conversation; and also in a renouncing a man's own righteousness in point of justification before God, and acceptance with him. All which is the work of God, and not man, and is therefore called the circumcision made without hands; it has God, and not man, for its author; and its praise is of God, and not of men; and its seat is in the heart and spirit, and not in the flesh; and such whose hearts are circumcised to love the Lord their God, and fear him, are the true circumcision: *which worship God in the spirit.* The object of worship is God, and him only; not a creature animate or inanimate, stocks or stones, beasts, birds, men, or angels; only God, Father, Son, and Spirit: that the Father is to be worshipped, is not disputed, see John iv. 21, 23. and the Son is to be worshipped with the same worship the Father is; since he is in the form of God, and equal to him, is the Creator of all, the Lord of angels and men, and is to be, and is worshipped by both; prayer is made unto him, baptism is administered in his name, and trust and confidence are placed in him; and so is the Holy Ghost, he being equally God with the Father and the Son, and therefore the same homage is to be given to him as to them: and so some indeed read the words here, *which worship God the Spirit;* or the Spirit, who is God. *Worship* is either inward or outward; inward

worship lies in the exercise of grace on God, as of faith, hope, love, fear, &c. outward worship is the performance of certain external actions required by God, and both are to be performed: and it is also either private or public; private worship is in the closet, or in the family, and consists of praying, singing of praises, &c. public worship lies in the observance of the outward ordinances of preaching, praying, hearing singing, &c. in the church of God; even all such ordinances as God has appointed, which are recorded in the Scriptures, and are confirmed by the authority of Christ. The manner in which worship is to be performed, is *in the spirit*; either in and with the spirit of God, without whose grace and assistance no part of it can be performed well. And the Alexandrian copy reads, *which worship in the spirit of God*; and so the Complutensian edition, and several copies. Or in and with our own hearts and spirits, which should be engaged in every part of religious worship with much attention, diligence, and fervency; or in a spiritual manner, in opposition to the carnal worship of the Jews, and the bodily exercise of formal professors; and which lies in drawing nigh to God with true hearts, sincere and fervent ones, with grace in them, and that in exercise: *and rejoice in Christ Jesus*; or *glory in him*, and make their boast of him; for a different word is here used from that in ver. 1. Such who have a true sense of themselves, and a spiritual sight of Christ, will not glory in themselves, in their wisdom, strength, riches, or righteousness, but in Christ, in his wisdom and strength, in his riches and righteousness, and in his person and grace only: *and have no confidence in the flesh*; in any carnal descent, or birth-privilege, as to be of the seed of Abraham, of the stock of Israel, or of such a tribe, or family, or born of such a parent; nor in circumcision, or any of the carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law; nor in any civil, moral, legal, and external righteousness, for so to do is but to make flesh an arm; or indeed, to trust in any thing out of Christ, or short of him; and all this makes up the character and description of a true believer in Christ.

Ver. 4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, &c.*] This he says, lest it should be objected to him, that the reason why he had no confidence in the flesh, and did not boast of it, was, because he could not; he had nothing to glory of, and put his confidence in, and therefore acted the common part of such persons, who despise what either they have not, or are ignorant of: but this was not the apostle's case, he had as much reason, and as good a foundation for trust in himself, his privileges and attainments, as any man had, and more; and his meaning here is not, that he might lawfully have confidence in the flesh, for that is criminal in every one, but that he had as good pretensions to it; and were it lawful, might with greater appearance of truth do it than some other persons, or indeed any other: *if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more*: the sense is, if there were any other person besides the false teachers he speaks of in ver. 2. that were of the judaizing sect, or any whatever of the Jewish nation, be he who

he will, who thought within himself he had, or seemed to others to have (for all such confidence, and the grounds of it, are only in show and appearance, and in imagination, not in reality), reasons for boasting and trusting in himself and in his carnal privileges and performances, the apostle had more, and which he enumerates in the following verses; not but that he might be exceeded by some in some one particular or another; as for instance, he was not of the tribe of Levi, nor of Judah; he was neither of the house of Aaron, nor of David; neither of the priestly line, nor of the blood-royal; but taking all together, there was not a man in whom so many reasons met, for boasting and confidence in the flesh, as in himself.

Ver. 5. *Circumcised the eighth day, &c.*] Circumcision was an appointment of God to Abraham, and his male issue; to him and them God gave the covenant of circumcision: this to Abraham personally was a sign and seal, that the righteousness of faith, which he had while he was an uncircumcised person, should come upon the uncircumcised Gentiles in the times of the Messiah, when the Gospel should come among them; and it was a distinguishing character of the Jews from the Gentiles, until the coming of Christ; it was typical of the effusion of his blood to cleanse from all the impurity of original and actual sin, and represented the circumcision of the heart. The Jews valued themselves much upon it, and treated the Gentiles with contempt for the want of it; and would neither converse with them in a civil or religious way, because they were uncircumcised: but the apostle was no Gentile, or an uncircumcised person; he had this mark in his flesh to glory in as well as others, if it had been lawful to trust in it; he was the subject of this ordinance whilst it was a standing one, and before it was abolished by Christ; and it was performed on him at the precise time fixed in the original institution of it, which was not always observed; for not to take notice of Jewish proselytes, who were circumcised at any age, when they became such, whether in youth, manhood, or old age; and which by the way shews, that the apostle was no proselyte, but a natural Jew; Gershom, the son of Moses, was not circumcised till some years after his birth; and all the while the children of Israel were in the wilderness this ordinance was neglected, till Joshua had led them into Canaan's land, and then he circumcised all that generation that was born in the wilderness, some of whom must be near forty years of age; and in after-times it was usual with the Jews, for one reason or another, to put off circumcision to a longer time. Take the following story as an illustration of this: "'tis a tradition of R. Nathan; once, says he, I went to the cities of the sea, and a woman came to me who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third she brought to me; I saw him that he was red, I said unto her, my daughter, *wait a while* for him till his blood is swallowed up in him; she waited for him a while, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name. And again another time I went to the province of Cappadocia (the Jerusalem

"Talmud" has it Cæsarea of Cappadocia), a certain woman came to me, who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third, (the above Talmud adds, and he died, the fourth,) she brought to me, I saw that he was green, I inspected him, and the blood of the covenant was not in him, I said unto her, my daughter, דַּרְכֵינוּ, *tarry a while* for him; (the Jerusalem Talmud has it, דַּרְכֵינוּ לְאוֹרֵר נֹכַח, *let him alone to another time*;) till his blood fall in him, she waited for him, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name." The Jewish canon, with regard to the time of circumcision, runs thus: "an infant may be circumcised at eight days, or at nine, or at ten, or at eleven, or at twelve, neither less nor more (not less than eight, nor more than twelve), how? according to its course at eight. If it is born between the two evenings, it is circumcised on the ninth day; if between the two evenings of the sabbath-eve, it is circumcised on the tenth day; if on a feast-day after the sabbath, it is circumcised on the eleventh; if on the two days of the beginning of the year, it is circumcised on the twelfth. An infant that is sick, they don't circumcise him until he is recovered." And in the last case, they reckon seven days from the time of the recovery of the child, as Maimonides observes; with whom may be read other cases, in which circumcision was not always performed on the eighth day, but sometimes was deferred, and sometimes it was done the same day the child was born. But circumcision on the eighth day was reckoned most valid and authentic, and according to rule; and therefore it is not without reason, that the apostle mentions the time of his circumcision, and puts an emphasis upon it. *Of the stock of Israel*; this is said to distinguish him from an Ishmaelite, or an Edomite, who were circumcised, and from the son of a proselyte, who might be circumcised on the eighth day; but he was a natural Israelite, to whom the various privileges belonged, mentioned in Rom. ix. 4, 5. and therefore had as much reason to trust in the flesh as any Israelite whatever. *Of the tribe of Benjamin*; who was a genuine and legitimate son of Jacob, whom he had by his lawful and beloved wife Rachel. Of which tribe was the first king of Israel, whose name was Saul, and which was the apostle's first and Jewish name, and which perhaps was common in that tribe on that account. In this tribe stood the city of Jerusalem, and the temple of the Lord; this tribe retained the true worship of God with Judah, when the ten tribes revolted and worshipped the calves at Dan and Bethel, and returned with Judah from captivity, when the others did not. And the apostle was not only able to make himself appear to be of the stock of Israel, but could name the tribe to which he belonged, which many of the Jews, that were of one, or rather of the ten tribes, were not able to do, and may be his chief reason for mentioning this circumstance. *An Hebrew of the Hebrews*; not so called only because he could trace his pedigree from Abraham the Hebrew,

or understood, and could speak the Hebrew language, which the Hellenistical Jews could not, or was an illustrious one among them, but because both his parents were Hebrews; he was an Hebrew by the father and mother's side both; he was a genuine Hebrew. The Arabians have the same way of speaking; and with them a genuine Arab is called an Arab of the Arabs, as here. Some there were whose mothers were Hebrews, and their fathers Gentiles; such an one was Timothy, Acts xvi. 1. and there were others whose fathers were Hebrews, and their mothers Gentiles; and these are thought by some to be the same the Talmudists call חַלְלִים, *profane*: they not being reckoned so holy as such whose fathers and mothers were both Hebrews; of which the latter gloried over the other. *As touching the law, a Pharisee*: with respect to the interpretation and observance of the law, which was according to the traditions of the elders, and not the literal and genuine sense of it, he followed; and was of the sect of the Pharisees, which was the strictest sect among the Jews, and in the greatest esteem among the people: and though they had put many false glosses on the Scripture, and held many erroneous principles, and were very tenacious of human traditions, yet they were preferable to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and other things; and were more zealous in their devotion and religion, and more strict in their morals, and external holiness of life and conversation. They separated and distinguished themselves hereby from other people, and hence they had their name; see the note on Matt. iii. 7. Now the apostle was not only a Pharisee, but the son of one; he was always brought up in that strict sect and severe way, Acts xxiii. 6.

Ver. 6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version adds, *of God*, as in Gal. i. 13. The apostle was very zealous of the traditions of the elders, and for the law of God, and towards God also; though his zeal was not according to knowledge, but blind, ignorant, and furious; which pushed him on to persecute the followers of Christ, and the church of Christ at Jerusalem more especially, in a very violent and outrageous manner; he held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen; he consented unto his death; he made havoc of the church at Jerusalem, haling men and women to prison; he continued breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ; gave his voice against them when put to death, punished them frequently in the synagogues by scourging them, and compelled them to blaspheme the name of Christ; was exceeding mad against them, pursued them to strange cities, and persecuted the church of God exceedingly, more than any one single person besides. *Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless*. This he mentions last, as including the whole of his righteousness, civil, ceremonial, and moral; and which he fancied was so perfect, that whatever righteousness was in the law, or required by it, he had it, and to such a degree, that he was blameless before God and men; that he was justified by it in the sight

[†] T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 7. 4.

[‡] Mism. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 5. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & Mism. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 2. & Bartenora in ib.

[†] Hilch. Mile, c. 1. 16.

[‡] Pocock. Specim. A. ab. Hist. p. 3, 9.

[¶] T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 1.

of God, and could not justly be found fault with by any, or be charged with any defect in his obedience, either to the moral or ceremonial law; which must arise from great ignorance of the righteousness of God, and the strictness of his justice, and of the law of God, and the purity, spirituality, and extent of it, which reaches to the thoughts of the heart, and the first motions of sin; and of himself, the plague of his own heart, of the sin of lust, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in every instance of it.

Ver. 7. *But what things were gain to me, &c.*] As circumcision, and the observance of the ceremonial law, which he thought were necessary to salvation; and his natural and lineal descent from Abraham, which he supposed entitled him to the favour of God, and eternal life, as well as to outward privileges; and his being of that strict sect of religion, a Pharisee, which he doubted not, being brought up and continued in, would secure to him everlasting happiness; and his zeal in persecuting the church of Christ, in which he thought he did God good service, and merited heaven for himself; and his legal righteousness, which he fancied was perfect, and so justified him in the sight of God, and rendered him acceptable to him: for the apostle's meaning is, not only that these things were judged by him, whilst in an unconverted state, good in themselves, and in some respects useful, but that they were really gainful, and meritorious of happiness in another world. But being converted, he saw all those things in a different light, and had a different opinion of them: *those I counted loss for Christ*: circumcision he saw was now abolished, and was nothing, and that the circumcision of the heart was the main thing; and that the other was so far from being useful and necessary to salvation, that it was hurtful, was a yoke of bondage, bound men over to keep the whole law, and made Christ of none effect to them; and the same opinion he had of the whole ceremonial law: as for natural descent, which he once valued and trusted in, he now rejected it, well knowing it signified not whether a man was a Greek, or a Jew, a Barbarian, or Scythian, provided he was but a believer in Christ; and as for any outward form or sect of religion, he knew there was no salvation in it, nor in any other name but that of Christ; and he was so far from thinking, that on account of his zeal in persecuting the church he was deserving of heaven, that for that reason he was not worthy to be called an apostle of Christ; and as for his legal righteousness, he now saw it to be as filthy rags; that many things in it were really evil in themselves, such as his observance of the traditions of the elders, whereby the commands of God were transgressed, and his mad zeal in persecuting the followers of Christ; and other things, which had the appearance of good works, were not truly so, did not spring from love, were not done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and that the best of them were very imperfect, and exceeding blamable; yea, that if they had been perfect, they could not have been meritorious of eternal life, as he once thought them to be; he saw now they were of no use in justification and salvation; nay, that they were hurtful and pernicious, being trusted to, as keeping persons off from Christ,

and his righteousness: wherefore, he gladly suffered the loss of all his legal righteousness, and renounced and disclaimed it, and all pretensions to justification and salvation by it, for the sake of Christ; of life and salvation by him, and in comparison of him; of the knowledge of him, and of his justifying righteousness, as the following verses shew. Hence, what before he pleased himself much with, and promised himself much from, he could not now reflect upon with any pleasure and satisfaction of mind; which is the sense of this phrase with Jewish writers*: so it is observed of a drunken man, when he comes to himself, and it is told him what he did when in liquor, he grieves at it, *וידעש הכל הפסד ולא ריוח*, and counts all loss and not gain; i. e. can take no pleasure in a reflection on it.

Ver. 8. *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, &c.*] Not only the things before mentioned, but any thing, and every thing else but Christ, or that stood in competition with him, or were short of him; as his natural and acquired parts; the whole compass of learning he had attained to; all that honour, credit, reputation, and popularity he was in for knowledge and devotion; all worldly substance, the comforts of life, and life itself; and all his righteousness since conversion, as well as before; of this no doubt could be made by those who knew him, his principles and his practices: and all this for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: by the knowledge of Christ is not meant subjectively the knowledge that is in Christ, or which he has of others, either as God or man; but objectively, that knowledge which believers have of him, who know him not only in his person, as God over all, but as a Saviour and Redeemer, and as theirs; they know him in all his relations, and particularly as their Lord, not by creation only, but by redemption and grace, as the apostle did, putting an emphasis on these words, *my Lord*; thereby expressing his faith of interest in him, his great affection for him, and cheerful subjection to him. And this knowledge is not general, but special, spiritual, and saving; it is a knowledge of approbation of Christ above all others; a fiducial one, which has faith in him joined with it, and is both experimental and, practical, and, at least at times, appropriating; and though imperfect, it is progressive and capable of being increased, and will at last be brought to perfection. It is attained to, not by the light of nature, nor by the help of carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses, but by the Gospel of the grace of God, as a means; and the efficient cause of it is Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father reveals Christ in his saints; the Son gives them an understanding to know him; and the Spirit is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and this knowledge is very excellent: a spiritual knowledge of Christ is more excellent than a general and notional one, or than a knowledge of Christ after the flesh; and the knowledge of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, though the same in nature, is more excellent than that which was under the legal dispensation, by promises, prophecies, and the ceremonial law, in degree, extensiveness, and clearness; but the most excellent knowledge of Christ is that of the saints in heaven; yea, even there is an excellency in what the

* Sopher Coari, p. 3. sect. 16. fol. 152. 1.

saints have here on earth, and a superior one to all other knowledge, if the author and original of it is considered: it is not of ourselves, nor by the assistance of men; it is not in the book of nature, nor in the schools of the philosophers; it is not of earth, nor earthly, but it comes from afar, from above, from heaven, from God the father of lights; it is a free-grace gift, a distinguishing one, and is very comprehensive, unspeakable, and unchangeable: and as to the object of it, it is Christ, the chiefest among ten thousands; who made the heavens, earth, and seas, and all that in them are, the sun, moon, and stars, men and beasts, birds and fishes, fossils, minerals, vegetables, and every thing in nature; and therefore the knowledge of him must be superior to the knowledge of every thing else; and, which adds to its excellency, it makes Christ precious, engages faith and confidence in him, influences the life and conversation, humbles the soul, and creates in it true pleasure and satisfaction; when all other knowledge fills with self-love, pride, and vanity, and increases sorrow; whereas this is not only useful in life, but supports, as under afflictions, so in the views of death and eternity; through it grace is received now, and by it glory hereafter; for it is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of eternal life. Well may the believer count all things but loss for it, as the apostle did; who adds, for further confirmation of what he had asserted, *for whom I have suffered the loss of all things*; he dropped all confidence in his carnal privileges, and civil, ceremonial, and moral righteousness, for Christ and his righteousness; he parted with all for this pearl of great price; he lost his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and suffered afflictions and persecutions in various shapes; he lost the comforts of life, being often in cold and nakedness, in hunger and thirst, and was ready to suffer the loss of life itself for professing and preaching Christ: *and do count them but dung*; or dog's meat; see ver. 2. what is fit only to be cast to dogs, as the word signifies; and intends every thing that is base, mean, and worthless; as the faeces of men, the dregs and lees of liquor, the falling of fruit, chaff, stubble, the dross of metals, dung, and what not: so he esteemed his carnal descent; his form and sect of religion, and zeal in it; his ceremonial and moral righteousness before and after conversion; and every thing of the creature, or what was his own, and but flesh; being of the same opinion with the church of old, who reckoned her righteousnesses, the best, and the whole of them, as *filthy rags*. The apostle next expresses his end and views in this, *that I may win Christ*; not get an interest in him, for this he had already, and he knew he had, and that he should never lose it; and besides, an interest in Christ is not a thing that begins in time, but commenced from all eternity; and is not gotten at all, not by good works, nor repentance, nor faith; for these, if right and genuine, are the fruits and effects of an interest in Christ, but is what is freely given. The apostle's meaning is, either that he might gain or acquire a larger knowledge of Christ; and he cared not what pains he took, what expenses he was at, nor what loss he sustained for what he esteemed the most excellent, and for which he had already suffered the loss of all things; and if he had had more to lose, he could willingly part with it

for more of this knowledge; compare ver. 10. or his sense is, that he might gain by Christ, or that Christ might be gain to him, as he found him to be, and as he is to every believer; who by parting with all for Christ, gains much by him, as a justifying righteousness, acceptance with God, peace, pardon, life, grace, and glory.

Ver. 9. *And be found in him, &c.*] This is another end the apostle had in view, in counting all things loss and dung, and suffering the loss of all for Christ. Calvin, different from other interpreters, reads the words actively, *and may find in him*; and thinks the sense is, that the apostle renounced all things for Christ, that he might recover all in him: and true it is, that for the loss of carnal privileges, he found in Christ spiritual blessings; and for the loss of his own righteousness, another, and a better, even the righteousness of God; and in lieu of external goods, or worldly substance he was stripped of, true and lasting riches; and in the room of outward credit, peace and plenty, true honour, real peace, and spiritual pasture; and instead of the comforts of life, and life itself, spiritual and eternal life; though it is best to read the words passively, *and be found in him*; that is, be in him, as the Ethiopic version renders it; so the word *found* is used in Gal. ii. 17. Phil. ii. 8. and he means not a nominal being in Christ, or a being in him by profession, but a real one; and which is either secret or open: a secret being in Christ he had from everlasting, being chosen in him, given to him, loved by him, betrothed unto him, preserved in him, and represented by him; and an open one he had at conversion, when he became a new creature, and was created in Christ Jesus unto good works: and here he intends a more clear and evident manifestation of his being in Christ; and his desire is, that he might appear to be in him, in life and at death, and at the day of judgment, and in the following manner: *not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law*; by which he means his obedience to the moral, as well as the ceremonial law; for the one was as much his own as the other, and more properly his righteousness: this he calls his *own*, because performed by him, and wrought out in his own strength; and which he had an high opinion of, as if it was perfect and blameless; and which he had before put his trust and confidence in; as also to distinguish it from another's righteousness, even that which he had in Christ: he moreover calls it, *the righteousness which is of the law*; which the law required, and he performed in obedience to it, seeking for justification by it; this character distinguishes it from the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is manifested without the law: and this his own legal righteousness he did not desire to *have*, and to be found in; not but that he desired to live soberly and righteously, to have, and do works of righteousness, but not depend on them; he would not have, and account this his moral righteousness, as a justifying one; he knew it was imperfect, filthy, and unprofitable, and that by it he could not be justified and saved, therefore he desired to have another. *But that which is through the faith of Christ*: not through that faith which Christ himself, as man, had and exercised on God, as his God; but that which he is the author and finisher of; and which has him and his

righteousness for its object; not through faith, as the cause of it; for the moving cause of justification is the free grace of God, and the efficient cause is God himself: and it appears from hence, that faith is not the matter of our justification, or is not our righteousness; for faith and righteousness are two distinct things, otherwise righteousness could not be said to be *through* faith. The righteousness of Christ is here meant, and which is the sole matter of justification, and comes to us through faith apprehending, receiving, and embracing it; and which shews, that it must be before faith, or it could not be through it; as water that runs through a bridge must be before and above that bridge through which it runs. This righteousness is further described, as *the righteousness which is of God by faith*; that righteousness which Christ, who is the true God, is the author of, hence it is a pure and perfect one, infinite, and serves for many; which God the father approves of, and is well-pleased with, because his law is magnified, and made honourable by it; and what he graciously gives, and freely imputes without works, to his people: and this is *by faith*, which beholds the excellency of it, acknowledges its sufficiency, renounces its own righteousness, and submits to, and lays hold on this, and rejoices in it; and thus men are justified openly and manifestly by faith, receiving the justifying righteousness of Christ: or the words may be rendered *upon faith*. This righteousness is as a garment put upon faith, or put upon him by God, who has true faith in Christ; see Rom. iii. 22. This last clause, *by faith*, is omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and seems to be read by them as belonging to the beginning of the next verse. Now this righteousness the apostle desired to have, and be found in; and this he says not, as supposing that a person may be found in Christ, and yet not have his righteousness; nor as if he himself had not this righteousness, and an interest in it; but to shew his value for it, and his desire to be continually exercising faith on it, and the trust and confidence he placed in it; well knowing that in this he was safe and secure from all condemnation; this would answer for him in a time to come; being found in this he should not be naked nor speechless, and should have a right and an admission into the kingdom and glory of Christ Jesus.

Ver. 10. *That I may know him, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads *by faith*; and to the same sense the Syriac. The apostle did know Christ, and that years ago; he knew whom he had believed; he knew him for himself; he knew his personal interest in him; nor did he know any but him in the business of salvation: but his knowledge of Christ, though it was very great, it was imperfect; he knew but in part, and therefore desired to know more of Christ, of the mystery and glories of his person, of the unsearchable riches of his grace, of his great salvation, and the benefits of it, of his love, which passes perfect knowledge, and to have a renewed and enlarged experience of communion with him. The apostle here explains what he means by winning Christ, for the sake of which he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung; it was, that he might attain to a greater knowledge of the person

and grace of Christ: *and the power of his resurrection*; not that power which was put forth by his father, and by himself, in raising him from the dead; but the virtue which arises from it, and the influence it has on many things; as on the resurrection of the saints: it is the procuring cause of it, they shall rise by virtue of union to a risen Jesus; it is the first-fruits, which is the earnest and pledge of their resurrection, as sure as Christ is risen, so sure shall they rise; it is the exemplar and pattern of theirs, their bodies will be raised and fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; and this the apostle desired to know, experience, and attain unto. Christ's resurrection has an influence also on the justification of his people; when Christ died he had the sins of them all upon him, and he died for them; when he rose again, he was justified from them, and discharged as their public head and representative, and they in him: hence it is said of him, that *he was raised again for our justification*, Rom. iv. 25. Now, though the apostle was acquainted with this virtue and influence of Christ's resurrection, he desired to know more of it, for the encouragement of his faith to live upon Christ, as the Lord his righteousness. Moreover, the regeneration of men is owing to the resurrection of Christ; as to the abundant mercy of God, as the moving cause, so to the resurrection of Christ, as the means or virtual cause; and therefore are said to be *begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*, 1 Pet. i. 3. This power and virtue the apostle had had an experience of, yet he wanted to feel more of it, in exciting the graces of the spirit to a lively exercise, in raising his affections, and setting them on things above, and in engaging him to seek after them, and set light by things on earth, and in causing him to walk in newness of life, in likeness or imitation of Christ's resurrection, to all which that strongly animates and encourages; see Col. iii. 1, 2. Rom. vi. 4, 5. *And the fellowship of his sufferings*; either his personal sufferings, and so signifies a sharing in, and a participation of the benefits arising from them; such as reconciliation for sin, peace with God, pardon, righteousness, nearness to God, &c. or the sufferings of his members for him, and with him, and which Christ reckons his own: these the apostle was willing to take his part in, and lot of, knowing, that those that are partakers of his sufferings in this sense, shall reign with him, and be glorified together. What the Jews deprecated, the apostle was desirous of; namely, sharing in the sorrows and sufferings of the Messiah, and which they reckon the greatest happiness to be delivered from. "The disciples of R. Eleazar⁷ asked him, what a man should do that he may be delivered מחרבו של משיח, *from the sorrows of the Messiah?* he must study in the law, and in beneficence." And elsewhere they say⁸, "he that keeps the three meals on the sabbath-day shall be delivered from three punishments, מחרבו של משיח, *from the sorrows of the Messiah*, and from the damnation of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog." But our apostle rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ, and was desirous of filling up the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, the church: *being made conformable unto his death*; either in a spiritual sense

⁷ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

⁸ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. See Cetubot, fol. 111. 1.

dying daily unto sin, having the affections, with the lusts, crucified, and the deeds of the body mortified, and so planted in the likeness of his death; or rather in a corporeal sense, bearing always in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and being continually exposed to death for his sake, and ready to suffer it, whenever called to it.

Ver. 11. *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*] Not in a figurative sense, the resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, of which Christ is the efficient cause, for this the apostle had attained to; unless the consummation of that spiritual life, in perfect holiness, should be intended, than which nothing was more desirable by him; nor in a representative sense, for this also he enjoyed in Christ his head, being risen with him, and in him, when he rose from the dead; but in a literal sense, and designs not the general resurrection of the just and unjust, which he believed; for he knew that every one must, and will attain to this, even Pharaoh, Judas, and the worst of men; but the special and particular resurrection of the righteous, the better resurrection, which will be first, and upon the personal coming of Christ, and by virtue of union to him, and in a glorious manner, and to everlasting life and happiness: and when the apostle says, *if by any means* he might attain to this, it is not to be understood as if he doubted of it, which would be inconsistent with his firm persuasion, that nothing should separate him from the love of God, and with his full assurance of faith, as to interest in Jesus Christ; but it denotes the difficulty of attaining it, since through various afflictions and great tribulations a believer must pass, before he comes to it; and also the apostle's earnest desire of it, and strenuous endeavour for it; not caring what scenes of trouble, or sea of sorrow, what fiery trials, severe sufferings, or cruel death he went through, so be it he obtained, as he believed he should, the glorious and better resurrection; he counted not his life dear to himself, he loved it not unto death, having in view the blissful and happy state after it.

Ver. 12. *Not as though I had already attained, &c.*] Or *received*; he had received much grace out of the fulness of it in Christ; he had received the gift of righteousness, the forgiveness of his sins, and the adoption of children; he had attained to a lively hope of the incorruptible inheritance, and had received a right unto it, and had a meetness for it; but as yet he had not received the thing itself, nor was he come to the end of his race, and so had not received the crown of righteousness laid up for him; he had not yet attained to perfect knowledge, nor perfect holiness, nor perfect happiness: wherefore he adds, *either were already perfect*: he was perfect in comparison of others, that were in a lower class of grace, experience, and knowledge, in which sense the word is used in ver. 15. and in 1 Cor. ii. 6. he was so, as perfection intends sincerity, uprightness, and integrity; the root of the matter, the truth of grace was in him; his faith was unfeigned, his love was without dissimulation, his hope was without hypocrisy, his conversation in the world was in godly simplicity, and his preaching and his whole conduct in his ministry were of sincerity, and in the sight of God: he was perfect as a new creature with respect to parts, having Christ formed in him, and all the parts

of the new man, though not as to degrees; this new man not being as yet grown up to a perfect man, or to its full growth, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; he was perfect with respect to justification, being perfectly justified from all things, by the righteousness of Christ, but not with respect to sanctification; and though his sanctification was perfect in Christ, yet not in himself; his knowledge was imperfect, something was wanting in his faith, and sin dwelt in him, of which he sometimes grievously complained: now this he says, lest he should be thought to arrogate that to himself, which he had not: *but I follow*; Christ the forerunner, after perfect knowledge of him, perfect holiness from him, and perfect happiness with him: the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who pursue it with eagerness, press forward with all might and main, to get up to the mark, in order to receive the prize; accordingly the Syriac version renders it, *רדח אנה, I run*, and so the Arabic: the apostle's sense is, that though he had not yet reached the mark, he pressed forward towards it, he had it in view, he stretched and exerted himself, and followed up very closely to it, in hope of enjoying the prize: *if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus*; he was apprehended of Christ, when he met him in his way to Damascus, stopped him in his journey, laid him prostrate on the ground, and laid hold on him as his own, challenged and claimed his interest in him, as one that the father had given him, and he had purchased by his blood; he entered into him, and took possession of him, and took up his residence in him, having dispossessed the strong man armed, and ever since held him as his own; and he apprehended, or laid hold on him, to bring him as he had engaged to do, to a participation of grace here, and glory hereafter; that he might know him himself, and make him known to others; that he might be made like unto him, have communion with him, and everlastingly enjoy him: and these things the apostle pursued after with great vehemence, that he might apprehend them, and be in full possession of them; and which he did, in the way and manner hereafter described.

Ver. 13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, &c.*] That for which he was apprehended of Christ: he had not attained to perfect knowledge, was not come to the mark, had not received the prize, or laid hold on eternal life; though he had received so much grace, and such gifts, as had qualified him for an apostle; and he had been so many years in that office, and had so great a knowledge in the mystery of the Gospel, and had laboured in it more abundantly than others, and with great success; and even though he had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard unspeakable words, not lawful to be uttered, yet he had no such opinion of himself, as if he was perfect: by which way of speaking, he tacitly strikes at the arrogance and vain confidence of false teachers, that pretended to perfection; and in this way led the brethren to conclude, that they could never have arrived to it, since so great an apostle had not; some copies read *not yet*, and so the Ethiopic version: *but this one thing I do*; which he was intent upon, constantly attended to, and earnestly pursued; it was the main and principal thing he was set upon, and which he employed himself in;

and which engrossed all his thoughts, desires, affections, time, and labour; see Psal. xxvii. 4. Luke x. 42. The Syriac version reads, *this one thing I know*; signifying that whatever he was ignorant of, and however imperfect his knowledge was in other things, this he was full well apprized of, and acquainted with. The Arabic version renders the whole thus, *I do not think that I have now obtained, and received any thing, but the one thing; namely, what follows; forgetting those things which are behind*, meaning not the sins of his past life, which were indeed forgotten by God, and the guilt of which was removed from him, by the application of the blood of Christ, so that he had no more conscience of them; yet they were remembered and made mention of by him, partly for his own humiliation, and partly to magnify the grace of God: nor earthly and worldly things, which believers are too apt to have respect to, to look back upon, and hanker after, as the Israelites did after the flesh-pots in Egypt; though these were forgotten by the apostle, so as not anxiously to care for them, and seek after them, to set his affections on them, or trust in them: nor his fleshly privileges, and legal righteousness, which he pursued, valued, and trusted in before conversion, but now dropped, renounced, disregarded, and counted as loss and dung; but rather his labours and works of righteousness since conversion, which though he sometimes took notice of for the magnifying of the grace of God, for the defence of the Gospel, and to put a stop to the vain boasting of false teachers, yet he forgot them in point of dependence on them, and trust to them; and having put his hand to the plough, he did not look back, nor desist, but went on in his laborious way, not thinking of what he had done and gone through, nor discouraged at what was before him; as also he intends all his growth in grace, and proficiency in divine knowledge, which was very great; and though he was thankful for these things, and would observe them to the glory of the grace of God, yet he trusted not in them: nor did he sit down easy and satisfied with what he had attained unto, and therefore was *reaching forth unto those things which are before*; to perfection of knowledge, holiness, and happiness, which were before him, and he as yet had not attained unto; but was desirous of, and pursued after with great vehemence and eagerness; the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who did not stop to look behind them, and see what way they have run, and how far they are before others, but look and move forwards, and stretch themselves out to the uttermost, and run with all their might and main to the mark before them; and so the apostle did in a spiritual sense.

Ver. 14. *I press toward the mark, &c.*] The allusion is to the white line, or mark, which the runners in the Olympic games made up to, and to which he that came first received the prize; and by which the apostle intends the Lord Jesus Christ, who is *σκοπος*, the scope, or mark, of all the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God, to which they all aim, and in which they all centre; and of the covenant of grace, of which he is the sum and substance, the Mediator, surety, and messenger, in whom are all the blessings and promises of it; and of the Scriptures of truth, the

writings of the Old and New Testament, which all testify of him, and agree in him; and of both law and Gospel, he is the end of the law, and the substance of the Gospel; and of all the graces of the spirit, in the hearts of his people, faith looks at him, hope is concerned with him, and love has him for its object; and of all the duties believers are concerned in, they all point at him, they are done in his name and strength, through faith in him, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory; and so he is of their thoughts, affections, and desires: and to this mark they press or *run*, as the Syriac version renders it; they look to Jesus, whilst they are running their Christian race; they keep him in their view, and follow after him, because he is their forerunner, and the Captain of their salvation; they set him before them as their guide to direct them, according to whom they steer their course, that so they may not lose their way, nor move out of it, to the right hand or the left; and from whom they take great encouragement to go on, and press through the difficulties they do; and besides, they know that there is no coming at the prize, but through the mark, for there is salvation in no other; and that whoever comes up to the mark, or believes in Christ, shall enjoy the prize of eternal life, which is next mentioned: *for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*: by which is meant, the incorruptible crown; the crown of life, righteousness, and glory, that fadeth not away, styled *the prize of the calling of God*; because it is what God in effectual vocation calls his people to, even to a kingdom and glory, and to eternal glory and happiness; of which they have a sight, though but a glimmering view of it, and are blessed with hope in it; in which they rejoice, and see their right unto it, in the righteousness of Christ, and have a metness for it: this is named *the high calling of God*, because God is on high, who calls them to it, in allusion to the judge in the Olympic games, who was placed in an exalted situation, near the mark, with the crown in his hand, which he gave to him that came first; and because the grace by which the saints are called is from above, as every good and perfect gift is; and because the prize they are called unto consists of things above, where Jesus is, and is the hope laid up in heaven, and the inheritance reserved there; and expresses the great honour and dignity of called ones, who are called to a crown and kingdom, are raised from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and are made kings and priests unto God: and may also denote, that the calling to such high honour is from above, and not below; and is owing to the special grace and favour of God, and not to any merits of men; nor is the prize to which they are called, of him that willeth and runneth, but of God's grace and mercy: and moreover, this calling is said to be *in Christ Jesus*; for both the purpose and grace, according to which men are called, are in him; the grace by which they are called, and which is implanted in them when called, is all in and from Christ; the blessings of grace, which they then in person enjoy, are spiritual blessings in him; and even the glory they are called unto is in his hands; not only the promise of eternal life, but that

itself; the gift of it is with him, and it comes through him; yea, they are called by him, and said to be the called of Christ Jesus; now the prize of this calling, which is what God has prepared from all eternity, which Christ has in his hands, and will give to all his, and which is of immense richness and eternal duration, and shall be bestowed on all Christian runners, or true believers, is what the apostle was pressing for, pursuing after, with much difficulty, through great toil and labour, diligent searching of the Scriptures, frequent wrestling with God in prayer, and constant attendance on the means of grace, and ordinances of the Gospel.

Ver. 15. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, &c.*] Not absolutely, but comparatively, with respect to other believers, in a lower class of knowledge and experience; and not with respect to degrees, but parts; and regards such who were not children, but of ripeness in divine things, unless the words are spoken ironically: *be thus minded*: as the apostle was, to count what were gain to him, loss for Christ; to reckon all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; to be willing to suffer the loss of all things, to win him; to desire to be found in him, and in his righteousness, and not a man's own; to know more of him in his person, righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; and to attain to such a state, and yet to disclaim all perfection, and acknowledge their imperfection; and to forget things behind, and reach to those before; and press towards the mark, Christ, for the prize of eternal glory: *and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded*; as to seek for justification by the works of the law, or partly by Christ and partly by the law, and to imagine and expect perfection in this life: *God shall reveal even this unto you*; such errors will be made manifest sooner or later; the day will declare them, and such wood, hay, and stubble, will be burnt up by the fire, which will reveal every man's work.

Ver. 16. *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, &c.*] Whatever degree of knowledge of Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, is attained to, let it be retained, and not departed from: *let us walk by the same rule*: either the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness in particular, which is a rule of judgment concerning other things; for so far as they agree or disagree with this, they are to be received or rejected; or the Scriptures of truth, which are the rule of faith and practice, and the standard and test, to which all are to be brought and tried: *let us mind the same thing*: be of one heart and affection to each other, and of the same judgment in the doctrines of the Gospel, and pursue the same measures; particularly press towards the same mark, and for the same prize the apostle did, and be followers of him, as is exhorted to in the next verse.

Ver. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, &c.*] Not that the apostle set up himself as the head of a party, which is what he always blamed in others; he did not assume a dominion over the faith of men, or seek to lord it over God's heritage; nor did he desire any to be followers of him, any further than he was a follower of Christ; and in what he was, whether in

doctrine or practice, he desires to be followed in: and here he has a particular regard to what went before, concerning reckoning what was gain loss; accounting all things but dung, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ; looking to his righteousness alone for justification; disclaiming perfection, yet forgetting things behind; reaching towards things before, and pressing to the mark for the prize, and walking according to the rule of God's word; in which things he had some that followed him, who were his spiritual children, and to whom he had been useful in conversion and edification; see 1 Cor. iv. 15, 16. 1 Thess. i. 6, 7. and he would therefore have these Philippians followers of him, *together* with them; and which contains in it an encouraging reason, or argument, since others were followers of him; or together with one another, he was desirous, that one and all of them might follow him; that they might all go in the same way, profess the same truth, be found in the practice of the same things, worship the Lord with one consent, pursue the same ends, and draw all the same way; and so be as the church was, like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot: *and mark them which walk so*; as the apostle did, and those that were followers of him; these he would have them mark, observe, attentively look to; not as others, who cause offences and divisions, and obey not the word, in order to shun, avoid, and keep no company with; but to imitate and follow, and next to Christ, the mark, to make use of them as inferior ones: *as ye have us for an ensample, or type*; believers should be ensamples one to another, especially ministers of the word; pastors of churches are not to be lords over God's heritage, but to be ensamples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, as the apostle exhorts Timothy, 1 Epist. iv. 12. and in these things they are to be followed by believers.

Ver. 18. *For many walk, &c.*] אחרנייתא, *otherwise*, as the Syriac version adds; and which truly explains the words, and gives the sense; they walked not as the apostle and his followers; they walked as men, as carnal men, according to the course of the world, after their ungodly lusts; or according to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation, and not uprightly, and according to the truth of the Gospel: and there were many that walked so; the road both of profaneness and error is a broad one, and many walk therein, which makes it the more dangerous; the examples of many have great force, though a multitude is not to be followed to do evil; the conversation of a great part of professors is not to be imitated; the few names in Sardis that have not defiled their garments with error or immorality should be marked for ensamples, and the majority shunned: *of whom I have told you often*; both when present among them by word of mouth, and when absent from them by writing; for the apostle was a faithful watchman and monitor to this church, and to all the churches, the care of which lay upon him; and diligent he was to warn them against false teachers, whose doctrines and practices he knew were of pernicious consequence: *and now tell you even weeping*; partly on account of those evil men, whose state and condition, notwith-

standing their profession, was very bad; and partly on account of the glory of God and Christ, and the honour of religion, which suffered much through them; and also on account of the Philippians, lest they should be drawn aside by them; and because they had taken so little notice of his frequent cautions and advice: and that they might the better know the men he spoke of, and avoid them, he describes them by the following characters, that they are *the enemies of the cross of Christ*: not that, though they might be Jews, they were like the unbelieving Jews, who were open and implacable enemies of a crucified Christ, called Jesus accursed, and anathematized him and his followers, and to whom the preaching of Christ crucified was an offence and stumbling-block; for these were professors of Christ, and pretended to preach Christ, and him crucified: nor were they such heretics that denied that Christ really assumed human nature, and was really crucified and died; and affirmed that all this was only in appearance, or that an image was hung upon the cross for him, or Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his room, as some have thought, which was the heresy of Simon Magus, and his disciple Basilides: nor is the sense that they were averse to the crucifixion of the affections with the lusts, though this seems to be their true character, since they were sensual, and minded earthly things; but the meaning is, that they disliked the cross of Christ; they were unwilling to take it up for his sake, and follow him; they studied all ways and means to shun it; they ingratiated themselves into the affections of the unbelieving Jews, by complying with the ceremonies of the law, and bearing hard upon the apostle and his ministry, that so they might not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; and besides, by enjoining circumcision and an observance of the law as necessary to salvation, they, as much as in them lay, made void the efficacy of the cross and death of Christ, and made that and him unprofitable, and of no effect to the souls of men; and were both doctrinally and practically enemies of the cross of Christ: and so all such professors of Christ, who walk not according to the Gospel, though they are not open and direct enemies to the Gospel, which is the preaching of the cross, yet they are secret and indirect ones, and oftentimes do more mischief to it by their lives, than the keenest adversaries of it can by their pens.

Ver. 19. *Whose end is destruction, &c.*] Everlasting destruction, the destruction of both body and soul in hell; and this is the end, the reward and issue of bad principles and practices; the broad roads of sin and error lead to destruction; however pleasing such ways may be to men, the end of them is eternal death; destruction and misery are in all the ways of profaneness and heresy; not only immoralities, but heresies, such as strike at the efficacy of Christ's cross, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are damnable ones, and bring upon men swift destruction; and how should it otherwise be, for there is no salvation but by the cross of Christ? and if men are enemies to that, and the efficacy of it, and the way of salvation by it, there is no more, nor any other sacrifice for sin, but a

fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation; and this will be the case of all barren and unfruitful professors, who are like the earth, that brings forth briars and thorns, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned; for what will the hope of such an one, founded on his profession, though he may have got credit and reputation among men, avail, when God takes away his soul? *whose god is their belly*; the belly was the god of the Cyclops, they sacrificed to none but to themselves, and to the greatest of the gods, their own belly*; as money is the covetous man's god, whom he loves, adores, and puts his confidence in, so the belly is the god of the sensualist, the epicure, and voluptuous person; he has more regard for the service of that, than for the service of God? and of this complexion were these professors; they were lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God; all their pretensions to religion, to Christ, and his Gospel, were only to serve themselves, their own bellies, and not the Lord Jesus Christ, and to do good to the souls of men: or their belly may be said to be their god, because they placed religion in the observance of meats and drinks, either allowed or forbidden in the law of Moses, which profited not those that were occupied therein; for the kingdom of God, the Gospel dispensation, internal religion, and the exercise of it, lies not in these things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: *and whose glory is in their shame*; in their evil practices committed in secret, of which it was a shame to speak; in their hidden things of dishonesty, crafty walking, and deceitful handling of the word of God, which were vile and scandalous; in corrupting the Gospel, and the churches of Christ, with their false doctrine; in observing and urging the ceremonies of the law, which were dead, and ought to be buried; and particularly circumcision in the flesh, in that part of the body which causes shame, and in this was their glory, Gal. vi. 13. The idol Baal Peor, and which is no other than the Priapus of the Heathens, is called by this name, Hos. ix. 10. so the prophets of Baal are in the Septuagint on 1 Kings xviii. 19, 25. called the prophets, *τῆς αἰσχρίας*, of that shame; it may be the apostle may have a regard to the secret debaucheries of these persons; or because they made their belly their god, he calls it their shame in which they gloried, and which was the name given to the idols of the Gentiles: *who mind earthly things*. The Arabic version renders it, *who entertain earthly opinions*; and some by *earthly things* understand the ceremonies of the law, called the elements and rudiments of the world, which these false teachers were fond of, and were very diligent to inculcate and urge the observance of; though rather worldly things, such as honour, glory, and popular applause, and wealth, and riches, are meant; for they sought their own things, and not the things of Christ; through covetousness, with feigned words, they made merchandise of men, and amassed to themselves great sums of money; and yet were greedy dogs, could never have enough, every one looking for his gain from his quarter: and now persons of such characters as these were by no means to be followed, but such who are hereafter described.

* Euripides.

Ver. 20. *For our conversation is in heaven, &c.*] The Ethiopic version renders it, *we have our city in heaven*; and the words may be truly rendered, *our citizenship is in heaven*; that is, the city whereof we are freemen is heaven, and we behave ourselves here below, as citizens of that city above: heaven is the saints' city; here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come, which is permanent and durable; a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God: as yet they are not in it, though fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; they are pilgrims, strangers, and sojourners on earth; but are seeking a better country, an heavenly one, and God has prepared for them a city; they have a right unto it through the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, and a meekness for it in him; and their conversation is here beforehand, whilst their commoration is below; their thoughts are often employed about it; their affections are set upon it; their hearts are where their treasure is; the desires of their souls are towards it, and they are seeking things above, and long to be in their own city, and father's house, where Christ is; and to be at home with him, and for ever with him. This is the work and business of their lives now, and what their hearts are engaged in. The Syriac version renders it, *our work is in heaven*; the business, the exercise of our lives, and of our graces, tend that way: *from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*: Christ is now in heaven, at the father's right hand, appearing in the presence of God for his people, and making intercession for them; and so will remain, until the time of the restitution of all things; when he'll descend from heaven, and be revealed from thence: and this the saints look for, and expect; as they have good reason for it; from his own words, from the words of the angels at the time of his ascension, and from the writings of the apostles: and they expect him not merely as a Judge, under which consideration he will be terrible to the ungodly, but as a Saviour; who as he has already saved their souls from sin, and the dreadful effects of it, from the bondage and curse of the law, from the captivity of Satan, and from eternal ruin and wrath to come, so he will save and redeem their bodies from the grave, corruption, mortality, and death, as follows.

Ver. 21. *Who shall change our vile body, &c.*] Which is defiled with sin, attended with frailty, and is mortal; and being dead, is sown and laid in the grave in corruption, weakness, and dishonour: in the Greek text it is, *the body of our humility*; sin has subjected the body to weakness, mortality, and death; and death

brings it into a very low estate indeed, which is very humbling and mortifying to the pride and vanity of man: now this vile body, in the resurrection-morn, shall be stripped of all its vileness, baseness, and meanness; and be changed, not as to its substance, nor as to its form and figure, which shall always remain the same, as did the substance and form of our Lord's body after his resurrection; but as to its qualities, it shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality, from weakness to power, and from dishonour to glory, and be free from all sin: so the Jews say^b, that "the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, goes along with man in the hour of death, but does not return with him when the dead arise:" and this change will be made by the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall descend from heaven; who as he is the pledge, the first-fruits, the exemplar, and meritorious cause, so he will be the efficient cause of the resurrection of the saints; who will be raised and changed by him, by his power, and by virtue of union to him: *that it might be fashioned like unto his glorious body*; or *the body of his glory*, as it is now in heaven, and of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and pledge; for glory, power, incorruption, and immortality, the bodies of the saints in the resurrection shall be like to Christ's, though not equal to it, and shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. The Jews^c have a notion, that "the holy blessed God will beautify the bodies of the righteous in future time, like the beauty of the first Adam;" but their beauty and glory will be greater than that, 'twill be like the glory of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, whose image they shall then bear: and whereas this requires almighty power, of which Christ is possessed, it will be done *according to the working*, the energy of his power and might; or as the Syriac version renders it, *according to his great power*: which was put forth in raising himself from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the son of God: and *whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*; not only sin, Satan, and the world, but death and the grave; and so consequently able to raise the dead bodies of his saints, and to change the qualities of them, and make them like unto his own: and now who would but follow such persons, who are citizens of heaven, have their conversation there, look for Christ the Saviour from thence, who when he comes will raise the dead in Christ first, put such a glory on their bodies as is on his own, and take them to himself, that where he is they may be also? see Heb. vi. 12.

C H A P. IV.

THIS chapter contains exhortations to various duties becoming Christians, the apostle's thankfulness to the Philippians for their present to him, and the conclusion of the epistle with the salutations of the brethren: in ver. 1. the apostle exhorts the saints with great affection to perseverance in the doctrine and faith of

Christ; and in ver. 2. mentions some persons by name, and to whom he recommends unity and agreement; and in ver. 3. entreats others to assist them therein; and in ver. 4. exhorts them all in general to joy in the Lord, and to moderation, enforced by this argument, the Lord being at hand, ver. 5. and to calmness and

^b Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 12. c. 2.

^c Midrash Hanneclan in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

quietness of mind, and to prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, ver. 6. to which they are encouraged, by the promise of having the peace of God, keeping their minds through Christ, ver. 7. and to conclude, he exhorts them to every thing that is virtuous and commendable; to which he stimulates them, from the consideration of the nature of the things themselves, from his own example, and from the presence of God with them, they might expect to enjoy, ver. 8, 9. and then he proceeds to take notice of the kindness of the Philippians to him, declares his joy on account of it, and expresses it by their care of him again; which he corrects, by observing that it was not for want of care in them before, but of opportunity of shewing it, ver. 10. nor did he take notice of this present of theirs, with so much exultation on account of his own penury, for he had learnt the great lesson of contentment in every state, ver. 11. which he enlarges upon and explains; namely, that he had been taught, and knew how to behave in fulness and want, in prosperity and adversity; though this was not owing to himself, but to the power and strength of Christ, ver. 12, 13. however, he commends the Philippians for their communicating to him in his affliction, both at the first preaching of the Gospel to them, and at several times since, ver. 14, 15, 16. the reason of which commendation was not because he was covetous of gifts and presents from them, but to encourage them to bring forth fruit, which would turn to their own advantage, ver. 17. as for himself he had enough, and therefore said not this on his own account, but because such communication was a sacrifice well-pleasing to God, and a return would be made by him; who, as he was able to supply all their need, would; of which he assures them, and for which he prays, ver. 18, 19. and to whom he gives the glory of what they had given, and he had received, ver. 20. and then the epistle is concluded with the salutation of the apostle, and the saints, and brethren with him, and with his usual benediction, ver. 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *Therefore, my brethren, &c.*] Not in a natural, but spiritual relation; having the same father, being of the same family, and household of faith: seeing that on the one hand there were false teachers, who stand described by various characters in the preceding chapter, by whom they were in danger of being carried away from the simplicity of the Gospel; and on the other hand, such were the conduct and conversation of the apostle, and other true believers, and such were their expectations of Christ from heaven, and of happiness from him as there expressed; therefore he exhorts to steadfastness in him, and that under the most tender, affectionate, and endearing appellations; given in the uprightness of his soul, without any manner of flattery, to signify his strong affection for them, and to engage them to attend the more to what he was about to exhort them to; and which arose from pure love to them, an hearty concern for their good, and the honour of Christ Jesus: *my dearly beloved*: as belonging to Christ, interested in him, members of him, redeemed by him, and bearing his image; and as his brethren, and so not loved with a carnal, but spiritual love: *and longed for*; to see them, converse with them, and impart

some spiritual gift to them; being the excellent in the earth, as other saints, towards whom was his desire, and with whom was all his delight. These epithets are joined with the word *brethren*, in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and read thus, *my dearly beloved, and longed-for brethren*; and in the Ethiopic version, *our beloved brethren*: to which are added, *my joy and crown*; they were matter of joy to him, as he had reason to hope well of them; yea, to be confident that the good work was begun, and would be carried on in them; and that they had hitherto continued in the doctrine of the Gospel, and walked worthy of it; and they were his *crown*, as they were seals of his ministry; and whom he valued more, and reckoned a greater honour and ornament to him, than the richest diadem, set with the most costly jewels and precious stones, and which he hoped and believed would be his crown of rejoicing another day; when he, with them, should stand at the right hand of Christ triumphing, as victors crowned, over sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell: *so stand fast in the Lord*; or *by the Lord*; by his power and strength, which is only able to make to stand fast; saints are liable to falling, and would fall, were they not upheld with his right hand, and kept by his power; they only stand fast, as they stand supported by his strength, trusting in his might, and leaning on his arm. Christ is the only foundation where they can stand safe and sure; and such as are rooted and grounded, and built up in him, are established and stand; though they are still in need of being exhorted to hold the head, abide by him, and cleave unto him; to stand fast in his grace, exercising the graces of faith, hope, and love upon him; in the liberty of Christ, in opposition to the bondage of the law, false teachers were for bringing them into; and in the doctrine of faith, and not depart from it in any degree, nor give way in the least to the opposers of it, but continue steadfast in it without wavering, and which is chiefly intended here: so the Arabic version renders it, *stand in the faith of the Lord*; both in the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of it, and in the profession of both: see 1 Cor. xvi. 13. The apostle bids them *so stand fast*; that is, either as they had hitherto done, or as they had him and others for an example; whose views, conversation, and behaviour, are described in the foregoing chapter: *my dearly beloved*; this, which otherwise would be a repetition of what is before said, is by some connected with the former clause, and read thus, *so stand fast my dearly beloved in the Lord*; and contains a reason, both why they were dearly beloved by the apostle, because beloved in and by the Lord; and why it became them to stand fast in him, and abide by him, his truths, ordinances, cause, and interest.

Ver. 2. *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, &c.*] Two women, who were members of this church at Philippi, and who seem to have been at variance; either with each other, on account of some temporal and civil things, as often is the case of the dear children of God, who fall out by the way; and it becomes a very hard and difficult task to reconcile them, though as here entreated in the most tender and importunate manner to agree: or else with the church, having entertained some sentiments in religion dif-

ferent from it; being drawn aside by false teachers from the simplicity of the Gospel, and their steadfastness in the faith; and this may rather be thought to be the meaning, since the apostle would scarcely take notice of a private difference in so public a manner, and since this exhortation follows so closely the former: *that they be of the same mind in the Lord*: either that they agree together, and be reconciled to each other, considering the relation they stood in to one another, and to the Lord; or that they become of the same mind, and embrace the same truths, and profess and maintain the same principles the church did; and so the Arabic version renders it, *that ye entertain one and the same opinion concerning the faith of the Lord*.

Ver. 3. *And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, &c.*] Not his wife, as some think ⁴, for he had none, as appears from 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8. at the writing of which epistle he was at Ephesus, where he staid some little time, and then went to Jerusalem; where he was quickly apprehended, and sent a prisoner to Rome, and where he now was as such; and therefore it is not likely that he should marry a wife within this compass of time, and much less that he should have one at Philippi; besides, the word used is of the masculine gender, and designs a man and not a woman: some think it is the proper name of a man, who was called *Szygytus*, and so the Arabic interpreter seems to understand it; and by the apostle, true *Szygytus*, signifying that as was his name, so was he, really and in truth, a companion and fellow-labourer, that drew in the same yoke with him; the Syriac version renders it, *the son of my yoke*, and the Ethiopic version, *my brother and my companion*: some think this person was the husband or brother of one of the above women; and therefore is entreated to use his interest, and compose the difference between them, or endeavour to reconcile them to the church; and others that it was the jailer, that was converted by the apostle: but it seems most likely to have been one that was under the same yoke of the Gospel, and who had been employed with him in preaching of it, a fellow-labourer; such an one as Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy, and might be one of those; or rather Epaphroditus, who was minister in this church, and by whom the apostle sent this letter, and whom he might address and importune in this manner; the word may very well be thought to answer to the Hebrew word כֹּרֵן, often used in Jewish writings, for an associate, a colleague, and a disciple of the wise men, to which the apostle may allude; see ch. ii. 25. *help those women*; Euodias and Syntyche. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read *them*, referring to the above women; and the Arabic version reads, *help both*; that is, both those women; not by relieving their temporal wants, which it does not appear they were in; but either by composing their differences, or by assisting them with good counsel and advice; and giving them proper instructions in the doctrines of the Gospel, that they might be brought to think the same things the church did: and the rather such pains should be taken with them, since they were such, says the apostle, *which laboured with me in the Gospel*; not in preaching it, for he suffered

not a woman to teach in the church; but by professing it, and bearing reproach and persecution for it; and by supporting and encouraging, and spreading it with their worldly substance: *with Clement also*; which some think is the same with Clemens Romanus, who was afterwards bishop of Rome, and whose epistle to the Corinthians is still extant; other writings are ascribed to him, but are spurious; however, by his name he seems to be a Roman; and from his being joined with the apostle, as one with whom these women also laboured in the Gospel, he appears to be a preacher of it at Philippi: *and with other my fellow-labourers*; in the work of the ministry, as Timothy, who was with him at Philippi, when he first preached the Gospel there, and some others: *whose names are in the book of life*; the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees, divine predestination to eternal life; and this being called a *book*, and the names of persons being said to be in it, denote the love of God to his elect, his care of them, his value for them, his remembrance of them, and the exact knowledge which he has of them; as well as imply, that his eternal election of them is personal and particular, is well known to him, and is sure and unchangeable; being more so than the writing of Pilate on the cross, who said, *what I have written, I have written*; and is called the *book of life*, because those whose names are written in it, have a spiritual life here, and an eternal one hereafter; to both which they are fore-written in this book, or pre-ordained in God's counsels, and certainly and infallibly enjoy it: now the apostle's knowledge of these persons being written in this book, did not arise from any special revelation, as being shewn the book of life, and the names of the elect in it, when he was caught up into the third heaven; nor was his knowledge of this matter peculiar and limited to these persons only, but common to all that he had reason to hope and believe had received the grace of God in truth, and walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called; such persons in a judgment of charity, which hopes and believes all things, he concluded were in this book of life; and the same judgment, faith, and hope, ought all believers to form and entertain one of another, nothing appearing contrary to it, in their faith and conversation.

Ver. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway, &c.*] This is a repetition of the exhortation in ch. iii. 1. see the note there, with this addition *alway*: for there is always cause and matter for rejoicing in Christ, even in times of affliction, distress, and persecution; since he is always the same; his grace is always sufficient; his blood has a continual virtue in it, and always speaks for peace and pardon; his righteousness is an everlasting one, and so is his salvation, and such is his love; though some join this word with what follows, *and again, I always say, rejoice*; this is what was continually inculcated by him, as being of great importance and use for the comfort of believers, and the honour of Christ.

Ver. 5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin reads, *your modesty*. The Syriac and Arabic versions, *your meekness, or humility*;

⁴ Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 30.

graces which accompany moderation, and are very necessary to it, but not that itself. The Ethiopic version renders it, *your authority*, which by no means agrees; for moderation lies not in exerting authority and power to the uttermost, at least with rigour, but in shewing clemency and lenity; not dealing with men according to the severity of laws and strict justice, but according to equity, and with mildness and gentleness; giving up strict and proper right, receding from what is a man's due, and not rigidly insisting on it; putting up with affronts and injuries, and bearing them with patience; and interpreting things in the best sense, and putting the best constructions on words and actions they will bear; and in using inferiors and equals with all humanity, kindness, and respect: and this is what is here intended, which the apostle would have made *known*; exercised and practised publicly, that it might be seen and known of all, and God might be glorified, by whose name they were called, through their agreeable conversation among men; see Matt. v. 16. and he would not only have this known unto, but exercised towards *all men*; not only to believers, the members of the church, by ruling with gentleness, by bearing the infirmities of the weak, and by forgiving offences; but also to unbelievers, to the men of the world, by not avenging themselves, but giving way to wrath; by patient suffering for well doing, without making any returns of ill, either by words or deeds: this is the moderation here meant, and not moderation in eating and drinking, and in apparel, and in the love and use of, and care for the things of this world; though such moderation highly becomes professors of religion; and much less moderation in religion, or towards the false teachers, thinking and speaking well of them; and interpreting their notions in the best sense, hoping they may mean otherwise than they say, and therefore should treat their persons with great respect, and their principles with tenderness; but this can never be thought to be the apostle's sense, after he had himself given them such names and characters, as in ch. iii. 2, 18, 19. and besides, though we may, and many times ought, as men and Christians, to give way, and yield up what is our right and due, for the sake of peace, yet we cannot, nor ought to give up any thing, that of right belongs to God and Christ, in matters of doctrine or worship; nor in the least abate of our zeal for the same, or give way to false teachers in any respect, nor for any time: moreover, moderation in religion is nothing else but lukewarmness and indifference, than which nothing is more detestable, or abhorred by Christ. The argument or reason enforcing moderation in the above sense of it follows, *the Lord is at hand*. The Syriac version reads, *our Lord*: and the Ethiopic version, *God is at hand*. The sense is, either the Lord is near, he's omnipresent, and sees and observes the conduct of his people, their deportment in the world, and to one another; and therefore, as in his presence, and under his eye, they should behave according to equity, and with kindness and tenderness towards their fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians: or the Lord is nigh unto them, as he is to all that call upon him in truth; he's a present help in time of trouble; he's in the midst of them, and will help, and that right early;

and will avenge his elect, and vindicate their cause, and right all their wrongs in his due time; and therefore they should take all things patiently, and not avenge themselves: or in a little while Christ will come to judgment, when he'll plead the cause of his people, and convince ungodly sinners of their ungodly deeds, and hard speeches against him and his; and therefore they should leave all to that time, and commit themselves to him that judgeth righteously.

Ver. 6. *Be careful for nothing, &c.*] This must be understood not in the most extensive sense, but with a limitation and restriction. There are many things that saints are to be careful for, as men and Christians; they are to be careful of their bodies, as well as of their souls; of the health of them, which is to be preserved by all lawful means, and not exposed to unnecessary danger; and for their families, to provide things honest for them, proper food and raiment, and the necessaries of life; for whoever does not do that, denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel; and even for the things of this world in a moderate way, using all diligence and industry in obtaining them; men ought to be careful to discharge the duties of their calling in civil life, and to care and concern themselves for the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the support of the Gospel; and that they offend not God, by sinning against him: but the carefulness the apostle speaks of, is an anxious solicitude for worldly things, an immoderate concern for the things of life, arising from diffidence, or negligence, of the power, providence, and faithfulness of God: saints should not be anxiously, or in a distressing manner concerned for the things of this world, but be content, whether they have less or more; nor be overmuch pressed with what befalls them, but should cast their care upon the Lord, and carry every case to him, and leave it there: *but in every thing*. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, *in every time*: always, constantly, every day, as often as there is opportunity, and need requires. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions join it with the following clause, *in every prayer and supplication*; but the grammatical construction of the words will not admit of such a version: 'tis best to understand it of every thing, or case, which should be brought to God; whether it be of a temporal or spiritual kind, relating to body or soul, to ourselves or others, to our families, relations, and acquaintance, the church, or the world: *by prayer and supplication*; which may include all sorts of prayer, mental or vocal, private or public, ordinary or extraordinary, and every part of prayer: *prayer* may design petition, or asking for good things that are wanted; and *supplication*, a deprecating of evils that are feared; though these two are often used together for the same thing, for prayer in general: which ought always to be accompanied *with thanksgiving*; for mercies received; for a man can never come to the throne of grace, to ask for grace and mercy, but he has mercies to bless God for, and so to do is very acceptable to God; nor can a person expect to succeed in the enjoyment of future mercies, when he is not thankful for past and present ones: in this manner therefore, at all times, upon every occasion, in a way of humble petition and supplication, joined with thankfulness for all favours, *let your requests be made*

known to God; not to men; fly not to an arm of flesh, but to God, to him only, and that in the most private manner, as not to be known by men; and put up such requests, as there may be reason to hope and believe God will *know* and approve of; such as are agreeable to his will, to the covenant of his grace, and the declaration of his word: use familiarity with God, tell him as you would do a friend, freely and fully, all your case, pour out your souls and your complaints before him. This God would have his people do, and he expects it from them; and though he knows all their wants, and what are their desires before they express them, yet he'll seem not to know them, or take any notice of them, until they open them to him in some way or other; either by vocal prayer, or mental; by ejaculations, or sighs and groans, by chattering as a crane or a swallow, all which he understands: and be the case made known in what way or manner soever, with ever so much weakness, so be it it is made known, 'tis enough, it shall be regarded and not despised.

Ver. 7. *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, &c.*] Not that peace which God calls his people to among themselves in their effectual vocation; and which he requires of them to cultivate and maintain; and which he encourages in them by the promise of his gracious presence among them; and which indeed he is the author of, and therefore is so called, Col. iii. 15. and which may be said to surpass or exceed all speculative knowledge, and understanding; for the one puffs up and profits nothing, but the other edifies; and much less that peace which God has in himself, who is all peace and love, and which passes all understanding, human and angelic; but either that peace which is made with God by the blood of Christ, and is published in the Gospel of peace, which passes and surprises all understanding of men and angels, that it should be; that the thoughts of God should be concerning it from everlasting; that a council of peace should be called and held between the eternal Three, and a covenant of peace entered into; that Christ should be appointed the peace-maker, and the chastisement of it laid on him; that he should make it by the blood of his cross, and for men, whilst enemies to God and to himself: or else that peace of conscience, which arises from a view of peace made by Christ; of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; and which may be called *the peace of Christ*, as the Alexandrian copy reads; both because it is founded upon, and springs from him, and is what he is the donor of: and this is what passes the understanding of every natural man; he knows nothing of this peace, what this tranquillity of mind means; he intermeddles not with this joy; it is unaccountable to him how it should be, that such men should have peace, who have so much trouble, are so much reproached, afflicted, and persecuted, and yet have peace in Christ, whilst they have tribulation in the world; which *shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ, or in Christ Jesus*; some read these words prayer-wise, or as a wish, *let it, or may it keep*, so the Vulgate Latin; but they are rather a promise, encouraging the saints to the discharge of the above duties: as rejoicing always in the Lord, shewing their moderation to all men, avoiding anxious care, and betaking themselves at all

times, on all occasions, to prayer to God; in which way they may expect peace, and such as will be of that service to them, as here expressed; that is, be a means of their final perseverance; for the peace of God, in either sense, is a preservation of the saints: peace made with God secures them in Christ from all condemnation by the law, sin, Satan, the world, or their own hearts; and peace in their own souls, on so good a foundation as it is, keeps them through Christ as in a garrison, from being overset with the troubles of the world, or the temptations of Satan; and is a means of preserving them from being carried away with the errors and heresies of the wicked, having a witness to truth within themselves; and from every evil way and work, from profaneness and immorality; the grace of God teaching them, and the love of Christ constraining them, which is shed abroad in their hearts, to live and act otherwise.

Ver. 8. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, &c.*] To close all with respect to the duties of Christianity incumbent on the professors of it, the apostle exhorts to a regard to every thing that is true; that is agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, to the Gospel the word of truth, or to the law and light of nature; and whatever was really so, even among the very Heathens, in opposition to falsehood, lying, and hypocrisy: *whatsoever things are honest*; in the sight of men; or *grave*, or *venerable* in speech, in action or attire, in opposition to levity, frothiness, or foppery: *whatsoever things are just*; between man and man, or with respect both to God and men; giving to God what belongs to him, and to man what is his due; studying to exercise a conscience void of offence to both, in opposition to all impiety, injustice, violence, and oppression: *whatsoever things are pure*; or *chaste*, in words and deeds, in opposition to all filthiness and foolish talking, to obscene words and actions. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, *whatsoever things are holy*; which are agreeable to the holy nature, law, and will of God, and which tend to promote holiness of heart and life: *whatsoever things are lovely*; which are amiable in themselves, and to be found even among mere moral men, as in the young man whom Christ as man is said to love, Mark x. 21. and which serve to cultivate and increase love, friendship, and amity among men; and which things also are grateful to God and lovely in his sight, in opposition to all contention, strife, wrath, and hatred: *whatsoever things are of good report*: are well-spoken of, and tend to get and establish a good name, which is better than precious ointment, Eccles. vii. 1. for though a good name, credit, and reputation among men, are to be sacrificed for the sake of Christ when called for; yet care is to be taken to preserve them by doing things which may secure them, and cause professors of religion to be well reported of; and which is beautiful in all, and absolutely necessary in some: *if there be any virtue*; anywhere, among any persons whatever, in opposition to vice: *and if there be any praise*; that is praiseworthy among men, and deserves commendation, even though in an unjust steward, Luke xviii. 8. it should be regarded. The Vulgate Latin adds, *of discipline*, without any authority from any copy. The Claromontane manuscript reads, *if any praise of knowledge: think on these things*; meditate upon them, revolve them in your minds, seriously con-

sider them, and reason with yourselves about them, in order to put them into practice.

Ver. 9. *These things which ye have both learned, &c.*] Meaning from himself, in a doctrinal way: *and received*; not only into their heads but hearts, had embraced cordially, with great affection, in the love thereof, as well as given a full assent to: *and heard*: either publicly or privately, from the pulpit, or in conversation; or had heard of him when absent, or from him when present: *and seen in me*; in his life and conversation, which were well known, and were a pattern to them that believe; and therefore he adds, *do*; practise the same things which they had learned from him as their duty, and had heard him urge as such, and had seen exemplified in himself: *and the God of peace shall be with you*; to give that peace which is beyond the conception of a natural man, and the expression of a spiritual one, and is the great preservative through Christ; and to enable to do and to continue to do the above things, and to keep them from all harm, and every enemy of their souls; to favour them with his gracious presence here, and with endless peace hereafter.

Ver. 10. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, &c.*] The apostle proceeds to the last part of this epistle, and to take notice of the present which these Philippians had sent him, on account of which this his rejoicing was; and which was not small but great, and was not of a carnal but spiritual kind; it was a joy in the Holy Ghost, which is opposed to meats and drinks, and earthly enjoyments; it was a joy in the Lord; *in our Lord*, as the Syriac version renders it; it was not so much on account of the nature, substance, quantity or quality of the things sent him, and the suitableness of them to his present necessity; but because this thing was of the Lord, he had put it into their hearts to do it, and had given them not only ability, but a willing mind, and had wrought in them both to will and to do; and because what they did they did for the sake of Christ, and to him as an apostle of his, and in obedience to Christ, and with a view to promote his cause and interest, honour and glory: *that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again*; which supposes that they had formerly, at the first preaching of the Gospel, shewed great respect to him, and took great care of him, as appears from ver. 15, 16. but that for some time past, and it seems for a considerable while, they had dropped it, or at least had not shewn it; but that now it revived again, and was seen in the present they had now sent him. The allusion is to trees, which in the summer season bear much fruit, in autumn cast their leaves, and in the winter are entirely bare, and in the spring of the year revive again, and put forth leaves and fruit: and just so it is with the saints, they are compared to trees, and are called trees of righteousness, and are fruitful ones; but they have their winter seasons, when they are barren and unfruitful, and look as if they were dead; but when it is a spring time with them they revive again, as in the exercise of their faith and hope in Christ, so of their love to him, and to one another, and the ministers of the Gospel; when the south wind of the spirit blows, the sun of righteousness arises, and the dews of divine grace fall upon them; and such a revival was now in this church; and this

was what the apostle so much rejoiced in, not so much for the gift bestowed on him, as for the fruit that appeared in them; see ver. 17. but whereas he had said that this care of him flourished again, *at last*; lest this should be thought as finding fault with them, and bringing a charge against them, he corrects himself by adding, *wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity*; signifying that he believed they had entertained the same sentiments of him, had the same affection and inward care for him all along; but they had no opportunity of shewing it, he being at such a distance, and they having no conveniency or proper persons to send to him; or were hindered through multiplicity of business on their hands, that they could not attend to him; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it; *but ye were busied*, or taken up and employed in business; or it was for want of ability; for the words will bear to be rendered, *but ye lacked ability*: and to this sense does the Syriac version render it, *אלה לא ספקין דויתון*, *but ye were not sufficient*; or had not a sufficiency, were not able to do it, and therefore to be easily excused.

Ver. 11. *Not that I speak in respect of want, &c.*] Either of want of will in them; of their slowness and backwardness in their care of him, postponing him to others, caring for him last of all; this gave him no uneasiness, he did not take it ill, knowing and owning himself to be less than the least of all saints: or of his own want before this present came; and his sense is, that he did not express himself with so much joy, because of the penury and distress he was in before the things came to him which they sent; for he was not in want; though he had nothing, he possessed all things, and was as happy, and in as comfortable a frame, and in as much content then as now: *for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*; or *to be sufficient*, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or *that that is sufficient for me which I have*, as the Syriac version renders it; for the word here used signifies to be self-sufficient, or to have a sufficiency in one's self, which in the strict sense of the phrase is only true of God, who is *El-shaddai*, God all-sufficient; but, in a lower sense, is true of such who are contented with their present state and condition, with such things as they have, be they more or less, and think that they have enough, as old Jacob did, Gen. xxxiii. 11. and such persons have a sort of an all-sufficiency in them; they are thankful for every thing they have, be it little or more, and in every state, whether of adversity or prosperity; and quietly and patiently submit to the will of God, and cheerfully take and bear whatever is assigned them as their portion; and such an one was the apostle: he was not only content with food and raiment, and such things as he had, but even when he had nothing at all; when he had neither bread to eat nor clothes to wear; when he was in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, as was sometimes his case; and therefore he does not say here, that he had learnt to be content with such things as he had, but *εὐ οὐς εἶμι, in what I am*: and this he had not by nature, but by grace; it was not natural, but adventitious to him; it was not what he had acquired by his industry, but what he had learned; and that not in the school of nature and reason, whilst an unregenerate man; nor at the feet of Gama-

liel, whilst he was training up under him in the law of Moses, and in the traditions of the elders; but he learned it of God, and was taught it by the revelation of Christ, and under the teachings of the spirit of God, and that in the school of affliction, by a train of experiences, of many sorrows, afflictions, and distresses; for this lesson is learned quite contrary to all the rules and reasons among men, not by prosperity, but by adversity: many are the things that may excite and encourage to the exercise of this heavenly grace, where it is wrought; as the consideration of the unalterable will of God, according to which every man's state and condition is settled, and therefore what God has made crooked can never be made straight; and of our case when we came into the world, and what that will be when we go out of it, naked and bare of this world's things; and of our unworthiness of the least mercy at the hand of God: add to which, the consideration of God being our portion and exceeding great reward; of having an interest in Christ and all things in him; and of the profits and pleasures of a life of contentment; and of the promises which God has made to such; and of that future glory and happiness which will shortly be enjoyed: so that a believer may say, who has the smallest pittance of earthly enjoyments, this, with a covenant God, with an interest in Christ, with grace here and heaven hereafter, is enough.

Ver. 12. *I know both how to be abased, &c.]* Or *humbled*; to be treated with indignity and contempt, to be trampled upon by man, to suffer hardships and distress, to be in a very mean and low condition, to work with his own hands, and minister to his own and the necessities of others in that way; yea, to be in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and have no certain dwelling-place; and he knew how to behave under all this; not to be depressed and cast down, or to fret, repine, and murmur: *and I know how to abound; or to excel*; to be in the esteem of men, and to have an affluence of the things of this world, and how to behave in the midst of plenty; so as not to be lifted up, to be proud and haughty, and injurious to fellow-creatures; so as not to abuse the good things of life; and so as to use them to the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the good of fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians: *everywhere*; whether among Jews or Gentiles, at Jerusalem or at Rome, or at whatsoever place; or as the Arabic version renders it, *every time*; always, in every season, whether of adversity or prosperity: *and in all things*; in all circumstances of life: *I am instructed*; or *initiated*, as he was by the Gospel; and, ever since he embraced it, was taught this lesson of contentment, and inured to the exercise of it, and was trained up and instructed how to behave himself in the different changes and vicissitudes he came into: *both to be full, and to be hungry*; to know what it was to have plenty and want, to have a full meal and to want one, and be almost starved and famished, and how to conduct under such different circumstances: *both to abound and to suffer need*; which the apostle repeats for confirmation-sake; and the whole of what he here says is an explanation of the lesson of contentment he had learned; and the knowledge he speaks of was not speculative but experimental, and lay not merely in theory, but in practice;

and now lest he should be thought guilty of arrogance, and to ascribe too much to himself, he in the following verse attributes all to the power and grace of Christ.

Ver. 13. *I can do all things, &c.]* Which must not be understood in the greatest latitude, and without any limitation; for the apostle was not omnipotent, either in himself, or by the power of Christ; nor could he do all things that Christ could do; but it must be restrained to the subject-matter treated of: the sense is, that he could be content in every state, and could know how to behave himself in adversity and prosperity, amidst both poverty and plenty; yea, it may be extended to all the duties incumbent on him both as a Christian and as an apostle, as to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men; to take the care of all the churches; to labour more abundantly than others in preaching the Gospel; and to bear all afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions for the sake of it; yea, he could willingly and cheerfully endure the most cruel and torturing death for the sake of Christ: all these things he could do, not in his own strength, for no man was more conscious of his own weakness than he was, or knew more of the impotency of human nature; and therefore always directed others to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in Christ, on which he himself always depended, and by which he did what he did; as he adds here, *through Christ which strengtheneth me*. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word *Christ*, and only read *him*; and so the Alexandrian copy and others; but intend Christ as those that express it: strength to perform duty and to bear sufferings is in Christ, and which he communicates to his people; he strengthens them with strength in their souls, internally, as the word here used signifies; by virtue of which they can do whatever he enjoins them or calls them to, though without him they can do nothing.

Ver. 14. *Notwithstanding ye have well done, &c.]* This he says lest they should think he slighted their kindness, and lest they should be discouraged from doing any such thing of this kind another time, either to himself or others; for though he was so well contented with his state, and knew how to be abased and to suffer need, and could do all things through the strength of Christ, yet he observes they did well in communicating to him; for communicating to poor saints or ministers is a considerable branch of well-doing; it is a good work when it is done in faith, and from love, and with a view to the glory, honour, and interest of Christ; it is what is agreeable to the will of God, and is an odour of a sweet smell, and acceptable to him: *that ye did communicate with my affliction*; by which is meant, not any affliction of mind, for he was in as comfortable a frame, had as clear views of his interest in God, as his covenant-God, and was as contented and satisfied as ever he was in his life; nor any disorder or distemper of body; but he was in prison and penury: these Philippian communicated with him in it, both by sympathizing with him in his tribulation, and by sending their minister to visit him, and with him a present for his relief and support; in doing which they did well.

Ver. 15. *Now ye Philippians know also, &c.]* As

well as the apostle did, that they not only communicated now, but also had done formerly, and when none else beside them did; wherefore he not only commends them for their present kindness to him, but for their past favours: *that in the beginning of the Gospel*: of the preaching of it by the apostle in the parts of Macedonia, particularly at Philippi; as soon as ever the Gospel was preached to them, they shewed a grateful and beneficent spirit; of which we have an instance in Lydia, the first person we read of converted there, and also in the jailer, who was the next; see Acts xvi. 12, 14, 15, 34, 40. yea, not only while he was with them they communicated to him, but when he was gone from them: *when I departed from Macedonia*; when he went to Corinth and other places, to preach the Gospel in other parts and to other people, they sent the brethren after him with presents which supplied what was lacking to him, and in which other churches were deficient; see 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9. the Ethiopic version reads, *when ye went from Macedonia with me*; but is not supported by any copy or other version: *no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*; the phrase, *giving and receiving*, is the same with *מִשָּׂא וּמַתָּן*, which is often used by the Jews for trading and commerce*; and the allusion is to the keeping of accounts by men in business, by debtor and creditor, in a book, putting down in one column what is delivered out, and in the other what is received, whereby accounts are kept clear: the apostle's meaning is, that whereas he and his fellow-ministers had delivered out spiritual things to this church, they had in return communicated their carnal things; so that there was a proper account kept, which was not observed by other churches, and which was greatly to the commendation of this.

Ver. 16. *For even in Thessalonica, &c.*] When the apostle was there; for from Philippi he went to Thessalonica; see Acts xvii. 1. *ye sent once and again unto my necessity*; for his use and service, to support him whilst he was at that place, and relieve and assist him in his necessities; for the people at Thessalonica were either not able to communicate, or were not of a beneficent disposition, or the apostle did not care to be chargeable to them; and they seem many of them to have been idle and lazy, and therefore he wrought among them with his own hands to set them an example; and the Philippians hearing and knowing that this was the case, sent frequently, whilst he was here, some of the brethren with gifts unto him.

Ver. 17. *Not because I desire a gift, &c.*] This commendation of them he entered into, not because he desired another present to be made to him, either by them or others; he was not a man of such a disposition, he was not like one of those that could never have enough; he was fully satisfied and highly contented with what he had; he was not like the false teachers, that made merchandise of men; he sought not theirs, but them: *but I desire fruit that may abound to your account*; he had planted them, or had been an instrument in planting of them, as trees of righteousness; and his great desire was to see fruits of righteousness grow upon them; by which sometimes are meant *acts of beneficence*, as

in 2 Cor. ix. 10. and that these might be abundant, and turn to their profit and advantage, as such fruit does; for God does not forget to recompense acts of bounty, and labours of love, but if even a cup of cold water is given to a prophet or minister of Christ, on account of his being so, it shall have its reward in the issue of things, upon the casting up of accounts; for the apostle still has reference unto that; his view was, that the balance might be on their side, and that much might be received by them; so that it was not for himself, but for their encouragement and future good, he said this; for as for himself he adds,

Ver. 18. *But I have all things, and abound, &c.*] Or *I have received all things*, as the Syriac version renders it; all that they had sent by Epaphroditus; and for which he now gives a receipt; and by virtue of which he now abounded; and which abundance of his was not so much owing to the largeness of their presents, as to the contentation of his mind; looking upon this gift of theirs, though it might be but small in itself, a fulness to him; for he adds, *I am full*; as much as he desired, he wanted no more, he had enough: *having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you*; and which he acknowledged, that the character of this good man might stand clear, who had been intrusted with this affair: *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God* this is said in allusion to the sacrifices under the former dispensation, in which God smelled a sweet savour, Gen. viii. 21. in reference to which, as the sacrifice of Christ is said to be of a sweet-smelling savour, and as the spiritual sacrifices of the saints, as praises and prayers, are called odours, and are said to be acceptable unto God; so acts of beneficence are called sacrifices, with which he is well pleased.

Ver. 19. *But my God shall supply all your need, &c.*] Or *fulfil all your need*: the Jews, when they would comfort any, under the loss of any worldly enjoyment, used to say, *הַבְּקוֹם יִמְלֵא לְךָ חֲסֵרוֹתַי*, *God fulfil, or will fulfil thy need*¹. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read these words as a wish or prayer, *but may my God supply or fulfil all your need*; I am not able to make you any returns, but I pray that my God would recompence it to you, that as you have supplied my want, he would supply all yours; but we with others, and as the Ethiopic version, read, *shall or will supply*; as an assertion by way of promise, though he could not, yet his God would; he who was his God, not only as the God of nature and providence, or as the God of the Israelites, but as the God of all grace; who had loved him as such, had chosen, adopted, regenerated, and sanctified him; who was his God in Christ, and by virtue of the covenant of grace, and which was made known in effectual vocation; whose ambassador he was, and whom he had faithfully served in the Gospel of his son; this God, who had been his God, was and would be so unto death, in whom he had an interest, and because he had an interest in him, and was thus related to him, he firmly believed, and fully assures these saints, that he would supply their wants who had been so careful of him: believers, though they need nothing as considered in Christ, being

* Vid. Kimchi in Psal. xv. 3. & Targum in Isa. ix. 4.

¹ T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. Debarim Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 239. 4.

complete and filled full in him, having in him all grace, and all spiritual blessings, and under believing views of this at times, see themselves complete and wanting nothing; yet, in themselves, they are poor and needy, and often want fresh discoveries of the love of God to them, fresh supplies of grace from Christ, stand in need of more light from him, and to be quickened according to his word; they want fresh supplies of strength from him answerable to the service and work they are daily called to; and as their trials and afflictions abound, they have need of renewed comfort to support under them; and have also need of fresh manifestations and applications of pardoning grace to their souls, and fresh views of the righteousness of Christ, as their justifying righteousness before God; and, in a word, need daily food for their souls as for their bodies: now God, who is also their God, is able and willing to supply their wants; and he does so, he withholds no good thing from them, nor do they want any good thing needful for them, for he supplies *all* their need; and this they may expect, since he is the God of all grace, and a fulness of grace is in his son; and this grace is sufficient for them, and a supply of it is given them by the spirit; *according to his riches*: God is rich not only in the perfections of his nature, which are inconceivable and incommunicable; and in the works of his hands, of creation and providence, the whole earth is full of his riches, and according to these riches of his goodness he supplies the wants of all creatures living; but he is also rich in grace and mercy, and it is according to the riches of his grace he supplies the spiritual wants of his people, and he does it like himself, according to the riches he has; he gives all things richly to enjoy, plenteously and abundantly: *in glory*: in a glorious manner, so as to shew himself glorious, and make his people so, to the glory of his rich grace; and *with glory*, as it may be rendered, with eternal glory; he will not only give grace here, and more of it as is needful, according to the abundance of it in himself and in his son, but glory hereafter: and all *by Christ Jesus*; and through him, who is full of grace and truth; who is the Mediator in whom the fulness of it lies, and through whose hands, and by whom, it is communicated to the saints: or *with Christ Jesus*; along with him God gives all things freely, all things pertaining to life and godliness: or *for the sake of Christ Jesus*; not for any worth or merit in men, but for the sake of Christ, in whom they are accepted, and on whose account respect is had to their persons, and so to their wants.

Ver. 20. *Now unto God and our father, &c.*] To God, who is our father in Christ, be *glory for ever and ever, Amen*; for all the grace he gives now, and for all the glory and happiness expected hereafter; for the supply of every want both temporal and spiritual;

seeing every good gift comes from him, and is to be ascribed to his free grace and favour, and not to any deserts of men: and particularly he may mean for what they had sent him, and he had received from them.

Ver. 21. *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus, &c.*] Meaning at Philippi, whether rich or poor, lesser or greater believers, common saints, as well as the officers of the church, bishops and deacons; who were in Christ by electing grace, and as their covenant head, and representative from everlasting, and which was manifested and made known by their conversion and effectual vocation: *the brethren which are with me greet you*; such as Timothy; see ch. ii. 19. and Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Lucas; Philemon. ver. 23, 24. he makes no mention of Peter anywhere, when he writes from Rome or to it, which shews he was not there then, or a bishop of that place, as the Papists say.

Ver. 22. *All the saints salute you, &c.*] The members of the church at Rome, chiefly they that are of *Cæsar's household*; for by means of the apostle's bonds, which were made manifest in the emperor's palace, Christ was made known to some there likewise; though Nero, the then reigning emperor, was a very wicked prince, and his court a very debauched one, yet the grace of God reached some there: who these were cannot be said; as for the conjecture that Seneca the philosopher, Nero's master, was one of them, it is without foundation; the eight letters of his to the Apostle Paul, and the six letters of the apostle to him, are spurious, though of ancient date, being made mention of by Austin and Jerom^s: a like groundless conjecture is that, that Lucan the poet, Seneca's brother's son, was another; for there is nothing in his writings, or in any account of him, any more than in the former, that shews him to be a Christian. Torpes, a man in great favour and dignity in Nero's court, and Evellius his counsellor, who both suffered martyrdom under him, according to the Roman martyrology, are also mentioned.

Ver. 23. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, *with your spirit*, as in Gal. vi. 18. and so the Alexandrian copy and some others read. This is the apostle's token in all his epistles of the genuineness of them, and which he wrote with his own hand, 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18. see the notes on Rom. xvi. 20, 24. *Amen*; with which all the epistles are concluded; see the note on Rom. xvi. 27. The subscription is, *it was written to the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus*; that is, this epistle was written to the Philippians by the Apostle Paul, when he was a prisoner at Rome, and sent to them by Epaphroditus their minister, when he returned from him to them.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE COLOSSIANS.

THE Colossians, to whom this epistle is written, were not the Rhodians, by some called Colossians, from Colossus, the large statue of the sun, which stood in the island of Rhodes, and was one of the seven wonders of the world; but the inhabitants of Colosse, a city of the greater Phrygia, in the lesser Asia, near to which stood the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, mentioned in this epistle. Pliny ^a speaks of it as one of the chief towns in Phrygia, and ^b Herodotus calls it the great city of Phrygia; it is said to have perished a very little time after the writing of this epistle, with the above cities, by an earthquake, in the year of Christ 66, and in the tenth of Nero^c; though it was afterwards rebuilt; for Theophylact says, that in his time it was called Chonæ. When the Gospel was brought hither, and by whom, is not known, nor who was the founder of the church in this place; for the Apostle Paul was not, since his face had never been seen by them, ch. ii. 1. though it is said that Epaphras, the same name with Epaphroditus, was fixed by him pastor of this church; and others say Philemon was set over it by him. The occasion of this epistle was this, Epaphras, who had preached the Gospel

to the Colossians, and very likely was the first that did, came to Rome, where the Apostle Paul was a prisoner, and gave him an account of them, how they had heard and received the Gospel, and of their faith in Christ, and love to the saints; and also declared to him in what danger they were through some false teachers that had got among them, who were for introducing the philosophy of the Gentiles, the ceremonies of the law of Moses, and some pernicious tenets of the followers of Simon Magus, and the Gnostics; upon which the apostle writes this epistle to them, to confirm them in the faith of the Gospel Epaphras had preached unto them, and which was the same he himself preached; and to warn them against those bad men, and their principles; and to exhort them to a discharge of their duty to God, and men, and one another. It was written by the apostle, when in bonds at Rome, as many passages in it shew, and about the same time with those to the Philippians and Ephesians; and the epistle to the latter greatly agrees with this, both as to subject and style. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year of Christ 60, in the second of the apostle's imprisonment, and in the sixth of Nero's reign.

C H A P. I.

THIS chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's usual salutation; his thanksgiving to God on behalf of the Colossians for grace received; his prayers, that more might be given them; an enumeration of various blessings of grace, which require thankfulness, in which the glories and excellencies of Christ are particularly set forth: and it is concluded with an exhortation to a steadfast adherence to the Gospel, taken from the nature, excellency, and usefulness of the ministry of it. The inscription, and the salutation, are in ver. 1, 2. and are the same with those in the epistle to the Ephesians, only Timothy is joined with the apostle here, and the Colossians have the additional character of *brethren* given them. The thanksgiving is in ver. 3, 4, 5. the object of it is God, the father of Christ; the time when made, when in prayer to him; its subject-matter, the faith and love of the saints; to which is added, their happiness secured for them in heaven, their hope was conversant with: and

whereas the Gospel was the means by which they came to the hearing and knowledge of it, this is commended from the subject of it, the doctrine of truth; from the spread of it in the world; and from its efficacy in bringing forth fruit in all, to whom it came in power, and that with constancy, ver. 5, 6. and also from the testimony of Epaphras, a faithful minister of Christ, and theirs, who was dear to the apostle, and of whom he had the above account of them, ver. 7, 8. And then follow his prayers for them, that they might have an increase of spiritual knowledge, and that they might put in practice what they knew; and for that purpose he entreats they might be blessed with strength, patience, and long-suffering, ver. 9, 10, 11. And in order to excite thankfulness in himself and them, he takes notice of various blessings of grace; of the father's grace in giving a meetness for eternal glory and happiness, by delivering from the power of darkness, and translating into the kingdom of his son, ver. 12, 13.

^a Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 22.

^b Polyinnia, l. 7. c. 30.

^c Eusebius in Chron.

and of the son's grace in obtaining redemption by his blood, and procuring the remission of sins, ver. 14. which leads the apostle to enlarge upon the excellencies of the author of these blessings, in his divine person, as the image of God, and the first cause of all created beings, ver. 15. which he proves by an enumeration of them, as created by him, and for his sake, by his pre-existence to them, and their dependence on him, ver. 16, 17. and in his office-capacity, as Mediator, being the head of the church, the governor of it, and the first that rose from the dead; by all which it appears that he has, and ought to have the pre-eminence, ver. 18. And this is still more manifest from his having all fulness dwelling in him, to supply his body the church, of which he is the head, ver. 19. and from the reconciliation of all the members of it to God by him, ver. 20. which blessing of grace is amplified partly by the subjects of it, who are described by their former state and condition, aliens and enemies, and by their present one, reconciled by the death of Christ in his fleshly body; and partly by the end of it, the presentation of them holy, blameless, and irreprovable in the sight of God, ver. 21, 22. Wherefore it is a duty incumbent on such to abide by the Gospel of Christ, which brings the good tidings of peace and reconciliation, and is the means of faith and hope; and the rather, since they had heard it themselves, and others also, even every creature under heaven; and the apostle was a minister of it, ver. 23. and on his ministrations of it he enlarges, by observing his sufferings for the church on account of the Gospel, which he endured with pleasure; and therefore they should, by his example, be encouraged to continue in it, ver. 24. Moreover, he argues the same from his commission of God to preach it for their sakes, ver. 25. and from the nature and subject-matter of it, being a hidden mystery, and containing riches and glory in it; yea, Christ himself, the foundation of hope of eternal glory, ver. 26, 27. and from the end of preaching it, which was to present every man perfect in Christ; which end the apostle laboured and strove to obtain through the power and energy of divine grace, which wrought in him, and with him, ver. 28, 29.

Ver. 1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*] The apostle puts his name to this epistle, by which he was known in the Gentile world, as he usually does in all his epistles; and styles himself *an apostle*, as he was, having seen Christ in person, and received his commission, doctrine, and qualifications immediately from him, with a power of doing miracles to confirm the truth of his mission. This he chose to make mention of, partly because the false teachers everywhere insinuated that he was not an apostle; and partly to give the greater sanction and authority, and command the greater regard and credit to what he should say; as well as to excuse his freedom in writing to them whom he had never seen, since he was an apostle of the Gentiles, and so to them: he calls himself an apostle of *Jesus Christ*; not of men, he was not sent out by men, but by Christ, who appeared to him, made him a minister of his, gave him his Gospel by revelation, abundantly qualified him for the work, sent him forth unto the Gentiles, in whose name he went as an ambassador and messenger of his, and whom he preached,

and by whom he was greatly succeeded, to the conversion of many souls, who were seals of his apostleship in every place: into which office he came *by the will of God*; not by the will of men, for he derived no authority and power, nor received any doctrine from men; nor by his own will, of his own head, by any usurpation of his; he did not take this office upon him of himself, but was invested with it, according to the secret will and purpose of God, from everlasting, who had ordained and appointed him to this service, and according to his will of command made known to him in time, when he told him what he should do, and openly separated, and sent him forth to do the work he had called him to; and which arose not from any merits or worthiness of the apostle, but from the sovereign good will and pleasure, free grace and favour, of God, to which the apostle continually ascribes it in all his epistles: *and Timotheus our brother*; who joined with the apostle in this epistle, and whom he calls a *brother*; partly because of the Christian relation he stood in to him, and them, they being all brethren, children of the same father, partakers of the same grace of regeneration, belonging to the same family, and so should own and love one another as brethren; and partly and chiefly because of his being a brother, companion, fellow-soldier, and a fellow-labourer in the Gospel. He mentions him, either because he was known unto them, or that he might be so; and to shew the agreement there was between them in the doctrine of Christ, which might have the greater weight with them to abide in it.

Ver. 2. *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, &c.*] This is the inscription of the epistle, in which the persons wrote unto are described as *saints*, or holy men; not by birth, for all are unholly and unclean by nature; nor by baptism, for that neither takes away sin, nor gives grace; nor merely externally, by an outward reformation; but by separation, being by an act of eternal election set apart for God, for holiness, and happiness; and by imputation, Christ being made sanctification to them; and by the sanctifying grace of the spirit of God in regeneration, being called with an holy calling, and having principles of grace and holiness wrought in them, and they formed as new men in righteousness and true holiness: and as *brethren*; being born of God, having him for their father, and being of his household, and a part of the family in heaven and earth named of Christ, and heirs together of the grace of life, and of the heavenly glory: and as *faithful* ones; true and sincere believers in Christ, constant and persevering in the faith of him; faithful to the Gospel, and their profession of it, and to Christ, whose name they bore, and to one another, to whom they stood in the relation of brethren: and all this *in Christ*; and by, and through him; they were saints in him; they were chosen in him, and sanctified in him their head, and received all their holiness from him; they were brethren in him the first-born of them; his God being their God, and his father their father; and had their faith and faithfulness from him, as well as it was exercised towards, and on him: and they are further described by the place of their abode, *which are at Colosse*: a city of Phrygia: *grace be unto you, and peace from God our father, and the Lord Jesus*

Christ. This is the salutation, and which stands in this form in most of Paul's epistles; see the note on Rom. i. 7. The Syriac version puts peace before grace, and leaves out the last clause, *and the Lord Jesus Christ*; as does also the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 3. *We give thanks to God, &c.*] Meaning himself and Timothy. This is the beginning of the epistle, which is introduced with a thanksgiving to God; to whom praise and thankfulness are always due as a Creator and preserver, as the author of all good things, as the father of mercies, temporal and spiritual, and as the covenant God and father of his people through Christ: wherefore it follows, *and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; the sense of which either is, that God the father, who is the object of praise and thanksgiving, is both the God of Christ, and the father of Christ, the God of Christ, as Christ is man, and the father of Christ, as Christ is God; or the latter is exegetical of the former, and may be rendered thus, *God, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ*: and very properly are thanks given to him under this character, because it is as he is the father of Christ that he blesses his people with all spiritual blessings; and because he is their God, as well as his God; and their father, as well as his father, though in a different sense, his by nature, theirs by adoption. Moreover, as all their blessings come from God, as the father of Christ, and through Christ, and for his sake, so it is very proper that thanks should be returned unto him under that character; and through Christ, by whom alone such sacrifices of praise are acceptable to God: 'tis added, *praying always for you*: which, as it is expressive of the constant discharge of the duty of prayer, and the continual remembrance of these saints in it, and shews the affection the apostle had for them; so it points out the time when, and the way and manner in which Paul and Timothy gave thanks to God on account of them; 'twas when they were at the throne of grace, and in their frequent prayers to God; thankfulness for mercies received, both by ourselves and others, being a branch of the duty of prayer.

Ver. 4. *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, &c.*] This expresses the matter of their thankfulness, or what it was they gave thanks to God for, their faith in Christ; by which is not only meant their hearty assent to the whole doctrine of faith, concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ, their soundness and steadfastness in it, and their sincere and constant profession of it; but the grace of faith in them, the operation of the spirit of God in their souls, which had not Moses, nor any mere man, but Christ for its object; by which they looked unto him as a Saviour, went unto him as such, ventured on him, committed themselves unto him, leaned and relied upon him; that grace which comes from him, has him for its author and finisher, and returns unto him, and lives on him. This Paul and Timothy had heard of by their minister Epaphras; and it shews that they made no secret of it, did not keep it to themselves, but declared, confessed, and published it to others, as is the duty of all believers to do; and thanks being given for it to God, makes it a clear point that it was not of themselves, but was the gift of God, otherwise there would have been no need of thankfulness for it; as

also, that it is a very eminent grace, and of great use and service to such who are possessed of it. *And of the love which ye have to all the saints*; this is another thing for which thanks are given to God. The object of this grace are *saints*; all men indeed are to be loved, and even our very enemies; and good is to be done to all, but especially to holy and good men, to the household of faith; and these are *all* to be loved and respected; nor is any respect or difference of persons to be made on account of country, or natural relation, as Jews or Gentiles, or of outward state and condition, as rich or poor, bond or free, or of greater or lesser gifts and grace, weak or strong believers, or of different sentiments in the lesser matters of religion. It denotes both the grace of love itself, which is a fruit of the spirit implanted in regeneration, and is an evidence of the new birth, and always is where true faith in Christ is, for faith works by it; and also the effects of it, which lies not in bare words, in expressions of spiritual affection and friendship, but in deeds, by serving one another in love, by relieving in necessity, sympathizing in distress, praying with and for one another, and the like; all which these saints were famous for.

Ver. 5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, &c.*] These words may be considered either in connexion with the foregoing, and express the reason or motive which encouraged these saints to believe in Christ, and to go on believing in him, and hold fast the profession of their faith in him, and to love the saints, and shew it upon all occasions, and in every case; because of the rich treasure of glory and happiness in reserve for them in heaven, which they were hoping and waiting for; this encouraged their faith in Christ, and enlarged their love and beneficence to the saints: or else with the thanksgiving of the apostle, and so contains fresh matter of it, that as thanks were given for faith and love, so for *hope*; by which is meant, not the grace of hope, for that is not in heaven, though it enters within the veil, and is conversant with heavenly things, but is in the heart; and though it supposes it, and which these persons had; they were not without it; they had a good hope through grace of eternal glory, for faith, hope, and love, always go together: nor Christ the foundation of hope; there are many things in him, which are a ground of hope of happiness, as his sufferings, and death, and redemption thereby; his resurrection from the dead, his intercessions and preparations; the promise of life in him, and the thing itself being in his gift; his righteousness and grace, which give a title to it, and meetness for it; and he is also in heaven, but then he can't be said to be laid up there: but the thing hoped for, everlasting happiness, is intended; see Tit. ii. 13. Gal. v. 5. 2 Tim. iv. 8. which is so called, because it is the object of hope; is not yet possessed; is future; is not seen; is difficult, and yet possible to be enjoyed: this is said to be *laid up*; which denotes the preciousness and valuableness of it, it is a treasure, an inheritance, a kingdom, and riches of glory; and the secrecy and hiddenness of it, it consists of things invisible to the bodily eye, and which are out of the reach of carnal sense and reason, of which faith only has some small glimpse; and also the safety of it, 'tis hid in Christ, 'tis reserved in heaven, and can't be

come at, and spoiled by men or devils; and likewise the free grace and goodness of God in laying up and providing things of such a nature for his children and friends: the place where it is, *in heaven*, where moth and rust corrupt not, and thieves cannot break through and steal; and so is safe, and must be of an heavenly nature, as it is for heavenly persons: *for you*: the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, for those who were chosen in Christ, for whom it was prepared from the foundation of the world; for this is not laid up for any, for every one, but for the chosen of God, and precious; whom God has distinguished by his grace, Christ has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit regenerates and sanctifies, and who have faith, hope, and love, given unto them; and this was not only laid up for them, but they knew of it, they were made acquainted with it: *whereof ye heard before*: before the writing of this epistle, under the ministry of their faithful teacher Epaphras: *in the word of the truth of the Gospel*; or in the true word of the Gospel; which comes from the God of truth, is edited by the Spirit of truth, is concerning Christ the truth, and which contains nothing but truth, and lies in the Scriptures of truth: or *in the word of truth, even the Gospel*: which explains what word of truth is meant. The law is the word of truth; and many of the words of men, of the philosophers, were words of truth; but it was not in either of them they had heard of eternal life laid up in heaven; of which there were hopes to be entertained by sinful creatures, enjoying it through Christ: this is what only the Gospel brings an account of; life and immortality are only brought to light by the Gospel; which not only speaks of it, but lays that before men, which give them ground and encouragement to hope for it.

Ver. 6. *Which is come unto you, &c.*] That is, the Gospel, which came to them from God, from heaven, from Christ, out of Jerusalem, from whence the word of the Lord was to be, by the ministers of the Gospel, who being sent, came to Colosse, and there preached it; and so the Syriac version renders the words דר דתאכרת, *which is preached unto you*. And a wonderful instance of the free grace of God this was; they did not seek, inquire for, and go after the Gospel, but it came to them; and so Christ was found of them by it, who sought him not, and made manifest in his person, grace, and righteousness to them that asked not after him: for this Gospel came not to them in word only, but with the power of the Holy Spirit: it was come, *εἰς υμᾶς, into you*, as the phrase may be rendered, into their very hearts, and wrought effectually there, enlightening, convincing, comforting, and instructing them; where it had a place, and remained; for the words may be read, as they are by the Arabic version, *which is present with you*. The Gospel is always in one place or another, and will be to the end of the world; but it is not always in the same place; but as yet it was not removed from Colosse; it was still with them in the external ministry of it, and it remained in their hearts in the powerful and comfortable experience of it: *as it is in all the world*; as it was come into, and preached to all the world, and was made useful, and continued in all the world at that time. Christ gave his disciples a commission to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; it was no more

to be restrained to a particular nation, but was made general and common to all the nations of the world, and accordingly they preached it to all; and by this time had delivered the joyful message to the greater part of the world, which is sometimes meant by all the world, and the whole world; or it had been now preached in all the known and habitable parts of the world by one apostle and another, some being sent into one part, and some into another; so that the grace of God appeared to all men, and the doctrine of it had been preached to every creature under the heaven, according to Christ's commission; the Gospel of the kingdom was to be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, before the end of the Jewish state came, or before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was not many years after the writing of this epistle. Now this shews, that it was the same Gospel which had been preached at Colosse by their faithful minister there, as had been dispensed in other, and in all parts of the world by the apostles; which is said in the commendation of the Gospel, it being one, uniform, consistent, and all of a piece in every place, and as preached by every faithful minister, and might serve greatly to confirm the Colossians in their faith of it: *and bringeth forth fruit*; by which is meant, either the conversion of sinners, the fruit of the Gospel ministry, when attended with a divine blessing and power; or the graces of the spirit, as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, self-denial, &c. with all the effects thereof, in new obedience, and a godly conversation, which come from Christ, the green fir-tree, and are produced by the spirit, through the preaching of the Gospel. The Vulgate Latin adds, *and increaseth*; the Syriac version has the same; and it is so read in some Greek copies, as in the Alexandrian copy, two of Stephens's, and in the Complutensian edition; and may intend the spread of the Gospel among others, besides those who first received it, and the growing fruitfulness of the professors of it under its influence: *as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it*; as soon as ever it came among them they hearkened to it, they were inclined to hear it externally, and a divine power going along with it, giving them hearing ears, and understanding hearts, they heard it, so as to know it, love it, and believe it: and from that time it brought forth fruit, and increased in them, and they continued in the faith and profession of it; so that as the Gospel is commended both from the large spread and efficacy of it, as well as its uniformity in every place, these Colossians also are commended for their hearing of it, both externally and internally, and for their perseverance in it: and which is further illustrated in the following clause, *and know the grace of God in truth*: by the *grace of God* may be meant the love and favour of God, in the mission and gift of his son, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners, displayed in the Gospel, of which they had a comfortable experience, it being shed abroad in their hearts by the spirit; or the blessings of grace revealed in the Gospel, as free justification by the righteousness of Christ, full pardon of sin, according to the riches of grace, and adoption of children, arising out of the love and free favour of God, of which they had had a real application made to them through the Gospel, by the spirit of God; or rather the doctrine of grace itself, so

called, because it is a declaration of the free grace of God in the salvation of sinners, and the means of implanting grace in the heart. This they knew not merely in a notional and speculative manner, but experimentally; for the Gospel was not only come to them, but into them; they had a spiritual knowledge of it, and affection for it; they felt the power of it in their hearts, and tasted and relished the sweetness of it; and owned and *acknowledged* it, as the word here used may be rendered; for as with the heart they believed it, so with the mouth they made public profession of it: and this they did *in truth*; they came by the knowledge of the love of God, and the blessings of grace, and the doctrines of it, by the Gospel, the word of truth; in and through that they became acquainted with these things; and having known and embraced the doctrine of the Gospel of the grace of God, in the truth of it, without any mixture of error, as it had been purely, and without adulteration, truly and faithfully preached by their minister, they professed it truly, heartily, and sincerely, and without hypocrisy; which is another part of their commendation, and involves in it the praise of their minister also, which is enlarged upon in the following verses.

Ver. 7. *As ye also learned of Epaphras, &c.*] To know the grace of God, believe the truth of the Gospel, and to own and profess it sincerely. *Our dear fellow-servant*: a *servant* of Christ he was, and a *fellow-servant* of the apostles, jointly engaged with them in preaching the Gospel; which character, as it greatly commends Epaphras, and shews him to be a very considerable preacher of the word, so it expresses the great humility and condescension of the apostle, in putting him upon a level with himself, though he was not in that high office of the apostleship he was. And *dear* this precious servant of Christ was to him, and his fellow-ministers, on account of the grace and gifts bestowed on him, because of his usefulness in the ministry, and his faithfulness and integrity in the discharge of it; and whose company and conversation in the prison greatly endeared him to them, for he was a fellow-prisoner, as well as a fellow-servant, Philemon, ver. 23. It follows, *who is for you a faithful minister of Christ*; one whom Christ had made a *minister*, and not *man*; who was qualified, and sent forth, and made successful by him in his service; and who preached none but Christ, and him crucified, in the business of salvation: and he was a *faithful* one; one that sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; nor to please men, but his master; who concealed no part of his message, but freely and fully declared the whole; he was faithful to Christ, who put him into the ministry, and to the souls of men, to whom he ministered: and therefore 'tis said, he was such an one *for you*; for them, not for himself; for their spiritual good and advantage; he sought not theirs, but them; he had a great zeal for them, dearly loved them, and spent his time and strength, and made use of his gifts and talents while among them, for their use and benefit.

Ver. 8. *Who also declared unto us your love in the spirit.*] Not only their love to God, and Christ, and to all the saints, which is before mentioned, but their love to the apostle; though they had only heard of him, and of his great capacity for, and faithfulness and use-

fulness in preaching of the Gospel, which had greatly endeared him to them. This, he says, was *in the spirit*; it was spiritual love, to distinguish it from a carnal and worldly one; they loved him for the spiritual grace that was in him, the spiritual gifts bestowed on him, the spiritual service he was engaged in, and the spiritual usefulness he was of: or they loved him in, and with their spirits, with all their hearts, sincerely, and without dissimulation; and though they had never seen him in the flesh, yet being, as it were, present with him in spirit, their affections were knit unto him: or this their love was *in the Holy Spirit*, as the Ethiopic version reads it; it was a fruit of the spirit of God, which he had implanted in their hearts in regeneration, as is also love to God, and likewise to Christ.

Ver. 9. *For this cause we also, &c.*] Not merely for their love to the apostle, and the rest that were with him; which sense is too much contracted, and carries some appearance of meanness and selfishness; but because of their faith in Christ, their love to all the saints, and the good hope they had of eternal happiness; and because they had heard the Gospel, and truly knew it, and sincerely professed it: therefore, *since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire*; which shews that the apostles prayed without ceasing; not that they were every moment praying, without intermission, but that they were frequent and constant every day at the throne of grace; and as often as they were there, they were mindful of these Colossians, even ever since they heard of their reception of the Gospel, of their profession of it, and of the fruit it brought forth in them; and in their petitions *prayed and desired*, earnestly and importunately entreated God on their behalf: *that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will*; the will of God, as the Syriac version reads it; by which is meant, not the secret will of God, according to the counsel of which he does all things in nature, providence, and grace, but his revealed will; and that either as it is signified in the law, which declares the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, relating to what he would have done, or avoided by his creatures; or rather, as it is exhibited in the Gospel, which contains the will of God respecting the salvation of his chosen ones; as that it is his will that Christ should obtain eternal redemption for them, to do which he voluntarily substituted himself in their room, came into this world, and has accomplished it; and that all those that are redeemed by Christ should be regenerated by the spirit; and that whoever sees the son, and believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life; as also, that all those whom he has chosen in Christ, and given to him, and he has redeemed by his blood, and who are sanctified by his spirit, none of them should be lost, but that they should be all saved with an everlasting salvation. Now the apostle does not pray that they might have a *knowledge* of this will of God, for some knowledge of it they had already; they had heard of the hope laid up in heaven, in the truth of the word of the Gospel; they had not only had the external revelation, and had heard the Gospel outwardly preached, but they had known truly the grace of God; and therefore what he asks for is, that they might be *filled* with the knowledge of it; which supposes that they had knowledge, but it was not full

and complete; it was imperfect, as is the knowledge of the best of saints in this life; and that they might have a larger measure of it, and such a fulness of it as they were capable of in the present state, and not such an one as the saints will have in heaven, when they shall know even as they are known. He adds, *in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*; his meaning is, that they might be led into *all* the wisdom of God, which is so largely displayed in the revelation of his will concerning the salvation of his people, which is made in the Gospel; which is the manifold wisdom of God, wherein he has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; and contains such a scheme of things, so wisely contrived and formed, that angels desire to look into it; and that they might have a *spiritual understanding* of the mysteries of grace, without which they cannot be discerned to spiritual advantage, nor indeed without the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of them: and the Ethiopic version renders it, *by the prudence of the Holy Ghost*: who searches the deep things of God, and reveals them to the saints, and improves and increases their spiritual and experimental knowledge of them, which is what is here intended.

Ver. 10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version reads, *of God*; to which the Ethiopic version agrees; but rather the Lord Jesus Christ seems to be designed: and to *walk worthy* of him, is to walk by faith in him; to walk after his spirit, and according to his word, and in his ordinances; to have the conversation as becomes his Gospel, and worthy of that vocation wherewith the saints are called by grace to the obtaining of his kingdom and glory. The apostle prays that their knowledge might issue in practice; for knowledge, without practice, is of no avail: he first asks for knowledge, and then practice, for how should men act according to the will of God, or Christ, unless they know it? and when they know it, they should not rest in their knowledge, but put it in practice: *unto all pleasing*. The Syriac reads it, *that ye may please God in all good works*: an unregenerate man can't please God in any thing; without faith in Christ it is impossible to please him by any thing man can do; Christ only could, and did always the things that pleased his father; there are many things done by believers which are displeasing to God; nor is there any thing they can do that is pleasing to God but through Christ, in whom their persons and services are accepted; good works being done in faith, and from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, are acceptable unto him through Christ; and therefore are to be carefully maintained, and studiously performed by all those that have a spiritual understanding of the will of God, and believe in Christ their Lord and Redeemer: *being fruitful in every good work*; saints are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; good works are the fruit, which, under the influence of divine grace, they bring forth; and this is not of one sort only, as trees usually do, but of every kind; being ingrafted into Christ the true vine, and deriving life, sap, and nourishment from him, they are filled with the fruits of righteousness by him, which they bring forth and bear, to the glory of his heavenly Father; and being such, they are pleasant plants to him, as fruit-bearing

trees are to the owner of them: wherefore, in order to the saints walking in their lives and conversations unto all pleasing, or pleasing in all things, the apostle prays they might be fruitful in good works, and that in every one, in every kind of good works: *and increasing in the knowledge of God*; not barely of his nature and perfections, as they are displayed in the works of creation; but of his mind, and will, and the mysteries of his grace, as they are revealed in the Gospel; of the knowledge of him in Christ, as the God of all grace, and as a covenant God and father. The apostle had before prayed for an increase of the knowledge of the will of God, previous to his request, for the putting of it in practice; and now suggests, that an increase of the knowledge of God himself may be expected in a practical use of means, an attendance on the ordinances of Christ, and a diligent performance of good works: from the whole of these petitions, it may be observed by the apostle's asking for them, that all our knowledge, and the increase of it, and all our fruitfulness in good works, are all from the Lord; and therefore we have no reason to boast of our knowledge, nor depend upon our works, but frankly to own, that notwithstanding all we know, and do, we are but unprofitable servants.

Ver. 11. *Strengthened with all might, &c.*] This is still a continuation of the apostle's prayer for these believers; for having prayed for an increase of spiritual knowledge, and that this might be put into practice, he proceeds to pray for strength for them, that they might be enabled to practise what they had knowledge of; to walk worthily, to please God in all things, to bring forth fruit with patience, to persevere in knowledge, practice, fruitfulness, and in an increase thereof. It implies, that believers are weak in themselves, and insufficient to do or bear any thing of themselves, but stand in need of strength from above, even of *all might*; of all kind of spiritual might and strength, proportionate to the various kinds of services, temptations, and trials they are called unto, and exercised with: they have need of every kind, degree, and supply of strength, to enable them to resist the temptations of Satan, to stand against them, and bear up under them; to oppose the corruptions of their own nature, that great company which comes upon them, wars against them, threatens to carry them captive, and destroy them, and against which they have no power of their own; to bear the cross, which, without the presence and grace of Christ, is very heavy, and all afflictions and adversities of every sort, which are grievous to the flesh, and at which it recoils; to perform the various duties of religion, and the whole of the work of their generation; which though they have a will unto, yet often know not how to perform, they want renewed strength in their souls; and also to persevere in faith and holiness, and hold on and out to the end: and which strength they can't expect to have from themselves, or from any creature, but *according to his glorious power*; the glorious power of God. Power belongs to God, is a perfection of his nature, and has been, and is gloriously displayed in many things; as in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the upholding of all things in their being; in the redemption and salvation of sinners; in their faith and conversion; in supporting the saints under various trials and exercises; and in the safe keeping

them through faith unto salvation: from this glorious power of God saints may hope to be supplied with all might, or a sufficient supply of strength for every service, and for every difficulty; as also from the grace that is in Christ, who has strength as well as righteousness for his people, who is the glorious power and arm of the Lord, without whom they can neither do, nor bear any thing, but through him strengthening them, they can do, and bear all things; as likewise from the spirit of the Lord, who is the finger of God, by whom Christ wrought his miracles; and is that glorious power from on high, with which the apostles being endued, did the wondrous things they did; and 'tis by the same spirit that believers are strengthened with might in the inner man: *unto all patience*: to bring forth fruit with patience; to run with patience the race set before them; to bear patiently all afflictions and tribulations; to wait patiently for the things promised by God, and for the coming and appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the heavenly glory or hope laid up for them in heaven: *and long-suffering*; to be slow to anger, and not easily provoked to wrath; to be ready to forgive injuries; and to bear long, and with patience, all reproaches and persecutions for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; all which require daily fresh supplies of grace and strength, especially to endure all *with joyfulness*, as well as with patience and long-suffering, with a cheerful spirit, or with joy in the Holy Ghost; to esteem reproach for Christ's sake above the riches and honours of this world; to rejoice when counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. This requires strength above that of nature, and a renewed supply of that of grace. This last clause, *with joyfulness*, the Syriac version connects with the following verse, reading it, *with joy do ye give thanks, &c.*

Ver. 12. *Giving thanks unto the father, &c.*] To God the father, as the Vulgate Latin and the Syriac versions read the clause; and the Complutensian edition, and some copies, *God and the father*; who is both the father of Christ by nature, and of all his people by adoption. The Ethiopic version renders it, as an exhortation or advice, *give ye thanks to the father*; and so the Syriac version: but the words rather seem to be spoken in the first, than in the second person, and are to be considered in connexion with ver. 9. So when the apostle had made an end of his petitions, he enters upon thanksgiving to God: *which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*; by the *inheritance*, or *lot*, is meant not the common lot of the children of God to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom, which they are by God the father counted and made worthy of, with the rest of saints called out of darkness into light; nor their present state and condition, having a power to become the children of God, and to be fellow-citizens with the saints, to enjoy communion with them, under the Gospel dispensation, called *light*, in opposition to Jewish and Gentile darkness, to be brought into which state is an high favour of God; but the heavenly glory, so called, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was divided by lot to the children of Israel, according to

the will and purpose of God; and because it is not acquired by the works of men, but is a pure free-grace gift of God, and which he, as the father of his people, has bequeathed unto them; and which they enjoy through the death of the testator Christ; and of which the spirit is the earnest; and because this glory is peculiar to such as are the children of God by adopting grace. It is no other than that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fades not away, reserved in the heavens; and designs that substance, or those solid and substantial things they shall possess hereafter; that kingdom, salvation, and glory, they are heirs of; and includes all things they shall inherit, and even God himself, who is their portion, their inheritance, their exceeding great reward, and of whom they are said to be heirs. This is the inheritance of the saints, and of none else; who are sanctified or set apart by God the father in eternal election; who are sanctified by the blood of Christ, or whose sins are expiated by his atoning sacrifice; who are sanctified in Christ, or to whom he is made sanctification; and who are sanctified by the spirit of Christ, or have the work of sanctification begun upon their souls by him; in consequence of which they live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. And this inheritance of theirs is *in light*: unless this clause should be read in connexion with the word *saints*, and be descriptive of them; they being called and brought out of darkness into light, and made light in the Lord, light being infused into them; in which light they see light, sin to be exceeding sinful, and Christ to be exceeding precious: or this phrase should be thought to design the means by which the father makes meet to partake of the inheritance; namely, in or by the light of the Gospel, shewing the way of salvation by Christ, and by the light of grace put into their hearts, and by following Christ the light of the world, which is the way to the light of life: though it rather seems to point out the situation and nature of the heavenly inheritance; it is where God dwells, in light inaccessible to mortal creatures, and who is light itself; and where Christ is, who is the light of the new Jerusalem; and where is the light of endless joy, and uninterrupted happiness; and where the saints are blessed with the clear, full, and beatific vision of God in Christ, and of Christ as he is, seeing him, not through a glass darkly, but face to face. This may be said in reference to a notion of the Jews, that the *light* which God created on the first day is that goodness which he has laid up for them that fear him, and is what he has treasured up for the righteous in the world to come^d. Now the saints' meetness for this is not of themselves; by nature they are very unmeet for it, being deserving of the wrath of God, and not of an inheritance; and are impure and unholy, and so not fit to partake of the inheritance of saints, or holy ones, and much less to dwell and converse with an holy God; and being darkness itself, can't bear such light, or have communion with it: but God the father makes them meet, which includes all the acts of his grace towards them, upon them, and in them; such as his choosing them in Christ, and their inheritance for him; in preparing that for them, and

^d Zohar in Gen. fol. 6. 3. & in Exod. fol. 32. 3. & in Lev. xiv. 4. & xxxvii. 4. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

them for that; blessing them with all grace, and all spiritual blessings in Christ; putting them among the children by an act of adoption, of his own sovereign will and free grace, and thereby giving them a goodly heritage, and a title to it; justifying them by the righteousness of his son, and so making them heirs according to the hope of eternal life, and forgiving all their trespasses for Christ's sake; cleansing them from all in his blood, so that being the undefiled in the way, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, they are fit for the undefiled inheritance; regenerating them by his spirit, and implanting principles of light and life, grace and holiness, in them, without which no man shall see the Lord, or enter into the kingdom of heaven. One copy, as Beza observes, reads it, *which hath called us to be partakers*, &c. and so does the Ethiopic version. And all such as the father has thus called, and made meet, shall certainly be partakers of the inheritance; they partake of it already in Christ their head, and in faith and hope, having the spirit as an earnest and pledge of it, and will wholly and perfectly enjoy it hereafter: for though, like Canaan's land, 'tis disposed of by lot, by the will, counsel, and free grace of God, yet will it not be divided into parts as that was; there is but one undivided inheritance, but one *part* and portion, which all the saints shall jointly and equally partake of, having all and each the same right and title, claim and meetness. For which they have abundant reason to give thanks to the father, when they consider what they were, beggars on the dunghill, and now advanced to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; were bankrupts, over head and ears in debt, owed ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay, and now all is frankly forgiven; and besides, a title to, and meetness for, the heavenly inheritance, are freely bestowed on them; and particularly when they consider they are no more worthy of this favour than others that have no share in it, and also how great the inheritance is.

Ver. 13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, &c.*] That is, from the power of Satan; see Acts xxvi. 18. who, though once an angel of light, is now darkness itself, and is reserved in chains of darkness; he is a ruler of the darkness of this world; his kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; and he blinds the minds of them that believe not, keeps them in darkness, and increases the natural darkness of their minds; he delights in works of darkness, and tempts men to them; and his everlasting state and portion will be blackness of darkness: his power over men, in a state of unregeneracy, which he usurps, and is suffered to exercise, is very great; he works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; and nothing less than the power of God, who is stronger than the strong man armed, can deliver out of his hands; and which is at least one part of the mercy for which thanks are here given; see the note on Luke xxii. 53. with the Jews, one of the names of Satan is *הַשָּׂטָן, darkness* *. Moreover, the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, with which God's elect, whilst in a state of nature, are surrounded, and, as it were shut up and imprisoned, so that they have not the least spark of true spiritual light and knowledge, may be also meant; under the power of which they

are to such a degree, that they know nothing of God in Christ, of the way of salvation by him, or of the work of the spirit on their souls, or of the doctrines of the Gospel in an experimental manner; and so they continue, till, by an almighty power, they are turned from darkness to light; when, by powerful grace, they are plucked as brands out of the burning, and delivered from wrath to come, and from that utter darkness of misery and destruction their ways of sin and darkness led and exposed them to. This deliverance is wrought out for them in effectual vocation, when they are internally called, and powerfully brought out of this darkness, by introducing light into them, revealing Christ in them, causing the prince of darkness to flee from them, and the scales of darkness and blindness to fall from their eyes; and which is both an instance of the wonderful grace of God, and of his almighty power, and in which lies in part the saints' meetness for the inheritance; for these words are, in some sort, explanatory of the former; for so long as a person is under the power of darkness, he cannot be meet for an inheritance which is in light: it follows, as another branch of this mercy, for which thanks are given, *and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son*; not into the kingdom of glory; for though the saints are heirs of it, and rejoice in hope of it, they have not yet an entrance into it; which they will have abundantly when Christ shall introduce them into it, not only as his father's, but as his own kingdom and glory: but the kingdom of grace is here meant, or that state of grace, light, and life, which such are brought into, when rescued out of Satan's hands, and recovered out of their former state of ignorance and infidelity; when they are by the drawings of the father, by his powerful and efficacious grace, brought to Christ, and, in the day of his power on their souls, are made willing to submit to his righteousness, and to embrace him as the alone Saviour and Redeemer, and be subject to him as King of saints, observing his commands, keeping his ordinances, and walking in his statutes and judgments with other saints, in a Gospel church-state; which is Christ's kingdom here on earth, where he reigns as King over God's holy hill of Zion, being set there by his father, from whom he has received this kingdom, and will deliver it to him, when it is complete and perfect. Now those whom Jehovah the father snatches out of Satan's hands, and breaks in upon their souls with divine light and knowledge, he brings into such a state, and into this kingdom of Christ, who is called *his dear son*; or *the son of his love*; or *his son of love*; who being his son by nature, of the same nature with him, and equal to him, always was, is, and will be, the object of his love, complacency, and delight; as he cannot be otherwise, since he is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; and even as this son of his is in an office-capacity, as the Mediator between God and man, he is his elect,* in whom his soul delights; and he is always well pleased with all the chosen ones in him, who are the sons of God through him, and always beloved in him. This clause is added, partly to distinguish the kingdom of Christ, into which the saints are brought in this life, from the kingdom of

* Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4.

the father, or the ultimate glory they shall possess hereafter; and partly to express the security of the saints, and their continuance in the love of God, being in the kingdom, and under the care and government of the son of his love; and also to make way for what the apostle has further to discourse concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ, in the following verses.

Ver. 14. *In whom we have redemption, &c.*] Which is an excellent and wonderful blessing of grace saints have in and by Christ; and lies in a deliverance from sin, all sin, original and actual, under which they are held captive, in a state of nature, and by which they are made subject to the punishment of death; but through the sacrifice of Christ it is taken, and put away, finished, and made an end of; and they are freed from the damning power of it, or any obligation to punishment for it; and in consequence of this are delivered from the enslaving governing power of it by his grace and spirit, and will hereafter be entirely rid of the very being of it: it consists also of a deliverance from the law, the curse and bondage of it, under which they are held on account of sin, the transgression of it; but being delivered from sin, they are also from the law, its accusations, charges, menaces, curses, and condemnation; as likewise out of the hands of Satan, by whom they are led captive; for through the ransom-price paid by Christ they are ransomed out of the hands of him that was stronger than they, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered by him that has led captivity captive: in short, this redemption is a deliverance out of the hands of all their enemies, and from all evils and misery, the effects of sin, from death, and hell, and wrath to come. The author of it is Christ, the son of God, the son of his love, his dear son: he was called to this work in the council of peace, in which the affair of redemption was consulted; and he agreed to undertake it in the covenant of grace, of which this is a principal article; and being in his constitution, as Mediator, every way fit and proper for it: as man, the right of redemption belonged to him, being the near kinsman of his people, and, as God, he was mighty and able to perform it; as man he had something to offer, and, as God, could make that sacrifice valuable and effectual to all saving purposes; as man, he had compassion on human nature, and, as God, was concerned for things pertaining to his honour and glory. And thus being every way qualified, he was sent, and came on this errand, and has obtained a redemption, which is precious, plenteous, complete and eternal: it is now with him, and *in him*; and he is made this, and every thing else to his people, that they want. The subjects of this blessing are, not angels, but men; and not all men, but some that are redeemed from among men, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; who are called by the name of Jacob, the people of Christ, a peculiar people, and the church of God; and evidentially are such, who have faith in Christ, love to the saints, and good hope of eternal life; who know the grace of God in truth, are made meet to be partakers of the eternal inheritance, being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ, and are designed by the *we* in this text: the means by which this blessing is procured, is *through*

his blood. This phrase is left out indeed in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and in some copies; but rightly stands here, as it does in Eph. i. 7. where there is another clause added, which is here omitted, at the end of the verse, *according to the riches of his grace*. This is the blood of Christ, his own blood, and not the blood of bulls and goats, and the same with that of the persons he redeems, but untainted with sin; the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish, of original or actual sin, otherwise it would not have been a sufficient redemption-price for his people; nor even then, were it not as it was the blood of the son of God, of one that was God as well as man, whereby it came to have a proper value and efficacy in it to obtain this blessing: Christ's shedding his blood freely on this account is a proof of his great love to his redeemed ones; the efficacy that was in it to answer this purpose shews the dignity and greatness of his person; and it not being to be effected without it, demonstrates the strictness of divine justice, and that the redemption of men is brought about in a way entirely consistent with the righteousness and holiness of God. A particular branch of this blessing follows, and which serves, in some sense, to illustrate and explain it, *even the forgiveness of sins*: of all sin, original and actual; of heart, lip, and life, secret and open, past, present, and to come; which lies in a non-imputation of sin, a remembrance of it no more, a removing of it entirely out of the way, a covering and blotting it out of sight, so as to be no more visible and legible: this is in Christ, where all spiritual blessings are; nor is it to be had or expected from an absolute God, but from God in Christ, and through him, through his propitiatory sacrifice; for as redemption, so forgiveness of sin is through his blood, which was shed for it; so that it proceeds upon the foot of satisfaction made to the justice of God by a price paid, and is an act of justice as well as grace, and belongs to the same persons as redemption does; hence those that are redeemed are represented as without fault before the throne; and indeed, the reason why their iniquities are blotted out, and will be remembered no more against them, is, because they are redeemed.

Ver. 15. *Who is the image of the invisible God, &c.*] Not of deity, though the fulness of it dwells in him; nor of himself, though he is the true God, and eternal life; nor of the Spirit, who also is God, and the Spirit of the Son; but the Father, called *God*, not to the exclusion of the Son or Spirit, who are with him the one God: *and he is invisible*: not to the son who lay in his bosom, and had perfect and infinite knowledge of him; nor, in some sense, to angels, who always behold his face, but to men: no man hath seen him corporeally with the eyes of his body, though intellectually with the eyes of the understanding, when enlightened; not in his essence and nature, which is infinite and incomprehensible, but in his works of creation, providence; and grace; nor immediately, but mediately, in and through Christ, in whom he gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of his person and perfections; and this not perfectly now, but in the other state, when the saints shall see him face to face. But chiefly the father is said to be invisible, because he did not appear to Old-Testament saints; as his voice was never heard, so his

shape was never seen; he never assumed any visible form; but whenever any voice was heard, or shape seen, it was the second person that appeared, the son of God, who is here said to be his *image*, and that, as he is the son of God; in which sense he is the natural, essential, and eternal image of his father, an increated one, perfect and complete, and in which he takes infinite complacency and delight: this designs more than a shadow and representation, or than bare similitude and likeness; it includes sameness of nature and perfections; ascertains the personality of the son, his distinction from the father, whose image he is; and yet implies no inferiority, as the following verses clearly shew, since all that the father hath are his. Philo, the Jew^f, often speaks of the *Λόγος*, or Word of God, as the image of God. Also, this may be understood of him as Mediator, in whom, as such, is a most glorious display of the love, grace, and mercy of God, of his holiness and righteousness, of his truth and faithfulness, and of his power and wisdom: *the first-born of every creature*: not the first of the creation, or the first creature God made; for all things in the next verse are said to be created by him, and therefore he himself can never be a creature; nor is he the first in the new creation, for the apostle in the context is speaking of the old creation, and not the new: but the sense either is, that he was begotten of the father in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible by men, before any creatures were in being; or that he is the *first Parent*, or bringer-forth of every creature into being, as the word will bear to be rendered, if instead of *απαρχιτοκος*, we read *απαρχιτοκος*; which is no more than changing the place of the accent, and may be very easily ventured upon, as is done by an ancient writer^g, who observes, that the word is used in this sense by Homer, and is the same as *απαρχιτοκος*, *first Parent*, and *απαρχιτοκος*, *first Creator*; and the rather this may be done, seeing the accents were all added since the apostle's days, and especially seeing it makes his reasoning, in the following verses, appear with much more beauty, strength, and force: he is the first Parent of every creature, *for by him were all things created*, &c. or it may be understood of Christ, as the King, Lord, and Governor of all creatures; being God's first-born, he is heir of all things, the right of government belongs to him; he is higher than the kings of the earth, or the angels in heaven, the highest rank of creatures, being the Creator and upholder of all, as the following words shew; so the Jews make the word *first-born* to be synonymous with the word *king*, and explain it by *נָדוּל וְשֶׁר*, *a great one, and a prince*^h; see Psal. lxxxix. 27. and Heb. i. 2, 6.

Ver. 16. *For by him were all things created, &c.* This is a reason proving Christ to be before all creatures, to be the common Parent of them, and to have the government over them, since he is the Creator of them. The creation of all things, by him, is not to be understood of the new creation, for whenever that is spoken of, the word *new* is generally used, or what is equivalent to it, or some clause or phrase added, which determines the sense,

and is not the case here: besides, all things that are in heaven are said to be created here: which, to say nothing of the sun, moon, and stars, which are not capable subjects of the new creation, to restrain them to angels, cannot be true of them; for as for those who were once in heaven, but kept not their first estate, and quitted their habitation, these find no place there any more; they never were, nor will be renewed and restored by Christ; and as for the good angels, since they never sinned, they stand in no need of renovation. Moreover, all things that are on earth are also said to be created by him, and are, but not anew: for to confine these only to men, all men are not renewed in the spirit of their minds; all have not faith, nor a good hope through grace, nor love to God and Christ, the greater part of the world lies in open wickedness; and all that profess religion are not new creatures, these are a chosen generation, and a peculiar people: wherefore these words must be understood, not metaphorically, but literally; in which sense all things are created by Christ, not by him as an instrument, but as the efficient cause; for the preposition *by* does not always signify the former, but sometimes the latter; see 1 Cor. i. 9. Gal. i. 1. nor to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit, who, with the Son, were jointly concerned in the creating of all things out of nothing: and these *all things* can only refer to the things that are made: increated things can never be said to be created; this is a contradiction in terms; the Father is not created by him, nor he himself as the Son of God, nor the Spirit; but every thing that is made is created by him: hence it follows, that he himself is no creature, otherwise he must create himself, which also is a contradiction, since every creature is made by him; and consequently he must be God, for he that made and built all things is God. These are divided as to the subject of them, or place where they are, into things *that are in heaven, and that are in earth*. The things that are in heaven, are the things that are in the airy and starry heavens, and in the heaven of heavens. The things in the airy heavens, the fowls thereof, were on the fifth day created by him; and the things in the starry heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, were on the fourth day ordained by him; and the inhabitants of the third heaven, the angels, were made by him, Heb. i. 7. and, as the Jewish writersⁱ say, on the second day of the creation, though some say on the fifth. The earth comprehends the whole terraqueous globe, consisting of land and sea; and the things in it are all that are in the seas, the fishes and other things in it; and all that are in the bowels of the earth, as well as on the surface of it, all metals and minerals, all plants, herbs, and trees, every beast of the forest, the cattle on a thousand hills, the fowls on the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field, and all human creatures. Again, these all things are, as to the quality of them, distributed into *visible and invisible*, both in heaven and in earth: the visible things in heaven are the fowls that fly in the airy heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars in the starry heaven, and the

^f De Mund. Opific. p. 6. de Plant. Noe, p. 216, 217. de Confus. Ling. p. 341. de Somniis, p. 600. de Monarch. p. 323.

^g Isidor. Pelusiot. l. 3. Ep. 21.

^h R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 1.

ⁱ Targum Jon. in Gen. l. 26. Dereshit Rabba, fol. 1. 1. & 3. 3. Menass. ben Israel, Conciliator in Gen. Qu. 12.

bodies of those saints that have been either translated, or raised, in the third heaven; the visible things in the earth are all creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, all bodies, all corporeal and material beings: the invisible things in earth are not only those that are in the innermost parts of it, but the spirits or souls of men; and those in heaven are not the invisible God, Father, Son, and Spirit, but the angels, who are incorporeal and immaterial spirits, and so invisible: and which, *whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers*, are all made by him; by these some understand civil magistrates among men, and the various degrees and orders of them. By *thrones* they think kings, or monarchs, are meant, who sit on thrones; and by *dominions*, little petty kings, or lords, dukes, and earls; and by *principalities*, governors of provinces and cities; and by *powers*, inferior magistrates; and indeed, political governors are sometimes called dominions, dignities, principalities, and powers; and there are different orders of them, the king as supreme, and governors under him; see Jud. viii. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. But since these seem rather to be said of the invisible things in heaven, and to be an explanation of them, angels may rather be thought to be intended; and are so called, not as denoting different orders and degrees among them, which some have rashly ventured to describe, but because of the use that God makes of them in the government of the world, and the executions of the various affairs of Providence relating to particular persons and kingdoms; though these several names are not so much such as the apostle chose to call them by, as what they were called by others; the three latter are indeed elsewhere used by himself, Eph. i. 21. and iii. 10. Col. ii. 10. but not the former, *thrones*, which yet are used by Jewish writers, and given to angels. Thus, in a book of theirs, which they esteem very ancient, and ascribe to the patriarch Abraham, it is said ^k, "there is no angel in which the name Jehovah is not found, which is everywhere, as the soul is in every member; wherefore men ought to allow Jehovah to reign in all the members, וּבְכָל בְּרִשְׁתָּן, and in all the thrones, and in all the angels, and in every member of men." And elsewhere, speaking of the garments of God, "by these (say they) ^l כְּרִשְׁתֵּי קֹדֶשׁ, the holy blessed God created the thrones, and the angels, and the living creatures, and the *seraphim*, and the heavens, and the earth, and all that he created." And the *thrones* in Dan. vii. 9. are interpreted ^m, of "the superior princes, לְמַלְאכֵי רוּחַנִּים, the spiritual angels, who sit first in the kingdom; and they are called in the words of the Rabbins, the *throne of glory*; for so is the way of kings, that their princes sit before them, every one on his throne, according to their dignity." Now the apostle's sense is, that the angels, the invisible inhabitants of the upper world, are all created by Christ, let them be called by what names they will, that the Jews, or the false teachers, or any sort of heretics of those times thought fit to give them, whether they called them thrones or

dominions, &c. And so the Arabic version, rather interpreting than translating the words, renders them thus, *whether you say thrones, or whether you mention dominions, or whether you understand princes, or whether you say powers*; speak of them under what title or appellation you please, they are all the creatures of the son of God. The apostle seems to have in view, and to oppose some notions of some heretics of his time, the followers of Simon Magus, who held, that the angels were created by his Helena; or, as others, by what they call *Ennea*, and that these angels created the world, and are to be worshipped; but he here affirms, that all things are created by Christ, even all the angels; and therefore he, and not they, are to be worshipped, a notion he afterwards takes notice of in the following chapter: and as all things are affirmed to be created by him, which demonstrates the dignity and deity of his person, so likewise for him; that is, for his pleasure, that he may take delight and complacency in them, and in his own perfections displayed by them; and for his service and use, as the angels, to worship him and minister to him and for others, he sends them to: elect men are made to serve and glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his; and even the non-elect are made to subserve his mediatorial kingdom and interest; yea, the whole world is built and kept in being purely on his account, until he has finished the great affair of the salvation of his people, in the application of it to each of them, as he has completed the impetration of it; and then he will dissolve the heavens, and burn up the earth and all the works that are therein: all are made for his glory, and that end is, and will be answered by them in one way or another.

Ver. 17. *And he is before all things, &c.*] Not only in dignity, being preferable to angels and men in his nature, names, offices, and works, and worthy of more honour than all creatures; but he is before them in existence, as he must needs be, since they are all made by him; he was not only before John the Baptist, his forerunner, before Abraham who saw his day and was glad, before the first man was made, but before the angels were in being, or the heavens and the earth, or any creature were formed; and therefore must be God, who is from everlasting to everlasting: and by him all things consist; he upholds all things by the word of his power; the heavens have their stability and continuance from him; the pillars of the earth are bore up by him, otherwise that and the inhabitants of it would be dissolved; the angels in heaven are confirmed in their estate by him, and have their standing and security in him; the elect of God are in his hands, and are his peculiar care and charge, and therefore shall never perish; yea, all mankind live and move, and have their being in him; the whole frame of nature would burst asunder and break in pieces, was it not held together by him; every created being has its support from him, and its consistence in him; and all the affairs of Providence relating to all creatures are governed, directed, and managed by him, in conjunction with the Father and the blessed Spirit.

^k Sopher Jetzira, p. 17. Ed. Rittangel.

^l Tikkuue Zohar in ib. p. 127, 128. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 10. 2. & in Lev. fol. 39. 1. & 47. 2.

^m Aburbinel in Dan. fol. 45. 4. & 46. 4.

Ver. 18. *And he is the head of the body, the church, &c.*] By the church is meant, not any particular congregated church, as the church at Colosse, or Corinth, or any other; but the whole election of grace, the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life; the church which Christ has given himself for, and has purchased with his blood, and builds on himself the rock, and will, at last, present to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; this is compared to an human body, and therefore called *the body*; which is but one, consisting of many members in union with each other, set in their proper places in just symmetry and proportion to each other, and subservient to one another, and are neither more nor fewer; see 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 13, 14, &c. and of this body, the church, Christ is *the head*; he was the representative head of this body of elect men from all eternity, and in time; he is a political head of them, or in such sense an head unto them, as a king is to his subjects; he reigns in them by his spirit and grace, and rules them by wholesome laws of his own enacting, and which he inscribes on their hearts, and he protects and defends them by his power; he is an economical head, or in such sense an head of them, as the husband is the head of the wife, and parents and masters are the heads of their families, he standing in all these relations to them; and he is to them what a natural head is to an human body; of all which see the note on 1 Cor. xi. 3. The Messiah is called *one head*, in Hos. i. 11. which Jarchi explains by David their king, and Kimchi on the place says, this is the King Messiah: *who is the beginning*; which either denotes the eternity of Christ, who was not only in the beginning, and was set up from the beginning, from everlasting, but is also the beginning and the end; and who is, indeed, without beginning of days, or end of life: or his dominion; he is *the principality*, as the word may be rendered; he is the principality of principalities, the head of all principality and power, the angels; he is the Prince of the kings of the earth; he is King of saints; the kingdom of nature and providence is his, and the government of his people in a special manner is on his shoulders; or this may design his being the first cause of all things; he is the beginning of the creation of God; the efficient cause of all created beings; he is the beginning of the church, of which he is the head; as Eve was from Adam, so is the church from Christ; it is a body of his preparing, and a temple of his building, and where he sits as a priest on his throne, and has the government of it: the second number, wisdom, in the cabalistic tree of the Jews, is called *the beginning*^o, as is the Logos, or Word, by Philo the Jew: *the first-born from the dead*; the first that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for, though others were raised before him, and by him, yet not to a state of immortality; the path of life, to an immortal life, was first shewn to him as man; and who also is the first-fruits of them that sleep, and so the pledge and earnest of the future resurrection of the saints; and is both the efficient and exemplary cause of it; the resurrection of the dead

will be by him as God, and according to his own, as man: *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*; or might be the first and chief over all persons, angels, and men; having a superior nature, name, and place, than the former, and being the first-born among many brethren designed by the latter: and in all things he is the first, and has the precedence and primacy; in sonship, no one is a son in the sense he is; in election, he was chosen first, and his people in him; in the covenant, he is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, he is that itself; in his human nature, he is fairer than the children of men; in redemption, he was alone, and wrought it out himself; in life, he exceeded all others in purity, in doctrine, and miracles; and in dying he conquered death, and rose first from it; in short, he died, revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of dead and living; and he ought to have the pre-eminence and first place in the affections of our hearts, in the contemplations of our minds, in the desires of our souls, and in the highest praises of our lips.

Ver. 19. *For it pleased the father, &c.*] The phrase, *the father*, is not in the original text, but is rightly supplied; since he is expressly mentioned in the context, as he who makes the saints meet to be partakers of the heavenly glory; who delivers them from the power and dominion of sin, and translates them into the kingdom of his dear son; and who, by Christ, reconciles all things to himself, ver. 12, 13, 20. and whose sovereign will and pleasure it is, *that in him should all fulness dwell*; by which is meant, not the fulness of the deity, though it is read by some *the fulness of the Godhead*: which seems to be transcribed from chap. ii. 9. but though all the perfections of God are in Christ, as eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, independence, and necessary existence, and every other, or he would not be equal with God; nor could all the fulness of the Godhead be said to dwell in him, should any one be wanting; yet this is a fulness possessed by him, that does not spring from, nor depend upon the father's good will and pleasure; but what he naturally and necessarily enjoys by a participation of the same undivided nature and essence with the Father and Spirit: nor is the relative fulness of Christ intended, which is his church, so called, Ephes. i. 23. and will be so when all the elect are gathered in, and filled with all the gifts and graces of his spirit, and are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; for though every believer dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, yet the church is not said to dwell in Christ, but Christ in the church; moreover, as yet she is not his fulness, at least in the sense she will be, and much less can she be said to be all fulness: nor is this to be understood of Christ's fulness of fitness and abilities, as God-man and Mediator, to perform his work and office as such; though this may be taken into the sense of the text as a part, yet is not the whole; but rather chiefly that dispensatory communicative fulness, which is, of the father's good will and pleasure, put into the hands of Christ to be distributed to others, is here designed. There is a fulness of nature in

^o Cabala densdata, par. 2. p. 7. & Lex. Cabal. p. 679, 681.

^o Philo de Conf. ling. p. 341.

Christ; the light of nature is from him, and communicated by him to mankind; the blessings of nature are the blessings of his left hand, which he distributes to his people as he thinks fit; and all things in nature are subservient to his mediatorial kingdom and glory. There is a fulness of grace in him, out of which saints receive, and grace for grace, or a large abundance of it; the fulness of the spirit of grace, and of all the graces and gifts of the spirit is in him; and of all the blessings of grace, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, adoption, sanctification, even of all that grace that is implanted in regeneration, that is necessary to carry on and finish the good work upon the soul; there is a fulness of all light and life, of wisdom, and strength, of peace, joy, and comfort, and of all the promises of grace, both with respect to this world and that which is to come; and there is also a fulness of glory in him, not only the grace, but the glory of the saints, is laid up and hid with him, and is safe and secure in him: this is said to *dwell* in Christ, which implies its being in him; it is not barely in intention, design, and purpose, but it is really and actually in him, nor is it in any other; and hence it comes to be communicated to the saints: and it also denotes the continuance of it with him; it is an abiding fulness, and yields a continual daily supply to the saints, and will endure to the end of time, and be as sufficient for the last as the first believer; it is like the subject of it, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever: and it also intends the safety of it: the saints' life both of grace and glory is hid with Christ, and is secure, it is out of the reach of men and devils, and can never be lost, or they deprived of it; and all this is owing not to any merits of men, to their faith and holiness, or good works, which are all the fruits of this fulness, but to the good will of God; *it pleased the Father* to place it here for them; it was owing to his good will to his Son, and therefore he puts all things into his hands; and to his elect in him, for, having loved them with an everlasting love, he takes everlasting care of them, and makes everlasting provision for them; it was his pleasure from all eternity to take such a step as this, well knowing it was not proper to put it into the hands of Adam, nor into the hands of angels, nor into their own at once; he saw none so fit for it as his son, and therefore it pleased him to commit it unto him; and it is his good will and sovereign pleasure, that all grace should come through Christ, all communion with him here, and all enjoyment of him hereafter; which greatly enhances and sets forth the glory of Christ as Mediator, one considerable branch of which is, that he is full of grace and truth; this qualifies him to be the head of the church, and gives a reason, as these words be, why he has, and ought to have, the pre-eminence in all things.

Ver. 20. *And by him to reconcile all things to himself, &c.*] This depends upon the preceding verse, and is to be connected with that phrase in it, *it pleased the father*; and the sense is, that it was the good will and pleasure of God from all eternity, as to lay up all fulness in Christ for his chosen people, so to reconcile them to himself by him; and which is another reason why Christ is, and ought to be considered as the head of the church, whose reconciliation he has procured,

and why he ought to have the chief place in all things, and among all persons. Reconciliation supposes a former state of amity and friendship, and in such an one man was originally with God; and a breach of that friendship, which was made and issued in real enmity in the heart of man; and also a restoration to friendship again: and it is to be understood not of a reconciliation of God to men, which the Scriptures nowhere speak of, but of men to God; and is a reconciliation of them, not to the love of God, which his elect always shared in, but to the justice of God, offended by the transgression of a righteous law; and is indeed properly a reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction for their sins, and so of their persons, and whereby all the perfections of God are reconciled to and agree with each other in the salvation of such sinners: now this takes its first rise from God the father; it is owing to his sovereign good will and pleasure; he took the first step towards it; he knew what a state of enmity and rebellion his people would fall into; his thoughts ran upon their peace and reconciliation from everlasting; he called a council of peace about it, and in it drew the model of it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his son, and, in consequence of it, sent him in the fulness of time to effect it, laying on him the chastisement of their peace; it was his pleasure that this affair of reconciliation should be brought about, not by the means of angels, in whom he could put no such trust and confidence, and who, though they rejoice at peace being made on earth, could never have effected it; nor that it should be done by men, who have no knowledge of the way of it, no inclination to it, nor power to make it; but *by him*, his son Jesus Christ, whom he appointed and called to this work, and sent to do it; and who is therefore, in prophecy, before this reconciliation was actually made, styled *Shiloh*, the Prince of peace, and the peace: and this, when made, was made to *himself*; meaning either to Christ, in whom all the elect were gathered together, as in one head, and were reconciled in one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, through him; or rather to God the father, to whom they were enemies, yea, enmity itself, and to whom the satisfaction and atonement were made; it being his law that was broken, and his justice that was injured, and to whom they are always in Scripture said to be reconciled; though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, the one God with the Father: moreover, the sense of this phrase may be, that the reconciliation of the elect made by Christ, in a way of full satisfaction to law and justice, is to the glory of God, the glory of all his perfections; as of his grace and mercy, wisdom, power, and faithfulness, so of his righteousness and holiness: the means by which Christ has effected it are, his sacrifice, sufferings, and death, expressed in the following clause; *having made peace through the blood of his cross*. This was what man could not do, what Christ was appointed and sent to do, and what he was every way qualified for as God and man; as man he had blood to shed, and could make reconciliation for sin in the nature which had sinned, and, as God, could draw nigh to his father, and treat with him about terms of peace, and perform them; and so a fit day's man and Mediator between God and man: this peace he has made by his *blood*,

that is, by the shedding of it, by his death as a sacrifice, which he underwent on the *cross*; partly to denote the shame, and chiefly to signify the curse he endured in the room of his people: all which shews the malignant nature of sin, the strictness of justice, and that peace is made in a way of full satisfaction, is upon honourable terms, will be lasting, as it is joyful, being attended with a train of blessings: *by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven*: by which are intended not the whole universe and fabric of the world, all creatures and things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, which have been cursed for the sin of man, and have proved unfriendly to him, but, in consequence of redemption and reconciliation by Christ, will, as some think, in the time of the restitution of all things, be restored to their former state, and to their friendly use to mankind; nor elect men and elect angels, and their reconciliation together, for the apostle is not speaking of the reconciling of these things together, but of the reconciling of them to God, which though it is true of elect men, is not of elect angels, who never fell, and though they have confirming grace, yet not reconciling grace from Christ, which they never needed; nor Jews and Gentiles, for though it is true that God was in Christ reconciling the world of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews to himself, and the chosen of God among both are actually reconciled to God by the death of Christ, yet the one are never called things in heaven, or the other things on earth, in distinction from, and opposition to each other; but rather all the elect of God are here meant, the family of God in heaven and in earth; all the saints that were then in heaven, when actual reconciliation was made by the blood of Christ, and who went thither upon the foot of peace, reconciliation, and redemption, to be made by his sacrifice and death; and all the chosen ones that were or should be on the face of the earth, until the end of time; all these were reconciled to God by Christ: and then the apostle proceeds particularly to mention the Colossians, as also being instances of this grace, good will, and pleasure of God by Christ.

Ver. 21. *And you that were sometime alienated, &c.*] The general blessing of grace and reconciliation, which belongs to the whole body of Christ, the church universal, all the elect of God, whether in heaven or in earth, is here particularly applied to the saints at Colosse, who were eminent instances of it; and that the free grace of God towards them in it might more illustriously appear, the apostle takes notice of what they were before the coming of Christ in the flesh, before the Gospel came among them, and whilst in a state of unregeneracy, as that they were *alienated*; that is from God, not from his general presence, power, and providence, which reach to all his creatures, but from the life of God; see Ephes. iv. 18. from living agreeably to the will of God, being estranged from him who is the fountain of moral and spiritual, as well as natural life; from the law, the rule of life, and from a principle of life in themselves; and altogether disapproving of such a life, as contrary to their carnal affections and lusts: and which alienation from God greatly lay in their forsaking him, the one only and true God, and following and serving strange gods, not attend-

ing to the dictates and light of nature; and being destitute of a divine revelation, they went further and further off from God, and from his people, worship, and ordinances; and were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; the source of all which was sin, and was owing to themselves: God did not alienate himself from them first; they alienated themselves from him; their sins separated between God and them, set them at a distance from him, and at enmity to him, and which very early appeared, for they were estranged from the womb: *and enemies in your mind by wicked works*. They were enemies to God, the true God, and were lovers and worshippers of idols; they were enemies to the being and perfections of God, as all men in a state of nature are; and more or less shew it, by either denying there is a God, or wishing there was none, or fancying him to be such an one as themselves; or they dispute his sovereignty, deny his omniscience, arraign his justice and faithfulness, and despise the riches of his grace and goodness; they are enemies to his purposes, providences, and word; cannot bear that he should determine any thing concerning them or others; their eye is evil to him because he is good to others; they reply against him, they run upon him, and charge his decrees with unrighteousness and cruelty; murmur at and quarrel with the dispensations of his providence, as unequal and unjust; cast away the law of the Lord, will not be subject to it, and contemn the revelation of his will. They are enemies to Christ in one shape or another; either to his person, denying his proper deity, or real humanity; or to his offices, not hearkening to him as a prophet, trampling on his blood and sacrifice as a priest, and unwilling to have him to rule over them as a King; or to the way of salvation by him, of pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and acceptance with God through his person; or to his doctrines and ordinances, which are unsuitable to their vicious tastes, carnal affections, and appetites: they are enemies to the spirit of Christ, by either denying his deity and personality, or by ridiculing the operations of his grace; or treating with contempt, and as foolish, every thing of his, the Bible and all the truths contained in it, dictated by him. They are enemies to the people of God, exceeding mad against them, hate them and persecute them, reckon them the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, living in malice to them, and hateful and hating one another: and this enmity to every thing divine and good is seated in *the mind*; the mind is not the object of this enmity, as some read the words, *to the mind*: for the mind of a carnal man is enmity itself against God; but it is the subject of it, where it has its chief place, and from whence it proceeds, and shews itself in evil actions; and though the word *your* is not in the original text, it is rightly supplied; for the meaning is not that they were enemies of *his mind*; of the mind of the Lord, of his counsels and will, as some read and explain the words, though there is a truth in this, but in their own minds: so that not the body but the soul is the seat of this enmity; and not the inferior faculties of the soul only, the sensitive appetite and passions, but the understanding, the judgment and will, the more noble and rational powers of

the soul; from hence spring all the malice and enmity expressed in word and actions: where then is man's free will to that which is good? and hence it is that the mind stands in need of being renewed, enlightened, cleansed and sanctified, and renovation begins here, which is the effect of almighty power; for nothing else can remove the rooted enmity in the heart of men; and which, as deep and as secret as it is, sooner or later, in one way or another, shews itself *by wicked works*; and that frequently, as by loving what God hates, and hating what he loves; by omitting what he commands, and committing what he forbids; by maintaining friendship with the world, and by harbouring his professed enemies, and persecuting his dear friends; and by their wicked words, and evil lives and conversations; and by the various works of the flesh, which are manifest, some being more directly against God, others by which they wrong themselves, and others by which they injure their neighbours: *yet now hath he reconciled*; which may be understood either of the Father's reconciling them to himself by his Son; and so the words are a continuation of the account of the father's grace, as to all the elect in general, so to the Colossians in particular, notwithstanding the black characters in which they stand described in their natural estate: or else of Christ's reconciling them to his father, by the sacrifice of himself, which he voluntarily offered for them, though this was their case, and of enemies made them friends: and may be meant either of the impetration of reconciliation for them by his sufferings and death; or of the virtue and efficacy of it in the application of it; in the former sense the *now* refers to the coming of Christ into the world, and the time of his death, and the offering up of his body once for all, when peace and reconciliation were completely made at once for all God's elect; in the latter sense it refers to the time of the conversion of these Colossians, when Christ by his spirit, in consequence of reconciliation made in the body of his flesh, through death reconciled them to God; to his mind and will, to the way of salvation by himself, to the saints the excellent in the earth, to the Gospel and the ordinances of it, and to all his ways and worship.

Ver. 22. *In the body of his flesh through death, &c.*] Or *through his death*, as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and all the Oriental versions, read. These words express the means by which that reconciliation was made, which in the virtue and efficacy of it was applied particularly to these Colossians at their conversion, whereby their minds were actually reconciled to God, as *in or by the body of his flesh*: that is, by the offering up of his body on the accursed tree, in which he bore the sins of his people, and made reconciliation for them: and it is so called either to distinguish it from his mystical and spiritual body the church, of which he is the head before spoken of; or from his glorious and immortal body, as now raised and exalted at God's right hand; and to denote the truth of his human body, that it was a real fleshly body, consisting of flesh and blood as ours does, and the same with ours, and not an aerial, celestial body, or a mere phantom; and also to signify the infirmity and mortality of it, being, excepting sin, in all points like to ours, and subject to death; and that it was in that body his father prepared

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for him, and he assumed; and as he was clothed with it in the days of his flesh, or mortal state, that he made reconciliation for the sins of his people, and that *through death* in it; even the death of the cross, by which he bore the penalty of the law, the curse of it, made satisfaction to justice, obtained life, abolished death, and destroyed him that had the power of it, and fixed a sure and lasting peace for all his saints; his end in which was, *to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight*. This presentation of the saints by Christ is either in his own sight, *before himself*, as the Arabic version reads it; and is here in this present state, they being considered by him both as sanctified and as justified; he taking delight in the graces of his spirit, and the exercise of them on himself, though imperfect, and in them as clothed with his spotless righteousness, in which they are perfectly comely, all fair, and without spot: or in the latter-day glory, the New Jerusalem church-state; when the church will be as a bride prepared for her husband, will be brought into his presence in raiment of needle-work, in fine linen clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, and be presented to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: or in the ultimate glory, when all the saints shall be for ever with him, continually before him, and in his sight; which is what his heart was set upon from everlasting, which he had in view in his sufferings and death, and still has in his prayers and preparations: or else this presentation is what has been or will be made before his father, and in his sight; and which was partly done, when he gathered together all the elect in himself, and represented them on the cross, in the body of his flesh; and partly is now doing in heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for them, bears their names on his breast-plate, presents their persons and their cases; and especially will be done at the last day, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the father, and say, lo, I and the children thou hast given me: and who will be presented *holy* by him; he being their sanctification, and they having all their sins expiated by his sacrifice, and their persons washed and cleansed in his blood, and their hearts sanctified by his spirit; which sanctification, though it is imperfect in this life, yet will be completed by the author of it at death; for without perfect holiness no man shall see God, or be presented in his sight: and this is in consequence of the death of Christ and reconciliation by it, and a fruit of electing grace, by which persons are chosen in Christ, that they should be holy and without blame; and as here, *unblamable and unreprouvable*: as they are, not now in themselves, but in Christ, as arrayed with his robe of righteousness and garments of salvation, being all-glorious within, and their clothing of wrought gold, in which they will be introduced and presented to himself, and to his father, faultless, with exceeding joy, and stand so before the throne, and that to all eternity.

Ver. 23. *If ye continue in the faith, &c.*] In the doctrine of faith which they had received and embraced; and in the grace of faith, and the exercise of it, which was implanted in them; and in the profession of faith which they had made: not that the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood, sufferings, and death, and re-

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conciliation of their persons to God thereby, depended upon their faith, and abiding in it; but that faith and continuance in it were necessary means of their presentation in unblemished holiness and righteousness; for if they had not faith, or did not abide in it, or if the good work of grace was not wrought upon their souls, and that performed until the day of Christ, they could not be presented holy and blameless: this shews the necessity of the saints' final perseverance in faith and holiness, and is mentioned with this view, to put them upon a concern about it, and to make use of all means, under divine grace, to enjoy it; and nothing could more strongly incline and move unto it, than the blessed effect of Christ's death, reconciliation, and the end of it, to present the reconciled ones blameless; in order to which 'tis necessary they should hold on and out to the end: hence the Ethiopic version reads the words, not as a condition, but as an exhortation enforced by what goes before; *therefore be ye established in the faith*: it follows, *grounded and settled*; not on the sandy foundation of man's own righteousness, and peace made by his own performances; but upon the foundation and rock, Christ, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; and so shall never finally and totally fall away, being rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith of him, in the doctrines of faith, respecting peace by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and life by his death; and so continue steadfast and immovable, always abounding in his work: *and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel*; the hope of eternal life and happiness, which is set before us in the Gospel; which that gives a good and solid ground and foundation of, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is the instrumental means, in the hand of the spirit, of begetting to it, and of encouraging and increasing it: the law gives no hopes of eternal life to a poor sinner; it works wrath, and ministers death; there is nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment by it; but the Gospel encourages to hope in the Lord, from the consideration of rich mercy and plenteous redemption in him; and this hope of the Gospel is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and not to be let go; this confidence and rejoicing of the hope is to be kept firm unto the end: *which ye have heard*; that is, which Gospel they had heard from Epaphras their faithful minister, and that not only externally, but internally; they had heard it and believed it; and it had brought forth fruit in them; for it came to them not in word only, but in power; which is said in commendation of it, and to engage them to continue in it, and abide by it; as is also what follows: *and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven*; and therefore since it was the same which was everywhere preached, they might depend upon the truth of it, should have the greater value for it, and by no means relinquish it. This must be understood not of every individual creature, even human and rational, that was then, or had been in the world; but that it had been, and was preached far and near, in all places all over the world, to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; who are sometimes styled *every creature, the creature, the whole creation, all men, &c.* see Mark xvi. 15. Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22. Titus ii. 11. and of this, the first preaching of the Gospel by Peter after our Lord's re-

surrection, was an emblem and pledge, Acts ii. 5. and some time after that, the sound of all the apostles went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: *whereof I Paul am made a minister*; by Jesus Christ, who appeared unto him, and called, qualified, and sent him forth as such; and this is mentioned to encourage the Colossians to abide by the truths of the Gospel, since what they had heard and received were what were everywhere preached by the faithful ministers of the word; and particularly by the apostle, who was ordained to be a teacher and preacher of it to the Gentiles. The Alexandrian copy reads, *a preacher and an apostle, and a minister*; see 1 Tim. ii. 7.

Ver. 24. *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, &c.*] The apostle, as soon as he had made mention of his being a minister of the Gospel, thinks and speaks of his *sufferings*; for those are what always more or less attend persons in such an office; they are appointed to them by God; Christ has foretold them of them; they are necessary for them; they must expect them, and patiently endure them: the apostle was under them *now* at this present time, for he wrote this epistle in his bonds when a prisoner at Rome, not for any immorality, any crime he had committed, but for Christ's sake, for his Gospel's sake, for the sake of the churches of Christ to whom he preached, for the confirmation of them, and so of these Colossians; and therefore he says, *for you*; and which he mentions to animate them to abide by the Gospel, for which he was suffering, that it might continue with them and others: nor was he distressed and discouraged at his afflictions, he *rejoiced* in them, because he had the presence of God in them, the spirit of God and of glory rested on him, and God was glorified by them; he esteemed it an honour done him that grace was given, and he counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ; and as well knowing that he should live and reign with him, since he suffered with him and for him: and what greatly caused and increased his joy was what follows, *and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh*; by which are meant not the afflictions or sufferings of Christ in his own person; for these were all over, he was now entered into his glory, was exalted at the father's right hand, and was crowned with glory and honour: there was nothing left behind of his sufferings, to be undergone by any of his people; he had drank of the cup and all the dregs of it; he had sustained the whole of his father's wrath, and all the curses of the law, being abated nothing, but was made perfect through sufferings; having perfectly suffered all, he suffered once and once for all, he will suffer no more; nor is there any need of his suffering more or again, for he has finished sin, wrought righteousness, made peace, and obtained eternal redemption; nor had he any partner in his sufferings, nor did he need any, or left any part of his sufferings to be filled up by others; for he endured all and the whole, which the law and justice of God could require in his own body, in the body of his flesh through death; of these sufferings the apostle does not speak, but of such which he filled up in *his own flesh*; and design the afflictions of Christ in his members, which are called *his*, because of that near union there is between Christ and them; so that what befalls them may be predi-

cated of him; when any one of them suffers, he suffers with him, as the sufferings of a part of the body are ascribed to the whole person; and because of that sympathy there is between them, he has a fellow-feeling with his people in all their infirmities; in all their afflictions he is afflicted: if Saul persecutes his saints, he persecutes him; whatever injury is done to them, he takes it as done to himself, who are to him as the apple of his eye. Moreover, hereby they are conformed unto him, and made like him; as he was, so are they in this world; there is a good deal of likeness between the afflictions of Christ and his people, though in some things there is a great disparity; add to this, that the afflictions of the saints are endured for Christ's sake, for the sake of his Gospel, and the profession of his name, and therefore called his, and the more cheerfully bore by them: now of these there were some remains to be filled up by the apostle; not that all the afflictions of the whole body of Christ were to be, or have been filled up by him; there was a great deal left behind by him to be filled up by others, and which has been filling up ever since, and still is, and yet all is not fulfilled to this day, nor will be till the end of time; but he speaks only of that part and measure of them, which was to be filled up in his flesh; he had his measure of afflictions allotted to him, great part of which he had endured already, but some remained, the measure was not yet full, though pretty near being completed, which gave him pleasure; it was just filling up, and the time of his departure was at hand, when there would be no more sorrow; for it was only while he was in the flesh he was filling up this measure, and would be quickly up; and what added to his joy was, that as these were the afflictions of Christ, and the measure of them was appointed by his heavenly Father, to be filled up by him in this mortal state, so they were *for his body's sake, which is the church*; not in the room and stead of the church, and people of Christ, as were the sufferings of Christ personal; or to exempt them from sufferings who all have their share in this life; nor for their sins to make reconciliation for them, and procure the remission of them; nor to redeem them, or obtain salvation for them, all which is completed by Christ; but for their good and profit, that the Gospel might continue and be blessed to the conversion of many, for the increase of the church and additions to it, and for the furtherance of the Gospel, and that such who professed it might be established and confirmed in it, by the sufferings of the apostle for it: and such good effects did follow upon his sufferings and afflictions; they were for the consolation of many souls, the strengthening of weak believers, and causing even preachers of the Gospel to wax more confident, and more boldly preach the Gospel without fear of man.

Ver. 25. *Whereof I am made a minister, &c.*] Not of Christ, or of the Gospel as before, though both were true; but of the churches for whose sake he endured afflictions; and which carries in it a reason of his suffering for them: he was not a saviour of the body, nor a redeemer of the church, nor Lord of it; but a minister, a servant of it, that ministered to it in holy things, in the word and ordinances; not a deacon, as the word sometimes signifies, nor an ordinary minister, or a pastor of a particular church; but a mi-

nister of the church in general, being an apostle sent to preach the Gospel everywhere: he was *made* a minister of it, not by men, or any thing he received from men; nor by himself, not by usurpation, he did not thrust himself into this office, or take it upon him of himself; but was put into it by Christ, who counted him faithful, he appeared to him, and made him a minister, qualified him for this office, called him to it, and sent him to perform it: and which he executed *according to the dispensation of God*; or divine economy, which denotes such an authority and administration as is used in a family. The church is God's family, it is called the house and household of God, and the household of faith, part of which is in heaven and part on earth; God is the householder or master of the family; Christ is the son over his own house; ministers are stewards in it, and their work is to give to every one their portion of meat in due season; their authority from God to do so, and the exercise of it, are the economy or dispensation of the Gospel committed to them: this is of God and not man, for none but God can give them a power to dispense it, and which is purely of his grace, called therefore the dispensation of the grace of God, Ephes. iii. 2. and here said to be given, *which is given to me for you*; not according to any merits of his, who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an injurious person to Christ and his Gospel; but according to the pure grace of God, and that not for himself, but for the good of others, for the Gentiles especially, and so for the Colossians: *to fulfil the word of God*; either the promises and prophecies contained in the word of God, respecting the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and their conversion by it; which had in a great measure their accomplishment through the ministry of the apostle: or to fill all places with the word of God and Gospel of Christ, as the apostle did from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum, diffusing the savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place; and sinners being converted, churches were planted and daily filled with such as should be saved; or to preach fully and faithfully the Gospel, keeping back nothing that was profitable, but declaring the whole counsel of God, continuing faithful to it to the end, as he did: to fill up or fulfil words is an Hebraism, and signifies to confirm them, or act according to them; see 1 Kings i. 14. and the Septuagint there.

Ver. 26. *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, &c.*] This is said, as explanatory of the word of God; signifying that he did not mean the Scriptures in general, which are the word of God, and every part of them; some part of which is historical, another prophetic, another practical, and another doctrinal; nor the law, which also is the word of God, but the Gospel, called *the mystery*, as it often is; because it contains things, which, though revealed, are mysteries to a natural man; and even to enlightened persons, who have the clearest view of them, the modus of them is not to be accounted for; such as the doctrines of the Trinity, of the union of the two natures in Christ, the incarnation of the son of God, the union and communion of the church with Christ, the resurrection of the dead, &c. And though perhaps great and special regard may be here had to

the calling of the Gentiles, which, though revealed in the prophecies of the Old Testament, was in a great measure hid in them, and not so clearly known in ages and generations past as now, yet the whole may be applied to the Gospel mystery in general; which was first hid in the heart of God, in his thoughts and purposes, in his counsel and covenant, and in his son, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and then in the ceremonies and shadows of the law, which but few had any insight into, and discerning of; and, during that dispensation, was wholly hid from the Gentiles; and but in part known by the Jews, and but by a few, and comparatively by them very darkly; and not so clearly by the angels themselves, who pry into these mysteries, and now, under the Gospel dispensation, learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God; and indeed it was hidden from all men, Jews and Gentiles, in a state of nature, and even from the wise and prudent of this world: *but now is made manifest to his saints*; now under the Gospel dispensation, since the coming of Christ; there is an external revelation of the Gospel by him, more clearly, by whom grace and truth came, called the revelation of Christ; and an internal revelation of it by his spirit, who is the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; which is made to saints, the holy apostles and prophets, who are the saints to whom this faith, and the mystery of it, were first delivered with so much power and evidence; and to all the elect of God, whom he has separated for himself in eternal election; whom Christ has sanctified by his blood, and to whom he is made sanctification; and who are called with an holy calling, have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them by the spirit of God, and therefore called *his saints*; these have only a spiritual discerning of the Gospel, for the natural man neither knows nor receives it.

Ver. 27. *To whom God would make known, &c.*] The spring and cause of the manifestation of the Gospel to the saints, and chosen of God, is not their works, for God does not call them with an holy calling according to them, but according to his own grace; nor any preparations and dispositions in them before such manifestation, towards the Gospel and the truths of it, for there are none such naturally in men, but all the reverse; nor a foresight of their better improvement of it, when made known, for this is not the method of divine grace, witness the instances of Sodom and Gomorrhah, Tyre and Sidon; nor any holiness in them, or because they were sanctified, for they became so by the power of divine grace, through the Gospel revelation; but it is the pure sovereign good will and pleasure of God; see Eph. i. 9. Matt. xi. 25, 26. as appears from what they were before the Gospel came unto them, what is made known to them in it and by it; and from this, that they and not others, equally as deserving, are favoured with it: *what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles*. The apostle, besides calling the Gospel a *mystery*, as before, ascribes *glory* to it; 'tis a glorious mystery, there's a glory in all the mysteries of it; 'tis a glorious Gospel, as it is often called, in its author, subject, matter, use, and efficacy: and also *riches of glory*, or glorious riches; containing rich truths, an immense treasure of them, com-

parable to gold, silver, and precious stones; rich blessings of justification, pardon, reconciliation, adoption, and eternal life; and rich promises, relating both to this life, and that which is to come; all which were opened and made known, not to the Jews only, but *among the Gentiles* also; who before were aliens, enemies, exceeding wicked, poor, blind, and miserable, but now, through the Gospel, were become rich and glorious, wise, knowing, and happy: *which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*; this is to be connected with all that goes before: Christ is the riches of the Gospel; the riches of the divine perfections, which the Gospel more clearly displays than the works of creation or providence, are all in Christ, the fulness of them dwells in him; and this is the grace the Gospel reveals, that he, who was rich with all these, became poor to make us rich; the rich promises of the Gospel were all made to Christ, and are all *yea and Amen* in him; the rich blessings of it are all in his hands, righteousness, peace, and pardon, the riches both of grace and glory; the rich treasures of its divine truths are hid in him; and he is the substance of every one of them: Christ is also the glory of the Gospel, inasmuch as he is the author, preacher, and subject of it; it is full of the glory of his person, both as the only-begotten of the father, and as the only Mediator between God and man; it is the glass through which this is seen: moreover, the glory of God in him is expressed hereby; the glory of his wisdom and power, of his truth and faithfulness, of his justice and holiness, of his love, grace, and mercy, and every other perfection, is eminently held forth in the Gospel; as this is great in the salvation and redemption of his people by Christ, which the Gospel brings the good news of; add to this, that that glory which the saints shall have with Christ, and will lie in the enjoyment of him to all eternity, is brought to light in the Gospel: Christ is also the mystery of the Gospel; he is one of the persons in the mystery of the Trinity; the mystery of his divine sonship, of his divine person, being God and yet man, man and yet God, and both in one person, and of his incarnation and redemption, makes a considerable part of the Gospel: and Christ, who is the sum and substance of it, is *in* his people; not only as the omnipresent God, as the author of the light of nature, as the Creator of all things, in whom all live, move, and have their beings, but in a way of special grace; and the phrase is expressive of a revelation of him in them, of their possession of him, of his inhabitation in them by his spirit and grace, particularly by faith, and of their communion with him, in consequence of their union to him; and being so, he is the ground and foundation of their hopes of glory. There is a glory which the saints are hoping for, which the glories of this world are but a faint resemblance of; which is unseen at present, and which the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared unto; 'tis what is eternal, and which Christ has entered into, and took possession of; and what will greatly consist in beholding his glory, and in everlasting communion with him; this through grace saints have a good hope of, and are waiting for, and even rejoice at times in the hope of it; of which hope Christ is the foundation; for not only the promise of it is with him, but the glory itself is in

his hands; the gift of it is with him, and through him; he has made way by his sufferings and death for the enjoyment of it, and is now preparing it for them, by his presence and intercession; his grace makes them meet for it, his righteousness gives them a title to it, and his spirit is the earnest of it, and the substance of it will be the fruition of himself.

Ver. 28. *Whom we preach, &c.*] Under the above considerations; as the riches, the glory, and the mystery of the Gospel; as the hope set before lost sinners to lay hold upon; as the only Saviour and Redeemer, by whose righteousness believers are justified, through whose blood their sins are pardoned, by whose sacrifice and satisfaction atonement is made, and in whose person alone is acceptance with God: Christ and him crucified, and salvation by him, were the subjects of the ministry of the apostles; on this they dwelt, and it was this which was blessed for the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, the planting of churches, and the setting up and establishing the kingdom and interest of Christ: *warning every man*; of his lost state and condition by nature; of the wrath to come, and the danger he is in of it; of the terrors of the Lord, and of an awful judgment; shewing sinners that they are unrighteous and unholy, that their nature is corrupt and impure, their best righteousness imperfect, and cannot justify them before God; that they stand guilty before him, and that destruction and misery are in all their ways; and therefore advise them to flee from the wrath to come, to the hope set before them in the Gospel: *teaching every man in all wisdom*; not natural, but spiritual and evangelical; the whole Gospel of Christ, the counsel of God, the wisdom of God in a mystery, and all the branches of it; teaching them to believe in Christ for salvation, to lay hold on his righteousness for justification, to deal with his blood for pardon, and with his sacrifice for the atonement of their sins; and to observe all things commanded by Christ, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly: by these two words, *warning and teaching*, the several parts of the Gospel ministry are expressed; and which extend to all sorts of men, rich and poor,

bond and free, greater and lesser sinners, Gentiles as well as Jews; and who are chiefly designed here, and elsewhere, by every man and every creature: *that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*; not in themselves, in which sense no man is perfect in this life; but in the grace, holiness, and righteousness of Christ, in whom all the saints are complete: or it may regard that ripeness of understanding, and perfection of knowledge, which, when arrived unto, saints become perfect men in Christ; and is the end of the Gospel ministry, and to which men are brought by it; see Eph. iv. 13. and to be understood of the presentation of the saints, not by Christ to himself, and to his father, but by the ministers of the Gospel, as their glory and crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ.

Ver. 29. *Wherunto I also labour, &c.*] In the word and doctrine, by preaching Christ, warning sinners of their danger, teaching them the way of salvation, and their duty; with this view, that, in the great day of account, he might bring a large number of them, and set them before Christ as the seals of his ministry, as instances of the grace of Christ, and as perfect in him: *striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily*; meaning either in his prayers, earnestly entreating of God that he would succeed his labours, and bless them to the conversion of many; which sense is favoured by the Syriac version, which renders it, *וְיִתְבַּשֵּׁף, and make supplication*; that is, with that effectual fervent prayer, which was powerfully wrought in him: or in his ministry, combating with many enemies, fighting the good fight of faith; not in his own strength, but through the power of Christ; which enabled him to preach the Gospel far and near, in season and out of season; which supported his outward man, and strengthened his inward man for that service, and made it effectual to the good of the souls of many: some refer this to the signs, wonders, and miracles, which Christ wrought by him, for the confirmation of the Gospel; but the other sense, which takes in both the power by which he was assisted in preaching, both in body and soul, and that which went along with his ministry to make it useful to others, is to be preferred.

C H A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle expresses his great concern for the Colossians, and others he had never seen; exhorts them to constancy in the faith of Christ; warns them of false teachers, and their tenets; takes notice of various blessings and privileges they had by Christ, and cautions against several superstitions and corruptions, which were obtaining among the churches of Christ: in ver. 1. the apostle declares the conflict he had for the persons he writes to, and for others, though they had never seen him, which he was desirous they might be acquainted with; partly for the comfort of their hearts, their cement in love, and the improvement of their knowledge of divine things, the treasures of which are in Christ, ver. 2, 3. and partly that they might not be deceived by the enticing words of the false teachers, ver. 4. and should his absence and

distance from them be objected to his professed concern and affection for them, he answers, that notwithstanding that, he was present with them in spirit, and had a discerning of their faith and order, and the steadfastness thereof, with pleasure, ver. 5. wherefore he exhorts them to perseverance in the faith of Christ, and to an abounding in it, ver. 6, 7. and to take heed of being hurt by the vain philosophy and traditions of the Jews, but to keep close to Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, seeing all fulness is in him, and they were full in him, who is over all, and superior to all, and therefore had no need to have recourse unto, and hearken to any other, ver. 9, 10. nor did they need any Jewish ordinances, particularly circumcision, since they were partakers of another and better circumcision in Christ; and besides, were buried in baptism with

him; and even though they had been dead in sin, and in their fleshly uncircumcision, yet they were alive, quickened with Christ, and had the forgiveness of all their sins for his sake; and had freed them from the ceremonial law, and had rid them of all their former lords and masters, and had brought them into the liberty of the Gospel, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. wherefore he concludes, by way of exhortation and advice, first with respect to Jewish ceremonies, not to suffer them to be imposed upon them, or to regard the censures of men for the non-observance of them, since these were but shadows, of which Christ is the substance, ver. 16, 17. and next with respect to the worship of angels, under a notion of humility, some were for introducing; who are described as bold intruders, vain, proud, and conceited persons, and as not holding the head Christ, to whom the body the church is joined, and by whom it is nourished and increased, ver. 18, 19. and seeing now they that are Christ's are dead with him to the ceremonial law, and that dead to them, the apostle argues that they should not be subject to the ordinances, commands, and doctrines of men; some of which he instances in, as if they were still under the rudiments of the world; and the rather, since these things had no true wisdom in them, only a shew of it, and were no other than will-worship and superstition, and lay in a negligence of the body, and were dishonourable and unsatisfying, ver. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, &c.*] This is occasioned by what he had said in the latter part of the former chapter, that he laboured and strove according to the energy of divine power in him, to present every man perfect in Christ; and lest these Colossians should think that these labours and strivings of his were only for all and every of those persons among whom he was, and to whom he personally preached, he would have them know, observe, and assure themselves, that the great conflict, strife, and agony, in which he was engaged, was for them also; by which he means, his fervent prayers and wrestlings with God, the conflicts he had in his own mind, with his own spirit, about the good of the churches of Christ, the care of which were upon him, and even of those to whom he was by face unknown, sometimes hoping, sometimes fearing, sometimes rejoicing, at other times weeping, at what he heard concerning them; also his combats with the false apostles, striving and earnestly contending for the faith of the Gospel, giving no place to them, no, not for an hour, defending truth, refuting error, and fighting the good fight of faith, by preaching, writing, and disputing; likewise the various persecutions, great afflictions, and hardships he met with from men, for the sake of the Gospel; add to all this, the frequent battles he had with the enemy of souls, his wrestlings against principalities and powers, the many temptations of Satan with which he was attacked, to draw him off from the service of Christ, to weaken his hands, and hinder his success in it; all which he endured and went through with a greatness of mind, and that for the good of the churches of Christ, and the glory of his name, which were the great things he had in view

and among others, for the good of these Colossians, and for them at Laodicea; the saints of that place, the church of Christ which was there; and is the rather mentioned, because near to Colosse: it was a famous city by the river Lycus, first called Diospolis, and then Rhoas², and afterwards Laodicea; it was the metropolis of Phrygia, in which Colosse stood: hence this epistle is ordered to be read to them also, they being infested with false teachers, and in the same situation and circumstances as the Colossians were; and though the apostle was unknown to both of them, having never been at either place, yet was heartily concerned for each of their welfare, and he strove for them as he did for others; one of Stephens's copies adds, *and them in Hierapolis*; see ch. iv. 13. *And for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh*; meaning the churches in Christ, and believers in him; such as had never heard him preach, nor had any personal knowledge of him, and conversation with him, which tend to knit the hearts of Christians more firmly together; yet his heart was towards them, he laboured for them, by praying for them, writing to them, suffering all things for their sakes, for the confirmation of them, and of the Gospel of Christ. Christian love and care, and the benefit of the labours and sufferings of Gospel ministers, extend and reach to persons that never saw them.

Ver. 2. *That their hearts might be comforted, &c.*] Here follow the reasons why the apostle had so great a conflict, on account of the above persons, and why he was so desirous they should know it; one is, the consolation of their hearts. The hearts of God's people often need comfort, by reason of in-dwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive providences; and by reason of false teachers, who greatly trouble them, unsettle their minds, weaken their faith, and fill them with doubts and perplexities, and which was the case with these churches: now the business of Gospel ministers is to comfort such; this is the commission they are sent with; the doctrines of the Gospel are calculated for this very purpose, such as full redemption, free justification, complete pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation; and the bent of their ministry is to comfort distressed minds, upon what account soever; and it must be a comfort to these churches, when they found that they were regarded by so great an apostle; and it might tend to confirm them in the doctrine they had received at first, and deliver them from the scruples the false apostles had injected into their minds, and so administer comfort to them, when they perceived that the apostle approved of the Gospel they had heard and embraced, and rejected the notions of the false teachers: *being knit together in love*: as the members of an human body are, by joints and bands; as love is the bond of union between God and his people, Christ and his members, so between saints and saints; it is the cement that joins and keeps them together, and which edifies and builds them up, and whereby they increase with the increase of God; it makes them to be of one heart and one soul; it renders their communion with one another comfortable and delightful, and strengthens

them against the common enemy, who is for dividing, and so destroying; and is what is the joy of Gospel ministers, and what they labour at and strive for, and which is another reason of the apostle's conflict: *and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding; that is, spiritual knowledge and understanding, or the understanding of spiritual things; for the understanding of things natural and civil is not designed; nor a mere notional knowledge of spiritual things, which persons may have, and yet not charity, or love, with which this is here joined; and such an one also, which is sure and certain: for as there is such a thing as the assurance of faith, and the assurance of hope, so likewise of understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it; concerning which there ought to be no doubt, being to be received upon the credit of a divine testimony: moreover, such a knowledge and understanding of divine things is intended, as is large and abundant, signified by all riches; for though it is not complete and perfect in this life, yet it takes a vast compass, and reaches to all the deep things of God; to whatever relates to the person and grace of Christ; to all the things of the spirit of God; to all the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace; to the riches both of grace and glory, to the things of time and eternity, and which is more clearly explained by the following clause: to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the father, and of Christ; that is, to a greater and more perfect knowledge, approbation, and confession of the Gospel, which he had in the preceding chapter called the mystery; see ver. 26, 27. and here the mystery of God, which he is both the author and subject of: it is by him as the efficient cause, ordained by him, and hid in him before the world was; and it is of him, as the subject-matter of it; not as the God of nature and providence, which the works of both declare; but as the God of all grace, as God in Christ, which is the peculiar discovery of the Gospel: and of him as the father of Christ, which is not discoverable by the light of nature, nor known by natural reason, but is a point of divine revelation; and of him as the father of his people by adoption; and of all his grace, in election to grace and glory; in predestination to sonship, and in the council and covenant of grace; in the scheme of salvation and redemption; in the mission of his son, and the gift of him as a Saviour and Redeemer. The copulative *and* before *the father*, is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which read *the mystery of God the father*; and with it it may be rendered, as it sometimes is, *God, even the father*: though the word *God* may be considered essentially, and as after distinguished into two of the persons of the Godhead; *the Father* the first person, so called, in relation to his Son, which is no small part of the mystery of the Gospel; and *Christ* the second person, who is equally God with the father; and the Spirit, who, though not mentioned, is not excluded from this adorable mystery: and which is the mystery of *Christ*, he being both the efficient cause and the subject-matter of it; it treats of his deity and personality; of his offices, as Mediator, prophet, priest, and King; of his incarnation and redemption; of his grace,*

righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction; of justification by him, pardon through him, and acceptance in him.

Ver. 3. *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*] This may be understood either of the mystery of the Gospel, which contains the rich mines and hidden treasures of all divine truths; so called, because of the richness and intrinsic value and excellency of them; and because of their variety and abundance, being the unsearchable riches of Christ: or of Christ himself; and not so much of his personal wisdom, either as God, being the all-wise God, the wisdom of God, an omniscient Being, that knows all persons and things whatever, within the whole circle of wisdom and knowledge; or as man, whose wisdom and knowledge, though created, was very large and abundant; or as Mediator, on whom the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of knowledge, rests; but of that fulness of truth as well as grace, which dwells in him as in its subject and fountain; by whom it comes, and from whom it is derived unto us; and our highest wisdom and knowledge lies in knowing him, whom to know is life eternal; and the excellency of whose knowledge surpasses every thing else; it is the greatest riches, and most valuable treasure; nor is there any thing worth knowing but what is in Christ, all is laid up in him: and being said to be *hid* in him, shews the excellency of the wisdom and knowledge that is in him only valuable things being hid, or compared to hid treasure; that this can't be had without knowing him; that it is imperfect in the present state, and is not yet fully and clearly revealed; and therefore should be inquired after, and searched for, and Christ should be applied unto for it: נְנוּי הַכִּמְתָּא; *treasures of wisdom*, is a phrase used by the Targumist ⁹.

Ver. 4. *And this I say, &c.*] That he had such a conflict for them, and had told them of his care and fear on their account, and had signified his great desire that they might arrive to a more large and certain knowledge of the mysteries of grace, and had asserted that all solid spiritual wisdom and knowledge were in Christ; all which he said, to shew his affection for them; to observe unto them, that there was no need to seek for wisdom and knowledge elsewhere, since there was such a fulness of it in Christ, and the Gospel; and to put them upon their guard against false teachers: *lest any man should beguile you with enticing words*; by which are meant, not apt and pertinent words, such as are suited to the minds of men, and proper to convey right ideas of divine truth, poignant expressions, sound speech, and strong reasonings; for such the apostle himself used, and yet not enticing words of men's wisdom; and which design mere words, great swelling words of vanity, which like bubbles look big, and make a great noise, but contain nothing but wind and emptiness; fair speeches, specious pretences, false colourings, fallacious reasonings, a shew of probability, and appearance of science, falsely so called; whereby deceitful workers, such as the followers of Simon Magus and the Gnostics, used, whom the apostle had in view; beguiled unstable souls, and deceived the hearts of the simple: wherefore the apostle said the above things, shewing that all true wisdom

⁹ Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. xl. 4.

was in Christ, and all spiritual knowledge was in the pure and unmixed Gospel; which was not to be parted with for other things, which through art and management, and the cunning craftiness of men, might at first sight carry in them a shew of probability, and appearance of truth. The gold, the silver, and precious stones of divine truths, which have been proved by the standard, are not to be given up for such as only look like them, being wrought up through the fallacy of men; who by a set of unmeaning words, paralogisms, and false reasonings, lie in wait to deceive.

Ver. 5. *For though I be absent in the flesh, &c.]* Or *body*, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and as it is expressed in 1 Cor. v. 3. here the apostle anticipates an objection which might be made, how he could have such a conflict and concern for them, and express so much affection for them, and know so much of their affairs, in what condition and situation they were, and how liable to be deceived by false teachers, when he was absent from them, and had never been among them. That he had never been corporeally present with them, nor was he then, he owns; but this did not hinder but that he might be in another sense present with them, and so have cognizance of them and their state, and be affected towards them, and concerned for them: *yet am I with you in the spirit*; as he was with the Corinthians in the place above cited, judging the incestuous person, determining concerning his case, and delivering him up to Satan, and so he was with these Colossians; for as he was a member of the same body with them, he was actuated by the same spirit; and by virtue of their union to each other in their common head, his spirit went out towards them, his heart was knit unto them; he had the same affection for them, and care of them, though he had never seen them with his bodily eyes, as he had for those whom he had seen: moreover, this may regard that extraordinary discerning and presence of his spirit which he had; and which was of the same kind with that of Elisha, when his servant Gehazi went after Naaman the Syrian, and took a present of him, to whom on his return he said, upon his denying that he had been anywhere, *went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?* 2 Kings v. 26. Elisha's spirit went, and was present with him, and saw and knew all that passed, being under the impulse and inspiration of the spirit of God, who made all known unto him: so the spirit of the Apostle Paul was at the church at Colosse, and saw and discerned their whole estate; this being made known by the spirit of God, under whose inspiration he wrote this letter, suitable to their case: *joying and beholding your order*: or as the Syriac version renders it, *I rejoice that I can see your order*: that is, with pleasure observe, consider it, and contemplate on it; and that partly from the relation of Epaphras, and chiefly from the intimations of the spirit of God in an extraordinary way: by their *order* is meant, either their orderly walk and conversation, which being as becomes the Gospel of Christ, was very pleasing and delightful to the apostle; or rather the order of their church-discipline, they having regular officers, pastors, and deacons, ordained among them; who rightly performed their offices, and had respect and subjection

yielded to them; the ordinances of the Gospel were duly administered, and constantly attended on; the members of the church were watched over, admonitions given, and censures laid where they were necessary, and every thing was done decently and in order; which was a beautiful sight, and gave the apostle an uncommon pleasure. The word used signifies a military order, such as is observed in armies, in battle array; suggesting, that these Christians were good soldiers of Christ, were enlisted under his banners, and kept in due order, in rank and file; stood fast in one spirit, contended and strove together for the faith of the Gospel, fought the good fight of faith, nor could any hardship move them from their station; so that they were, in the apostle's eye, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners, Cant. vi. 4. and so may denote their attachment to the Gospel, and to one another; they were united to, and abode by each other; they served the Lord with one consent, and kept the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace, which is a pleasant thing to behold, as well as what follows: *and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ*; either in the grace of faith, and the exercise of it on Christ, in opposition to doubtings and unbelief; whereby God is honoured, and with which he is well pleased; souls are filled with peace and joy; Satan is resisted and overcome; and the hearts of others, particularly ministers of the Gospel, are comforted: or in the doctrine of faith respecting Christ, in which they stood fast; notwithstanding there was a majority against it, the wise and learned, the rich and mighty, did not receive it; and though it was opposed by false teachers, persecuted by profane men, and loaded with reproach and obloquy; and also in the profession of it, which they held without wavering: now to see a set of Christians, a church of Christ walking together in Gospel order, steady in their faith on Christ, abiding by the doctrine of faith, and maintaining an honourable profession, how beautiful and delightful is it!

Ver. 6. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, &c.]* Receiving Christ is believing in him: faith is the eye of the soul, that sees the beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ; the foot that goes to him, and the hand that takes hold on him, and the arm that receives and embraces him; so that this is not a receiving him into the head by notion, but into the heart by faith; and not in part only, but in whole: faith receives a whole Christ, his person as God and man; him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; particularly as a Saviour and Redeemer, he being under that character so exceeding suitable to the case of a sensible sinner; and it receives all blessings of grace along with him, from him, and through him; as a justifying righteousness, remission of sins, adoption of children, grace for grace, and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified; and both Christ and them, as the free-grace gifts of God; which men are altogether undeserving of, and can't possibly give any valuable consideration for: so these Colossians had received Christ gladly, joyfully, willingly, and with all readiness; and especially as *the Lord*, on which there is a peculiar emphasis in the text; they had received him and believed in him, as the one and only Lord and head of

the church; as the one and only Mediator between God and man, to the exclusion of angels, the worship of which the false teachers were introducing; they had received the doctrines of Christ, and not the laws of Moses, which judaizing preachers were desirous of joining with them; they had heard and obeyed the son, and not the servant; they had submitted to the authority of Christ as King of saints, and had been subject to his ordinances; wherefore the apostle exhorts them to continue and go on, believing in him, and holding to him the head: *so walk ye in him*; not only in imitation of him as he walked, in the exercise of grace, as love, patience, humility, and meekness, and in the discharge of duty; but by faith in him, going on in a way of believing in him, always looking to him, leaning on him, and deriving grace and strength from him: to walk in Christ, is to walk in and after the spirit of Christ, under his influence, by his direction, and through his assistance; and to walk in the doctrine of Christ, abiding by it, and increasing in the knowledge of it; and to walk in the ordinances of Christ, which with his presence and spirit, are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace: particularly here it may signify, to make use of Christ, and walk on in him, as the way, truth, and the life; as the only way of access to God, and acceptance with him; as the way of salvation, as the only true way to eternal life and happiness, in opposition to every creature, angels, or men; the worshipping of the one, or works done by the other.

Ver. 7. *Rooted and built up in him, &c.*] By these metaphors, the apostle expresses the safe and happy state of these believers; and which he makes use of as arguments, to engage them to walk on in Christ, and as pointing out the manner in which they should. Believers are sometimes compared to trees, and are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; and their root is Christ, from whence as such they spring, and by whom they are filled with the fruits of righteousness; in him they are to abide, keep close unto him, and walk in him; deriving all their life, nourishment, fruitfulness, grace, and perseverance in it, from him as their root: they are also sometimes compared to a building, to an house, a temple, an habitation for God; and Christ is the sure and only foundation on which they are laid, and where they are safe and secure; and, being fitly joined together, grow up as an holy temple to the Lord; and this being their case, they are to go on laying the whole stress of their salvation on him, building their faith and hope of eternal glory entirely upon him; and building up one another also on their most holy faith, of which he is the substance, as it follows: *and established in the faith*; that of Christ, or in the doctrine of faith which respects Christ: the apostle here expresses the same thing without a figure, which he had signified by the two foregoing metaphors, and explains what he means by them; namely, that they were well settled and grounded in their faith in Christ, and thoroughly instructed and established in the doctrines of the Gospel; and a very good thing it is to have the heart established with grace, both as a principle and a doctrine; which is God's work, and was the happy case of these persons; wherefore it became them to act as such, and not be like children tossed to and fro with every wind

of doctrine, or carried about with divers and strange doctrines, but abide by those which had been preached to them by the faithful ministers of Christ, and they had received: *as ye have been taught*; by Epaphras their minister, and others; and therefore should not listen to false teachers, and to a contrary doctrine taught by them; considering of whom they had learnt the true doctrine, what evidence it carried with it, and what use it had been of to them, in convincing, converting, comforting, instructing, and establishing them: and therefore should be *abounding therein with thanksgiving*; that is, in the faith; as in the grace, so in the doctrine of faith; for as saints are to abound in the work of the Lord, and in every good work, and in the exercise of every grace, so in the knowledge of truth; see 2 Cor. viii. 7. and to make use of all means for the increase of, and growth in Gospel grace and light, and the knowledge of a crucified Christ, which is meant by *abounding*: for all which there is great reason for thanksgiving; both for the unspeakable gift of Christ, who is received as such by faith, and in whom believers are rooted and built up; and for faith itself, which is the gift of God; and also for the Gospel, and the truths of it; and for every degree of spiritual light in it, and knowledge of it.

Ver. 8. *Beware lest any man spoil you, &c.*] Or *despoil you*; rob you of the rich treasure of the Gospel, strip you of your spiritual armour, take away from you the truths and doctrines of Christ, and divest you of your spiritual privileges and blessings; suggesting, that the false teachers were thieves and robbers, and men of prey: or drive and carry you away as spoils, as the innocent harmless sheep are drove, and carried away by wolves, and by the thief that comes to steal, to kill, and destroy; intimating, that such as these were the heretics of those times; wherefore it became them to be upon their guard, to watch, look out, and beware, lest they should be surprised by these deceitful workers, who lay in wait to deceive; were wolves in sheep's clothing, who transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ; and therefore it became them to take heed, lest any man hurt them, be he ever so wise and learned, or be thought ever so good, religious, and sincere; since men of this cast put on such masks and false appearances, on purpose to beguile. The things by which they imposed upon weak minds are as follow, and therefore to be shunned, avoided, and rejected: *through philosophy*: not right philosophy, or true wisdom, the knowledge of God, of the things of nature, of things natural, moral, and civil; which may be attained unto by the use of reason, and light of nature. The apostle does not mean to condemn all arts and sciences, as useless and hurtful, such as natural philosophy in its various branches, ethics, logic, rhetoric, &c. when kept within due bounds, and in their proper place and sphere; for with instances of these the Scriptures themselves abound; but he means that philosophy, or science, which is falsely so called, the false notions of philosophers; such as the eternity of matter, and of this world, the mortality of souls, the worshipping of demons and angels, &c. and also such principles in philosophy, which in themselves, and in the things of nature, are true, but, when applied to univine things,

to things above nature, the mere effects of divine power and grace, and of pure revelation, are false; as that out of nothing, nothing can be made, which in the things of nature is true, but not to be applied to the God of nature, who has made the world out of nothing; as also that from a privation to an habit there is no return, which is naturally true, but not to be applied to supernatural things, and supernatural agency; witness the miracles of Christ, in restoring sight to the blind, life to the dead, &c. and therefore is not to be employed against the resurrection of the dead: philosophy may be useful as an handmaid; 'tis not to be a mistress in theological things; it may subserve, but not govern; it is not to be made use of as a judge, or rule in such matters; the natural man, on these principles, neither knows nor receives the things of the spirit of God; judgment is not to be made and formed according to them; as of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; of the sonship of Christ, and his incarnation; of man's redemption by him, of reconciliation and satisfaction by his blood and sacrifice, of the pardon of sin, of a sinner's justification, of the resurrection of the dead, and such-like articles of faith: that philosophy which is right, can only be a rule of judgment in things relating to it, and not in those which are out of its sphere: in a word, the apostle here condemns the philosophy of the Jews, and of the Gnostics; the former had introduced natural philosophy into the worship and service of God, and the things appertaining to their religion; and had made the tabernacle and temple, and the most holy place, and the things belonging thereunto, emblems and hieroglyphics of natural things; as of the sun, moon, and stars, and their influences, and of the four elements, and of moral virtue, &c. as appears from the writings of Josephus¹, and Philo²; when they were types and representatives of spiritual things under the Gospel dispensation; and the latter had brought in the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, concerning abstinences, purgations, sacrifices, and ceremonies of worship, given to demons and angels: in short, the apostle's meaning is, that philosophy is not to be mixed with the pure Gospel of Christ; it has always been fatal to it; witness the school of Pantenus in Alexandria, in the early times of Christianity, by which the simplicity of the Gospel was greatly corrupted; and the race of schoolmen a few centuries ago, who introduced the philosophy of Aristotle, Averrois, and others, into all the subjects of divinity: to observe no more, such kind of philosophy is here meant, which may be truly called *vain deceit*: that is, that which is vain and empty, and has no solid foundation, even in nature and reason itself; and which being applied to divine things and religious observances, is deceitful and delusory: *after the tradition of men*; either of the Gentiles, who had their traditions in religion; or of the Jews, called the traditions of the elders, and of the fathers, which the Pharisees were fond of, by which they transgressed the commandments of God; which the apostle was brought up in, and was

zealous of formerly, but now was delivered from, and rightly condemned as idle, trifling, and pernicious: *after the rudiments of the world, or the elements of the world*: not the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water; or the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, &c. among the idolatrous Gentiles, but the ceremonial laws of the Jews; see Gal. iv. 3, 9, which were that to them in religion, as the A B C, or letters, are in grammar, the elements and rudiments of it; and though these were to them, when children, useful, but now under the Gospel dispensation are weak, beggarly, and useless, and not to be attended to: *and not after Christ*: what he has taught and prescribed, the doctrines and commandments of Christ, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are in him; and therefore all such vain and deceitful philosophy, human traditions, and worldly rudiments, are to be rejected; Christ and his Gospel, the revelation he has made, are the standard of doctrine and worship; he only is to be heard and attended to, and whatever is contrary thereunto is to be guarded against.

Ver. 9. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*] This is to be understood, not of the doctrine, or Gospel of Christ, as being a perfect revelation of the will of God; but of Christ, and particularly of his human nature, as consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul, in which the Godhead dwells in a most eminent manner: God indeed is everywhere by his powerful presence, was in the tabernacle and temple in a very singular manner, and dwells in the saints in a way of special grace; but resides in the human nature of Christ, in the highest and most exalted manner; that is to deity what the human body is to an human soul, it is the house in which it dwells: so Philo the Jew³ calls the *Logos* the house of God, who is the soul of the universe; and elsewhere says⁴, that God himself has filled the divine *Logos* wholly with incorporeal powers. The Godhead dwells in Christ as in a tabernacle, in allusion to the tabernacle of Moses, which looked mean without-side, but glorious within; where God granted his presence, and accepted the sacrifices of his people; the human nature of Christ is the true antitypical tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man; and sometimes is called a temple, in allusion to Solomon's; and which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, signified by fulness here: for not the fulness of grace, or a communicative fulness, is here meant; nor the relative fulness, the church; but the fulness of the divine nature, of all the perfections of deity, such as eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, necessary and self existence, and every other; for if any one perfection was wanting, the fulness, much less all the fulness of the Godhead, would not be in him. The act of inhabitation denotes the union of the two natures in Christ, and expresses the distinction of them; and is to be understood of the Godhead, as subsisting in the person of the Son of God, and not as subsisting in the person of the Father, or of the Spirit; and shews the permanency of this union,

¹ Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 4. 7.

² De Congressu quarend. Erud. p. 440. 441. de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 665, &c. quod deterius pct. p. 184.

³ De migr. Abraham, p. 389.

⁴ De Somniis, p. 574.

'tis a perpetual abiding one; and this fulness is not dependent on the father's pleasure; it is not said of this as of another fulness, ch. i. 19. that it pleased the father that it should dwell in him: the manner in which it dwells, is *bodily*; not by power, as in the universe; nor by grace, as in the saints; nor by any glorious emanations of it, as in heaven; nor by gifts, as in the prophets and eminent men of God; nor by signs, symbols, and shadows, as in the tabernacle and temple; but essentially and personally, or by personal union of the divine nature, as subsisting in the son of God to an human body, chosen and prepared for that purpose, together with a reasonable human soul; which is the great mystery of godliness, the glory of the Christian religion, and what qualified Christ for, and recommends him to us as a Saviour; and is a reason why, as these words are, that the Gospel should be abode by, continued in, and that with thankfulness; nor should any regard be had to vain and deceitful philosophy, to the traditions of men, or rudiments of the world: Christ only is to be looked to, attended, and followed, who has all fulness in him.

Ver. 10. *And ye are complete in him, &c.*] Or *filled up, or filled full in him*; that is, are perfect in him: saints are in Christ, and all fulness being in him, they are full too, of as much as they stand in need, and are capable of containing: for these words are not an exhortation to perfection, as the Arabic version reads them, *be ye complete in him*, like those in Gen. xvii. 1. Matt. v. 48. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. but are an affirmation, asserting not what the saints shall be hereafter, or in heaven, but what they now are; not in themselves, for in themselves none are perfect, not even those who are truly sanctified; for though all grace is seminally implanted in them, and they have a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or new creature, and are perfect in comparison of what they sometimes were, and of profane persons and hypocrites, and with respect to weaker believers, yet none are absolutely perfect; the good work of grace is not yet finished in them, sin dwells in them, they are full of wants and complaints; the best of them disclaim perfection as attained to by them, and express their desires of it; but they are perfect in Christ their head, who has all fulness in him, in whom they are chosen and blessed: they are complete and perfect in him as to sanctification; he having all fulness of grace and holiness for them, they have it in him; and he is made perfect sanctification to them: and as to justification, he has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, he has made full atonement for sin, has obtained eternal redemption, brought in a complete and perfect righteousness, by which they are justified from all things; are freed from sin, and made perfectly comely, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: and as to knowledge, though it is imperfect in them in their present state, yet in Christ all the treasures of it are, and they have no need to go elsewhere for any; they are filled with the knowledge of God and of his will, and are complete therein in Christ; and what knowledge they have, is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it; so that they have no reason to be beholden to angels or men, only to Christ: *which is the*

head of all principality and power; not only of the body the church, and who is to be held unto as such, from whom all light, life, grace, and strength, are to be derived; but of all others, though in a different sense; and not only of the kings, princes, and potentates of this world, who hold their kingdoms, and receive their crowns from him, and rule by him; but also of the angels, good and bad, often called principalities and powers; especially the former is here meant, of whom Christ is head, being their Creator, Governor, and upholder; who not only maintains them in their beings, but has confirmed them in their state of holiness; so that they are dependent upon him, and beholden to him for all they have and are: with the Jews, *Metatron*, which with them is the name of the angel in Exod. xxiii. 20. and seems to be a corruption of the word mediator, and to design the Messiah, is said ^v to be King over all the angels. This is mentioned, partly to set forth the glory and excellency of Christ; and partly against worshipping of angels, making use of them as mediators, or applying to them on any account, since Christ is the head of these, and of every creature; therefore no creature is to be looked and applied unto, trusted and depended on: unless rather should be meant the Jewish rulers, Scribes, and Pharisees, their doctors, wise men, and Rabbins, called the princes of this world; the Jews' tutors and governors, to whom Christ is superior; he's the only master and father, and in whom perfection of wisdom is, and not in them; and therefore should not regard them, their vain philosophy, worldly rudiments and traditions.

Ver. 11. *In whom also ye are circumcised, &c.*] This is said to prevent an objection that might be made to the perfection of these Gentile believers, because they were not circumcised; for the Jews thought that perfection lay in circumcision, at least that there could be no perfection without it: "great is circumcision (say they*), for notwithstanding all the commands which Abraham our father did, he was not called perfect until he was circumcised; as it is written, Gen. xvii. 1. *walk before me, and be thou perfect*:" which objection the apostle anticipates, by observing, that they were circumcised in Christ their head, who is made unto them sanctification; and by him as the meritorious and efficient cause of their regeneration and conversion, or internal circumcision, the antitype and perfection of circumcision in the flesh; for the former, and not the latter, is here meant: these believers were circumcised in Christ, or by him; not with external circumcision, which was peculiar to the Jews, the natural seed of Abraham, prefigured Christ, and had its accomplishment in him, the body and substance of all the shadows of the ceremonial law; and so was now nothing, either to Jew or Gentile: as for the Gentiles, they never were obliged unto it; and as for the Jews, it was an insupportable yoke to them, binding them to keep the whole law of Moses, which they could not do, and so it made nothing perfect; but Christ the substance of that, and the end of the whole law, has, the head of the body the church, in whom all the members of it are complete, and are circumcised: *with the circumcision made without hands*; which

* Zohar in Deut. fol. 130. a.

* Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11.

is that of the heart, in the spirit; every man, though he may be circumcised in the flesh, is uncircumcised in heart, until he is circumcised by Christ and his spirit; which is done, when he is pricked to the heart, and thoroughly convinced of sin, and the exceeding airfulness of it; when the callousness and hardness of his heart is taken off and removed, and the iniquity of it is laid open, the plague and corruption in it discerned, and all made naked and bare to the sinner's view; and when he is in pain on account of it, is broken and groans under a sense of it, and is filled with shame for it, and loathing and abhorrence of it: now this is effected not *by the hand of man*, as the Ethiopic version reads it, as outward circumcision was; this is not done by any creature whatever; not by angels, who rejoice at the repentance of sinners, but can't produce it; nor by ministers of the Gospel, who at most are but instruments of regeneration and conversion; nor by men themselves; this is not by might or power of man, by the strength of his free will, but by the spirit of God: for though men are sometimes exhorted to circumcise themselves, as in Deut. x. 16. Jer. iv. 4. in order to convince them of the corruption of their nature, and the need they stand in of spiritual circumcision; yet whereas there is an utter disability in them to effect it, and they need the power and grace of God for that purpose, the Lord has graciously promised his people to do it himself for them, Deut. xxx. 6. so that this circumcision is in the same sense made without hands, as the human nature of Christ is said to be a tabernacle not made with hands, that is of men, but of God, being what God has pitched, and not man; and it stands opposed to circumcision in the flesh, which was made with hands, Eph. ii. 11. and by some instrument, as a sharp knife or stone: *in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*. The Vulgate Latin version leaves out the word *sins*, and so the Alexandrian copy and some others; and the Syriac version the word *body*: *by the flesh* is meant corrupt nature, which is born of the flesh, and propagated in a carnal way, and is the source and spring of all sin; *by the sins* of it are intended the works of the flesh, the inward motions of sin in the members, and the outward actions of it: these are said to be a *body*, because sin consists of various parts and members, as a body does; and these united together, and which receive frequent and daily additions; and which are committed and yielded to by the members of the natural body; and which body and bulk of sins arising from the corruption of nature are compared to a garment, and a very filthy one it is; in the putting-off of which lies spiritual circumcision: this is done several ways; partly by Christ's wrapping himself in the sins of his people, bearing them in his body, and becoming a sacrifice for them, whereby the old man was crucified, and the body of sin destroyed; and by an application of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, to the consciences of his people, whereby their iniquities are caused to pass from them, and they are clothed with change of raiment; and by the power of his spirit, laying sin under the restraints of grace, not suffering it to have dominion, but causing grace to reign through righteousness; and by the saints themselves, under the influence of grace, who put off the old man

with his deeds, according to the former conversation: *by the circumcision of Christ*; not that with which Christ was circumcised at eight days old, that he might appear to be truly man, and a son of Abraham, and under the law, and to fulfil all the righteousness of it, but that which he by his spirit is the author of, and what is before expressed.

Ver. 12. *Buried with him in baptism, &c.*] The apostle goes on to observe how complete and perfect the saints are in Christ; that they are not only circumcised in him in a spiritual sense, and the body of the sins of their flesh is put off, and removed from them, in allusion to the cutting off and casting away of the foreskin in circumcision; but that they and all their sins were buried with Christ, of which their baptism in water was a lively representation: Christ having died for their sins, was laid in the grave, where he continued for a while, and then rose again; and as they were crucified with him, they were also buried with him, as their head and representative; and all their sins too, which he left behind him in the grave, signified by his grave-clothes there; and baptism being performed by immersion, when the person baptized is covered with water, and as it were buried in it, is a very significant emblem of all this; 'tis a representation of the burial of Christ, and very fitly holds him forth to the view of faith in the state of the dead, in the grave, and points out the place where the Lord lay; and it is also a representation of our burial with him, as being dead to sin, to the law, and to the world, by him. This shews now, that baptism was performed by dipping, or covering the whole body in water, for no other form of administration of baptism, as sprinkling, or pouring water on the face, can represent a burial, or be called one; and this is what many learned interpreters own, and observe on this place: *wherein also ye are risen with him*; Christ is risen from the dead as the head and representative of his people, and they are risen with him; and their baptism is also an emblem of his and their resurrection, being administered by immersion, in which way only this can be signified; for as the going down into the water, and being under it, represents Christ's descending into the state of the dead, and his continuance in it, so the emersion, or coming up out of the water, represents his rising from the dead, and that of his people in him, in order to walk in newness of life; for the apostle's meaning is, that in baptism saints are risen with Christ, as well as in it buried with him: and this *through the faith of the operation of God*; that is, it is through faith that saints see themselves buried and risen with Christ, to which the ordinance of baptism is greatly assisting, where there is true faith; for otherwise, without faith, this ordinance will be of no use to any such end and purpose; and it is not any faith that will avail, but that which is of God's operation; faith is not naturally in men, all men have it not; and those that have it, have it not of themselves, it is the gift of God; it is what he works in them, and by his power performs: *who hath raised him from the dead*; this is a periphrasis of God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ from the dead is generally ascribed; though not to the exclusion of Christ, and of the Spirit, who were also concerned; and is here

added, partly to shew in what respect faith, which is Christ's work, has him for its object, as having raised Christ from the dead, who was delivered for offences, but is risen again through the power of God for justification, and whoever with his heart believes this shall be saved; and partly to shew, that the same power is exerted in working true faith in the heart, as was put forth in raising Christ from the dead.

Ver. 13. *And you being dead in your sins, &c.*] Not corporeally, though sin had subjected them to a corporeal death, and their bodies were really mortal, and in a little time must die; but morally, sin had brought a death upon them in a moral sense, they were separated from God, as at death the body is from the soul, and so were alienated from the life of God, and consequently must be dead; they had lost the image of God, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; and were dead as to the understanding of what was good, as to their affections for it, or will and capacity to do it; and, like dead men, were insensible of their state, their sin, and misery; and altogether inactive and helpless in spiritual things, being destitute of spiritual life, strength, and motion; and were moreover in themselves deserving of eternal death, and according to the law of works, under the sentence of it, and so liable and exposed unto it; and all this for, and on account of their sins, their actual sins and transgressions here meant; which separated them from God, deformed his image in them, and hardened their hearts, that they had no true sight and sense of themselves; as also on account of the corruption of their nature, signified in the next clause: *and the uncircumcision of your flesh*; which is to be taken not literally, for the prepuce, or fore-skin of their flesh, which was a sign and token of the corruption of nature, but figuratively that itself; it being usual with the Jews to call the vitiosity of nature *עיר*, *uncircumcision*: which, they say, is one of the seven names of *יצר רע*, *the evil imagination*, or corrupt nature, denoting the pollution, loathsomeness, and abominableness of it: *hath he quickened together with him*; that is, with Christ; this may be understood either of the quickening of them in conversion and sanctification; for as they were dead in sin in a moral sense, in conversion a principle of life was implanted in them, or grace, as a living principle, was wrought in their souls by the spirit of life from Christ; so that they could see their lost state, their need of Christ, the glory of his person and righteousness, the fulness and suitableness of his grace; feel their burdens, and handle the word of life; could hear the Gospel, speak the language of Canaan, breathe in prayer and spiritual desires, walk in Christ, and do all things through him; and this was God's act and not theirs, and owing to his rich mercy and great love: and this may be said to be done *with Christ*, because this is in consequence of his being quickened, or raised from the dead; and by it they were made partakers of the life of Christ, they became one spirit with him; and it was not so much they that lived, but Christ lived in them; and besides, they were quickened, in order to live a life of grace and communion with him here, and of glory hereafter: or it may be interpreted

of the quickening of them in justification; and the rather, because of what is said in the next clause; and that either openly, as when a sinner is convinced that he is dead in a law-sense, and faith is wrought in him to behold pardon and righteousness in Christ; upon which he prays for the one, and pleads the other; and the spirit of God seals unto him the pardon of his sins, brings near the righteousness of Christ, enables him to lay hold on it as his, and pronounces him justified by it; and may well be called justification of life, for he is then alive in a law-sense, in his own comfortable view and apprehension of things: or secretly in Christ, as the head and representative of all his people; who when he was quickened, they were quickened with him; when he rose from the dead, they rose with him; and when he was justified, they were justified in him, and this seems to be the true sense of this passage: *having forgiven you all trespasses*. This was a past act, being done and over; not only at first conversion, when a discovery of it was made, but at the death of Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin; yea, even as early as Christ became a surety, when the sins of his people were not imputed to them, but to him: and this was a single act, and done and complete at once; forgiveness of sin is not done by piecemeals, or at different times, or by divers acts, but is done at once, and includes sin past, present, and to come; and is universal, reaches to all sin, original and actual, before and after conversion; sins of thought, word, and action: and this is God's act, and his only; not men, nor ministers, nor angels, can forgive sin; this is the peculiar prerogative of God, and is owing to his abundant mercy and free grace, and which is signified by the word here used. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *having forgiven us all our trespasses*; and so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read us instead of you.

Ver. 14. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, &c.*] Various are the senses interpreters give of these words; some think by the hand-writing is meant the covenant God made with Adam, Gen. ii. 17. which being broken, obliged him and all his posterity to the penalty of death, but is cancelled and abolished by Christ; others, the agreement which the Israelites made with God at Mount Sinai, when they said, *all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient*, Exod. xxiv. 7. which was as it were setting their hands, and laying themselves under obligation to obedience, and, in case of failure, to the penalty of the law; others, God's book of remembrance of the sins of men, out of which they are blotted when pardoned; others, the book of conscience, which bears witness to every debt, to every violation and transgression of the law, which may be said to be blotted out, when pacified with an application of the blood and righteousness of Christ; rather with others it signifies the ceremonial law, which lay in divers ordinances and commands, and is what the apostle afterwards speaks of more clearly and particularly; and may be called so, because submission to it was an acknowledgment both of the filth and guilt of sin; every washing was saying, that a man was polluted and unclean; and every sacrifice

was signing a man's own guilt and condemnation, and testifying that he deserved to die as the creature di^d, which was offered in sacrifice: or rather the whole law of Moses is intended, which was the hand-writing of God, and obliged to obedience to it, and to punishment in case of disobedience; and this the Jews² call שטר חוב, *the writing of the debt*, and is the very phrase the Syriac version uses here: now this was as a debt-book, which shewed and testified the debts of men; that is, their sins, how many they are guilty of, and what punishment is due unto them: and may well be said to be that *that was against us, which was contrary to us*; its nature being holy, just, good, and spiritual, is contrary to the unholy and carnal heart of man, and its commands disagreeable to his mind and will; nor can he perform what it requires; nor can he be subject to it without the grace of God, any more than he can like its precepts; and besides, it is contrary to him, and against him, as it charges him with debts, and proves them upon him, so that he has nothing to say in his defence; yea, it proceeds against him, and curses and condemns, and kills him: but God has *blotted it out*, Christ having engaged as a surety for his people, to pay off all their debts; and this being done by him, God has crossed the debt-book of the law, has blotted it out, so that this book is of no force; it does not stand against these persons, it can't shew or prove any standing debt, it can't demand any, or inflict any penalty: nay, he has *took it out of the way*; it is not to be seen or looked into as a debt-book; it is abolished and done away; it is no more as administered by Moses, as a covenant of works, or as to its rigorous exaction, curse, and condemnation; this is true of the whole law of Moses, as well as of the ceremonial, which is utterly abolished and disannulled in every sense, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it: *nailing it to his cross*; to the cross of Christ, shewing that the abolition of it is owing to the cross of Christ; where and when he bore the curse and penalty of the law for his people, as well as answered all the types and shadows of it: it is thought to be an allusion to a custom in some countries, to cancel bonds, or antequate edicts and decrees, by driving a nail through them, so that they could not be legible any more: or it may be to the writing of Pilate, which contained the charge and accusation against Christ; and which was placed over his head upon the cross, and fastened to it with nails²; every nail in the cross made a scissure in this hand-writing, or bond of the law, that lay against us, whereby it was so rent and torn, as to be of no force: thus the Holy Ghost makes use of various expressions, to shew that there is nothing in the law standing against the saints; it is blotted out, and can't be read; it is took away, and can't be seen; it is nailed to the cross of Christ, and is torn to pieces thereby, that nothing can ever be produced from it to their hurt and condemnation.

Ver. 15. *And having spoiled principalities and powers, &c.*] Principalities of hell, the infernal powers of darkness, the devil that had the power of death, the accuser of the brethren, who often objected their debts,

with all his works and posse: these Christ has divested of their armour, wherein they trusted to have ruined men, as sin, the law, and death; he has ransomed his people from him that was stronger than they, and taken the prey out of the hands of the mighty; he has bruised the serpent's head, demolished his works, destroyed him himself, and all his powers, and defeated all their counsels and designs against his elect: some render the word ἀποκαταραχας, *having put off, or unclothed*: and which some of the ancient writers apply to the flesh of Christ, and understand it of his putting off the flesh by death, whereby he gave the death-blow to Satan and his powers, Heb. ii. 14. to which sense agrees the Syriac version, which renders the words, וְבִלְלוּ פָנָיו, *and by the putting-off of his body, he exposed to shame principalities and powers*: but it may be better interpreted of unclothing, or stripping principalities and powers of their armour, with which they were clothed; as is usually done to enemies, when they fall into the hands of their conquerors: unless rather this is to be understood of Christ's taking away the power and authority of the Jewish ecclesiastical rulers and governors, by abolishing the ceremonial law, and the ordinances of it; declaring himself to be the alone King and Lawgiver in his house, and requiring subjection to his institutions and appointments, which sense agrees with the context: *he made a shew of them openly*; when being raised from the dead, he ascended on high, and led captivity captive; he led Satan and his principalities and powers captive, who had led others, as he passed through the air, the territories of the devil, in the sight of God and the holy angels: *triumphing over them in it*: which some understand of the cross, as if where and by what he got the victory, there he triumphed; the cross, where his enemies thought to make a shew of him, expose him to public scorn and contempt, and to triumph over him, was as it were the triumphant chariot, in which he triumphed over all the powers of hell, when he had conquered them by it: but the words may be rendered *in himself*, as they are by the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and the sense be, that as he by himself got the victory, his own arm brought salvation to him, so he alone shared the glory and honour of the triumph: or it may be rendered *in him*, and the whole in this and the preceding verse be applied to God the father, who, as in ver. 12, 13. is said to raise Christ from the dead, to quicken sinners dead in sins, and to forgive all their trespasses; so he may be said to blot out the hand-writing of ordinances, and to spoil principalities and powers, expose them to public view and shame, and triumph over them, *in him*, in and by his son Jesus Christ: the whole is an allusion to the victories, spoils, and triumphs, of the Roman emperors, who when they had obtained a victory, a triumph was decreed for them by the senate; in which the emperor was drawn in an open chariot, and the captives being stripped of their armour, and their hands tied behind them, were led before him and exposed to public view and disgrace; whilst he was shouted and huzzaed through the city of Rome, and had all the marks of

² Tzeror Hammor, fol. 87. 1, 3.

² Noanus in Joh. xix. 19. Vid. Niccqueti Titulus S. Crucis, l. 1. c. 18. p. 128.

honour and respect given him^b: now all that is said in the preceding verses shew how complete the saints are in and by Christ; and stand in no need of the philosophy of the Gentiles, or the ceremonies of the Jews; nor have any thing to fear from their enemies, sin, Satan, and the law, for sin is pardoned, the law is abolished, and Satan conquered.

Ver. 16. *Let no man therefore judge you, &c.*] Since they were complete in Christ, had every thing in him, were circumcised in him; and particularly since the hand-writing of the law was blotted out, and torn to pieces through the nails of the cross of Christ, the apostle's conclusion is, that they should be judged by no man; they should not regard or submit to any man's judgment, as to the observance of the ceremonial law: Christ is the prophet who was to be raised up like unto Moses, and who only, and not Moses, is to be heard; saints are to call no man master upon earth but him; they are not to be the servants of men, nor should suffer any yoke of bondage to be imposed upon them; and should they be suffered and condemned by others, as if they were transgressors of the law, and their state bad, for not observing the rituals of the former dispensation, they should not regard such censures, for the judaizing Christians were very censorious, they were ready to look upon and condemn a man as an immoral man, as in a state of damnation, if he did not keep the law of Moses; but such rigid censures were to be disregarded, *let no man judge, or condemn you*; and though they could not help or hinder the judgment and condemnation of men, yet they could despise them, and not be uneasy with them, but set light by them, as they ought to do. The Syriac version renders it, *לֹא תִּירָא, let no man trouble you*, or make you uneasy, by imposing ceremonies on you: the sense is, that the apostle would not have them submit to the yoke they would lay upon them, nor be terrified by their anathemas against them, for the non-observance of the things that follow: *in meat or in drink*; or on account of not observing the laws and rules about meats and drinks, in the law of Moses; such as related to the difference between clean and unclean creatures, to abstinence in Nazarites from wine and strong drink, and which forbid drinking out of an uncovered vessel, and which was not clean; hence the washing of cups, &c. religiously observed by the Pharisees. There was no distinction of meats and drinks before the law, but all sorts of herbs and animals, without limitation, were given to be food for men; by the ceremonial law a difference was made between them, some were allowed, and others were forbidden; which law stood only in meats and drinks, and such-like things, but is now abolished; for the kingdom of God, or the Gospel dispensation, does not lie in the observance of such outward things, but in internal ones, in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; it is not any thing that goes into the man that defiles, nor is any thing in its own nature common or unclean, but every creature of God is good, so be it it be used in moderation and with thankfulness: *or in respect of an holyday*; or feast,

such as the feast of the passover, the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of Pentecost; which were three grand festivals, at which all the Jewish males were obliged to appear before the Lord; but were never binding upon the Gentiles, and were what the Christians under the Gospel dispensation had nothing to do with, and even believing Jews were freed from them, as having had their accomplishment in Christ; and therefore were not to be imposed upon them, or they condemned for the neglect of them. The phrase *בְּיָמֵינוּ*, which we render *in respect*, has greatly puzzled interpreters; some reading it *in part of a feast*; or *holyday*; as if the sense was, that no man should judge or condemn them, for not observing some part of a festival, since they were not obliged to observe any at all: others in *the partition, or division of a feast*; that is, in the several distinct feasts, as they come in their turns: some think the apostle respects the Misna, or oral law of the Jews, in which are several treatises concerning a good day, or an holyday, the beginning of the new year, and the sabbath, which treatises are divided into sections or chapters; and that it is one of these sections or chapters, containing rules about these things, that is here regarded; and then the sense is, let no man judge you or condemn you, for your non-observance of feast-days, new moons, and sabbaths, by any part, chapter, or section, of *יּוֹם טוֹב*, or by any thing out of the treatise concerning a feast-day; or by any part, chapter, or section, of *רֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁבִיעָה*, the treatise concerning the beginning of the year; or by any part, chapter, or section, of *שַׁבָּת*, the treatise concerning the sabbath; and if these treatises are referred to, it proves the antiquity of the Misna. The Syriac version renders it, *בְּפִלְגָּא דְעֵצָא, in the divisions of the feast*: frequent mention is made of *פְּרוֹס הַדָּגָן*, the division, or half of the feast, in the Jewish writings: thus for instance it is said^c, "three times in a year they clear the chamber (where the half-shekels were put) *בְּפְרוֹס*, in the half, or middle of the passover, in the middle of Pentecost, and in the middle of the feast:" again^d, "there are three times for tithing of beasts, in the middle of the passover, in the middle of Pentecost, and the middle of the feast;" that is, of tabernacles: and this the Jewish commentators say^e, was fifteen days before each of these festivals: now whether it was to this, *פְּרוֹס*, middle, or half-space, before each and any of these feasts the apostle refers to, may be considered: *or of the new moon*; which the Jews were obliged to observe, by attending religious worship, and offering sacrifices; see Numb. xxviii. 11. 2 Kings iv. 23. *Or of the sabbath-days, or sabbaths*; meaning the jubilee-sabbath, which was one year in fifty; and the sabbath of the land, which was one year in seven; and the seventh-day sabbath, and some copies read in the singular number, *or of the sabbath*; which were all peculiar to the Jews, were never binding on the Gentiles, and to which believers in Christ, be they who they will, are by no means obliged; nor ought they to observe them, the one any more than the other; and should they be im-

^b Vid. Lydium de re Militari, l. 6. c. 3.

^c Vid. Casaubon. Epist. ep. 24.

^d Misn. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 1.

^e Misn. Becorot, c. 9. sect. 5.

^f Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

posed upon them, they ought to reject them; and should they be judged, censured, and condemned, for so doing, they ought not to mind it. It is the sense of the Jews themselves, that the Gentiles are not obliged to keep their sabbath; no, not the proselyte of the gate, or he that dwelt in any of their cities; for they say², that "it is lawful for a proselyte of the gate to do work " on the sabbath-day for himself, as for an Israelite " on a common feast-day; R. Akiba says, as for an " Israelite on a feast-day; R. Jose says, it is lawful for " a proselyte of the gate to do work on the sabbath-day for himself, as for an Israelite on a common or " week day;" and this last is the received sense of the nation; nay, they assert that a Gentile that keeps a sabbath is guilty of death³; see the note on Mark ii. 27. Yea, they say⁴, that "if a Gentile sabbatizes, or " keeps a sabbath, though on any of the days of the " week, if he makes or appoints it as a sabbath for " himself, he is guilty of the same." It is the general sense of that people, that the sabbath was peculiarly given to the children of Israel; and that the Gentiles, strangers, or others, were not punishable for the neglect and breach of it⁵; that it is a special and an additional precept, which, with some others, were given them at Marah, over and above the seven commands, which the sons of Noah were only obliged to regard⁶; and that the blessing and sanctifying of it were by the manna provided for that day; and that the passage in Gen. ii. 3. refers not to the then present time, but עַל דְּרֵוֹרֵי, *to time to come*, to the time of the manna⁷.

Ver. 17. *Which are a shadow of things to come, &c.*] By Christ, and under the Gospel dispensation; that is, they were types, figures, and representations of spiritual and evangelical things: the different *meats and drinks*, clean and unclean, allowed or forbidden by the law, were emblems of the two people, the Jews and Gentiles, the one clean, the other unclean; but since these are become one in Christ, the distinction of meats is ceased, these shadows are gone; and also of the different food of regenerate and unregenerate souls, the latter feeding on impure food, the ashes and husks of sensual lusts, or their own works, the former on the milk and meat in the Gospel, the wholesome words of Christ; and likewise the clean meat was a shadow of Christ himself, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. The *holydays*, or *feasts* of the Jews, the feasts of tabernacles, of the passover and Pentecost, were types of Christ; the feast of tabernacles, though it was in remembrance of the Israelites dwelling in tents and booths when they came out of Egypt, yet was also a representation of the people of God dwelling in the earthly houses of their tabernacles here on earth; and particularly of Christ's dwelling, or tabernacled in human nature, and who likewise was born at the time of this feast; see the note on John i. 14. The passover, as it was a commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and of God's passing over their houses when he smote the first-born

of the Egyptians, so it was a type of Christ our pass-over sacrificed for us, and was kept by Moses in the faith of him, Heb. xi. 28. there is a very great resemblance, in many particulars, between Christ and the paschal lamb; see the note on 1 Cor. v. 7. The feast of Pentecost, or the feast of harvest and first-fruits, was a shadow of the first-fruits of the spirit, which Christ having received, gave to his disciples on that day; and of the harvest of souls to be gathered in under the Gospel dispensation, of which the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was an earnest and pledge. The *new moon* was typical of the church, which is fair as the moon, and receives all her light from Christ the sun of righteousness; and of the renewed state of the church under the Gospel dispensation, when the old things of the law are passed away, and all things relating to church-order, ordinances, and discipline, are become new. The *sabbaths* were also shadows of future things; the grand sabbatical year, or the fiftieth-year sabbath, or jubilee, in which liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, a general release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, pre-figured the liberty we have by Christ from sin, Satan, and the law, the payment of all our debts by Christ, and the right we have through him to the heavenly and incorruptible inheritance. The seventh-year sabbath, in which there was no tilling of the land, no ploughing, sowing, nor reaping, was an emblem of salvation through Christ by free grace, and not by the works of men; and the seventh-day sabbath was a type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter: now these were but shadows, not real things; or did not contain the truth and substance of the things themselves, of which they were shadows; and though they were representations of divine and spiritual things, yet dark ones, they had not so much as the very image of the things; they were but shadows, and like them fleeting and passing away, and now are gone: *but the body is of Christ*; or, as the Syriac version reads it, *the body is Christ*; that is, the body, or sum and substance of these shadows, is Christ; he gave rise unto them, he existed before them, as the body is before the shadow; not only as God, as the son of God, but as Mediator, whom these shadows regarded as such, and as such he cast them; and he is the end of them, the fulfilling end of them; they have all their accomplishment in him: and he is the body of spiritual and heavenly things; the substantial things and doctrines of the Gospel are all of Christ, they all come by him; all the truths, blessings, and promises of grace, are from him and by him, and he himself is the sum of them all. The allusion seems to be to a way of speaking among the Jews, who were wont to call the root, foundation, substance, and essence of a thing, גוּבַח, *the body of it*: so they say¹, "the constitutions concerning the sanctification of the offerings and the tithes, are, both the one and the other,

¹ T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1. Piske Tosaphot Yebamot. art. 84. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 20. sect. 14.

² T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 58. 2.

³ Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 10. sect. 9.

⁴ T. Bab. Betza, fol. 16. 1. Seder Tephillot, fol. 76. 1. Ed. Amst.

¹ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 56. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, p. 17. & Zuts, p. 101. Ed. Meyer.

² Jarchi & Daal Hattorim in Gen. ii. 3. Pirke Eliezer, c. 18.

³ V. d. Misa. Abot, c. 3. sect. 13. & Eartenora in ib. & Halicot Olam, par. 2. c. 1. p. 48.

⁴ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 1.

“נופי תורה, *the bodies*, or substantial parts of the law :” and again ², that “the constitutions or rules about the sabbath, the festivals and prevarications, they are as mountaints that hang by an hair; for the Scripture is small, and the constitutions are many; the judgments and the services, the purifications and uncleannesses, and the incants, they have, upon which they can support themselves, and these, and these, are “נופי תורה, *the bodies of the law* :” they say ³ of a small section, or paragraph, that *all the bodies of the law depend upon it*: once more ⁴, “the sabbaths, and “the good days (the feasts or holydays) are נוּפֵי, *the bodies of the sign* ;” which the phylacteries or frontlets were for; but our apostle says, that Christ is the body and substance of all these shadows, in opposition to these sayings and notions of the Jews: some connect this last clause with the former part of the following verse, rendering it as the Arabic version thus, *because of the communion of the body of Christ, let no man condemn you*; and the Ethiopic version thus, *and let no man account you fools, because of the body of Christ*, but there is nothing in the text to support these versions.

Ver. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward, &c.*] Or prize; the allusion is to the Olympic games, one of which was running races; in which the stadium, or race-plot was fixed, a mark set up to look and run unto, a corruptible crown proposed to be run for, and which was held by one who sat as judge, and determined who got the victory, and to whom the crown belonged; these judges sometimes acted the unfair part, and defrauded the victors of their proper right, and to such the apostle compares the false teachers: the Christian's reward, or prize he is running for, is the incorruptible and never-fading crown of glory, life, and righteousness; the race-plot is the Christian life, spent in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in holding fast, and holding out in a profession of faith unto the end; the mark he looks at, and presses towards, is Jesus Christ; and his great concern, the apostle by this metaphor suggests should be, lest by false teachers he should be defrauded of the prize of the high calling of God, through their removing the mark Christ from him, by denying his person and Godhead; or by intercepting his sight of him, placing other objects before him, such as angels, to be worshipped and adored; or by darkening of it, joining Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, works and grace together, in the business of salvation; whereby he might seem to come short, or be in danger of coming short of the heavenly glory: *is a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels*: these things the apostle instances in, as in what lay their danger of being beguiled of their reward, or prize. True humility is an excellent grace; 'tis the clothing and ornament of a Christian; nor is there any thing that makes a man more like Christ, than this grace; but in these men here respected, it was only the appearance of humility, it was not real; it was in things they devised and willed, not in things which God commanded, Christ required, or the Scriptures pointed

at; they would have been thought to have been very lowly and humble, and to have a great consciousness of their own vileness and unworthiness to draw nigh to Christ the Mediator immediately, and by him to God; wherefore in pretence of great humility, they proposed to make use of angels as mediators with Christ; whereby Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, would be removed out of sight and use; and that humble boldness and holy confidence with God at the throne of grace, through Christ, which believers are allowed to use, would be discouraged and destroyed, and the saints be in danger as to the outward view of things, and in all human appearance of losing their reward: *worshipping of angels* was a practice which very early prevailed among some that were called Christians, and for a long time continued in Phrygia and Pisidia; some make Simon Magus, and others Cerinthus, the author of this idolatry; but it was not only a branch of the Platonic philosophy, and so a part of that philosophy and vain deceit before mentioned, which these men might have borrowed from the Gentiles, but was a notion and practice of the Jews: before the Babylonish captivity, the names of angels were not known, nor are they ever mentioned by name in Scripture; hence they say ⁵, that “the names of angels came up with them, or by their means from Babylon:” after this they began to talk much of them, and to have too high a veneration for them, and ascribe too much to them; and observing that the law was ordained, spoken, and given by them, and that the administration of things under the former dispensation was greatly by their means, they fell to worshipping of them ⁶; and the believing Jews were hereby in great danger of falling into the same practice: hence the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, writing to the Jewish church, largely insists on the proof of Christ being superior to angels; shewing that he has a more excellent name than they had; that he was the son of God in such sense as they were not the sons of God; that they were worshippers of him, yea, that they were creatures made by him, and even ministering spirits to his saints, the heirs of salvation: and very rightly is worshipping of angels condemned here by the apostle, since God only is the object of worship; since these are creatures, and so not to be adored; are worshippers of God and Christ themselves, and have refused adoration when it has been offered to them: that the Jews did, and do worship angels, and make use of them as mediators and intercessors, is clear from their liturgy, or prayer-books, where they say ⁷, “מַלְאָכֵי רַחֲמֵיךָ, *O ye angels of mercies, or ye merciful angels*, ministers of the most High, entreat now the face of “God for good:” and elsewhere ⁸, “they say three times, let Juhach keep us, let Juhach deliver us, and “let Juhach help us:” now Juhach was the name of an angel, who they supposed had the care of men, and is taken from the final letters of those words in Pual. xc. 11. *for he shall give his angels charge over thee*: so they speak of an angel whom they call Sandalphon, who they say is appointed over the prayers of the

² Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 11. 2.

³ T. Bab. Beraot, fol. 63. 1.

⁴ T. Bab. Menaot, fol. 36. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 1.

⁵ T. Hieros. Roshhasanah, fol. 56. 4.

⁶ Vid. Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 6. p. 635.

⁷ Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil. fol. 222. 2.

⁸ Ib. fol. 325. 1.

righteous*: with this notion the judaizing and false teachers seem to have been tainted, and against which the apostle here cautions the saints, lest, under a shew of humility, they should be drawn into it: and to preserve them from it, he observes, that such an one who should spread and propagate such a notion, was one that was *intruding into those things which he hath not seen*; thrusting himself in a bold and daring manner into an inquiry and search after, debate upon, and affirmation of things he could have no certain knowledge of; as of angels, whose nature, qualities, works, and ministrations, he had never seen with his bodily eyes; nor could ever discern with the eyes of his understanding any such things in the Scriptures, which he ascribed to them; but they were the birth of his own mind, the fruits of his own fancy and imagination, things devised in his own brain: being *vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind*; judging of things not according to the word of God, and with a spiritual judgment, and according to a spiritual sense and experience, but according to his own carnal reason, and the vanity of his mind; being puffed and swelled with an high opinion of himself, of his great parts and abilities, of his knowledge of things above others, and of his capacity to penetrate into, and find out things which were not seen and known by others: this shews that his humility was forced, and only in outward appearance, and was not true and genuine.

Ver. 19. *And not holding the head, &c.*] Christ, as some copies express it; for by making use of angels as mediators and intercessors, Christ the only Mediator, the Lord and head of angels, and of the church, was dropped and laid aside; which is another reason the apostle gives, why such men, and their principles and practices, should be shunned and avoided by all those that had a regard for Christ the head: *from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*; by *all the body*, or the whole body, is meant the church, the mystical body of Christ; which, like an human body, consists of various members, all in union with one another, and with Christ the head: and *by joints and bands* are intended, either the grace of Christian charity, or love, the bond of perfectness; which is that in Christ's mystical body, as joints and bands are in an human body; for by this the members of Christ are joined, united, and knit together, and make increase: or else the ordinances of the Gospel, by which the saints are kept together in order, and through which is spiritual *nourishment ministered*, from Christ the head to them; who hates not his own flesh, the members of his body, but nourishes and cherishes them, with the wine of divine love, with the water of life, with himself the bread of life, with his flesh which is meat indeed, and with his blood which is drink indeed; with his own wholesome words, even the words of faith and sound doctrine: and it is from him, that the saints *are knit together*: both to one another in him the corner-stone, and also to him, being made one body and one spirit with him; and so from and through him, this body *increaseth with the increase of God*: that which God has appointed for his church, and which he

gives; and which it will arrive unto, when all the elect are gathered in, and they are filled with all the gifts and graces of the spirit, and these are brought to their proper pitch and full degree; all which is had from, and owing to Christ: for if Christ the head is not held, the body will have no nourishment, but soon become a skeleton; the members of it will soon loosen from one another and fall into pieces, and there will be no spiritual increase or edification: all which are so many reasons, why the saints should be upon their guard against these false teachers, and judaizing Christians, and which argument and exhortation the apostle further pursues in the following verses.

Ver. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ, &c.*] Or *seeing ye are dead with Christ*; for these words do not signify any doubt about it, but suppose it, and express what is taken for granted. They were dead with Christ by virtue of union to him; they being one with him, and considered in him as their head and representative, died in him, and with him; they were crucified with him, as they are said to be buried with him, and risen with him; they were dead with him, by having communion with him in his death; they partook of the benefits of it, as redemption, pardon, justification, and reconciliation; and they were planted together with him in the likeness of his death, not merely partakers of his sufferings, or suffered with him, and were conformable unto his death, by undergoing such-like things as he did, but as he died unto sin, and lived unto God, so did they; and through the virtue and efficacy of his death were dead to sin, so as that it was not imputed to them, so as to be freed and discharged from it, that it could not damn and destroy them; yea, so as that itself was crucified with him, and destroyed by him: and also to the law, to the moral law; not but that they lived according to it, as in the hands of Christ, in their walk and conversation, but did not seek for life, righteousness, and salvation by it; they were dead unto it as to justification by it, and even to obedience to it in a rigorous and compulsive way; and to all its terrors and threatenings, being moved to a regard to a principle of love to Christ; and to all its accusations and charges, its curses and condemnation, and as a ministration of death, fearing neither a corporeal, nor an eternal one: they were dead also to the ceremonial law, and were free *from the rudiments, or elements of the world*: the ordinances of a worldly sanctuary, the rites and ceremonies of the world, or state of the Jews, in opposition to, and distinction from, the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, called, and that by them, *עולם הזה, the world to come*: these were like letters to a language, or like the grammar, which contains the rudiments of it; these were the first principles of the oracles of God, which led to Christ, and had their accomplishment and end in him; and so believers were dead unto them, and delivered from them, as they were also to the world, the Jewish state, and were entered into the world to come; and even to this present evil world, and to the men and things of it, being by Christ crucified to it, and that to them: upon all which the apostle thus reasons, *why, as though living in the world*; since ye are

* Zohar in Gen. fol. 97. 2. & in Exod. fol. 24. 3.

dead unto it, and from the rudiments of it, why should ye be as though ye lived in it? his meaning is not, that they should not live in the world, nor among the men of it, for then they must needs go out of the world; saints may live in the world, though they are not of it, and among the inhabitants of it, though they don't belong to them, but to another and better country: nor does he suggest, that they lived according to the course of the world, as they did in their unregenerate state; but what he seems to blame them for, and reason with them about, was, that they acted as if they sought for life and righteousness in the rudiments of the world, or by their obedience to ceremonial rites, or human inventions: for he adds, *are ye subject to ordinances?* not civil and political ones, which are for the better and more orderly government of kingdoms, states, and cities, for these the saints ought to be subject to, both for the Lord's sake, and conscience sake; nor Gospel ordinances, as baptism, and the Lord's supper, for such all believers ought to submit unto; but either legal ones, the weak and beggarly elements, the yoke of bondage, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, the hand-writing of ordinances, which some were desirous of conforming to; or rather the ordinances and appointments of the Jewish fathers, the traditions of the elders, their constitutions and decrees, which are collected together, and make up their Misna, or oral law; and so the argument is from the one to the other, from the greater to the less, that if they were delivered by Christ from the burdensome rites of the ceremonial law, which were originally appointed by God, it must be great weakness in them to be subject to the ordinances of men; or both the institutions of the ceremonial law, and the decrees of the Jewish doctors about them, which were devised by them, and added to them, and imposed as necessary to be observed, may be intended; of which the apostle gives some particulars in the next verse.

Ver. 21. *Touch not, taste not, handle not.*] This the apostle says, not of himself, but in the person of the Jewish doctors; who urging the use of the ceremonial law, to which they added decrees and constitutions of their own, said, *touch not* the dead body of any man, the bone of a man, or a grave, any man or woman in their uncleanness; not only their flesh, but the bed they lay on, or the seat they sat on; or any creature that was by the law unclean; or a Gentile, or any notorious sinner, or common man: hence the Pharisees used to wash themselves when they returned from market, lest they should have been by any means accidentally defiled by touching any thing unclean. There is a treatise in their Misna, called Oholot, which gives many rules, and is full of decrees about things *כבשׂים*, *that defile by touching*. And so they likewise said, *taste not*, neither the fat, nor the blood of any creature which might be eaten itself, nor swine's flesh, nor the flesh of any creature that chewed the cud, or divided the hoof; nor might the Nazarites taste wine, or strong drink, or vinegar made of either, or moist grapes, or even the kernels and husks; and if a man ate but the quantity of an olive of any of the above things, he was, according to the Jewish canons,

to be cut off, or beaten^s: and they also said, *handle not*; or, as the Syriac and Arabic read, *do not come near*, or *draw not nigh*, to a Gentile, to one of another nation, or any unclean person, to whom they forbid any near approach or conversation; or *handle not* any of the above things. Some think that these several rules have respect only to meats; as *touch not*, that is, do not eat of things forbidden ever so little; nay, *taste not*, do not let any thing of them come within your lips; yea, *handle not*, do not so much as touch them with your fingers. Others think that *touch not* regards abstinence from women; see 1 Cor. vii. 1. and respects the prohibition of marriage by some in those times; and *taste not*, the forbearance of certain meats, at certain times, which God had not restrained any from; and *handle not*, that is, make no use of, or enjoy your own goods, and so designs that voluntary poverty which some entered into under the direction of false teachers.

Ver. 22. *Which all are to perish with the using, &c.*] Meaning either the ordinances concerning touching, tasting, and handling, which bring destruction and death on them that use them, and comply with them, in order to obtain righteousness and life; for instead of enjoying salvation through them, they were the cause of damnation to them. Or rather the meats not to be touched, tasted, or handled; these are in their own nature perishing things, and perish by being used; they are only of service to the body, and can be of none to the soul; the using of them cannot defile the man, nor an abstinence from them sanctify him, or commend him to God; they only relate to this present life, and will cease with it, and can have no manner of influence on the spiritual and eternal concerns of men: and besides, the ordinances concerning them are not of God, but are *after the commandments and doctrines of men*; for so even the ceremonial law, being now abolished, though originally of God, yet the imposition of it, as necessary to salvation, was a commandment and doctrine of man's; and particularly the traditions of the elders, and the various rules and decrees, which the doctors among the Jews obliged men to regard, were human inventions and devices: and this is another reason the apostle makes use of to dissuade from any regard unto them; for whatever is of man, and not of God, in religious worship, ought to be rejected.

Ver. 23. *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom, &c.*] The authors of them set up for men of wisdom, and were esteemed such, and are often styled *חכמים*, *wise men*; and their scholars that received their traditions, and explained and enforced them on others, *תלמידי החכמים*, *the disciples of the wise men*: and they pretended, that these constitutions of theirs were a *hedge for the law*, and for the honour of it, and to preserve it, and keep men from transgressing it; and this carried in it some appearance of wisdom: and their pretensions to it lay in the following things, *in will-worship*: being what was over and above that which was commanded by God, and so, like the free-will offerings under the law, must be acceptable to him; this was one of their colours, which had some shew of wisdom, religion, and zeal: *and humility*: in worshipping of angels, and not coming directly, and with boldness,

^s Maimon. Maacolat Asuret, c. 7. sect. 1. & c. 14. sect. 2. & Nezirut, c. 5. sect. 3.

to God or Christ; or rather in subjecting themselves to the yoke of the law, and submitting to the decrees of the fathers and doctors of the church, who were more wise, and learned, and knowing than they, and so had the appearance of prudence, gentleness, and goodness: *and neglecting of the body*: by fastings and watchings, whereby they seemed to be very religious and devout, holy and mortified persons, who kept under their bodies, subdued their unruly appetites, and fulfilled not the lusts of the flesh: but then this was only a shew of wisdom and godliness; there was no truth nor reality in these things; they were only a mere form, an outside shew, a mere pretence; there was no true devotion nor religion in them: and so *not in any honour*: or to be had in any esteem; for if the rites of the ceremonial law itself were weak and beggarly elements, much more must these additions to it, and corruptions of it, be such; and at most only regarded things exter-

nal, that were to the *satisfying of the flesh*: either the body, or the carnal mind, in which they were vainly puffed up: though some consider this last clause as explanative of the former, *neglecting of the body*, or not sparing it, but afflicting it with austerities of life; depriving it of its proper right, what is necessary for it, not taking due care of it, so as to satisfy nature; whereby instead of honouring, they dishonoured it: for though the body is not to be pampered, and the lusts of it indulged, or luxury and intemperance to be encouraged; yet since the body is the work of God's hands, is the habitation of the soul, and by which it performs its offices, and is the purchase of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and will be raised a glorious body at the last day, it ought not to be neglected and dishonoured; but should have a sufficiency of food and clothing, whereby it may be comfortably and honourably nourished and supported.

C H A P. III.

THIS chapter contains exhortations to several duties, some more general, which relate to all Christians, and others more particular, which belong to saints in such and such a state of life. The apostle begins with an exhortation to seek things heavenly, and not earthly, and to set the affections on the one, and not on the other: the arguments used to enforce it are taken from the saints being risen with Christ; from Christ being in heaven at the father's right hand; from their being dead to sin, the law, and the world; from their having life in Christ safe and secure; yea, from Christ being their life, and their appearance with him in glory, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. And next he proceeds to an exhortation to the mortification of sin, and the deeds of it, which he urges from the wrath of God coming upon men for these things, and from the consideration of their former state and condition, expressed by walking and living in them, ver. 5, 6, 7. and by a metaphor taken from the putting off and on of garments, he exhorts to the putting off of the old man, with his deeds, several of which are mentioned, ver. 8, 9, and to the putting on of the new man, and to the exercise of various graces, as mercy, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, and peace, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. And then he proceeds to exhort to such duties as relate to the word and worship of God; as that the word of Christ should have an abiding place in them, and that they should teach and instruct one another by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and do all they did in a religious way, in the name of Christ, with thankfulness to God by him, ver. 16, 17. And closes the chapter with the duties of wives to their husbands, and of husbands to their wives, and of children to their parents, and of parents to their children, and of servants to their masters, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *If ye then be risen with Christ, &c.*] The apostle having observed in the former chapter, that the believing Colossians were dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, were buried with him in baptism, and were risen with him through the

faith of the operation of God, argues from hence how much it became them to regard a new and spiritual life, and to seek after superior and heavenly things, and treat with neglect and contempt carnal and earthly ones. For he does not here call in question their being risen with Christ, but takes it for granted that they were, and makes use of it as an argument for his present purpose. They were risen with Christ as their head, and as members in union with him representatively, when he rose from the dead; and emblematically in their baptism, when having gone down into the water, and being baptized, they emerged from it; and spiritually in conversion, when they were raised from a death of sin, to a life of grace, by Christ, as the resurrection and the life, the efficient cause of it, and in virtue of his resurrection from the dead: wherefore being thus raised again in every sense, it highly became them to *seek those things which are above*; the better and heavenly country, the continuing city, which is above the heavens, whose builder and maker is God; Christ, who is in heaven, and salvation alone by him without the works of the law; all spiritual blessings, such as pardon, peace, righteousness, life, and glory, which are in heavenly places in him; doctrines and ordinances, which come from heaven, and are the means of supporting a spiritual and heavenly life; especially that bread of life which came down from heaven, and gives life unto the world, and of which if a man eats, he shall never die, but live for ever; and particularly glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, the crown of righteousness laid up above, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of it; which are to be sought for in the first place with all affection, earnest desire, care, and diligence, not by or for works of righteousness, but in Christ, and as the gifts of God's grace through him. *Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*: which contains other reasons and arguments to engage believers to look upwards, and seek after heavenly things; that as Christ, when he died and rose again from the dead, did not stay long on earth, nor minded the things of the

world, but ascended up to heaven, where he now is, and will remain until his second coming; so they, being dead and risen with him, should, in their thoughts, desires, and affections, in the exercise of the graces of faith, hope, and love, ascend heavenwards, like pillars of smoke perfumed with frankincense; and the more should their hearts be where he is, and intent on things above there, from the consideration of that great honour and dignity in which he is. He is *on the right hand of God*; in human nature, an honour which none of the angels were ever admitted to: here he *sitteth*, as having done the work of redemption, and entered into his rest, beholding the travail of his soul with satisfaction, though he continues to be an advocate, and to make intercession for his people; which is another reason enforcing this exhortation.

Ver. 2. *Set your affections on things above, &c.*] For unless the affections are set on them, they will never be sought after in a proper manner. The word signifies to mind them, and think on them, to favour and approve of them, to be affectionately desirous of them, and concerned for them; for where the treasure is, the heart should be; and as the saints' best things are above, their minds and affections should be there likewise; their contemplation should be on those things, and their conversation should be in heaven; nor should they regard any thing but what is there, or comes from thence, for they belong not to this world, but to another and better country: their citizenship is in heaven, and there, in a short time, they must have their everlasting residence; and therefore should seek after, and highly prize and value heavenly things, and set their affections on them, and *not on things on the earth*; not mind earth and earthly things, temporal enjoyments, riches, and honours; and though food and raiment, and the necessaries of life, are to be sought after, and cared and provided for, yet not with anxiety and perplexity of mind, in an over-thoughtful and distressing manner; nor should the heart be set on those outward things, or happiness placed in the possession of them. Moreover, worldly lusts, the members which are on the earth, earthly pleasures that are sinful, may be here meant. Worldly lusts are to be denied, the deeds of the body are to be mortified, carnal desires are not to be gratified and indulged, provision is not to be made for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts; and particularly the vain philosophy of Jews and Gentiles, the traditions of the elders, the ceremonies of the law, which lay in earthly things, in worldly observances, the difference of meats and drinks, keeping of days, months, and years, new moons, feasts, and sabbath-days; the rudiments of the world, the commandments and doctrines which were of the earth, and lay in not touching, tasting, and handling certain things that are on earth, and which perish with the using, as opposed to the doctrines of the Gospel, and ordinances of Christ, which are from above, and come from heaven, and have a spiritual and heavenly use: and which is the sense chiefly intended, though it is best to understand the words in their largest compass.

Ver. 3. *For ye are dead, &c.*] Not in a natural or corporal sense, for they were living in the world; nor in a moral sense, for though they had been dead in

sins, they were quickened by the grace of God; nor in a law-sense, for all their trespasses were forgiven them; see ch. ii. 13, 20. but they were dead to the law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, by the body of Christ; and to sin, as to its damning power, through his bearing it in his own body on the tree; and to the world by his cross: and therefore as dead men have nothing to do with the world, and the things of it, so believers being dead with Christ, should have no regard to the rudiments of the world, the ceremonies of the law, and the ordinances of men; to worldly lusts, and to the things that are in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; but should be dead as to their desires after, affections for, and subjection to these things: *and your life is hid with Christ in God*; which is another reason why they should not mind things on earth, but things in heaven. The saint's *life* is either spiritual, and is a life of grace from Christ, a life of faith on him, and a life of communion with him, and may be distinguished into a life of sanctification, both internal and external, and into a life of justification; or eternal, which is a life free from all the sorrows of this, both outward and inward; a life of perfection and pleasure, of vision and enjoyment of God and Christ, and of fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and saints, and which will never end. This is *theirs*, what they have a right unto, and shall everlastingly enjoy: it is not only promised to them, and prepared and laid up for them, but it is given unto them in Christ; and who has made way for their full possession of it, into which he himself will put them, having power, as Mediator, so to do; and even now they have it, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it. This is said to be *hid*, which denotes the secrecy of it, and is true both of spiritual and eternal life. The spiritual life of the saints is hid from the men of the world, who are alienated from the life of God, are ignorant of the Lord of life, and know nothing of the spirit of life; they are strangers to the nature of this life, and to the food on which believers live, the hidden manna; and to the doctrines of the Gospel, by which they are nourished, these are hid to them that are lost; and to all the joys and pleasures of it: and this is sometimes hid from the saints themselves, when temptations are violent, corruptions prevail, grace is low, and seems to be gone, and God hides his face. Eternal life is also an hidden one from natural men; the things that are eternal, are things unseen by the carnal eye, and not to be conceived of by a carnal heart; and can only be beheld, and that in a very glimmering and imperfect manner, by an eye of faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, the clearest one saints have in this life; for eternal glory and happiness is in part hid from the saints themselves; they see it but through a glass darkly; nor does it appear to themselves, as yet, what that felicity is in its fulness and perfection they shall enjoy. Moreover, this phrase is expressive of the safety, as well as of the value and preciousness of this life, things of worth being hid for security. It is hid, and it is hid *with Christ*; spiritual life is with him, as the head, root, and fountain of it, and so is safe, and can never be lost; because he the head lives, the members shall live also; and as

long as it is in him, as the fountain, the streams and supplies of it shall not be wanting to his people; nor can the communication between him and them be ever cut off: eternal life is deposited in his hands by the father; it is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord God, and is in him for ever safe: nay, it is not only with Christ, where it is secure enough, but it is with Christ *in God*: Christ is in God, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father; they are one in nature, and so in power and glory; and this union between them, which is natural and perfect, is the foundation of the security both of the persons, and of the life, spiritual and eternal, of God's elect: see John x. 28, 29, 30. Moreover, this life itself is in God. Not only our natural life is in him; we live and move, and have our being in him; but our spiritual and eternal life: he is the spring of it; it arises originally from him; it was purposed in him; it was promised by him; the scheme of it, or what is called the fellowship of the mystery, was hid in him; it was given by him; he is the fountain of it, and that itself; and therefore the saints can never perish, nor need they fear any enemy.

Ver. 4. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, read, *your life*. Christ is the author of spiritual life, the fountain from whence it springs, the object on which the saints live, yea, their very life itself; it is not so much they that live, as Christ that lives in them: and he is their eternal life; it is in him, and given forth by him; to know him now is the beginning of it; and its perfection hereafter will lie in the vision of him, communion with him, and conformity to him. The Jews have a saying, "that lives depend upon the son of Jesse," all sorts of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. At present, Christ, the life of his people, is, as it were, hid; when he had done the work he came into this world about, and for which he was manifest in the flesh, he departed out of it, ascended up into heaven, and went to his God and father, where he is, and will be retained, until the time of the restitution of all things; and though he appears in the presence of God, and on the behalf of his redeemed ones, yet he is now out of sight, and not to be seen with their bodily eyes; but, ere long, he'll be revealed from heaven, and come in the clouds of it, and be seen by all, to the terror and confusion of some, and to the joy and salvation of others; when his appearance will be exceeding glorious, not only in his glorified body, or exalted human nature, and as the Judge of the whole earth, clothed with majesty, authority, and power, but as the son of God, God equal with the father, in all the perfections and glory of deity, which will be manifest and apparent to every one: *then shall ye also appear with him in glory*; the dead bodies of the saints will then be raised and united to their souls, which he will bring with him, when he appears; and living saints shall be changed, and be caught up together with the raised ones, into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so they all shall be with him together, wherever he is, whether in the air, or on earth, or in heaven, and whilst he

is in either; and shall be for ever with him, enjoy communion with him, be made like unto him, and behold his glory: yea, they shall *appear in glory* too; with a glory on their bodies, which will be raised in glory like unto the glorious body of Christ; and on their souls, being in perfect holiness, having on the wedding-garment, or robe of Christ's righteousness, being clothed upon with their house from heaven, and appearing in the shining robes of immortality, incorruption, and glory; having the glory of God upon them in soul and body, and such a glory revealed in them, as the sufferings of this present life, and all the enjoyments of it, are not to be compared with. All which furnish out strong arguments and reasons, enforcing the above exhortations to seek for, and set the affections on things in heaven, and not on earth.

Ver. 5. *Mortify therefore your members, &c.*] Not *your bodies*, as the Ethiopic version reads, nor the members of the natural body, but of the body of sin, in-dwelling sin; which as a body consists of various members, which are parts of it, rise out of it, and are used by it, as the members are by the body; and intend the sins of the flesh, or sinful actions, which are generally performed by the members of the natural body, in which the law of sin is, and by which it operates; so that the mortification the saints are here exhorted to, in consideration of having a spiritual life in them, and a hope of eternal life in Christ, from whence the apostle argues, is not a mortification or destruction of the body of sin itself, or of the being and principle of it in the soul, where it is, and lives, and dwells, and will as long as the saints are in this tabernacle, but of the deeds of the body, or of sinful actions, as to the life and conversation; and signifies a denial of them, an abstinence from them, and a non-performance of them; see the note on Rom. viii. 13. These members, or deeds of the body, or acts of sin, are called *your*: for as the old man is ours, the vitiosity of nature is what we bring into the world with us, and is rooted and incorporated into us; so the actions that flow from it, and are done by it, are not to be ascribed to God, nor even to Satan, but they are our own actions, and which are performed by the members of our mortal body, or by the faculties of our souls: and are, *which are on earth*; or earthly; are concerned about earthly things, the things of the world, worldly lusts and pleasures, which rise out of earthly-mindedness, and incline unto it, and are only what are done here on earth, and will have no place in heaven. The particulars of which follow: *fornication*; the sin of uncleanness committed by single persons, or out of the state of marriage, and which the Gentiles did not account sinful: hence so much notice is taken of it, with a censure, and so often, by the apostle, in almost all his epistles, and dehorted from, as a sin against the body, as what disqualified for church-communion, and was not to be named among the saints, who should be dead to that, and that to them, as to the commission of it. *Uncleanness*: of every sort, all other impure actions, as adultery, incest, sodomy, and every other unnatural lust; all which should be abstained from, and never com-

mitted by those who profess to be alive unto God. *Inordinate affection*; which may intend the passions, or first motions of sin, stirred up by the law, and which work in, and operate by the members of the body, and bring forth fruit unto death, and therefore to be opposed by such as have a life in Christ; and also those vile affections, which some in a judicial way are given up unto, and prevail with those who are effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, and which are to be abhorred and denied by all who are heirs of the grace of life, and expectants of an heavenly one. *Evil concupiscence*; so called to distinguish it from that natural concupiscence, or desire after things lawful and necessary, and which is implanted in nature by God himself; and from that spiritual concupiscence or desire after spiritual things, and that lusting against the flesh, and carnal things, which is formed in the heart of a regenerate man by the spirit of God. It is the same with *יצר הרע*, the *evil imagination*, or corruption of nature. so much spoken of by the Jews. This here is what is forbidden by that law, *thou shalt not covet*: and includes every fleshly lust and inordinate desire, or every desire after that which is not lawful, or does not belong to a man; as what is another's property, his wife, or goods, or any thing that is his; and so very naturally follows, *covetousness*; an immoderate love of money, the root of all evil, insatiable desire of having more, and of having more than a man's own; and is enlarged as hell, and as death is not satisfied, but still craves more, without making any good use of what is possessed: *which is idolatry*. The covetous man, and the idolater, worship the same for matter and substance, even gold and silver; the covetous man lays up his money, makes no use of it, as if it was something sacred; he looks at it, and adores it, and puts his trust and confidence in it, and his heart is so much set upon it, that he neglects the worship of the true God; and indeed no man can serve God and mammon. Some think, that by this *πλοονεία*, rendered *covetousness*, is meant, that greedy desire after the commission of all uncleanness, and impure actions, which were perpetrated by the followers of Simon Magus in their religious assemblies, and under the notion of worship, and as acceptable to God, and therefore called idolatry; and which ought not to be once named, much less practised, among the living members of Christ. Moreover, such filthy actions were performed by the Gentiles in the worship of their deities.

Ver. 6. *For which things' sake, &c.*] Those sins above-mentioned: *the wrath of God*; the effects of it in temporal judgments, and eternal ruin and destruction, the wrath to come, which all are deserving of, and there is only deliverance from by Christ: *cometh upon the children of disobedience*: who are disobedient both to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ: who are unbelievers in him, are rebellious and gain-saying, reject his calls, the persuasions of his ministers, set at nought his counsel, and will have none of his reproof. There have been already instances of God's displeasure at sin, his indignation against it, and his judgments on account of it: his wrath is revealed from heaven, and it will come down from thence on disobedient and rebellious sinners, and that sud-

denly, and with great power, like a mighty torrent, that there will be no standing before it. This is a reason why such who have life in Christ should mortify, repress, and abstain from the above sins; for though this regards sinners, and ungodly persons, yet the effects of God's wrath on such shew how much such sins are displeasing to him, and detested by him, and therefore to be avoided by the saints.

Ver. 7. *In the which ye also walked some time, &c.*] Either in or among the children of disobedience, or rather in the fore-mentioned sins. Sin is a road or path, in which sinners walk a way of their own, or of their own choosing and approving, though a dark and crooked one, and which leads to destruction: walking herein denotes a continued series of sinning, a persisting in it, a progress therein, a proceeding from evil to evil, taking pleasure, and going on securely in it; and which is the case and state of God's elect before conversion, which is a turning of them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and out of the ways of sin, into the paths of righteousness, when the course of their walk, of their lives and conversations, is altered; and which is suggested here, and made use of as another reason for the mortification of the deeds of the body of sin, taken from their former state, and their deliverance out of it; and therefore the time past of their lives, when they walked in these things, should suffice, and they should now cease from sin, from a series and course of sinning: *when ye lived in them*; in sins, and were dead in them; for to be dead in sin, and to live in sin, is the same thing; living in sin is the death of sin. To live in sin is to live after the flesh, after the dictates of corrupt nature, to live a sinful course of life; it is for a man to give up himself to sin, be wholly bent upon it, take delight in it, and make it his work and business. This had been the case of these believers, but now they were dead to sin, and it became them to live no longer therein, but to mortify it by denying it, and abstaining from it, and living soberly, righteously, and godly.

Ver. 8. *But now you also put off all these, &c.*] Intimating, that now since they were converted and delivered out of the former state in which they were once, and professed not to walk and live in sin, it became them to separate, remove, and put at a distance from them all sins, and every vice, to lay them aside as dead weights upon them, and put them off as filthy garments; for such sins are never to be put on, and cleaved to again as formerly; and that not only those, the above-mentioned, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, but the following also, *anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, or evil speaking*: what vices are here intended, see the note on Eph. iv. 31. to which is added, *filthy communication*, which comes out of the mouth: and is to be removed and put out of it, or abstained from; and which is to be understood also of blasphemy, or evil speaking of one another, whereby the credit and reputation of each other may be hurt. *Filthy communication* is the same with that which is said to be *corrupt*, Eph. iv. 29. and which, though it is applicable to all speech that is unsavoury, unedifying, idle, and useless, and may be properly enough said of flat-

tery, lying, cursing, and swearing; yet chiefly regards obscene language, unchaste words, and filthy talking, which tend to encourage and cherish the sin of uncleanness in any of its branches.

Ver. 9. *Lie not one to another, &c.*] Which is another vice of the tongue, and to which mankind are very prone, and ought not to be done to any, and particularly to one another; since the saints are members one of another, and of the same body, which makes the sin the more unnatural; of this vice, see the note on Eph. iv. 25. and is another sin that is to be put off, or put away; that is to be abstained from, and not used. The arguments dissuading from this, and the rest, follow, *seeing that ye have put off the old man, with his deeds.* The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read this as an exhortation, as they do the next verse also. Who is meant by the old man, see the note on Rom. vi. 6. and what by putting him off, see on Eph. iv. 22. and as for *his deeds*, they are the same with the deceitful lusts there mentioned, and the works of the flesh in Gal. v. 19. and with the members of the body of sin in the context, ver. 5, 8. Some, as Beza, think, that here is an allusion to the rite of baptism in the primitive church; which, as he truly observes, was performed not by aspersion, but immersion; and which required a putting off, and a putting on of clothes, and when the baptized persons professed to renounce the sins of the flesh, and their former conversation, and to live a new life.

Ver. 10. *And have put on the new man, &c.*] Concerning which, and the putting it on, see the note on Eph. iv. 24. *which is renewed in knowledge*; this man, or principle of grace in the soul, is a new one, which never was there before; and there is a daily renovation of it in the spirit of the mind, by the spirit of God; for as the outward man decays, the inward man, which is the same with this new man, is renewed day by day, increases in holiness and righteousness, grows in grace, and particularly in *knowledge*; light and knowledge of a man's self, of his lost state and condition by nature, of his need of Christ, and of his salvation, is what appears at the first formation of this new man; and the daily renovation of him lies in an increase of spiritual, experimental, and saving knowledge of God, and Christ, and divine things; and indeed, until a man becomes a new creature, he neither knows, nor is he capable of knowing, the things of the spirit of God; so that this new man, or principle of grace, begins with spiritual knowledge, and is formed in order to it, and its increase lies in it: *after the image of him that created him*; the new man; for this is a creation-work, and so not man's, but God's; and is made not after the image of the first man, no not as innocent, and much less as fallen; but after the image of Christ, to which the elect of God are predestinated to be conformed, and which is instamped in regeneration; and more and more appears by every transforming view of Christ, and will be perfected in heaven, when they shall see him as he is, and be perfectly like him, who is not only the pattern, but the Creator of it, even the author and finisher of faith.

Ver. 11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, &c.*] That is, either in Christ, after whose image the new man is created; see Gal. v. 6. and vi. 15. or in the new man, and with respect to regeneration; or in the whole business of salvation: it matters not of what nation a man is; this has no influence on his new birth, either to forward or hinder it; for he is never the more a new creature, a regenerate man, and interested in salvation, because he is a Jew, which he may be outwardly, and not inwardly; and he may be born again, though he's a Greek or Gentile, as the Syriac version reads; for God of his own will, and abundant mercy, and not out of respect to nations and persons, begets souls again to a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance: *circumcision or uncircumcision*; a man's being circumcised in the flesh signifies nothing; this he may be, and not a new creature; for that is not true circumcision, but that which is of the heart, and in the spirit: and, on the other hand, it is no objection to a man's being born again, that he is uncircumcised in the flesh; this may be his case, and yet may be circumcised with the circumcision made without hands; neither one nor the other is of any account with God, nor makes the man either better or worse. *Barbarian, Scythian*; all such were Barbarians to the Romans, that did not speak their language; and as were such also to the Greeks, who were not of their nation, and therefore Greeks and Barbarians are opposed to each other, Rom. i. 14. and so they are here in the Syriac version, which reads *Greek and Barbarian*. The Arabic version, instead of *Barbarian*, reads *Persian*, because it may be, a Persian is so accounted by the Arabians; and because the Scythians were, of all people, the most barbarous and unpolished, and were had in great disdain by others, therefore the apostle mentions them, as being within the reach of the powerful and efficacious grace of God; nor were the fierceness of their dispositions, and the impoliteness of their manners, any bar unto it. Remarkable is the saying of Anacharsis the Scythian, who being reproached by a Grecian, because he was a Scythian, replied, "my country is a reproach to me, but thou art a reproach to thy country." It matters not of what nation a man is, so be it he is but a good man; especially in Christianity, all distinctions of this kind cease. It is added, *bond or free*: the grace of God in regeneration is not bestowed upon a man because he is a free man, or withheld from another because he is a bond-servant. Onesimus, a fugitive servant, was converted by the Apostle Paul in prison; and whoever is called by grace, if he is a free man in a civil sense, he is Christ's servant in a religious one; and if he is a servant of men, he is, in a spiritual sense, the Lord's free man. It is not nation, nor outward privileges, nor the civil state and condition of men, which are regarded by God, or are any motive to him, or have any influence upon the salvation of men: *but Christ is all, and in all*; he is all efficiently; he is the first cause of all things, the beginning of the creation of God, the author of the old, and of the new creation, of the regeneration of his people, and of their whole salvation: he is all comprehensively; has all the fulness of the Godhead, all

² Vid. Justin. l. 2. c. 1, 2, 3. Plin. l. 4. c. 12. & 6. 17. Herodot. l. 4. c. 46.

¹ Laertius in Vita Anacharsis.

the perfections of deity in him; he is possessed of all spiritual blessings for his people; and has all the promises of the covenant of grace in his hands for them; yea, all fulness of grace dwells in him, in order to be communicated to them: and he is all communicatively; he is their light and life, their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, their food and clothing, their strength and riches, their joy, peace, and comfort, who gives them grace here, and glory hereafter. So, with the Jews, the Shekinah is called כל, *all*^b; and this likewise, with the Cabalists^c, is one of the names of the living God, and well agrees with Christ, who has all things in him; and is the reason they give for this divine appellation: and Christ is *in all*; in all places, being infinite, immense, and incomprehensible, as God, and so is everywhere by his power, upholding all things by it; and in all his churches, by his gracious presence, and in the hearts of all his regenerate ones, of whatsoever nation, state, and condition they be: he is revealed in them, formed within them, and dwells in their hearts by faith; and is all in all to them, exceeding precious, altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousands, and whom they esteem above all creatures and things. The Arabic version reads, *Christ is above all, and in all*.

Ver. 12. *Put on therefore, &c.*] As the apostle had argued for the putting off of the members of the body, from their having put off the old man himself; so he now argues from their having put on the new man, to their putting on of his members; that is, to the exercise of the various graces of the spirit, and the discharge of the several duties of religion; which though they would not be a robe of righteousness, or garments of salvation to them, yet would be very becoming conversation-garments, such as would be adorning to themselves, to the doctrine of Christ, and their profession of it, without which they would be naked in their walk, and exposed to shame. לְהַלְבִּישָׁא בְּרוּחַ קְדוּשָׁה, *to be clothed with the Holy Spirit*, is a phrase used by the Cabalistic doctors^d; and is indeed a Scripture phrase, *the spirit of the Lord came upon, לְבָשָׁה, clothed Zechariah*, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20. and so Esther is said, by the Jewish writers^e, *to be clothed with the Holy Ghost*. Here the metaphor is taken from the putting off of clothes; and what is here directed to, is like Joseph's coat, a coat of many colours. The arguments made use of lie in the characters under which the saints are addressed, *as the elect of God, holy and beloved*; that is, *as becomes the elect of God, as the Arabic version renders it*; as such who were chosen in Christ from eternity, according to the sovereign will and pleasure of God, and his free grace unto salvation and eternal life; which carries in it a strong argument to enforce the performance of good works, since men are hereby chosen unto holiness, and good works are what God has fore-ordained that they should walk in, and especially to mercy, and acts of it; since hereby their salvation appears to be not of man's will and works, but of God, that sheweth mercy; and such who are the objects of this grace are vessels of mercy. The apostle calls all the members of this church by this name,

though every individual of them might not be chosen of God; but because they were all under a visible profession of faith and holiness, and the greater part of them were truly believers, he in a judgment of charity gives them all this appellation, and upon the same foot, the next, *holy*; not by birth, for they were by nature unclean and filthy, conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; nor by baptism, which takes away neither original nor actual sin, but leaves men as it finds them, and who ought to be holy before they partake of that; but in Christ imputatively, as he was made of God unto them sanctification; and by him efficaciously, in virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, by which he sanctifies his people; and by his spirit inherently and internally, who is the author of the work of sanctification in the heart; and they were likewise so externally in a professional way, and therefore it highly became them to exercise and practise the following graces and duties, to which they were still more obliged, inasmuch as they were *beloved*; that is, of God, as appeared both from their election and sanctification. God had loved them, and therefore had chosen them in his son, and had given his son to die for them, that he might sanctify them; and because of his great love to them, had quickened them when dead in sin, and sanctified them by his spirit: wherefore, since God had so loved them, they ought to shew love again to him, and to one another, and put on *bowels of mercies*: a sympathizing spirit with saints in distress; weeping with them that weep, suffering with them that suffer, being touched, as their high-priest is, with a feeling of their sorrows and weaknesses: it denotes inward pity and compassion to distressed objects, the most tender regard to persons in misery, and such compassion as is free from all hypocrisy and deceit, and therefore is expressed by *bowels*; and what is very large, and reaches to multitudes of objects, and is displayed and exerted various ways, and therefore signified by *mercies*. Now such a spirit is a very beautiful one; the apostle begins with the innermost of these garments, adding to it *kindness*, which is this inward, tender, unfeigned, and abundant mercy put into act and exercise; this is doing good to all men, especially to the household of faith, distributing to the necessities of the saints, and a shewing mercy with cheerfulness, and is very ornamental to a Christian professor: as is also *humbleness of mind*; which lies in the saints entertaining mean thoughts of themselves, looking upon themselves as the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; as inferior to others in knowledge, experience, gifts, and graces; in esteeming others better than themselves; in ascribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God; in doing works of mercy and righteousness without ostentation, and boasting of them, or depending on them; owning, that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants; and this is a beautiful dress for a believer to appear in: *be ye clothed with humility*; 1 Pet. v. 5. And of the like nature is *meekness*; which shews itself in not envying the gifts and graces, the usefulness and happiness of others, but rejoicing therein; in

^b Tzeror Hammor, fol. 98. 9.

^c Shaare Ora, fol. 6. 1. & 22. 2. & 25. 3.

^d Sepher Jetzirah, Nethib, 17. p. 136.

^e VOL. III.—NEW TEST.

^f T. Megilla, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1. Zohar in Numb. fol. 70. 3. & 76. 2. & Rays Mehinna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 38. 2.

quietly submitting to the will of God in all adverse dispensations of Providence, and patiently bearing what he is pleased to lay on them; and in enduring all the insults, reproaches, and indignities of men with calmness. This ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Pet. iii. 4. And what follows is natural to it, and explanative of it, *long-suffering*: whereby a person patiently bears the evil words and actions of others, and is not easily provoked to wrath by them, but puts up with injuries, and sits down contented with the ill usage he meets with.

Ver. 13. *Forbearing one another, &c.*] Not only bearing one another's burdens, and with one another's weaknesses, but forbearing to render evil for evil, or railing for railing, or to seek revenge for affronts given, in whatsoever way, whether by words or deeds: *and forgiving one another*: all trespasses and offences, so far as committed against themselves, and praying to God to forgive them, as committed against him: *if any man have a quarrel against any*: let him be who he will, high or low, rich or poor, of whatsoever age, state, or condition, and let his quarrel or complaint be what it will, ever so great, or ever so just and well-founded, yet let him put up with it, and forgive it: *even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye*: what God is said to do for Christ's sake, Eph. iv. 32. see the note there, that here Christ is said to do: as Mediator, he has procured the remission of sins by the shedding of his blood; and as God he forgives sins freely, fully, forgetting the injuries done, not upbraiding with former offences, and that too without asking, and before there is any appearance of repentance; and so should the saints forgive one another, as they expect to have an application and manifestation of forgiveness to themselves.

Ver. 14. *And above all these things, &c.*] Bowels of mercies, kindness, &c. put on *charity*, or brotherly love, for without this all is nothing; they will only be done in show and appearance, in mere guise and hypocrisy, if love is wanting; this actuates and exercises all the rest; 'tis only from this principle that true sympathy, real kindness, undisguised humility, and meekness, patient long-suffering, and forbearance, and hearty forgiveness proceeds: this is greater, and more excellent, than all the other, and adds a glory, lustre, and beauty to them; this is the upper garment that covers all the rest, for so the words may be rendered, *upon all these things put on charity*: whereby a disciple of Christ is visible, and distinguished, and is known to be what he is; this is like a strait and upper garment, keeps close all that is under it, and within it: and it is called *the bond of perfectness*: either of the law, and the duties of religion, which it is said to be the fulfilling of; or rather of the saints, for this is the bond of union between them, which knits and cements them together, so that they are perfectly joined together, and are of one mind and one heart: it is the bond of peace among them, of perfect unity and brotherly love; and a most beautiful and pleasant thing it is for brethren to live and dwell together in unity; such are beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem among themselves, and terrible to their enemies as an army with banners, being not to be divided or broken by them. The Clarmontane exemplar reads, *the bond of unity.*

Ver. 15. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, &c.*] *By the peace of God* is meant, either the peace believers have with God, which is his gift, and passes all understanding, and flows from a comfortable apprehension of interest in the blood, righteousness, and atonement of Christ; or rather that peace which does, or should subsist among the saints themselves, which God is the author of, calls for, and requires, and encourages in them. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *the peace of Christ*; and so the Alexandrian copy, and some others. This may be said to *reign* in their hearts, when it is the governing principle there; when it restrains the turbulent passions of anger, wrath, and revenge, allays undue heats, moderates the spirits, and composes differences. The metaphor is taken from the judge in the Olympic games, who was the umpire, the moderator, and who determined whose the victory was, and to whom the crown belonged; the apostle would have no other umpire among the saints than the peace of God: and the arguments he uses follow, *to the which also you are called in one body*; the saints in their effectual vocation are called to peace by God, who is the God of peace; by Christ, who is the Prince of peace; and by the Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and through the Gospel, which is the Gospel of peace, and into a Gospel state, which lies in peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost: and they are not only called to this, but they are called *in one body*; though they are many members, yet they are but one body; and therefore ought to be in peace, and that should bear the sway in them, seeing it is unnatural for members of the same body to quarrel with each other. *And be ye thankful*: which intends either gratitude to men, to fellow-creatures, for any service or kindness done by them, especially to the saints, the members of the same body, who are placed in a subservience, and in order to be useful to each other; or else to God, for all spiritual blessings in Christ, and particularly the peace he gives, for effectual vocation, and a place in the body, the church; and to *Christ*, as the Syriac version reads, for all those graces which come from him, and strength to exercise them, and for himself, and an interest in him, who is all in all; and a grateful spirit, both for spiritual and temporal mercies, is a very becoming and beautiful one, and is another part of the ornament of a Christian: this last is added to make way for what follows.

Ver. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy and Arabic version read, *the word of God*; by which may be meant the whole Scripture, all the writings of the Old and New Testament, which are by inspiration of God, were edited by the spirit of Christ, speak and testify of him, and were written for his sake, and on his account, and therefore may be called his word; and are what should be searched into, carefully attended to, diligently read, and frequently meditated upon; and which are able, under a divine blessing, to furnish with all spiritual wisdom, or to make men wise unto salvation: or by the word of Christ may be meant more especially the Gospel, which Christ is the author of as God, the preacher of as man, and the subject-matter of as God-man and Mediator: it is the word concerning him, his person and offices; concerning

peace and pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation through his obedience, sufferings, and death. The exhortation to *let it dwell in them*, supposes that it had entered into them, and had a place in them through the spirit and power of Christ; and that it should have a constant and fixed place there, and not be like a stranger or wayfaring man, that tarries but for a night, or like a sojourner, that continues but for a while; but as an inhabitant that takes up its residence and abode, never more to depart; and intends not only a frequent reading, and hearing of, and meditating upon the word of God, but continuance in the doctrines of the Gospel, with a steady faith in them, and a hearty affection for them; for such an inhabitation imports a very exact knowledge of the Gospel, and familiarity with it, and affectionate respect for it; as persons that dwell in a house, they are well known by those of the family, they are familiarly conversed with, and are treated with love and respect by them: and so the word of Christ, when it has a fixed and established abode in a man's heart, he has an inward, spiritual, experimental knowledge of it; he is continually conversant with it; this word of Christ is his delight, and the men of his counsel his guide, his acquaintance, with whom he takes sweet counsel together, and esteems it above the most valuable things in the world, and receives and retains it as the word of God. The manner in which the apostle would have it dwell is *richly*; that is, largely, plentifully, in an abundant manner, as this word signifies; see 1 Tim. vi. 17. and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it here, *abundantly*; and to the same sense the Arabic version. His meaning is, that not one part of the Scripture only should be regarded and attended to, but the whole of it, every truth and doctrine in it, even the whole counsel of God; which as it is to be declared and preached in its utmost compass, so all and every part of it is to be received in the love of it, and to be abode in and by; there is a fulness in the Scriptures, an abundance of truth in the Gospel, a large affluence of it; it is a rich treasure, an invaluable mine of precious truths; all which should have a place to their full extent, in both preacher and hearer: and that *in all wisdom*; or *unto all wisdom*; in order to attain to all wisdom; not natural wisdom, which is not the design of the Scriptures, nor of the Gospel of Christ; but spiritual wisdom, or wisdom in spiritual things, in things relating to salvation; and which is, and may be arrived unto through attendance to the word of Christ, reading and hearing of it, meditating on it; and especially when accompanied with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and which is to be desired and prayed for. *Teaching and admonishing one another*. The Syriac version renders it, *teach and instruct yourselves*; and may regard not only publicly teaching Christ, his Gospel, the truths and doctrines of it, and all his commands and ordinances, for which he qualifies men, and sends them forth in his name; but private teaching, by conference, prayer, and singing the praises of God, according to the measure of the gift of grace bestowed on every one: and so *admonishing* may not only respect that branch of the public ministry, which is so called, and intends a putting into the mind, or putting persons in mind both of their

privilege and duty; nor only that part of church-discipline which lies in the admonition of a delinquent, but private reproofs, warnings, and exhortations; and as by other ways, so, among the rest, *in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*; referring very probably to the title of several of David's psalms, *מְשִׁיבִי*, *Maschil*, which signifies giving instruction, or causing to understand; these psalms, and the singing of them, being appointed as an ordinance of God to teach, instruct, admonish, and edify the saints; for the meaning of these three words, and the difference between them, see the note on Eph. v. 19. *singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*; that is, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and what is meant by singing of them, see the note on the above place: the manner in which they are to be sung is, *with grace*; meaning either by the assistance of the spirit and grace of God, without which no ordinance can be performed aright, to the glory of God, and to spiritual profit and edification, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. or with grace in the heart in exercise, particularly faith, without which it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. or with gratitude to God, with thankfulness of heart for his mercies, and under a grateful sense of them; or in such a manner as will minister grace unto the hearers, be both amiable and edifying, Col. iv. 6. all these senses may be taken in: that the phrase, *in your hearts*, does not mean mental singing, or what is opposed to singing with the voice, see the note on Eph. v. 19. The object here, as there, is *to the Lord*; the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of his person and grace: the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, *to God*; and indeed God, in the three divine Persons, and in all his perfections and works, is the object of praise, and his glory is the end of singing praise.

Ver. 17. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, &c.*] Whether in preaching the word of Christ, in hearing the Gospel, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and in conference and conversation with each other; or in whatsoever action, civil or religious, throughout the whole life and conversation, in the performance of things natural, moral, and evangelical, relating to God or man, or one another, in the world or church: *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*; both in the strength of Christ, without whom nothing can be well said or done; and according to the mind and will of Christ declared in the Gospel, which is his name; and calling upon his name for assistance in the ministration of his word, administration of his ordinances, and in the performance of every duty, directing all to, and having solely in view his honour and glory: *giving thanks to God, and the father by him*; this shews, that singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, is a distinct thing from giving of thanks, mentioned in the preceding verse. The things for which thanks are to be given, are *all things*; and the time when, *always*, as in Eph. v. 20. see the note there. The person to whom they are to be given is God the father, the father of our spirits, and of our mercies, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of us in him; and the person by whom they are to be given, is Christ, which is just and proper, since all mercies come from, and through him; nor is there any other way of bringing and offering the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God; nor are

they, nor can they be acceptable to God by, and through any other, but by him alone.

Ver. 18. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, &c.*] The apostle proceeds from those duties which related to them as church-members one towards another, for their mutual good and edification, and the glory of God, to such as concerned them in their own houses and families, as in a natural relation to each other; as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants; shewing hereby; that the Gospel does not at all break in upon, but establishes the duties of common and civil life. Concerning the duty of wives to their husbands, here exhorted to, see the note on Eph. v. 22. The reason urging to a regard to it is, *as it is fit in the Lord*; that is, Christ, as the Syriac version reads it. Subjection of wives to their own husbands is *fit* and proper in its own nature, by reason of the original creation of man, and of the woman from him: man was made first, and then the woman; and the woman was made out of the man, out of one of his ribs; and so, though not to be trampled under his feet, but to be by his side, and an help-meet to him, yet not to be head, or to rule over him. Moreover, the woman was made for the man, and not the man for the woman; add to this, that the woman was in the transgression, and the means of the fall of man, which gave a fresh reason for, and made the obligation to subjection to him the stronger: and it is also a *decent* and becoming thing for wives to be subject to their husbands; for as it is giving honour to them, it is a real ornament to themselves, and is one of those good works which women professing godliness should adorn themselves with; and makes more comely and beautiful than brodered hair, gold, pearls, or costly array, yea, than their natural favour and beauty: it is what is fitting *in the Lord*; it is what he requires, not only what the law of God requires, 1 Cor. xiv. 34. and which was enjoined originally, Gen. iii. 16. and was charged as a duty under the legal dispensation; but is what is commanded by Christ under the Gospel dispensation, and is to be observed by all those that are *in* him, that profess to be new creatures, converted persons, that so the word of God be not blasphemed, and the enemy have no occasion to reproach, Tit. ii. 5. 1 Tim. v. 14. though this phrase may also be considered as a restriction and limitation of this subjection; that though it reaches to all things, yet only to such as are agreeable to the will of the Lord, and not contrary to the Gospel of Christ; for in these they are not to be subject to them, but to Christ the Lord; but in all other things they are, even as the church is subject to Christ: and when this is the case, such subjection is regarded by Christ as if it was done to himself; and indeed his honour and glory should be the governing view in it; see Eph. v. 22.

Ver. 19. *Husbands, love your wives, &c.*] See the note on Eph. v. 25. *and be not bitter against them*; turning love into hatred of their persons; ruling with rigour, and in a tyrannical manner; behaving towards them in a morose, churlish, and ill-natured way; giving them either bitter words, or blows, and denying them their affection, care, provision, protection, and assistance, but using them as servants, or worse. All which is barbarous, brutish, and unchristian, and utterly unbecoming the Gospel.

Ver. 20. *Children, obey your parents, &c.*] Both father and mother; see the note on Eph. vi. 1. *in all things*; not in things sinful, which are contrary to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; in things repugnant to the duties of religion, the ordinances of the Gospel, and the doctrines of Christ, parents are to be neglected and disobeyed. God is to be regarded, and not men; but in all things good and lawful, and in all things that are of an indifferent nature, which may, or may not be done, in these things the will of earthly parents is to be attended to; of which there is a considerable instance in the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv. 6—10. and even they are to be obeyed in things that are hard and difficult to be complied with, and which are disagreeable to flesh and blood, as the cases of Isaac and Jephtha's daughter shew. *For this is well-pleasing unto the Lord*; and is a reason sufficient to engage to the performance of the duty; for whatever is grateful and well-pleasing to God ought to be done with pleasure by us, from a principle of love to him, by faith in him, and with a view to his glory; and then such an action is acceptable in his sight through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Alexandrian copy reads, *in the Lord*; and so the Vulgate Latin version.

Ver. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, &c.*] See the note on Eph. vi. 4. *lest they be discouraged*; or disheartened and dispirited; their spirits be broke through grief and trouble, and they become indolent, sluggish, and unfit for business; or, despairing of having any share in the affections of their parents, disregard their commands, instructions, and corrections, and grow obdurate, stubborn, and rebellious.

Ver. 22. *Servants, obey in all things your masters, &c.*] That is, in all things relating to the body, and bodily service; not to the conscience, and religious worship; in things worldly, and not spiritual; in all things that are within a master's power, and it is lawful for him to command; and in all things that are fitting and proper that a servant should do; and even in such things as may be difficult, troublesome, and disagreeable to the flesh unto them; see Luke xvii. 7, 8, 9. who those servants are that are to obey, and who their masters, said to be *according to the flesh*, to whom they are to be subject, see the note on Eph. vi. 5. *not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart*; see the note on Eph. vi. 5, 6. *fearing God*; who sees and knows all things, what servants do when their masters are absent from them, and to whom they are accountable; and a servant that fears God will make conscience of discharging his service faithfully, will not mispend his master's time, nor embezzle his goods, or waste his substance; but from a principle of reverential affection for God, and fear of him, with a concern for his name, and a view to his glory, will with all diligence, uprightness, faithfulness, and sincerity, do his duty, seek his master's good and interest, and cheerfully obey all his lawful commands. The Alexandrian copy reads, *fearing the Lord*; and so the Syriac version, *in the fear of the Lord*.

Ver. 23. *And whatsoever ye do, &c.*] Some have thought that these words, and the two following verses, regard the Colossians in general, and the performance of any, and all good works by them; but by their connexion with the preceding verse, and with the

beginning of the next chapter, they appear to concern servants only, and what they do under that character, and under the discharge of their duty: *do it heartily*; not by mere force and necessity, grudgingly; and with murmurings, but from the heart, and with good will, having a true, real, and hearty affection for their masters, having their good and interest at heart, and a delight in their service; like the Hebrew servant, that loved his master, as also his wife and children, and therefore would not depart from him, Exod. xxi. 5: *as to the Lord, and not unto men*; see the note on Eph. vi. 7.

Ver. 24. *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, &c.*] This is said for the encouragement of Christian servants, who, though they may receive little or nothing from their earthly and carnal masters; yet they shall be used and treated as children by the Lord, and by whom they will be possessed of an eternal inheritance, after their work and labour is over: by *the reward of the inheritance* is meant the heavenly glory, called a *reward*, because the apostle is speaking to servants, and therefore uses language agreeable to them; and who, though they may have no reward in this world, yet as there is a God that judgeth in the earth, there is verily one for them in the world to come; and though it is not given for working, yet it is given to those that do good, and continue in well-doing; whose works follow, though they do not go before them; and is enjoyed after their work is over, as the servant receives his wages at evening, and when he has done his work; though this will not be received as a reward of debt, but of grace; it cannot be of merit, as is clear from the nature of good works themselves, which are all due to God, prior to the performance of them; and when done in the best manner, are no more than a man's duty, and are done not in his own strength, but by the grace of God; and in many things, yea in every thing, he comes short of performing what is incumbent on him; and besides, there's no manner of proportion between the best services of the saints, and eternal glory: to which may be added, that eternal life is the free gift of their heavenly Father to them, and is here called an inheritance, which never becomes the property of servants in a way of merit, but is the portion of children, from their father's good pleasure. Wherefore the heavenly glory is such a reward as that it is an inheritance; or, as the Syriac version renders it, *in an inheritance*; it lies in an inheritance, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fades not away, reserved in the heavens; and which is not got by industry, or obtained by the works of the law, nor bought with a price, but is a free bequest of God as a father to his children; for an inheritance is peculiar to children, and this to the children of God, as these believing servants were; and which comes to them by and through the death of the testator; and it may be called an inheritance, because the heavenly glory is substantial, 'tis substance, a better and a more enduring substance than any inheritance in this world; and is a very plentiful possession and estate,

it consists of all things, yea, God himself is the portion of his people, and they that are his children are heirs of God; there's not only a glory, but riches of glory, a plenty, a fulness of it in this inheritance; the way in which they come by it, is receiving it from Christ; *of the Lord ye shall receive it*. It is in a way of receiving, and so by gift, as a man can receive nothing but what is given him; and as all grace is in a way of receiving, and therefore boasting in it is excluded, so glory is enjoyed in the same way, and from the same hands, even from Christ, the righteous Judge, that will give it. 'Tis in him they obtain this inheritance, and are in him chosen and predestinated unto it; 'tis by his resurrection from the dead, and in consequence of it, that they through the power of his spirit and grace are begotten unto it; 'tis his grace that makes them meet for it, and he has it in his hands for them; he is a feoffee in trust on their behalf, and is able to give it to them; and will at the last day introduce them into the full possession of it. Now these Christian servants *knowing* all this, having a lively hope of this inheritance, a full persuasion, and a firm faith of right unto it, and meetness for it, and having the spirit of God as an earnest and pledge of it; the consideration of it must greatly tend to make them quiet and easy in their present servitude, and to encourage them to the discharge of their duty with diligence, faithfulness, and cheerfulness: since they might assure themselves of the inheritance hereafter, how small soever their reward was now: *for ye serve the Lord Christ*; who is a good master, and faithful to all his engagements and promises, all whose servants are respected by him, and honoured by his father, and shall be for ever where he is.

Ver. 25. *But he that doth wrong, &c.*] Which may be understood both of servants that do wrong to their masters through sloth and idleness, neglecting their business, embezzling their masters' goods, and defrauding them of their substance; and of masters that injure their servants by withholding from them proper food and raiment, by cheating them of their wages, either giving them none at all, or too little, or detaining them too long, and by giving them bad language, and hard blows, and such-like severe usage: *shall receive for the wrong which he hath done*; either in this world, or in the other; God will avenge all such injuries, sooner or later; so that these words may be considered either as said with a view to deter servants from evil practices, or to comfort them under the mal-treatment they may meet with from cruel masters: *and there is no respect of persons*. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions add, *with God*; which undoubtedly is the sense; he regards not the rich more than the poor; he makes no difference between bond and free, the servant and the master; he'll not take the part of the one, because he is a master, nor neglect the other, because he is a servant, but will do that which is just and right with regard to them both; see the note on Eph. vi. 9.

C H A P. IV.

THIS chapter begins with an exhortation to masters to behave towards their servants in a just and equitable manner, from the consideration of their having a master in heaven, which should have concluded the preceding one; and in it the apostle gives some general exhortations, and some particular instructions about reading this, and another epistle, and stirring up their minister to his duty; and great part of it is taken up in expressing his love to the Colossians, and in the salutations of others, and of himself. The general exhortations are to prayer, with watchfulness and thankfulness, not only for themselves, but especially for the ministers of the Gospel, ver. 2, 3, 4. and next to a wise behaviour towards them that were of the world, ver. 5. and also to a prudent conversation, particularly in language, with every one, ver. 6. And then the apostle proceeds to declare his great affection for them, and care of them, which he shewed by sending two proper persons to them from him, partly to make known his affairs to them, and partly to know the state and condition they were in, and comfort them, ver. 7, 8, 9. and next follow the salutations of various persons to them, who are mentioned by name, and whose characters are given, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. And then he orders them to read this epistle in the church of Laodicea, and also that which came from that place, ver. 16. and to admonish Archippus to take heed to, and fulfil his ministry, since it was what he had received in the Lord, ver. 17. And then closes the epistle with his own salutation and benediction, entreating a remembrance of him and his bonds, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *Masters, give unto your servants, &c.*] This verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter, with which it should have been concluded. It is indeed strange, that those who made the division of chapters and verses should separate this from the former chapter, to which it so manifestly belongs, and begin a new one with it, when it has no connexion with what follows; for the apostle having observed the duty of servants to their masters, proceeds to direct masters to the discharge of their duty to their servants, by giving them *that which is just and equal*; proper food and raiment, which is sufficient and fitting for them; the wages due unto them by law or contract; using them with gentleness and humanity, taking care of them when under affliction, and in sickness; encouraging the diligent and laborious by an addition to their salaries; correcting the disobedient within just bounds, not with too much rigour and severity; and carrying it with an even hand to all, not preferring or indulging one before another, without any reason: *knowing that ye also have a master in heaven*: see the note on Eph. vi. 9.

Ver. 2. *Continue in prayer, &c.*] This is not said particularly to masters, as in the foregoing verse, but to all the members of the church in general; for the

apostle having taken notice of some special duties relating to persons in different stations of life, returns to such as were common to them all; as this of prayer to God is, for such prayer is intended; for though the object is not expressed here, he is in the following verse, and the Mediator Christ is supposed, and also the Holy Spirit, whose assistance is necessary to it. The things exhorted to, and required in prayer, are, first, as in this clause, continuance in it, which does not mean that men should be always formally praying to God; nor can it be thought that saints are always in praying frames of soul, though such are always desirable; but it intends frequency and constancy in prayer, in opposition to an entire restraint and omission of it, and to a performance of it but now and then, or very rarely; for though Christians are not, as the Jews were, bound to certain stated hours of prayer, so many times in a day, yet a day should not pass without prayer to God; for their daily cases call for it; their lives, their health, their daily bread, and all their temporal enjoyments, which depend on his daily goodness, providence, and power; their spiritual affairs, the renewing of the inward man day by day, fresh supplies of grace for new service; their daily trials and afflictions, their continued enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, all fully shew the necessity of daily prayer: besides, God does not always immediately answer the prayers of his people, he will be sought unto time after time, even for a blessing he intends to give; and therefore the saints should not be discouraged, but continue in prayer till they receive the mercy, and their importunity is a means of enjoying it, as in the case of the poor widow; and which is an encouraging reason why men should pray always, and not faint. Add to this, that constant prayer is a means of keeping up a spiritual acquaintance, intercourse, and familiarity with God, and of the soul alive in the vigorous exercise of the graces of the spirit, and of preserving the saints from temptations and sin; for, generally speaking, restraining prayer before God, and casting off his fear, go together. The next things requisite in prayer are watchfulness and thankfulness: *and watch in the same with thanksgiving*. There is not only a watchfulness unto it, previous to a man's entrance on it, as in Eph. vi. 18. 1 Pet. iv. 7. but a watchfulness in it, which is opposed both to sleepiness of body, and to coldness and indifference of mind, to all careless airs and negligent manner of performing it; and designs an intenseness of mind, an application of thought, and fervency of devotion, and affection in it. It lies in a concern, that the heart be lift up, with the hands to God; in a care, that what is asked is according to the will of God, and that the whole be performed in sincerity, faith, and fear. This is what the Jews call *עיון תפלה*, *the attention of prayer*^f, and *כוונה דלב*, *the intention of the heart*; and which, they say^g, is the

^f T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2. & Sabbath, fol. 127. 1.

^g R. Aben Ezra in Psal. lxxviii. 37.

root of prayer, the main and principal thing in it; and that every prayer which is not with intention, is no prayer^b; and which, they observe, lies in this, that a man turns his heart from all (other) thoughts, and seems to himself as if he stood before the divine Majesty. To this *thanksgiving* must be added; see Phil. iv. 6. for this is well-pleasing to God; and the contrary, an ungrateful spirit, is highly resented by him. Besides, a believer has always mercies to bless God for, as well as favours to ask at his hands; nor is he ever in such a situation, either in temporals or spirituals, but he has something to bless God for. Moreover, how should it be expected that a person should succeed in a present request, who is not thankful for a former kindness?

Ver. 3. *Withal, praying also for us, &c.*] The persons to be prayed for are next directed to; and these are not only themselves, though their concern is very near and great, but others also, all the saints and people of God, yea, all men, and in particular the ministers of the Gospel. The apostle desires they would pray for him, and his fellow-ministers, and which he says not in dissimulation, under a guise of humility, but in true humility and lowliness of mind; being sensible of the greatness of the ministerial work, which this shews, and of his own imperfection and weakness, and of what advantage the prayers, even of the meanest in the church, might be unto him: and this shews, that it is the duty of churches, and of particular believers, to pray for their ministers, and, among the rest, as follows, *that God would open to us a door of utterance; or of the word;* so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; meaning, either the word of the Gospel, that the door of that might be opened, that it might have a free course, and be glorified; for though he was bound, that was not; nor does he desire that the door of the prison might be opened, but the door of the word, that there might be an opportunity of preaching it; in which sense this phrase is used, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12. that whereas he could not go abroad to preach it, the hearts of men might be inclined to come to him, and hear it from his mouth; and that the door of their hearts might be opened, that they might attend unto it; that it might have an entrance into them, and a place in them: or else the door of his own speech and words is intended, and the sense be, that God would not only set before him an open door for the preaching of the Gospel, and make it effectual for the conversion of many souls; but that, as he would furnish him with all abilities, and every gift for that service, so that with enlargement of heart, and liberty of mind, he would give him elocution, a mouth and wisdom to speak, utterance and freedom of speech; that the door of the Gospel being opened, or an opportunity given to preach it, and the door of men's hearts opened to receive it, the door of his lips might be also opened to shew forth the praise of the grace of God. The Alexandrian copy adds, *with boldness, or boldly*, as in Eph. vi. 19. *to speak the mystery of Christ*: the Gospel, of which Christ is the author, preacher, sum, and substance; the whole of which is a mystery; the wisdom of God in a mystery; all

the doctrines of it are mysteries; and particularly those, and which are here more especially designed, which regard the person, offices, and grace of Christ, as the mystery of his divine and eternal sonship, of his incarnation, of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person, of redemption by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and satisfaction by his sacrifice, things dear to the apostle, and which his soul was full of, and he wanted to speak out; and therefore desires prayer to be made for him, that a door might be opened, and way made for his speaking of these things with freedom: *for which*, says he, *I am also in bonds*; this he adds, partly to shew how dear the Gospel was to him, that he was willing to suffer, and did suffer cheerfully for the sake of it; and what an honour he esteemed it to lie in chains for it, of which, nor of that, was he in the least ashamed; and partly to stir them up the more to pray for him, for his liberty in every respect.

Ver. 4. *That I may make it manifest, &c.*] It being a mystery, a secret, which was hid in God from everlasting, and, during the legal dispensation, was wrapped up in types, and shadows, and sacrifices, and is still hidden unto the natural man. Wherefore the apostle was desirous of making it manifest in a ministerial way; for God only, by his spirit, makes it manifest in a spiritual, experimental, and saving way. *As*, says he, *I ought to speak*. The Arabic version adds, *concerning it*, the Gospel, the mystery of Christ. The apostle's meaning is, that he might deliver it with that clearness and evidence, and use that plainness of speech which became the Gospel, and him as a minister of it, and not ambiguous expressions, equivocal phrases, words of double meanings, on purpose to hide things from men, but by manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. As also to speak it faithfully, declaring the whole counsel of God, keeping back nothing that might be profitable to the churches; and with all constancy and certainty, with all boldness and intrepidity of soul, and freedom of mind; not seeking to please men, aiming at vain-glory, and popular applause, or being afraid of their faces, menaces, and reproaches.

Ver. 5. *Walk in wisdom, &c.*] Or wisely, circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise men; see the note on Eph. v. 15. *Towards them that are without*; so the Jews used to call the Gentiles, all that were out of their own land, that were not of their nation or religion, who were aliens from them, and strangers to their privileges; and sometimes the unbelieving Jews bear the same character, Mark iv. 11. Here it may design such who were not members of this church; so the distinction of those that are *without*, and such as are *within*, is used by the apostle in 1 Cor. v. 12. A church is an house or family, and such as belong to it are called the household of faith, and those that do not are they that are without; it is as a city, and those that are of it are fellow-citizens with the saints, but others are strangers and foreigners; it is a garden enclosed, they that are planted in it are those that are within, and such as lie

^b Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 15, 16.

in the wide open field of the world are those that are without : but inasmuch as there are some who are not members of churches, and yet have the grace of God, this phrase may chiefly regard all unregenerate men, profane sinners, such as have not faith in Christ, nor hope in God, who are entirely destitute of the grace of God. Now it becomes saints to walk wisely towards them ; all communication with them is not cut off, or correspondence and conversation with them forbidden ; the saints indeed are not to have their conversation among them as in times past ; they are to have no fellowship with them in immoral actions, and superstitious practices ; but they may be concerned with them in things civil, with respect to trade and commerce, and the common business of life ; on these accounts they may keep company with them ; otherwise, as the apostle elsewhere says, they must needs go out of the world. But then it is incumbent upon them to behave wisely towards them, with the simplicity of the dove to join the wisdom of the serpent ; they should walk inoffensively towards them, and do nothing to provoke them, to injure and persecute them, but take all prudent methods to gain their affections, escape their resentment and wrath, and obtain their liberty of worshipping God without disturbance ; they should give to all their due, tribute, custom, fear, and honour, to whom they are due, and owe no man any thing but love ; they should submit to every ordinance of men, and be subject to the higher powers, not only to escape wrath, but for conscience-sake, and should give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's ; they should pray for kings, and all in authority ; for the prosperity of the nation, city, and place where they are, for their carnal relations and neighbours, and even their very enemies, and do them all the good, both for soul and body, that lies in their power, and as they have opportunity ; and by so doing, they'll heap up coals of fire on their heads. Such a prudent walk, and wise conduct, is necessary on account of the Gospel, that the public ministration of it may be continued, that it may spread and get ground, and that it may not be reproached and blasphemed ; and on the account of them that are without, that they may not have any stumbling-blocks laid in their way, and they be hardened in their impiety and irreligion, and be more set against the truths of the Gospel ; and also on account of believers themselves, who ought so to converse with the men of the world, that they are not partakers with them in their sins, and have their manners corrupted by them, or the vital heat of religion damped, and they become dead, lifeless, lukewarm, and indifferent to divine things, which is often the case through an indiscreet and imprudent walk with such men : the apostle adds, *redeeming the time* ; as an instance of prudent walking towards them that are without ; see the note on Eph. v. 16.

Ver. 6. *Let your speech be always with grace, &c.* In *grace*, or *concerning grace* : let grace be the subject-matter of your speech and conversation. When saints meet together they should converse with each other about the work of grace upon their souls, how it was begun, and how it has been carried on, and in what case it now is ; they should talk of the great things and wonders of grace, which God has done for them, which would be both comfortable and edifying to them, and make

for the glory of the grace of God ; and also, they should confer together about the doctrines of grace, and so instruct, establish, and build up one another in them ; and at least their conversation should always turn on things graceful and acceptable, such as may minister grace unto the hearer, and be useful and edifying ; wherefore all obscene words, unchaste expressions, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, ought not to be used. Or this may regard the manner of the speech, and language of the saints ; it should be in the exercise of grace ; it should be in truth, faithfulness, and sincerity, without lying, dissimulation, and flattery ; it should be in consistency with the grace of love, therefore evil should not be spoken one of another ; nor should there be whisperings, backbitings, or any thing said that is injurious to the character, credit, and reputation of another ; for this is contrary to love, and so not with grace : and whatever is said should be spoken in the fear of God ; the reason why so many evil things proceed out of the mouths of men is, because the fear of God is not before their eyes. Moreover, the speech of the saints ought to be in a graceful way, with a cheerful and pleasant countenance, in an affable and courteous manner, and not after a morose, churlish, and ill-natured fashion : and this should be *always* the case ; not that they should be always talking, for there is a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak ; but the sense is, that when they do speak, it should be both graceful things, and in a graceful manner ; so that there is never any room and place for vain discourse, unprofitable talk, and idle words, which must all be accounted for in the day of judgment. *Seasoned with salt.* The Syriac version adds, *TN, as*, and reads it, *as if it was seasoned with salt* : grace being that to speech, as salt is to meat ; as salt makes meat savoury and agreeable to the palate, so grace, prudence, and holiness, which may be meant by salt, see Mark ix. 50. make discourse savoury, pleasant, and acceptable to a spiritual man, who savours the things that be of God, as all such things are that relate to the grace of God, the work or doctrines of it ; and as salt preserves flesh from putrefaction and corruption, so when grace goes along with speech, it makes it pure and incorrupt, sound speech which cannot be condemned : and the apostle's view is, in this exhortation, that nothing unsavoury and corrupt proceed out of the mouths of believers ; see Eph. iv. 29. *that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *and know ye how*, &c. and make it to be a fresh exhortation to the saints to be concerned for such a share of spiritual knowledge, that they may be able to give a proper and pertinent answer, with meekness and fear, to such as shall ask a reason of the hope that is in them ; and to make suitable returns to persons according to their age, sex, capacities, and circumstances ; for every one is not to be answered alike, nor the same man under different circumstances ; a fool is sometimes to be answered according to his folly, and sometimes not ; and this seems to be a better reading than ours, which makes this to be the end of gracious, savoury, and incorrupt speech ; whereas knowledge is not acquired by speaking, but ought to go before it ; though indeed a person that uses himself to speaking with prudence,

purity, and grace, is at all times ready to give an agreeable answer, in a graceful and acceptable manner, to every one.

Ver. 7. *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, &c.*] This Tychicus was an Asian by birth; see Acts xx. 4. His name signifies *fortunate*, and is the same with *Fortunatus* in Latin, which name is mentioned in 1 Cor. xvi. 17. whether he is the same person may be inquired. It is said that this Tychicus was one of the seventy disciples, and was afterwards bishop of Chalcedon. However, he was employed by the apostle as a messenger to Colosse, as he also was to Ephesus, see Eph. vi. 21. 2 Tim. iv. 12. to inform the members of the church of his state and condition, how it was with him; as that he was in prison at Rome, for the sake of the Gospel, which he continued to abide by, and held fast the profession of, not being in the least moved and intimidated by what he suffered, being supported by the presence of Christ, and the discoveries of his love; and therefore, though his outward state was very mean and uncomfortable, yet the inward state of his soul was right and good; the inward man was renewed day by day. He might also send word by him what his thoughts were about his deliverance, or his dissolution, and what expectation he had of either of these: and that they might give the greater credit to what Tychicus should relate from him, he gives him the following character, *who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister*: the same character is given of him in Eph. vi. 21. see the note there: to which is here added, *and fellow-servant in the Lord*; he was a *brother* in Christ, being a partaker of the same grace, and in the same spiritual relation; and *beloved* of God, and Christ, of all the churches and saints that knew him, and especially by the apostle; and was also a *minister* of the Gospel, a preacher of Jesus Christ, and a *faithful* one to Christ, to his Gospel, and the souls of men; than which a greater character can't well be given: and though the apostle was endued with such superior gifts, grace, and usefulness; yet he calls this ministering brother a *fellow-servant in the Lord*; he having a commission to preach from the same Lord, and having the same Gospel intrusted with him, and being engaged in the same good work, and having the same ends in view, the glory of Christ, and the good of souls; though he had not equal abilities and qualifications, and was not in the same high post and office as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 8. *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, &c.*] That is, to relate to them his affairs both temporal and spiritual; and also, *that he might know your estate*. The Arabic version renders it, *that I may know your estate*; by him when he returned again; as whether they continued steadfast in the Gospel, and observed the order, ordinances, and discipline of it; how it prospered, and was succeeded among them, to their comfort and edification, and to the conversion of others; and what reception the false teachers had among them; and what love, concord, and harmony were among themselves; or what were their afflictions and

distresses from their enemies. The Ethiopic version renders it, *that ye may know the history of me*; which agrees with a manuscript mentioned by Grotius, which reads, *that ye may know the things concerning us*, as does the Alexandrian copy; and with Eph. vi. 22. where 'tis added, as here, and *comfort your hearts*; who might be greatly cast down upon hearing of the sufferings of the apostle, and also with those they themselves endured both from within and from without, from sin, Satan, and the world; see the note on Eph. vi. 22.

Ver. 9. *With Onesimus, &c.*] Who had been Philemon's servant, ran away from him, and was met with and converted by the Apostle Paul, of whom he says many things in his epistle to his master. According to the Apostolic Constitutions, he was afterwards bishop of Berrhæa; and some say he suffered martyrdom under Domitian; a servant of this name is mentioned by Suetonius¹, Ignatius* speaks of one Onesimus as bishop of Ephesus, but not the same with this, *a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you*; either one of their ministers, as Epaphras was, ver. 12. or one of their city, who was originally a native of that place; and which the apostle mentions, the more to recommend him; though this is the least part of his commendation; he calls him a *brother*, being both a converted man, and in the ministry; and being *faithful* in his work to Christ, and greatly *beloved* by the saints; and particularly highly in the esteem and affections of the apostle: *they shall make known unto you all things which are done here*: at Rome, either to him in prison, or in the church; and being two of them, were a proper number to bear a testimony, and which ought to be received.

Ver. 10. *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, &c.*] This man was a man of Macedonia, and a Thessalonian, Acts xix. 29. and xx. 4. which hinders not but that he might be of the circumcision, or a Jew, as is suggested in the following verse; for he might be born at Thessalonica, and yet be of Jewish parents; nor is his Greek name any objection to it, for the Jews themselves say, that the greatest part of the Israelites that were out of the land, their names are as the names of strangers: he was a constant companion of the apostle, and one of his fellow-labourers, as in Philem. ver. 24. and now a prisoner with him at Rome; and who having some knowledge of the members of the church at Colosse, takes this opportunity of sending his Christian salutation to them: *and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas*; the same with John Mark, whose mother's name was Mary, said here to be sister to Barnabas, Acts xii. 12. 24. concerning whom there was a difference between Paul and Barnabas, Acts xv. 37, 38, 39. and is the same Mark that wrote the Gospel, and was converted by the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. v. 13. and who is said to have received his Gospel from him; he is also mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. ver. 24. The Arabic version calls him here, the *brother's son of Barnabas*; and the Syriac version, בר דודו, *his uncle's son*; however, Barnabas being so great a man as he was, and so well known, it added some credit to Mark, that he was a relation of his: *touching whom ye re-*

¹ In Vit. Galbæ, c. 13.

* Ep. ad Ephes. p. 17. & ad Antioch. ascript. p. 89.

¹ T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2.

ceived commandments; not concerning Barnabas, but Mark, concerning whom they had had letters of commendation, either from Barnabas or from Paul, to this purpose: *if he come unto you, receive him*; for this was either the substance of those letters, or what the apostle now adds of his own, for the further confirmation of them; and that they might more readily and honourably receive him, when he should come unto them.

Ver. 11. *And Jesus, which is called Justus, &c.*] The former of these names is the same with Joshua, and was very frequent with the Jews, and the latter a surname that was sometimes given to men remarkable for holiness and righteousness: so Joseph, called Barnabas, is surnamed Justus, Acts i. 23. and James, the brother of our Lord, was called by the Jews James the Just^m: whether this man was not the same with Justus of Corinth, whose house joined to the synagogue, and into which Paul entered, Acts xviii. 7. is not certain, but is likely: *who are of the circumcision: were Jews, were circumcised persons, though not now sticklers for circumcision, and the rest of the ceremonies, as appears by what follows: this is to be understood of all the above persons, that sent their salutations to this church; though some confine it to Marcus, Barnabas's sister's son, and to Jesus, called Justus: these only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God; who assisted him in preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and in promoting the honour and interest of Christ. These were the only persons of the Jewish nation that were then at Rome under that character; from whence it appears that Peter was not there at that time: the apostle adds, which have been a comfort unto me; under his afflictions and sufferings, by visiting him, conferring with him, praying for him, communicating to him, and labouring in the Gospel in his room and stead.*

Ver. 12. *Epaphras, who is one of you, &c.*] A native of Colosse, and one of their faithful ministers; see ch. i. 7. *A servant of Christ*; not merely in the same sense as every believer is, but as he was a preacher of the Gospel, in which he faithfully served his Lord and master, Christ: *saluteth you*; sends his Christian respects to you, for whom he bore a sincere love and hearty affection, as appears by what follows: *always labouring fervently for you in prayers*; in all his prayers, which were many and frequent, he never forgot his dear flock at Colosse, of which he was pastor, but strove with God for them, even to an agony, as the word signifies; he wrestled with the Lord as Jacob did, nor, as he, would he let him go without a blessing for this church; he was incessant, importunate, and fervent in prayer for them: and what he prayed in particular for them was, *that ye may stand perfect*; in Christ Jesus their head, and in his spotless righteousness; see ch. i. 28. and ii. 10. and continue believing in him, and looking to him for righteousness and strength, in whom all the fulness, the perfection of grace dwells; and where the saints only are, and can continue to be perfect: *and complete in all the will of God*; or be filled in it, have a perfect knowledge of

the revealed will of God, both as to doctrine and practice, and be enabled to act according to it.

Ver. 13. *For I bear him record, &c.*] The apostle was an eye and ear witness of his fervent prayers, his labour of love, and zealous affection for these saints and others; and therefore, as he judged he ought, he bears a testimony for him, *that he hath a great zeal for you*; for their spiritual welfare, that the Gospel might continue with them, and they in that, against false teachers, and their attempts to subvert them; that they might grow in the grace of the Gospel, and walk worthy of it, and be at peace among themselves: *and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis*; cities in Phrygia, which lay near to Colosse, the one being situated by the river Lycus, and the other by the Mæander; here were many believers, for whom Epaphras had a like zeal and affection as for the Colossians, and to whom very likely he had been useful, either in conversion or edification, or both. The apostle takes no notice to the Colossians of Epaphras being his fellow-prisoner, as he does in his epistle to Philemon, ver. 23. it may be for this reason, lest they should be over-much distressed and cast down with it.

Ver. 14. *Luke, the beloved physician, &c.*] Luke the Evangelist, though some doubt it, is here intended, who was a constant companion of the apostle in his troubles, and went with him to Rome, as the Acts of the Apostles wrote by him shew, and as from 2 Tim. iv. 11. it appears; so Jerom^m calls the Evangelist Luke, the physician of Antioch, for from thence he was; and being converted by the Apostle Paul, as is very probable, though some make him to be one of the seventy disciples, he became of a physician of bodies, a physician of souls: some say^o he was a scholar of Galen, the famous physician, and others that he was his sister's son; who having heard of Christ's miracles, set out with his master Galen for Judea, to know the truth of them, of which they doubted; Galen died by the way, Luke came to Christ, and being taught by him, became one of the seventy disciples. The apostle calls him *beloved*, not on account of his profession, in which he might be useful to many, but as he was a brother in Christ, a minister of the Gospel, and a fellow-labourer of his. This is the same person with Lucas, mentioned along with Demas, and others, as here, in Philem. ver. 24. The name perhaps is Roman, but was, however, well known among the Jews; for they say^r, the "witnesses that sign a divorce, and their names are as the names of strangers, what is to be done with it? there's none comes into our hands (is received) לוֹקִים, "Lukus and Lus, and we allow it to be right:" upon which the gloss says, because these were famous names: *and Demas greet you*; the same who, through the love of the present world, forsook the apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 10. which he did either after the writing of this epistle, or if before it, he was now returned again to him: his name seems to be the same with the Roman Dama, unless it should be a contraction of Demetrius, or rather of Demarchos; though the Jews make frequent mention of R. דִּימִי, *Dimi*, or *Demi*, in

^a Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 1.

^r Catalog. Script. Eccles. p. 91. Vid. Nicephor. Hist. l. 2. c. 42.

^o Vid. Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 1294.

^r T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. a.

their writings¹, which perhaps is the same name with this.

Ver. 15. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, &c.*] Where there was a church mentioned in the following verse, of which see the note on Rev. ii. 10. *And Nymphas*; which some, unskilful in the Greek language, have took for a woman; whereas it is the name of a man, as the following words shew; and is a contraction of Nymphios, or Nymphidios, or Nymphodoros: *and the church which is in his house.* This man seems to have been an inhabitant of Laodicea, and that the church there met at his house to worship God, to pray unto him, sing his praise, hear his word, and attend on all ordinances: or his own family was brought up so strictly to the observance of these things, that they looked like a little church of themselves.

Ver. 16. *And when this epistle is read amongst you, &c.*] Which the apostle was now writing, and sent unto them; and which was to be read publicly, before the whole church; being sent not to any particular person, or persons, but to the whole body, and for their general good and instruction: *cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans*; his will was, that after it had been read to the church at Colosse, it should be sent, or at least a copy of it, to the church of the Laodiceans, in order to be read there: his reason might be, not only because this church was near them, but because it was in much the same situation, being infested with the same sort of false teachers; and therefore what was said to the one, was pertinent to the other: *and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea*: which was not an epistle of the apostle to the Laodiceans, as some have thought, but one that was written from thence, as the Syriac version renders it. Marcion, the heretic, called the epistle to the Ephesians, the epistle to the Laodiceans, but without any reason; and others have forged an epistle which bears this name, and appears to be a collection out of others, and chiefly from the epistle to the Philippians; and which being short, and may gratify the curious who can't otherwise come at it, I shall transcribe it, and is as follows. "Paul an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ; to the brethren which are of Laodicea, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to Christ in every prayer of mine, that ye continue and persevere in good works, expecting the promise in the day of judgment: neither let the vain speeches of some that pretend to truth disturb you, so as to turn you from the truth of the Gospel which is preached by me; and now the Lord cause that those who belong to me may be serviceable for the furtherance of the truth of the Gospel, and doing kind actions, which are of salvation unto eternal life: and now my bonds are manifest which I suffer in Christ, in which I am glad and rejoice; and this is to my perpetual salvation which is done by your prayers, the Holy Ghost supplying, whether by life or by death; for me to live is life in Christ, and to die is joy; and

"he will do his own mercy in you, that ye may have the same love, and be unanimous: therefore, most beloved, as ye have heard of the presence of the Lord, so think ye, and do in fear, and you shall have life for ever; for it is God that worketh in you; and whatsoever ye do, do without sin; and what is best, most beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and take heed of all filth in all gain; let your petitions be openly with God, be ye steadfast in the sense of Christ: and whatsoever things are sound and true, and chaste and just, and lovely, do; and what ye have heard and received retain in the heart, and peace shall be with you. Salute all the brethren with an holy kiss; all the saints salute you; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Cause this to be read to the Colossians, and that which is of the Colossians to you."

Every one on reading it will easily see that it is a spurious piece, a collection out of other epistles, and very ill put together: however, the apostle here does not speak of any epistle written to the church of Laodicea, but of one that was written from thence; which some think was written by himself, and that he means his first epistle to Timothy, which is said to be written from Laodicea; and the rather, because in that the qualifications of the ministers of the Gospel are given; and also suitable instructions for the discharge of their work, and so very proper to be read in the presence of Archippus; who, from the following verse, seems to have been remiss and negligent, and needed stirring up to the performance of his office: but from ch. ii. 1. it appears, that the apostle had not been at Laodicea when he wrote this, and had not so much as seen any of the faces of the brethren there in the flesh; it therefore seems rather to be an epistle which was sent from Laodicea to him, or to the Colossians; which having something in it very instructive and useful, the apostle desires it might be publicly read.

Ver. 17. *And say to Archippus, &c.*] A name common among the Grecians. This person the apostle calls his fellow-soldier, in Philem. ver. 2. and who was now the minister of the Gospel at Colosse, his fellow-minister, or co-pastor Epaphras, being at Rome, and a prisoner there; though by some he is said to be the first bishop of the Laodiceans, but it seems most likely that he now resided at Colosse, and was their minister: who being negligent in his office, they are called upon to say unto him, *take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* The ministry he had, was not that of the office of a deacon, as some have thought, but of a preacher of the word; and this he had received gifts for, and was called unto it, and installed in it; and that in, and by the Lord himself, and to whom he was accountable for it: and therefore it was incumbent on him to fulfil it; by constantly preaching the word, and faithfully administering the ordinances; by defending truth, detecting error, reproving vice, visiting the sick, and comforting the feeble-minded; taking heed in all things to himself and doctrine, that he feed the whole flock of God

¹ T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 19. 2. Nazir, fol. 56. 1. Sota, fol. 43. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 43.

² Juchasin, fol. 97. 2. & 117. 1.

with wholesome food; and, as a wise and faithful steward, give to every one their portion of meat in due season: hence it appears, that when ministers are negligent in the discharge of their duty, the church has a power to admonish and exhort them to a diligent performance of it.

Ver. 18. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul, &c.* After his amanuensis had finished the epistle, he added his usual salutation to it with his own hand, to prevent all counterfeits and impositions, and that the churches to whom he wrote might be sure of the genuineness of his epistles; but before he added it to it, he either wrote with his own hand, or ordered to be written the following words, *remember my bonds*; this he says, partly that they might be animated to abide by the Gospel, for which, as he had told them before, ver. 3. that he was in bonds; and partly to encourage them, by his example, patiently to endure what afflictions and persecutions soever they should meet with, for the sake of it; as also that they might be moved hereby, to remember him in their prayers, that, if it

was the will of God, he might be released, and be yet further useful in preaching the Gospel; or however, that he might be supported in his bonds, and cheerfully bear them, and remain steadfast in his faith in Christ unto the end: and then follows the salutation, *grace be with you, Amen*; which is common to all his epistles, and well suits them; in which he so much displays the grace of God, as it is expressed in the Gospel; and which his heart was full of, and earnestly desired might be more largely manifested to, and bestowed upon the saints. This epistle is said to be *written from Rome to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus*; and though the subscriptions of the epistles are not always to be depended on, yet this seems to be right; that it was inscribed to the Colossians, there is no doubt; and that it was written from Rome is clear enough, since by several expressions it is plain that he was now a prisoner, and in bonds; and that it was sent by Tychicus and Onesimus is more than probable, from ver. 7, 8, 9.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

THESALONICA was a very large, populous, and flourishing city, it was *liberæ conditionis*, as Pliny says ^a, a free city, and the metropolis of Macedonia; it was formerly called Halis ^b, and had the name of Thessalonica given it by Philip king of Macedon, on account of his conquest of Thessalia, which this name signifies; and some say he gave this name to a daughter of his on that occasion, who was afterwards the wife of Cassander; who, others say, called this place by his wife's name ^c, who before was Therme: its name with the Italians is Salonichi, and is now in the hands of the Turks, as all Greece is: here the Apostle Paul came after he had been at Philippi, and stayed about three weeks, and preached every sabbath-day, and his ministry was blessed to the conversion of some Jews, a multitude of devout Greeks, and many of the chief women of the place, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church; to which the apostle wrote this epistle, and is the first of all the epistles he wrote: the occasion of it was this; the unbelieving Jews, vexed to see the apostle's success, raised a mob of the baser sort of people, and assaulted the house of Jason, where the

apostle and his companions were; but Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea, which the rabble understanding, followed them thither; when Paul was sent as if he was going to the sea, but was conducted by the brethren to Athens, who gave orders that Silas and Timothy should come to him with all speed, as they did; and Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the young converts there; and returning with good news of their faith, and charity, to the apostle at Corinth, he sent them from thence this epistle, and not from Athens, as some have thought: the design of which is to encourage them under their afflictions and sufferings; to exhort them to stand fast in the Lord, to abide by his truths and ordinances, and to live an holy life and conversation, and to regard the several duties of religion, towards God and one another, and those that were set over them; and in it he instructs them concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the coming of Christ, articles of very great importance and concern: the writing of this epistle is placed by Dr. Lightfoot in the 51st year of Christ, and in the 11th of Claudius Caesar.

^a Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 10.

^b Ptolom. l. 2. c. 15.

^c Strabe, l. 7.

C H A P. I.

THIS chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's salutation of the persons it is wrote unto; his thanksgiving for blessings received by them; an account of the manner in which the Gospel came to them, how they behaved when it was preached to them, and of the success of it in their conversion. The inscription which expresses the names of the persons concerned in the epistle, and describes those to whom it is written, and also the salutation, which is the same as in other epistles, are in ver. 1. and then follows a thanksgiving to God made in prayer to him for the special graces of the spirit bestowed on them, as faith, hope, and love, and the lively exercise of them in which they were; the source and spring of which was the electing love of God, ver. 2, 3, 4. and the evidence of their election of God to the apostle, was the manner in which the Gospel came to them; not merely in the external ministry of it, but in the internal efficacy of it, through the power of the Holy Ghost, ver. 5. and the effects of it upon them; it found an hearty reception among them, in much affliction, and with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that they not only professed it, and became the followers of Christ and his apostles, but were examples unto others, ver. 6, 7. for the fame of the Gospel being preached unto them, and of their faith, were spread everywhere, so that the apostle had no need to say any thing about it, ver. 8. the manner of their entrance among them, and the issue of it, their conversion, were so manifest to all; which is described by what they were turned from, idols; and by what they were turned to, the living God; and by the ends of it, which were to serve God, and wait for Jesus Christ; the arguments engaging to which are, his relation to God as his son, his being raised from the dead by him; his being in heaven, exalted at his right hand there, from whence he is expected; and his having, by his sufferings and death, delivered his people from wrath to come, ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 1. *Paul, and Syllanus, and Timotheus, &c.* These are the persons concerned in this epistle, and who send their greetings and salutations to this church; Paul was the inspired writer of it, and who is called by his bare name, without any additional epithet to it, as elsewhere in his other epistles; where he is either styled the servant, or apostle, or prisoner of Christ, but here only Paul: the reason for it is variously conjectured; either because he was well known by this church, having been lately with them; or lest these young converts should be offended and stumble at any pompous title, which they might imagine carried an appearance of arrogance and pride; or because there were as yet no false apostles among them, who had insinuated any thing to the disadvantage of Paul, as in other places, which obliged him to assert his character and magnify his office; or rather because this was the first epistle he wrote, and he being conscious to himself of his own meanness, and that he was the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be called one, chose not to use the title.

Syllanus is the same with Silas, who was with the apostle at Thessalonica and at Corinth, when he wrote this epistle; he was originally a member of the church at Jerusalem, and was one of the chief of the brethren there, and a prophet; see Acts xvii. 4. and xviii. 5. and xv. 22, 23. Timotheus was also with the apostle at the same place, and was sent back by him from Athens to know their state, and returned to Corinth to him with Silas; he stands last, as being the younger, and perhaps was the apostle's amanuensis, and therefore in modesty writes his name last: the reason of their being mentioned was because, having been with the apostle at this place, they were well known by the church, who would be glad to hear of their welfare; as also to shew their continued harmony and consent in the doctrines of the Gospel; they stand in the same order in 2 Cor. i. 19. *unto the church of the Thessalonians*; which consisted of several of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, both Jews and Gentiles; see the note on Acts xvii. 4. who were called under the ministry of the word by the grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, and were separated from the rest of the world, and incorporated into a Gospel church-state. This was a particular congregated church of Christ. Some have thought it was not as yet organized, or had proper officers in it; since no mention is made of pastors and deacons, but the contrary is evident from chap. v. 12, 13. where they are exhorted to know, own, and acknowledge them that laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and esteem them highly for their works' sake. This church is said to be *in God the father*; were interested in his love and free favour, as appears by their election of God, ver. 4. and they were in the faith of God the father, as the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the profession of it, and so were distinguished from an assembly of Heathens that were in the faith of idols, and not of the one true and living God, and especially as the father of Christ; they were in fellowship with God the Father, and they were drawn by the efficacy of his grace to himself and to his Son, and were gathered together and embodied in a church-state under his direction and influence; he was the author of them as a church, and they were plants of Christ's heavenly Father's planting, not to be plucked up; and they were, as the Arabic version renders it, *ad-dicted* to God the Father; they were devoted to his service; they had his word among them, which they had received not as the word of men, but as the word of God; and his ordinances were duly and faithfully administered among them, and attended on by them: *and in the Lord Jesus Christ*; they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; they were chosen in him as their head and representative; they were in him as members of his body, and as branches in the vine; they were openly in him by effectual vocation and conversion, were in the faith of him, and in the observance of his commands, and in communion with him; and so were distinguished from a Jewish

synagogue or congregation : all this being true, at least of the far greater part of them, is said of them all, in a judgment of charity, they being under a profession of the Christian religion : *grace be unto you, and peace from God our father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*. This is the apostle's usual salutation and wish in all his epistles to the churches ; see the note on Rom. i. 7. the words *from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ* are left out in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions ; and the Arabic version omits the last clause, *and the Lord Jesus Christ* ; and the Ethiopic version only reads, *peace be unto you and his grace*.

Ver. 2. *We give thanks to God always for you all, &c.*] For all the members of this church, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, officers or private Christians ; for their being a church, for the gifts bestowed on them, for the graces hereafter mentioned that were wrought in them and exercised by them ; the glory of all which is given to God, and thanks for the same, which shews them to be gifts of his, and not in the least owing to any merits of men : the apostle ascribes nothing to their free will, previous dispositions and qualifications, diligence and industry ; nor does he attribute any thing to himself and to his companions, who were only ministers by whom these believed ; but he refers all to God, to his grace and goodness : and he returned thanks to him for it, and that *always* ; whenever he thought of it, made mention of it, or was at the throne of grace, as follows, *making mention of you in our prayers* ; to God, daily, both in private and in public, at which times thanksgivings to God were made on their account ; for thanksgiving is a part of prayer, and requests are always to be made known unto God with thanksgiving. The Ethiopic version renders this clause in the singular number, *and I am mindful of you always in my prayer* ; and leaves out the world *all* in the former clause.

Ver. 3. *Remembering without ceasing, &c.*] The phrase *without ceasing*, is, by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, joined to the last clause of the preceding verse ; and the remembrance the apostle speaks of is either a distinct thing from the mention made of them in prayer, and suggests that they bore them on their minds at other times also ; or 't is the same with it ; or rather a reason of their mentioning of them then, because they remembered them, and the following things of theirs : as *your work of faith* : by which is meant not the principle of faith, for as such that is God's work, the produce of his grace, and the effect of his almighty power ; but the operative virtue and exercise of it under the influence of the grace of God : the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, *the work of your faith* ; and so some copies, and the Syriac version, *the works of your faith*. The Targumist in Hab. i. 12. represents God as holy *בְּעֵבְרִי הַצְּמִתָּה*, *in works of faith* : faith is a working grace, it has a deal of work to do, it has its hands always full, and is employed about many things ; it is the grace by which a soul goes to God, as its covenant God, lays hold on him as such, pleads his promises with him, asks favours of him, and is very importunate, and will have no denial ; and by which it goes to Christ as at first conversion,

afterwards for fresh supplies of grace, out of that fullness of grace that is in him ; it receives him and all from him, and through him pardon, righteousness, adoption of children, and an eternal inheritance ; and it is that grace which carries back all the glory to God and Christ, and to free grace ; it glorifies God, exalts Christ, humbles the creature, and magnifies the grace of God, it has much work to do this way ; and it works by love, by acts of love to God, to Christ, and to the saints ; and it puts the soul upon a cheerful obedience to every ordinance and command, and hence obedience is styled the obedience of faith ; and indeed all good works that are properly so are done in faith, and faith without works is dead ; it is greatly engaged against the world and the devil ; it is that grace by which Satan is opposed and overcome, and by which the believer gets the victory over the world ; so that he is not discouraged by its frowns, and cast down by the trials and afflictions he meets with in it, nor drawn aside by its snares and allurements ; something of this kind the apostle had observed and remembered in these believers : he adds, *and labour of love* ; love is a laborious grace when in lively exercise ; love to God and Christ will constrain a believer to engage in, and go through, great hardships, difficulties, toil, and labour, for their sakes ; and love to the saints will exert itself, by serving them in things temporal and spiritual, ministering cheerfully and largely to their outward wants, for which reason the same epithet is given to love in Heb. vi. 10. as here ; regarding and assisting them in their spiritual concerns ; praying for them and with them ; building them up in their most holy faith ; communicating their experiences, and speaking comfortable words unto them ; reproving them for sin in love, and with tenderness ; restoring them when fallen in a spirit of meekness ; and stirring them up to love and good works : love has much toil and labour, not only in performing the several duties of religion, both towards God and man ; but in bearing all things, the burdens of fellow-Christians, the infirmities of weak believers, forbearing them in love, forgiving their offences, and covering their sins : *and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, or of our Lord Jesus Christ*. These persons had a good hope through grace given unto them, and which was founded in Christ Jesus, in his person, blood, and righteousness, and so was as an anchor sure and steadfast ; and it had him for its object, it was an hope of interest in him, of being for ever with him, of his second coming and glorious appearance, and of eternal life and happiness through him ; and this was attended with patience, with a patient bearing of reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of Christ, and a patient waiting for his coming, his kingdom and glory ; and this as well as the others were remembered by the apostle, and his fellow-ministers, with great pleasure : and that *in the sight of God and our father, or before God and our father* ; which may be read in connexion either with the above graces, which were exercised, not only before men, but before God, and in his sight, who sees not as man seeth, and who cannot be deceived and imposed upon ; and so shews that these graces were true and genuine, faith was unfeigned, love was without dissimulation,

and hope without hypocrisy : or with the word *remembering*, as it is in the Syriac version, which reads, *remembering before God and our father* ; that is, as often as we appear before God, and lift up our hands and our hearts unto him in prayer, we bear you upon our minds before God ; and particularly remember your operative faith, laborious love, and patient hope of Christ.

Ver. 4. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*] Which intends not an election to an office, for this epistle is written not to the officers of the church only, but to the whole church ; nor to the Gospel, the outward means of grace, since this was common to them with others, and might be known without the evidence after given ; nor does it design effectual vocation, sometimes so called, for this is expressed in the following verse as a fruit, effect, and evidence of the election here spoken of, which is no other than the eternal choice of them to everlasting life and happiness : this is of God, an act of God the father, made in Christ Jesus before the world began, and which springs from his sovereign will, and is the effect of his pure love and free favour ; and therefore these persons who are the objects of it are said to be *beloved of God* ; for so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read the words, and which agree with 2 Thess. ii. 13. for this choice does not arise from the merits of men, or any conditions in them, or from the foresight of their faith, holiness, and good works, but from the free grace and good pleasure of God ; and is the source and spring of all grace, and the blessings of it, and even of good works ; and is a sure, immutable, and irreversible act of God, being founded on his own will, and not on the works of men ; the knowledge they had of this was not what the Thessalonians themselves had, though they might have, and doubtless had the knowledge of this grace, and which may be concluded with certainty from effectual vocation ; and is a privilege which many particular believers may, and do arrive unto the knowledge of, without any extraordinary revelation made unto them : but here it intends the knowledge which the apostle and his companions had of the election of the members of this church ; not by inspiration of the spirit of God, but by the manner of the Gospel's coming unto them, and the effects it had upon them, as expressed in the following verses ; and from their faith, hope, and love, mentioned in the preceding verse ; and which was the ground and foundation of their thanksgiving for them ; see 2 Thess. ii. 13.

Ver. 5. *For our Gospel came not unto you, &c.*] The apostle calls the Gospel *our Gospel*, not because he and his fellow-ministers were the authors of it ; for in this respect it is solely of God, being the produce of his wisdom and grace, and by the revelation of Jesus Christ, hence he calls it the Gospel of God in ch. ii. 2, 8, 9. nor because they were the subject of it, for they preached not themselves, but a crucified Christ, and him only, though it was a stumbling-block to some, and foolishness to others ; but because it was committed to their trust, and they were the preachers of it, and agreed in the ministration of it ; and it is opposed to, and is distinct from, that which was preached by the false teachers ; and here intends not barely the Gospel itself, but chiefly their preaching of it : and this *came unto* them being sent of God, for wherever

the Gospel comes, it comes with a mission and commission from God ; and being brought unto them by the apostles, who were bringers and publishers of the good tidings of good things, it came unthought of, unsought and unasked for by them ; and that not only externally, which to have is a great blessing, but internally, *eis vobis, into you* ; it came not barely into their ears vocally, and into their heads notionally ; but into their hearts, and worked effectually there ; it was mixed with faith, and was profitable ; it became the ingrafted word, and dwelt richly in them : for it came to them not *in word only* ; it did come in word, it could not come without words, there is no interpreting of Scripture, nor preaching of the Gospel, nor hearing of it without words, without articulate sounds ; but not only with these, nor with wisdom of words, with enticing words of man's wisdom, with words which man's wisdom teacheth ; as also not in the mere notion and letter of the Gospel, which when it comes in that manner is a dead letter, and the savour of death unto death : *but in power* ; not merely preached in a powerful way, or attended with miraculous operations, though doubtless both were true ; for the apostle was a powerful preacher, and his ministry was confirmed by signs and wonders and mighty deeds ; but from neither of these could he conclude the election of these people : but the preaching of the Gospel was accompanied with the powerful efficacy of the grace of God, working by it upon them ; so that it became the power of God unto salvation to them ; it came to them in the demonstration of the spirit of God, and of power, quickening them who were dead in trespasses and sin, enlightening their dark understandings, unstopping their deaf ears, softening their hard hearts, and delivering them from the slavery of sin and Satan ; from whence it clearly appeared that they were the chosen of God, and precious : *and in the Holy Ghost* ; the Gospel was not only preached under the influence, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and attended with his extraordinary gifts for the confirmation of it, which it might be, and be no proof of the election of these persons to eternal life ; but it came by the power of the Holy Spirit to their souls, working and implanting his graces in them, as faith, hope, and love, and every other ; and he himself was received along with it, as a spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and of faith and adoption ; all which gave full evidence of their election : *and in much assurance* ; not on the preacher's side, as if the Gospel was preached by him with great assurance, boldness, and confidence ; or with great strength of evidence, giving clear and full proof of what was delivered sufficient to ascertain it, and persuade any one to the belief of it ; or *with much fulness*, as some render the words, that is, of the Gospel of Christ, and of the gifts of the spirit, and to a multitude of persons ; all which might be, and yet be no proof of the choice of these persons in Christ to eternal salvation ; but the Gospel preached to them was blessed to produce in them much assurance, or a large assurance, if not a full one, of the grace of faith in Christ, and of hope of eternal life by him, and of understanding of the doctrines of the Gospel, and of interest in the blessings of grace held forth in them ;

and this being a fruit, was an evidence of electing grace: *as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.* The apostle appeals to themselves for the truth of what he had said; who must have observed, and could not but remember, with what meanness they appeared, with what fear and trembling, with what plainness and simplicity, without the enticing words of man's wisdom; what a contemptible figure they made, how they wrought with their own hands, and endured reproach and persecution for their sakes, that they might obtain salvation by Christ with eternal glory; and had nothing to recommend them to them, to win upon them, and engage their attention, and strike their affection; or persuade them to receive their persons, and believe their doctrines; wherefore the effects their ministry had upon them were not owing to the charms of words, the force of language, and power of oratory; or to any external thing in them, or done by them; but must be ascribed to the spirit of God, and to the power and efficacy of his grace.

Ver. 6. *And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, &c.*] So far followers of them as they were of Christ, in embracing the Gospel, submitting to the ordinances of it, professing the name of Christ, and suffering for his sake; the Alexandrian copy reads, *of God, and others, of Christ: having received the word; the Gospel, the word of truth, peace, and righteousness, and of salvation by Christ; which they received not as the word of man, but of God; and that in much affliction; referring to the uproar made by the baser sort of people, instigated by the unbelieving Jews, and the trouble they gave to Jason and other brethren, mentioned in Acts xvii. 1, 5—9.* and this is a considerable commendation of them, that at a time when others were offended and fell off from hearing the word, and a profession of the Gospel, they should receive it, and that *with much joy of the Holy Ghost; not with a carnal joy, or with a mere flash of natural affection, as in the stony-ground hearers, and in the Jews, who rejoiced for a while in John's ministry, and in Herod, who sometimes heard him gladly; but with a spiritual joy of the Holy Ghost's producing in them, applying the word with power to them, giving them a spiritual gust of it, and pleasure in it, raising in their souls a joy upon the most solid foundation.*

Ver. 7. *So that ye were ensamples to all that believe, &c.*] They were not only followers of Christ and his apostles, whom they took for examples of faith, holiness, courage, meekness, and patience; but they were patterns of good works, and of suffering afflictions to other believers, even to all that knew them, or heard of them, particularly *in Macedonia; as at Philippi and other places; though the Gospel was first preached there, and they had received it, and a Gospel church-state was formed there; yet these were more forward in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty, and were even ensamples to them to copy after; so the first are sometimes last, and the last first: and Achaia; another part of Greece, the metropolis of which was Corinth, where there also was a very considerable church; but these saints at Thessalonica set them an example in many things, and particularly in acts of beneficence and liberality, being one of the churches of Macedonia spoken of in 2 Cor. viii. 1.*

Ver. 8. *For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, &c.*] By which is meant the Gospel, and is so called because it is from the Lord, as the author of it; and it is of the Lord, as the subject of it; and it is by the Lord, as the minister or dispenser of it; and it is owing to the efficacy of his grace that it is useful and successful, and ought to be attended to, received, and obeyed, not as the word of man, but as the word of the Lord. This is said to have *sounded out*, alluding to the blowing of a trumpet, to which the Gospel is sometimes compared, as to the silver trumpet under the law, for the gathering of the people of Israel; or to the trumpet blown in the years of jubilee, which proclaimed liberty, release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, as the Gospel in a spiritual sense does; or to the trumpet used in war to prepare for the battle, and therefore should not give an uncertain sound; or as used musically, the Gospel being a joyful sound; and this sounding of it may denote the clear publication and open declaration, and large spread of it far and near: though, when it is said to sound forth from the Thessalonians, it is not to be understood as if the Gospel first began to be preached among them, and from thence went to other places; it was preached at Philippi before it came to them, and at many other places before it was there; the word of the Lord, according to the prophecy of Isa. ii. 2. came from Jerusalem; Christ and his apostles first preached there, and from thence their words and sound went to the ends of the earth; but not so much the preaching of the Gospel, as the fame and report of its being preached in this place, is here meant: and so the Latin translation of the Syriac version renders it, *for from you went the report of the word of our Lord; the fame of its being preached and received at Thessalonica, in the manner it was, spread itself, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place; not only at Philippi, Berræa, Athens, and Corinth, and other cities and towns in those countries, but also in other parts of the world; and what greatly contributed to it were the uproar that was made at Thessalonica, and continued at Berræa upon the first preaching of the Gospel in those parts by the unbelieving Jews; as also the large numbers both of Greeks and Jews, and of devout women of considerable families, that were converted: to which may be added, that Thessalonica was the metropolis of Macedonia, and a city of great trade, and much frequented from all parts both by sea and land; and by this means it came to pass, that not only the fame of the preaching of the word among them went abroad everywhere; but, as the apostle adds, *your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; meaning the grace of faith bestowed on them, by which they received the Gospel in the love of it, assented to it, and professed it, and which has God for its object, and is very valuable, since such public notice is taken of it; and which shews that it was not kept to themselves, and lay hid in their own breasts; but they declared it both by words and by deeds, by making a profession of it, and by walking agreeably to it: so that we had no need to speak any thing; the Syriac version adds, concerning you; concerning the preaching of the Gospel among them, their faith in it and profession of it, all being so well known in the several places where they came;**

for it seems it was usual with the apostles, when they came to any place, to speak of their success in others, and of the faith, and hope, and joy of other Christians, for the encouragement of, and as ensamples to those to whom they minister; but with relation to the Thessalonians this was unnecessary.

Ver. 9. *For they themselves shew of us, &c.*] Either the above reports of the preaching of the Gospel to the Thessalonians, and of their faith in God; or rather the persons to whom these reports were brought, openly and publicly, and largely declared concerning the apostles, *what manner of entering in we had unto you*: under what difficulties they laboured, what contention they had with the unbelieving Jews, what reproaches were cast upon them, and what persecutions they endured when they first entered their city and synagogue, and preached the Gospel to them; and in what manner they did preach it, with what boldness, sincerity, uprightness and affection, and without flattery, covetousness, and vain glory; and with what power it came to them, and what success attended it, and how readily, cheerfully, and reverently both they and that were received by them: *and how ye turned to God from idols*: immediately and at once, upon the preaching of the Gospel to them, being first turned by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; for the first work of conversion is God's work; then they themselves, under the influence of the same grace, turned to the one God, from their internal idols, their sins and lusts, and from their external idols, their many false and fictitious deities: for the Thessalonians before the Gospel came among them were idolaters; here the *Dii Cabiri*, the great and chief gods of the Gentiles, were worshipped; as Jupiter and Bacchus, Ceres and Proserpina, Pluto and Mercury, Castor and Pollux, and Esculapius; these the Macedonians, and particularly the Thessalonians, worshipped with great devotion and reverence⁴: but now they turned from them and forsook them, *to serve the living and true God*; who is called the *living God*, because he has life in and of himself, and is the fountain of life to others; from whom all living creatures have their life, and are supported in it by him; and in opposition to the above idols, which were inanimate things made of wood or metal, and were images of men that had been dead long ago: and the *true God*, because he is truth itself and cannot lie, who faithfully performs all his promises, and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and in opposition to the nominal and fictitious deities of the Gentiles, which were only in name, not in truth and reality, or by nature gods: now though these

Thessalonians had before done service to these idols, they now turned from them to serve the one living and true God; not only externally, by embracing and professing his Gospel, submitting to his ordinances, and walking according to the rules prescribed by him; but also internally, in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and every other grace.

Ver. 10. *And to wait for his son from heaven, &c.*] The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the natural, essential, and eternal son of God; and whoever is truly converted, is not only turned to God the father, and believes in him; but also believes in, receives, embraces, and professes his son Jesus Christ; who became incarnate, and, in the human nature he assumed, obeyed, suffered, and died and rose again, and ascended into heaven, where he now is, and will be till the time of the restitution of all things; when he will descend from thence, and come and judge the world in righteousness; and from thence the saints expect him, and look and wait by faith for eternal glory and happiness by him, and with him at his appearance and kingdom; so that many articles of faith are contained in this expression, which these Thessalonians were acquainted with, believed, and acted upon: and Christ the son of God is further described as that person *whom he raised from the dead*; that is, whom God the father raised from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the son of God; and which supposes his dying for the sins of his people, as it expresses his rising again for their justification; things which the faith of these believers was led unto, and in which light they viewed him: *even Jesus, which delivered us from wrath to come*; which is revealed from heaven against sin, and comes upon the children of disobedience; which all men are deserving of, even God's elect themselves, but shall not partake of, because they are not appointed to it, but to salvation; and because they are justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and so are saved from it; not from all fears about it, and apprehensions of it, which they are filled with, especially under first awakenings, and sometimes afterwards when under afflictive providences; but they are delivered from the thing itself, by which is meant vindictive punishment, even from all punishment in this life, for there is no wrath mixed with any of their mercies or their chastisements; and from all punishment in the world to come, which will fall heavy on others; and that because Christ has bore their sins, and the wrath of God and curse of the law, due unto them, in their room and stead.

C H A P. II.

THE apostle in this chapter gives a further account of his ministry among the Thessalonians, of the nature, manner, and success of it, and of his regard to them, and conduct and conversation when with them; and commends their readiness in receiving the Gospel, and excuses his present absence from them. He appeals to them themselves for the truth of it, that his entrance to them, or preaching among them,

⁴ Gutherlothus de mysteriis Deor. Cabirorum, c. 13. p. 94, 95. Jul. Firmicus de errore prof. relig. p. 18.

was not in vain and without success, ver. 1. that it was with all boldness and intrepidity of mind, notwithstanding what he had suffered before for it, ver. 2. and with all integrity and faithfulness to the trust reposed in him by the Lord, without deceit and guile, or seeking to please men, but God the searcher of hearts, who had committed this trust unto him, ver. 3, 4. and that neither then, nor at any other time, he had used flattery, or shewed covetousness; which he calls God to witness, ver. 5. nor of them or others sought glory and honour, even that which was due unto him by virtue of his office, ver. 6. but had shewed all gentleness, humanity, and affection; which he illustrates by the simile of a nurse cherishing her children, ver. 7. and by the willingness he shewed not only to preach the Gospel to them, but to lay down his life for them, had it been necessary; so great was his affection for them, ver. 8. and, as a proof of this, he puts them in mind of his labours, both in preaching the word, and in working with his own hands; because he would not be burdensome and chargeable to them, ver. 9. and as for his conversation among them, he appeals both to God and them, how holy, just, and unblemished it was, ver. 10. and reminds them of his tenderness, diligence, and faithfulness, in exhorting, comforting, and charging them, particularly to walk worthy of God; since he had called them to his kingdom and glory, ver. 11; 12. and then he expresses his thankfulness to God for their reception of the word of the Gospel; not as an human invention, but as of God, which wrought effectually in them, ver. 13. the evidence of which were partly their imitation of the churches of Christ in Judea, in doctrine and practice; and partly their suffering the same things they did of the Jews, ver. 14. who are described by their ill usage of, and cruelty to, Christ, their own prophets, and his apostles, by their not pleasing God, and by their contradiction to men; an instance of which is given in prohibiting the apostles to preach to the Gentiles, whose end in so doing with respect to the Gentiles, was that they might not be saved; but God's end in suffering them so to do, was with respect to them that they might fill up their iniquity, and so entire wrath and ruin come upon them, as had been foretold, ver. 15, 16. and then the apostle concludes the chapter, by expressing his affectionate concern in parting with them, which was not in heart but in body; by declaring his earnest desire and endeavour to see them again; and by observing to them the reason he had not and could not come unto them, because Satan hindered him, ver. 17, 18. the cause of his being so desirous to see them, was their being his hope, joy, glory, and crown of rejoicing, both now and hereafter, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, &c.*] The apostle having observed in ch. i. 9. that those persons to whom the report of the Gospel being preached at Thessalonica, and the success of it there was made, shewed everywhere both what manner of entrance he and his fellow-ministers had in that place, and the conversion of many souls there; he enlarges upon the latter, and here reassumes the former, and appeals to the Thessalonians themselves, who must know full well, and better than

others, what an entrance it was; and which is to be understood not merely of a corporeal entrance into their city and synagogue, but of their coming among them, by the preaching of the Gospel, as the ministers of the word and ambassadors of Christ: *that it was not in vain*; it was not a vain shew, with outward pomp and splendour, as the public entrances of ambassadors into cities usually are; but with great meanness, poverty, reproach, and persecution, having been lately beaten and ill used at Philippi; nor was it with great swelling words of vanity, with the enticing words of man's wisdom, to tickle the ear, please the fancy, and work upon the passions of natural men, in which manner the false teachers came: but the apostle came not with deceit and guile, with flattering words or a cloak of covetousness, or with a view to vain glory and worldly advantage; nor was the message they came with, from the King of kings, a vain, light, empty, and trifling one; but solid and substantial, and of the greatest importance; the doctrine they taught was not comparable to chaff and wind; it was not corrupt philosophy and vain deceit, the traditions and commandments of men, but sound doctrine, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ: nor was it fruitless and without effect; the word did not return void and empty; but was powerful and efficacious to the conversion of many souls. Christ was with them both to assist them in their ministry, and to bless it to the salvation of men; nor was their coming to Thessalonica an human scheme, a rash enterprise, engaged in on their own heads, on a slight and empty foundation; but upon good and solid grounds, by divine direction and counsel; see Acts xvi. 9, 10.

Ver. 2. *But even after that we had suffered before, &c.*] Before they came to Thessalonica, which they would not have done, had their ministry been a light and empty one in itself, and unprofitable to others; and especially had this been the case, they would never have rashly engaged in it again, and exposed themselves to fresh sufferings and dangers, as they did: *and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi*; being beaten with many stripes, and put into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, at the instigation of the masters of the damsel that had a spirit of divination, by whom they got much gain, and which Paul dispossessed; see Acts xvi. 16—24. *we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention*: and which still made it more manifestly appear, that the errand they came upon was a matter of importance, and that they did not proceed on a slight foundation: what they spoke was *the Gospel*, salvation by Christ, and not by the works of the law; the pure Gospel, and not a mixed one, free from the mixture of all human doctrines and inventions of men, without any adulteration and inconsistency; the whole of the Gospel, and not a part of it only; they declared the whole counsel of God, and kept back nothing that might be profitable: and this is styled *the Gospel of God*, to distinguish it from the Gospel of men, or that which the false teachers taught, and which was called the Gospel, though it was not so; and to express the excellency of it, from the author of it, who is God, it being the produce of his wisdom and grace; and from the matter of it, it containing the

good will of God to men, setting forth the grace of God in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and glorification, and expressing things relating to the kingdom of God, a meetness for it, and a right unto it; and it being so called shews it to be something divine, a message sent from God to sinful men; and gives a reason why the apostles were so bold to speak it, because it was not of men, but God. The Syriac version renders it the *Gospel of Christ*; see Rom. i. 16. and it being so, they were bold to speak it; or they spoke it both with liberty of mind, the spirit of God being with them, and with freedom of speech, a door of utterance being opened for them; as also with great courage and intrepidity, notwithstanding what they had suffered before, and the ill treatment they had met with at Philippi; and though they knew that the Gospel they spoke was contrary to the Jews, was a stumbling-block to them, and they had an inveterate prejudice against it; and was foolishness to the Greeks, and was derided by them, and they were sure to meet with reproach and persecution on account of it: yet they boldly and faithfully preached it, fearing not the face of men, nor their revilings: though it was with much contention; referring to the tumult raised by the baser sort, who, instigated by others, assaulted Jason and the brethren, where the apostles were, Acts xvii. 5, 6. or to the disputes which they had with the unbelieving Jews, who contradicted and blasphemed what they said; or to the division the Gospel made, as through the corruption of nature it makes wherever it comes, between the nearest relations and friends, some being for it, and others against it; or this may be expressive of the zeal with which the apostles preached, who earnestly contended for it, as persons in a combat or agony; they fought the good fight of faith valiantly, they endured hardness as good soldiers of Christ, and gave not way to the enemy, no, not for an hour: and all this was *in our God*; or by the confidence of our God, as the Syriac version renders it; trusting in him and relying upon him, being assisted by his grace, and strengthened by his power, and receiving much encouragement from a view of him as a covenant God; faith in God as a covenant God, will make a man bold in his cause; see Dan. iii. 17.

Ver. 3. *For our exhortation, &c.*] Or *consolation*: for the ministry of the Gospel, which is here meant, consists of doctrines full of comfort to distressed minds, such as free justification by the righteousness of Christ, full pardon by his blood, and complete satisfaction by his sacrifice; as well as of exhortations to the exercise of grace and discharge of duty: and this was *not of deceit*; or *error*, was not *fallacious*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; it consisted of nothing but truth, it was the word of truth, and the truth as it is in Jesus; nor did it proceed from any intention to deceive and impose on persons; it was no imposture: nor of *uncleanness*: it did not spring from any impure affection for any sin, for popular applause, or worldly interest; nor did the ministers of it connive at uncleanness in others, or practise it themselves, as did the false teachers; but bore their testimony against it, both by word and example, and taught no doctrine that encouraged to it; but, on the contrary, the doctrine which is according to godliness, and which

teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: *nor in guile*; as there was no deceitful design in the ministry of the word, nor any thing impure and immoral in the matter of it; so there was no artifice used in the dispensing of it; it was plain and simple, without any colour and guile, without the hidden things of dishonesty, without craftiness and handling the word deceitfully; and this is a reason why the apostles preached it with so much freedom and boldness, because there was nothing false, impure, or artful in it.

Ver. 4. *But as we were allowed of God, &c.*] Or, *approved of God*; not that there were any previous fitness and worthiness in them to be ministers of the word; but such was the good will and pleasure of God, that he from all eternity chose and appointed them to this work; and in his own time by his grace called them to it, and by his gifts qualified them for it, who otherwise were unworthy of it, and insufficient for it: *to be put in trust with the Gospel*; which is of great worth and value, a rich treasure, and of the last importance; which to be trusted with is a very great honour; and the discharge of such a trust requires great faithfulness, and which the apostles had: *even so we speak*; the Gospel as delivered to them, both as to matter and manner; neither taking from it nor adding to it, nor mixing it with any thing of their own, nor disguising it with any artifice: *not as pleasing men*; to gain favour and affection, esteem, applause, and honour from them; to escape reproach and persecution, and obtain worldly advantages by dropping, concealing, or blending of truths to make them more agreeable to the taste of natural men: *but God, which trieth our hearts*; studying to approve themselves to God, whose Gospel was committed to them, from whom they received gifts to preach it, and to whom they were accountable for all; and who being the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, knows the intentions and designs of men, and the springs of all actions; and sees through all artifices, and from whom nothing can be hidden, and who will, in his own time, bring to light the hidden things of darkness; under a sense of which faithful ministers act, as of sincerity, and as in the sight of an omniscient God.

Ver. 5. *For neither at any time used we flattering words, &c.*] To introduce them into the affections, and gain the esteem and good will of men; they did not in their ministry deliver such things as flattered men with a good opinion of themselves: they did not preach up the purity of human nature, but on the contrary the doctrine of original sin, the imputation of Adam's transgression to his posterity, and the corruption of all human nature; they asserted the universal pollution of it, of all men, and of all the powers and faculties of their souls, that they are all under the power and dominion of sin, are involved in the guilt of it, and are all guilty before God, and liable to everlasting wrath and punishment; and that unless they repented of their sins and believed in Christ, they would perish eternally; thus they dealt roundly and freely with men's consciences, and plainly, openly, and faithfully told them their case as it was: nor did they cry up the power of man's free will, which would have been grateful to Jews and Gentiles; but they declared

the reverse, they asserted the weakness and impotency of man, to any thing that is spiritually good; and represented him as a weak and strengthless creature, and unable to do any thing, even to think a good thought of himself; and ascribed all that a man is, or has, or does, that is good, to the grace and power of God, who works in him both to will and to do: nor did they plead for the sufficiency of man's righteousness to justify him before God, a doctrine very pleasing to human nature; but, on the contrary, they gave out that there was none righteous, no, not one of the sons of Adam, in and of themselves, or by virtue of any righteousness of their own; so far from it that they were full of all unrighteousness, and were not capable of working out a righteousness, or of attaining to the righteousness of the law; that what they did pretend to was not a justifying righteousness, and would give no right and title to eternal glory; and that the righteousness of Christ was the only righteousness, by which a man could be justified from all things, and in which he could be found safe. They did not blend and mix their doctrine to suit with the tastes of different men, but with all sincerity and plainness preached the truth, as it is in Jesus; they did not connive at the sins of men, cry Peace, Peace, when there was none, or sow pillows under their armholes, or promise them life, though they should not return from their wicked way; but they with great freedom inveighed against the sins of men, and exhorted them to repentance and reformation, as well as to faith in Christ for pardon and righteousness; nor did they wink at the sins of professors, or of one another, the Apostle Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed; and when they praised men for their gifts and graces, and the exercise of them, they took care to ascribe them to the grace of God, and give him the glory, and prevent men from boasting in themselves; in short, they acted the reverse of the false teachers, who had men's persons in admiration because of advantage, and by good words and fair speeches deceived the hearts of the simple; but so did not the apostles of Christ, no, never, not at any time: when they first came to Thessalonica during their stay there, either in public or in private: and though this was true of any other time and place, yet here must be confined to this, since the apostle appeals to this church for the truth of what he said, *as ye know*; for flattering words may be discerned; a flatterer is known by his words; though in general such is the weakness of human nature, that men love to be flattered, though they know they are: *nor a cloak of covetousness*; or *an occasion of it*, they did not take the opportunity or advantage by the ministry of the word, to indulge a covetous disposition, or to amass wealth and riches to themselves; or *an excuse for covetousness*, which covetous men are never at a loss to make, always pretending one thing or another to hide and cover their evil; but the apostles made no excuses, nor used any cloak, nor needed any to cover their covetousness, because they had not the thing; they did not pretend one thing and mean another; they did not, as the false apostles did, pretend to serve Christ, preach his Gospel, seek the glory of God and the good of souls, and mean themselves, and design their own worldly advantage; they did not make these a *pretence* for covetousness, they sincerely served

Christ, faithfully preached his Gospel, truly sought the glory of God, and were heartily concerned for the good of souls without any mercenary and selfish views; for the truth of which they could appeal to the heart-searching and rein-trying God, as the apostle here does, saying, *God is witness*; which is properly an oath, a solemn appeal to God; for since covetousness is an internal and secret sin, and may be so coloured and disguised as not easily to be discerned, as flattering words may, the apostle therefore calls God to witness the truth of what he had said.

Ver. 6. *Nor of men sought we glory, &c.*] Honour, esteem, and popular applause; for though there is an honour that is due to the faithful ministers of the word, who are highly to be esteemed for their works' sake, and as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God; and especially there was an honour and glory that belonged to the apostles of Christ as such, who were set in the highest office and place in the church; yet they did not seek after it as the Pharisees and false teachers did, who received honour one of another, and sought not that which comes from God only: but so did not the apostles; they took no steps this way to procure glory and esteem among men, but all the reverse; they preached doctrines which were not of men, nor according to men, nor agreeable to them; and these they delivered in a disagreeable way, not with enticing words of men's wisdom, they did not seek to please men, but spoke and did every thing that rendered them mean and despicable in their eyes; so that they looked upon them as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things: nor was this any disappointment to them, for to gain the favour of men was not their end and view; they did not seek for glory neither of the men of the world, *neither of you*; the church at Thessalonica, and the inhabitants of that place: *nor yet of others*; of other men, and churches elsewhere: *when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ: or have used authority*, which was given them, though not for destruction, but for edification; put on a magisterial air, and made use of the apostolic rod; appeared with some severity and rigour, and so have commanded awe, respect, and reverence: *or have been in honour*; insisted upon being treated in an honourable way, as the apostles of Christ, his ambassadors, who were sent and came in his name, and represented his person; and therefore to be received as he himself; though the phrase may rather have regard to an honourable maintenance, as in 2 Cor. xi. 9, which as the apostles of Christ they might have required as their due, but they chose rather to relinquish their right, and labour with their own hands, that they might not be chargeable: and so *glory* in the former clause may mean the same, even great and glorious things for themselves, a maintenance answerable to their high character and office, which they did not seek; but were content with a poor pittance, and such as they could get with their own hand-labour; in which sense the phrase, *double honour*, seems to be used in 1 Tim. v. 17, as appears by the reason given in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *But we were gentle among you, &c.*] Meek and humble, mild and moderate; not using severity, or carrying it in a haughty imperious manner; assum-

ing power and dominion, lording it over God's heritage, and commanding persons to do homage and honour to them, and forcing themselves upon them, and obliging them to maintain them. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, instead of *gentle*, read, *little children*; as the word signifies by adding a letter to it, and expresses much the same as the other, that they were harmless and modest, and disinterested; and sought not themselves neither honour nor wealth, but the real good of others, and were kind and tender, and affectionate to them: *even as a nurse cherisheth her children*: or *the children of her own self*; her own children, and so designs a nursing mother, one whose the children are, has bore them as well as nurses them, and therefore has the most tender concern for them; she lays them in her bosom, and hugs them in her arms, and so warms and cherishes them; gives them the breast, bears with their frowardness, condescends to do the meanest things for them; and that without any self-interest, from a pure parental affection for them: and such were the apostles to these Thessalonians; they were their spiritual parents, of whom they trailed in birth, till Christ was formed in them; they used them with the greatest fondness and tenderness; they fed them with the sincere milk of the word; they bore patiently all the slighting and ill treatment they met with; and condescended to men of low estates, and did them all the good offices they could, without any selfish views or sinister ends: a like simile is used by the Jews*, who say, "he that rises in the night to study in the law, the law makes known to him his offences; and not in a way of judgment, but **כְּמִתְּנוּת**, "as a mother makes known to her son, with *gentle words*:" but the ministration of the Gospel is much more gentle.

Ver. 8. *So being affectionately desirous of you, &c.*] Not of theirs but them; not of glory from them, nor a maintenance by them, but of their spiritual and eternal welfare; were as fond of them as a nursing mother is of her children, who, when absent from them but ever so little a while, longs to see them; see ver. 17. and chap. iii. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8. *we were willing*; took the utmost pleasure, delight, and complacency: *to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only*; the sincere milk of the word, which they did freely, fully, and for their spiritual good and profit, without any regard to any advantage of their own: *but also our own souls, or lives*; which is the highest expression and strongest proof of love that can be given; and respect is still had to the similitude of the nursing mother, who may be said to impart her blood, for such is her milk diversified, for the nourishment of her children: and such was the great concern of the apostles for the interest of Christ, the spread of the Gospel, and the good of souls, that their lives were not dear unto them, so that these ends might be answered: *because ye were dear unto us*; both because they were loved by God, redeemed by Christ, regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and had the image of Christ instamped upon them; and also because that they were their spiritual children; and as children are dear to their parents, so were these to them, even to such a degree, as that, were there a ne-

cessity for it, they could freely have laid down their lives for them.

Ver. 9. *For ye remember brethren, our labour and travail, &c.*] The great pains they took, even to weariness. The Vulgate Latin version renders the last word, *weariness*; and the Arabic version, *anxiety*; and the Ethiopic version, *affliction*; it is to be understood both of corporeal and spiritual labour, working with their hands and preaching the Gospel; this could not but be remembered by them, since it was not a year ago they were with them: *for labouring night and day*; at our handicraft, or *at the work of our hands*, as the Syriac version renders it; which they continually attended to, even night and day, when they were not preaching the Gospel, or disputing with the Jews, or praying and conversing with those that believed, or refreshing themselves with food and rest. The apostle's business was making of tents, see the note on Acts xviii. 3. *because we would not be chargeable to any of you*; neither to the whole body, nor to any single person; which shews that they did not seek their own ease and worldly interest; and proves what is before asserted, that they did not use a cloak of covetousness, but chose to forego, and not insist on what they had a right to, lest the Gospel should be hindered or reproached: *we preached unto you the Gospel of God*; freely and with great application and diligence; for this is the other part of their labour and travel; for the ministry of the word is a work, and a laborious one, when closely attended to; a preparation for it by prayer, reading, meditation, and much study, are wearisome and fatiguing; and to preach the word in season and out of season, with all long-suffering and doctrine, is very laborious; to which no man is sufficient of himself, and is a work which requires great faithfulness, application, and industry; and is oftentimes made the more heavy through the malice and opposition of enemies, and the weakness of friends.

Ver. 10. *Ye are witnesses, and God also, &c.*] Not so much to what goes before as to what follows after, relating to their holy walk and conversation among them, the more open part of which they were witness of; and for the more secret part God is appealed to, who is acquainted with the springs of actions, as well as with actions themselves: *how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe*. The Syriac version joins the last clause of the preceding verse with this, and reads the whole thus, *ye are witnesses, and God also, how purely and justly we preached unto you the Gospel of God, and how unblamable we were among all that believed*; referring the former part to the purity and integrity in which they preached the Gospel, and the latter to their unblemished conduct among the saints; but the whole of it refers to their conversation, which was holy, externally holy, arising from internal principles of holiness in their hearts, and free from that impurity and filthiness with which the false teachers were polluted; and confirms what is before said, that their exhortation was not of uncleanness: and it was likewise *just*, they were righteous in the sight of God through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and in conse-

* Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 5.

quence of this lived righteously before men, and were injurious to no man's person nor property : and their conversation was also *unblamable* ; not that they were without sin, and so without blame in themselves, of without the commission of sin by them, or that they passed without censure in the world, for they went through honour and dishonour, through good report and bad report, and had all manner of evil spoken of them falsely for Christ's name's sake ; but by the grace of God, they had their conversation among them that believed so, that there was nothing material to be alleged against them, or any just cause of blame to be laid either on their persons or their ministry ; and which is mentioned for imitation.

Ver. 11. *As you know, &c.*] This is added to the end of the last verse in the Arabic version, and which begins this verse thus, *as one of you, and as a father comforting his sons, so we, &c.* but for what is said in the former verse, an appeal is made both to God and to the Thessalonians, so that there is no need of adding such a clause there ; it properly stands here in connexion with what follows, *how we exhorted* ; to flee from wrath to come, and to Christ for refuge ; to look to, and believe in him, as the only Saviour of lost sinners ; to perform the duties of religion, and to continue in the faith ; to cleave to Christ, and walk on in him as they had received him, and to abide by the truths and ordinances of the Gospel they had embraced : *and comforted* ; under a sense of sin, with the soul-comforting doctrines of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, of full pardon by his blood, and of a plenary satisfaction and atonement by his sacrifice ; and under all their afflictions and persecutions for the sake of Christ, with exceeding great and precious promises of the presence, grace, and strength of Christ here, and glory hereafter : *and charged every one of you* ; not only publicly, but privately, going from house to house ; not in an austere and domineering way, but with the greatest tenderness, and yet faithfulness : *even as a father doth his children* ; not only in an authoritative, but in an affectionate way, and also with solid wisdom and judgment ; for in such a relation, in a spiritual sense, did the apostle and his fellow-ministers stand in to them ; see 1 Cor. iv. 15. and the substance of the charge is as follows :

Ver. 12. *That ye would walk worthy of God, &c.*] In imitation of him ; not of his perfections, which are inimitable, but of his works ; and these not of his power and wisdom, but those of kindness and beneficence, and of righteousness and holiness ; and in conformity to his revealed will, which is good, perfect, and acceptable ; and agreeably to his Gospel, that that may be adorned, and not blasphemed ; and particularly, in a manner worthy of the vocation wherewith saints are called by him : since it follows, *who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory* ; which instance of the grace of God carries in it many arguments, and lays many obligations on the persons interested in it, to walk in their lives and conversations worthy of God ; which may be taken from the nature of this call, which is not a mere external one by the outward ministry of the word, but an internal and effectual one, by the powerful and efficacious grace of God ; it is a call of persons out of darkness into light, and there-

fore it becomes them to walk as children of the light, and honestly, as in the day-time ; and from a state of bondage to sin and Satan, unto liberty, and therefore ought not to walk after the dictates of corrupt nature, nor the suggestions of Satan, but after the spirit of God, who is a spirit of liberty ; and from fellowship with the world, and the men of it, to communion with Christ, and therefore should not walk as other Gentiles do, nor run with them in the same excess of riot ; in short, such are called with an holy calling, and to holiness, and have in their effectual vocation principles of holiness implanted in them, and therefore should be holy in all manner of conversation : moreover, arguments may be taken from the consideration of him that calls, God, who is a holy Being, and therefore as he that hath called them is holy, so should they be likewise ; he is the God of all grace that has called them, and he has called them by his grace, and to special blessings of grace, and that according to his sovereign will and pleasure ; and has called them the most unworthy, base, mean, and despicable, and not others, which greatly enhances the obligation to walk worthy of him : to which add, that he that calls is God that dwells on high in heaven, and changes not, and such is his call ; hence it is styled the high calling of God, and the heavenly calling, and said to be without repentance ; and therefore the saints should live and walk as pilgrims and strangers here, and be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord : likewise the consideration of what they are called to should engage them to a becoming walk, being called to *his kingdom* ; to the kingdom of grace, which lies in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and which cannot be moved, and where they are kings and priests unto God ; and unto a Gospel church-state, and to all the privileges and immunities of it ; and unto the kingdom of heaven, prepared by God for them from the foundation of the world, their father's free gift to them, of which they are born heirs-apparent in regeneration, and have both a meetness for it, and a right unto it ; and therefore ought to behave suitable to this high honour and dignity which belong unto them : and this latter sense is the rather to be chose, since it follows, *and glory* : or to *his glory*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read ; to the glory of God, to the beholding of the glory of God through Christ, and the glory of Christ himself ; and to a participation of that glory which God has provided, and is in the hands of Christ for them, where it is hid, who when he shall appear, they'll appear with him in glory ; which will be both upon their souls and bodies ; and this will be an eternal glory, a glory that fades not away, and not like the glory of this world, which is transient, and soon passes away, but this will abide for ever ; and therefore since the saints are called to the obtaining of this, it is a reason why their conversation should be in heaven now, and as becomes God and his Gospel.

Ver. 13. *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, &c.*] As for their election of God, ch. i. 4. so for their effectual vocation by his grace, to his kingdom and glory, just now mentioned, as well as for their reception of the word of God as such, hereafter expressed ; since their having it and receiving it, and the

effectual operation of it in them, were owing to the goodness and grace of God, and therefore required a constant sense of the favour, and thankfulness, without ceasing, for it. The apostle having at large considered the manner of his and his fellow-ministers' entrance among them without guile, flattery, covetousness, or any sinister view, and with all simplicity, integrity, labour, diligence, affection, and tenderness, returns to observe the reception their ministry met with, and the influence and effect it had upon them: *because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us; or the word of hearing of God, as the Vulgate Latin version from the Greek text literally renders it; that is, the Gospel which was preached by the apostles, and was heard and received by these Thessalonians: and it is called the word of God, because God is the author of it; it comes from him, and is ministered by his authority, and is a part of that written word which is given by his inspiration; and because his grace in choosing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, adopting, regenerating, and giving eternal life to men, and the declaration of his will concerning saving them by his son Jesus Christ, are the subject-matter of it; and because he owns and blesses it, for the conversion and comfort of his people: and it may be called the word of hearing of God, because coming from him, and containing his will, and preached by his order, and succeeded by his power, hearing comes by it; it is divinely breathed by him; he speaks in it by his ministers, and he is heard of in it by his people; as he was by these believers, who heard his word both externally and internally; and received it into their understandings, so as to know it spiritually and experimentally; into their minds, not merely notionally, and so as to assent to the truth of it, and give credit to it, but so as to believe in Christ revealed in it; and into their affections, in the love of it, and with joy in the Holy Ghost; they received it gladly, and with meekness and readiness, so that it became the ingrafted word, and brought forth fruit in them: the manner in which they received it follows, ye received it not as the word of men; which is often fallacious and deceitful, at least dubious and uncertain, and not to be depended on; nor did they receive it as the words of wise men are received, and because it was clothed with the wisdom, eloquence, and oratory of men, for it was destitute of these; nor upon the credit and authority of men, no, not of the apostles themselves: but as it is in truth the word of God: it appearing to be agreeably to the perfections of his nature, and to the Scriptures of truth, and it bearing his impress and divine authority, they received it with much assurance and certainty, as infallible truth; and which was inviolably to be adhered to, without any alteration, without adding to it or taking from it; and to be had and retained in the greatest esteem and reverence, and never to be departed from: and that they received it in this manner, appears from its operation in them, which effectually worketh also in you that believe; the Vulgate Latin version reads, who worketh; referring it to God, as indeed it may be referred to him, as well as to his word; but the sense is much the same, for God works by and with his word, and his word only effectually works when it comes in power; or is the power of*

God unto salvation to them that believe; and when it does come with a divine commission and power, it effectually works to the quickening of dead sinners, the enlightening of dark minds, the unstopping of deaf ears, the softening of hard hearts, producing faith which works by love, encouraging hope, delivering from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and comforting and establishing the hearts of the saints under all afflictions, trials, and persecutions.

Ver. 14. *For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, &c.]* As of the Lord and of the apostle, ch. i. 6. so of the churches of God that were before them, who were gathered out of the world by the grace of God; and who were united in the fear of God, and assembled together for his worship, to bear a testimony to his truth and ordinances, and for the glory of his name: these they followed in the faith and order of the Gospel, and became like them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the word; or equal to them, were upon an equal foot with them, as the Arabic; that is, in suffering reproach and persecution for the Gospel, as the latter part of the verse shews; and their bearing these with patience, courage, and constancy, was a proof that the word of God had a place, and wrought effectually in them; otherwise they would never have endured such things as they did, and as other churches did: *which in Judea are in Christ Jesus;* for besides the church at Jerusalem, there were many churches in Judea and Galilee; see Acts ix. 31. Gal. i. 22. which shews that the primitive churches were not national, but congregational: and these were in Christ Jesus; *in the faith of Jesus Christ,* as the Arabic version renders it; which distinguishes them from the synagogues, or congregations of the Jews, which did not believe in Christ; see the note on ch. i. 1. *For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen;* the inhabitants of Thessalonica, the baser sort of them, who were stirred up by the unbelieving Jews of that place, to make an uproar in the city, and assault the house of Jason, in order to seize upon the apostles; see Acts xvii. 6. *Even as they have of the Jews;* in like manner as the churches of Judea suffered by the Jews their countrymen; see Acts viii. 1, 3. Heb. x. 32, 33, 34.

Ver. 15. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus, &c.]* For though Pilate condemned him to death, and the Roman soldiers executed the sentence, yet it was through the malice and envy of the Jews that he was delivered to him, who brought charges against him, and insisted upon the crucifixion of him; and who are therefore said to have taken him with wicked hands, and crucified and slain him; and to have killed the Prince of life, and to have been the betrayers and murderers of him; and therefore it is no wonder that such persons should persecute the followers of Christ, whether in Judea or elsewhere: *and their own prophets;* whom God sent unto them; these they not only mocked and misused, and persecuted, but many of them they put to death, as Isaiah and others; and though this was done by their fathers, yet the present generation were the children of them that killed the prophets; and shewed themselves to be of the same principles, and by their practices approved of what they had done: hence our Lord addresses the city of Jerusalem thus,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, Matt. xxiii. 31, 34, 37. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase *their own*, and so does the Alexandrian copy; but it stands in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and is rightly retained, it having an emphasis in it; these prophets being of their own nation, born among them, and raised up in the midst of them, and sent unto them particularly, and yet were so used; and therefore it need not seem strange that they should treat in an ill manner persons of a lower character, that did not agree with them; the consideration of which serves to support under reproach and persecution; see Matt. v. 12. *And have persecuted us*; the apostles of Christ; have drove us out of our own country, and pursued us from place to place, and caused us to flee from one city to another: *and they please not God*; though they reckoned themselves his chosen people, the favourites of heaven, and whom God delighted in; but neither their persons nor their actions were pleasing to him, their carnal minds being enmity to him, to his law and to his Gospel; and they in the flesh, or in an unregenerate estate, and without faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God, and their actions such as before described: *and are contrary to all men*; not only Christians, but Heathens; to all the Gentiles, who are called all men, the nations of the world, the world, and the whole world; they were contrary to these, both in their religious and civil principles, and had an aversion to them, of which the following is a full instance.

Ver. 16. *Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, &c.*] Speaking or preaching the Gospel is the ordinary means of saving souls, or of acquainting them with the way of salvation, the necessity of it, and of the application of it to them, and with this end and view it is preached: now though the Jews disbelieved the Gospel, and despised the ministry of it, and disavowed any such use and end of it, yet such was their envy at the Gentiles, and their hatred of them, that could they have believed it to be the means of salvation, they would have forbidden the preaching of it to them, as they now did; and it is certain, that even the believing Jews, through ignorance, did at first disapprove of the ministry of the word to the Gentiles; see Acts xi. 1, 2, 3. such was the aversion of that nation to all others, and which perfectly agrees with their general sentiments, which forbid the explanation of the law to the Gentiles; and therefore it need not be wondered at, that they should do all that in them lay to hinder the entrance and spread of the Gospel among them, of which take the following proof: "whoever has not the holy name sealed and bound in his flesh (*i.e.* is not circumcised) אסיר לאודעה ליה מלה דאורייתא " *it is forbidden to make known to him a word of the law*, and much less to study in it—and whoever is not circumcised, and they give to him אנת ועזר " *אנת ועזר, the least thing in the law*, 'tis as if he destroyed the world, and dealt falsely with the name of God—Hillel and Shammai did not make known to Onkelos a word of the law, until he was circumcised—and the traditions are, that even though

" a man is circumcised, yet if he does not do the commands of the law, lo, he is as a Gentile in all things, " and it is forbidden to teach him the words of the law : " nay, it is a rule with the Jews †, that " if a Gentile " studies in the law, he is guilty of death : " and thus were they left in providence, to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, to fill up their sins alway; the measure of their own and their fathers' iniquities; see Matt. xxiii. 32. a phrase expressive of the abounding of their sins, and of their being under a divine appointment, and of their being limited and restrained by a divine power, and overruled by infinite wisdom, to answer some ends and purposes of God's glory; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost; which is to be understood, not of their wrath and fury being come to its highest degree and pitch against the followers of Christ, but of the wrath of God, as the Vulgate Latin version and Beza's ancient copy express it; and designs not so much eternal punishment, as the Ethiopic version renders the phrase, or everlasting wrath and damnation on the reprobate part of that people, as temporal ruin and destruction, which was now near at hand, and hung over their heads; and therefore is said to be come to them, and which in a little time fell upon their nation and city, and temple, even to the uttermost, to the last degree; and was, as the Arabic version renders it, *wrath consuming; or the consummation, and that determined poured upon the desolate*, spoken of in Dan. ix. 27. and which, as it is come upon them, will remain unto the end, as the phrase may also be rendered; unto the end of the world, till the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and then God's elect among the Jews shall obtain mercy, and be called, and so all Israel shall be saved, Rom. xi. 25, 26.

Ver. 17. *But we, brethren, being taken from you, &c.*] Here more properly should begin the third chapter, in which the apostle having before observed the manner of his entrance among these people, the nature of his ministry, the reception the word of God met with among them, and the powerful effect it had upon them, insomuch that they patiently and cheerfully bore persecution for the sake of it; he excuses his not having been with them again as yet, which he knew was proper and necessary, as he was their apostle and spiritual father; and expresses an affectionate concern at his parting with them in the manner he did, which was not his own choice and voluntary act, but was obliged to it, being hurried away at once, at an unawares in the night, by reason of the uproar made in the city by the baser sort of people, instigated by the unbelieving Jews; so that he and his fellow-ministers had not the opportunity of taking their leave of them, as they would have done: hence he says, *we being taken from you*; they were, as it were, passive in it; they were forced away on a sudden, they did not go of themselves; the word used is very uncommon and emphatical, and may be literally rendered, *we being orphanized from you*; which represents this parting to be like the separation made by death, between parents and children; when either parents are deprived of their children, or children of their parents,

† Zohar in Lev. fol. 30. 2, 3.

† T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Mela'chim, c. 10. sect. 9.

and are left orphans or fatherless; and just in such a destitute and desolate condition were the apostle and his companions in, in their account; nor need it to be wondered at, when they are before compared to a nursing mother and a tender father, as they were to these their spiritual children: and he further observes, that this removal from them, was *for a short time*, or *for the time of an hour*; which may either denote the suddenness of it, being as it were at an hour's warning, having no more notice of it than for the space of an hour; or it may express the great affection he and his fellow-ministers had for them, insomuch that they could not bear an absence from them, though but for an hour; or it may be said by way of comfort, that this parting was but for a short time, and that in a little while they might hope to see them again; and if not in this life, yet in the future state, when they should meet and never part more, and which would be but in a short time at longest: moreover, this separation was only *in presence*: in person, in face, in sight, in body, it was but a corporeal one: *not in heart*; the apostle's heart was with them, as much as if present; they were always in his mind, and remembered by him, at the throne; he had as it were the images of them continually before him, as parents have of their children when at a distance from them; his heart was after them, and his affections moved strongly towards them: and the effect this distance had on him, and those that were with him, was this, that they *endeavoured the more abundantly*, he observes, *to see your face with great desire*: it made them but the more desirous of seeing them face to face again, and put them upon attempting with more abundant earnestness and diligence to come and see them.

Ver. 18. *Wherefore we would have come unto you, &c.*] They not only had a will, and purposed in themselves, and entered into some resolutions to come unto them, but endeavoured to put them into execution: *even I Paul*: as well as Silas and Timotheus; the latter of which had been with them, and the others had as good a will, and especially Paul: and that *once and again*: or *once and twice*: so the Jews used^b to speak פעם ראשונה ושנית, *one time and a second*; that is, several times: *but Satan hindered us*. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *hindered me*: by moving the mob which rose at Thessalonica, to go to Berea, and disturb the apostle there; which obliged him, contrary to his will, to go to Athens instead of returning to Thessalonica, as he intended; and when at Athens, from whence also he might purpose to return thither, he was hindered by the disputes the Jews and the Stoics, and Epicurean philosophers, had with him; and after that, might be prevented by the lying in wait of the Jews for him, of which he might be informed; or by disturbances raised in the church, or churches, where he was, by the false teachers; which required his stay with them, to oppose and refute error and heresy, and to make up differences that arose among true Christians, forevented by Satan and his emissaries; see Rom. i. 13. Satan does all he can to hinder the preaching of the Gospel, the hearing of the word, the

profession of religion, and the saints coming together, and having spiritual conversation with each other; being, as his name *Satan* signifies, an enemy to Christ and his interest, and to the souls of men: indeed he can do nothing but by divine permission, nor can he hinder the will of God, and the execution of that, though he often hinders the will of man, or man from doing his will; he hindered the apostle from doing what he willed and purposed, but he did not hinder the will of God, which was that Paul should be employed in other work elsewhere.

Ver. 19. *For what is our hope, or joy, &c.*] The apostle here gives a reason why they were so concerned at parting with the Thessalonians, and were so desirous of seeing them again, and attempted it so often, because they were their *hope*: not the foundation of it, which was Christ; nor the thing hoped for, which was eternal life; nor the ground of their hope, which was the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; but they were persons whom they hoped well of, and of whom their hope was steadfast; as of their election of God, of their redemption by Christ, of their effectual calling, of their perseverance in faith and holiness, notwithstanding all reproach and persecution; and of meeting the Lord, and being together with him for ever: and they were also their *joy*; their conversion was matter of joy to them, because of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, displayed therein; because of the abundant grace bestowed on these persons; and because that hereby the kingdom of Satan was weakened, and the kingdom of Christ enlarged, and his churches increased and beautified; and their own ministry was blessed and confirmed, and their hearts and bands strengthened, and they encouraged to go on in it: and they continued to be their joy, inasmuch as they stood fast in the Lord, walked on in the truth, and had their conversations as became the Gospel of Christ; and they were persuaded would be their joy hereafter, at the second coming of Christ; when they should give up their account of them with joy, and not with grief: and 'tis added, *or crown of rejoicing*; or *of glorying*, or *boasting*; not that they gloried in them, for they gloried not in men, but in the Lord, in his righteousness, riches, wisdom, strength, and grace, in the person, blood, and cross of Christ; but they gloried of them, as trophies of divine grace, as a prey taken out of the hand of the mighty, and as lawful captives delivered from the power of Satan, and of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. The Alexandrian copy reads, as we render it, *crown of rejoicing*: which is but a stronger phrase, to express the joy they had in their conversion and perseverance, in allusion to crowns wore at times of rejoicing, as at marriage-feasts, and the like: hence we read¹ of the crowns of the bridegrooms, and of the brides, which were forbidden the use of in the war of Vespasian; the latter were made of gold, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, and from thence called golden cities²; and the former, some say, were made of salt and sulphur, to put them in mind of the destruction of the Sodomites, for their unnatural lusts³; others of a

^b Maimon. Eileh. Chohel, c. 5. sect. 10.

¹ Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 14.

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² Maimon. in Misna Sota, & in Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 1.

³ Ex Hechaim M. S. apud Wages; scilicet in Sota ib.

salt-stone as clear as crystal, or of the stone Bdelium, painted in the colour of sulphur^m; and some were made of myrtles and roses, but in the war of Vespasian only those made of reeds were usedⁿ; these crowns at weddings seem to be the *beautiful crowns* in Ezek. xxiii. 42. where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here, *σφραγὶς καυχασίως*, a *crown of rejoicing*, or *glorying*: the Hebrew phrase עֲשֵׂרֵת תְּפָאֵרֶת, may be rendered a *crown of glory*, as the phrase here is by the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; but does not mean the crown of glory, life, righteousness, and immortality, the apostle expected at the hands of Christ another day; nor that his being an instrument of the conversion of these persons was the ground of such an expectation, or was what entitled him to such a crown; since he knew that conversion-work was owing to the powerful grace of God, and the crown of eternal life was his free gift; but that it would be an honour to him, and give him abundant joy and pleasure at the coming of Christ, to be encircled with such a number

of souls he had been useful to, and who were his spiritual children; just as *children's children are the crown of old men*, Prov. xvii. 6. all this is put by way of question, which strongly affirms, *are not even ye; or ye also*, as well as others, as the Corinthians and Philippians; see 2 Cor. i. 7. Phil. i. 6, 7. and iv. 1. *In the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?* to judge the quick and dead, when both they and these should meet him, and stand before him with confidence, being clothed with his righteousness, and clad with robes of immortality and glory.

Ver. 20. *For ye are our glory and joy.*] Or *our joy*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; this is a repetition, and a confirmation of what is before said; and signifies that these saints were then the glory of the apostles, being the seals of their ministry; and whom they gloried of and rejoiced in, and hoped and believed they would be such, as would be their joy and crown in time to come, and for ever.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle expresses his great love to the Thessalonians, by sending Timothy to them, to establish and comfort them; and declares his satisfaction with the tidings he brought of them, and concludes the chapter with fervent prayers for them: such was his affection for them, that he chose rather to be left alone at Athens, and send Timothy to them, though so very dear and useful to him, as his characters shew, to the end that they might be established and comforted, ver. 1, 2. and not be shaken with the afflictions the apostles met with, seeing these were no other than what God had appointed them to; and besides, they had been apprized of them before-hand by the apostle, ver. 3, 4. but however, lest Satan should get an advantage of them, the apostle could not be easy without sending to know how things stood with them, ver. 5. next he proceeds to give an account of the success of this mission, and the satisfaction it gave him and his fellow-ministers to hear of their faith and charity, their remembrance of them, and desire to see them, ver. 6. which comforted them under their afflictions, made them lively and cheerful, filled them with joy and thankfulness, and put them upon prying to God to see their face, and perfect what was lacking in their faith, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. and then follow the petitions themselves, which are made both to God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that their way might be directed to them, that they might increase and abound in love to one another, and to all men, as they did to them, and that God would establish them in holiness in his sight, at the coming of Christ, ver. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, &c.*] Or *bear*, as the word properly signifies; or *bear that*, as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, *that desire*, as the Arabic version renders it; that ardent and longing desire of seeing them again, expressed in the latter

part of the preceding chapter; which was as fire in their bones, and was retained with great pain and uneasiness; but now they could hold it no longer, and like Jeremy, ch. xx. 9. were weary with forbearing, and could not stay; or it was like a burden, which they stood up under as long as they could, even Paul, Silas, and Timotheus, but now it became insupportable: *we thought it good to be left at Athens alone*; that is, Paul and Silas, or Paul only, speaking of himself in the plural number; for he seems to have been alone at Athens, at least at last; he considering every thing, thought it most fit and advisable when at Athens, where he waited for Silas and Timotheus, having ordered them to come thither to him from Berea, Acts xvii. 14, 15. either to send orders to Berea for Timothy to go from thence to Thessalonica, to know the state of affairs there, and Silas elsewhere; or if they came to him to Athens, of which Luke gives no account, he immediately dispatched Timothy to Thessalonica, and Silas to some other part of Macedonia, for from thence they came to him at Corinth, Acts xviii. 5. such was his desire of knowing how things were at Thessalonica, that he chose rather to be left alone at Athens, disputing with the unbelieving Jews, and Heathen philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoic sects, sustaining all their scoffs and jeers alone; and was content to be without his useful companions, Silas and Timothy, who might have been assisting to him at Athens, in hope of hearing of his dear friends at Thessalonica.

Ver. 2. *And sent Timotheus our brother, &c.*] In a spiritual relation, having the same heavenly Father, and belonging to the same Jerusalem, which is true, and the mother of us all; of the same household and family, and in the same relation to Christ, the first-born among many brethren; or their brother in the ministry, who was employed in the same business, and

^m Bartenora in Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 14.

ⁿ T. Bab. Sota, fol. 49 2.

did the same work they did; or he is so called, on account of that strict and intimate friendship which subsisted between them, by virtue of which they stuck as close as brethren, or closer to one another than brethren usually do: *and minister of God*; of his making, and not man's; of his calling and sending, and of his blessing and succeeding; and who was a minister of the things of God, of the mysteries of God, of the truths of his Gospel; and who ministered according to the ability God gave him, and was faithful to him: *and our fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Christ*; he was a labourer, and not a loiterer in the Lord's vineyard; one that laboured in the word and doctrine, that studied to shew himself a workman, that gave himself wholly to meditation, reading, exhortation, and doctrine, and preached the word in season and out of season; and was a fellow-labourer with him, who laboured more abundantly than any of the apostles; and not in the law, but in the Gospel, even in the Gospel of Christ, of which he is the sum and substance, author and preacher. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out these words, and so do Beza's ancient copy and the Alexandrian manuscript, *and our fellow-labourer*: reading the latter part of the clause in connexion with the former thus, *a minister of God in the Gospel of Christ*, as the former of these versions, *in the doctrine of Christ*, as the latter. These characters are given of Timothy, partly to shew what honour was done the Thessalonians, in sending such a messenger to them; and partly that they might receive him with the greater respect, and treat him according to his character, office, and dignity; and chiefly to observe to them the apostle's great affection for them, in parting with so dear and useful a minister for their good and advantage, as follows: *to establish you*; which though the work of God, it is usually done by the ministry of the word; and then is the end of the Gospel ministration answered to the churches, when they are established by it; for notwithstanding the saints are in a stable condition, as in the arms of love, and in the hands of Christ, and in the covenant of grace, and upon the rock of ages, and in a state of regeneration, justification, and adoption, from whence they can never fall totally and finally; yet they are often very unstable in their hearts and frames, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in their adherence to the cause and interest, Gospel and ordinances of Christ, through the prevalence of corruption, the temptations of Satan, and the reproaches and persecutions of men: and these Thessalonians were young converts, and just planted together as a church; and at their first setting out, sustained a considerable shock of afflictions, which made the apostle concerned for their establishment in the faith which they had received: *and to comfort you concerning your faith*. This is another end of the Gospel ministry, to comfort afflicted minds, and distressed consciences; it is the will of God that his people should be spoke comfortably to; the doctrines of the Gospel are calculated for that purpose, and the ministers of it should be Barnabases, sons of consolation. These saints might be in some doubt about the grace of faith, whether it was right or no, or about the doctrine of faith they had received; and therefore Timothy is sent to com-

fort them under their afflictions, which might have created these doubts, and to remove them, by shewing them that their faith was like-precious faith with the apostles; and that the doctrine of faith they embraced was the faith once delivered to the saints, and was the true faith of Christ: the words will bear to be rendered, *to exhort you concerning your faith*, as the Vulgate Latin version renders them; that is, to exhort you to continue in the faith, to stand fast in it, in the exercise of the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both. The Syriac version renders it, *to ask*, or inquire of you concerning your faith, being willing to know how it stood, since they left them, as in ver. 5.

Ver. 3. *That no man should be moved by these afflictions, &c.*] Which the apostle endured for the sake of preaching the Gospel among them, and which he feared might be a means of troubling their minds, of shaking their faith, and moving them from the hope of the Gospel; for though none of these things moved him, who was an old soldier of Christ, and used to hardness, and an apostle of Christ; yet these were young converts, and not used to such things, and therefore might be staggered at them, and be offended, as stony-ground hearers are; and though the apostle hoped better things of them, yet was he concerned for them, that no one among them might be unhinged by them, or succumb under them: *for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto*; by the immutable decree of God: afflictions, as to their nature, measure, and duration, are appointed for the people of God, and they are appointed for them; this is the case of all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, and especially of Gospel ministers; of which these saints had been apprized by the apostle, and therefore was nothing new, unheard-of, and unexpected, or to be looked upon as a strange thing; and seeing this was the appointment of heaven, and the will of God, they should be patiently endured, and quietly submitted to.

Ver. 4. *For, verily, when we were with you, &c.*] In presence, in person, as they then were in heart and affection; when they were first among them, and preached the Gospel to them: *we told you before*; before it came to pass; *that we should suffer tribulation*; which they might say by virtue of Christ's prediction to all his disciples, that they should have tribulation in the world; and upon its being the common case of God's people, and the usual way through which they enter the kingdom; and the Apostle Paul might foretel this, upon the discovery that was made to him how many things he should suffer for the sake of Christ, and which therefore he always, and in every place expected; and he might have a particular revelation of the disturbance and opposition he was to meet with at Thessalonica: *even as it came to pass, and ye know*; referring to the tumult and uproar in Acts xvii. 5—10. and which should be considered so far from being a discouragement, that it was a great confirmation of the truth of their mission and ministry; nor could it be so surprising to them, as it might have been had they had no previous notice of it.

Ver. 5. *For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, &c.*] Or hear the above vehement desire of seeing them, or of hearing from them. Here the apostle speaks in

the singular number, and seems to intimate, as if what was said before of the like kind is to be understood singly of him; for these words are a repetition and summary of the foregoing, with some diversity: *I sent to know your faith*: how it stood, whether it was staggering through these afflictions, or firm; whether it was weak or strong, what was wanting in it; and whether it grew and increased. The Arabic version adds, *and charity*: for of this, as well as of faith, Timothy brought an account, as appears from the following verse. *Lest by some means the tempter*: Satan, so called from his common and constant employ in tempting men to sin; see Matt. iv. 3. *have tempted you* with success, and got an advantage over them, improving these afflictions to such a purpose as to move them from the hope of the Gospel, and relinquish the profession of it; for otherwise there was no question to be made but he had tempted them, or solicited them to it; for none of the saints are free from his temptations; the apostle himself was not, nor indeed our Lord Jesus Christ: but the apostle's fears were, lest he should so have tempted them as to have gained upon them, and have persuaded them to have turned their backs upon the Gospel, and not expose their name and credit, and hazard the loss of worldly substance, and even life itself, for the sake of it. *And our labour be in vain*: in preaching the Gospel among them; not with respect to God, to whom the word never returns void and empty; nor with regard to the apostles, whose judgment was with the Lord, and their work with their God, who will of his own grace reward them; but with respect to the Thessalonians, to whom, should Satan gain his point, it would be of no use and service, for which the concern was. The Ethiopic version reads, *and your labour be in vain*: in receiving the apostles, embracing and professing the Gospel, and suffering for it; see Gal. iii. 4. but the common reading is best, and agrees with what the apostle elsewhere says, Gal. iv. 11. Phil. ii. 16.

Ver. 6. *But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, &c.*] At Corinth, as appears from Acts xviii. 5. which shews that this epistle was not written from Athens, as the subscription to it asserts, but from Corinth; for as soon as ever Timothy came from Thessalonica, to the apostle at Corinth, and made the report to him, he immediately sent them this epistle which is here suggested: *but now, &c.* just now; *lately*, as the Syriac version renders it, a very little while ago, Timothy was just come: *and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity*; of their faith, the grace of faith, that it was of the right kind; as far as could be judged, it was the faith of God's elect, like-precious faith with theirs; an unfeigned one, strong and lively, operative and growing: or of the doctrine of faith, as received and embraced by them; as that they were greatly led, and had much light into it, and had, for the time, made considerable proficiency in it; that they held it fast, and stood fast in it, and contended for it, notwithstanding all the afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions which they either saw in the apostles, or endured themselves for the sake of it; and likewise of the profession of both the grace and doctrine of faith, which they held fast, and without wavering, and that in a pure conscience, which was good news

indeed. Timothy also brought an account of their *charity*, or love, which faith works by; these two graces are always found together; they are wrought in the soul by one, and the same hand, and at the same time; where the one is, the other is; and as the one flourishes and increases, so does the other. And by this grace is meant love to God, to Christ, to his truths, ordinances, ways, and worship, and to one another, and even to all men; and which was without dissimulation, in sincerity, in deed, and in truth, and was constant and fervent: and this was not the whole of the report, for it follows, *and that ye have a good remembrance of us always* they bore in memory the persons of the apostles; and when they made mention of their names, it was with the greatest respect and reverence; nor were they forgetful hearers of the word, but remembered with great affection and pleasure the truths, the doctrines, and exhortations they delivered to them, so as to put them in practice, and longed for another visit from them, to have their memories refreshed by them: *desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you*. they had an equal desire to see their spiritual fathers, as they had to see their spiritual children. Now such a report as this concerning their steady faith in Christ, their fervent love to one another, and their affectionate regard to the ministers of the word, was a sort of a Gospel, as the word used signifies; or it was good news and glad tidings to the apostle, and those that were with him.

Ver. 7. *Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you, &c.*] Or *in you*, as the Vulgate Latin version; or *from you*, as the Arabic; or *by you*, as the Syriac; or *for you*, as the Ethiopic; that is, on account of them, either by what they had heard was in them, or had heard from them. This gave abundant consolation *in all our affliction and distress*: which they met with at Corinth, where the apostle laboured with his own hands, and ministered to his own, and the necessities of others, and was greatly opposed, reproached, and persecuted; see Acts xviii. 3, 6, 9, 10, 12. but the news of the good estate and condition the Thessalonians were in, was a great relief and comfort to him, particularly their faith: *by your faith*: by the report of it, that it grew exceedingly, and that they walked in the truth; see 3 John iii. 4. The Alexandrian copy reads, *in all your distress and affliction, and by your faith*.

Ver. 8. *For now we live, &c.*] Before they were as dead men, lifeless, disconsolate, dispirited, carrying about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, and death working in them, and they, as it were, under the sentence of that, being killed all the day long for Christ's sake; but now, upon this news, in the midst of all their sore trials and troubles, their spirits revived, and they became alive and cheerful; see Psal. xxii. 26. Isa. lv. 3. it was like life from the dead unto them: *if ye stand fast in the Lord: or our Lord*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; that is, *in the faith of the Lord*, as the Arabic version renders it: they were in the Lord secretly by electing grace, and openly by regenerating grace, and they abode in him; and by persevering grace, they were rooted and built up in Christ, and established in the faith of him, of his person, office, and grace; they were steady in the exer-

cise of grace upon him, and stood fast in the liberty wherewith he had made them free, and continued steadfastly in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; for the *if* here is not expressive of doubting, but of reasoning, *seeing ye stand fast in the Lord*; of which they were assured by Timothy: and this gave them fresh spirit and life amidst the deaths in which they often were.

Ver. 9. *For what thanks can we render to God again for you, &c.*] They had given thanks to God for them before, for their faith, love, and patience; see ch. i. 2, 3. and now having received a further account of them, they looked upon themselves bound to give fresh thanks to God for them, for the increase of their faith and love, and for their perseverance, as they did; see 2 Thess. i. 3. and ii. 13. since these are gifts of God's grace; but they knew not where to begin, what to render, and when to end: the phrase is much like that in Psal. cxvi. 12. *what shall I render unto the Lord, &c. for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God*; the joy they had was *all joy*, perfect and complete in its kind; see Jam. i. 2. and it was not for themselves, on their own account, because of any worldly interest or advantage they had therein, but for the sake of these Thessalonians, whose spiritual welfare they rejoiced at: nor was their joy of a carnal nature, but spiritual; it was a joy in the Holy Ghost, and which was hearty and sincere: it was *before God our God*, their covenant God and father; it was in his sight and presence, who sees and knows all things, all actions, and the principles of them. Though this last clause, *before our God*, is, in the Syriac version, placed at the beginning of the next verse, according to which, it refers, not to thanks or joy before God, but to prayer before him.

Ver. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly, &c.*] This good news not only comforted their hearts, and revived their spirits, and filled them with joy and thankfulness, but also sent them to the throne of grace to pray without ceasing, continually, night and day, and as often as they went thither, and that with great fervency and earnestness, in a multitude of petitions; or, as the Arabic version renders it, *with prayers exceeding a multitude*; with innumerable requests: *that we might see your face*; once more, and converse face to face: *and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith*? in the grace of faith; for though they remembered their work of faith with pleasure, and had had good tidings of it very lately, and were thankful that it grew exceedingly as it did, yet they knew it was not perfect, there was unbelief attending them: and though it is God's work to increase faith, as well as to produce it, yet, as the ministry of the word is the means of the first planting of it, so it also is of the increase of it. This may likewise be understood of the doctrine of faith, which though they had received in the love of it, and had made considerable progress in their knowledge of it; yet they knew but in part, and needed to be taught the way of God, and truths of the Gospel more perfectly; and the ministry of the word is for the perfecting of the saints in the knowledge of the son of God, and of other truths; wherefore the apostle

desired greatly to see them, that he might be an instrument of instructing them more perfectly in the knowledge of divine things; and in this, and in the following epistle, he does particularly instruct them about the rise and fall of antichrist, the coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, articles of faith in which they seemed to have been deficient: but now, though these saints had deficiencies in their faith, yet they were not what the Jews call *מוחסדי אמונה*, such as are deficient in faith, or want faith entirely, a phrase somewhat like th.s which is here used.

Ver. 11. *Now God himself, and our father, &c.*] The Oriental versions leave out the copulative *and*, and read, *God himself, our father*: the first person in the Trinity, who is God himself, truly and properly so; and who is a God that hears prayer; and who is omnipotent, and able to do more than the saints can ask or think; and is omniscient, and knows their persons and cases, and what is proper for them, and how and when to help and supply them; and he is also the God of all grace, the author and giver of it, and who is able to make it abound, and increase it, and so a very proper object of prayer: and who is likewise the father of Christ, and of all the saints, not only by creation, in which sense he is the father of all men, but by adopting grace; and which is mentioned to encourage freedom and boldness in prayer, which children may use with a father, and to raise an expectation of succeeding and receiving an answer; for if earthly parents hear their children, and give good things to them, how much more will not our heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit, and all other good gifts, unto his children? And this shews that the apostle prayed to God in the manner Christ directed, Matt. vi. 9. *and our Lord Jesus Christ*; who is equally the object of prayer with God, his father and ours; who is sometimes distinctly prayed unto, as in Acts vii. 59. and often in conjunction with his father, as in all those places in the epistles, where grace and peace are wished for from them both; see Rom. i. 7. and sometimes he is set before the father, as in 2 Thess. ii. 16. to shew the entire equality between them, and that he is equally addressed as he, being truly and properly God, who knows all things, and is the Almighty, and whose grace is sufficient for us, and therefore rightly applied unto, as here: the petition put up to them both is, that they would *direct our way unto you*: a journey is not to be taken without the will of God, without seeking to know it, without submission to it, and dependence on it; nor is there any prosperous one, but by it; see Jam. iv. 13, 14, 15. Rom. i. 10. Men may devise their own ways, but God directs their goings; especially a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord, and particularly ministers; who, as they are often directed to subjects and matter, in a very providential way, so to places, and are ordered both where and when to go; see Acts xvi. 6, 7, 9, 10. The apostle was aware, that there were obstacles in his way of coming to Thessalonica, for he had attempted it once and again, but Satan, and his emissaries, hindered; and therefore he desires that God and Christ would remove them out of the way, and make his way straight

and plain, as the word signifies, that he might once more see their faces.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord make you to increase, &c.*] That is, the Lord the Spirit; so that the object of prayer, addressed by the apostle, is Father, Son, and Spirit, as in Rev. i. 4, 5. The Alexandrian copy reads *God*. The Spirit is God, equally with the Father and the Son, and so a fit object of prayer with them, which otherwise he would not be. The request is, that he would cause these saints to *increase* in number, as the first churches greatly did; and in the gifts of the spirit, which he divides to men severally as he will; and in his graces, as in faith, in hope, in holiness, in humility, in knowledge, in spiritual joy and strength, an increase in all which is from him: *and abound in love one towards another*; for though they were taught of God to love one another, and did so, and the apostle had had good tidings of their love; yet it was not perfect, there was room for a further exercise of it, by serving each other by it, in things spiritual and temporal; and he had his request, for it did abound in every one of them towards each other, 2 Thess. i. 3. *and towards all men*; the men of the world, who were without, were not members of the church, nor professors of the Christian religion, but enemies to that, and to Christ, and to them; and yet they were to love them as men, and pray for them, and do them all the good that lay in their power: *even as we do towards you*; for the love of the apostle, and those with him, abounded more and more towards these saints, and was so far from being weakened, that it was increased by their absence from them; and they were more abundantly desirous of seeing them, and were even quite impatient until they sent to them, and heard of them.

Ver. 13. *To the end he may stablish your hearts, &c.*] Which are very unstable and inconstant in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, and have need to be established in the love of God, against the fears of men, the frowns of the world, the temptations of Satan, and in, and with the doctrines of grace; see the note on ver. 2. *unblamable in holiness before God, even our father*. There is no holiness in men naturally; what

is in them without the grace of God is only a shew; true holiness is from the spirit of God; and this is a stable thing in itself, and can never be removed or taken away; but the acts of it, through the prevalence of corruption, the force of Satan's temptations, and the snares of the world, are fickle and inconstant; and the saints need to be established in the discharge of duty, as well as in the exercise of grace: and whereas the apostle prays, that they might be *unblamable in holiness*, the Alexandrian copy reads, *in righteousness*, so one of Stephens's; it must be observed, that no man is perfectly holy in this life; no man is without sin in himself, or lives without the commission of it; holiness in the best is imperfect; no man, as yet, is in himself sanctified wholly; there's no unblamable holiness but in Christ; and in him the saints are without spot and blemish, who is their sanctification and their righteousness; but in themselves they are full of spots and stains; yet through the grace of God their hearts may be so established with principles of holiness, and they may be so assisted in the acts of it daily, as to give no just cause of blame to men, and so to behave as to approve themselves *before God*, who sees the heart, and knows from what principles all actions flow: and this the apostle desires may be *at the coming of our Lord Jesus*; or *unto the coming of him*, as in ch. v. 23. Either at death, when he comes into his garden, and gathers his lilies, and takes his to himself to be for ever with him; or at the day of judgment, when he comes to judge the quick and dead; and which coming of his is certain, and will be quickly and suddenly, and with great glory and power: and, as it is here added, *with all his saints*; meaning either his holy angels, or rather the souls of his people, whom he'll bring with him, and will raise their dead bodies, and reunite them to their souls, when they shall be for ever with him; and then shall they be unblamable in holiness, both in soul and body, and shall be presented by him, first to himself, and then to his father, faultless, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, *Amen*; and so does Beza's ancient copy, and the Alexandrian manuscript.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter the apostle proceeds to exhort in general to the performance of good works, particularly to purity of life, to brotherly love, to quietness, diligence, and industry in the several callings of life, and not to mourn in an excessive and immoderate manner for deceased friends; which leads him to say some things concerning the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. The general exhortation to holiness is in ver. 1, 2, 3. which is pressed in a way of entreaty for the sake of Christ; and the duties urged to were the commandments of Christ, and which the apostles had given them, and they had received, and were well acquainted with; and besides, a walk according to these commands was well-pleasing to God, and sanctification in general was his will: and in parti-

cular the apostle exhorts to abstain from fornication, and all uncleanness; since it is a dishonouring the body of man; acting the part of the ignorant Gentiles that know not God; a defrauding another man, as is uncleanness with another man's wife; the vengeance of God will light on such; it is contrary to that vocation with which the saints are called, that being to holiness, and not uncleanness; and to despise this exhortation, is casting contempt, not upon man, but God himself, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Brotherly love is the next thing exhorted to, which seemed needless to write about, since, in regeneration, these saints were taught to exercise it, and had exercised it towards all the brethren throughout Macedonia, though it was necessary to exhort them to abound more and more in it, ver. 9, 10.

and to study peace and quietness, and be industrious in their business, that so they might live an honest life among their carnal neighbours, and not be in want of any thing from them, ver. 11, 12. and whereas some of them had lost some of their dear friends and relations by death, and were ready to exceed due bounds in their sorrow for them, he dehorts from such immoderate sorrow, as being like that of those that had no hope of a resurrection from the dead; whereas, seeing it was an article of their faith, that Christ was risen from the dead, they might assure themselves that those that sleep in him shall be brought along with him when he shall appear a second time, ver. 13, 14. which will not be prevented by those that are alive when Christ comes; for as they will be changed, the dead in Christ will be raised at his coming; which coming of his will be in person, from heaven, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God; and then both shall be caught up together to meet him in the air, and be for ever with him; and therefore they had no need to sorrow as others, since they should meet again, and never part more, and with which words they should comfort one another under their present loss, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, &c.*] Or request of you in the most kind and tender manner, from real and hearty love and affection for you, and with a view to your good, and the glory of God: *and exhort you*; or beseech and entreat you. The apostle does not lay his commands upon them as he might have done, and sometimes does, but endeavours to work upon them by way of entreaty, and which he doubtless thought the most effectual method to win upon them, and gain them; for some minds are more easily wrought upon by entreaty than by authority: and this he does in the most moving and powerful manner, even by the *Lord Jesus*; or in the *Lord Jesus*; in his name and stead, as personating him, and as though he did beseech and entreat them by him, and his fellow-ministers; or for his sake, intimating, that if they had any regard to him, any value for his name, if that had any weight with them, or they had any concern for his honour and interest, then he begs their attention to the following exhortation; or by the *Lord Jesus*, by all that is in him, or done for them by him; in whom they were chosen, by whom they were redeemed, in whom they were made new creatures, to whose image they were to be conformed, whose followers they professed to be, whose Gospel they embraced, and by whose name they were called. *That as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God.* The walk of believers is two-fold, either internal or external. Their internal walk is by faith, which is the going out of the soul by faith to Christ for every supply of grace. Their external walk is not as it was before conversion, according to the course of this world, or as other Gentiles walk, but in a holy religious life and conversation; and this requires spiritual life, strength, and direction from Christ; for neither dead men, nor, if alive, yet weak, can walk; nor is it in a spiritual man, that walketh to direct his steps; and such a walk also denotes continuance in well-doing, and a progression or going on in it, and supposes ways to walk in. Christ, he is the chief and principal way, and there are other paths

which regard him, or relate and lead unto him; as the way of truth, the path of ordinances, and of religious worship, both public and private, and the ways of righteousness, holiness, and good works: the manner in which saints are to walk is as Christ himself walked, after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, according to the rule of the word, which is the standard of faith and practice, with prudence, wisdom, circumspection, and worthy of God, and of that vocation wherein they are called: and of such a walk there is a necessity; it *ought*, it must be both on the account of God, it being his will, and for his glory, and the contrary would shew great ingratitude to him; and on the account of the saints themselves, to adorn them, and their profession, and preserve them from shame and disgrace, to shew their faith, and demonstrate their calling and election to others; and likewise on account of others, partly for the winning of some, by recommending in this way the Gospel to them, and partly for the bringing of others to shame and silence, who falsely accuse their good conversation. Now when the apostle, and those that were with him, were at Thessalonica, they gave these saints directions and instructions about their walk and conversation, to order it in such a manner as might *please God*; which is not to be understood of rendering their persons acceptable to God hereby, for the saints' acceptance with God is only in Christ the beloved; nor of their gaining the love and favour of God by such means, for the love of God is from everlasting, and is free, and sovereign, and does not arise from, or depend upon the holiness and obedience of men; or of making peace with God by such a walk, for peace is only made by the blood of Christ; but of doing those things, and in such a way God approves of: unregenerate men cannot please God, nor any thing they do, because they are destitute of the spirit of God, and are without Christ, and his grace, and have not faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God; but what a believer does in faith, from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God, is approved of by God, and is acceptable to him through Christ, and for his sake; and there are many things of this kind, as prayer, praise, acts of beneficence to the poor, and indeed every good work and holy action; and inasmuch as they had been thus taught and instructed how to behave and conduct in their outward walk and conversation, they are entreated and exhorted to go on and abound in the work of the Lord: *so ye would abound more and more*: that is, be more and more in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty, making advances in holiness of life, and perfecting it in the fear of God. Beza's ancient copy, and another manuscript, as also the Alexandrian copy, and some others, add between the preceding, and this last clause, *as ye also walk*: and so the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions seem to have read; commending them for their present and past walk and conversation, in order to persuade and encourage them to go forward.

Ver. 2. *For ye know what commandments we gave you, &c.*] When among them; such as those of faith and love, the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and all such as relate to the worship and service of God, to the discipline of Christ's house,

to their behaviour one towards another, and their conduct in the world: and which were delivered to them, not as from themselves, and by their own authority, but *by the Lord Jesus*: in his name, and by his authority, and as ordered by him; for their commission ran to teach men all things, whatsoever Christ commanded: now since they knew what these commandments were, and whose they were, and the obligation they lay under to regard them, the apostle makes use of it as a reason or argument to engage them to obedience to them; for he that knows his Lord's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke xii. 47.

Ver. 3. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, &c.*] Which is another reason to enforce the above exhortation. *Sanctification* is internal or external. Internal sanctification is the work of the spirit of God, and is a principle of spiritual life in the soul, a divine and spiritual light in the understanding, a flexion of the will to the will of God, and a settlement of the affections on divine things, and is an implantation of every grace in the heart. External sanctification arises from this, and lies in holiness of life and conversation; and is what is chiefly designed, as appears both by what goes before, and follows after: and this is *the will of God*: the will of his purpose and decree; for in the same decree that he wills the salvation of any by Jesus Christ, he also wills their sanctification in heart and life, and here and hereafter: and this is his approving will, or what is well-pleasing in his sight, being agreeable to his nature, and divine perfections, particularly his holiness, in which he is glorious; and it is his will of command, and what he requires in his law, which is holy, just, and good, and perfectly agrees with the sound doctrine of the Gospel, and the revelation of his will in both. *That ye should abstain from fornication*: which is particularly mentioned, abstinence from it being a branch of external holiness; and because that this sin was common among the Gentiles, and not esteemed a sin by them; as also to observe to these Christians, that as simple fornication was not to be allowed of, much less other acts of uncleanness, as adultery, incest, sodomy, and the like, which were iniquities that greatly prevailed among the Heathens. The Syriac version renders it, *from all fornication*; on this subject the apostle enlarges in some following verses.

Ver. 4. *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel, &c.*] By which may be meant, either a man's wife, or his body, and it is not very easy to determine which, for the Jews call both by this name. Sometimes they call ^p a woman גולם, which the gloss says is a vessel unfinished. It is reported ^q, that when R. Eleazar died, Rabbenu Hakkadosh would have married his widow, and she would not, because she was כלי של קדושה, a vessel of holiness, greater than he. Moreover, it is said ^r, that "he that forces (a young woman) must drink ^s בעצמו, in his own vessel—how drink in his own vessel? though she be lame, though she be blind, and though she is stricken with ulcers." The commentators ^t on the passage add, "in the vessel which he has chosen; that is to say,

"whether he will or no, he must marry her;" see Prov. v. 15. And again, they sometimes call a man's wife his tent: hence that saying ^u, "אין אהלו אלא אשתו", *there's no tent but his wife*, as it is said, Deut. v. 30. "go, say to them, get you into your tents again." And certain it is, that the woman is called the weaker vessel in 1 Pet. iii. 7. between which passage and this there seems to be some agreement. The same metaphor of a vessel is made use of in both; and as there, honour is to be given to the weaker vessel, so here, a man's vessel is to be possessed in honour; and as there, husbands are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge, so here, knowledge is required to a man's possessing his vessel aright. Now for a man to possess his vessel in this sense, is to enjoy his wife, and to use that power he has over her in a becoming manner; see 1 Cor. vii. 4. and which is here directed to *in sanctification and honour*: that is, in a chaste and honourable way; for marriage is honourable when the bed is kept undefiled; and which may be defiled, not only by taking another into it, and which is not possessing the wife in sanctification and honour, it is the reverse, for it is a breaking through the rules of chastity and honour; but it may even be defiled with a man's own wife, by using her in an unnatural way, or by any unlawful copulation with her; for so to do is to use her in an unholy, unchaste, wicked, and dishonourable manner; whereas possessing of her according to the order and course of nature, is by the Jews, in agreement with the apostle, called ^v, בקדוש עצמו, a man's sanctifying himself, and is chaste, and honourable. And it may be observed, that the Jews use the same phrase concerning conjugal embraces as the apostle does here. One of their canons runs thus ^w: "though a man's wife is free for him at all times, it is fit and proper for a disciple of a wise man to use himself בקדושה, *in, or to sanctification*." When these things are observed, this sense of the words will not appear so despicable as it is thought by some. The body is indeed called a vessel; see 2 Cor. iv. 7. because in it the soul is contained, and the soul makes use of it, and its members, as instruments, for the performance of various actions; and, with Jewish writers, we read of כלי גופו, the vessel of his body ^x; so then, for a man to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, is to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, and preserve it in purity and chastity; as the eyes from unchaste looks, the tongue from unchaste words, and the other members from unchaste actions; and to use it in an honourable way, not in fornication, adultery, and sodomy; for, by fornication, a man sins against his own body; and by adultery he gets a wound, and a dishonour, and a reproach that will not be wiped away; and by sodomy, and such like unnatural lusts, men dishonour their own bodies between themselves: particularly by his vessel, as Gataker thinks, may be meant the *membrum virile*, or the genital parts, which, by an euphemism, may be so called; see 1 Sam. xxi. 5.

Ver. 5. *Not in the lust of concupiscence, &c.*] Or passion of lust; for the mere gratifying and indulging

^p T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2.

^q Jarhasin, fol. 48. 2. Shalshetheth Makkabala, fol. 29. 1.

^r Maimo. Chofetz, c. 3. sect. 4. 8.

^s Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

^t T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 7. 9. & 15. 2.

^u Maimon. in Min. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4.

^v Maimon. Hileh Droyot, c. 5. sect. 4.

^w Caphtor, fol. 57. 2.

of that; for, for a man so to possess his vessel, is to cherish the sin of concupiscence, the first motions of sin in the heart, by which a man is drawn away, and enticed; to blow up the flame of lust, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof: *even as the Gentiles which know not God*; for, though they knew him, or might know him with a natural knowledge, by the light and works of nature; yet they knew him not savingly and spiritually, as he is revealed in the word, of which they were destitute; or as the God of all grace, and the God and father of Christ, or as he is in Christ: and though by the light of nature they might know there was a God, yet they knew not who that God was; nor did they act up to that light and knowledge they had; they did not glorify him as God, by ascribing to him what was his due; nor were they thankful for the mercies they received from him; nor did they fear, love, worship, and serve him; nor did they like to retain him in their knowledge, and therefore were given up to judicial blindness and hardness, to a reprobate mind, and to vile affections, and so did things very inconvenient, unnatural, and dishonourable. Wherefore, for a man to use either his wife or his body in any unchaste and dishonourable manner, for the gratifying of his lusts, is to act an Heathenish part; a like argument, dissuading from things unlawful, is used in Matt. vi. 32. and xx. 25, 26. Gal. iv. 8, 9.

Ver. 6. *That no man go beyond, and defraud his brother in any matter, &c.*] Or in this matter, as the Syriac version. This is commonly understood of transgressing the bounds of justice and equity between men and men; and of cheating and defrauding in trade and business, by increasing or lessening the value and prices of goods by the buyer and seller, by not keeping to the bargain, contract, covenant, or sample, by false weights and measures, and by taking the advantage of the weakness and ignorance of men; all which is aggravated by dealing thus with a brother; see 1 Cor. vi. 8. and this hint is thought the rather necessary, since Thessalonica was a place of great trade and business. But the matter, or business referred to, is not trade, but the subject of chastity or uncleanness the apostle is speaking of, both before and after; and the phrases used either design the act of adultery, a coveting a brother's wife, and lying with her, and so a defrauding and wronging of him by defiling his bed; or rather sodomitical practices, an unnatural lust and desire in men after men, and copulation with them; for *παρεξουσι*, rendered, *go beyond*, answers to *על בנא*, to *go upon*, or *lie with*, so often used in Jewish writings for lying with women, men, and beasts, in an unlawful way. Thus, for instance¹, “these are to be burned, *הרבא על אשה*, he that lies with a woman, and her daughter, &c.” And again², “these are to be beaten, *על אשה*, he that lies with his sister, or his father's sister, &c.” And the word *αλιενειδω*, translated *defraud*, signifies a greedy, insatiable, and unnatural lust and desire after a man, a brother, or the committing of sodomitical practices with greediness; see Eph. iv. 19. which abominable iniquities are dissuaded from by the following reasons,

because that the Lord is the avenger of all such; or with respect to all these things, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; or for all these things, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; as fornication, adultery, lasciviousness, and all sorts of abominable uncleanness. The person that commits these things the Lord avenges, either in this life, by the hand of the civil magistrate, who is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that does evil; or by a violent death, as in the case of Zimri and Cozbi, and twenty-four thousand more at the same time; or by some awful judgment from heaven, as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrhah; or in the world to come; for the law of God is made and lies against such persons; these living and dying in such sins God will judge, to whom vengeance belongs; these shall not inherit the kingdom of God, but have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. *As we have also forewarned you and testified; not by a former epistle, as if this was the second to them, and what follows the first, as Grotius thought; but they did this when they were in person with them, knowing that these abominable vices greatly prevailed in their city; therefore they bore their testimony against them, and exposed the evil of them, and warned them of the danger by them, so that they could not now plead ignorance.* The Ethiopic version reads in the first person singular, *as I have before said unto you, and testified to you.*

Ver. 7. *For God hath not called us, &c.*] The Syriac version reads *you*. This is another reason to enforce the above exhortations, and to caution them against the above unclean practices, taken from the end of effectual vocation by the efficacious grace of God, which is not *unto uncleanness* of any sort, as before specified. This they had lived in before their calling, and were now called from it into communion with Christ, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and by the Gospel, which teaches to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to forsake all impurity, both of flesh and spirit: *but this call is unto holiness* of life and conversation in general, and to chastity in thought, look, word, and actions in particular; for God that calls is holy, and therefore those who are called ought to be so; the calling with which they are called is a holy calling, principles of grace and holiness are wrought in their souls, when they are called; and the end of their vocation is to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and then, and then only, do they walk worthy of that vocation wherewith they are called, and of God who has, by his grace, called them to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 8. *He therefore that despiseth, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin adds, *these things*; these exhortations now delivered, the commandments given by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the will of God above declared; he that rejects these things with contempt, takes no notice of them, and acts not according to them, *despiseth not man*; not men only, the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the Gospel; for, by despising these exhortations, they themselves were despised, though not alone: *but God*; Father, Son, and Spirit; God the

¹ Misna Sanhedrin, c. 9. sect. 1.
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² Misna Maccot, c. 3. sect. 1.

father, whose will was their sanctification, even to abstain from fornication, and every act of uncleanness, which, if not attended to, was a despising of him; and the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, and for whose sake they were entreated and exhorted, and in whose name, and by whose authority the apostle gave them these commandments; wherefore to slight them, was to slight Jesus Christ himself; and, by the way, this is a proof of the true and proper deity of Christ. Moreover, such despisers also, in some sense, do despite unto the spirit of grace, by whom the apostles spake, or who spoke in them these things, as follows, *who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit*; as he did to the prophets of the Old Testament, and therefore what they said was equally by divine inspiration of God; and hence despising them, was despising the spirit of God that spake by them. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *who hath given unto you his Holy Spirit*; and so all Stephens's copies; which furnishes out a fresh reason or argument, dissuading from uncleanness, since God had given them his *spirit* to convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, so that they were not ignorant of the things warned against; and he had given them his spirit as an *holy spirit*, as a spirit of sanctification, to begin and carry on that work in them, to which uncleanness was very opposite; and he had given his spirit unto, or *into* them, to dwell in them, as in his temple, and therefore should be careful not to defile it; and to cause them to walk in his statutes, and to assist them to keep his judgments, and do them, and as an earnest of their inheritance, and a sealer of them up unto the day of redemption; wherefore it became them not to grieve him by an impure life; and they were laid under obligations to live in the spirit, and to walk after him, and not after the flesh.

Ver. 9. *But as touching brotherly love, &c.*] Another branch of sanctification; which is distinct from love to God and Christ, though it always accompanies it, and from love to all mankind; and is what is peculiar to brethren in a spiritual relation, and ought to be universal, fervent, and sincere, and as Christ has loved them: concerning which the following things are said, *ye need not that I write unto you*. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *we have no need to write unto you*; and so some copies. It seems that it was needful to write unto them about other things, as to refresh their memories with the instructions they had given them, when with them, how they should walk and please God; and to put them in mind of the commandments given them by Christ, and that their sanctification was the will of God; and particularly it was necessary to write unto them about chastity, and purity of life, whether in or out of the conjugal state; but as for brotherly love, there was no immediate absolute necessity to write about that, either about the nature of it, or to describe the objects of it, or point out instances of it, or to exhort to it in a pressing manner: the reason is, *for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another*; not merely by the light of nature, which teaches men to be kind, courteous, affable, and beneficent; nor by the law of Moses, which obliges men to love their neighbours as themselves; nor only doctrinally by the ministry of the Gospel, which frequently

inculcates the exercise of this grace as a matter of great importance and consequence; nor only by the new commandment, and example of Christ; but by the spirit of God internally in regeneration, who, according to the tenour of the new covenant, writes this law of love, and of Christ, upon the heart; and this being written upon the hearts of the Thessalonians, by the finger of the spirit of God, whereby they were clearly directed, and powerfully taught to exercise this grace, and discharge this duty, and under the influence of the same spirit did exercise it, it was unnecessary for the apostle to write about it, and press them to it.

Ver. 10. *And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren, &c.*] Whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, greater or lesser believers, and whether related in the bonds of nature or not; they exercised this grace of love without respect of persons, to all, and not only to all the brethren in the particular community at Thessalonica, but *which are in all Macedonia*; throughout the whole country, particularly at Philippi and Berea, and other places: *but we beseech you, brethren*. The Alexandrian copy reads, *beloved brethren*; and the Syriac version, *I beseech you, my brethren: that ye increase more and more*; in shewing love to the brethren; which may be done both by administering to them in things temporal, by assisting them in distress, by sympathizing with them, and by giving them counsel and advice; and in things spiritual, by bearing their burdens, forbearing with them, and forgiving them; by admonishing them in love, by stirring them up to love and good works, by praying with them and for them, and by instructing and building them up in their most holy faith; and this increase, and abounding in the exercise of this grace, may respect not only the more frequent and fervent use of it, but also the larger extent of it to other objects; as not only to all the brethren in their own church, and to all that were in Macedonia, to which it did extend, but likewise to all the brethren in other parts of the world, and which are more distant and remote; and even to the poor saints at Jerusalem in particular; and accordingly we find that their love did abound unto them; see Rom. xv. 25, 26, 27. 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2. this shews, that though brotherly love was much practised by these saints, yet it was not perfect; nor is any grace perfect as to degrees; nor is any saint perfect in the discharge of duty in this life.

Ver. 11. *And that ye study to be quiet, &c.*] To live peaceably in their own families, and to give no disturbance to other families, by tale-bearing, whispering, and backbiting; to behave with quietness in the neighbourhood, town, or city, they dwell in, and to seek the peace thereof; and to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, in the commonwealth, and under the government to which they belong; and not to create and encourage factions, divisions, animosities, and contentions, in their own church, or in any of the churches of Christ; and it becomes saints to make this their study, to be very solicitous for it, to strive for it, and pursue after it: the word used signifies to be ambitious of it, as what is a man's glory and honour, to emulate and strive to outdo each other, as who shall have the honour of

being the quietest person, and the most peaceable member in the community: *and to do your own business*: or private business, or what is proper and peculiar to a man's self; to abide every man in his own calling wherein he is called, and attend the business of it, and not thrust himself into other families, and officiously take upon him, under a pretence of zeal, affection, and friendship, to inspect, direct, or manage the business of others: in short, he should not meddle with other people's business, but mind his own: and this is what the Jews call *דרך ארץ*, *the way of the earth*, or the business of life: "there are four things, (they say) in which a man should employ himself continually, with all his might, and these are they, the law, and good works, and prayer, and the business of life;" upon which the gloss has this note by way of explanation, "if a man is an artificer (let him attend) to his art; if a merchant to his merchandise, and if he is a soldier to war;" and which may serve to illustrate the apostle's sense: *and to work with your own hands*; the reason of this is, because there were some among them, who would not work at all; see 2 Thess. iii. 11. and by this instruction it appears, that the members of this church, in common, were such as were brought up to handicraft trades and businesses, and were poor and mean; and this was the general case of the primitive churches: it pleased God to choose and call the poor of this world, to whom the Gospel was preached, and they received it; few of the rulers among the Jews believed in Christ, and not many mighty, rich, or noble among the Gentiles were called; some there were, and in this church there were some of the chief women of the city, Acts xvii. 4. and though these and others of the better sort, as well as ministers of the Gospel among them, who laboured in the word and doctrine, were not obliged by this to perform manual work and labour, yet were not exempted from all concern in the exhortation; it being proper and necessary, that all sorts of persons be employed in one sort of business or another, and to use diligence and application in it; the apostle's view being chiefly to inveigh against sloth and idleness, and to exhort to labour and industry as the most effectual method to preserve peace and quietness, and to keep persons from being troublesome and hurtful, in families, churches, and commonwealths: the reasons enforcing this follow in this and the next verse, *as we commanded you*; and the command of an apostle carries weight and authority with it, and ought to be obeyed; yea, they not only strictly enjoined a diligent application to business, but set them an example themselves, see 1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 7, 8.

Ver. 12. *That ye may walk honestly, &c.*] Decently, in good credit and reputation, providing things honest in the sight of all men, for themselves and families, and honestly paying every man his own; on which account it became them to mind their own business, and work at their trades; otherwise their walk and conversation would be scandalous, and not honest and honourable: *toward them that are without*; the men of the world, who were without the church; see 1 Cor. v. 12. profane sinners, unconverted Gentiles, that were

without Christ and hope, and God in the world, and were aliens and strangers; and yet care should be taken that no occasion be given to such to reproach the name of God, the ways of Christ, and the doctrine of the Gospel: *and that ye may have lack of nothing*; but have wherewith to supply the necessaries of life, and give to them also that stand in need, which is more blessed and honourable than to receive; or might not need any such instruction and exhortation, or any reproof for sloth and idleness; or not stand in need of any man, as the Syriac version renders it; of the help and assistance of any, of any of those that are without, which would be dishonourable; or of them that are within, of the church, which might be burdensome. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *that ye may not desire any thing of any one*; as the slothful man covets greedily all the day long what is another's, and this desire kills him, Prov. xxi. 25, 26. he covets an evil covetousness, and craves in a scandalous way the bread of others; when it would be more honourable for him to work with quietness, and eat his own bread got by honest labour, and not be beholden to another.

Ver. 13. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, &c.*] As they seem to have been, about the state of the pious dead, the rule and measure of mourning for them, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and the future happiness of the saints; wherefore the apostle judged it necessary to write to them upon these subjects: the Alexandrian copy and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *we would not have you to be ignorant, &c. concerning them which are asleep*; that is, dead: it was in common use among the Eastern nations, when they spoke of their dead, to say they were asleep. This way of speaking is used frequently both in the Old and the New Testament; see 1 Kings ii. 10. and xi. 43. Dan. xii. 2. John xi. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 20. and very often with the Targumists; so the Targum on Eccl. iii. 4. *a time to weep*, paraphrases it, "a time to weep *על שכיבת*, *over them that are asleep*;" and in ch. iv. 2. "I praised *ית שכיבת*, *those that are asleep*," the dead: the reason of this way of speaking was, because there is a likeness between sleep and death; in both there's no exercise of the senses, and persons are at rest, and both rise again; and they are common to all men, and proper and peculiar to the body only. The apostle designs such persons among the Thessalonians, who either died a natural death, or were removed by violence, through the rage and fury of their persecutors, for whom their surviving friends were pressed with overmuch sorrow, which is here cautioned against: *that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope*; the apostle's view is not to encourage and establish a stoical apathy, a stupid indolence, and a brutal insensibility, which are contrary to the make of human nature, to the practice of the saints, and even of Christ and his apostles, and our apostle himself; but to forbid excessive and immoderate sorrow, and all the extravagant forms of it the Gentiles ran into; who having no notion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead,

* T. Bsb. Beracot, fol. 39. 2.

had no hope of ever seeing their friends more, but looked upon them as entirely lost, as no longer in being, and never more to be met with, seen, and enjoyed; this drove them to extravagant actions, furious transports, and downright madness; as to throw off their clothes, pluck off their hair, tear their flesh, cut themselves, and make baldness between their eyes for the dead; see Deut. xiv. 1. practices forbidden the Jews, and which very ill become Christians, that believe the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead: the words are to be understood not of other Christians, who have no hope of the eternal welfare of their deceased friends; not but that the sorrow of those who have a good hope of the future well-being of their dear relatives, must and ought to be greatly different from that of others, who have no hope at all: it is observed by the Jews^b on those words in Gen. xxiii. 2. and *Abraham came to mourn for Sarah*, &c. that "it is not said to weep for Sarah, but to mourn for her; for *for such a woman as this, it is not fit to weep*, after her soul is joined in the bundle of life, but to mourn for her, and do her great honour at her funeral; though because it is not possible that a man should not weep for his dead, it is said at the end, *and to weep for her*:" but here the words are to be understood of the other Gentiles that were in a state of nature and unregeneracy, who had no knowledge of the resurrection of the dead, or any hope of a future state, and of enjoying their friends in it: they are called *οι κοιμῶτες, the rest*; and the Syriac version renders it, *other men*.

Ver. 14. *For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, &c.*] As every Christian does, for both the death and resurrection of Christ are fundamental articles of faith; nothing is more certain or more comfortable, and more firmly to be believed, than that Christ died for the sins of his people, and rose again for their justification; on these depend the present peace, joy, and comfort of the saints, and their everlasting salvation and happiness: and no less certain and comfortable, and as surely to be believed, is what follows, *even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*. The saints that are dead are not only represented as asleep, as before, but as *asleep in Jesus*; to distinguish them from the other dead, the wicked; for the phrase of sleeping in death is promiscuously used of good and bad, though most commonly applied to good men: and so say the Jews^c, "we used to speak of just men, not as dead, but as sleeping; saying, afterwards such an one fell asleep, signifying that the death of the righteous is nothing else than a sleep." To represent death as a sleep makes it very easy and familiar; but it is more so, when it is considered as sleeping in Jesus, in the arms of Jesus; and such as are asleep in him must needs be at rest, and in safety: some join the phrase *in, or by Jesus*, with the word *bring*, and read the passage thus, *them that are asleep, by Jesus will God bring with him*; intimating, that God will raise up the dead bodies of the saints by Christ, as God-man and Mediator; and through him will bring them to eternal glory, and save them by him, as he has determined: others render the words, *them which sleep through, or by Jesus*; or die for his sake, and so

restrain them to the martyrs; who they suppose only will have part in the first resurrection, and whom God will bring with Jesus at his second coming; but the coming of Christ will be *with all his saints*; see ch. iii. 13. wherefore they are best rendered, *them that sleep in Jesus*; that is, *in the faith of Jesus*, as the Arabic version renders it: not in the lively exercise of faith on Christ, for this is not the case of all the saints at death; some of them are in the dark, and go from hence under a cloud, and yet go safe, and may be said to die, or sleep, in Jesus, and will be brought with him; but who have the principle, and hold the doctrine of faith, are, and live and die, true believers; who die interested in Christ, in union with him, being chosen and blessed; and preserved in him from everlasting, and effectually called by his grace in time, and brought to believe in him; these, both their souls and bodies, are united to Christ, and are his care and charge; and which union remains in death, and by virtue of it the bodies of the saints will be raised at the last day: so that there may be the strongest assurance, that such will God bring with him; either God the Father will bring them with his Son, or Jehovah the Son will bring them with himself; he'll raise them from the dead, and unite them to their souls, or spirits, he will bring with him; the consideration of which may serve greatly to mitigate and abate sorrow for deceased friends.

Ver. 15. *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, &c.*] The apostle having something new and extraordinary to deliver, concerning the coming of Christ, the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the saints, the change of the living saints, and the rapture both of the raised and living in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, expresses himself in this manner; either in allusion to the prophets of old, to whom the word of the Lord is said to come, and who usually introduced their prophecies with a "Thus saith the Lord;" or in distinction from his own private sense, sentiment, and opinion of things; signifying, that what he was about to say, was not a fancy and conjecture of his own, the fruit and produce of his own brain, but what he could assert upon a sure foundation, upon the best and greatest authority, even the word of the Lord; and has respect either to some particular word of Christ, as some think; such as Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. John v. 28, 29. or rather to a particular and peculiar revelation, and special instruction in these things, he had immediately from Christ; and it may be when he was caught up into the third heaven himself, and had an experience in himself of somewhat of that which both the living and raised saints shall feel, when they are caught up together in the clouds; since the change of the living saints, at the time of the resurrection of the dead, is a mystery which seems to have been first made known unto, and discovered by the Apostle Paul; see 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. *That we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord*: not that the apostle thought that he and the saints then in the flesh should live and continue till the second coming of Christ; for he did not imagine that the coming of Christ was so near, as is manifest from 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2, 3. though

^b Tzeror Hammor, fol. 23. 4.

^c Shebet Juda, p. 294. Ed. Genit.

the Thessalonians might take him in this sense, which he there corrects; but he speaks of himself and others in the first person plural, by way of instance and example, for illustration-sake; that supposing he and others should be then in being, the following would be the case: and moreover, he might use such a way of speaking with great propriety of other saints, and even of those unborn, and that will be on the spot when Christ shall come a second time; since all the saints make up one body, one family, one church and general assembly; so that the apostle might truly and justly say, *we which are alive*; that is, as many of our body, of our family, of our church or society, that shall be living at the coming of Christ; and he might choose the rather to speak in this form, person, and tense, to awaken the care, circumspection, diligence, and watchfulness of the saints, since it could not be known how soon the Lord would come: however, from hence it appears, that there will be saints alive at Christ's second coming; he'll have a seed to serve him till he comes again; he always had in the worst of times, and will have, and that even in the last days, in the days of the son of man, which are said to be like those of Noah and of Lot; and these are said to *remain*, or to be *left*. these will be a remnant, the residue and remainder of the election of grace, and will be such as have escaped the fury of antichrist and his followers, or of the persecutors of the saints: now these *shall not prevent them that are asleep*; that is, that are dead, so the Ethiopic version; the reason why the dead are so called, see in the note on the preceding verses: the sense is, either they *shall not come up to them that are asleep, or dead*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render the words; they shall not come into the state of the dead, they shall undergo a change equivalent to death, but not death itself; see 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. or rather they *shall not go before them*; they shall not get the start of them, and be in the arms of Jesus, and enjoy his presence when he comes, before the dead in Christ, which might be thought, but this will not be the case; for the dead saints will rise before the living ones are changed, and both will be caught up together to meet the Lord, as is said in the following verses; so that the one shall not prevent or go before the other, or come at, or into the enjoyment of Christ first, but both together.

Ver. 16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, &c.*] Not by proxy, or by representatives; not by the ministry of angels, as on Mount Sinai; nor by the ministers of the word, as under the Gospel dispensation; nor by his spirit, and the discovery of his love and grace, in which sense he descends in a spiritual manner, and visits his people; but in person, in his human nature, in soul and body; in like manner as he went up to heaven will he descend from thence, so as to be visible, to be seen and heard of all: he'll come down from the third heaven, whither he was carried up, into which he was received, and where he is retained until the time of the restitution of all things, and from whence the saints expect him: and this de-

scendent will be *with a shout*; the word here used is observed by many to signify such a noise or shout as is made either by mariners, when they pull and row together; and shout to direct and encourage one another; or to an army with the general at the head of it, when about to undertake some considerable action, to enter on a battle, and make the onset; Christ will now appear as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, as the Judge of the whole earth, attended with the host, or armies of heaven, and the shout of a king will be among them: perhaps the same is intended, as by the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings upon the coming of Christ, the destruction of antichrist, and the marriage of the Lamb, in Rev. xix. 1, 6, 7, 14, 15. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it, *in, or with command*; and the Arabic version, *with his own government, or authority*; that is, he shall descend, either by the command of his father, as man and Mediator, having authority from him, as the son of man, to execute judgment; or with his commanding power and authority over the mighty angels, that shall descend with him: it follows, *with the voice of the archangel*; so Michael is called, in Jude, ver. 9. with which compare Rev. xii. 7. and who perhaps is no other than Christ himself, who is the head of all principality and power; and the sense be, that Christ shall descend from heaven with a voice, or shall then utter such a voice, as will shew him to be the archangel; or as the Syriac version renders it, *the head, or prince of angels*; and which whether it will be an articulate voice, such as was expressed at the grave of Lazarus; or a violent clap of thunder, which is the voice of God; or the exertion of the power of Christ, is not certain: 'tis added, *and with the trump of God*; called *the last trump*, 1 Cor. xv. 52. because none will be blown after it, and may be the same with the seventh trumpet, Rev. xi. 15. and here the trump of God, because blown by his order; or by Christ himself, who is God, and so be the same with the voice of the archangel; and these figurative expressions are used, to set forth the grandeur and magnificence in which Christ will come; not in that low, mean, and humble form in which he first came, but with great glory, and marks of honour and respect; with angels shouting, trumpets blowing, and saints rejoicing. This is said in allusion to the trumpet which was heard on Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, and of which the Jews say ^d, that it כְּנֹחַת כִּי־תִנָּחַת, *quickeneth the dead*: for they have a notion, that when the Israelites first heard the voice of the Lord, they died; but upon hearing it the second time, they returned to life^e: and they suppose also in the time to come, at the resurrection of the dead, a trumpet will be blown, which will quicken the dead^f, and at the day of judgment^g; and this is reckoned by them as one of the signs of the Messiah's coming^h: "Michael shall shout with a great shout, and the graves of the dead shall be opened at Jerusalem, and the holy blessed God will restore the dead to life, and Messiah the son of David shall come," &c. And the dead

^d Targum Jon. in Exod. xx. 18.

^e Ecthoroth Hassammim in ib.

^f Mechlita in ib. & Abarbanel, Masbmia Jeshus, fol. 11. 4.

^g Zohar in Lev. fol. 42. 2. 4.

^h Abkath Rodel, p. 139. Ed. Huls.

in *Christ shall rise first*: the same with those that are *asleep in Jesus*, ver. 14. not only the martyrs that died for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; nor merely those who die in the lively exercise of faith in Christ; but all that die interested in him, and in union with him: and these shall *rise*, in consequence of their being his; being given to him, made his care and charge, and engaged for by him, and in virtue of their union to him; and shall rise to an entire conformity to his glorious body, and in order to enjoy eternal life and glory with him: and these will rise *first*, before the wicked, which is the first resurrection, Rev. xx. 5, 6. even a thousand years before them; the righteous will rise in the morning of the resurrection, and so will have the dominion in the morning, Psal. xlix. 14. even at the beginning of the thousand years, as soon as Christ will come; but the wicked will not rise till the evening of that day, or till the close of the thousand years: and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, who thought that some will rise before others; see 2 Esdras ii. 23. Having mentioned those words in Psal. cxvi. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*, 'tis asked¹, "is there no land of the living" but Tyre and its neighbours, and Cesarea, and its "neighbours, where is cheapness and fulness?" says R. Simeon ben Lekish, in the name of Bar Kaphra, "the land in which the dead live, תחייה, *first*, in the "days of the Messiah;" and on the same place elsewhere^k they observe, that "our Rabbins say two "things, or give two reasons, why the fathers loved "to be buried in the land of Israel, because the dead "in the land of Israel תחיה, *live*, or *rise first*, "in the days of the Messiah, and shall enjoy the years "of the Messiah:" and in another place^l they take notice of what is written in Isa. xxvi. 19. *and the earth shall cast out the dead*: says R. Jochanan, "the dead "which are in the land (*i. e.* of Israel), they shall *live "first*: as it is said, *thy dead men shall live, together with "my dead body shall they arise*: these are they that are "without the land; *awake and sing ye that dwell in the "dust*, these are they that die in the wilderness:" and again^m, "as it is said, Isa. xl. 26. *that bringeth out "their host by numbers*, come see, it is said, all that "die in the land of Israel יקומו בקרמיתא, *shall rise "first*, because the holy blessed God shall awake them, "and raise them, according to Isa. xxvi. 19." Once more they sayⁿ, "they that study in the law as they ought, "these are they that shall *rise first* to everlasting life, "as it is said Dan. xii. 2, *and many of them that sleep "in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting "life, &c.* and these are for everlasting life, because "they study in everlasting life, which is the law:" to which may be added the following passage^o, "they that "are worthy to be buried in the land of Israel, shall "be *raised first*—and they shall be raised and quick- "ened before the rest of the children of the world, "who draw the waters of the law; and they draw, "because they study to draw out of the waters of the "law; and they are strengthened by the tree of life,

"and they shall go out *first*, because the tree of life is "the cause why they shall *rise first*:" they sometimes endeavour to fix the time, how long they will rise before the rest^p; "*many of those that sleep, &c.* these "are the righteous that shall go before others in life, "and how many years shall they go before them?" R. Judah says, two hundred and ten years: R. Isaac "says, two hundred and fourteen; according to others, "the righteous shall go (or be raised) a year before "the rest of men; says R. Nachman, it will be ac- "cording to the computation (of time) that the carcass "has been in the dust; R. Jose replies, if so, there "will be many resurrections." These instances may suffice to shew, that the Jews had a notion of some persons rising before others, to which the apostle may have some reference; though his sense is not only this, but also that the dead in Christ shall rise before the living saints are changed, and taken up to be with Christ, and so shall not go before to him; which illustrates and proves what he had before asserted.

Ver. 17. *Then we which are alive and remain, &c.]* See the note on ver. 15. *shall be caught up*; suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with force and power; by the power of Christ, and by the ministry and means of the holy angels; and to which rapture will contribute, the agility which the bodies both of the raised and changed saints will have: and this rapture of the living saints will be *together with them*; with the dead in Christ, that will then be raised; so that the one will not prevent the other, or the one be sooner with Christ than the other; but the one being raised and the other changed, they'll be joined in one company and general assembly, and be rapt up together: *in the clouds*; the same clouds perhaps in which Christ will come, will be let down to take them up; these will be the chariots, in which they'll be carried up to him; and thus, as at our Lord's ascension a cloud received him, and in it he was carried up out of the sight of men, so at this time will all the saints ride up in the clouds of heaven: *to meet the Lord in the air*; whither he'll descend, and will then clear the regions of the air of Satan, and his posse of devils, which now rove about there, watching all opportunities, and taking all advantages to do mischief on earth; these shall then fall like lightning from heaven, and be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit, till the thousand years are ended: here Christ will stop, and will be visible to all, and as easily discerned by all, good and bad, as the body of the sun at noon-day; as yet he will not descend on earth, because not fit to receive him; but when that and its works are burnt up, and it is purged and purified by fire, and become a new earth, he'll descend upon it, and dwell with his saints in it: and this suggests another reason why he'll stay in the air, and his saints shall meet him there, and whom he'll take up with him into the third heaven, till the general conflagration and burning of the world is over, and to preserve them from it; and then shall all the elect of God descend from heaven as a bride

¹ T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3. & Cetubot, fol. 35. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 74. fol. 65. 1.

² Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 83. 4. & 84. 1. & Shemot Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 135. 2.

³ Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 4.

^m Zohar in Gen. fol. 79. 3.

ⁿ Ib. fol. 100. 3.

^o Ib. fol. 103. 1.

^p Ib. fol. 89. 1.

adorned for her husband, and he with them, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men; see Rev. xxi. 1, 2, 3. The resurrection by the Mahometans is called *לקא אללה*, a meeting of God, or a going to meet God: and so shall we ever be with the Lord: now the saints are with him at times, and have communion with him, but not always; but then they shall be ever with him; wherever he is; first in the air, where they shall meet him; then in the third heaven, where they shall go up with him; then on earth, where they shall descend and reign with him a thousand years; and then in the ultimate glory to all eternity: and this will be the issue and accomplishment of the counsel and covenant of grace, of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of his preparations and prayers.

Ver. 18. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*] Or doctrines; as that the saints, when they die, don't cease to be, but are asleep, and asleep in

Jesus; that their souls are with him, and their bodies sleep in his arms, and are his care; that these will be as soon with Christ, as the saints that will be alive when he comes; that the coming of Christ will be with great power and glory; that the righteous will rise first in the morning of the resurrection, and before the living saints are changed, and are with Christ; that they will both be taken up together to meet him; and that they shall all be with him, and that for ever, and never part more; than which nothing can yield more true and solid comfort, under all the trials and troubles of this life, under all diseases and distempers of body, under all afflictions and persecutions for Christ's sake, under the loss of near and dear relations, and in a view of death and eternity: some copies read, *with these words of the spirit*; and so the Arabic version, *with these spiritual words*; for such they are, being the word of God, as in ver. 15.

C H A P. V.

IN this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the suddenness of Christ's coming, and the necessity of sobriety and watchfulness, and being on our guard with respect unto it, and then proceeds to exhort to several duties of religion, and closes the epistle with prayers for the saints, salutations of them, advice unto them, and with his usual benediction: Having spoken of the coming of Christ in the preceding chapter, the apostle signifies he had no need to write of the time and season of it; since it was a well-known thing that it would be sudden, and at an unawares, like the coming of a thief in the night, and the travail of a woman with-child, though certain and inevitable; and would bring sure destruction on wicked men, unthought-of by them, ver. 1, 2, 3. but such was the state and condition of the saints, being not in the night of nature's darkness and unregeneracy, but enlightened by the spirit of God, that they were not ignorant of these things, nor liable to be surprised unawares hereby, ver. 4, 5. however, in consideration of their being in the light, and not in darkness, it became them to behave accordingly, and not indulge themselves in sleep and sloth, but be watchful and sober, and on their guard, having on their spiritual armour, ver. 6, 7, 8. and the rather, since they were not appointed to the wrath they deserved, but to salvation by Christ; whose end in dying for them was, that they might live together with him, and therefore should exhort and comfort, and edify one another, ver. 9, 10, 11. and then follow various exhortations, some, which respect their ministers, their knowledge of them, love to them, and esteem for them, on account of their dignity, office, work, and usefulness, ver. 12, 13. others, which concern themselves and one another, as church-members, ver. 13, 14. others, which regard also them that are without, ver. 14, 15. and others which relate to joy and thanksgiving, to prayer and praise; to the gifts of the spirit, and the ministry of the word; and to a trial and examination

of what is good, and an abiding by it, and an abstinence from all evil, and every appearance of it, ver. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. and the whole is concluded with prayers for them, for their perfect sanctification, and entire preservation to the coming of Christ; which were put up in faith, grounded upon the faithfulness of God who had called them to grace and glory, ver. 23, 24. and with a request to them to pray for him, and other ministers of the Gospel, and to salute all the brethren, ver. 25, 26. and with a charge to read this letter to them all, ver. 27. and with his usual benediction, ver. 28.

Ver. 1. *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, &c.*] Of the coming of Christ, his appointed time and his day, as the Ethiopic version renders it; of the resurrection of the dead in Christ first, and of the rapture of all the saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, things treated of in the preceding chapter: and which might excite a curiosity to know the times and seasons of them; as in what year they would come to pass; in what season of the year, whether winter or summer; in what month, and on what day of the month; and whether in the night-season, or in the day-time; and in what hour, whether at midnight, cock-crowing, morning, or noon-day: to repress which the apostle observes, *ye have no need that I write unto you*: to write to them concerning the things themselves was necessary and useful, to stir up and encourage their faith, hope, and expectation of them; to allay their grief for departed friends, and to comfort one another under the various trials and exercises of life; but to write to them about the time of these things would be trifling and unnecessary, would be an idle speculation, and an indulging a vain curiosity; and, besides, was impracticable: for of that day and hour knows no man; the times and seasons the father hath put in his own power; for these things are equally true of Christ's second coming, as of the kingdom of Christ coming with power and glory, and of

the destruction of Jerusalem, Matt. xxiv. 36. Acts i. 6, 7. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, *ye have no need that we write unto you*; the reason follows;

Ver. 2. *For yourselves know perfectly, &c.*] With great exactness and accuracy, with great clearness and perspicuity, as a certain truth, which was made plain and evident to them, and about which there could be no question; and which perfect knowledge they had, either from the words of Christ, Matt. xxiv. 42, 43, 44. or from the ministration of the apostle and his fellow-labourers, when among them: *that the day of the Lord*; of the Lord Jesus, when he will shew himself to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the Judge of the whole earth; and which is sometimes styled the day of the Son of man, and the day of God, for Christ will appear then most gloriously, both in his divine and human nature; the day of redemption, that is, of the body from the grave, and from corruption and mortality; and the last day in which will be the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment, in which Christ will come to judge the quick and dead: and which *so cometh as a thief in the night*; at an unawares, and the Lord himself in that day will so come, Rev. iii. 3. and xvi. 15. respect is had not to the character of the thief, nor to the end of his coming; but to the manner of it, in the dark, indiscernibly, suddenly, and when not thought of and looked for; and such will be the coming of Christ, it will be sudden, and unknown before-hand, and when least thought of and expected: and since the Thessalonians knew this full well, it was needless for the apostle to write about the time and season of it; which they were sensible of, could no more be known and fixed, than the coming of a thief into any one of their houses.

Ver. 3. *For when they shall say, &c.*] Or men shall say, that is, wicked and ungodly men, persons in a state of unregeneracy: *peace and safety*; when they shall sing a requiem to themselves, promise themselves much ease and peace for years to come, and imagine their persons and property to be very secure from enemies and oppressors, and shall flatter themselves with much and long temporal happiness: *then sudden destruction cometh upon them*; as on the men of the old world in the times of Noah, and on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot; for as these, will be the days of the Son of man, as at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, so at the last day; see Luke xvii. 26—30. and as was the destruction of literal Babylon, so of Babylon in a mystical sense, or antichrist and his followers: and which will be *as travail upon a woman with-child*; whose anguish and pains are very sharp, the cause of which is within herself, and which come suddenly upon her, and are unavoidable; and so the metaphor expresses the sharpness and severity of the destruction of the wicked, thus the calamities on the Jewish nation are expressed by a word which signifies the sorrows, pangs, and birth-throes of a woman in travail, Matt. xxiv. 8. and likewise that the cause of it is from themselves, their own sins and transgressions; and also the suddenness of it, which will come upon them in the midst of all their mirth, jollity, and security; and moreover, the inevitableness of it, it will certainly

come at the full and appointed time, though that is not known: *and they shall not escape*; the righteous judgment of God, the wrath of the Lamb, or falling into his hands; to escape is impossible, rocks, hills, and mountains will not cover and hide them; before the judgment-seat of Christ they must stand, and into everlasting punishment must they go.

Ver. 4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, &c.*] In a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness, blindness, and ignorance, and which is the condition of all men by nature; they are born in darkness, and are brought up in it, and willingly walk in it; they are covered with it, as the earth was covered with darkness in its first creation; and dwell in it, as the Egyptians did for some days, in thick darkness, darkness which might be felt; their understandings are darkened with respect to the true knowledge of God, the nature of sin, the way of salvation by Christ, the work of the spirit of God upon the soul, and the necessity of it, the Scriptures of truth, and the mysteries of the Gospel; and which is the case of God's elect themselves, whilst unregenerate: but now these persons were called out of darkness, turned from it, and delivered from the power of it; and therefore knew that the day of the Lord comes as above described, by the metaphors of a thief in the night, and a woman with-child, and needed not to be informed about that matter: or *that that day should overtake you as a thief*; or seize and lay hold upon you as a thief who comes in the dark, and lays hold upon a person suddenly; but these saints were not in the dark, but in the light, and so could see when the day of the Lord came; and would not be surprised with it, as a man is seized with terror and fright, when laid hold on by a thief; since they would be, or at least should be on their watch, and be looking out for, and hasting to the coming of the day of God.

Ver. 5. *Ye are all children of light, &c.*] Or enlightened persons, whose understandings were enlightened by the spirit of God, to see their lost state by nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness to justify them before God, the fulness, suitableness, and excellency of Christ's righteousness, the way of salvation by Christ, and that it is all of grace from first to last; to understand in some measure the Scriptures of truth, and the mysteries of the Gospel; to have knowledge of some things that are yet to be done on earth, as the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the change of living saints, and the rapture of both up into the air to meet Christ, the burning of the world, and the new heavens and new earth, where Christ and his saints will dwell; as also to have some glimpse of the heavenly glory, of the unseen joys, and invisible realities of the other world: and this the apostle says of them *all*, in a judgment of charity, as being under a profession of the grace of God, and in a church-state, and nothing appearing against them why such a character did not belong to them: *and the children of the day*; of the Gospel day, in distinction from the night of Jewish darkness; and of the day of grace which was come upon their souls, in opposition to the

night of ignorance and infidelity which was past; and of the everlasting day of glory, being heirs of, and having a right unto, and a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light: *we are not of the night, nor of darkness*; that is, not children of the night, nor children of darkness, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; and the former changes the person, and reads, *ye are not the children of the night, &c.* of the night of the legal dispensation, or of Gentile ignorance; or of a state of natural darkness, in unregeneracy and unbelief: all which strengthens the reason why there was no need to write unto them concerning the time and season of Christ's coming, and lays a foundation for the following exhortations.

Ver. 6. *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, &c.* As the rest of the Gentiles, as unconverted persons, who are in a state of darkness, and are children of the night; let us not act that part they do, or be like them; which professors of religion too much are, when they indulge themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures, and are careless and thoughtless about the coming of the day of the Lord; and get into a stupid, drowsy, and slumbering frame of spirit; when grace lies dormant as if it was not, and they grow backward to, and slothful in the discharge of duty, and content themselves with the bare externals of religion; and become lukewarm and indifferent with respect to the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, the cause of God, the interest of religion, and glory of Christ; and are unconcerned about sins of omission or commission: and are willing to continue in such a position, being displeased at every admonition and exhortation given them to awake; but this is very unbecoming children of the light, and of the day: *but let us watch*; over ourselves, our hearts, thoughts, affections, words and actions; and over others, our fellow-Christians, that they give not into bad principles and evil practices; and against sin, and all appearance of it; against the temptations of Satan, the snares of the world, and the errors of wicked men, who lie in wait to deceive; and in the word and ordinances, and particularly in prayer, both unto it, in it, and after it; and for the second coming of Christ, with faith, affection, and patience; and the rather, because of the uncertainty of the time of it; *and be sober*; not only in body, abstaining from excessive eating and drinking, using this world, and the good things of it, so as not to abuse them, or ourselves with them; but also in mind, that the heart be not overcharged with the cares of this world; for men may be inebriated with the world, as well as with wine; and the one is as prejudicial to the soul as the other is to the body; for an immoderate care for, and pursuit after the world, chokes the word, makes it unfruitful, and runs persons into divers snares and temptations, and hurtful lusts. The Arabic version renders it, *let us repent*; and the Ethiopic version, *let us understand*; as intending the sobriety of the mind, repentance being an after-thought of the mind, a serious reflection on past actions with sorrow and concern; and thinking soberly, and not more highly than a man ought to think of himself, his gifts, his attainments and abilities, in opposition to pride, vanity, and self-conceit, is very becoming; and shews a true and well-informed

understanding and judgment, and that a man is really sober and himself.

Ver. 7. *For they that sleep, sleep in the night, &c.* The night is the usual season for sleep, and sleep is only for such who are in darkness, and are children of the night; and not proper to be indulged by such who are children of the day, and of the light: *and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night*; drunkenness is a work of darkness, and therefore men given to excessive drinking love darkness rather than light, and choose the night for their purpose. To be drunk at noon is so shameful and scandalous, that men who love the sin, and indulge themselves in it, take the night-season for it; and equally shameful it is, that enlightened persons should be inebriated, either with the cares of this life, or with an over-weening opinion of themselves.

Ver. 8. *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, &c.* As in body, so in mind; let us cast off the works of darkness, and have no fellowship with them; since the day of grace has passed upon us, the darkness is gone, and the true light shines, let us walk as children of the light, living soberly, righteously, and godly: *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*; this is the coat of mail, 1 Sam. xvii. 5, 38. which was made of iron or brass; and the Ethiopic version here calls it, *the iron coat*. The allusion seems to be to the high-priest's breast-plate of judgment, in which were put the *Thummim* and *Urim*, which signify perfections and lights; faith may answer to the former, and love to the latter: these two graces go together, faith works by love, and love always accompanies faith; as there can be no true faith where there is no love, so there is no true love where faith is wanting: *faith* is a considerable part of the Christian soldier's breast-plate, and answers the end of a breast-plate, it being that grace which preserves the vitals of religion, and keeps all warm and comfortable within; and secures the peace and joy of the saints, as it has to do with Christ and his righteousness; wherefore this breast-plate is called *the breast-plate of righteousness*, Eph. vi. 14. it fortifies the soul, and preserves it from Satan's temptations, from his fiery darts entering, and doing the mischief they would; it defends the heart against the errors of the wicked, for a man that believes has a witness in himself to the truths of the Gospel, and therefore can't be easily moved from them; and strengthens a man against the carnal reasonings of the mind, for faith in the promises of God surmounts all the difficulties that reason objects to the fulfilling of them; and secures from the fears of death, the terrors of the law, and dread of the wrath of God: and *love* is the other part of the breast-plate; love to God and Christ is a means of keeping the believer sound both in faith and practice; for a soul that truly loves God and Christ can't give in to principles that depreciate the grace of God, and derogate from the glory and dignity of the person and office of Christ, or the work of the Spirit; and such love the ordinances and commands of Christ, and hate every false way of worship, or invention of men; and love to the saints is the bond of perfectness, knits them together, preserves unity and peace, and fortifies against the common enemy; *and for an helmet, the hope of salvation*; the helmet is that part of armour which covers

the head, and was made of brass, 1 Sam. xvii. 5, 38. and used to be anointed with oil, that it might shine the brighter, last the longer, and more easily repel blows; to which this grace of the Spirit, hope of salvation by Christ, is fitly compared: for by *salvation* is meant salvation by Christ, spiritual salvation, and that as complete in heaven; and hope is a grace wrought in the soul by the spirit of God, which has for its foundation Christ and his righteousness, and for its object the heavenly glory; it covers the head in the day of battle, and preserves from being overcome by sin and Satan, when one that is destitute of it says there is no hope, and we will walk every man after the imagination of his own evil heart; it erects the head in time of difficulty, amidst tribulation and afflictions; it defends it from fears of divine wrath which is revealed from heaven, and sometimes in appearance seems to hang over it; and it preserves from Satan's temptations, and being carried away with the error of the wicked, from the hope of the Gospel: and thus a Christian clothed and armed with these graces, faith, hope, and love, should be so far from indulging himself in sin and sloth, that he ought always to be sober and watchful, and prepared to meet the enemy in the gate; and be ready, always waiting for his Lord's coming.

Ver. 9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, &c.*] To destruction and ruin, the effect of wrath; though there are some that are vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, of old ordained to condemnation, and who are reserved for the day of evil; but there are others who are equally children of wrath, as deserving of the wrath of God in themselves as others, who are not appointed to it; which is an instance of wonderful and distinguishing grace to them: *but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*; salvation is alone by Christ, he alone has wrought it out; it is in him, and in no other; he was appointed to this work, was called and sent, and came to do it, and has done it; and God's elect, who were chosen in him, are appointed in the counsel and purpose of God, to obtain, possess, and enjoy this salvation; and which, as this appointment, may be known, as it was by these Thessalonians; the Gospel having come to them, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as it is an encouragement to faith and hope, so it excites to sobriety and watchfulness, and the discharge of every duty. The doctrine of predestination does not lead to despair, but encourages the hope of salvation; and it is no licentious doctrine, for election to salvation by Christ is through sanctification of the Spirit, and unto holiness; and good works are the fruits of it, and are what God has fore-ordained his people should walk in.

Ver. 10. *Who died for us, &c.*] The elect of God, who are not appointed to wrath, but to salvation by Christ, on which account he died for them; not merely as a martyr to confirm his doctrine, or only by way of example, but as a surety, in the room and stead of his people; as a sacrifice for their sins, to make atonement for them, and save them from them; so that his death lays a solid foundation for hope of salvation by him: *that whether we wake or sleep*; which phrases are to be understood, not in the same sense in which they are used in the context; as if the sense was, whether a

man indulges himself in sin, and gives way to sleep and sloth, and carnal security, or whether he is awake and on his watch and guard, he shall through the death of Christ have eternal life secured to him; not but that there is a truth in this, that eternal life and salvation by Christ, as it does not depend on our watchfulness, so it shall not be hindered by the sleepy, drowsy frame of spirit, the children of God sometimes fall into: but rather natural sleep and waking are intended; and the meaning is, that those for whom Christ died are always safe, sleeping or waking, whatever they are about and employed in, and in whatsoever situation and condition they are in this world; though it may be best of all to interpret the words, of life and death; and they may have a particular regard to the state of the saints at Christ's second coming, when some will be awake, or alive, and others will be asleep in Christ, or dead; and it matters not which they are, whether living or dead; see Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9. for the end of Christ's dying for them, and which will be answered in one as well as in another, is, that *we should live together with him*; Christ died for his people, who were dead in trespasses and sins, that they might live spiritually a life of sanctification from him, and a life of justification on him, and by him; and that they might live a life of communion with him; and that they might live eternally with him, in soul and body, in heaven, and reign with him there, and partake of his glory; and this all the saints will, whether they be found dead or alive at his coming; for the dead will immediately arise, those that sleep in the dust will awake at once, and they that are alive will be changed, and both will be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and be forever with him: now the consideration of the death of Christ, and this end of it, which will certainly be answered, serves greatly to encourage hope of salvation by him, and faith in him, and an earnest expectation of his second coming.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, &c.*] Either with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and the thoughts of being for ever with him, and one another, and so may be a repetition of the advice in ch. iv. 18. or with this consideration, that they were not in a state of darkness, ignorance, and infidelity, but were children of the light, and of the day, being called out of darkness into marvellous light, and should enjoy the light of life; and with the doctrine of predestination, they being appointed not to that wrath they were deserving of, but to be possessed of salvation by Jesus Christ, of which they could never fail, since the purpose of God according to election always stands sure, not upon the foot of works, but upon his own sovereign and unchangeable grace; or with the doctrine of Christ's sufferings and death, in their room and stead, whereby the law was fulfilled, justice satisfied, their sins atoned for, pardon procured, an everlasting righteousness brought in, and their salvation fully accomplished, things the apostle had spoken of in the context: the words will bear to be rendered, *exhort one another*; that is, not to sleep, as do others, or indulge themselves in sin and sloth; but to be sober, and upon their watch and guard, and in a posture of defence against the enemy; to put on the whole armour of God, and particularly the breast-

plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation: *and edify one another*; by praying together, conversing with each other about the doctrines of the Gospel, and the dealings of God with their souls; abstaining from all corrupt communication, which has a tendency to hurt each other's principles or practices, or to stir up wrath and contention; attending only to those things which are for the use of edifying, whereby their souls might be more and more built upon Christ, and their most holy faith; and be a rising edifice, and grow up unto an holy temple in the Lord, and for an habitation of God through the Spirit: *even as also ye do*; which is said in their commendation, and not through flattery, but to encourage them to go on in this way; and from whence it may be observed, that mutual consolation, exhortation, and edification, are things the saints should be stirred up to frequently, even though they are regarded by them, and much more then should these be pressed upon them who are careless and negligent of them.

Ver. 12. *And we beseech you, brethren, &c.*] Not in a natural or civil, but spiritual relation; and what follows relating to the ministers of the word, the apostle addresses this church on their behalf, not in an imperious and authoritative manner, but by way of entreaty, with great humility and strong affection: *know them that labour among you*; who were not non-residents, but were upon the spot with them; and where indeed should pastors be, but with their flocks? and husbandmen and vine-dressers, but in their fields and vineyards? and stewards, but in the families where they are placed? and parents, but with their children? nor were they loiterers in the vineyard, or slothful servants, and idle shepherds, but labourers; who laboured in the word and doctrine; gave up themselves to meditation, reading, and prayer; laboured hard in private, to find out the meaning of the word of God; and studied to shew themselves workmen, that need not be ashamed; and preached the word in season and out of season; faithfully dispensed all ordinances, and diligently performed the duties of their office; and were willing to spend and be spent, for the glory of Christ, and the good of souls, and earnestly contended for the faith of the Gospel; and all this they did, as among them, so for them, for their spiritual good and welfare: some render the words, *in you*; they laboured in teaching, instructing, and admonishing them; they laboured to enlighten their understandings, to inform their judgments, to raise their affections, and to bring their wills to a resignation to the will of God; to refresh their memories with Gospel truths; to strengthen their faith, encourage their hope, and draw out their love to God and Christ, and the brethren: and what the apostle directs them to, as their duty towards these persons, is to *know* them; that is, not to learn their names, and know their persons, who they were; for they could not but know them in this sense, since they dwelt and laboured among them, and were continually employed in instructing them; but that they would make themselves known to them, and converse freely and familiarly with them, that so they might know the state of their souls, and be better able to speak a word in season to them; and that they would take notice of them, shew respect to them, and an affection for them; ac-

knowledge them as their pastors, and account of them as stewards of the mysteries of God, and own them as ministers of Christ; and reckon them as blessings to them, and acknowledge the same with thankfulness; and obey them, and submit unto them in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and to their counsel and advice, so far as is agreeable to the word of God: the Arabic version renders it, *that ye may know the dignity of them that labour among you*; and so conduct and behave towards them accordingly: *and are over you in the Lord*; are set in the highest place in the church, and bear the highest office there; have the presidency and government in it, and go before the saints, and guide and direct them in matters both of doctrine and practice, being ensamples to the flock; the Syriac version renders it, *and stand before you*; ministering unto you in holy things, being servants to you for Jesus' sake: and this *in the Lord*; or by the Lord; for they did not take this honour to themselves, nor were they appointed by men, but they were made able ministers of the word by God; received their gifts qualifying them for this work from Christ, and were placed as overseers of the church by the Holy Ghost: and it was only in things pertaining to the Lord that they were over them; not in things civil, which distinguishes them from civil magistrates; nor in things secular and worldly, they had nothing to do in their families, to preside there, or with their worldly concerns, only in the church of Christ, and in things pertaining to their spiritual welfare; and though they were over them, yet under Christ, and in subjection to him, as their Lord and King; governing not in an arbitrary and tyrannical way, lording it over God's heritage, usurping a dominion over the faith of men, coining new doctrines, and making new laws; but according to the word of God, and laws of Christ, in the fear of the Lord, and with a view to the glory of God, and in love to souls: hence the Arabic version renders it, *in the love of the Lord*: the phrase, *in the Lord*, is omitted in the Syriac version: *and admonish you*; or instruct you, put into your minds good and wholesome things, and put you in mind of the doctrines of the Gospel, of the duties of religion, of former experiences; and give warning of sin and danger, and reprove and rebuke with faithfulness; and as the case requires, either in public or private, and with sharpness or tenderness.

Ver. 13. *And to esteem them very highly, &c.*] Or, as the Ethiopic version renders it, *honour them abundantly*; for such are worthy of double honour, and to be had in reputation; they should be honourably thought of, and be high in the affections of the saints, who should esteem them better than themselves, or others in the community; and should be spoke well of, and their characters vindicated from the reproach and obloquy of others; and should be spoke respectfully to, and be honourably done by; should be provided for with an honourable maintenance, which is part of the double honour due to them in 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. and this should be *in love*: not in fear, nor in hypocrisy and dissimulation; not in word and in tongue only, but from the heart and real affection: the Syriac version renders it, *that they be esteemed by you with more abundant love*; with an increasing love, or with greater love than is shewn to the brethren in common, or to private

members: *and that for their works' sake*; for the sake of the work of the ministry, which is a good work as well as honourable; is beneficial to the souls of men, and is for the glory of God, being diligently and faithfully performed by them; on which account they are to be valued, and not for an empty title without labour. *And be at peace among yourselves.* The Vulgate Latin version reads, *with them*; and so the Syriac version, connecting the former clause with this, *for their works' sake have peace with them*; that is, with the ministers of the word; don't disagree with them upon every trivial occasion, or make them offenders for a word; keep up a good understanding, and cultivate love and friendship with them; *embrace them with brotherly love*, as the Ethiopic version renders the words, understanding them also as relating to ministers; a difference with them is of bad consequence, and must render their ministry greatly useless and unprofitable to those who differ with them, as well as render them very uncomfortable and unfit for it. The Arabic version renders it, *in yourselves*; as referring to internal peace in their own souls, which they should be concerned for; and which only is attained to, enjoyed, and preserved, by looking to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: or else it may regard peace among themselves, and with one another as brethren, and as members of the same church; which as it is for their credit and reputation without doors, and for their comfort, delight, and pleasure within, in their church-state and fellowship, so it tends to make the ministers of the Gospel more easy and comfortable in their work: thus the words, considered in this sense, have still a relation to them.

Ver. 14. *Now we exhort you, brethren, &c.*] This is said either to the ministers of the word that laboured among them, presided over them, and admonished them; and the rather, because some of these things here directed to are pressed upon the members of the church in ver. 11. and which otherwise must make a repetition here; or to the members in conjunction with their pastors: *warn them that are unruly*; or disorderly, idle persons, working not at all, busying themselves with other men's matters, and living upon the church's stock, reprove them for their sloth, exhort them to work with their own hands, to do their own business, and with quietness eat their own bread; or such who keep not their places in the church, but are like soldiers that go out of their rank, desert their companies, and fly from their colours, or start aside, rebuke these, and exhort them to fill up their places, to abide by the church, and the ordinances of Christ; or such who are contentious and quarrelsome, turbulent, headstrong, and unruly, that cause and foment animosities and divisions, check them, admonish them, lay them under censure, for such a custom and practice is not to be allowed of in the churches of Christ. *Comfort the feeble-minded*; such as are not able to bear the loss of near and dear relations; are ready to stagger under the cross, and at the reproaches and persecutions of the world; and are almost overset with the temptations of Satan; and are borne down and discouraged with the corruptions of their hearts, speak a comfortable word to them, encourage them with the doctrines of grace, and the promises of the Gospel. *Support the weak*; who

are weak in faith and knowledge, strengthen them, hold them up; or, as the Syriac version renders it, *take the burden of the weak*, and carry it, bear their infirmities, as is directed in Rom. xv. 1. *be patient towards all men*; towards the unruly, the feeble-minded, and the weak, as well as to other Christians, that know more, and behave better, and also to the men of this world, as well as to believers; give place to wrath, and leave vengeance to him to whom it belongs; exercise long-suffering and forbearance with fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians.

Ver. 15. *See that none render evil for evil unto any man, &c.*] Not an ill word for an ill word, railing for railing, nor an ill action for an ill action; no, not to any man whatever, not to an enemy, a persecutor, a profane person, as well as not to a brother, a believer in Christ; and this the saints should not only be careful of, and guard against in themselves, but should watch over one another, and see to it, that no such practice is found in each other. *But ever follow that which is good*; honestly, morally, pleasantly, and profitably good; even every good work, which is according to the will of God, is done in faith, from love, and to the glory of God; and particularly acts of beneficence and liberality to the poor; and which are not to be once, or now and then done, but to be followed and pursued after, and that always; *both among yourselves, and to all men*; not only to the household of faith, though to them especially, and in the first place, but to all other men, as opportunity offers, even to our enemies, and them that persecute us, and despitefully use us; do good to their bodies, and to their souls, as much as in you lies, by feeding and clothing the one, and by praying for, advising, and instructing the other.

Ver. 16. *Rejoice evermore.*] Not in a carnal, but in a spiritual way, with joy in the Holy Ghost; and which arises from a view of pardon by the blood of Christ, of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; not in themselves, as the wicked man rejoices in his wickedness, and the hypocrite and formalist in his profession of religion, and the reputation he gains by it; and the Pharisee and legalist in his morality, civility, negative holiness, and obedience to the rituals of the law; for such rejoice in their boastings, and all such rejoicing is evil; but in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the greatness, fitness, fulness, and glory of his person, in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in what he is in himself, and is made unto his people, and in what he has done, and is still doing for them, and particularly in the salvation he has wrought out; and not in the things of this life, and the attainments of it, either of body, or of mind, or of estate, as in strength, wisdom, or riches; but in things spiritual, that our names are written in heaven, and we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and called by his grace, and shall be glorified together with him; and not only in prosperity, but in adversity, since all things work together for good, and afflictions serve for the exercise of grace; and especially, since to suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, is a great honour, and the spirit of God, and of glory, rests on such, and great will be their reward in heaven: and there is always reason, and ever a firm ground and foundation for rejoicing with believers, let their cir-

cumstances or their frames be what they will; since God, their covenant God, is unchangeable, and his love to them is from everlasting to everlasting invariably the same; the covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things, and sure, is firm and immovable; and Jesus, the Mediator of it, is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever.

Ver. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*] Not that saints should be always on their knees, or ever lifting up their hands, and vocally calling upon God; this is not required of them, and would clash with, and break in upon other parts of religious worship, and the duties of civil life, which are to be attended to, as well as this, and besides would be impracticable; for however willing a spiritual man might be to be engaged in this work always, yet the flesh is weak, and would not be able to bear it; and it requires food and drink, sleep and rest, for its refreshment and support; for all which there must be time allowed, as well as for other actions of animal life, and the business of a man's calling. But the meaning is, that believers should be daily, and often found in the performance of this duty; for as their wants daily return upon them, and they are called to fresh service, and further trials and exercises, they have need of more grace, strength, and assistance, and therefore should daily pray for it; and besides certain times both in the closet, and in the family, in which they should attend the throne of grace, there is such a thing as mental prayer, praying in the heart, private ejaculations of the soul, which may be sent up to heaven, whilst a man is engaged in the affairs of life. The Ethiopic version renders the words, *pray frequently*; don't leave off praying, or cease from it through the prevalence of sin, the temptations of Satan, or through discouragement, because an answer is not immediately had, or through carelessness and negligence, but continue in it, and be often at it; see Luke xviii. 1—8. These words are opposed to the practice of such, who either pray not at all, or, having used it, have left it off, or who only pray in a time of trouble and distress, and bear hard on those who think they should not pray but when under the influences of the Spirit, and when his graces are in a lively exercise: the reason for this rule of praying with frequency and constancy is, because the saints are always needy, they are always in want of mercies of one kind or another, and therefore should continually go to the throne of grace, and there ask for grace and mercy to help them in time of need.

Ver. 18. *In every thing give thanks, &c.*] That is, to God the father, in the name of Christ; see Eph. v. 20. thanks are to be given to him *for all things*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; for all temporal good things; for our beings, the preservation of them; for food and raiment, and all the mercies of life; for the means of grace, the word and ordinances, and the ministers of the Gospel; for spiritual blessings, for electing, redeeming, regenerating, adopting, pardoning, justifying, and persevering grace: for a meetness for heaven, a right unto it, and a good hope of it; and especially for Jesus Christ, for such an husband, such an head, such a surety and Saviour, and advocate with the father, as he is; and for life, peace, joy, comfort, righteousness, and salvation in him: and thanks should be given to God in every circumstance of life; in adver-

sity, as Job did; when not in so comfortable and agreeable a frame of soul as to be wished for, since it might be worse, and is not black despair; even under the temptations of Satan, since they might be greater and heavier, and since the grace of God is sufficient to bear up under them, and deliver out of them, and since there is such a sympathizing high-priest and Saviour; and in afflictions of every kind, since they are all for good, temporal, or spiritual, or eternal. *For this is the will of God*; which may refer either to all that is said from ver. 11. to this passage, or particularly to this of giving thanks; which is the revealed and declared will of God, is a part of that good, perfect, and acceptable will of his, and what is well-pleasing in his sight, and grateful to him; see Psal. lxxix. 30, 31. and is *in Christ Jesus concerning you*; either declared in and by him, who has made known the whole of the will of God, and so the Arabic version, *which he wills of you by Jesus Christ*; or which is exemplified in Christ, who for, and in all things, gave thanks to God, and had his will resigned to his in every circumstance of life; or, which being done, is acceptable to God through Christ. The Alexandrian copy reads, *for this is the will of God towards you in Christ Jesus*; that is, with respect to you who are in Christ secretly by election, and openly by effectual vocation; and who, of all men in the world, have reason to be thankful for every thing, and in every circumstance.

Ver. 19. *Quench not the spirit.*] By which is meant, not the person of the spirit, but either the graces of the spirit, which may be compared to light, and fire, and heat, to which the allusion is in the text; such as faith, which is a light in the soul, a seeing of the son, and an evidence of things not seen; and love, which gives a vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench; and zeal, which is the boiling up of love, the efferency of it; and spiritual knowledge, which is also light, and of an increasing nature, and are all graces of the spirit: and though these can't be totally extinguished, and utterly put out and lost, yet they may be greatly damped; the light of faith may become dim; and the flame of love be abated, and that wax cold; the heat of zeal may pass into lukewarmness, and an indifference of spirit; and the light of knowledge seem to decline instead of increasing; and all through indulging some sin or sins, by keeping ill company, and by neglecting the ordinances of God, prayer, preaching, and other institutions of the Gospel; wherefore such an exhortation is necessary to quicken saints, and stir them up to the use of those means, whereby those graces are cherished and preserved in their lively exercise; though rather the gifts of the spirit are intended. The extraordinary gifts of the spirit, bestowed on the apostles at the day of Pentecost, are represented under the symbol of fire, to which perhaps the apostle may here have respect; and the more ordinary gifts of the spirit are such as are to be stirred up, as coals of fire are stirred up, in order that they may burn, and shine the brighter, and give both light and heat, 2 Tim. i. 6. and which may be said to be quenched, when they are neglected, and lie by as useless; when they are wrapped up in a napkin, or hid in the earth; or when men are restrained from the use of them; or when the use of them is not attended

to, or is brought into contempt, and the exercise of them rendered useless and unprofitable, as much as in them lies. And even private persons may quench the spirit of God, his gifts of light and knowledge, when they hold the truth in unrighteousness, imprison it, and conceal it, and don't publicly profess it as they ought.

Ver. 20. *Despise not prophesyings.*] Or *prophecies*; the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the first coming of Christ, concerning his person, office, and work, his obedience, sufferings, and death, his resurrection from the dead, ascension and session at God's right hand; for though all these are fulfilled, yet they have still their usefulness; for by comparing these with facts, the perfections of God, his omniscience, truth, faithfulness, wisdom, &c. are demonstrated, the authority of the Scriptures established, the truths of the Gospel illustrated and confirmed, and faith strengthened; and besides, there are many prophecies which regard things to be done, and yet to be done under the Gospel dispensation, and therefore should not be set at nought, but highly valued and esteemed: also the predictions of Christ concerning his own sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead, and what would befall his disciples afterwards, with many things relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, his second coming, and the end of the world, these should be had in great esteem; nor should what the apostles foretold concerning the rise of antichrist, the man of sin, and the apostacy of the latter days, and the whole book of the Revelations, which is no other than a prophecy of the state of the church, from the times of the apostles to the end of the world, be treated with neglect and contempt, but should be seriously considered, and diligently searched and inquired into. Yea, the prophecies of private men, such as Agabus, and others, in the apostle's time, and in later ages, are not to be slighted; though instances of this kind are rare in our times, and things of this nature should not be precipitantly, and without care, given into: but rather prophesyings here intend the explanation of Scripture, and the preaching of the word, and particularly by persons who had not the gift of tongues, and therefore men were apt to despise them; see 1 Cor. xiii. 2. and xiv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 24, 31. Just as in our days, if persons have not had a liberal education, and do not understand Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, though they have ministerial gifts, and are capable of explaining the word to edification and comfort, yet are set at nought and rejected, which should not be.

Ver. 21. *Prove all things, &c.*] That are said by the prophets, all the doctrines which they deliver; hear them, though they have not the gift of tongues, and all desirable advantages; don't reject them on that account, and refuse to hear them, for so, many useful men may be laid aside, and the spirit of God in them be quenched; try their gifts, and attend to their doctrines, yet don't implicitly believe every thing they say, but examine them according to the word of God, the test and standard of truth; search the Scriptures, whether the things they say are true or no. Not openly erroneous persons, and known heretics, are to be heard and attended on, but the ministers of the

word, or such who are said to have a gift of prophesying; these should make use of it, and the church should try and judge their gift, and accordingly encourage or discourage; and also their doctrines, and if false reject them, and if true receive them. *Hold fast that which is good*; honest, pleasant, profitable, and agreeable to sound doctrine, to the analogy of faith, and the Scriptures of truth, and is useful and edifying, instructive both as to principle and practice; such should be held fast, that no man take it away; and be retained, though a majority may be against it, for the multitude is not always on the side of truth; and though it may be rejected by men of learning and wealth, as Christ and his doctrines were rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the people; and though it may be reproached as a novel, upstart notion, or a licentious one, since these were charges against the doctrine of Christ, and his apostles; and though it may be attended with affliction and persecution, yet none of these things should move from it, or cause to let it go.

Ver. 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*] Of doctrinal evil. Not only open error and heresy are to be avoided, but what has any shew of it, or looks like it, or carries in it a suspicion of it, or may be an occasion thereof, or lead unto it; wherefore all new words and phrases of this kind should be shunned, and the form of sound words held fast; and so of all practical evil, not only from sin itself, and all sorts of sin, lesser or greater, as the Jews have a saying, "take care of a light as of a heavy commandment," that is, take care of committing a lesser, as a greater sin, and from the first motions of sin; but from every occasion of it, and what leads unto it, and has the appearance of it, or may be suspected of others to be sin, and so give offence, and be a matter of scandal. The Jews have a saying very agreeable to this, "remove thyself afar off" (or abstain) from filthiness, and from every thing, "דרימה לו, that is like unto it."

Ver. 23. *And the very God of peace, &c.*] Or *the God of peace himself.* The apostle follows his exhortations with prayer to God, knowing the weakness and impotency of the saints to receive them, and act according to them, and his own insufficiency to impress their minds with them; and that unless the Lord opened their ears to discipline, and sealed instruction to them, they would be useless and in vain; wherefore he applies to the throne of grace, and addresses God as *the God of peace*; so called, because of the concern he has in peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ, and because he is the giver of peace of conscience, and the author of peace, concord, and unity among the saints, and of all happiness and prosperity, both in this world, and in that which is to come; see the note on Rom. xv. 33. And the apostle might choose to address God under this character, partly to encourage boldness, freedom, and intrepidity at the throne of grace, and partly to raise hope, expectation, and faith of having his requests answered, since God is not an angry God, nor is fury in him, but the God of peace: and the petitions he puts up for the Thessalonians are as follow: and first, that God would *sanctify*

* Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 1.

* Apud Drusium in loc.

you wholly; or *all of you*, as the Arabic version; or *all of you perfectly*, as the Syriac version. These persons were sanctified by the spirit of God, but not perfectly; the Gospel was come to them in power, and had wrought effectually in them, and they were turned from idols to serve the living God, and had true faith, hope, and love, implanted in them, and which they were enabled to exercise in a very comfortable and commendable manner; but yet this work of grace and sanctification begun in them was far from being perfect, nor is it in the best of saints. There is something lacking in the faith of the greatest believer, love often waxes cold, and hope is not lively at all times, and knowledge is but in part; sin dwells in all; the saints are poor and needy, their wants continually return upon them, and they need daily supplies; the most holy and knowing among them disclaim perfection in themselves, though desirous of it. Their sanctification in Christ is perfect, but not in themselves; there is indeed a perfection of parts in internal sanctification, every grace is implanted, there is not one wanting; the new creature, or new man, has all its parts, though these are not come to their full growth; there is not a perfection of degrees, and this is what the apostle prays for; for sanctification is a progressive, gradual work, it is like seed cast into the earth, which springs up, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, and is as light, which shines more and more to the perfect day. Sanctified persons are first as new-born babes, and then they grow up to be young men, and at last become fathers in Christ; and this work being begun, is carried on, and will be performed, fulfilled, and made perfect: and it is God's work to do it; he begins, and he carries it on, and he will finish it; and therefore the apostle prays to him to do it; this is his first petition: the second follows, and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. A like division of man is made by the Jews: says one of their writers "a man cannot know God, unless he knows נשמתו ונפשו, his soul, his breath, or his spirit, and his body." Says R. Isaac, "worthy are the righteous in this world, and in the world to come, for lo, they are all holy; their body is holy, their soul is holy, their spirit, and their breath is holy." See the note on Heb. iv. 12. Some by *spirit* understand the graces and gifts of the spirit in a regenerate man; and by *the soul*, the soul as regenerated, and as it is the seat and subject of these graces; and by *the body*, the habitation of the soul, which is influenced by the grace that is in it; and this is a sense not to be despised. Others by *the spirit* understand the rational and immortal soul of man, often called a spirit, as in Eccl. xii. 7. and by *the soul*, the animal and sensitive soul, which man has in common with brutes; see Eccl. iii. 21. and by *the body*, the outward frame of flesh and blood, and bones; but rather *spirit* and *soul* design the same immaterial, immortal, and rational soul of man, considered in its different powers and faculties. The *spirit* may intend the understanding, Job xxxii. 8. which is the principal, leading, and governing faculty of the soul; and

which being enlightened by the spirit of God, a man knows himself, Christ Jesus, and the things of the spirit; the truths of the Gospel, and receives and values them. The *soul* may include the will and affections, which are influenced by the understanding; and in a regenerate man the will is brought to a resignation to the will of God, and the affections are set upon divine things, and the body is the instrument of performing religious and spiritual exercises: and these the apostle prays may be *preserved blameless*; not that he thought they could be kept from sinning entirely in thought, word, or deed; but that they might be preserved in purity and chastity from the gross enormities of life, and be kept from a total and final falling away, the work of grace be at last completed on the soul and spirit, and the body be raised in incorruption, and glory; and both at the coming of Christ be presented faultless, and without blame, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, first to himself, and then to his father.

Ver. 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you, &c.*] Into the fellowship of his son, and to his kingdom and glory, and who continues to do so, not only externally by his word, but internally by his spirit and grace. *Who also will do it.* Two things the apostle mentions as the ground of confidence that the above petitions would be heard and answered; that is, that God would wholly sanctify them, and preserve the whole of them blameless to the coming of Christ; and they are the faithfulness of God, and the effectual calling of his saints. God is faithful to his word, his covenant and promises; he has promised to sanctify and cleanse his people from all their sins, and to preserve them safe to his kingdom and glory; agreeably the Arabic version renders this last clause, *and will execute his promise*: and effectual vocation is a sure pledge of glorification; whom God calls he justifies and glorifies; as sure as he gives grace, he will give glory; and whom he calls to his eternal glory, he will make perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle. The Complutensian edition reads, *who also will make your hope firm*; that is, with respect to the above things.

Ver. 25. *Brethren, pray for us.*] Which is added with great beauty and propriety, after the apostle had so earnestly and affectionately prayed for them; and this is directed, not to the pastors of the church only, but to all the members of it, whom the apostle styles *brethren* in a spiritual relation, as he often does; and of whom he requests, that they would pray for him, and the rest of his fellow-ministers and labourers in the word, that God would more and more qualify and fit them for their work, assist in private studies and meditations, give them freedom of thought, liberty of expression, and a door of utterance, and follow their ministrations with a divine blessing and success, and deliver them out of the hands of unreasonable men; see the note on Heb. xiii. 18.

Ver. 26. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.*] In opposition to an unchaste and hypocritical one. His meaning is, that they would salute the members of the church in his name, and give his Christian love and affections to them. And his view is, to recom-

¹ Aben Ezra in Exod. xxxi. 18.

² Zohar in Lev. fol. 99. 2.

mend to them brotherly love to each other, and to stir them up to the mutual exercise of it more and more.

Ver. 27. *I charge you by the Lord, &c.*] Or *I adjure by the Lord*; by the Lord Jesus; it is in the form of an oath, and a very solemn one; and shews that oaths may be used on certain and solemn occasions: *that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren*; to all the members of the church, who are called *holy*, because they were sanctified or set apart by God the father in election; and were sanctified by the blood of Christ, or their sins were expiated, or atoned for by the sacrifice of Christ in redemption; and were sanctified or made holy by the spirit of God in regeneration; and were enabled by the grace of God to live holy lives and conversations. Now this epistle being directed only to some of the principal members of the church, it may be to one or more of their elders; lest he or they should be tempted on any account to conceal it, the apostle in a very solemn manner adjures, that it be read publicly to the whole church whom it concerned, that all might hear, and learn, and receive some advan-

tage from it; from whence we may learn, as is observed by many interpreters, that the sacred Scriptures, neither one part nor another, nor the whole of them, are to be kept from private Christians, but may be read, and heard, and used by all.

Ver. 28. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen.*] This is the apostle's usual salutation in all his epistles, and the token of the genuineness of them, 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18. see the notes on Rom. xvi. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 23. and 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

The subscription to this epistle is not genuine, which runs thus, *The first Epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens*; whereas it appears from ch. iii. 1, 6. compared with Acts xviii. 1, 5. that it was written from Corinth, and not from Athens; nor are these last words, *from Athens*, in Beza's Claromontane copy; though they stand in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the London Polygot Bible, which add, *and sent by Timothy*, and in the Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

THIS second epistle was written, not from Athens, as the subscription testifies, nor from Rome, as Athanasius* supposes; but from Corinth, from whence was sent the former, and where the apostle and Timothy, and Sylvanus met; and which was sent about half a year after the other. The design of which is to comfort and support the Thessalonians under the afflictions and persecutions they endured for the sake of the Gospel; and to rectify a mistake they had gone into, and which might be occasioned by what the apostle had said in his former epistle, concerning the second

coming of Christ, as though it was just at hand; which might lead them to neglect their worldly business, and duties of civil life, and give the enemies of the Gospel an advantage against the whole of it as false, should not this prove true; as also to exhort this church to take notice of disorderly persons, such as were idle, and busy-bodies, and withdraw from them, and remove them from their communion, as being not only burdensome to them, but a reproach to their profession.

C H A P. I.

THIS chapter, besides the inscription and salutation, contains a thanksgiving for the flourishing condition in which the graces of the spirit were in these saints, and consolation for them under their suffering circumstances. The inscription and salutation are in ver. 1, 2. and are as usual: the thanksgiving is in ver. 3. for the growth of their faith, the abounding of their love,

and their constant patience under persecutions and afflictions, insomuch that the apostle also gloried of them for these things among other churches, ver. 4. and as an encouragement to them to continue patient under sufferings, he observes that this was a token of the righteous judgment of God, and that they were reckoned worthy of his kingdom for which they suffered,

ver. 5. and of which righteous judgment they might be assured, from the nature of God himself, whose justice required a retribution of vengeance to their persecutors, and rest to them with the apostles, ver. 6, 7. the time of which rest and ease is pointed at, as that it will be at the coming of Christ; which is described by the place from whence he comes, heaven; by his retinue, his mighty angels; by the manner in which he shall come, in flaming fire; and by the vengeance he will execute: the objects of which are also described, by their ignorance of God, and by their disobedience to the Gospel of Christ; and by the nature of the punishment inflicted on them, which will lie in an expulsion from the presence, power, and glory of God, and in an everlasting destruction of soul and body, ver. 7, 8, 9. but as for them, the persecuted saints, and which is mentioned for their comfort, Christ shall at this day be glorified and admired in them, and by them, ver. 10. wherefore the apostle prays for the perseverance of them, that the good work of faith might be performed in them, and they enjoy the glory they were called unto; and that Christ might be glorified in them, and they in him; not according to their works, but according to the grace of God through him, ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 1. *Paul, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, &c.*] See the note on 1 Thess. i. 1.

Ver. 2. *Gracc be unto you, and peace, &c.*] See the note on Rom. i. 7.

Ver. 3. *We are bound to thank God, &c.*] Since all blessings, temporal and spiritual, come from him: and that *always*; seeing he is ever giving out fresh favours, or continuing former ones; and because those, especially which are of a spiritual nature, always abide, such as faith and love; which the apostle particularly takes notice of, the members of this church had, and were increasing in them: for it was not for himself, but for them he gives thanks, *for you, brethren*: who were so, not in a natural or civil relation, but in a spiritual one, being the children of God, and brethren of Christ; and to do this for them, he looked upon himself with others under an obligation: *as it is meet*; just, proper, and fitting; it not only becomes the persons who have received mercies from God to be thankful for them; but it is very right for others to join with them in it, and especially the ministers of the Gospel, who are bound, and whom it becomes: 'tis agreeable to their office and profession to give God the praise and glory of all the grace, and the increase of it, which those, who attend their labours, are favoured with, since this is not of them, but of God; and it was for an increase of grace the apostle here gives thanks, as he judged he was obliged to do, and it was fit he should. *Because that your faith groweth exceedingly.* Their faith was not a faith of miracles, nor a mere historical faith, or a counterfeit and temporary one, but the faith of God's elect; which is the evidence of things not seen, of an unseen Christ, and the glories of another world; that grace by which a man goes out of himself to Christ for righteousness, life, and salvation; by which he is justified, and by which he lives on Christ, and walks on in him as he has received him. This was theirs; it was not of themselves, the

produce of nature, or the fruit of their natural power and free will; but it was the gift of God, and of his operation; a fruit of the spirit of God, and of which Christ was the author and finisher; and was only theirs, as being given unto them, implanted in them, and exercised by them under the influence of the spirit of God, and for their use, comfort, and advantage. This was, at first, but like a grain of mustard-seed, very small, but gradually increased, and grew exceedingly; and from seeing of Christ, and looking at him, and which at first might be very dim and obscure, it proceeded to going or coming to him; and which might be in a very feeble manner, and was not without being drawn and led, and great encouragements, many invitations, and large assurances; and from thence to a laying hold upon him, though it may be but in a trembling way, and not without being called to stretch forth the hand of faith, and be no more faithless, but believing; and from thence to a leaning and relying on him, trusting in him with all, and for all; and from thence to claiming an interest in him, saying, my Lord, and my God, which is the full assurance of faith; and when it is come to this, it is grown exceedingly, which might be the case of these Thessalonians; which the apostle knew by the aboundings of their love, for faith works by love; and by their patience, firmness, and resolution in suffering for Christ; all which are in proportion to faith, and the growth of it; and for this he gives thanks to God, for faith is a precious thing; and as that itself, so the increase of it is from God, and therefore to him the praise belongs: *and the charity of every one of you towards each other aboundeth*; as their faith in Christ, so their love to one another was increasing, and shewed itself in serving one another both in temporals and spirituals; and this was not the case of a few only, or of the greater part, but of every one of them; which made their communion with one another very comfortable and delightful. For what is more pleasant than for brethren to dwell together in unity?

Ver. 4. *So that we ourselves glory in you, &c.*] Or *of you*; for though they were the subject concerning which, yet not the object in which they gloried; the apostle elsewhere advises not to glory in men, but only in the Lord; nor was this his practice contrary to his advice, for he did not boast of these persons with respect to their carnal things; he did not glory in their flesh, nor in their riches, nor wisdom, nor strength, nor any external gift; he gloried indeed of their graces, and of the exercise and increase of them; but of these not as of themselves, or as owing to him, and his fellow-ministers, but as instances of the grace of God, and for which he gives thanks to him: and besides, he did not glory of these in the presence of God, in whose presence none should glory, but *in the churches of God*; the other churches in Macedonia and Achaia, as Philippi, Berea, Corinth, &c. he gave thanks to God for them, and gloried of them before men, or among the saints, to the glory of the grace of God in them, and in order to stir up other churches to an emulation and imitation of them. And the particulars he gloried of them for were as follow, *for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure*; many and sore were the reproaches, the afflictions, and persecutions that befell them for the sake of Christ,

and their profession of him, and his Gospel; and which is more or less the case of every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus: and these they endured, they bore and stood up under, they were not shocked, and staggered, and moved from the hope of the Gospel by them; which shews that the truth of grace was in them; for where there is not the root of the matter, when tribulation and affliction arise because of the profession of the word, such are offended, stumbled, and quickly gone; but these saints endured their afflictions, and with great patience, without murmuring and repining, and with great constancy, firmness, and resolution of mind. They stood fast in the grace and doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both, which they held without wavering, and none of the things they met with could move them from it. The apostle had mentioned their faith before, and he takes notice of it again, because their patience, constancy, and perseverance in sufferings, arose from it; for the trying of faith works patience, Jam. i. 3. The Ethiopic version leaves out the word *faith*, but very wrongly.

Ver. 5. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, &c.] That is, according as some think, that God should glorify those that are persecuted, and punish their persecutors: this sense indeed may seem to agree with what follows; but the apostle is speaking not of something future, but of something present; not of what God will do hereafter, but of the present sufferings of the saints. According to others the sense is, that God's suffering affliction and persecution to befall his own people, as a chastisement of them, that they may not be condemned with the world, is an evidence of his strict justice, that he will not suffer sin in any to go unobserved by him; and is a manifest token how severely and righteously he will punish the wicked hereafter, see 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. But rather the meaning of the words is this, that whereas good men are afflicted and persecuted in this life, they have now their evil things, and bad men prosper and flourish, and have their good things, so that justice does not seem to take place; which seeming inequality in Providence has been sometimes the hardening of wicked men, and the staggering of the righteous, which should not be; this is now a manifest token, and a clear case, that there will be a righteous judgment, in which things will be set aright, and justice will take place; for God is neither unrighteous nor careless, or negligent; and this is observed to support the saints under their sufferings, and to animate them to bear them patiently: *that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer*; either of the Gospel, which is sometimes so called, and for which they suffered, and so judged themselves worthy of it; as those that put it away from them, and care not to suffer the least reproach for it, shew themselves to be unworthy of it, and of eternal life also: or of a Gospel church-state, and a name, and a place in it, for which the people of God likewise suffer; and those who shun reproach and sufferings for it are not worthy to have a place, or their names there: or rather of the heavenly glory; for the hope of which saints suffer much here, whereby their graces are tried, and so they are counted worthy, not by way of merit of it,

but meetness for it; many tribulations are the way, or at least lie in the way to this kingdom. In the school of afflictions the saints are trained up for it; and though these are not worthy to be compared with their future happiness, yet they work for them an eternal weight of glory; by the means of these the graces of the spirit of God are exercised and increased, their hearts are weaned from the world; and coming up out of great tribulations, they wash their garments, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light.

Ver. 6. *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God, &c.]* That which is righteous in itself, is righteous in the sight of God, but it is not always so with men; men may think it a righteous thing that they should be rewarded for persecuting the followers of Christ, supposing they hereby do God good service; but on the contrary, with God, and in his sight and account, 'tis a righteous thing, or a point of justice, *to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you*: persecution is an affliction, or a trouble to the saints; persecutors trouble them in their minds and bodies, in their persons and property; they trouble their minds by casting reflections and reproaches upon them, by severe revilings, and cruel mockings, which all are not alike able to bear; and they trouble and afflict their bodies by imprisonment and bonds, by scourging and beating, and various cruel and torturing deaths; and they disturb them in the possession of their estates, by spoiling their goods, and confiscating them to their own use; and it is but according to *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, to render tribulation to such troublers of God's Israel; and to them it is recompenced, either in this world, or in the world to come: sometimes in this world persecutors are manifest instances of God's judgments and wrath upon them, as Herod, who stretched out his hands to vex certain of the church, killed James the brother of John, and imprisoned Peter, and was smitten by the angel of the Lord, and was eaten of worms; and the Jews, who were now the only and the implacable persecutors of the saints, in a short time had the wrath of God come upon them to the uttermost, even upon their nation, city, and temple, upon their persons and property. And if not in this life, 'tis a certain thing that hereafter such shall have indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; they shall be cast into outward darkness, into the lake of fire; and the hottest place in hell will be their portion, even devouring flames, and everlasting burnings; and are what is designed by tribulations here.

Ver. 7. *And to you who are troubled, rest with us, &c.]* This is another branch of the justice of God, in rendering to them who are afflicted and persecuted for righteousness-sake, *rest*: a relaxation or rest from persecutions, for a while at least; as the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had, from that persecution raised at the death of Stephen, Acts ix. 31. and as the Christians had at the destruction of Jerusalem; which though it was a day of vengeance to the unbelieving Jews, were times of refreshing to the saints, who were now delivered from their persecutors: or rather this designs a rest which remains for the saints after death in the grave, and, at the coming of the Lord, and to all eter-

nity; when they shall rest from all their toil and labour, and be freed from sin, and all disquietude by it, and from the temptations of Satan, and likewise from the persecutions of men; see Job iii. 17. And this will be enjoyed in company with the apostles, and other believers; and as it is some alleviation to the sufferings and afflictions of saints now, that the same are accomplished in others, so it will enhance the heavenly glory, rest, and felicity, that they will be partners and sharers in it with: the apostles of Christ Jesus, and have the same crown of glory they have; and indeed their company and conversation will be a part of their happiness. *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven*; then will the justice of God take place in both the above branches and instances of it, rendering tribulation to persecutors, and rest to the persecuted. Christ, ever since a cloud received him out of the sight of the apostles up to heaven, has been, as it were, hid, and has not been seen with corporeal eyes by men on earth ever since, but by a very few, as Stephen, and the Apostle Paul; he has only been seen by an eye of faith; at his second coming there will be a revelation of him, and every eye shall see him: and this revelation of him will be *from heaven*; thither he was received at his ascension, and there he now is; and here he is received, and will be retained until the end of all things; and from hence the saints expect him, and from hence will he descend in person, and then he'll be revealed, and appear to the view of every one: and that *with his mighty angels*; which will add to the glory, majesty, and solemnity of that appearance: these are called *his angels*, because he is the Creator of them, and the object of their worship and adoration, and he is the Lord and head of them, and they are ministering spirits to him and his; and *mighty angels*, because they excel all other creatures in strength; a remarkable instance of the might and strength of angels is in 2 Kings xix. 35. The words from the original text may be rendered, *with the angels of his power*; as they are by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, for they will be the ministers of the power of Christ in gathering the elect from the four winds, and all nations, before Christ; and in taking out of his kingdom all that offend, and do iniquity; and in severing the righteous from the wicked; and in casting the latter into the furnace of fire. The Syriac version reads the words, *with the power of his angels*.

Ver. 8. *In flaming fire, &c.*] Which may either refer to Christ, who will be revealed from heaven in such a manner; and whose coming will be as the lightning, not only sudden, but glorious, illustrious, and visible; he will be seen and easily discerned; there will be such a light and flaming fire about him, which, as it will serve to make him visible, will greatly add to the majesty of his appearance, and strike terror to his enemies, and burn them up round about; see Dan. vii. 7, 9, 10. Psal. xcvi. 3, 4. or else it may refer to the angels, who shall descend in fiery forms, which is agreeably to their nature, Psal. civ. 4. and so they appeared in the forms of horses of fire, and chariots of fire, when Elijah was carried up to heaven. And it is a

tradition of the Jews*, that the angel Gabriel descended בשללומבא ראשון, *in a flame of fire*, to burn Moses, as he was in the inn, when upon his journey from Midian to Egypt: or this clause may be read in construction with the following, as it is in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, *in flaming fire taking vengeance*; and so expresses the manner in which vengeance will be taken on the wicked by Christ, the Judge of all, to whom it belongs: and the punishment of ungodly men is often signified by fire, and flames of fire, by the fire of hell, and a lake which burns with fire and brimstone, by a furnace of fire, everlasting fire, and fire that cannot be quenched, to set forth the endless torture and inconceivable misery of the damned; and it may be, some regard is had to the general conflagration, which will be at the coming of Christ, when the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all that is in it, shall be burnt up, when the bodies of the wicked, then living, will be consumed in flames of fire, and their souls feel the wrath of the Almighty. The persons who will then be punished, and on whom vengeance will be taken, are described as follows, *on them that know not God*; which is a periphrasis, or common character of the Gentiles, 1 Thess. iv. 5. who know not the one, true, and living God; or know him not so as to glorify him as God, and be thankful to him for the mercies they receive from him, and still less know him in Christ Jesus; which ignorance of theirs is not without sin, nor will it excuse from punishment; for though vengeance will not be taken on them, because they have not a spiritual saving knowledge of God, in the Mediator Jesus Christ, who never was revealed to them; yet forasmuch as they had the light and law of nature, by which the being of God, and the invisible perfections of his nature might be seen and understood, and much of his will, with respect to moral good and evil, be known, against both which they have rebelled, and having sinned, will perish without law: though it may also include all such persons, who having been favoured with an external revelation, have professed to know God, and yet in works have denied him: *and that obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ*; of which Christ is the author, was the preacher, and is the sum and substance; which is good news and glad tidings of the grace of God, of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by Christ; which may be said to be obeyed, when it is received and embraced by faith, with and from the heart, and confession is made of it with the mouth, and the ordinances of it are submitted to; and which is called the obedience of faith, because faith without obedience is not right, and obedience without faith is of no avail: but all that hear the Gospel do not obey it; there are some that disbelieve and reject the doctrines and ordinances of it, and others that do profess it, and do not yield a cordial and cheerful obedience to it; both may be reckoned among the disobeyers of it: and though the unbelieving Jews may be chiefly designed here, yet deists of every age and place, where the Gospel revelation has come, and carnal professors, and pro-

* Zohar in Gen. fol. 62. 2.

fane despisers everywhere, may be included; whose condemnation will be aggravated by the external light which has shone around them, and they have hated; the severest punishment will be inflicted on them; it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrha, than for such persons; see 1 Pet. iv. 17.

Ver. 9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, &c.*] With destruction both of soul and body, though not with the annihilation of either; their gnawing worm of conscience will never die, and the fire of divine wrath will never be quenched; the smoke of their torment will ascend for ever. Sin being committed against an infinite and eternal Being, will be infinite in its duration; nor will it cease to be in the persons punished, who will not be in the least reformed or purged from sin by punishment; which will make the continuance of it just and necessary. And these will be driven from the presence of the Lord: as the former clause may express the punishment of sense the wicked will feel in their own breasts, this may intend the punishment of loss; or what they will be deprived of, the presence of the Lord, in which the happiness of angels, and of glorified saints lies; and may also signify how sudden and terrible their destruction will be. As soon as the Lord appears, they'll perish at his presence like wax before the fire; and so awful will be his appearance, they'll flee from it with the utmost terror, and call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of the Lord, and to screen them from his wrath: and from the glory of his power; or his glorious power, in which he shall come, and which will be exerted, and shewn in raising the dead, and gathering all nations before him, in passing sentence on them, and in executing it. For he has power, as to save, so to destroy, as to glorify the bodies and souls of his saints, so to destroy the wicked, both body and soul, in hell; and the glory of his power will be seen in the one, as well as in the other. And now it will be, that tribulation will be rendered to the troublers of the Lord's people.

Ver. 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, &c.*] Or by them who are set apart for holiness and happiness by God the father; whose sins are expiated by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; to whom he is made sanctification; and who are sanctified by the spirit and grace of God; and in whom Christ has a peculiar interest, through his father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of his grace: and when he comes a second time he'll be glorified in these persons; he'll appear glorious to them; he'll come in his own glory both as God and man; and in his father's glory, authority, and majesty, conferred on him as the Judge of the whole earth; and with the glory of his angels, who will accompany him. And he will also bestow a glory on them; their souls will be endowed with perfect knowledge and holiness; and their bodies will be made like to his glorious body; and both will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father; and this glory on the members of Christ will redound to the glory of him their head. And as he will then, in the most full and clear manner, display the glory of his person and perfections, of his wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness, set off the glory of his

offices, and the administration of them, and open the riches both of his grace and glory to them; so they will, in return, ascribe honour, praise, and glory, to him, and give him the glory of their salvation to all eternity: and to be admired in all them that believe; who are the same with the saints; these are convertible terms; for no man can be a saint, unless he is a believer in Christ, let him make what pretensions to holiness he will: and no man can be a true believer in Christ, unless he is a saint; for true faith works by love, and in a way of holiness; and in those, or by those that are sanctified by faith in him, will he be admired when he appears a second time. He is admired by them now; he is with them the chiefest among ten thousands, and altogether lovely: they wonder at the glory and beauty of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and are amazed that such as they are should be admitted to communion with him; and how much more will they wonder, when they shall see him as he is? and he'll be admired by others on the account of them, when they shall see those that they have despised, and persecuted, and accounted as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, received into the arms of Jesus with all the expressions of tenderness and love; placed at his right hand, and set down with him on his throne, clothed with white robes, and crowns on their head, and palms in their hands: and he himself will be admired with them, when they shall see him whom they took to be a mere man, and who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and was loaded with reproach and ignominy, and at last suffered a shameful death, coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory as the Judge of quick and dead; thus will he be admired by them, in them, and with them. (*Because our testimony among you was believed*) in that day: the phrase, in that day, belongs to all that goes before, as that Christ shall take vengeance on wicked men, and they shall be punished by him, and he shall be glorified and admired in and by his people in that day, when he shall be revealed from heaven, and come to judge both quick and dead. Though some versions read it in construction with the clause immediately preceding, *because our testimony among you was believed in that day*; or concerning that day; that is, you gave credit to the testimony we bore, when among you, concerning this illustrious day of the Lord; or our testimony, the ministry of the word by us, in which we bore a testimony to the person and grace of Christ, to his first, and to his second coming, was received and embraced by you with a view to this day, and to the enjoyment of the glory of it. The Arabic version renders it, *for our testimony will be true in that day*; that is, it will appear to be so, every thing we have said will be accomplished then. The Syriac version is very remote, *that our testimony concerning you may be believed in that day*: but it is best to read this clause in a parenthesis, as in our version; which is an application of what is said to the Thessalonians, who might conclude, that since they had embraced the testimony of the Lord Jesus, borne unto him by his apostles, they would be found among the number of the saints and believers, in whom Christ would be glorified and admired; the consideration of which might ani-

mate and encourage them to endure afflictions and persecutions with patience, and to hold out to the end, and at last enjoy the heavenly glory, for which the apostle next prays.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore also we pray always for you, &c.*] Not only observe the above things to your comfort, to support you under sufferings, but we add our prayers, and not only now, but always, that you may be among them in whom Christ will be glorified and admired; in order to which we most sincerely pray, *that our God would count you worthy of this calling.* The Syriac version reads, *your calling,* as in 1 Cor. i. 26. The Vulgate Latin reads, *his own calling,* meaning their effectual calling. This is indeed of God, and not of man; and is owing, not to any previous worthiness in man, as appears from the instances of Matthew the publican, Zaccheus, the Apostle Paul, the Corinthians, and others, but entirely to the free grace of God, who counts them worthy, not for any worthiness there is in them; but *vouchsafes,* as the word may be rendered, this blessing of grace, their effectual vocation, of his own good will and pleasure: but this cannot be meant here, because these persons were partakers of that grace, God had called them to his kingdom and glory; unless the sense of the petition is, that God would cause them to walk worthy of the vocation with which they were called, which becoming walk is owing to the grace of God: or else the meaning may be, that God would grant unto them perseverance in the grace, by and to which they were called, that so they might enjoy eternal glory: which though certain, should be prayed for by saints, both for themselves and others: the words may be rendered, *that our God would count you worthy of the call;* of the call of Christ when he shall be revealed from heaven, and come a second time; for then will he first call the saints out of their graves, as he did Lazarus, and they shall hear his all-powerful voice, and come forth to the resurrection of life, the first and better resurrection, which those that have part in will be secure from the second death; this the apostle was desirous of attaining to himself, and prays that God would vouchsafe it to others; of this Job speaks in ch. xiv. 15. And next Christ will call the righteous, when raised and set at his right hand, to inherit the kingdom and glory prepared by his father for them; and happy are those who by the grace of God will be counted worthy of this call! or rather by calling here is meant, the ultimate glory itself, which the saints are called unto; this God gives a right unto in the justifying righteousness of his son, and makes meet for by his own grace; and the thing itself is a free-grace gift of his through Jesus Christ. In this sense calling seems to be used in Eph. iv. 4. and to this agrees the Ethiopic version here, *that God may impart unto you that to which he hath called you;* and that is eternal glory, which though certainly and inseparably connected with effectual vocation, may, and should be prayed for: *and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness;* not providential, but special goodness; not the good pleasure of his strict justice in the condemning of the wicked, denying his grace to them, and hiding from them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which is a part of his good pleasure, even of the good

pleasure of his righteousness; but this is the good pleasure of his grace and kindness in Christ Jesus, and intends the whole of his gracious designs towards his people: and to express the free, rich, sovereign grace of God in them, the apostle uses a variety of words, calling them *his pleasure,* his *good pleasure;* and, as if this was not enough, *the good pleasure of his goodness;* and desires that all of it might be fulfilled; it consisting of many things, some of which were fulfilled, and others remained to be fulfilled. It consists of the choice of persons in Christ, and the predestination of them to the adoption of children, which is according to the good pleasure of the will of God; the redemption of them by Christ, in which are displayed the exceeding riches of his grace; the free justification of them by the righteousness of Christ; the full pardon of all their sins, and their adoption into the household of God, and their regeneration, of rich grace, and abundant mercy; all these instances of the good pleasure of divine goodness were fulfilled in these persons; what remained were the carrying on and finishing the work of grace upon their souls, and their enjoyment of the heavenly glory: and for the former, in order to the latter, the apostle prays in the next clause, *and the work of faith with power;* faith is not only an operative grace, see the note on 1 Thess. i. 3. and is attended with good works; but it is a work itself, not of man's, for he cannot produce it in himself, nor exercise it of himself; but it is the work of God, of his operation which he works in his people; it has not only God for its object, and therefore the Arabic version reads, *the work of faith on him;* but it has God for its author: and this now, though it had grown exceedingly in these believers, was not as yet fulfilled or perfect; something was still lacking in it; wherefore the apostle prays that he who was the author would be the finisher of it: and this will be done *with power;* not of man's, for this work is neither begun, nor carried on, nor will it be finished by the might and power of men; but the same hands which laid the foundation of it, raise it up, carry it on, and give the finishing stroke to it; it is done by the power of God, and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, *by his own power:* which is greatly displayed in the production of faith at first; for a poor sensible sinner, in a view of all his sins, and the just deserts of them, to venture his soul on Christ alone for salvation; for a man to go out of himself and renounce his own righteousness, and trust to the righteousness of Christ for his justification before God, and acceptance with him, is owing to the exceeding greatness of God's power to them that believe; and the same power is seen in enabling faith to do the things it does; see Heb. xi. and in encouraging, supporting, and maintaining it under the most difficult circumstances, as in the case of Abraham; and to make it stand fast under the severest persecutions, and at the hour of death, and in the view of an awful eternity, when it receives its full completion.

Ver. 12. *That the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, &c.*] This is the end of the apostle's prayer, and which is answered by the fulfilment of the things prayed for; as the name of Christ and his Gospel are dishonoured, by the unbelief, cow-

ardice, and the unworthy walk of professors; so they are glorified in and by the saints, by their faith, patience, and good works in this world; which not only themselves adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, but cause others to glorify him likewise; and Christ will be glorified in them hereafter, by the glory which will be conferred upon them, and which will reflect glory upon him; when all the gracious designs of God are accomplished on them, and the work of faith is finished in them; for should not these be completed, Christ would lose the glory of redemption and salvation, which by means of these will be given by the saints to him to all eternity: *and ye in him*; that is, that ye may be glorified; the saints are now glorified in him as their head and representative, being raised together and made to sit together in heavenly places in him; and when the work of grace is finished upon their souls, they will be glorified toge-

ther with him and by him; and in the resurrection-morn shall appear in glory with him both in soul and body, and shall be made like him, and everlastingly enjoy him and see him as he is; the Alexandrian copy reads, *and us in him*; and all this will be as it is wished for, *according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ*; according to the grace and free favour of God in election, and of Jesus Christ in redemption, and of the blessed Spirit in sanctification; for election, redemption, vocation, justification, pardon, adoption, and the whole of salvation from first to last are of grace and not of works; and according to this, all these things must be prayed for the application of, and must be expected only on such a foot; and to this must all be ascribed, the glory of which is the ultimate end of God, in all he has done, does, or will do for his people.

C H A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle guards against a notion, as if the second coming of Christ was at hand; declares that, previous to it, there must be a great apostacy, and a revelation of antichrist; comforts the saints against fears of being included in this defection; exhorts them to stand fast in the faith, and closes this chapter with petitions for them. He entreats them in a most tender and solemn manner not to imagine that the day of Christ was at hand, and that they would not be disturbed and moved at it; and points unto the several ways, and cautions against them, they might be imposed upon and deceived by men with respect to it, ver. 1, 2. and assigns his reasons why it could not be yet, because before this time there was to be a general apostacy, and antichrist must appear; whom from his character, he calls the man of sin, and from his end, the son of perdition; and describes him as an opposer of God, an exalter of himself, above all that is called God, as sitting in the temple of God and declaring himself to be God, ver. 3, 4. of which things he had told them before, ver. 5. nor were they ignorant of what at present hindered the revelation of the man of sin, who was then in being, and was working and growing up apace; only there was something (the Roman empire) which hindered, and would continue to do so, until the fixed time of his revelation was up, ver. 6, 7. when he should be manifest; though he should not always continue, being to be consumed and destroyed by the breath of Christ's mouth, and the splendour of his coming, ver. 8. and the appearance of antichrist in the world, being a matter of considerable importance, it is described by being after the working of Satan, and as attended with lying and false miracles, and with all deceitful and unrighteous doctrines and practices; which reprobate men would be left to give into, as a punishment of their not receiving cordially the truth of the Gospel; upon which account God would give them to such judicial blindness, as to give credit to a lie, which would bring on their final damnation, they not believing the truth, but taking pleasure in unrighteousness, ver. 9, 10, 11,

12. but lest this account of things should be discouraging to the saints at Thessalonica, the apostle styles them brethren; asserts them to be the beloved of the Lord; gives an instance of it, for which he gives thanks, namely, their election of God; the date of which was from everlasting; the means sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth; the end salvation by Jesus Christ; and the evidence of which was their effectual vocation by the Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of Christ, ver. 13, 14. and then he exhorts them to stand fast in the doctrines that had been taught them, either in an epistolary way, or by the ministry of the word, ver. 15. and concludes the chapter with petitions for them made to God the father, and to Christ who had loved and comforted them, and given them good hope of everlasting things; that they might be comforted more and more, and be established in every good doctrine and practice, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *Now we beseech you, brethren, &c.*] The apostle having finished his first design in this epistle, which was to encourage the saints to patience under sufferings, proceeds to another view he had in writing it, and that is, to set the doctrine of Christ's coming, as to the time of it, in its proper light; and this is occasioned by what he had said concerning it in the former epistle, which was either misunderstood or misrepresented; and as he addresses the saints with a very affectionate appellation as his *brethren*, so by way of entreaty *beseeching*, and yet in a very solemn manner: *by the coming of our Lord Jesus*; which is to be understood not of the coming of Christ in the flesh, to procure the salvation of his people; nor of his coming in his kingdom and power to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him as the Messiah; but of his coming to judge the quick and dead, than which nothing is more sure and certain, being affirmed by angels and men, by prophets and apostles, and by Christ himself, or more desirable by the saints; wherefore the apostle entreats them by it, that whereas they believed it, expected it, and wished for it, they would regard what he was about to say:

so that the words, though an entreaty, are in the form of an adjuration; unless they should be rendered as in the Æthiopic version, as they may, *concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and so express the subject-matter of the discourse now entering upon, with what follows: *and by our gathering together unto him*; which regards not the great gatherings of the people to Christ the true *Shiloh* upon his first coming, and the preaching of the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, when there were not only great flockings to hear it, but multitudes were converted by it; nor the greater gatherings there will be in the latter day, at the time of the conversion of the Jews, and when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; nor the conversion of particular persons, who are gathered in to Christ, and received by him one by one; nor the assembling of the saints together for public worship, in which sense the word is used in Heb. x. 25. but the gathering together of all the saints at the last day, at the second coming of Christ; for he will come with ten thousand of his saints, yea, with all his saints, when their dead bodies shall be raised and reunited to their souls, and they with the living saints will be caught up into the air, to meet the Lord there and be ever with him; when they will make up, complete and perfect, the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven: this will be the gathering together of all the elect of God; and so the Arabic version reads, *the gathering of us all*; and which, as it is certain, is greatly to be desired; it will be a happy meeting and a glorious sight; by this the apostle entreats and adjures them to regard what follows.

Ver. 2. *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, &c.*] Or *from your mind or sense*, as the Vulgate Latin version; or *from the solidity of sense*, as the Arabic version; that is, from what they had received in their minds, and was their sense and judgment, and which they had embraced as articles of faith; that they would not be like a wave of the sea, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; or be moved from the hope of the Gospel, from any fundamental article of it, and from that which respects the second coming of Christ particularly; and especially, that they would not be quickly and easily moved from it; see Gal. i. 6. *or be troubled*; thrown into consternation and surprise, for though the coming of Christ will not be terrible to saints, as it will be to sinners; yet there is something in it that is awful and solemn, and fills with concern; and to be told of it as at that instant might be surprising and shocking: the several ways in which their minds might be troubled and distressed with such an account are enumerated by the apostle, that they might guard against them, and not be imposed upon by them: *neither by spirit*; by a prophetic spirit, by pretensions to a revelation from the spirit, fixing the precise time of Christ's coming, which should not be heeded or attended to; since his coming will be as a thief in the night: *nor by word*: by reason and a shew of it, by arguments drawn from it, which may carry in them a shew of probability; by enticing words of man's wisdom; by arithmetical or astronomical calculations; or by pretensions to a word, a tradition of Christ or his apostles, as if they had received it *viva voce*, by word of mouth

from any of them: *nor by letter, as from us*; by forging a letter and counterfeiting their hands, for such practices began to be used very early; spurious epistles of the Apostle Paul were carried about, which obliged him to take a method whereby his genuine letters might be known; see ch. iii. 17, 18. or he may have respect in this clause to his former epistle, wherein he had said some things concerning the coming of Christ, which had been either wrongly represented, or not understood; and as if his sense was, that it would be whilst he and others then living were alive and on the spot: wherefore he would not have them neither give heed to any enthusiastic spirits, nor to any plausible reasonings of men, or unwritten traditions; nor to any letters in his name, or in the name of any of the apostles; nor even to his former letter to them, as though it contained any such thing in it, *as that the day of Christ is at hand*; or is at this instant just now coming on; as if it would be within that year, in some certain month, and on some certain day in it; which notion the apostle would have them by no means give into, for these reasons, because should Christ not come, as there was no reason to believe he would in so short a time, they would be tempted to disbelieve his coming at all, at least be very indifferent about it; and since if it did not prove true, they might be led to conclude there was nothing true in the Christian doctrine and religion; and besides, such a notion of the speedy coming of Christ would tend to indulge the idle and disorderly persons among them in their sloth and negligence: and now for these, and for the weighty reasons he gives in the next verse, he dissuades them from imbibing such a tenet; for though the coming of Christ is sometimes said to be drawing nigh, and to be quickly, yet so it might be, and not at that instant; besides, such expressions are used with respect to God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years; and because the Gospel times, or times of the Messiah, are the last days, there will be no other dispensation of things until the second coming of Christ; and chiefly they are used to keep up the faith, and awaken the hope and expectation of the saints with respect to it. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, *the day of the Lord*; and so the Vulgate Latin version; and accordingly the Syriac and Æthiopic versions, *the day of our Lord*.

Ver. 3. *Let no man deceive you by any means, &c.*] By any of the above means; by pretending to a revelation from the spirit; or to have had it from the mouth of any one of the apostles; or to have a letter as from them, declaring the day of Christ to be instant; or by any other means whatever; don't be imposed upon by them for the following reasons, for there were things to be done before the coming of Christ, which were not then done, and which required time: for that day shall not come, *except there come a falling away first*; either in a political sense, of the nations from the Roman empire, which was divided into the eastern and western empire; for which, way was made by translating the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, or Constantinople; the former of these empires was seized by Mahomet, and still possessed by the Turks; and the latter was overrun by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, and torn to pieces; Italy particularly

was ravaged by them, and Rome itself was sacked and taken: or rather in a religious sense, of the falling of men from the faith of the Gospel, from the purity of Gospel doctrines, discipline, worship, and ordinances; and this not of some Jews who professed faith in Christ, and departed from it, or of some Christians who went off to the Gnostics; but is to be understood of a more general defection in the times of the Papacy; when not only the eastern churches were perverted and corrupted by Mahomet, and drawn off to his religion, but the western churches were most sadly depraved by the man of sin, by bringing in errors of all sorts in doctrine, making innovations in every ordinance, and appointing new ones, and introducing both Judaism and Paganism into the churches; which general defection continued until the times of the reformation, and is what the apostle has respect to in 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. where he manifestly points out some of the Popish tenets, as forbidding marriage to priests, and ordering abstinence from meats on certain days, and at certain times of the year: this was one thing that was to precede the coming of Christ, another follows, which should take place at the same time; *and that man of sin be revealed*; who was now hid, though secretly working; by whom is meant not only any particular person or individual; not the devil, for though he is the wicked one, a damned spirit, an opposer, an adversary of God and Christ, and his people, and who has affected deity, and sought to be worshipped, and even by Christ himself; yet the man of sin is here distinguished from Satan, ver. 9. nor is any particular emperor of Rome intended, as Caius Caligula, or Nero, for though these were monsters of iniquity, and set up themselves as gods, yet they sat not in the temple of God; nor is Simon Magus designed, who was a very wicked man, a sorcerer, and who gave out himself to be some great one, and was called the great power of God, before his profession of faith in Christ; and afterwards affirmed that he was God, the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Spirit in the rest of the nations of the world; and, because of his signs and lying wonders, had a statue erected by the Roman emperor with this inscription, *to Simon the holy god*; but then this wicked man was now already revealed: nor is this to be understood of a certain Jew, that is to be begotten by the devil on a virgin of the tribe of Dan, and who is to reign three years and a half, and then to be destroyed by Christ, which is a fable of the Papists; but a succession of men is here meant, as a king is used sometimes for an order and succession of kings, Deut. xvii. 18. and an high-priest for that whole order, from Aaron's time to the dissolution of it, Heb. ix. 7. so here it intends the whole hierarchy of Rome, monks, friars, priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and especially popes, who may well be called *the man of sin*, because notoriously sinful; not only sinners, but sin itself, a sink of sin, monsters of iniquity, spiritual wickednesses in high places: it is not easy to reckon up their iniquities, their adulteries, incest, sodomy, rapine, murder, avarice, simony, perjury, lying, necromancy, familiarity with the devil, idolatry, witchcraft, and what not? and not only have they been

guilty of the most notorious crimes themselves, but have been the patrons and encouragers of others in sin; by dispensing with the laws of God and man, by making sins to be venial, by granting indulgences and pardon for the worst of crimes, by licensing brothel-houses, and countenancing all manner of wickedness; and therefore it is no wonder to hear of the following epithet, *the son of perdition*; since these are not only the Apollyon, the king of the bottomless pit, the destroyer, the cause of the perdition of thousands of souls, for the souls of men are their wares; but because they are by the righteous judgment of God appointed and consigned to everlasting destruction; the devil, the beast, and the false prophet, will have their portion together in the lake that burns with fire, Rev. xx. 10. the same character as here is given of Judas, the betrayer of Christ, John xvii. 12.

Ver. 4. *Who opposeth, &c.*] Or is an opposer, an adversary of Christ, the antichrist; who opposes him in his kingly office, styling himself the head and spouse of the church, assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth, taking upon him to dispense with the laws of Christ, and to make new ones; who opposes him in his priestly office, by pretending to offer him up again in the sacrifice of the mass, and by making angels and saints departed, intercessors and advocates; and also in his prophetic office, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and setting up unwritten traditions before the word of God, requiring the worshipping of images, angels, and saints, when Christ requires that the Lord God only should be worshipped and served; and by introducing the doctrine of works and of merit instead of grace, and with a multitude of other things, in which he most manifestly appears to be diametrically opposite and contrary to Christ: *and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.* The Syriac version renders the last clause, *וְהוּא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, and religion*; and the Greek word does signify religion, worship, or devotion, as it is translated, in Acts xvii. 23. but here the act of worship is put for the object, and is rightly rendered, *or that which is worshipped*; as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and in the Arabic version, *or that which is to be worshipped*; and it was usual with the Jews to call God the object of worship, by the name of worship itself, and by which they used to swear: it is said^c of R. Benjamin the just, that he was appointed over the alms-chest: one time a woman came to him and said, Rabbi, relieve me; he replied to her, *הַעֲבֹרָה, by the worship* (that is, by God who is worshipped) there is nothing in the alms-chest: and elsewhere^d it is said by one, concerning two that were fatherless, for whom the collectors of alms gathered, *הַעֲבֹרָה, by the worship*, they go before my daughter: and a little after, *הַעֲבֹרָה, by the worship*, these things are holy to thee; where the gloss says, it is an oath: and so here the word is to be understood of Deity itself; and the meaning is, that antichrist would exalt himself above all the gods of the Gentiles, who are only nominally, and not by nature, gods; to these were ascribed, some one thing, to some another; one had the government of heaven, another of hell, another of the seas, and an

^c T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1.

^d T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 24. 1.

other of the winds, &c. but this haughty creature antichrist assumes to himself all power, both in heaven, earth, and hell. Angels are sometimes called gods, Psal. viii. 4. because they are sent of God, and sometimes represent him; the popes of Rome have exalted themselves above these; Pope Clement VI. proclaimed a jubilee, and promised forgiveness of sins to all that should come to Rome; and in his bull for it says, that "if any that was confessed should die by the way, he should be free from all his sins; and we do command the angels, that they take such a soul out of purgatory entirely absolved, and introduce it into the glory of paradise:" and in a manuscript in the library at Helmsted are these words, "we command the angels that they carry such a soul into Abraham's bosom, as soon as it has left the body:" kings and civil magistrates are called gods, Psal. lxxxii. 5. and this monster of iniquity and first-born of Satan, the popes of Rome, have exalted themselves above these; they have not only took upon them to excommunicate emperors and kings, but to depose them, and take away their crowns from them, and give their kingdoms to others, and absolve their subjects from allegiance and fidelity to them; an emperor has held a pope's stirrup whilst he alighted from his horse, and was severely reprimanded for holding the left instead of the right stirrup; and the same emperor held another pope's stirrup whilst he got on his horse, and who set his foot upon his neck when he absolved him, being before excommunicated by him, using these words in Psal. xci. 13. *thou shalt tread upon the lion, &c.* An emperor and an empress waited at a pope's gates three days barefoot; another emperor and empress were crowned by the Pope with his feet; he took the crown with his feet, and, they bowing down, put it upon their heads, and then kicked it off; and one of our own kings resigned his crown and the ensigns of his royalty to the Pope's legate, who kept them five days; and when he offered a sum of money to the legate as an earnest of his subjection, to shew his master's grandeur, he spurned at it; a king was thrown under a pope's table to lick the bones like a dog, whilst he was eating: so truly has this passage had its accomplishment in that impious and insolent set of men. Rome is by the Jewish writers called *Magdiel*, which signifies *magnifying itself*: the reason is, שִׁיתָבֵל, because it magnifies itself above all these¹; that is, above all kingdoms and states: but what is worse, and most dreadfully blasphemous, follows, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God: not in the temple of Jerusalem, which was to be destroyed and never to be rebuilt more, and was destroyed before this man of sin was revealed; but in the church of God; so called, 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. the Ethiopic version renders it, *in the house of God*: for antichrist rose up out of, and in the midst of the church; and it was a true church in which he first appeared, and over which he usurped power and authority; though it has been so corrupted by him, as now to be only nominally so; here he sits, and has homage done him by his creatures, as if he was a god, and is

not only styled Christ's vicar, but a god on earth, and our Lord God the Pope; so in the triumphal arch at the entry of Pope Sixtus IV. these lines were put, *oraculo vocis, mundi moderaris habenas, et meritò in terris crederis esse Deus*: the sense is, that he governed the world by his word, and was deservedly believed to be *God on earth*; and their canon law² says, "it is clearly enough shewn, that the Pope cannot be loosed or bound by any secular power; since it is evident that he is called God by that pious prince, Constantine, and it is manifest that God cannot be judged by men:" and Pope John XXII. is expressly called³, *our Lord God the Pope*: the Ethiopic version reads, *he shall say to all, I am the Lord God*: see Ezek. xxviii. 2. the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, leave out the phrase, *as God*, but the Syriac retains it: however, the same blasphemy is expressed in the next clause, *shewing himself that he is God*: by usurping a power over the consciences and souls of men; by dispensing with the laws of God and man; by assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth; by taking upon him to open and shut the gates of heaven at pleasure; and by pardoning sin, which none but God can do; this is the mouth speaking blasphemies, Rev. xiii. 5, 6.

Ver. 5. *Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, &c.*] At Thessalonica, for the apostle had been there in person, and had preached there with great boldness and success; he had declared the whole counsel of God, and the Gospel came in power and worked effectually in them, and yet there was too great a forgetfulness of it; with which the apostle tacitly charges them, and rebukes them gently for it; and as a faithful monitor, stirs up their pure minds by way of remembrance, and reminds them of former truths delivered to them: *I told you these things: or words*, as the Arabic version; concerning the coming of Christ, as that it would not be yet, that there must be a defection from the faith, and antichrist must be revealed; which shews that these were things of moment and importance, and were useful and profitable to be insisted on; and therefore the apostle had told them of them, and spoke freely and largely about them, at his first preaching among them, and were what he inculcated everywhere; and also that his doctrine was all of a piece at one time as another; it was not yea and nay, or contradictory; what he now said was no other than what he had said before; and therefore it was the more inexcusable in them, to be shaken or troubled by any means with another doctrine.

Ver. 6. *And now ye know what withholdeth, &c.*] Or hinders the revelation of the man of sin, or antichrist; by which is meant not the Apostle Paul, though he by his ministry was a very great hinderance of the growth of error, and the spread of evil practices in the churches, and so of the more open appearance of the man of sin in his forerunners; and after his departure from Ephesus, and imprisonment at Rome, and suffering death, there was a great falling off in the churches, and among professors of religion, which made way for the manifestation of antichrist in due time: nor the

¹ Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43.

² Abarbanel in Dan. fol. 42. 3.

³ Gratian. Decret. dist. 96. can. satis.

⁴ Extravag. cum inter.

preaching of the Gospel, in its power and purity, in the several parts of the world; though so long as this obtained, got ground, and gained success, the man of sin could not shew his head; and therefore it must, as it did, decline, and was gradually taken away that he might appear: nor the spirit of God, as the spirit of truth and holiness, though as long as he continued in his gifts and operations of grace in the churches, they were preserved from antichristian doctrine and worship; but when he removed from them, this enemy and adversary of Christ and his Gospel came in like a flood: nor the general defection in ver. 3. though that was to be previous to the revelation of antichrist, and was to be what would usher him in; nor could he appear until the wickedness of men was come to a pitch, that they would be ready to receive him, and pay homage and worship to him: nor is the decree of God meant, though till the time came fixed by God for his appearance, the decree must be a bar in his way; since as there is a time for every purpose, nothing can come to pass till that time comes: but by that which withheld, let or hindered the open appearance of antichrist, were the Roman empire and emperors; these stood in his way, and whilst this empire lasted, and the emperors wore the imperial crown, and sat on the throne, and held the government in their hands, the popes could not come at the height of their ambition, dignity, and authority, nor shine in their glory; nor could the whore of Babylon take her seat, and sit upon the seven hills of Rome until the Roman emperor was taken out of the way: this therefore hindered, *that he might be revealed in his time*. The Ethiopic version renders it, *until his time appointed came*: wherefore till the time that God had fixed for the appearance of this monster of iniquity, this son of perdition, the Roman empire must continue, and Roman emperors must keep their place and dignity to prevent his appearance sooner: the reason why the apostle expresses this not in plain words, but in an obscure manner, and with so much caution, was, that he might not offend the Roman emperors, and provoke them to a severe persecution of them as seditious persons, that sought the destruction of the empire: the word here used, which is rendered *withholdeth*, or *letteth*, as in the next verse, signifies a ruler or governor, and answers to the Hebrew word עָרַב, to *keep back*, or *restrain*; and which is used of kings, who by their laws and government restrain and withhold people from doing what they would; see 1 Sam. ix. 17. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. to which the apostle, who well understood the Hebrew language, doubtless had reference; so מְרַבֵּן, is rendered, a *magistrate*, in Judges xviii. 7.

Ver. 7. *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, &c.] Or the mystery of that wicked one*, as the Syriac; meaning either antichrist himself, and the spirit of antichrist, which were already in the world, 1 Jo in ii. 18. and iv. 2. *mystery* being one of the names of antichrist, Rev. xvii. 5. and anciently this word was engraven on the mitres of the popes of Rome: or the evil doctrines and practices of antichrist may be intended; for as the doctrine of the Gospel is called a mystery, and the mystery of godliness; so the doctrines and practices of antichrist may be called the mystery of iniquity, especially as they were now secretly spread, imbibed, and

practised: the foundations of it were now laying in the church by false teachers; for errors and heresies of every sort, respecting the person and offices of Christ, and in opposition to them, were now broached; idolatry, and holding communion with idolaters, now obtained; worshipping of angels was used by some; and superstition and will-worship, worship after the commandments of men, were practised; days, and months, and years, distinguished by Jews and Pagans, and difference of meats, were observed; celibacy and virginity began to be admired and commended; dominion and magistracy were despised, and church-authority contemned, and many, as Diotrophes, loved to have the pre-eminence; and the doctrine of justification by the works of the law was industriously spread, and zealously preached and received; all which laid the foundation, and are the life and soul of popery: *only he who now letteth*, will let, *until he be taken out of the way*: that is, the Roman empire and Roman emperors, and which were by degrees entirely removed, and so made way for the revelation of this wicked one: and which was done partly by Constantine the emperor receiving the Christian faith, whereby the Roman empire as Pagan ceased; and by increasing the riches of the church, and feeding the pride, ambition, and covetousness of the bishops, especially the bishop of Rome; and next by removing the seat of the empire from Rome to Byzantium, which he called Constantinople: here the Greek emperors continued in succession, and neither they themselves, nor even their exarchs, resided at Rome, but at Ravenna; so that way was made for antichrist to come to his seat, and there was nothing to rival and eclipse the grandeur, power, and glory of the Roman popes: and that which let was also taken out of the way, by the division of the empire, by Theodosius, giving to his elder son Arcadius, the eastern, and to the younger, Honorius, the western parts of it: the eastern empire was in process of time seized upon and possessed by Mahomet and the Saracens; and the western empire was overrun by the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, and became extinct about the year 476, in Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, who was obliged to abdicate the government by Odoacer king of the Heruli; when the kingdom of the Lombards took place in Italy, and afterwards that was translated to Charles the great, king of the French; so that there was nothing more of the Roman empire remaining than the bare name, as at this day; and by this means the popes of Rome got to the height of their power and glory, which is meant by the revelation of the man of sin.

Ver. 8. *And then shall that wicked be revealed, &c.]* That lawless one, who sets himself above the laws of God and man, and dispenses with them at pleasure, who judges all men, but is judged by no man; as he was in his ecclesiastical power, when Phocas, who murdered the Emperor Mauritius, granted to Boniface III. to be called universal bishop; and in his civil power in succeeding popes, who took upon them the power over kings and emperors, to crown, depose, and excommunicate at pleasure: *whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth*; that is, the *Lord Jesus*, as the Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version read; and the Syriac version, *our Lord*

Jesus: who is Lord of lords, and God over all; and so able to do what he is here said he shall do: and which he will do *with the spirit of his mouth*; meaning either the Holy Spirit, the third person which proceeds from him, as in Psal. xxxiii. 6. and so the Ethiopic version, *whom the spirit of our Lord Jesus shall cast out*; Christ will by his spirit blow a blast upon antichrist and his kingdom, which he shall never recover again, but ever after consume and waste away: or else by his spirit is meant his Gospel; the Scriptures in general are the breath of God, being divinely inspired by him, and are the sword of the spirit, the two-edged sword of law and Gospel, which proceeds out of Christ's mouth; the Gospel contains the words of Christ, which are spirit and life; these come out of his mouth, and are sharper than any two-edged sword; and as hereby sinners are cut to the heart, hewn and slain, convicted and converted, so by this likewise antichrist will be consumed, and is consuming; for this phrase denotes the beginning of his destruction, which took place at the time of the reformation by the preaching of the Gospel by Luther and others; by which this man of sin received his deadly wound, and has been in a consumption ever since, and is sensibly wasting in his power and glory every day, and will ere long come to utter destruction: *and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming*: either in a spiritual way, when he shall come in his spiritual kingdom and glory, by the light of his Gospel and the illuminations of his spirit; when at even-tide it shall be light; when he the sun of righteousness shall arise; when latter-day light and glory shall appear, and latter-day darkness, the gross darkness of Popery, Paganism, and Judaism, which cover the people, shall be removed, and antichrist in every form shall disappear: or in a personal manner, when he shall come to judge the quick and dead, which will be in flaming fire and great glory; and then will antichrist and his followers, the beast and those that have worshipped him, be cast with the devil and the false prophet into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and this will be the last and utter end of him. In this passage there is a manifest reference to Isa. xi. 4. *with the breath of his mouth shall he slay the wicked*: which the Targumist paraphrases, "with the words of his lips he shall slay ארמילוס רשיעא, *Armillus the wicked*;" and which the Jews say will be done by the Messiah at his coming; "for so¹ (say they) that phrase in Deut. xxii. 8. *if a man fall from thence*, "has respect to Armillus the wicked, who at the coming of our Messiah will be slain, as it is said in "Isa. xi. 4." This Armillus, the Jews say², is the head of all idolatry, the tenth king who shall reign at Rome, the city of Satan; that he shall rise up after Gog and Magog, and shall go up to Jerusalem, and slay Messiah ben Joseph, and shall himself be slain by Messiah the son of David; yea, they say expressly³, it is the same whom the Gentiles call antichrist: it is the same with Romulus the first king of the Romans, and designs a Roman, the Roman antichrist; and it may be observed, that the Targumist interprets *the breath of his mouth*, by his word; and so says another

of their writers^m, "the meaning is by the word of his lips, for the word goes out of the mouth with the vapour and breath:" such an expression as this is saidⁿ to be used by Moses, when he was bid by God to answer the angels who objected to his having the law given him; "I am afraid (says he) they will slay (or burn me), בהבל שבפיהם, *with the breath of their mouth*:" much more may this be feared from the breath of Christ's mouth.

Ver. 9. Even him *whose coming is after the working of Satan, &c.*] That is, as a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer; for such was the working of Satan with our first parents; he seduced Eve, not only by subtlety, but by lying; he abode not in the truth, is the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning; and such is the working of antichrist his first-born; he comes in a deceitful way, under a profession of Christ, and a pretension of faith in him, and love to him; but speaks lies in hypocrisy, for such are his doctrines and tenets; and is not only a murderer of the bodies of the saints, but of the souls of men; which are the wares the whore of Babylon deals in: *with all power*; not omnipotence, for that is peculiar to God, and is not in Satan nor in antichrist, though the latter assumes to himself all power in heaven and in earth, and claims a jurisdiction both temporal and spiritual over men; but rather this means great power, or all kind of power of doing miracles, as follows: *and signs, and tying wonders*; that is, such signs and miracles as are not real, but feigned, only in appearance, not in truth, like those that were done by the magicians of Egypt; and these were done to countenance lies, and to induce persons to believe them; and how many miracles and lying wonders the church of Rome pretends to, every body knows.

Ver. 10. *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, &c.*] Not that he deceives, or goes about to deceive, or thinks to deceive by open unrighteousness; but by unrighteousness, under a pretence of righteousness and holiness; as with the doctrines of justification and salvation by a man's own righteousness, with the doctrines of merit and of works of supererogation, which are taking to men, and by which they are deceived, and are no other than unrighteousness with God, and betray ignorance of his righteousness, and a non-submission to it; as also with practices which carry a shew of holiness, religion, and devotion, when they are no other than acts of impiety, superstition, and will-worship; as their litanies and prayers, their worship of images, angels, and saints departed, their frequent fasts and festivals, their pilgrimages, penance, and various acts of mortification and the like: but then these deceptions only have place *in them that perish*; whom the god of this world has blinded, from whom the Gospel is hid, and to whom it is foolishness: all men indeed are in a lost perishing condition, through original and actual sin; but all shall not perish, there are some that God will not have perish, whom Christ is given for that they should not perish, and whom he has redeemed by his blood, and to whom he gives eternal life; but there are others that are vessels of wrath

¹ Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 2.

² Apud Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 221, 222, 223.

³ Abkath Rochel, par. 1. sign. 7. p. 52.

^m In Ohel Moed. fol. 19. 1.

ⁿ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

afore ordained to condemnation, reprobate men left to themselves, and given up to their hearts' lusts; and these, and only these, are finally and totally deceived, by the signs and lying wonders, and false appearances of antichrist; see Matt. xxiv. 24. *because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved*; by the truth is meant either Christ the truth of types, the sum of promises, in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are, and by whom grace and truth came; or the Gospel, often called truth, and the word of truth, it coming from the God of truth, has for its subject Christ the truth, is dictated and directed into by the spirit of truth, and contains nothing but truth; and by the love of it is meant, either the loveliness of it, for truth is an amiable, lovely thing, in its nature and use; or an affection for it, which there is, where true faith in it is, for faith works by love: there may be a flashy affection for the truths of the Gospel, where there is no true faith in Christ, or the root of the matter is not, as in the stony-ground hearers; and there may be an historical faith in the doctrines of the Gospel, where the power of them is denied, and there is no true hearty love for them; and in these persons there is neither faith nor love; the truths of the Gospel are neither believed by them, nor are they affected with them, that so they might be saved; for where there is true faith in the Gospel of Christ, and in Christ the substance of it, there is salvation; the reason therefore of these men's perishing is not the decree of God, nor even want of the means of grace, the revelation of the Gospel, but their rejection and contempt of it.

Ver. 11. *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, &c.*] Or efficacy of error, which God may be said to send; and the Alexandrian copy reads, *does send*; because it is not a bare permission, but a voluntary one; or it is his will that error should be that truth may be tried, and be illustrated by its contrary, and shine the more through the force of opposition to it; and that those which are on the side of it might be made manifest, as well as that the rejecters of the Gospel might be punished; for the efficacy of error is not to be considered as a sin, of which God cannot be the author, but as a punishment for sin, and to which men are given up, and fall under the power of, because they receive not the love of the truth, which is the reason here given: and this comes to pass partly through God's denying his grace, or withholding that light and knowledge, by which error may be discovered and detected; and by taking from men the knowledge and conscience of things they had, see Rom. i. 28. So that they call evil good, and good evil, and don't appear to have the common sense and reason of mankind, at least do not act according to it; and by giving them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and to the god of this world, to blind their minds; and without this it is not to be accounted for, that the followers of antichrist should give into such senseless notions as those of transubstantiation, works of supererogation, &c. or into such stupid practices as worshipping of images, praying to saints departed, and paying such a respect to the pretended relics of saints, &c. as they do; but a spirit of slumber is given them, and eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, because of their re-

jection of the Gospel: and that *they should believe a lie*; that the pope is Christ's vicar on earth, and has power to forgive sins; that the bread and wine in the Lord's supper are transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ; with other lying tenets spoken in hypocrisy concerning good works, merit, pardon, penance, &c. with a multitude of lying wonders and false miracles, of which their legends are full; and this is the first and more near end of strong delusion or efficacious error being sent them; the more remote and ultimate one follows.

Ver. 12. *That they all might be damned, &c.*] Or judged, discerned and distinguished from true Christians and real believers; or rather that they might be condemned and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and have their portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; where the devil, the false prophet, and the beast, whose followers they are, will be cast; and it is but a righteous thing with God to give them up to such delusion, that they may be damned, since they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved; and the following character of them justifies the divine procedure: *who believed not the truth*; neither the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, nor Christ, who is truth itself; and therefore were righteously given up to believe a lie; and whose damnation is just, according to the declaration of Christ, he that believeth not shall be damned: *but had pleasure in unrighteousness*; in sin, as all unrighteousness is; in sinful ways and works, and in unrighteous doctrines; as the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and of justification by works, being derogatory to the justice of God, and to the righteousness of Christ; and in the unrighteous persecution and bloodshed of the saints, the martyrs of Jesus; in which the followers of antichrist take as much delight and pleasure, as an intemperate man does in drinking wine or strong drink to excess; and therefore the whore of Babylon is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints; and it is but just she should have blood to drink, or be punished both with temporal and eternal destruction.

Ver. 13. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, &c.*] Lest the saints should be discouraged by the above account of antichrist, and his followers, and fear they should be left to the same deceptions, and damnation be their portion; the apostle being persuaded better things of them, gives their character, and represents their case in a quite different light; and signifies, that he and his fellow-ministers were under obligation to be continually thankful to God for what he had done for them; for as God is the father of mercies, whether spiritual or temporal, thanks are to be given to him; and saints are not only to bless his name for what they themselves receive from him, but for what others enjoy also, and that continually; because spiritual blessings, especially such as are afterwards intimated in, are permanent and durable, yea, everlasting: the characters which shew them to be different from the followers of antichrist, are, *brethren, beloved of the Lord or of God*, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read: they were the brethren of Christ, being the dear children of God, born of him, and belonging to his family, and of the apostles,

and of one another, being of the household of faith; and they were beloved by God the father, as the instances of their election to salvation by him, and their vocation to eternal glory, shew; and by the Lord Jesus Christ, who had wrought out for them the salvation they were chosen to; and by the Lord the Spirit, by whom they were regenerated, called, sanctified, and brought to the belief of the truth; and since they had interest in the everlasting love of the three divine Persons, there was no danger of their falling away and perishing. The reason of the apostle's thanksgiving for the persons thus described is, *because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation*; which is to be understood, not of an election of them, as a nation, for they were not a nation, only a part of one; nor of them as a church, for they were not so from the beginning; nor to the outward means of grace, the ministry of the word and ordinances, for the choice is unto salvation; nor to any office, for they were not all officers in the church, only some; nor does it intend effectual vocation, for that is distinguished from it in the following verse; but an eternal appointment of persons to grace and glory: and this is an act of God the father, in Christ, from eternity; and which arises from his sovereign good will and pleasure, and is an instance of his free grace and favour, for the glorifying of himself; and is irrespective of the faith, holiness, and good works of men; all which are the fruits and effects, and not the motives, conditions, or causes of electing grace. This act is the leading one to all other blessings of grace, as justification, adoption, vocation, and glorification, and is certain and immutable in itself, and in its effects. The date of it is *from the beginning*: not from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel to them, and the sense be, that, as soon as the Gospel was preached, they believed, and God chose them; for what was there remarkable in them, that this should be peculiarly observed of them? The Bereans are said to be more noble than they were: nor from the beginning of their vocation, for predestination or election precedes vocation; see Rom. viii. 30. nor from the beginning of time, or of the creation of the world, but before the world began, even from eternity: and in such sense the phrase is used in Prov. viii. 23. and that it is the sense of it here, is manifest from Eph. i. 4. where this choice is said to be before the foundation of the world. The end to which men, by this act, are chosen, is *salvation*: not temporal, though the elect of God are appointed to many temporal salvations and deliverances, and which they enjoy both before and after conversion; yet salvation here designs the salvation of the soul, though not exclusive of the body, a spiritual and an eternal salvation, salvation by Jesus Christ, as is expressed in 1 Thess. v. 9. and the same decree that appoints men to salvation, appoints Christ to be the Saviour of them; and there is salvation in and by no other. The means through which this choice is made, are *through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth by sanctification* is meant, not any thing external, as reformation of life, obedience to the law, or outward submission to Gospel ordinances; but internal holiness, which lies in a principle of spiritual

life in the soul, and in a principle of spiritual light in the understanding; in a flexion of the will to the will of God, and the way of salvation by Christ; in a settlement of the affections on divine and spiritual things, and in an implantation of all grace in the heart; and is called the sanctification of *the spirit*, partly from the spirit or soul of man being the principal seat of it, and chiefly from the spirit of God being the author of it; and this being a means fixed in the decree of election to salvation, shews that holiness is not the cause of election, yet is certain by it, and is necessary to salvation; and that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine, since it provides for and secures true and real holiness. *Truth* designs either the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth of types and promises, and the substance of the truth of the Gospel, in whom it lies, and by whom it comes; or the Gospel itself, which comes from the God of truth, lies in the Scriptures of truth, is dictated and directed into by the spirit of truth; the sum of it is Christ the truth, and has nothing in it but truth. *The belief or faith* of this intends, not an historical faith, or a mere assent to truth; but a cordial embracing of it, a receiving of the love of the truth, a feeling of the power of it unto salvation, and a believing in Christ, the substance of it; which is a seeing of him spiritually, and a going out of the soul to him in acts of hope, reliance, trust, and dependence; and this being also a means settled in the choice of men to salvation, makes it appear, that faith is no cause of election, but the effect of it; that it is necessary to salvation, and therefore appointed as a means; that it is certain to the elect by it, and that they therefore cannot be finally and totally deceived, or be carried away with the error of the wicked, or with the deceiveableness of unrighteousness with which antichrist works.

Ver. 14. *Whereunto he called you by our Gospel, &c.* Salvation being appointed as the end in the decree of election, and sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth, as means; the elect in effectual vocation are called to the participation of each of these; first to the one, and then to the other; to grace here, and glory hereafter: and the means by which they are called is the Gospel, which the apostle calls *our Gospel*, not because they were the authors, or the subject of it; for with regard to these it is styled the Gospel of God, and the Gospel of Christ; but because they were intrusted with it, and faithfully preached it, and in opposition to another Gospel published by false teachers. And by this they were called to *the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*; not his essential glory, though he will be seen and known in the glory of his person as he is, so far as creatures in a state of perfection will be capable of; nor his mediatorial glory, though it will be one part of the saints' happiness in heaven to behold this glory of Christ; but rather the glory which shall be personally put upon the saints, both in soul and body, in the resurrection-morn, is here intended; and which is called the glory of Christ, because it is in his hands for them; and is what he is preparing for them, and for which he gives them both a right and a meetness; and which he at last will introduce them into; and it will lie greatly in conformity to him, and

in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him: and now God's elect are called by the ministry of the word to the obtaining of this, not by any merit of theirs, or by any works of righteousness done by them, but to the possession of it, as the word used properly signifies. The Syriac version renders it, *that ye may be a glory to our Lord Jesus Christ*: as the saints will be at the last day, and to all eternity, when they shall be raised again, and have the glory of God upon them, and be for ever with the Lord.

Ver. 15. *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, &c.*] In the doctrine of the Gospel in general, and in the article of Christ's second coming in particular, and not in the least waver about the thing itself, nor be shaken in mind, and troubled as if it was just at hand; and the rather it became them to be concerned that they stood fast in the truth, and persevered unto the end, since there was to be a falling away, and the mystery of iniquity was already working, and antichrist would shortly appear, whose coming would be with all deceivableness, of unrighteousness; and they had the greater encouragement to continue firm and unmoved, seeing they were chosen from eternity unto salvation through sanctification and belief of the truth, and were called in time by the Gospel to the enjoyment of the glory of Christ in another world. *And hold the traditions which ye have been taught*: meaning the truths of the Gospel, which may be called traditions, because they are delivered from one to another; the Gospel was first delivered by God the father to Jesus Christ, as Mediator, and by him to his apostles, and by them to the churches of Christ; whence it is called the form of doctrine delivered to them, and the faith once delivered to the saints: and also the ordinances of the Gospel which the apostles received from Christ, and as they received them faithfully delivered them, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; as well as rules of conduct and behaviour, both in the church, and in the world, even all the commandments of Christ, which he ordered his apostles to teach, and which they gave by him; see ch. iii. 6. and 1 Thess. iv. 2. And so the Syriac version here renders it, *the commandments*: and these were such as these saints had been taught by the apostles, under the direction of Christ, and through the guidance of his spirit; and were not the traditions of men or the rudiments of the world, but what they had received from Christ, through the hands of the apostles: *whether by word, or our epistle*, that is, by our word, as well as by our epistle, and so the Arabic version reads; these doctrines, ordinances, and rules of discipline were communicated to them, both by word of mouth, when the apostles were in person among them, and by writing afterwards to them; for what the apostles delivered in the ministry of the word to the churches, they sent them in writing, that they might be a standing rule of faith and practice; so that this does not in the least countenance the unwritten traditions of the Papists; and since these were what were taught them, *viva voce*, and they received them from the mouth of the apostles, or by letters from them, or both, it became them to hold and retain them fast, and not let them go, either with respect to doctrine or practice.

Ver. 16. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, &c.*] The apostle having exhorted the saints to perseverance, closes this second part of his epistle, relating to the coming of Christ, with a prayer for the saints, that they might be comforted and established. The objects addressed are Christ and the Father. And in each of their characters are reasons contained, encouraging to believe the petitions will be regarded; for it is *our Lord Jesus Christ himself* who is prayed unto; who is our Lord, not by creation only, in which sense he is Lord of all, but by redemption, and through a marriage-relation; and he is our Jesus, our Saviour, and Redeemer; and our Christ, the anointed prophet, priest, and King; even he himself, who stands in these relations and offices; and what may not be expected from him? *and God, even our father*: not by creation, but by adoption; and as it is in his power, he has a heart to give, and will give good things unto his children: and inasmuch as Christ is equally addressed as the object of prayer as the Father, and is indeed here set before him, or first mentioned, it may be concluded that there is an entire equality between them, and that Christ is truly and properly God; otherwise religious worship, of which prayer is a considerable branch, would not be given him, nor would he be set upon an equal foot with the father, and much less before him. The Arabic version reads, *our Lord Jesus Christ, our father*; and the Ethiopic version also, *our Lord Jesus Christ, God our father*: as if the whole of this, or all these epithets and characters, belong to Christ, and he was the only person addressed; but the common reading is best: *which hath loved us*; this refers both to the Father and to Christ. The Father had loved them with an everlasting and unchangeable love, as appeared by his choosing them unto salvation by Christ, securing them in his hands, and making an everlasting covenant with him, on their account; by sending his Son to be the Saviour of them; by regenerating, quickening, and calling them by his grace, adopting them into his family, pardoning all their sins, justifying their persons, and giving them both a meetness for, and a right unto eternal glory. And Christ, he had loved them with the same love; and which he shewed by undertaking their cause in the council of peace; by espousing their persons in the covenant of grace; by assuming their nature in the fulness of time; by dying in their room and stead; and by his continued intercession and mediation for them, and by many other instances. And since they had such a share in the affection both of the Father and the Son, it need not to have been doubted but that what was prayed for would be granted: to which is added, *and hath given us everlasting consolation*: all true solid consolation is from God and Christ: God is called the God of all comfort; and if there be any real consolation, it is in, by, and from Christ; and it is the gift of God, an instance of his grace and favour, and not a point of merit; the least degree of consolation is not deserved, and ought not to be reckoned small: and it is everlasting: it does not indeed always continue, as to the sensible enjoyment of it, in this life, being often interrupted by in-dwelling sin, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan, yet the ground and

foundation of it is everlasting; such as the everlasting love of God, the everlasting covenant of grace, the everlasting righteousness of Christ, and everlasting salvation by him, and he himself, who is the consolation of Israel, as well as the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, who ever abides as the earnest and pledge of future happiness. And the present spiritual joy of the saints is what no man can take away from them, and what will eventually issue in everlasting consolation, without any interruption in the world to come, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and all tears be wiped from their eyes: *and good hope through grace.* The Syriac version reads, *in his grace*; and the Ethiopic version, *a good hope: and his grace*, hope, as well as faith, is the gift of God, a free-grace gift of his: and it may be called a good one, because God is the author of it; and it is built on a good foundation, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is of good things to come, and therefore called the blessed hope; and is what is sure and certain, and will never deceive, nor make ashamed; and since consolation is given here, and hope of happiness hereafter, it may be concluded the following requests will be regarded.

Ver. 17. *Comfort your hearts, &c.*] That is, apply the comfort given, and cause it to be received, which unbelief is apt to refuse; and increase it, by shedding abroad

the love of Christ, and of the Father; by the discoveries of pardoning grace; by the application of Gospel promises; by the word and ordinances, which are breasts of consolation; and by indulging with the gracious presence, and comfortable communion of Father, Son, and Spirit. The Arabic version reads, *comfort your hearts by his grace*, joining the last clause of the preceding verse to this. This petition stands opposed to a being troubled and distressed about the sudden coming of Christ, as the following one does to a being shaken in mind on that account, ver. 2. *And stablish you in every good word and work*; that is, in every good word of God, or truth of the Gospel, which contains good tidings of good things, so as not to waver about them, or stagger in them, or to depart from them; in practice of every duty, so as to be steadfast, and immoveable, and always abounding therein; good words and good works, principles and practices, should go together, and the saints stand in need of stability in both. For though, as to their state and condition, they are established in the love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the arms of Christ, and in him the foundation, so as they can never be removed; yet they are often very unstable, not only in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, but in their attachment and adherence to the Gospel and interest of Christ, and in the discharge of duty.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle requests of the Thessalonians, that they would pray for him, and other Gospel ministers; and he puts up prayers for them, gives them rules about dealing with disorderly persons, and concludes the epistle with his usual salutation. The request to pray for ministers is in ver. 1. the petitions to be made for them are, that their ministry might be succeeded, and their persons preserved and delivered from evil-minded men, destitute of faith in Christ, ver. 1, 2. and, for the consolation of the saints, observes the faithfulness of God engaged in their behalf to establish them in the faith they had, and to preserve them from every thing and person that is evil, ver. 3. and expresses his confidence in them with respect to their walk and conversation, ver. 4. and then prays for them, that their hearts might be directed into the love of God, and patience of Christ, ver. 5. And next follows an order to withdraw from every disorderly walker, particularly idle and slothful persons, ver. 6. and from such a lazy idle life the apostle dissuades by his own example, who behaved not disorderly, nor ate the bread of others, but wrought with his own hands, though he had a right to a maintenance without it, but did this to set an example to them, ver. 7, 8, 9. He puts them in mind of a precept of his when among them, that such who would not work should not eat, ver. 10. and the order he now gave, and the precept he reminds them of, were not without reason; seeing there were disorderly idle persons, and busy-bodies, among them, whom the apostle exhorts and beseeches, in the name of Christ,

to be industrious, and eat their own bread, as the fruit of their labours, ver. 11, 12. and as for the other members of the church, he exhorts them to diligence and constancy in well-doing, and to mark those that were incorrigible, and have no conversation with them, yet dealing with them not as enemies, but admonishing them as brethren, ver. 13, 14, 15. And closes all with prayers, that the Lord would give them peace, and grant his presence to them, and with his usual salutation, written with his own hand, as a token of this being a genuine epistle of his, and by which every epistle of his might be known, ver. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, &c.*] The apostle now proceeds to the last and closing part of the epistle, which respects church-discipline; and the removing of disorderly persons from their communion; and introduces it with a request to pray for him, and the rest of his fellow-ministers, particularly Silvanus and Timotheus, who joined with him in this epistle: he signifies that nothing more remained; this was the last he had to say, that they, the *brethren*, not the preachers of the word only, but the members of the church, would be solicitous for them at the throne of grace; as it becomes all the churches, and the several members of them, to pray for their ministers: with respect to their private studies, that they might be directed to suitable subjects; that their understandings might be opened to understand the Scriptures; that their gifts might be increased, and they be more and more fitted for public service: and with respect to their public ministrations, that they be brought forth in the

fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; that they have a door of utterance given them to preach the Gospel freely and boldly, as it ought to be spoken; and that their ministry be blessed to saints and sinners: and with respect to the world, and their conduct in it, that they be kept from the evil of it, and so behave as to give none offence, that the ministry be not blamed; and that they be not allured by the flatteries, nor intimidated by the frowns of the world, but endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ: and with respect to their persons and state, that their souls may prosper, and that they may have much of the presence of God, and much spiritual joy, peace, comfort, and strength of faith; and that they may enjoy bodily health, and their lives be spared for further usefulness. This request is frequently urged by the apostle; which shews his sense of the importance of the work of the ministry, the insufficiency of men for it, the necessity of fresh supplies of grace, and the great usefulness of prayer. The particular petitions he would have put up follow, *that the word of the Lord may have free course.* By *the word of the Lord*, or *of God*, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, is meant the Gospel; which is of God, and not of man, comes by the Lord Jesus Christ, and is concerning him, his person and offices, and concerning peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by him, as the subject-matter of it; and the request is, that this might *have free course; or might run*: he propagated and spread far and near: the ministry of the word is a course or race, and ministers are runners in it, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; which is the message they are sent with, and the errand they run upon: which comes from heaven, and is to be carried into all the world, and spread: Satan and his emissaries do all they can to hinder the progress of it; God only can remove all obstructions and impediments; when he works none can let; as mountains become a plain before Zerubbabel. Wherefore the apostle directs to pray to him for it, with what follows, *and be glorified, even as it is with you*: the Gospel is glorified when it is attended upon by large numbers, and is heard with a becoming reverence; when it is received in the love of it, is greatly prized and highly esteemed; when it is cordially embraced, and cheerfully obeyed. It is glorified when sinners are converted by it, and the lives of the professors of it are agreeably to it; and thus it was glorified in these several instances at Thessalonica; and therefore the apostle puts them upon praying, that it might be so elsewhere, as there; even *everywhere*, as the Syriac version adds.

Ver. 2. *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, &c.* Either from the unbelieving Jews, see Rom. xv. 30, 31. who were the avowed enemies of the Gospel, and did all they could to hinder the spread of it; and who were the implacable and constant adversaries of the apostle; who often lay in wait for him, and opposed him, and gave him trouble in all places, stirring up the people against him: or from the false teachers, and those of their party, who are the false brethren by whom he often was in perils; who were enemies of

the cross of Christ, and great hinderances to the spread of the Gospel; being men of absurd principles, and of wicked lives and conversations, whereby they perverted the Gospel of Christ, brought a reproach upon it, stumbled some, and overthrew the faith of others; and from these the apostle desires to be delivered: *for all men have not faith*: no man has faith of himself, it is the gift of God, and the operation of his spirit; and it is only given to the elect of God, who are ordained unto eternal life, and therefore it is called the faith of God's elect; all mankind have it not, none but Christ's sheep; and the reason why others have it not is, because they are not of his sheep. This is a truth; but rather the true sense of the words is, that all that are professors of religion, and members of churches, and even all that are preachers of the word, have not faith. They may have an historical and temporary faith, and the faith of miracles, and even all faith but the true faith; they may profess to believe, and yet not believe, as Simon Magus, and his followers seem to be intended here; for this is given as a reason why the apostle desired to be delivered from the above men. The Jews say, that "he that studies not in the law, לא יבין" "לא יבין, there is no faith in him"—and it is forbidden "to come near him, or to trade with him, or to walk with him, because there is no faith in him." The apostle seems to allude to this custom.

Ver. 3. *But the Lord is faithful, &c.* Or *God*, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, as do also the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies. This is said for the comfort of the saints, lest they should be discouraged upon hearing that all professors of faith in Christ had it not, who might be ready to take it to themselves, and fear, that either they had it not, or if they had, that they might lose it, and fall from it. Wherefore the apostle observes to them the comfortable attribute of God's faithfulness, which he will not suffer to fail. He has promised many things, and he is faithful that has promised, who also will do them, nor will any good thing he has promised ever fail. *Who shall establish you*: in the doctrines of the Gospel, so as not to be moved away from them, or be finally and totally seduced by those unreasonable and wicked men; and also in the grace of faith, which though it may be weakened, and there may be a falling from a degree of the steadfastness of it, as to its act and exercise, yet it shall never finally and totally fail, he who is the author will be the finisher of it; and likewise in the profession both of the doctrine and grace of faith, which true believers shall hold fast unto the end; for God will not suffer the righteous to be moved, or to depart from him; he has promised them perseverance, and he is faithful to give it to them. *And keep you from evil*: from the evil of sin; not from the being and commission of it entirely, which is not to be expected in this life; but from the dominion of it, at least from its reigning unto death, and from the damning power of it: and also from that evil one Satan; from his snares and temptations, so as to be entangled and overcome by them; for God is faithful, who will not suffer his to be tempted beyond their strength, but will enable them to bear it, and make

way for their escape, and deliver out of it; and likewise from evil men, unreasonable and wicked men, so as not to be drawn aside by them, by their principles and practices, by their frowns or flatteries.

Ver. 4. *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, &c.*] The ground of confidence concerning them was not in themselves, in their grace, and strength, and wisdom, and conduct, and good behaviour; but in the Lord, in his grace and strength, and in the power of his might, without whom they could do nothing, but through him strengthening them, could do all things. *That ye both do, and will do the things which we command you;* referring both to the commandments, which they had already given them by Christ, and they had shewed, and continued to shew a proper regard unto, see 1 Thess. iv. 1, 2. and also to what would be observed to them, as in ver. 6, 12.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, &c.*] By which may be meant either the love with which God is loved. This is the sum and substance of the first and chief commandment in the law, and is what every man in a state of nature is destitute of; it is implanted in the heart in regeneration, and is a fruit of the spirit of God; and where it is it oftentimes grows cold, and needs to be stirred up and rekindled, by the spirit of God, which may be intended, by a directing of the heart into it, that is, to a lively exercise of it: or else the love with which God loves his people is designed, which is free, sovereign, unchangeable, and from everlasting to everlasting; and to have the heart directed into this, is to be led into it directly; or by a straight line, as the word signifies, and not in a round-about way, by works and duties, as the causes or conditions of it; and to be led further into it, so as to wade into these waters of the sanctuary, from the ankles to the knees, and from thence to the loins, and from thence till they become a broad river to swim in; or so as to comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of this love, and to be rooted and grounded in it, and firmly persuaded of interest in it; and that nothing shall separate from it; and so as to have the heart sensibly affected with it. The phrase of directing the heart to God, and to seek him, is used in the Septuagint, in 2 Chron. xix. 3. and xx. 33. And this is not to be done by a believer himself, nor by the ministers of the Gospel: the apostle could not do it, and therefore he prays the Lord to do it; by whom is meant the spirit of God, since he is distinguished from God the father, into whose love the heart is to be directed, and from Christ, a patient waiting for whom 'tis also desired the heart may be directed into; and since it is his work to shed abroad the love of God in the heart, and to lead unto it, and make application of it; and which is a proof of his deity, for none has the direction, management, and government of the heart, but God, Prov. xxi. 1. and in this passage of Scripture appear all the three Persons; for here is the love of the Father, patient waiting for Christ, and the Lord the Spirit. For it follows, as another branch of the petition, *and into the patient waiting for Christ; or patience of Christ,* as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; and may intend either that patience, of which Christ was the subject; and which appeared in his quiet submission

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to all that outward meanness he did in his state of humiliation; in bearing the insults and reproaches of men, and the frowardness of his own disciples, in suffering himself to be tempted by Satan; and in bearing the sins of his people, the wrath of God, and strokes of justice in the manner he did: and for the saints to have their hearts directed into this patience of Christ, is of great use unto them, to endure Christ unto them; to lead them into the greatness of his love, and also of his person; and to make them more patient under the cross, when they consider him, and have him for an example. Or else it may respect the grace of patience, which he is the author of, for all grace comes from him; and he from hence may be called the God of patience, as his word, which is the means of it, is the word of his patience; and it is by his strength that saints are strengthened unto all patience, and long-suffering: and to be directed into this, or to the exercise of it, is of great use under afflictions from the hand of God, and under the reproaches and persecutions of men, and under divine desertions, and want of an answer of prayer, and under the temptations of Satan, and in an expectation of the heavenly glory. And the heart is never more in the exercise of this, than when it is directed into the love of God; see Rom. v. 2, 3, 4, 5. Or this may refer to that patience of which Christ is the object, and be understood, either of a patient bearing the cross for his sake; for every believer has a cross to take up and bear for Christ, and which is to be borne constantly, cheerfully, and patiently; and nothing more strongly animates to such a patient bearing of it, than a sense of the love of God; so that a being directed into that, leads also to this: or as our version points out the sense, it may be understood of a patient waiting for the second coming of Christ. Christ will certainly come a second time, though when he will come is uncertain; and his coming will be very glorious in itself, and of great advantage to the saints: hence it becomes them, not only to believe it, hope for it, love it, and look for it, but to wait patiently for it; which being directed to by the spirit of God, is of great use unto them in the present state of things.

Ver. 6. *Now we command you, brethren, &c.*] The apostle is now come to the main thing itself he has in view in this part of the epistle, which is to encourage a regard to the discipline of God's house; and to exhort this church to excommunicate, or remove from communion, all disorderly persons; and those who are to do this he points out, and calls upon, and even commands; and these are the fraternity, the brethren, the society of believers, all the members of the church; for to them to whom belongs the power of receiving members, to them only belongs the power of excluding offenders: the executive power lies in the hands of the elders or pastors of churches; they are the persons by whom the church receives or casts out members; but the power of judgment, or of determining who shall be received into, or who shall be removed from communion, lies in the church, and not in the pastors and elders only; whoever therefore take upon them to receive, or refuse, or cast out members of themselves, and at their own pleasure, act the part of Diotrephes, 3 John 9, 10. The authority for removing disorderly persons from communion is an

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apostolical command, *we command you*; who are the apostles of Christ, immediately sent by him, who had their mission and commission from him, and which were confirmed by miracles; these had a greater power and authority than the ordinary ministers of the word; they were the ambassadors of Christ, stood in his stead, represented him, and acted in his name; what they said, he spake by them; and it was all one as if he had spoke it himself: and that this might appear not to be of them, but of him, 'tis added, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*; that is, by his power and authority, if they had any regard to that, or to his honour and glory: *that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly*; by a brother is meant, not one in a natural or civil sense, who is so by blood, or by neighbourhood, by being of the same country, or of the same human species, since all are of one blood; but one in an ecclesiastical sense, a church-member, who is called a brother, though he may not be really a child of God, one of the brethren of Christ, or born of the spirit; yet being a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God externally, he bears this character; and such an one only is cognizable by a church, who have nothing to do to judge them that are without, only them that are within: and every brother in this sense falls under their notice; and every one that is a member, whether male or female, for this word includes both; and as the sisters, as well as the brethren, stand in the same relation, are in the same church-state, partake of the same ordinances, and enjoy the same privileges, they are obliged to regard the same rules of the Gospel, and duties of religion, and, in case of disorder, to be withdrawn from: and this also regards every brother, of whatsoever state or condition, bond or free, high or low, rich or poor; no partiality is to be used, no preference to be given to one above the other; a poor member in a disorder is not to be bore hard upon, whilst a rich one is winked and connived at: and it also respects the brethren, whether private members, or officers of the church; for not only the former, but also the latter, when they walk disorderly, whether in the discharge of their office, or in any other part of their conduct, are liable to the notice and censure of the church: and which is only to be done when any of them *walk disorderly*; not for every disorder they are guilty of; there's no man lives without sin; and church-members have their infirmities, and will have, as long as they are in the flesh, or in the body; and they are not to be made offenders for a word, or for a single disorder, or for the common infirmities of life; nor are the just to be set aside for a thing of nought, or a small offence, and that not continued in: it is one thing to be guilty of a disorder, and another thing to *walk disorderly*; which denotes a way, a course, a series of disorder, and proceeding on in it, a going from evil to evil, an increasing to more ungodliness; for walking is a progressive action, and disorderly persons don't stop, but grow worse and worse; for they take pleasure in their disorders; they choose their own ways, and delight in their abominations; the paths of sin are pleasant paths to them: and they are disorderly walkers, who pertinaciously and stubbornly continue in their disorders, notwithstanding the admonitions of private

persons, and of the whole church; and of this sort there are such that walk disorderly in the world, in the commission of notorious and scandalous sins, such as uncleanness, intemperance, covetousness, &c. and that walk disorderly in families; as husbands that are not affectionate to their wives, and provide not for their household; and wives that are not in subjection to their husbands; parents that provoke their children to wrath; and children that are disobedient to their parents; masters who give not that which is fit and equal to their servants; and servants that despise their masters because they are brethren, when they should serve them the more cheerfully, because faithful and beloved: and also that walk disorderly in churches, that fill not up their places, but neglect attendance with the church, on the word and ordinances; and who are contentious and quarrelsome, and will not submit to the sentiments of those who are superior to them in number and sense; and likewise such who entertain bad notions and principles, derogatory to the grace of God, the person and offices of Christ, and the operations of the Spirit; who walk not in the truth, nor according to the standard of the word of God; and especially such are designed here, who are busy-bodies, and idle persons, who work not at all, but live at the tables, and upon the substance of others, as appears ver. 11. These act contrary to the order and decorum of nations, towns, and families, and to that which God has fixed among mankind; and to the example of God, and Christ as God, who work hitherto and jointly together in Providence, and in the government of the world; and to the example which Christ, as man, has set, and to the example of the apostles, and to their commands: wherefore it follows, *and not after the tradition which he received of us*; meaning either the Gospel of Christ, which being preached was received, but the walk and conversation of some was not agreeably to it; or the ordinances of the Gospel, and the precepts of religion which the apostles delivered, and were received, and yet due attendance to them was not given; see the note on ch. ii. 15. or rather that particular injunction concerning quietness, and doing their own business, and working with their own hands, 1 Thess. iv. 11. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *which they received of us*; the sense is the same; and the Ethiopic version, *and not according to the constitution we appointed them*. Now what is commanded to be done to such disorderly persons, by the church, even the whole fraternity, is to *withdraw* themselves from them; by which is meant, not only to distinguish themselves from them by an orderly and regular conversation, and a strict observance of Gospel discipline, which to do is very right; nor barely to curb and restrain the affections towards such persons, lest by carrying it as heretofore, in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, they should take encouragement from hence to continue in their disorders, as tender parents keep in their affections, and from shewing them to their children, when in disorder, and under their corrections, that they might not seem to countenance them in that which is evil, though this is also very proper; nor also merely to contract or shut up the hand to such persons, and refuse to distribute to them, living such an idle life, and in such a disorderly way, though this is what ought to

be done; nor does this phrase only intend a forbidding such persons their houses and their tables, not suffering them to sit at the one, nor even to come into the other, not allowing any company and conversation with them, that they may have no opportunity of indulging their laziness and tale-bearing, though so to serve them is highly just and reasonable; nor does it design only a suspension, or a debarring, of them from the Lord's table, which ought not to be done to any persons, whilst they continue in relation to the church, and members of it; but a removal of them from church-communion, or an excommunication of them; which is sometimes expressed by rejecting persons, casting them out of the church, and putting them away, and here by withdrawing from them; which are all synonymous phrases, and intend exclusion from the communion of the church. And so the Ethiopic version here renders it, *that ye remove every brother, &c.* From this passage we learn who they are that are to be excommunicated or removed from the communion of churches, all disorderly walkers; what the act of excommunication is, it is a withdrawing from them, a separating them from the church, and its communion; and who they are that have the power to do it, the whole fraternity or body of the church; and also the authority for it, an apostolical command, in the name of Christ.

Ver. 7. *For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us, &c.*] The apostle goes on to dissuade from that which denominates persons disorderly walkers, and exposes them to the censure of the church, and that partly by the example of the apostles, and partly by their command. He appeals to them, to their knowledge and judgment, it being a thing well known to them, that they ought to walk as they had the apostles for ensamples; for who should they follow but their spiritual fathers, shepherds, and guides? and especially so far as they were followers of Christ, as they were, in the case referred unto, working with their own hands: *for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; they could appeal to them as witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblamably they walked among them; see 1 Thess. ii. 10. and particularly, that they did not live an idle and inactive life among them.*

Ver. 8. *Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, &c.*] Or freely, at free cost, without paying for it; he signifies, that what they ate, they bought with their own money, and lived on no man, without giving him a valuable consideration for what they had; though if they had not paid in money for their food, they would not have ate it for nought, since they laboured among them in preaching the Gospel to them; and such labourers are worthy of their maintenance, Luke x. 7. though the former sense is the apostle's here: *but wrought with labour and travail night and day; not only laboriously preaching the Gospel to them, as often as they could have opportunity, but working very hard and incessantly with their hands, at the occupations and trades they had been brought up to; and that of the Apostle Paul's was a tent-maker, at which he sometimes wrought, thereby ministering to his own, and the necessities of others, Acts xviii. 3. and xx. 34.*

nor was this inconsistent with his learning and liberal education. It was usual with the Jewish doctors to learn a trade, or follow some business and calling of life; see the note on Mark vi. 3. The apostle's end in this was, *that we might not be chargeable to any of you; or burdensome to them, they being for the most part poor; and the apostles being able partly by their own hand-labour, and partly by what they received from Philippi, Phil. iv. 16. to support themselves, chose to do it, that they might not lie heavy upon them, and any ways hinder the spread of the Gospel among them, at its first coming to them.* And so Maimonides says the ancient Jewish doctors behaved, and with a like view: wherefore, says he^p, "if a man is a wise man, and an honourable man, and poor, let him employ himself in some handicraft business, even though a mean one, and not distress men (or be burdensome to them); it is better to strip the skins of beasts that have been torn, than to say to the people, I am a considerable wise (or learned) man, I am a priest, take care of me, and maintain me; and so the wise men have ordered: and some of the greatest doctors have been hewers of wood, and carriers of timber, and drawers of water for the gardens, and have wrought in iron and coals, and have not required any thing of the congregation; nor would they take any thing of them, when they would have given to them."

Ver. 9. *Not because we have not power, &c.*] To forbear working, or require a maintenance from the churches to whom we minister, since Christ has ordained, that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel; see 1 Cor. ix. 4, 5, 6, 14. This the apostle says to preserve their right of claim, when and where they should think fit to make use of it; and lest other ministers of the word, who could not support themselves as they did, should be hurt by such an example; and lest covetous men should make use of it to indulge their sin, and improve it against the maintenance of Gospel ministers: wherefore the apostle observes to them, that they did not do this, as conscious that they had no right to demand a supply from them, *but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us; for it seems there were many idle lazy persons among them, who either had no callings or trades, or did not attend to them; wherefore the apostles wrought with their own hands, to set an example, who could not for shame but work, when they saw persons in so high an office, and of such a character, working with labour and travail, night and day, among them.*

Ver. 10. *For even when we were with you, &c.*] At Thessalonica in person, and first preached the Gospel to them, *we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat; the Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, when I was with you, I commanded you; using the above words, which were a sort of a proverb with the Jews, and is frequently used by them, לעי לא נניס, or דאי לא אכיל, that if a man would not work, he should not eat^q. And again^r, "he that labours on the evening of the sabbath (or on week-days), he shall eat on the sabbath-day; and he who does not labour on the evening of the sabbath,*

^p Hilchot Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 18.

^q Bereshit Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 13. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 4. & Midrash Kobelct, fol. 65. 4.

^r T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

“ from whence shall he eat (or what right and authority has he to eat) on the sabbath-day?” Not he that could not work through weakness, bodily diseases, or old age, the necessities of such are to be distributed to, and they are to be taken care of, and provided with the necessaries of life by the officers of the church; but those that can work, and will not, ought to starve, for any assistance that should be given them by the members of the church, or the officers of it.

Ver. 11. *For we hear that there are some, &c.*] This is the reason of the order or command given in ver. 6. for withdrawing from disorderly persons. When the apostle was with them, he observed that there were idle persons among them, and therefore gave orders then, that if they would not work, they should not eat; and in his former epistle, having intelligence that there were still such persons among them, he exhorts them to their duty, and puts the church upon admonishing them; and still information is given him, that there were some such persons yet among them; for as the apostle had the care of all the churches upon him, so he kept a correspondence with them, and by one means or another, by sending messengers to them, or by receiving letters from those he corresponded with, he learned the state of them; and his information was generally good, and what might be depended upon; see 1 Cor. i. 11. as it was in this case relating to some persons: *which walk among you disorderly*; and who they were, and which also explains ver. 6. are immediately observed: *working not at all*; at their callings, trades, and businesses in which they were brought up, but lived an idle and lazy life; and this was walking disorderly indeed, even contrary to the order of things before the fall, when man was in a state of innocence; for before sin entered into the world, Adam was put into the garden of Eden to keep and dress it; man was created an active creature, and made for work and business; and to live without, is contrary to the order of creation, as well as to the order of civil societies, and of religious ones, or churches, and even what irrational creatures do not. *But are busy-bodies*; though they work not at all at their own business, yet are very busy in other men's matters, and have the affairs of kingdoms, and cities, and towns, and neighbourhoods, and churches, and families, upon their hands; which they thrust themselves into, and intermeddle with, though they have no business at all with them: these wander from house to house, and curiously inquire into personal and family affairs, are tattlers, full of prate and talk, and, like the Athenians, spend all their time in telling or hearing new things; and they also speak things which they should not; they carry tales from one to another, and privately whisper things to the disadvantage of their fellow creatures and Christians, and backbite and slander them. These are the pests of nations and neighbourhoods, the plagues of churches, and the scandal of human nature; see 1 Tim. v. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 15.

Ver. 12. *Now them that are such, &c.*] For this was not the case and character of them all. Did such practices generally obtain, no community, civil or religious, could subsist. And the apostle wisely distinguishes them from others, that the innocent might not be involved in the charge. *We command and exhort by our*

Lord Jesus Christ; using both authority and entreaty, taking every way to reclaim them, commanding in the name of Christ, and beseeching for the sake of Christ, *that with quietness they work*; with their own hands, at their proper callings, and so support themselves, provide for their families, and have something to give to them that are in need; by which means they will live peaceable and quiet lives, in godliness and honesty, and not disturb the peace of neighbourhoods, churches, and families: *and eat their own bread*; got by their own labour, and bought with their money, and not the bread of others, or that of idleness.

Ver. 13. *But ye, brethren, &c.*] The rest of the members of the church, who were diligent and industrious in their callings, minded their own business, and did not trouble themselves with other men's matters, took care of themselves, and their families, and were beneficent to others: *be not weary in well-doing*; which may be understood generally of all well-doing, or of doing of every good work; which is well done when done according to the will of God, in faith, and from a principle of love, and in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God: or particularly of acts of beneficence to the poor; for though the idle and lazy should not be relieved, yet the helpless poor should not be neglected. This the apostle observes, lest covetous persons should make an handle of this, and withhold their hands from distributing to any, under a notion of their being idle and disorderly; or lest the saints should be tired, and become weary of doing acts of charity through the ingratitude, moroseness, and ill manners of poor people; see Gal. vi. 9.

Ver. 14. *And if any man obey not our word, &c.*] Of command, to work quietly, and eat his own bread, now signified by *this epistle*, particularly in ver. 12. *note that man*; some read this clause in connexion with the preceding phrase, *by this epistle*, or by an epistle; and so the Ethiopic version, *shew, or signify him by an epistle*; that is, give us notice of it by an epistle, that we may take him under our cognizance, and severely chastise him, according to the power and authority given us by Christ; but that phrase rather belongs to the preceding words: and the clause here respects the notice the church should take of such a person; not in a private way, or merely by way of admonition and reproof, such as is given before rejection from communion; but by the black mark of excommunication; lay him under censure, exclude him your communion, put a brand upon him as a scabbed sheep, and separate him from the flock; and so the Syriac version renders it, *יִתְפָּרֵשׁ, let him be separated from you*; and this sense is confirmed by what follows, *and have no company with him*; as little as can be in common and civil conversation, lest he should take encouragement from thence to continue in his sin, and lest others should think it is connived at; and much less at the Lord's table, or in a sacred and religious conversation, or in a way of church-fellowship and communion: *that he may be ashamed*; that he may have his eyes turned in him, as the word signifies, and he may be brought to a sight and sense of his sin, and be filled with shame for it, and loath it, and himself on the account of it, and truly repent of it, and forsake it; and this is the end of excommunication, at least one end, and a principal

end of it, to recover persons out of the snare of the devil, and return them from the error of their ways: so the Jews say¹, “in matters of heaven (of God or religion), if a man does not return privately, *בכלימין*, they put him to shame publicly; and publish his sin, and reproach him to his face, and despise and set him at naught until he returns to do well.”

Ver. 15. *Yet count him not as an enemy, &c.*] As an enemy of Christ, and the Christian religion, as the Jews and Pagans were; or as an enemy of all righteousness, as Elymas the sorcerer was; as one that has an implacable hatred to good men, and a persecutor of them, and has an utter aversion to them and their principles; nor deal with him in an hostile, fierce, furious, and passionate manner, as if you were seeking his destruction, and not his restoration. This seems to be levelled against the Jews, who allowed of hatred to incorrigible persons: they say¹, “an hater that is spoken of in the law, is not of the nations of the world, but of Israel; but how shall an Israelite hate an Israelite?—does not the Scripture say, *thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart?* the wise men say, “when a man sees him alone, who has committed a transgression, and he admonishes him, and he does not return, lo, it is *במצוד לשינאן*, a commandment to hate him until he repents and turns from his wickedness.” But admonish, or reprove him as a brother: as one that has been called a brother, and a member of the church, and who, though criminal, has no bitterness in him against the church, or against the name of Christ, and the doctrines of Christ; and therefore should not be treated in a virulent manner, but with a brotherly affection, meekness, compassion, and tenderness; and who indeed is to be reckoned as a brother, whilst the censure is passing, and the sentence of excommunication is executing on him; for till it is finished he stands in such a relation: though this also may have respect, as to the manner of excommunicating persons, so to the conduct of the church to such afterwards; who are not to neglect them, and much less to treat them as enemies, in a cruel and incompassionate manner; but should inquire, and diligently observe, what effect the ordinance of excommunication has upon them, and renew their admonitions and friendly reproofs, if possible, to recover them.

Ver. 16. *Now the Lord of peace himself, &c.*] The

Prince of peace, who is peaceable himself, and the author of peace in all his churches, and who requires peace, calls for it, and encourages it: *give you peace always by all means*: both a conscience-peace, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and faith in them, which passes all understanding, and which, when he gives, none can take away; and a church-peace, being freed from all such disorderly persons and their abettors, the disturbers of it: and indeed, the way to have true peace and prosperity in churches is to keep up the discipline of God's house. The apostle prays for it in faith, upon an observance of the rules he had given; he prays for constant and perpetual peace, which is greatly to be desired; and that it might be had by all means, and in every way through praying, preaching, administering the ordinances, laying on censures, when necessary, and Christian conversation. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, *in every place*; as well as at Thessalonica. *The Lord be with you all*; by his presence, to comfort and refresh; by his power, to keep and preserve; by his grace, to assist; and by his spirit, to counsel, advise, and direct.

Ver. 17. *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, &c.*] In writing his epistles, the body and substance of them, he used an amanuensis, but the salutation he wrote with his own hand: *which is the token in every epistle*; by which they might be known to be true and genuine, and be distinguished from counterfeit ones: and the rather he mentions this, that they might be troubled neither by word, nor by spirit, nor by epistle, as from them, as they had been, ch. ii. 2. for it seems that this wicked practice of counterfeiting the epistles of the apostles, or carrying about spurious ones, under their name, began so early; to prevent which, the apostle took this method, *so I write*, as follows:

Ver. 18. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*] This was the sign or token; see the note on Rom. xvi. 20.

The subscription to this epistle is, *The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens*; though it seems rather to be written from Corinth. In the Syriac version it is said, “the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which is written from Laodicea of Pisidia, and sent by the hands of Tychicus.”

¹ Maimon. Hilch. Deyot, c. 6. sect. 8.

¹ Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 13. sect. 14.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY, to whom this epistle is written, was eminent for his early piety and acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures; his mother was a Jewess, and his father a Greek, which was the reason why he was not circumcised in his infancy. Mention is made in the second epistle to him of his mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois, as believers, and of his knowledge of the Scriptures from a child: this excellent person the apostle meeting with at Lystra, and having a good report of him from the brethren there, he chose him to be his companion in his travels, and to assist him in the spread of the Gospel; and knowing that it would be very disagreeable to the Jews to hear the word of God from the lips of an uncircumcised person, he took him and circumcised him, becoming all things to all, that he might gain some. This being done, he went along with him into several parts, and he made great use of him, in preaching the word, planting churches, and writing epistles; he sent him to various places with messages from him, to Corinth, Philippi, and Thessalonica; and now had left him at Ephesus, where he be-

sought him to abide for a while; for that he was the bishop, pastor, or overseer of that church is not likely, since his residence here was not constant, and was afterwards called away from hence by the apostle, who desired his stay there, under whom, and by whose directions, he acted whilst there; and seeing that this church had elders, bishops, or overseers, whom the Holy Ghost had set over them, whom the apostle called to him at Miletus, and gave them some advice and instructions. The design of Timothy's continuance there was to check growing errors and heresies, and to take care of, and preserve the discipline of God's house; and to charge him with these things was the design of this epistle; in which he teaches him how to behave himself in the church of God, by taking heed to his doctrine and conversation; and gives rules relating to the qualifications of bishops and deacons, and to the care of widows, and with regard to church-censures, and the becoming walk and conversation of all sorts of persons of every office, age, sex, rank, and order. This epistle is thought to be written about the year 55.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle having entreated Timothy to abide at Ephesus, observes, that his end was, that he might check the false teachers there, whom he describes; and then he gives an account of his apostleship, and also of his conversion, to the encouragement of sinners, and to the glory of the grace of God; and closes with an exhortation to Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his Christian warfare. The inscription and salutation are in ver. 1, 2. and much in the common form; and whereas, when he went into Macedonia, he desired Timothy to continue at Ephesus, his end was, to restrain the false teachers from preaching the doctrine they did, which was contrary to the Gospel, fabulous, useless, and unedifying, ver. 3, 4. for though these men set up for teachers of the law, they went off, and strayed from its general end, which was love with faith, through their ignorance of it, ver. 5, 6, 7. not but that the law itself was good, as Gospel ministers full well knew; which is said to prevent an objection against them, as laying it aside as useless; but the abuse of it is what is complained of, it being made for some persons, and not for others who are mentioned, between

which, and the sound doctrine of the Gospel, there is an agreement, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11. which leads on the apostle to observe his call to the office of a preacher of it by Christ, his qualification for it, and investiture with it, for which he gives thanks, ver. 12. And in order to illustrate the grace of God in converting him first, and then making him a minister of the word, he takes notice of his state and condition before conversion, what a vile sinner he had been, and of the abundant grace God bestowed on him in it, ver. 13, 14. And that this case of his might not seem strange and incredible, he observes, that this is the sum of the Gospel, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, such an one as he was, ver. 15. And besides, the end of the Lord in his conversion was, by the pattern of long-suffering he shewed in him, that others might be encouraged to believe in Christ also, ver. 16. and then for all this grace bestowed on him, he ascribes honour and glory to God, ver. 17. and renews his charge to Timothy to fight manfully against the false teachers, to which he should be the more induced by the consideration of the prophecies that went before of him, ver. 18. and to hold faith and good conscience, which

had been dropped by some professors; of which instances are given in Hymeneus and Philetus, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*] His name was well known to Timothy, and very dear to him; and so was his office as an apostle, and which he mentions, not so much for Timothy's sake, but for the sake of others, that what he delivers in this epistle might come with its proper weight and authority, and be regarded: of this his office, as well as name, see the note on Rom. i. 1. How he came into this office next follows, not of himself, nor by men, but by the commandment of God; the appointment and decree of God, by which he was separated to this office, even from eternity, and is the same with the counsel or will of God, Eph. i. 1. or it may refer to the order given by the Holy Ghost to the church, to set apart him and Barnabas to the work of the ministry, Acts xiii. 2. though this commandment is called the commandment of God our Saviour; by whom is meant God the Father; and this character of him is mentioned, to shew that the embassy the apostle was sent on as such, and in which the discharge of his office greatly lay, was the affair of salvation, to publish and declare that to the sons of men; and also to shew the concern which God the Father has in that work: he resolved upon it, and appointed his people to it, and determined upon saving them by his Son, whom he pitched upon to be his salvation; he drew the scheme of it by his infinite wisdom, and sent his Son into the world to execute it; and he sends his ministers to publish the Gospel of it, and his Spirit to reveal and apply it to the hearts of his chosen ones; and keeps them by his power unto it, and will at last put them into the full possession of it; so that this character well suits with him, to whom it is also given, Tit. iii. 4. as well as with his son Jesus Christ, to whom it is more commonly ascribed, and from whom he is here distinguished: for it follows, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; who is both the author, and the ground and foundation of the grace of hope of salvation, and eternal life; not earthly enjoyments, nor any external thing whatever; not birth-privileges, carnal descent, religious education, morality and civility, obedience to the law of Moses, moral or ceremonial; nor a profession of Christ, nor a bare subjection to his ordinances, but he himself: and there is good ground to hope for pardon through his blood, which was shed for it; and for justification by his righteousness, which is freely wrought out, and freely imputed; and for salvation by him, since it is in him, and in no other, and is completely effected by him, and that for the worst of sinners, and is wholly of free grace, and which every one that believes in him shall enjoy; and so for eternal life, which hope is conversant with; and good reason there is for it in Christ, seeing it is in him, and in his gift; what his grace gives a meetness for, and his righteousness a title to; and which he is possessed of in the name of his people, prepares for them, and will introduce them into. The Complutensian edition reads, of the father, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; and so the Ethiopic version, of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Ver. 2. *Unto Timothy my own son in the faith, &c.*] Not in the flesh, or by natural descent, but in a spi-

ritual sense, in the faith of Christ; for Timothy was not related to the apostle according to the flesh, as some have thought, but the relation was spiritual; though the apostle was not properly his spiritual father, or the instrument of his conversion; for Timothy was a converted person, and a disciple of Christ, and well reported of by the brethren, when the apostle first met with him, Acts xvi. 1, 2. but he calls him his son, either because of his age, being a young man; or because of his affection for him, so the Vulgate Latin version reads, a beloved son; or rather, because he was instructed more largely by the apostle into the doctrine of faith; and as a son, with a father, served with him in the Gospel of Christ. It may be rendered a true or genuine son in the faith, in distinction from nominal Christians, formal professors and hypocrites. Timothy was a real Christian, a true believer, and an hearty and upright professor and preacher of the faith of Christ, as well as truly regenerated by the spirit of God. Grace, mercy, and peace from God our father, and Jesus Christ our Lord; the Arabic version reads, and Lord Jesus Christ our Lord. The form of salutation is the same as in all the epistles of the apostle, only that mercy is here inserted; and when he wishes grace to Timothy, he may mean a fresh discovery of the love and free favour of God unto him, and an increase of grace in him, and of the gifts of the spirit upon him; and by mercy he may intend a fresh application of the pardoning mercy of God, through Christ, and all assistance and success in his work as a minister, and all succour and support under every trial and exercise, and mercy at the last day, or the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; and by peace he may design peace of conscience through the blood of Christ, and all prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And all this being wished for equally from Christ, as from God the father, is a proof of the proper deity of our Lord.

Ver. 3. *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, &c.*] Where it seems he now was, being left here by the apostle, and where he was desired by him to continue: when I went into Macedonia; not when he went his first journey there, for Timothy was then along with him, Acts xvi. 3, 19, and so he seems to be in his journey through it, in Acts xx. 3, 4. It may be this may refer to a journey which Luke has given no account of: that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine; than the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; than what had been preached by the apostle at Ephesus, and the saints there had received; than what was agreeably to the Scriptures of truth, and was according to godliness; for all other doctrines must be divers and strange ones: nor would he have them teach in another way, in new words, but hold fast the form of sound words; for new words often produce new doctrines: the apostle perhaps by other doctrine chiefly respects the doctrine of justification by the works of the law. It seems as if there were some teachers in this place the apostle was suspicious of, or he had heard that they began to innovate in the doctrine of faith; wherefore he desires Timothy to continue a while, in order to be a check on these persons, and to charge them not to introduce any new doctrine; for it was only some, and not all that taught there, he was so to charge. Some refer this to hearers, and render the

words, that they follow no other doctrine; but it seems best to understand it of teachers; the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words as we do.

Ver. 4. *Neither give heed to fables, &c.* Old wives' fables, ch. iv. 7. or Jewish fables, Tit. i. 14. the traditions of the elders; any thing that was not true; or if it was, yet idle, vain, trifling, and unprofitable: and *endless genealogies*: not of deities, as the Theogony of the Gentiles, or the ten Sephiroth or numbers in the Cabalistic tree of the Jews, or the Æones of the Gnostics and Valentinians, which are said to proceed from one another, as some have thought; but both the public and private genealogies of the Jews, which they kept to shew of what tribe they were, or to prove themselves priests and Levites, and the like; of which there was no end, and which often produced questions and debates. By reason of their captivities and dispersions, they were much at a loss to distinguish their tribes and families. Some care Ezra took of this matter, when the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity. It is said ^a, that עשרה דורות, "ten genealogies (or ten sorts of persons genealogized) came out of Babylon; priests, Levites, Israelites, profane (or unfit for the priesthood, though they sprung from priests) proselytes, freemen (servants made free), bastards, Nethinim or Gibeonites, such whose father was not known, and those that were taken up in the streets." These Ezra brought up to Jerusalem thus distinguished, that they might be taken care of by the sanhedrim, and kept distinct; but these would often intermix and cause disputes; and sometimes these mixtures were connived at through partiality or fear ^b. "Says R. Jochanan, by the temple, it is in our hands, (the gloss adds, to discover the illegitimate families of the land of Israel,) but what shall I do? for lo, the great men of this age are hid (or impure): in which he agreed with R. Isaac, who said, the family that is hid, let it be hid. Abai also saith, we have learned this by tradition, there was a family of the house of Tzeriphah, beyond Jordan, and a son of Zion, (a famous man, a man of authority,) set it at a distance, (proclaimed it illegitimate,) by his authority. And again, there was another, and he made it near (or pronounced it right) by his power.—Again, there was another family, and the wise men would not discover it." By which we may see what management there was in these things, and what a foundation was laid for questions and debates. Of these public and private genealogies, see the note on Matt. i. 16. to which may be added what R. Benjamin says ^c of some Jews in his time, who were the Rechabites, and were very numerous, and had a prince over them of the house of David; and, adds he, they have a genealogical book, *כְּשֵׁרֵי שְׂאֵלוֹת*, and extracts of questions, which I should be tempted to render *clusters of questions*, which are with the head of the captivity; and this comes very near to what our apostle here says. And when it is observed, that Herod, that he might hide the meanness of his descent and birth, burnt all the genealogical writings in the

public archives ^d, it must be still more difficult to fix the true account of things; and for the loss of the genealogical book, the public one, the Jews express a very great concern: for they say ^e, that "from the time the book of genealogies was hid, the strength of the wise men was weakened, and the light of their eyes grew dim. Says Mar Zutra, between Azel and Azel, (that is, between 1 Chron. viii. 48. and ch. ix. 44.) there's need of four hundred camel-loads of commentaries." So intricate an affair, and such an endless business was this. And this affair of genealogies might be now the more the subject of inquiry among judaizing Christians, since there was, and still is, an expectation among the Jews, that in the times of the Messiah these things will be set aright. Says Maimonides ^f, "in the days of the King Messiah, when his kingdom shall be settled, and all Israel shall be gathered to him, יתייחסו כולם, they shall all of them be genealogized, according to his word, by the Holy Ghost, as it is said, Mal. iii. 3. he shall purify the sons of Levi, and say, this is a genealogized priest, and this is a genealogized Levite; and shall drive them away who are not genealogized (or related) to Israel, as it is said, Ezra ii. 63. Hence you learn, that by the Holy Ghost they shall be genealogized, those that arrogate and proclaim their genealogy; and he shall not genealogize Israel but by their tribes, for he shall make known that this is of such a tribe, and this is of such a tribe; but he shall not say concerning such an one he is a bastard, and this is a servant; for so shall it be, that the family that is obscure shall be obscure." Or else the genealogical account of their traditions may be meant, which they trace from Moses to Joshua, from Joshua to the elders, from the elders to the prophets, from the prophets to the men of the great synagogue, and from one doctor to another ^g, which to pursue is endless, tedious, and tiresome: which minister questions; as the traditions of the elders, and the genealogical account of them did; the Talmud is full of the questions, debates, contentions, and decisions of the doctors about them: rather than godly edifying, which is in faith; and which is the principal end of preaching, hearing, and conversation; and that may be called godly edifying, or the edification of God, as it may be rendered, which he is the author of, and which he approves of, and is by, and according to his word; or that in which souls are built up an habitation for God, and are built up in faith and holiness, and by an increase of every grace: and this is in faith, not only in the grace of faith, but by the doctrine of faith, on which the saints may build one another, and by which they are edified through the faithful ministration of it by the ministers of the word; when fabulous stories and disputes, about genealogies, are useless and unedifying: not that the apostle condemns all genealogies, such as we have in the writings of the Old Testament, and in the evangelists, nor all inquiries into them, and study of them, which, rightly to settle, is in some cases of great importance and use, but the private and

^a Misn. Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 1.

^b T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71. 1. & Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 65. 3.

^c Massaoth, p. 83.

^d Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 7.

^e T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 62. 2.

^f Hilchot Melacim, c. 12. sect. 3.

^g Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1, &c.

unprofitable ones before mentioned. Some copies read, *the dispensation of God, which is in faith*; meaning the dispensation of the mysteries of grace, which are in the doctrine of faith, which becomes a faithful steward of them, and not fables and genealogies, which issue in questions, quarrels, and contentions.

Ver. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity, &c.*] By the *commandment* may be meant, the order given to Timothy, or the charge committed to him; see ver. 18. to forbid the teaching of another doctrine, and to avoid fables and endless genealogies; the end and design of which was to cultivate peace, to maintain and secure brotherly love, which cannot long subsist, when a different doctrine is introduced and received; and to promote godly edification, which is brought about by charity or love, for charity edifies; but is greatly hindered by speculative notions, fabulous stories, and genealogical controversies and contentions: or by it may be intended the ministration of the Gospel, called the commandment, ch. vi. 14. because enjoined the preachers of it by Christ; the end of which is to bring persons to the obedience of faith, or to that faith which works by love, to believe in Christ, to love the Lord, his truths, ordinances, people, and ways; or rather the moral law is designed, which is often called the commandment, Rom. vii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. since of this the apostle treats in some following verses; the end and design, sum and substance, completion and perfection of which law are love to God, and love to one another; see Matt. xxii. 36, 37, 38, 39. Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Gal. v. 14. which charity or love, when right, springs out of a pure heart; which no man has naturally; every man's heart is naturally impure; nor can he make it pure; by the strength of nature, or by any thing that he can do: there are some that are pure in their own eyes, and in the esteem of others, and yet are not cleansed from their filthiness, and are inwardly full of all manner of impurity; though there are some that have pure hearts, and they are such, who have clean hearts created in them by the spirit of God; who are regenerated and sanctified by him; whose hearts are purified by faith; and who have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ; and who are not double-minded, speak with a heart and a heart, but whose hearts are sincere and upright, and without hypocrisy; so that charity or love, from such a heart, is love without dissimulation, which is not in tongue and words only, but in deed and in truth; 'tis an unfeigned love, or loving with a pure heart fervently. *And of a good conscience*; there is a conscience in every man, that accuses or excuses, unless it is cauterized or seared: but this conscience is naturally evil and defiled, and does not perform its office aright; either it takes no notice of, and is not concerned about sin, and has no remorse for it, or it takes notice of little things, and lets pass greater ones, or speaks peace when destruction is at hand: a good conscience is a conscience purified by the grace of God, and purged from dead works by the blood of Christ; under the influence of which a man acts uprightly in the discharge of his duty, and exercises a conscience void of offence towards God and man; and charity, proceeding from such a conscience, is of the right kind; *and of faith unfeigned*; with

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which a man really, and from the heart, believes what he professes; so did not Simon Magus, and all other temporary believers, whose faith is a feigned faith, a dead and inactive one; whereas true faith is an operative grace, it is attended with good works, and particularly it works by love: and that charity or love, which springs from faith unfeigned, is unfeigned love also, such as answers the design, and is the substance of the commandment. These words may be considered in a gradation, or as a spiritual genealogy, in opposition to the endless ones before mentioned, thus; that charity which is the end of the commandment comes out of a pure heart, out of which proceeds a good conscience, and from thence faith unfeigned. But the other way of interpreting seems best.

Ver. 6. *From which some having swerved, &c.*] The apostle, in this verse and the next, describes the persons he suspected of teaching other doctrines, and of introducing fables and endless genealogies; they were such who departed from the above things; they erred from the commandment, or law, notwithstanding their great pretensions to a regard unto it; at least they missed the mark, the end and design of it; they went astray from that, and instead of promoting charity or love, created feuds, contentions, and divisions in the churches; and were far from having a pure heart, being filthy dreamers, and sensual persons, destitute of the spirit of God, and were such who put away a good conscience, and made shipwreck of faith: such were Hymeneus, Philetus, Alexander, and others, of whom he also says, *they have turned aside to vain jangling*; which he elsewhere calls empty talk, and vain babblings, ch. vi. 20. 2 Tim. ii. 16. from the solid doctrines of the Gospel, and a solid way of handling them, they turned to vain, idle, useless, and unprofitable subjects of discourse, and to treating upon subjects in a vain, jejune, and empty manner; entertaining their hearers with foolish and trifling questions and answers to them about the law, and with strifes about words, which were unserviceable and unedifying; they were unruly and vain talkers, Tit. i. 10.

Ver. 7. *Desiring to be teachers of the law, &c.*] They were very fond of being called Rabbi, Rabbi, and styled doctors of the law, and of being thought to have skill in interpreting the law, and good talents in expounding it, and preaching upon it; which was now most in vogue, and gained the greatest applause, when the preaching of the Gospel was treated with contempt, not only by the unbelieving Jews, but by Judaizing Christians, and carnal professors. *Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm*: they did not understand the law, the nature and end, the purity and spirituality, and perfection of it, which they were so fond of teaching, and went into many foolish and unlearned questions about it; see 2 Tim. ii. 23. Tit. iii. 9. and which they as foolishly answered: these are the ignorant and unlearned men, who, notwithstanding their vain shew of learning, and pretence to skill in interpreting the law, wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction, and that of others; they were ignorant of the things they talked of, and knew not by what arguments to confirm them, and yet were very bold and confident in their assertions: and generally speaking so it is, that those who can

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prove least assert most, and that with the greatest assurance.

Ver. 8. *But we know that the law is good, &c.*] The apostle says this to prevent an objection that might be made to him, that seeing he bore so hard on such who were fond of being teachers of the law, he was himself against the law, and the preaching and proper use of it; but this he would not have concluded, for he and his fellow-labourers in the ministry, and all true believers know, from the Scriptures of truth, from the agreement of the law with the Gospel, and from their own experience, that the law is good, provided it be used in a lawful way, and to lawful purposes: and this is to be understood not of the ceremonial law, which was now disannulled, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it, so that there was no lawful use of that; but of the moral law, which must needs be good, since the author of it is God, who is only good; and nothing but good can come from him: the law, strictly moral, is a copy of his nature, transcribed out of himself, as well as with his own hands; and is a declaration of his will, and is instamped with his authority, and therefore must be good: the matter of it is good, it contains good, yea, great and excellent things; the matter of it is honestly and morally good, as to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with God: and it is pleasantly good to a regenerate man, who loves it, and delights in it after the inner man, and serves it with his spirit; though the carnal mind cannot be subject to it, but rejects it, and rebels against it: and it is also profitably good; for though obedience to it is not profitable to God, yet it is to men; and though eternal life is not obtained hereby, nor any reward given for keeping it, yet in keeping it there is a reward; and that peace is enjoyed, which the transgressors of it are strangers to: it is good in the uses of it, both to sinners and to saints. To sinners it is useful for the knowledge of sin, to convince of it, and bring them to a sense of it, and concern for it, which is effectually done, when the spirit of God sets in with it, or brings this commandment home to the heart; and if it has not this use, it is sometimes a means of restraining men from sin, which is the use of civil laws among men; and if it has not this, it is of use however to accuse men rightly of sin, and to pronounce justly guilty before God for it, to curse them as they deserve it, and to sentence to condemnation and death: and to believers it is of use, though they are not under it as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and are freed from its curse and condemnation, and under no obligation to seek for life and righteousness by it; to them it is of use, to point out to them what is the will of God, and what should be done, and not done; and it is a rule of walk and conversation to them, as in the hands of Christ; and is as a glass to them to behold their own deformity, the impurity of their nature, the plague of their own hearts, and the imperfection of their obedience; by which they see the insufficiency of their own righteousness, how far they are from perfection, and what carnal creatures they are, when compared with this law: and as this serves to put them out of conceit with themselves, so it tends to make Christ and his righteousness more lovely and valuable in their esteem; who has wrought out a

righteousness as broad and as long as the law is, and by which it is magnified and made honourable, and has delivered them from its curse and condemnation. And this law is good as it is holy, in its author, nature, and use; and as it is just, requiring just things, and doing that which is just, by acquitting those who are interested in Christ's righteousness, and in condemning those that have no righteousness; and as it is a spiritual and perfect law, which reaches the spirit and soul of man, and is concerned with inward thoughts and motions, as well as outward actions; and especially the end of it, the fulfilling end of it is good, which is Jesus Christ, who was made under it, came to fulfil it, and has answered all the demands of it: so that it must be good, and which cannot be denied, *if a man use it lawfully*; for if it is used in order to obtain life, righteousness, and salvation by the works of it, or by obedience to it, it is used unlawfully: for the law does not give life, nor can righteousness come by it; nor are, or can men be saved by the works of it; to use the law for such purposes, is to abuse it, as the false teachers did, and make that which is good in itself, and in its proper use, to do what is evil; namely, to obscure and frustrate the grace of God, and make null and void the sufferings and death of Christ. A lawful use of the law is to obey it, as in the hands of Christ, the King of saints, and lawgiver in his church, from a principle of love to him, in the exercise of faith on him, without any mercenary selfish views, without trusting to, or depending on, what is done in obedience to it, but with a view to the glory of God, to testify our subjection to Christ, and our gratitude to him for favours received from him.

Ver. 9. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, &c.*] No man is naturally righteous since Adam, excepting the man Christ Jesus: some that are righteous in their own opinion, and in the esteem of others, are not truly and really so; none are righteous, or can be justified in the sight of God by the works of the law; those only are righteous men, who are made so through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them: and such a righteous man is here intended, who believes in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, who lays hold on Christ's righteousness, and receives it by faith; in consequence of which he lives soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without sin, since there is no such just man upon earth. Now for such a man the law was not made; which must be understood not of its original constitution and make, for it was certainly made for, and given to Adam, who was a righteous man, and was written upon his heart in a state of innocence; and who had a positive law made also for him, and given to him as a trial of his obedience to this: it was also delivered to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, who were, many of them, at least, righteous men; and besides all this, the law was made for Jesus Christ; he was the end, the mark, and scope at which it aimed, and for whose sake it was given to Israel, that he might be made under it, and fulfil it. Nor does this expression deny all use of the law to a righteous man, but only removes an unlawful use, and a wrong end of the law: it never was made with any such view as to obtain

righteousness by it; for, a righteous man, as Adam, in innocence, and all that are justified by Christ's righteousness, need it not for such a purpose, because they are already righteous; and sinners can never attain to righteousness by it, since it cannot give life unto them: it is made therefore not for the former with the view now mentioned, but for the latter, and that both for the restraining of sin, and punishing of sinners. The words *δικαιω νόμος η κηληται*, may be rendered, *the law does not lie upon a righteous man, or against him*. It does not lie as a weight or burden on him; its precept does not lie on him, as a task to be performed; nor does its penalty, the curse, lie on him as a punishment to be bore by him: it does not lie upon him, nor against him, as an accusing law, its mouth is stopped by the righteousness of Christ, by which he is denominated a righteous man; nor as a terrifying law, and bringing into bondage by its threats and menaces; nor as a rigorous law, obliging to obedience in a forcible and compulsive way; seeing there is no need of it, the righteous man delights in it, and cheerfully serves it, and the love of Christ constrains him to obey it freely. And much less does it lie on him, or against him as a cursing or condemning law, since Christ has redeemed him from the curse of it. *But for the lawless and disobedient*; by the *lawless* are meant, not the Gentiles, which were without the written law, but such who have it, and despise and reject it, and live not according to it, but transgress it: and the *disobedient* design such who are unsubjected to it: who are sons of Belial, children without the yoke; who cast the law of the Lord behind their backs; who are not, nor can they be subject to it, without the powerful and efficacious grace of God. Now the law lies upon, and against such persons, as an accusing, terrifying, cursing, and condemning law. *For the ungodly, and for sinners*; by the *ungodly* are intended, such as are without God in the world, who neither fear God, nor regard man, who neglect and despise the worship of God, and say to him, depart from us, Job xxi. 14, 15. and by *sinners* are designed notorious ones, who are exceeding great sinners, always sinning, making sin their constant business and employment; on and against these the law lies: *for unholy and profane*: such are unholy persons, who are destitute of inward principles of truth and holiness, and who live unholy lives and conversations; and *profane* persons are those who profane the name of the Lord by cursing and swearing, and who profane his day, doctrines, and ordinances, and live dissolute and profane lives, being abandoned to all sin and wickedness; these three couples of wicked men, expressed in general terms, seem to have respect greatly to the moral part of the four precepts of the decalogue, as the following particulars do to the other six: *for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers*; though there is no law that expressly mentions this, yet is beyond all doubt a breach both of the fifth and sixth commands; and if cursing parents, and disobedience to them, were punishable by the law with death, then much

more the murder of them; see Lev. xx. 9. Deut. xxi. 18. though the words will bear to be rendered, *for strikers of fathers, and strikers of mothers*; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render them, and against this there was an express law, Exod. xxi. 15. According to the Pompeian law, one guilty of parricide was to be sewed up in a sack with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and cast into the sea, or into a river^b: *for manslaughterers*, guilty of the murder of any man, which was always punishable with death, and was a breach of the sixth command; see Gen. ix. 6. Exod. xx. 13. and xxi. 12.

Ver. 10. *For whoremongers, &c.*] Fornicators and adulterers, who were transgressors of the seventh command, Exod. xx. 14. see Lev. xx. 10. these God will judge, and such shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone: *for them that defile themselves with mankind*; who are guilty of sodomy; such, according to the law, were to die, Lev. xviii. 22. and xx. 13. the wrath of God was revealed from heaven in a very visible and remarkable manner against this abomination, by raining fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and upon the cities of the plain, who defiled themselves in this way: *for men-stealers*; who decoyed servants or free men, and stole them away, and sold them for slaves; see the laws against this practice, and the punishment such were liable to, in Exod. xxi. 16. Deut. xxiv. 7. This practice was condemned by the Flavian law among the Romans¹, and was not allowed of among the Grecians²; the death with which such were punished was strangling, according to the Jews¹: *for liars*; who speak what is false, against their own knowledge and conscience, and with a design to deceive; who lie against their neighbours, and act falsely and deceitfully in trade and merchandise, as well as speak that which is not true; see Lev. vi. 2. *for perjured persons*; who take a false oath on any account, and bear false witness against their neighbour. Now upon, and against all, and each of these, the law lies, as an accusing, threatening, and cursing law: *and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine*; the law lies against it, takes notice of it, charges with it, condemns and punishes for it: by *sound doctrine* is meant the doctrine of the Gospel, which is in itself pure and incorrupt, and is the cause of soundness and health to others; 'tis health to the navel, and marrow to the bones; its doctrines are the wholesome words of Christ, and by them souls are nourished up unto eternal life; when the errors and heresies of men are in themselves rotten and corrupt, and also eat as do a canker. Here it may be observed, that there is an entire harmony and agreement between the Gospel and the law, rightly understood; and used; what is contrary to the one, is also to the other; the Gospel no more countenances sin than the law does; and whatever is repugnant to the Gospel is liable to be punished by the law.

Ver. 11. *According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, &c.*] For no doctrine is sound, but what is agreeable to that: this is a very great encomium of

^b Pompon. Lætus de Leg. Rom. p. 156.

¹ Ib. p. 154.

² Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 8. c. 3.

¹ Misna Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Geniba, c. 9. sect. 1.

the Gospel. The doctrine preached by the apostles was not only Gospel, or good news, and glad tidings, but the Gospel of God; of which he is the author, and which relates to his glory, the glory of all his perfections; which reveals his purposes, shews his covenant, and exhibits the blessings and promises of it; and is the Gospel of the blessed God, who is blessed in himself, and is the fountain of blessedness to others; and particularly he blesses his chosen ones with spiritual blessings, and which are set forth and declared in the Gospel; for which reason this epithet seems to be given to God here: and it is a glorious one; it discovers the glory of God, of his wisdom, grace, and love in the salvation of men; its doctrines of peace and pardon, righteousness and salvation by Jesus Christ, are glorious ones; and so are its promises, being great and precious, all yea and amen in Christ, absolute, unconditional, unchangeable, and irreversible; its ordinances also are glorious ones, being amiable and pleasant, and not grievous and burdensome to believers; and it is glorious in its effects, being the power of God unto salvation, the means of enlightening the blind, of quickening the dead, of delivering men from bondage and servitude, of turning men from sin and Satan to God, and of refreshing and comforting distressed minds, and of reviving the spirits of drooping saints, of establishing and strengthening them, and nourishing them up to eternal life. The apostle adds, *which was committed to my trust*: to distinguish this Gospel from another, from that of the false teachers, which was an inglorious one, and he had nothing to do with; and to shew the excellency and worth of it; it being valuable, was deserving of care and keeping, and was a depositum the person intrusted with was faithfully and carefully to keep and preserve.

Ver. 12. *And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, &c.*] The subject-matter of this thanksgiving being the apostle's call to the ministry of the word, and his furniture and fitness for it, shews, that whilst others were fond of being teachers, and called doctors of the law, he esteemed it an high honour and special favour bestowed upon him, that he was a preacher of the Gospel; and that all his gifts and abilities for it were not of himself, nor from men, but were owing to the free grace of God, and favour of Christ; wherefore he gloried not in them, as if he had not received them, but gives Christ the glory of them, and thanks to him for them; *who hath enabled me*: who gave him all his abilities for the preaching of the Gospel, and all that strength to perform the various parts of labour and service he was called unto, and all that firmness, resolution, and fortitude of mind he was endowed with, to bear and suffer what he did for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. *For that he counted me faithful*; not that he was so antecedent to the grace and gifts bestowed on him by Christ, or that Christ foresaw that he would be so, and therefore chose him for his service; but he counted him faithful, having made him so by his grace, and thus he kept him; faithfulness being a necessary requisite and qualification for a Gospel minister, he having a great trust committed to him, being made a steward of the manifold grace and mysteries of God: *putting me into the*

ministry. The ministry of the word, the work of the ministry, or preaching of the Gospel, the dispensation or administration of it to the sons of men; this he did not thrust himself into, nor take this honour to, and of himself; nor was he put into it by men, but was chosen to it of God, and called unto it by the spirit, and was placed in it by Christ himself, who in person appeared to him, and made a minister of him; see Rom. i. 1. Acts ix. 15. and xiii. 2. and xxvi. 16. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, *his ministry*, the ministry of Christ.

Ver. 13. *Who was before a blasphemer, &c.*] Of the name of Christ, contrary to which he thought he ought to do many things; and he not only blasphemed that name himself, calling him an impostor and a deceiver, but he compelled others to blaspheme it also, Acts xxvi. 9, 11. This, as well as what follows, is said, to illustrate the grace of God in his conversion, and call to the ministry: *and a persecutor*; for not content to speak evil of Christ, of his person, people, truths, and ordinances, he acted against them; not only breathed out against the disciples threatenings and slaughter, but did many evil things to them, and destroyed them which called on the name of Christ; persecuted Christ in his members, and them beyond measure, even unto death, Acts ix. 1, 5, 13, 21. and xxii. 4. Gal. i. 13. *And injurious*; not barely using contumelious and reproachful words of Christ, and his people, which is the sense of some versions, and seems to be included in the first character; but using force and violence, and doing injury, not only to the characters, but persons and properties of the saints, making havoc of the church, haling men and women out of their houses, and committing them to prison; and now it was that Benjamin ravined as a wolf, the apostle being of that tribe; see Acts viii. 3. Gen. xlix. 27. *But I obtained mercy*: the Vulgate Latin version reads, *the mercy of God*; God had mercy on him, unasked and unsought-for, as well as unmerited; God had mercy on him when he was in the career of his sin, and stopped him; and of his abundant mercy begat him again to a lively hope of forgiveness and eternal life; and through his great love quickened him, when dead in trespasses and sins; and according to the multitude of his tender mercies, forgave and blotted out all his iniquities; and put him openly among his children, his family and household; and to all this added the grace of apostleship: he put him into the ministry, and, of a blaspheming and injurious persecutor, made him a laborious, faithful, and useful preacher of the Gospel. *Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*. This is said, not as an extenuation of this sin, or as an excuse for himself; for this was not the apostle's method, since in the next verse he calls himself the chief of sinners; besides, ignorance is not an excuse but an aggravation of sin, especially when there are means of knowledge, and these are not attended to; and when persons are not open to conviction, and reject the fullest evidence, which was the case here: nor can unbelief be pleaded in such a man's favour, who heard what Stephen had to say; and though he could not resist his wisdom, received not the truth spoken by him, but consented to his death; moreover, all sins spring from ignorance, and are aggravated

by unbelief: but this phrase describes the apostle's state and condition; he was a poor, blind, ignorant bigot, an unbelieving and hardened creature, and so an object of mercy, pity, and compassion; and he who has compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, had compassion on him. He indeed did not know that Jesus was the Christ, or that his followers were the true church of God; he really thought he ought to do what he did, and that, in doing it, he did God good service; he had a zeal, but not according to knowledge; and therefore did not sin wilfully and maliciously against light, and knowledge, and conscience, and so not the sin against the Holy Ghost; as some of the Pharisees did, and therefore died without mercy, and were not capable subjects of mercy, and proper objects of it; nor is it ever extended to such: but this not being the case of the apostle, mercy was of sovereign good will and pleasure vouchsafed to him; his ignorance and unbelief were not a reason or cause of his obtaining mercy, which is always shewn in a sovereign way; but a reason, shewing, that that was mercy that was vouchsafed to him, since he was such an ignorant and unbelieving creature. It is a good note of Beza's on the place, *en merita preparationis quæ profert apostolus*; what works, merits, previous qualifications and preparations were there in the apostle, fitting him for the grace and mercy of God, seeing in the midst of his sins, and in the full pursuit of them, the grace of God laid hold upon him, and mercy was shewn him? there's nothing between his being a blasphemer, a persecutor, an injurious person, an ignorant unbeliever, and his obtaining mercy.

Ver. 14. *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, &c.*] That is, the love of Jehovah the father; so the Ethiopic version reads, *the grace of God*: of God the father, since he is distinguished in the text from Jesus Christ. God is abundant in grace and goodness; he is rich and plenteous in mercy; there is an overflow of love in his heart to his chosen people, and in conversion it flows out, and abounds and superabounds; see Rom. v. 20. *with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*; these are the effects of the love and favour of God displayed in conversion, or which the grace of God brings along with it, and implants in the soul at that time, as it did in the apostle; for by *faith* is not meant the faithfulness of God to his son, and to his covenant, oath, and promise, which now began visibly to be made good; nor the faith of the Gospel committed to the apostle's trust, which was an high favour; but the grace of faith, which is a pure gift of God, and a distinguishing instance of his grace; for all men have it not, only his elect; and is a most precious and excellent grace, and of great use and importance: it receives every blessing from Christ, and gives him all the glory; through it much peace, joy, and comfort are enjoyed here, and with it is connected eternal life and salvation hereafter: and by *love* also is meant, not the love with which God loves his people, for that is designed by the grace of our Lord, though there is a very great display of that in conversion, which is a time of love; but the internal

grace of love, even love to God, to Christ, and to his people, which the apostle was before destitute of; but now instead of unbelief he had faith, and instead of rage and madness against Christ, and the saints, his soul was filled with love to both. The Arabic version reads, *with my faith, and my love*. The phrase, *which is in Christ Jesus*, denotes either that the spring of these graces is in Christ, and that they come from him, in whom all fulness dwells; or that he is the object of them, in which they centre, and on whom they are exercised, and particularly that love to the saints was shewn for his sake.

Ver. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, &c.*] This is said, lest it should be thought strange, or scarcely credible, that so great a sinner should be saved; as well as to give a summary of the glorious Gospel the apostle was intrusted with; and in opposition to fables, endless genealogies, and vain jangling, and contentions about the law. The doctrine of Christ's coming into the world, and of salvation by him, as it is the sum and substance of the Gospel, so it is a *faithful saying*; in which the faithfulness of God is displayed to himself, and the perfections of his nature, his holiness, justice, love, grace, and mercy; to his law, which is magnified, and made honourable; to his word of promise hereby fulfilled; and to his son in carrying him through the work: and the faithfulness of Christ is discovered herein, both to his father with whom, and to his friends for whom, he engaged to obtain salvation; and the faithfulness of ministers is shewn in preaching it, and of other saints in professing it, and abiding by it: it is a true saying, and not to be disputed or doubted of, but to be believed most firmly; it is certain that God the Father sent his Son into the world for this purpose; and Christ himself assures us, that he came for this end; his carriage to sinners, and his actions, testified the same; his works and miracles confirm it; and the numberless instances of sinners saved by him evince the truth of it: and it is *worthy of all acceptation*; or to be received by all sorts of persons, learned, or unlearned, rich or poor, greater or lesser sinners; and to be received in all ways, and in the best manner, as the word of God, and not man; with heartiness and readiness, and with love, joy, and gladness, and with meekness, faith, and fear, and by all means; for it is entirely true, absolutely necessary, and suitable to the case of all, and is to be highly valued and esteemed by those who do approve and accept of it. It is the Christian Cabala, or the evangelical tradition, delivered by the father to Christ, by him to his apostles, and by them to the saints, by whom it is cordially received. The apostle seems to allude to the Cabala of the Jews, their oral law, which they say^m was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, and by him to Joshua; and by Joshua to the elders; and by the elders to the prophets; and so from one to another to his times: but here he suggests, that if they would have a Cabala, here is one, that is firm, and true, and certain, and worthy to be received, whereas the Jewish one was precarious, yea, false and untrue. Indeed, sometimes the words of the prophets are so called by them; so that passage in Joel ii. 13. is called קבלהⁿ, *Cabala*, some-

^m Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

ⁿ Misn. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 1.

thing delivered and received; upon which one of their commentators has these words, "whatever a prophet commands the Israelites, makes known unto them, or exhorts them to, is a Cabala." And if a prophetic command or admonition, then surely such an evangelical doctrine, as follows, is entitled to this character, *that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*; Christ came into the world, being sent by his father, but not against his will, but with his free consent: he came voluntarily in the fulness of time into this sinful world, where he was ill treated; and this was not by local motion, or change of place, but by assumption of nature; and the end of it was, that he might be the Saviour of lost sinners, as all men are, both by Adam's sin, and their own transgressions; though he came not to save all, for then all would be saved, whereas they are not; and if he came to save them, he must have then so far lost his end; but he came to save sinners, of all sorts, even notorious sinners, the worst and chief of sinners: and the apostle instances in himself, *of whom I am chief*; or *first*; not that he was the first in time; Adam was the first man that sinned, though Eve was before him in the transgression: it is a most stupid notion, that some gave into from this passage, as if the soul of Adam passed from one body to another, till it came to Paul, and therefore he calls himself the first of sinners: but his meaning is, that he was the first in quality, or the greatest and chiefest of sinners, not only of those that are saved, but of all men, Jews or Gentiles; and this he said not hyperbolically, nor out of modesty, but from a real sense or apprehension he had of himself, and his sins, which were made exceeding sinful to him; or he was the chief of sinners, and exceeded all others in his way of sinning, in blaspheming the name of Christ, and persecuting his saints, otherwise his conversation was externally moral, and in his own, and in the opinion of others, blameless: he was no fornicator, adulterer, thief, extortioner, &c. but in the above things he went beyond all others, and was a ringleader in them; and the remembrance of these sins abode with him, and kept him humble all his days; he was always ready to acknowledge them, and express his vileness and unworthiness on account of them: hence he here says, *not of whom I was, but of whom I am chief*. Now such sinners, and all sorts of sinners, Christ came to save from all their sins, original and actual; from the law, its curse and condemnation; from the bondage of Satan, the evil of the world, and wrath to come, and from every enemy; and that, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, by fulfilling the law, bearing its penalty, offering himself a sacrifice for sin, thereby finishing it, making reconciliation for it, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness: and a great Saviour he is, and an only one; a full, suitable, able, and willing Saviour; a Saviour of the soul, as well as of the body, and of both with an everlasting salvation.

Ver. 16. *Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, &c.*] Though so great a sinner, and even the chief of sinners: *that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering*; not that the apostle was the

first that was converted upon Christ's coming to save sinners; for there were many converted before him, and very great sinners too, and he speaks of himself as one born out of due time; unless it can be thought that he was the first of the persecutors of the church, upon the death of Stephen, that was converted: but the word *first* is not an *adverb* of time, but a *noun* expressing the character of the apostle, as before; and the sense is, that in him, the first or chief of sinners, Jesus Christ exhibited an instance of his abundant long-suffering exercised towards his elect for their salvation; he waiting in the midst of all their sins and rebellions to be gracious to them; and of this, here was a full proof in the Apostle Paul: what long-suffering and patience were shewed, whilst he held the clothes of them that stoned Stephen, when he made havoc and haled men and women to prison, and persecuted them to death? and this was done, *for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*; either to those of his fellow-persecutors, or of others in that age, who should be made sensible of their sins, and by this instance and example of grace be encouraged to believe in Christ for life and salvation; or to all awakened and convinced sinners then, and in every age, who from hence may conceive hope of salvation in Christ for themselves, though ever so great sinners; since such patience and long-suffering were exercised towards, and such grace bestowed upon, one that had been a sinner of the first rank and size, yea, the chief of sinners: in him was delineated the grace of God, and in his conversion it was painted in its most lively colours; and a just representation is given of it, for the encouragement of the faith and hope of others in Christ. Christ is here represented as the object of faith; and true faith regards him, looks unto him, and deals with him for eternal life and salvation. Our countryman, Mr. Mede, thinks that the sense is, that the conversion of the Apostle Paul was a pattern of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day; and his thought seems to be a very good one: the apostle's conversion is a pledge and earnest of theirs, and shewed that God had not cast away all that people; and carries in it some likeness and agreement with theirs: as his, theirs will be in the midst of all their blindness and unbelief; and when they have filled up the measure of their sins; and they will be a nation born at once, suddenly, and by the immediate power and grace of God, without the ministry of the word, which they will not hear: thus they'll be converted as he was, and become as hearty lovers and friends of the Gentile churches.

Ver. 17. *Now unto the King eternal, &c.*] This doxology, or ascription of glory to God, on account of the grace bestowed upon the apostle, may be considered, either as referring to all the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one and only God; and to whom all the attributes of wisdom, power, eternity, immortality, or incorruptibleness, and invisibility, belong; and who are jointly concerned in the grace bestowed upon any of the sons of men. Or else to God the father, in agreement with a parallel place in Rom. xvi. 27. who is the only true God, in opposi-

tion to nominal and fictitious deities, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and to whom the several epithets here used may be unquestionably given: he has shewn his wisdom in the works of creation, providence, and grace; he is the everlasting King, or the King of ages, or of worlds; he is Maker of the worlds, and the Governor of them throughout all ages and generations; he only has immortality, and is the incorruptible God, and who is invisible, whose shape has never been seen, nor his voice heard: or else this may be thought to belong to Jesus Christ, since it is to him the apostle gives thanks for putting him into the ministry; and from him he obtained mercy, and received abundant grace; and he it was who came into the world to save sinners, and who shewed forth all long-suffering in him, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. upon which the apostle breaks out into this attribution of glory and honour, and which agrees with Jude 25. And every thing here said is applicable to him; he is the eternal King, whose is the kingdom of nature, providence, and grace; his throne is for ever and ever, and of his kingdom and government there is no end; he is *the King of ages*, as the phrase may be rendered, and so his kingdom is called מלכות כל העולמים, *the kingdom of all ages*, Psal. cxlv. 13. and which endures throughout all generations; and this distinguishes him from all other kings. Scarce any king ever reigned an age, but Christ has reigned, and will reign throughout all ages. No regard is here had, as some have thought, to the Æones of the Gnostics and Valentinians; but rather the apostle adopts a phrase into his doxology, frequently used by the Jews in their prayers, many of which begin after this manner; "blessed art thou, O Lord our God, מלך העולם רבון כל העולמים, *the king of the age, or world, &c.*" and *Other attributes and epithets follow, as immortal or incorruptible. Christ is the living God, and the living Redeemer; and though he died as man, he'll die no more, but ever lives to make intercession for his people, and to reign over them, and protect them: who also may be said to be invisible, who was so in his divine nature, till manifest in the flesh; and now in his human nature he is taken out of the sight of men, and is not to be beheld with bodily eyes by men on earth: and he is the only wise God; he is the only God, so the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, read; not to the exclusion of the Father or Spirit, but in opposition to all false deities, or those who are not by nature God: and he is the only wise God; who is wisdom itself, and of himself; and is the fountain of wisdom, both natural and spiritual, unto others; wherefore to him be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen. Christ is crowned with honour and glory, and he is worthy of it; and it becomes all men to honour the Son, as they do the Father: he is the brightness of his glory, and equal to him; and the glory of deity, of all the divine perfections, and works, and also worship, should be given him; as well as the glory of salvation, and of all the grace the sons of men partake of; and that not only now, but to all eternity.*

Ver. 18. *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy,*

&c.] After a digression the apostle had made concerning himself, his conversion, and call to the ministry, he returns to his former subject, and original design, and renews the charge he gave to Timothy; and which was not only an order to charge others to teach no other doctrine than that of the Gospel; but includes the charge of preaching it himself, and intends the glorious Gospel of the blessed God committed to his trust, and the whole form of sound words he had heard of him, and which he had charged him to keep pure and incorrupt: and this was done, according to the prophecies which went before on thee: by which are meant, not the prophecies of the Old Testament, though of these Timothy had a considerable share of knowledge from a child, and was hereby greatly qualified to have such a charge committed to him; but then these were not prophecies concerning him, but the Messiah, his person, office, kingdom, and grace: nor are any particular revelations made unto the Apostle Paul concerning Timothy intended, of which there is no account; the revelations and visions he had, related not to men, and their characters, but to doctrines; rather the testimonies of the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, and the good reports they made of him to the apostle, which promised and foreboded future usefulness, are designed; though it seems best of all to understand these prophecies of such as were delivered out by the prophets in the church, for such there were in those times; who, when Timothy was a child, or a youth, foretold that he would have great gifts bestowed upon him, and would be a very useful, diligent, laborious, and successful preacher of the Gospel; and therefore the apostle mentions these to stimulate him the more to the discharge of his work, that he might answer the prophecies concerning him: for he adds, *that thou by them mightest war a good warfare*; that is, that in consideration of the charge committed to him, and the prophecies that went before of him, he might be the more industrious to fulfil his ministry, which is signified by a warfare, in allusion to the service of the Levites, which is so called, Numb. viii. 24. with zeal and courage, faithfulness and integrity: for not that warfare is intended, which is common to all believers; who being enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation, and having on the whole armour of God, fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and are more than conquerors through him that has loved them: but that warfare, which is peculiar to the ministers of the word; whose business it is more especially to fight the good fight of faith, and as good soldiers of Christ, to endure hardness for the sake of him, and his Gospel; and who, besides the other enemies, have to do with false teachers; and their warfare lies in publishing and defending the Gospel of Christ, and in contending for it, and in the weakening of Satan's kingdom, and enlarging the kingdom of Christ; and for which the weapons of their warfare are peculiarly made, and are eminently succeeded; and when they are used to such good purposes, by the ministers of the Gospel, they war a good warfare.

Ver. 19. *Holding faith, and a good conscience, &c.]*

By *faith* is meant, not the grace of faith, but the doctrine of faith, a sense in which it is often used in this epistle; see ch. iii. 9. and iv. 1. and v. 8. and the *holding* of it does not intend a mere profession of it, and a retaining of that without wavering, which is to be done by all believers; but a holding it forth in the ministry of the word, in opposition to a concealing or dropping it, or any part of it; and a holding it fast, without wavering, and in opposition to a departure from it, or any cowardice about it, and against all opposers: to which must be added, *a good conscience*; the conscience is not naturally good, but is defiled by sin; and that is only good, which is sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thereby purged from dead works; the effect of which is an holy, upright, and becoming conversation; and which seems to be chiefly intended here, and particularly the upright conduct and behaviour of the ministers of the Gospel, in the faithful discharge of their work and office: see 2 Cor. i. 12. Heb. xiii. 18. to which may be added 1 Tim. iii. 9. *Which some having put away*; that is, a good conscience; and which does not suppose that they once had one, since that may be put away which was never had: the Jews, who blasphemed and contradicted, and never received the word of God, are said to put it from them, Acts xiii. 46. where the same word is used as here; and signifies to refuse or reject any thing with detestation and contempt: these men always had an abhorrence to a good conscience among men, and to a good life and conversation, the evidence of it; and at length threw off the mask, and dropped the faith they professed, as being contrary to their evil conscience: though admitting it does suppose they once had a good conscience, it must be understood not of a conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ, but of a good conscience in external shew only, or in comparison of what they afterwards appeared to have: and besides, some men, destitute of the grace of God, may have a good conscience in some sense, or with respect to some particular facts, or to their general conduct and behaviour among men, as the Apostle Paul had whilst unregenerate, Acts xxiii. 1. and which being acted against, or lost, is no instance of falling from the true grace of God, which this passage is sometimes produced in proof of: *concerning faith have made shipwreck*; which designs not the grace, but the doctrine of faith, as before observed, which men may profess, and fall off from, and entirely drop and lose. Though supposing faith as a grace is meant, the phrase, *have made shipwreck* of it, is not strong enough to prove the total and

final falling away of true believers, could such be thought to be here meant; since persons may be shipwrecked, and not lost, the Apostle Paul was thrice shipwrecked, and each time saved; besides, as there is a true and unfeigned, so there is a feigned and counterfeit faith, which may be in persons who have no true grace, and may be shipwrecked, so as to be lost.

Ver. 20. *Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, &c.*] The former of these is mentioned in 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. and that part of faith he made shipwreck of, or erred in, was the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, whereby the faith of some nominal believers was overthrown; and this was attended with the putting away of a good conscience, he seemingly before had; for his profane and vain babblings increased to more ungodliness: the latter seems to be the same with Alexander the coppersmith, who did the apostle much evil, 2 Tim. iv. 14. and it may be is the same with him who was at Ephesus when the apostle was there, Acts xix. 33, 34. and where he might be now with Hymeneus, with whom he might agree in his erroneous opinions, and therefore are particularly mentioned, Ephesus being the place where Timothy now was. It seems by their names that they were both Greeks; Alexander is a known name among the Greeks, since the times of Alexander the great, and even became common among the Jews; see the note on Acts iv. 6. and Hymeneus was a name among the Grecians, from Hymen, the Heathen god of marriage: one of this name is mentioned among those said to be raised from the dead by Æsculapius[†]; there was also a bishop of Jerusalem of this name[†]. *Whom I have delivered to Satan*; not by excommunication, which is the act of a church, and not of a single person; but by an apostolical power he had of delivering the bodies of men into the hands of Satan, by him to be tortured and afflicted, in order to bring them to a sense of their sins, and as a chastisement and correction for them, and a token of God's displeasure at them; see the note on 1 Cor. v. 5. *That they may learn not to blaspheme*; or that being chastised, corrected, or disciplined, they might not blaspheme, as they had before done; either by words, contradicting, reviling, and scoffing at the doctrine of the resurrection; or by their unbecoming lives and conversations, giving themselves great liberty in sinning, supposing there was no truth in that doctrine; whereby they not only blasphemed the Christian religion themselves, but caused it to be evil-spoken of by others.

C H A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle exhorts to prayer for all sorts of men, gives rules and directions about the dress of women, and their subjection to their husbands; and concludes with some comfort to them. The apostle exhorts to prayer in the first place, directs to the several parts and branches of prayer, and points to the persons to be prayed for, and what should be prayed

for on their account, ver. 1, 2. And next follow the reasons or arguments engaging to it, which are taken from the agreeableness of it in the sight of God; from the will of God, that all men should be saved; from there being but one God of all, and one Mediator between God and men; from Christ's giving himself a ransom-price for all; and from the apostle being a

[†] Apollodorus de Orig. Deor. l. 3. p. 172.

[†] Euscb. Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 14. 30.

preacher of the Gospel to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. wherefore he concludes and determines, according to his apostolical power and authority, that prayer be made in any place, provided there were faith and purity, and wrath and doubting were laid aside, ver. 8. Also, he exhorts women to appear, especially in public service, in a modest and becoming dress, and to adorn themselves with good works, ver. 9, 10. and that they should be silent learners, and not teachers, and be in subjection to their husbands, ver. 11, 12. The reasons of which subjection are taken from the formation of Adam before Eve, and from Eve's being deceived, and not Adam, ver. 13, 14. However, for the comfort of women, it is observed, that though in sorrow they bring forth children, yet through the birth of a son, the promised Messiah, they shall be saved, who continue in faith, charity, and holiness, with sobriety, ver. 15.

Ver. 1. *I exhort therefore, that first of all, &c.*] The two principal parts of public worship, being the ministry of the word and prayer; and the apostle having insisted on the former, in the preceding chapter, in which he orders Timothy to charge some that they teach no other doctrine than that of the Gospel, gives an account of his own ministry, and call to it, and of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to his trust, and stirs up Timothy to the faithful and diligent discharge of his work and office; now proceeds to the latter, to prayer, and exhorts unto it; either Timothy in particular, for so read the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, *I exhort thee, or desire thee*; or else the church in general; unless it should rather be thought to be a charge to Timothy to exhort, and so Beza's Claromontane copy reads, *exhort thou therefore*: but it is commonly considered as an exhortation of the apostle's, which he was very urgent in: it was what lay much upon his mind, and he was greatly desirous that it should be attended unto; for so the words may be read, *I exhort first of all, or before all things*; of all things he had to say, this was the chief, or it was what he would have principally and chiefly done by others: for this does not so much regard the order of time, that prayer should be made early in the morning, in the first place, before any thing else is done, and particularly before preaching, which seems to have been the custom of the primitive saints, Acts iv. 31. but the pre-eminence and super-excellency of it; though the words may be rendered, *I exhort, that first, the supplications of all be made*: and so may regard public prayer, the prayer of the whole church, in distinction from private prayer, or the prayer of a single person; which is expressed by different words, *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks*: the first of these, *supplications*, signifies such petitions for things that are wanted by men, either by themselves or others; and that either for their bodies or souls, as food and raiment for the one, and discoveries of pardoning love, supplies of grace, spiritual peace, comfort, &c. for the other: and the second word, *prayers*, signifies good wishes and desires, directed and expressed to God for things that are in themselves to be wished for, and desired of God, either for ourselves or others: and the next word, *intercessions*, intends either complaints exhibited in prayer against others

that have done injuries; or prayers put up for others, either for the averting of evil from them, or for the bestowing some good thing on them: and the last word, *thanksgivings*, with which requests should always be made known to God, designs that branch of prayer in which thanks are given to God for mercies received, whether temporal or spiritual: and these are to be made for all men; not only for all the saints, for all the churches of Christ, and ministers of the Gospel; nor only for near relations and friends, according to the flesh; but for all the inhabitants of the country and city in which men dwell, the peace and prosperity of which are to be prayed for; yea, for enemies, and such as reproach, persecute, and despitefully use the saints, even for all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free, good men and bad men: for it cannot be understood of every individual that has been, is, or shall be in the world; millions of men are dead and gone, for whom prayer is not to be made; many in hell, to whom it would be of no service; and many in heaven, who stand in no need of it; nor is prayer to be made for such who have sinned the sin unto death, 1 John v. 16. besides, giving of thanks, as well as prayers, are to be made for all men; but certainly the meaning is not, that thanks should be given for wicked men, for persecutors, and particularly for a persecuting Nero, or for heretics, and false teachers, such as Hymeneus and Alexander, whom the apostle had delivered to Satan. But the words must be understood of men of all sorts, of every rank and quality, as the following verse shews.

Ver. 2. *For kings, and for all that are in authority, &c.*] For supreme governors, as the emperor of Rome, and kings of particular nations; and for all sub-governors, or inferior magistrates, as procurators or governors of provinces, and pro-consuls, and the like; all that were in high places, and acted under the authority of those that were supreme; these are particularly mentioned, the then governors, whether supreme or subordinate, who were avowed enemies, and violent persecutors of the saints; and it might be a scruple with some of them, whether they should pray for them, and therefore the apostle enjoins it; and this in opposition to the notions and practices of the Jews, who used to curse the Heathens, and pray for none but for themselves, and those of their own nation: *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty*; which does not merely design the end of civil government by kings and magistrates, which is to preserve the peace and quiet of the commonwealth; to protect the persons and properties of men, that they may possess their own undisturbed; and to secure to them their civil and religious rights and liberties, that they may have the free use and exercise of religion, signified by *all godliness*; and to encourage morality and virtue, expressed by *honesty*; and so is an argument for prayer, taken from the advantage of civil government: nor does this clause only point out the duty of saints to live peaceably under the government they are, and not disturb it; to mind only their religious exercises among themselves, and behave honestly and morally among men, as they generally speaking are, the quiet in the land; but also expresses the thing to be prayed for; and the sense is, that since the hearts

of kings are in the hands of the Lord, and he can turn them as he pleases, prayer should be made to him for them, that he would either convert them, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth, they now persecuted; or at least so dispose their hearts and minds, that they might leave off to persecute, and so saints might live peaceably under them, enjoy their religious liberty, and be encouraged in their moral conversation. The Arabic version renders it, *that they may be preserved*; that is, kings, and all in authority. It is a saying of R. Hananiah, or Ananias, the sagan of the priests, "pray for the peace or safety of the kingdom" (one of their commentators on it adds, even of the "nations of the world, which is remarkable, and agrees" with the exhortation of the apostle); for if there was "no fear of that, men would devour one another alive."

Ver. 3. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*] Not only to live peaceably and quietly under the government men are, since that is the ordination of God, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, which his grace teaches; but to pray for all sorts of men, and for those who are set in the highest place of government, even though enemies and persecutors: this is good in itself, and in the sight of an omniscient God, who sees not as man seeth; and it is acceptable unto him through Jesus Christ, by whom every sacrifice of prayer or praise is so; for by God our Saviour is meant God the father, who is the Saviour of all men, in a way of providence, and the Saviour of all the elect in a way of special grace; see the note on ver. 1.

Ver. 4. *Who will have all men to be saved, &c.*] The salvation which God wills that all men should enjoy, is not a mere possibility of salvation, or a mere putting them into a salvable state; or an offer of salvation to them; or a proposal of sufficient means of it to all in his word; but a real, certain, and actual salvation, which he has determined they shall have; and is sure from his own appointment, from the provision of Christ as a Saviour for them, from the covenant of grace, in which every thing is secured necessary for it, and from the mission of Christ to effect it, and from its being effected by him: wherefore the will of God, that all men should be saved, is not a conditional will, or what depends on the will of man, or on any thing to be performed by him, for then none might be saved; and if any should, it would be of him that willeth, contrary to the express words of Scripture; but it is an absolute and unconditional will respecting their salvation, and which infallibly secures it: nor is it such a will as is distinguishable into antecedent and consequent; with the former of which it is said, God wills the salvation of all men, as they are his creatures, and the work of his hands; and with the latter he wills, or not wills it, according to their future conduct and behaviour; but the will of God concerning man's salvation is entirely one, invariable, unalterable, and unchangeable; nor is it merely his will of approbation or complacency, which expresses only what would be grateful and well-pleasing, should it be, and which is not always fulfilled; but it is his ordaining, purposing, and determining will, which is never resisted, so as

to be frustrated, but is always accomplished: the will of God, the sovereign and unfrustrable will of God, has the governing sway and influence in the salvation of men; it rises from it, and is according to it; and all who are saved God wills they should be saved; nor are any saved, but whom he wills they should be saved: hence by all men, whom God would have saved, cannot be meant every individual of mankind, since it is not his will that all men, in this large sense, should be saved, unless there are two contrary wills in God; for there are some who were before ordained by him unto condemnation, and are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; and it is his will concerning some, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned; nor is it fact that all are saved, as they would be, if it was his will they should; for who hath resisted his will? but there is a world of ungodly men that will be condemned, and who will go into everlasting punishment: rather therefore all sorts of men, agreeably to the use of the phrase in ver. 1. are here intended, kings and peasants, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, young and old, greater and lesser sinners; and therefore all are to be prayed for, even all sorts of men, because God will have all men, or all sorts of men, saved; and particularly the Gentiles may be designed, who are sometimes called the world, the whole world, and every creature; whom God would have saved, as well as the Jews, and therefore Heathens, and Heathen magistrates, were to be prayed for as well as Jewish ones. Moreover, the same persons God would have saved, he would have also come to the *knowledge of the truth*; of Christ, who is the truth, and to faith in him, and of all the truth of the Gospel, as it is in Jesus; not merely to a notional knowledge of it, which persons may arrive unto, and not be saved, but a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it; and all that are saved are brought to such a knowledge, which is owing to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, who hides the knowledge of Gospel truths from the wise and prudent, and reveals them to babes: whence it appears, that it is not his will with respect to every individual of mankind; that they should thus come to the knowledge of the truth; for was it his will they should, he would, no doubt, give to every man the means of it, which he has not, nor does he; he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, and overlooked their times of ignorance, and sent no message nor messenger to inform them of his will; he gave his word to Jacob, and his statutes unto Israel only; and the Gospel is now sent into one part of the world, and not another; and where it does come, it is hid to the most; many are given up to strong delusions to believe a lie, and few are savingly and experimentally acquainted with the truths of the Gospel; though all that are saved are brought to the knowledge of such truths as are necessary to salvation; for they are chosen to it through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.

Ver. 5. *For there is one God, &c.*] This does not so much regard the unity of God, with respect to himself, or his divine essence, though that is a truth; but does not carry in it any apparent and forcible reason

* Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 2.

* Ba. tenora in Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 2.

why all men should be prayed for, for which it is produced; but the unity of God with respect to men, as that there is but one God, who is the Creator of all men, and who, in a providential way, is the Saviour of all men; and in a way of special grace is the one God, the one covenant-God of all sorts of men, of Jews and Gentiles; for he has taken of the latter into the covenant of his grace, as well as the former, and has loved them with a special and distinguishing love, has chosen them in Christ to salvation, and has sent his son to redeem them; and of these he calls by his grace, regenerates, sanctifies, adopts, pardons, and justifies; see Rom. iii. 29, 30. and therefore all sorts of men, Gentiles as well as Jews, are to be prayed for: another argument follows, *and one Mediator between God and men*; a Mediator is of more than one, and has to do with two parties; and these at variance among themselves, between whom he stands as a middle person; his business is to bring them together, and make peace between them; and such an one is Christ: the two parties are God and his elect, who in their nature-state are at a distance from God, and at enmity to him, and who have broken his law, and affronted his justice; Christ stands as a middle person, a day's man between them, and lays his hands upon them both; has to do with things pertaining to the glory of God, and makes reconciliation for the sins of the people; brings them that were afar off nigh to God, and makes peace for them by the blood of his cross, by fulfilling the law, and satisfying justice for them; in consequence of this he appears for them in the court of heaven, intercedes and pleads for them, is their advocate, and sees that all covenant-blessings, of which he is the Mediator, are applied unto them, and preserves their persons, which are committed to his care and charge, safe to everlasting happiness; and this Mediator is *the man Christ Jesus*; not that he is a mere man, for he is truly and properly God; or that he is a Mediator only according to the human nature: it was proper indeed that he should be man, that he might have something to offer, and that he might be capable of obeying, suffering, and dying, and so of making satisfaction in the nature that had sinned; but then, had he not been God, he could not have drawn nigh to God on the behalf of men, and undertook for them, and much less have performed; nor would his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, have been available to cleanse from sin, to procure the pardon of it, justify from it, make atonement for it, or make peace with God: the reason why he is particularly mentioned as man, is, with a view to the argument in hand, praying for all men; since he who is the Mediator between God and man, has assumed a nature which is common to them all: and this Mediator is said to be one, not so much in opposition to other mediators, angels or saints departed, though it is a truth, and stands full against them, but with respect to men; there is but one Mediator between God and all sorts of men, through whom both Jews and Gentiles have an access to God, and peace with him; and therefore prayer through this Mediator

should be made for all. So the Jews say of the Messiah ², that he is אֵל מְדַבֵּר, *a Mediator, God*, a middle person between God and men. And they call him עַמּוּדָא מְדַבְרָא, *the Pillar of mediation* ³, or the middle Pillar; that is, the Mediator or Reconciler. And Philo ⁴ the Jew speaks of the word, as *μσσος*, a middle person, and standing in the middle between the dead and the living, and between God and men. The Ethiopic version here renders it, *there is one elect of God*: which is one of the characters of the Messiah, Isa. xlii. 1.

Ver. 6. *Who gave himself a ransom for all, &c.* What the Mediator gave as a ransom for men is *himself*, his body and his soul, which were both made an offering for sin; and his life, which is the result of union between soul and body; his whole human nature as in union with his divine person, and so might be truly said to be himself: this he gave into the hands of men, of justice and of death; and that voluntarily, which shews his great love to his people; and also as a *ransom*, or a ransom-price for them, ἀνταλλάξον, in their room and stead; to ransom them from the slavery of sin, and damnation by it, from the captivity of Satan, and the bondage of the law, and from the grave, death, hell, ruin, and destruction: and this ransom was given for all; not for every individual of mankind, for then all would be delivered, freed, and saved, whereas they are not; or else the ransom-price is paid in vain, or God is unjust to receive a sufficient ransom-price from Christ, and yet not free the captive, but punish the person for whom he has received satisfaction; neither of which can be said. But the meaning is, either that he gave himself a ransom for many, as in Matt. xx. 28. for the Hebrew word כָּל, to which this answers, signifies sometimes many, a multitude, and sometimes only a part of a multitude, as Kimchi observes ⁵: or rather it intends that Christ gave himself a ransom for all sorts of men, for men of every rank and quality, of every state and condition, of every age and sex, and for all sorts of sinners, and for some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, for both Jews and Gentiles; which latter may more especially be designed by all, as they are sometimes by the world, and the whole world; and so contains another argument why all sorts of men are to be prayed for, since the same ransom-price is given for them; as that for the children of Israel was the same, for the rich as for the poor. We ² read, that when the people of Israel comforted the high-priest upon the death of his wife, or any relation, they used to say to him, אָנֹכִי כִפְרָתְךָ, *we are thy atonement*, expiation, or ransom; that is, as the commentators ³ explain it, by us thou shalt be atoned, for we will be in thy room and stead, with respect to all things that shall come upon thee; but here the High-priest and Mediator is the atonement and ransom for the people: *to be testified in due time*; or a *testimony in his own times*; that is, the sum and substance of what is before said is the Gospel, which is a testimony concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ, exhibited in the times of the Messiah, or the Gospel dispensation. Some copies read, *the mystery*, which is

¹ R. Albo, Sepher Ikkarim, orat. 2. c. 28.

² Sepher Jetzira, p. 126.

³ Quis rerum divina. Hæres, p. 508, 509, 510.

⁴ Sepher Shorash. rad. לָלַךְ.

⁵ Misna Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1.

⁶ Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

another word often used for the Gospel; for that that is intended, appears by what follows.

Ver. 7. *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, &c.*] He was ordained or appointed to be a preacher of the Gospel from all eternity, and was separated or set apart unto it in time, and was put into the ministry of it by Christ himself, and was not a common or ordinary preacher of the word, but an apostle, an extraordinary officer in the Gospel church. *I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not*; which are a sort of an oath, or an appeal to Christ the omniscient God, for the truth of what he said, concerning his ordination to the Gospel; see a like phrase in Rom. ix. 1. The phrase, *in Christ*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in three of Beza's ancient copies, and in some others, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; *a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity*; the Gospel of the uncircumcision, or which was to be preached to the uncircumcised Gentiles, was committed to this apostle; and his work and ministry lay among them, and therefore he is called the apostle of the Gentiles: and so he was *in faith and verity*; which may regard the subject-matter of his teachings and ministry; it was the faith and truth of the Gospel, even the whole of it, the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and the truth as it is in Jesus; or else the character of the apostle, as a teacher, that he was a true and faithful one, who with all integrity and veracity, fully and faithfully preached the Gospel; and since he was appointed a teacher of it to the Gentiles, this is another argument why they, as well as the Jews, should be prayed for.

Ver. 8. *I will therefore that men pray everywhere, &c.*] In this declaration of the apostle's will concerning prayer, he only takes notice of *men*; not but that it is both the duty and privilege of women, as well as men, to pray in their houses and closets; but because he is speaking of public prayer in the church, which only belongs to men, he speaks only of them; and his will is, that prayer should be performed by them everywhere, or in any place, in any part of the world where they lived. Now was the prophecy in Mal. i. 11. fulfilled, and now was the time come our Lord refers to, John iv. 21. This seems to be said in opposition to a Jewish notion, that the temple at Jerusalem was the only place for prayer, and that prayer made elsewhere ought to be directed towards that. The Jews say^b, that "there is no way for the prayers of the nations of the world to ascend, seeing the gates of heaven are only opened in the land of Israel."—And again, that the prayers without the land have "no way to go up before the Lord, but the Israelites send them without the land over-against Jerusalem; and when they come to Jerusalem, from thence they remove, and ascend above.—No prayer ascends above from that place in which it is made, till it come to the land of Israel, and from thence to Jerusalem, and from thence to the sanctuary, and then it ascends above." They have also many rules con-

cerning places of private prayer, as that care should be taken that it be not in a place where there is any filth, or any bad scent^c. *Lifting up holy hands*: lifting up of hands was a prayer-gesture among the Heathens^d, and so it was among the Jews^e. R. Simeon lift up his hands in prayer to the blessed God, and prayed his prayer. Yea, they say, "it is forbidden a man to lift up his hands above, except in prayer, and in blessings to his Lord, and supplications, as it is said, Gen. xiv. 22. which is interpreted of lifting up of hands in prayer." And this was an emblem of the elevation of the heart in prayer to God, without which the former would be of little avail. It is an observation of the Jews^f, we have found prayer without lifting up of hands, but we never found lifting up of hands without prayer. And these hands must be holy and pure; there must be purity of heart, and cleanness of hands, or a freedom from any governing sin, which renders prayer unacceptable unto God; see Isa. i. 15, 16. The apostle alludes to a custom of the Jews, who always used to wash their hands before prayer; see Judith xii. 7, 8. So it is said^g of the Septuagint interpreters, that after the Jewish manner they washed their hands and prayed. The account Maimonides gives^h, is this: "cleanness of hands, how is it done? a man must wash his hands up to the elbow, and after that pray; if a man is on a journey, and the time of prayer is come, and he has no water, if there is between him and water four miles, which are eight thousand cubits, he may go to the place of water, and wash, and after that pray. If there is between him more than that, he may rub his hands, and pray. But if the place of water is behind him, he is not obliged to go back but a mile; but if he has passed from the water more than that, he is not obliged to return, but he rubs his hands and prays; they do not make clean for prayer but the hands only, in the rest of prayers, except the morning-prayer; but before the morning-prayer a man washes his face, his hands and feet, and after that prays." But, alas! what does all this washing signify? Unless, as Philo the Jewⁱ, expresses it, a man lifts up pure, and, as one may say, virgin hands, to heaven, and so prays. *Without wrath and doubting*; or reasoning, or disputation in a contentious way: the former of these, some think, has reference to *mur-muring*, as the Ethiopic version renders it, impatience and complaint against God in prayer, and the other to doubt and diffidence about being heard, and having the petitions answered; for prayer ought to be with praise to God, and faith in him: or rather *wrath* may intend an angry and unforgiving temper towards men, with whom prayer is made, which is very unbecoming; see Matt. v. 23, 24. and vi. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 7. and both that and doubting, or disputation, may have regard to those heats and contentions that were between the Jews and Gentiles, which the apostle would have laid aside, and they join together in prayer, and in other parts of public worship, in love and peace. Maimonides^j says, "men may not stand praying, either with laughter,

^b Shaare Ora, fol. 24. 2. 3.

^c Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 9, 9.

^d Apuleius de Mundo, p. 276.

^e Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2.

^f lb. in Numb. fol. 79. 1

^g T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 67. 2.

^h Arist. Hist. 70. p. 98.

ⁱ Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 2, 3.

^j De Charitate, p. 698. Vid. ib. de Victim. Offerent. p. 848.

^k Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 18.

" or with levity, nor with confabulation, nor with contention, nor with anger, but with the words of the law." And it is a saying of R. Chanina, "in a day of wrath, a man may not pray."

Ver. 9. *In like manner also, &c.*] Let the women pray likewise; though they are not to lead in prayer, or be the mouth of the church, which would be indecent, yet they are to join with the church in public prayer; see Acts i. 14. and in like manner as the men, with purity of heart and hand, without murmuring and impatience towards God, and without wrath and anger towards others, and in faith, without doubting and distrust: and the apostle proceeds to point out what sort of dress he would have them appear in at the time of prayer, and at any part of public worship; and thus the Ethiopic version renders it, *so let the women be clothed in prayer*, namely, as follows; *that women adorn themselves in modest apparel*: the word rendered *apparel* signifies a long robe, which reaches down to the feet; and the word translated *modest* signifies that which is clean, neat, and decent, yea, beautiful and ornamental; and the sense of the apostle is, that he would not have them to come to public worship in rags, and in dirty and filthy garments, but that their bodies should be covered with clean and decent raiment; so the Israelites washed their clothes that they might be ready to meet the Lord at Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 14. The Jews always appeared in their best clothes on the sabbath-day; this is one of their rules: "for the honour of the sabbath, every man must be clothed, כסות נקייה, *with clean or neat apparel* and clothing on the week-day must not be as clothing on the sabbath-day; and if a man can make no change, he must let down his *talith* (or upper garment, his cloak); so that his clothing may not be as the clothing of the week-days, when that was girt up about him." The apostle adds, *with shamefacedness and sobriety*: these are the two general rules by which dress is to be regulated; it is right and proper, when it is consistent with chastity, when it is not immodest and impudent, and more like the attire of an harlot than of a woman professing godliness; and when it is moderate as well as modest, and suitable to a person's age and station, and is not beyond the circumstances of life in which they are. There is no religion or irreligion in dress, provided pride and luxury are guarded against, and modesty and moderation preserved. *Not with broided hair, or plaited*, as in 1 Pet. iii. 3. see the note there. The Jews had women on purpose for this business; Mary Magdalene is thought to have her name from hence; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 56. *Or gold, or pearls, or costly array*: not that the apostle forbids all use or wear of such things by proper persons, whose circumstances would admit of it, and upon proper occasions, and at proper times: certain it is, that ear-rings and bracelets of gold, and jewels set in silver and gold, and raiment, costly raiment, were sent by Abraham, and given to Rebekah, and wore by her, who was a woman professing godliness: so the church in Psal. xlv. 9, 13, 14. though in figurative expressions, yet in allusion to what is literal, and honourable, and com-

mendable, is said to be in gold of Ophir, and her clothing to be of wrought gold, and to be brought to the king in raiment of needle work: but however justifiable such a dress may be at other seasons, the apostle judged it very improper at the time of public prayer, or at the time of public worship; seeing it might swell the heart of the wearer with pride, so as to forget herself and the business she was come about, and draw the eyes of others upon her; and so cause a general inattention. It was a complaint of Chrysostom's many hundreds of years ago, that some who came to public worship, appeared in such a dress, as if they came rather to dance than to pray; such apparel should be avoided: it is said of Pythagoras^a, that he taught the inhabitants of Crotona, the men literature, and the women chastity and modesty; and by his disputations so far prevailed upon the latter, as to lay aside their garments of gold and other ornaments of their dignity, as instruments of luxury; all which they brought into the temple of Juno, and dedicated them to that goddess; declaring, that shamefacedness or chastity, and not garments, are the true ornaments of matrons.

Ver. 10. *But (which becometh women professing godliness), &c.*] By which is meant not any particular grace, was it, the fear of God might be designed, and so the Syriac version renders it; nor the whole of internal religion only; nor the form of godliness, or the whole scheme of Gospel truth, which is according to godliness; nor only outward holiness of life and conversation; but the whole of all this, all religion, internal and external, the whole of godliness, both in a doctrinal and in a practical way. All this, these women the apostle gives directions unto, had made a profession of, and had been baptized upon it, and received members of churches; and as yet held their profession: and such persons, it best became them not so much to adorn themselves with any outward adornings, as *with good works*: such as are mentioned in ch. v. 10. see 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4, 5. Good works are like good clothes, to which the apostle alludes; they don't make persons men and women, but they adorn them as such; so good works, they don't make men and women Christians, or believers, but they adorn them as such; they are ornaments to their persons, and to their profession, and to the Gospel they profess. See Tit. ii. 10.

Ver. 11. *Let the woman learn in silence, &c.*] The apostle goes on to give some other instructions to women, how they should behave themselves in public worship, in the church of God; he would have them be learners and not teachers, sit and hear, and learn more of Christ, and of the truth of the Gospel, and to maintain good works; and he would have them learn in silence, and not offer to rise and speak, under a pretence of having a word from the Lord, or of being under an impulse of the spirit of the Lord, as some frantic women have done; and if they should meet with any thing, under the ministry of the word, they did not understand, or they had an objection to, they were not to speak in public, but ask their own husbands at home; see 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. And thus, they were to behave *with all subjection*; both to the ministers of

^a T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 65. 1.

^a Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat. c. 30. sect. 3.

^b Justin. ex Trogo. l. 20. c. 4.

the word, and to their own husbands; obeying from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to them; and submitting cheerfully to the ordinances of Christ; the whole of which is a professed subjection to the Gospel, and which becomes all professing godliness.

Ver. 12. *But I suffer not a woman to teach, &c.* They may teach in private, in their own houses and families; they are to be teachers of good things, Tit. ii. 3. They are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; nor is the law or doctrine of a mother to be forsaken, any more than the instruction of a father; see Prov. i. 8. and xxxi. 1, 2, 3, 4. Timothy, no doubt, received much advantage, from the private teachings and instructions of his mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois; but then women are not to teach in the church; for that is an act of power and authority, and supposes the persons that teach to be of a superior degree, and in a superior office, and to have superior abilities to those who are taught by them: *nor to usurp authority over the man*; as not in civil and political things, or in things relating to civil government; and in things domestic, or the affairs of the family; so not in things ecclesiastical, or what relate to the church and government of it; for one part of rule is to feed the church with knowledge and understanding; and for a woman to take upon her to do this, is to usurp an authority over the man: this therefore she ought not to do, *but to be in silence*; to sit and hear quietly and silently, and learn, and not teach, as in ver. 11.

Ver. 13. *For Adam was first formed, &c.* Immediately by God, out of the dust of the earth; and the breath of life was breathed into him, and he became a living soul; thus wonderfully and fearfully was he made; after this he was put into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and all creatures were brought to him, to give them names; and still an help-meet or a companion was not found for him. All this while Eve was not as yet formed, but after this, *then Eve*. She was formed out of him, was made out of one of his ribs; and was formed for him, for his use, service, help and comfort; and here lies the strength of the apostle's reason, why the woman should be in subjection to the man; not so much because he was made before her; for so were the beasts of the field before Adam; and yet this gave them no superiority to him; but because she was made out of him, and made for him, see 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. So that the woman's subjection to the man is according to the laws of nature and creation; and was antecedent to the fall; and would have been, if that had never been; though that brought her into a lower, and meaner, and more depressed estate; which the apostle next mentions. The words may be rendered, *the first Adam*, or *Adam the first was formed, and then Eve*. See 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.

Ver. 14. *And Adam was not deceived, &c.* There is no need to say with interpreters, that he was not deceived first; and that he was not deceived immediately by the serpent, but by Eve; and that he is never said in Scripture to be deceived, as Melchizedech is never

said to have a father or mother. The apostle's positive assertion is to be taken without any such limitations or qualifications; Adam never was deceived at all; neither by the serpent, with whom he never conversed; nor by his wife, he knew what he did, when he took the fruit of her, and ate; he ate it not under any deception, or vain imagination, that they should not die, but should be as gods, knowing good and evil. He took and ate out of love to his wife, from a fond affection to her, to bear her company, and that she might not die alone; he knew what he did, and he knew what would be the consequence of it, the death of them both; and inasmuch as he sinned wilfully, and against light and knowledge, without any deception, his sin was the greater; and hereby death came in, and passed on all men, who sinned in him: *but the woman being deceived was in the transgression*; and the serpent really beguiled her; she owned it herself, Gen. iii. 13. And this is elsewhere said of her, 2 Cor. xi. 2. which never is of Adam. She really thought the serpent spoke truth, that she and her husband should not die, if they ate of the fruit; but that it was good to make them wise; and that, upon eating it, they should be as gods, knowing good and evil; and under this deception she fell into the transgression, and was the cause and means, by her persuasions and example, of bringing her husband into the same sin; which involved him and all his posterity in ruin and destruction. And therefore she is called by the Jews אִמַּת הַחַיִּים, *the mother of iniquity* and sin; to which they refer, Psal. li. 5. And they say, "she was the cause of death to Adam, and to all the world: see the note on Rom. v. 12. And they observe ' the order of the punishment of the serpent, Eve, and Adam, as of their sin; the serpent was first accursed, then Eve, and last of all Adam. They say "Samael (the devil) could not subvert Adam, till the serpent came and turned the heart of Eve, and Eve turned his heart, and they both sinned; wherefore it is said, *the woman which thou gavest me*; Samael had no power to turn him, till Eve came, and she was the cause of his eating." Now inasmuch as the serpent did not attack Adam, he being the stronger and more knowing person, and less capable of being managed and seduced; but made his attempt on Eve, in which he succeeded; and since not Adam, but Eve, was deceived, it appears that the man is the more proper person to bear rule and authority, as in civil and domestic, so in ecclesiastical affairs; and it is right for the woman to learn, and the man to teach: and seeing that Eve was the cause of transgression to Adam, and of punishment to him and his posterity, the subjection of the woman to the man was confirmed afresh; and she was brought into a more depressed state of dependence on him, and subjection to him; see Gen. iii. 16. The Ethiopic version renders the text, *Adam hath not deceived, the woman hath deceived and pervaricated*.

Ver. 15. *Notwithstanding she shall be saved, &c.* Not Eve, though no doubt she is saved; since she had a sense of her sin, and shame for it, a revelation of

^p Tzeror Hammor, fol. 141. 3.

^q T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 5. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3. Caphtor, fol. 37. 2.

^r T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 18. 1. & Taanit, fol. 15. 2. Ereschit Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 17. 1.

^s Midrash Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3.

the Messiah to her, and faith in him; see Gen. iii. 7, 8, 15. and iv. 2. But rather any woman, particularly such as profess godliness, who shall be saved *in child-bearing*: which is to be understood not of a temporal salvation, or being saved through child-bearing, through the perilous time, and be delivered out of it; for though this is generally the case, yet not always, nor always the case of good women. Rachel died in child-bed: the Jews say¹, for three transgressions women die in child-bearing; because they don't take care of their menstres, and of the cake of the first-fruits, and of lighting the lamp (when the sabbath approaches). But spiritual and eternal salvation is here meant; not that bearing children is the cause, condition, or means of salvation; for as this is not God's way of salvation, so it confutes the salvation of women to child-bearing ones; and which must give an uneasy reflection to maidens, and women that never bore any; but rather the meaning is, that good women shall be saved, notwithstanding their bearing and bringing forth children in pain and sorrow, according to the original curse, in Gen. iii. 16. And so the words administer some comfort to women, in their present situation of subjection and sorrow; though they may be rendered impersonally thus, *notwithstanding there is salvation through the birth of a son*: and the sense is, that notwithstanding the fall of man by the means of the woman, yet there is salvation for both men and women, through the birth of Immanuel, the child born, and son given; at whose birth, the angels sung peace on earth, good will to men; through the

true Messiah, the seed of the woman, through the incarnate Saviour, who was made of a woman, there is salvation for lost sinners: he was born of a woman, and came into the world in order to obtain salvation for them; and he has effected it, and it is in him, for all such who apply to him for it; and with it all true believers, men and women, shall be saved through him, *if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness, with sobriety*. The Vulgate Latin version reads in the singular, *if she continues*, &c. but the sense is the same; for the *she*, or woman, is to be taken in a collective sense, as it is in the context, for many women; even for such as profess faith and godliness. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the words, *she shall be saved by her children, if they continue*, &c. *i. e.* she shall be saved by bearing of children, and bringing of them up in a religious way; if they, the children, continue as they were brought up; which is a very strange rendering of the words, and is as strange an interpretation of them; and yet is what many have given into, but needs no confutation. The meaning of the words is, that there is salvation through the incarnate Messiah, for all sorts of persons; for all men and women who believe in him, with that faith which works by love, and shews itself in holiness and sobriety; provided that they continue herein. For there are some that profess these things, that have only a temporary faith, and feigned love, and not true holiness; and these fall away, and are not saved; but such who have these graces in truth, as they do, and shall continue in them, so they shall certainly be saved.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle treats of the qualifications of officers of churches, bishops and deacons, and of their wives; and points at the principal reason of writing this epistle to Timothy: and first, he commends the office of a bishop, as a good and desirable one; and asserts it to be such in the strongest manner, ver. 1. and then follow the qualifications for it, some of which are of the economical or domestic kind, and regard him as an husband and parent, and the head of the family; others of a moral nature, and relate to sobriety, hospitality, temperance, patience, and liberality; and others of the ecclesiastical sort, as aptness to teach, and that he should not be a novice in religion; and in general, that he should be a man of a blameless life, and of good report in the world, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. next an account is given of the qualifications of deacons; some which concern their moral character; others their soundness in the faith; and others their domestic affairs, and their conduct in their families; about which they should be first examined, before they were put into their office; the characters of their wives are also given; and for their encouragement in the faithful performance of their office, it is observed, that they hereby obtain a good degree of honour and boldness in the faith of Christ, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. And the end of the apostle's writing this

epistle, and particularly of giving Timothy this account of the qualifications of the officers of the church of God, is, that he might know whom to appoint over it, and how to conduct himself in it; which he commends from its being the house of God, the church of the living God, and the pillar and ground of truth, ver. 14, 15. Of which truth he gives a summary, in several particulars of it, which open the great mystery of godliness, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *This is a true saying*, &c.] Some think this clause belongs to the last verse of the preceding chapter; and then the sense is, this is a doctrine that is true, and to be believed, that there is salvation through the birth of a son, or through the incarnate son of God, for men and women that believe in him, and continue in the faith of him, and love to him, joined with works of righteousness and holiness. And so the same phrase seems to belong to what goes before in ch. iv. 8, 9. and 2 Tim. ii. 10, 11. Though it regards what follows in ch. i. 15. and so it seems that it should be considered here; and is used to excite attention, and suggests that what was about to be said was of moment and importance, and what was without controversy, and unquestionably true. The apostle, having denied to women the work and office of teaching, proceeds to observe, that though this be-

¹ Misn. Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 6.

longed to men, yet not to every man; and therefore he gives the qualifications of such; which might serve as a direction to churches, in the choice of them; as well as be a means of stirring up persons in such an office, to a proper regard to themselves and their work: *if a man desire the office of a bishop*: which is the same with that of a pastor or elder; and so here the Syriac version renders it, *if a man desires presbytery, or eldership*; and it lies in preaching the word, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, and taking care of the discipline of the church, and in the visiting, inspection, and oversight of it; as the word *ἐπισκοπία, episcopacy*, here used, signifies; and this work and office may be lawfully and laudably desired, with a view to the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls. Nor should any undertake it, but such who find in themselves an hearty desire, and inclination to it, on such principles, and a real delight and pleasure in it; and such an one *he desireth a good work*: the office of a bishop, elder, or pastor of a church, is a work, and a very laborious one; wherefore such are called labourers in the word and doctrine: it is not a mere title of honour, and a place of profit, but it is a business of labour and care; yet a good one, a famous and excellent one; it being an employment in things of the greatest excellency in themselves, and of the greatest usefulness for the good of men, and the honour of God; as the doctrines, ordinances, and discipline of the Gospel; and so must be excellently, honestly, pleasantly, and profitably a good work.

Ver. 2. *A bishop then must be blameless, &c.*] Or *an elder*, as the Syriac version renders it; not that it can be expected that such an one should be entirely free from sin, or be blameless in the sight of God; but that he should be one, who is so before men, and has not been guilty of any notorious and flagitious crime; and particularly, is not chargeable with the vices hereafter mentioned or hinted at. So the priests under the law were to be without blemish, even in their bodies, Lev. xxi. 17—23. to which the apostle may here allude. *The husband of one wife*; which is not to be understood in a mystical and allegorical sense of his being the pastor of one church, since the apostle afterwards speaks of his house and children, that are to be ruled and kept in good order by him, in distinction from the church of God; but in a literal sense of his conjugal estate; though this rule does not make it necessary that he should have a wife; or that he should not marry, or not have married a second wife, after the death of the first; only if he marries or is married, that he should have but one wife at a time; so that this rule excludes all such persons from being elders, or pastors, or overseers of churches, that were *polygamists*: who had more wives than one at a time, or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others. Now polygamy and divorces had very much obtained among the Jews; nor could the believing Jews be easily and at once brought off of them. And though they were not lawful nor to be allowed of in any; yet they were especially unbecoming and scandalous in officers of churches. So the high-priest among the Jews, even

when polygamy was in use, might not marry, or have two wives, at once; if he did, he could not minister in his office until he divorced one of them*. For it is written, Lev. xxi. 13, *he shall take a wife, אהדת וְאִתּוֹ שְׂרָיִים, one, and not two*†. And the same that is said of the high-priest, is said of all other priests; see Ezek. xlv. 22. likewise the Egyptian priests might not marry more wives than one, though others might have as many as they pleased‡: and so the Flamines among the Romans‡. An elder or pastor must also be one that is *vigilant*; or wakeful and watchful, who is diligent in his business, and attends to his care and charge; is watchful over himself, his words, and actions; and watches for the souls of men, to do them all the good he can; and is sober in body, is temperate, and uses moderation in eating and drinking; and in mind, is moderate, humble, and prudent; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders the word *prudent*: and the Ethiopic version, *a wise man*, one of a sound judgment, a good understanding, and prudent conduct; is not wise above what is written, but thinks soberly of himself, as he ought. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *chaste*, as free from intemperance, so from uncleanness: and of *good behaviour*; neat and decent in his apparel; modest in his whole deportment and conduct, and affable and courteous to all; beautiful in his life and conversation, being adorned with every thing that is graceful and comely: *given to hospitality*: to the love of strangers, and to the entertainment of them; and especially the saints and fellow-ministers, who are exiled, or are travelling for the sake of spreading the Gospel, or upon some lawful and laudable account. These he is to assist by his advice and counsel, and with the necessities of life, according to his abilities. Abraham and Lot are noted instances of this virtue. *Apt to teach*: who has a considerable furniture of knowledge; is capable of interpreting the Scripture to the edification of others; is able to explain, lay open, and illustrate the truths of the Gospel, and defend them, and refute error; and who is not only able, but ready and willing, to communicate to others what he knows; and who likewise has utterance of speech, the gift of elocution, and can convey his ideas of things in plain and easy language, in apt and acceptable words; for otherwise it signifies not what a man knows, unless he has a faculty of communicating it to others, to their understanding and advantage.

Ver. 3. *Not given to wine, &c.*] One that does not sit at it, or is continually drinking it, and is intemperate in the use of it; otherwise it is lawful for persons in such an office to drink wine, and sometimes absolutely necessary; see ch. v. 23. it signifies one that is not given to much wine, as in ver. 8. is not addicted to it, or a follower of it; the Syriac version renders it, *who does not transgress over wine*, or go beyond due bounds in the use of it, who is not immoderate in it; the Arabic version renders it, *not insolent through wine*, as one that is heated with it is fierce and furious, and wrangling and quarrelsome, and often very mischievous and injurious; and this sense is followed by some. No

* Maimon. Issurc Bia, c. 7. sect. 13. & Cele Hamikdash. c. 5. sect. 10
† T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 59. 1.

* Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 51. vide Tertull. de monogamia, c. 17. & Exhort. castitat. c. 13.

† Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 12.

striker; either with his hands, so the Syriac version, *whose hand is not swift to strike*; not one who is nimble and ready at it, who no sooner is abused or injured, but he lifts up his hands and strikes; is but a word and a blow: or with his tongue; so the Arabic version, *not wounding with his tongue*: being too sharp and severe in the admonitions and reproofs of weak brethren, or fallen believers; and especially, he ought not to use scurrilous, reproachful, and contumelious language to any; see Jer. xviii. 18. *Not greedy of filthy lucre*: not covetous of getting money, of amassing wealth and riches together; or desirous of popular applause and glory from men. This clause is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in five of Beza's manuscripts and other copies, nor is it in the Vulgate Latin version, nor in any of the Oriental versions; it seems to be transcribed from Tit. i. 7. And indeed it is unnecessary here; since the same is expressed by the word *covetous*, at the end of the verse, and makes that a tautology; and moreover, by leaving out this clause, the opposition appears more manifest, between *no striker* and what follows, *but patient*: one who patiently bears all reproaches and injuries, puts up with affronts, and gives up what is his right and due, rather than contend, quarrel, and strike; who is patient towards all men, and does not bear hard on those that have offended, but is moderate and mild, and gentle in his censures, reproofs, and admonitions: *not a brawler*; not a quarrelsome litigious person, given to fighting, either with the fist or sword, or any other weapon: *not covetous*; or a lover of money in an immoderate way, greedy of worldly substance and riches, and insatiable in his desires after them; niggardly, sordid, and illiberal; acting a mercenary part; seeking his own things, and not the things of Christ; his gain from his quarter, and not the good of souls; and withholding from himself, from his family, and the poor, what ought to be enjoyed by them. Whereas, on the other hand, he ought to be generous and liberal, hospitable and charitable, and ready to communicate on all occasions, according to his abilities.

Ver. 4. *One that ruleth well his own house, &c.*] His family, wife, children, and servants; and is not to be understood of his body, and of keeping of that under, and of preserving it chaste and temperate, as appears from what follows: *having his children in subjection with all gravity*: keeping a good decorum in his family; obliging his children to observe his orders, and especially the rules of God's word; and not as Eli, who did not use his authority, or lay his commands upon his sons, nor restrain them from evil, or severely reprove them for their sins, but neglected them, and was too mild and gentle with them; 1 Sam. ii. 23. and iii. 13. but like Abraham, who not only taught, but commanded his children and his household, to keep the way of the Lord; Gen. xviii. 19. and so should those act who are in such an office as is here treated of; and should not only rule well in their families, preside over them, go before them, and set an example to them, and keep their children in obedience and subjection; but this should be *with all gravity*: not only in the master of the family, but in the children; who as their father is, or should be, should be brought up in, and used to gravity in words and in dress; and

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in the whole of their deportment and conversation. This may be observed against the Papists, who forbid marriage to the ministers of the Gospel.

Ver. 5. *For if a man know not how to rule his own house, &c.*] Which is an affair of less importance, and more easy to be done; not requiring so much resolution, prudence, care, and thought: *how shall he take care of the church of God?* preside over it, rule in it, provide for it, and see that every thing is in its proper place, and done according to the will of God. The argument is from the lesser to the greater.

Ver. 6. *Not a novice, &c.*] Or *one newly planted*, the Arabic version adds, *in the faith*: meaning not a young man, for so was Timothy himself; but a young professor and church-member; one that is lately come to the knowledge of the truth, and has just embraced and professed it, and become a member of a church, a new plant there: so the Hebrew word צמח, *a plant*, is by the Septuagint in Job xiv. 9. rendered by this very word. The reason why such a person should not be a bishop, elder, or pastor of a church, is, *lest being lifted up with pride*; through the dignity of the office he is advanced to, and the high opinion of men he stands in, and the great gifts qualifying him for such a place, he is supposed to have: for pride on account of these is apt to creep in, and swell and elate the minds of young professors especially; so that there is danger that *he fall into the condemnation of the devil*; or of the *slanderer*, as the word is rendered in ver. 11. and the sense then is, lest he should be censured and condemned by such who are given to calumny and detraction, and are glad of any opportunity to reproach and vilify the ministers of the word: but it is better to understand it of Satan; and then the meaning is, either lest such an one fall under the censure and condemnation of the accuser of the brethren; or rather lest he fall into the same condemnation and punishment the devil is fallen into, their crimes being alike. For it seems from hence, that pride was the first sin of the devil, and the cause of his apostacy from God; being elated with his own knowledge, strength, and dignity; and not being able to bear it, that the human nature should be advanced above that of angels.

Ver. 7. *Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, &c.*] That is, *without the church*, as the Arabic version reads; for wicked men, though they dislike the principles and profession of godly ministers, and despise their office, yet cannot but speak well of their becoming life and conversation. And this part of their character is necessary to invite persons to hear them, and to recommend their ministry to them, as well as for the reasons that follow: *lest he fall into reproach*: into the reproach of men; not only of the world, but of professors of religion; who may be apt to upbraid him with his past sins; especially such that may fall under his censures, admonitions, and reproofs, which hereby will become in a great measure useless and ineffectual: *and the snare of the devil*; lest Satan should take encouragement from hence to tempt him to other and greater sins; or lest finding himself slighted and despised by the people of God, because of his former sins, he should break out into anger and revenge against them; or into despondency and despair in himself; or should be negli-

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gent of his duty, and timorous of exhorting and reproving others, lest they should retort upon him, and reproach him with his former crimes. The Jews have a regard to the wisdom, prudence, gravity, and manners, of a man they appoint as a minister of a congregation. Their rule is this: "they don't appoint a messenger or minister of a congregation, but he who is the greatest in the congregation for wisdom and works; and if he is an elderly man, it is the better; and they take care that the messenger or minister of the congregation be a man whose voice is pleasant, and he is used to read: but he whose beard is not full grown, though he is a very considerable man, he may not be a minister of the congregation, because of the honour of the congregation."

Ver. 8. *Likewise must the deacons be grave, &c.*] The apostle proceeds to give the qualifications, and so the rules for choosing another sort of officers in the church, deacons; whose work and business is, not to preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances; but to take care of the secular affairs of the church, and particularly to serve tables; to provide the bread and wine for the Lord's table, to attend at it, and distribute the elements from the minister to the people, to collect for it, defray the charges of it, and divide what remains among the poor; and they are to take care of the minister's table, that he is provided for in a comfortable way, and to stir up the members to their duty in this respect; and to take care of the poor's table, and distribute what the church collects for them, with simplicity and cheerfulness; and are to be helps to the pastor, in observing the walk of members, in composing differences between them, in visiting the sick and poor, and in preparing matters for church-meetings. Their characters are, that they be *grave*: in their speech, gesture, and dress; honest, and of good report among men; and chaste in their words and actions; all which may be signified by the word here used; and the latter may be rather hinted at, because of Nicholas, one of the first deacons, who was charged with uncleanness: *not double-tongued*: whose hearts and tongues do not agree together; and who, being a sort of middle persons between the pastor and the members of the church, say one thing to one, and another to the other; which to do is of bad consequence: or who speak well to the poor when they apply to them, and promise them to do them all the service they can, and when it comes to the upshot speak against them: *not given to much wine*; which impairs the health, stupifies the mind, and so renders unfit for any such office, as well as wastes the temporal estate; and may lead them to embezzle and consume the church's stock: *not greedy of filthy lucre*; for such would withhold from the poor that which is meet for them, and make use of money in their hands, to their own advantage.

Ver. 9. *Holding the mystery of the faith, &c.*] The doctrine of the Gospel, called *the faith*, because it contains things to be believed; proposes Christ the object of faith; is the means by which faith comes, and is unprofitable without it: it is called *the mystery*, because it is of divine revelation, and could have never

been discovered by human reason; and now it is revealed, the modus of many things contained in it remains a mystery; several of the doctrines of it are mysterious ones, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity; and which the ancient Jews call by this very name, רֵיזוֹן לְמֹדֵימִוּתָא, *the mystery of faith*; the incarnation of the son of God, the union of the saints to Christ, and their communion with him, and the resurrection of the dead, with others. Now this mysterious doctrine of faith is to be held by deacons; they are to profess it, and to hold fast the profession of it, and that in a *pure conscience*; with a conscience sprinkled by the blood of Christ; with a conscience void of offence both towards God and man; with a suitable life and conversation; a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, and by which it is adorned: and this part of their character is necessary, that such may be able to instruct and establish those who are weak in the faith, and oppose and refute the erroneous, and also recommend the Gospel by their own example; otherwise should their principles or practices be bad, their influence on others might be very pernicious and fatal.

Ver. 10. *And let these also first be proved, &c.*] Not that they should be tried in any part of the deacon's office, to see how capable they are of performing it; but their internal and external characters are to be looked into and examined, and if they appear to be right, then they are to be approved of, chosen and called unto, and invested with the office: *then let them use the office of a deacon*; let them be employed and minister in the several parts and branches of that office: *being found blameless*; not without sin, but free from any gross and enormous one; not before God, but in the sight of men; see the note on ver. 2.

Ver. 11. *Een so must their wives be grave, &c.*] Some instead of *wives* read *women*, and understand them of deaconesses, such as were in the primitive churches; whose business it was to visit the poor and sick sisters of the church, and take care of things belonging to them; but it is better to interpret the words of the wives of the deacons, who must be as their husbands, *grave* in speech, gesture, and dress, of an honest report, a good behaviour, and chaste conversation; which will reflect honour and credit to their husbands: *not slanderers*; or accusers, and so act like devils, as the word is sometimes rendered; for should they act such a part, and accuse either the poor, or any of the members of the church wrongfully, or on any trifling occasion, as persons addicted to this vice are wont to do, it would be of bad consequence: and they also should be *sober*, temperate, not given to wine; excessive drinking is very scandalous in the female sex; and is the rather mentioned here, because women in the eastern countries were too frequently addicted to it: *faithful in all things*; as in the marriage-bed, so with whatsoever else they are intrusted with in the family, and civil concerns of their husbands; and this is the rather observed, because the wives of deacons may be sometimes intrusted with the church's stock in their husband's absence, to impart to the poor.

Ver. 12. *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife,*

* Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 8. sect. 11.

* Zohar in Gen. fol. 12. 4. & 13. 1, 2. & in Exod. fol. 66. 3.

&c.] See the note on ver. 2. *ruling their children and their own houses well.* These qualifications are the same with those of the bishop or elder; see the note on ver. 4.

Ver. 13. *For they that have used the office of a deacon well, &c.]* With diligence and faithfulness, with simplicity and cheerfulness; taking good care of the minister and poor, and of the discipline of God's house: *purchase to themselves a good degree;* not an higher office, as that of presbytery or episcopacy, which is a sense calculated to serve a hierarchy; nor a degree in glory and happiness hereafter; but rather an increase of gifts and grace; or a degree of respect and honour in the church: or the sense is, they possess and enjoy, which is the meaning of the word rendered *purchase*, a very honourable office in the church; and which is so to them, they using it well, and discharging it in an honourable manner; unless the apostle should design what the Jews called דְּרִגָּהּ רְמוּבָהּ, *a degree of faith*; ^b but that is expressed in the next clause: *and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus;* either in the exercise of the grace of faith at the throne of grace; or in asserting the doctrine of faith before men; and in repressing either for error or immorality; all which may be boldly done by those who use this office well.

Ver. 14. *These things write I unto thee, &c.]* Concerning the offices of bishops and deacons, their several qualifications, and the rules of judging of persons fit for such service: *hoping to come unto thee shortly;* at Ephesus. He could not tell whether he could come or no, and therefore makes no promise, but hoped he should; and since it was uncertain, he thought fit to write the above things for his instruction and use.

Ver. 15. *But if I tarry long, &c.]* Or should long delay coming, defer it longer than may be expected; let it be observed that these things are written, *that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God;* that is, the church of God, as it is afterwards explained; called a house, in allusion either to an edifice, it being a spiritual house built of lively stones, or true believers, upon the foundation Jesus Christ, and who also is the door into it; the pillars of it are the ministers of the Gospel; and the windows are the ordinances, and which also are the entertainment in it: or else to a family, as this is sometimes called the household of God, and of faith; the family named of Christ, of which he is the master; and in which are fathers, young men and children; in which ministers are stewards; and which is regulated by good and wholesome laws: and it is called the house of God, because as an edifice, it is of his building and repairing, and in which he dwells; and as a family, is what he provides for. Now the above things were written to Timothy, that he might know how to order and manage things in this house and family; what became him to do himself, in the character he was; and what persons to direct in the choice of, to be officers in it. And of this house it is said, *which is the church*

of the living God; in opposition to, and distinction from the houses and temples of idols, which are inanimate and senseless creatures; whereas the true God is the living God, has life in himself, essentially, originally, and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others. It is added, *the pillar and ground of the truth;* which holds forth the truth to be seen and read of all, as pillars that bear inscriptions; and which supports and maintains truth, as every true church of Christ does so long as it remains so; though truth is the pillar and ground of the church; for if once truth is gone, a church is no more so: rather therefore Timothy himself is here designed; and the sense is, that what was written to him was with this view, that he might the better know how to conduct himself in the church of God, as a pillar and ground of truth, to hold it forth and to secure it: ministers of the Gospel are called pillars, Gal. ii. 9. and that with greater propriety than the church itself, which is before called an house: though it may be best of all to understand it of Christ as incarnate, the great mystery of godliness; who as he is the ground and foundation of the church, and all believers, so he is the foundation of all true doctrine; and particularly the doctrine of his person, as truly God and truly man, is the pillar and ground which supports all other truths, and without which they fall to the ground: and so this clause may be read in connexion with the following words, thus; *the pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy, is the great mystery of godliness, &c.* And this way of speaking is used by the Jews, both of persons and things; so Zebulun is said ^c to be עִמּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, *the pillar of the law*; and it is said ^d of "the great sanhedrim in Jerusalem, they are the root of the oral law; and they are עִמּוּדֵי הַדּוֹרָהּ, *the pillars of doctrine*; and from them go forth the statutes and judgments unto Israel;" and the same is said of things as of persons. Maimonides says ^e, "the foundation of foundations and the pillar of wisdom, is to know that there is a first Being, that gives being to all beings;" and R. Sangari, another of their writers, says, ^f "there are two things which are עִמּוּדֵי הַתּוֹרָה, *the pillars of the law*; the one is, that the law is from God; the other is, that it is received with a faithful (or sincere) heart, from the congregation:" to which may be added, that it is said ^g that "the mystery of faith is עֵקֶר וְקִיּוּמָהּ, *the root and ground of the world*;" all which may serve to illustrate this passage.

Ver. 16. *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, &c.]* What follows is so, the incarnation of Christ, his birth of a virgin, the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person; this is a mystery, which though revealed, and so to be believed, is not to be discerned nor accounted for, nor the modus of it to be comprehended by reason: and it is a great one, next, if not equal, to the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the divine essence; and is a mystery of godliness, which tends to encourage internal and external religion, powerful and practical godliness in all the parts and branches of it; and is so beyond all dispute

^b Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 3.

^c Tzerer Hammor, fol. 152. 1.

^d Maimon. Hilehot Memarim, c. 1. sect. 1.

^e Hilehot Yesode Hattora, c. 1. sect. 1.

^f Coeri, par. 3. sect. 23. fol. 159. 2.

^g Zohar in Gen. fol. 124. 1.

and doubt. *God was manifest in the flesh*; not God essentially considered, or Deity in the abstract, but personally; and not the first nor the third Person; for of neither of them can this or the following things be said; but the second Person, the Word, or son of God; see 1 John iii. 8. who existed as a divine Person, and as a distinct one from the Father and Spirit, before his incarnation; and which is a proof of his true and proper deity: the Son of God in his divine nature is equally invisible as the Father, but became manifest by the assumption of human nature in a corporeal way, so as to be seen, heard, and felt: and by *flesh* is meant, not that part of the body only, which bears that name, nor the whole body only, but the whole human nature, consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul; so called, partly to denote the frailty of it, and to shew that it was not a person, but a nature, Christ assumed; and the clause is added, not so much to distinguish this manifestation of Christ from a spiritual manifestation of him to his people, as in distinction from all other manifestations of him in the Old Testament, in an human form for a time, and in the cloud, both in the tabernacle and temple. This clause is a very apt and full interpretation of the word *Moriah*, the name of the mount in which Jehovah would manifest himself, and be seen, Gen. xxii. 2, 14. *Justified in the spirit*; either by the spirit of God, making his human nature pure and holy, and preserving it from original sin and taint; and by descending on him at his baptism, thereby testifying that he was the son of God; and by the miracles wrought by his power, which proved Jesus to be the Messiah against those that rejected him; and by his coming down upon the apostles at Pentecost; and who in their ministry vindicated him from all the aspersions cast upon him: or else it is to be understood of the divine nature of Christ, in distinction from his flesh or human nature; in the one he was manifest and put to death for the sins of his people, which were put upon him, and bore by him; and by the other he was quickened and declared to be the son of God; and being raised from the dead, he was justified and acquitted from all the sins of his people, and they were justified in him; he having

made full satisfaction to justice for them. *Seen of angels*: meaning not ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, who are sometimes so called; but the blessed spirits, the inhabitants of heaven: by these he was seen at his birth, who then descended and sung praise to God on that account; and in the wilderness, after he had been tempted by Satan, when they ministered unto him; and in the garden upon his agony and sweat there, when one appeared and strengthened him; and at his resurrection from the dead, who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and told the women he was risen from the dead; as also at his ascension to heaven, when they attended him thither in triumph; and now in heaven, where they wait upon him, and worship him, and are ministering spirits, sent forth by him to do his pleasure; and he is seen by them in the ministry of the Gospel; in the truths of which they look with pleasure, and gaze upon with unutterable delight and admiration; especially those which respect the person and offices of Christ. Some copies read, *seen of men*, but that is implied in the first clause: *preached unto the Gentiles*; the worst of men, and that by the express orders of Christ himself; and which was foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and yet was a mystery, hid from ages and generations past: *believed on in the world*; among the Jews, and in the nations of the world, so that he was preached with success; and faith in Christ is the end of preaching; though this is not of a man's self, but is the gift of God, and the operation of his power: and it was a marvellous thing, considering the reproach and ignominy Christ lay under, through the scandal of the cross, that he should be believed on as he was. This can be ascribed to nothing else but to the power of God, which went along with the ministry of the word. *Received up into glory*; he was raised from the dead, and had a glory put upon his risen body; he ascended in a glorious manner to heaven, in a cloud, and in chariots of angels, and was received there with a welcome by his father; and is set down at his right hand, and crowned with glory and honour, and glorified with the glory he had with him before the world was.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter the apostle foretels a dreadful apostacy which should happen in the last times, the particulars of which he gives; and on occasion of one branch of it, discourses of Christian liberty in eating all sorts of food fit for use; and delivers out exhortations to Timothy to various duties relating to himself, his doctrine, and his charge. The prophecy is in ver. 1, 2, 3. the author of this prophecy is the spirit of God; the manner in which it was delivered was very clear and express; the time when it should be fulfilled, the last days; the thing itself, a departure of some from the faith; the means whereby it would come about are, some giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, and the hypocrisy and hardened consciences of others, who would forbid marriage, and order an ab-

stinence from certain meats; the evil of which last is exposed by their being the creatures of God, and by their being made for this purpose to be received with thankfulness by all believers, and who know the truth: and the reasons why they should be received and used follow; because they are all good, as they are the creatures of God; and because there is nothing to be refused, provided it be received with a thankful heart; and because every creature is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer, ver. 4, 5. And then Timothy is exhorted to put the brethren in mind of those things, by which he would shew himself to be a faithful minister of Christ, and well-instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel, ver. 6. and to reject things profane and fabulous, but use himself to internal and powerful god-

liness, since outward worship signifies little, but the former has the promise of this, and the other world annexed to it; which is a true saying, and to be depended on, ver. 7, 8, 9. and which is confirmed from the practice and experience of the apostles, and therefore should be taught with authority, ver. 10, 11. And then the apostle gives Timothy some advice, which being taken, would prevent his being despised on account of his youth; as with respect to his life and conversation, so to behave as to be a pattern to others, ver. 12. and with respect to the exercise of his ministry, to make use of such means, as reading and meditation, that his profiting might be manifest to all, ver. 13, 14, 15. and with respect to the doctrines he preached, to abide by them, whereby he would be a means of saving himself, and others, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *Now the spirit speaketh expressly, &c.*] The prophecy hereafter mentioned was not an human conjecture, but, as all true prophecy, it came from the spirit of God, who spoke or delivered it; either in the prophets of the Old Testament, who, as they spoke of the Gospel dispensation, so of the defection that should be in it; and particularly of antichrist, and of the apostasy through him, which is what is here intended, especially in Daniel's prophecies, under the names of the little horn, and vile person, ch. vii. and xi. or in the Lord Jesus Christ, who foretold that false prophets would arise and deceive many; or in some of the prophets in the Christian church, such as Agabus, and others, who might in so many words foretell this thing; or rather in the apostle himself, at this time, since this prophecy was delivered not in dark sayings, in an enigmatical way, in an obscure manner, as prophecies generally were, but in plain language, and easy to be understood, and wanted no interpreter to unriddle it; and seeing that it is nowhere to be found in so many express words elsewhere: and moreover, the apostle does not say the spirit *hath spoken*, but the spirit *speaketh*: then, at the time of the writing of these words, in and by him. The prediction follows, *that in the latter times some should depart from the faith*: that is, from the doctrine of faith, notwithstanding it is indisputably the great mystery of godliness, as it is called in the latter part of the preceding chapter; for from the true grace of faith there can be no final and total apostacy, such as is here designed; for that can never be lost. It is of an incorruptible nature, and therefore more precious than gold that perishes; Christ is the author and finisher of it; his prevalent mediation is concerned for it; it is a gift of special grace, and is without repentance; it springs from electing grace, and is secured by it; and between that and salvation there is an inseparable connexion; it may indeed decline, be very low, and lie dormant, as to its acts and exercise, but not be lost: there is a temporary faith, and a persuasion of truth, or a mere assent to it, which may be departed from, but not that faith which works by love: here it intends a profession of faith, which being made, should be dropped by some; or rather the doctrine of faith, which some would embrace, and then err concerning, or entirely quit, and wholly apostatize from. And they are said to be *some*, and these many, as they are elsewhere represented, though not all; for the elect cannot be

finally and totally deceived; the foundation of election stands sure amidst the greatest apostacy; and there are always a few names that are not defiled with corrupt principles and practices; Christ always had some witnesses for the truth in the darkest times; and now this defection was to be *in the latter times*; either of the apostolic age, which John, the last of the apostles, lived to see; and therefore he calls it the last time, or hour, in which were many antichrists, 1 John ii. 18. And indeed in the Apostle Paul's time the mystery of iniquity began to work, which brought on this general defection; though here it has regard to some later times under the Gospel dispensation; to the time when the man of sin, and the son of perdition, was revealed, and when all the world wondered after the beast: and indeed, such will be the degeneracy in the last days of all, that when the son of man comes, as the grace, so the doctrine of faith will be scarcely to be found in the world: the means by which this apostacy will obtain and prevail will be through men's *giving heed to seducing spirits*; either to doctrines which are of a deceiving nature; or to men who profess to have the spirit of God, and have not, but are evil men and seducers, deceiving, and being deceived; that lie in wait to deceive, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and by attending on the ministry of such persons, through hearing them, and conversing with them, the defection was to begin and spread; and therefore such should be carefully avoided, and their ministry shunned; nor should they be received, nor bid God speed. *And doctrines of devils*; such as are devised by devils, as all damnable doctrines be; and all lying ones, for the devil is the father of them; and as are all the false doctrines introduced by antichrist, for his coming was after the working of Satan; and particularly those doctrines of his concerning worshipping of angels, and saints departed, may be called the doctrines of devils, or of *demons*; being much the same with the demon-worship among the Heathens, of which the devil was the inventor: unless by doctrines of devils should be meant the doctrines of men, who for their cunning and sophistry, for their lies and hypocrisy, for their malice, and murdering of the souls of men, are comparable to devils.

Ver. 2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy, &c.*] Or *through the hypocrisy of those that speak lies*: for the apostle is still speaking of the means by which the apostacy should rise, and get ground; and it should be by the means of persons that should deliver lying or false doctrine under the colour of truth, and make great pretensions to religion and holiness, which would greatly take with men, and captivate and lead them aside: and this plainly points at the abettors of antichrist, the Romish priests, who deliver out the lying doctrines of merit, purgatory, invocation of saints, fastings, pilgrimages, &c. and the fabulous legends of saints, and the lying wonders and miracles done by them, and all under a shew of godliness, and the promoting of religion and holiness: *having their conscience seared with a hot iron*; which exactly describes the above-mentioned persons, whose consciences are cauterized and hardened, and past feeling; and have no regard to what they say or do, make no conscience of any thing, but under a cloak of sanctity commit the most shocking impieties; and are

men of the most infamous characters, and of the most enormous and scandalous lives and conversations; so that the metaphor may be taken either from the searing of flesh with an iron, or cauterizing it, whereby it grows callous and hard; or from the *stigmas* or marks which used to be put on malefactors, or such who have been guilty of notorious crimes.

Ver. 3. *Forbidding to marry, &c.*] Which points out not the Encratites, Montanists, and Manichees, who spoke against marriage; but the Papists, who forbid it to their priests under a pretence of purity and holiness, and at the same time allow them to live in all manner of debauchery and uncleanness; for these are the persons that forbid marriage in an authoritative way, and in hypocrisy: for that phrase is to be joined to all the sentences that follow it; as through the hypocrisy of those whose consciences are seared; and through the hypocrisy of those that forbid marriage to their priests, this being, by the common people, taken as an instance of great purity and holiness, and hereby they are drawn into the deception; as well as also through the hypocrisy of those that command to *abstain from meats*: not from some certain meats forbidden by the law of Moses, as did some Judaizing Christians; but from all meats at some certain season of the year, as at what they call the Quadragesima or Lent, and at some days in the week, as Wednesdays and Fridays; and this all under an hypocritical pretence of holiness, and temperance, and keeping under the body, and of mortification; when they are the greatest pamperers of their bodies, and indulge themselves in all manner of sensuality: the evil of this is exposed by the apostle, as follows, *which God hath created*; and therefore must be good, and ought not to be abstained from: and besides, the end of his creation of them is, *to be received*: to be taken, and used, and eaten; and therefore it is wicked to command men to abstain from them, and evil in those that do it: and the manner in which they should be received is *with thanksgiving*: since they are the creatures of God, and useful to men, and men are unworthy of them, having forfeited them by sin; and since they are the bounties of Providence, and a free use of them is allowed; so far then should men be from abstaining from them, that they ought to take them, and use them with all thankfulness: and especially this should be done *of them which believe and know the truth*; that is, who believe in Christ, and know the truth of the Gospel, which frees from every yoke of bondage, and from the burdensome rites, ceremonies, and inventions of men; for these have the good creatures as the fruits of divine love, through Christ the Mediator, and as blessings indeed; and who have the best right, claim, and title to them through Christ, being in him heirs of the world, and for whose sake all things are; and therefore these, as they know how to use them, and not abuse them, are to receive them at the hands of God, with thanksgiving, and not put them away, or abstain from them under a pretence of religion and holiness.

Ver. 4. *For every creature of God is good, &c.*] For food; and should be taken and used for that purpose, at all times, without distinction; even every creature which is made for food, and which is easy to be dis-

cerned by men: *and nothing to be refused*; or rejected as common and unclean, or to be abstained from at certain times: *if it be received with thanksgiving*: if not, persons are very ungrateful, and very unworthy of such favours; and it would be just in God to withhold them from them; and this they may expect at his hands, who reject them with contempt, or receive them with unthankfulness, or abstain from them in a religious way he never enjoined.

Ver. 5. *For it is sanctified, &c.*] Or set apart for use, and may be lawfully used at all times: *by the word of God*; which declares that there is nothing in itself common, or unclean, or unfit for use, and that nothing that goes into a man defiles him; so that by virtue of this word of God, every creature may be made use of, that is fit for food: or else this designs the word of God, which gives a blessing to what is eaten; for it is not by bread or meat only, but through the word of God commanding a blessing on what is eaten, that man lives, Matt. iv. 4. and therefore this blessing upon our food should be asked for: wherefore it follows, *and prayer*; this being used before eating for a blessing on the food, and after it, in a way of thanksgiving for it, sanctifies every creature of God, or gives men a free use of any, or all of them. So the Israelites, when they had eaten, and were full, were to bless the Lord, Deut. viii. 10. And thus our Lord Jesus Christ, at meals, used to take the food, and bless it, or ask a blessing on it, Matt. xiv. 19. And so did the Essenes among the Jews¹, and the Christians in Tertullian's¹ time; and the practice is highly necessary and commendable, nor ought it to be disused.

Ver. 6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, &c.*] Either of all the main and principal things already mentioned in the preceding chapters; as that the end of the commandment is love; that Christ's coming into the world to save the chief of sinners is a faithful saying, and worthy of acceptance; that prayers should be made for all sorts of men, for the reasons given; and that there is salvation for men and women through the incarnate son of God; that such and such are the qualifications of elders and deacons; and that the incarnation of Christ is, without controversy, the great mystery of godliness: or of the things which are particularly hinted at in the prophecy delivered in the beginning of this chapter; as that there should be a falling off from the doctrine of faith in the latter days; that this should come to pass through attending to erroneous spirits, and doctrines of *demons*, and through the lies of hypocritical, hardened, and infamous men; whose particular dogmas, by which they might be known, would be, to forbid marriage to certain persons, which is of divine institution and honourable, and to order an abstinence from meats at certain times, contrary to the will and providence of God. These the apostle would have Timothy propose, and subject to consideration, and from time to time refresh the memories of the saints with, who are apt, through negligence and inattention, and the weakness of the natural faculty, to be forgetful hearers of the word; that whenever such persons should arise, they might be on their guard against them. It is one part of the business of Gospel ministers to put the churches

¹ Porphy. de Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 12.

¹ Apolog. c. 39.

in mind of what they have received and known, and are established in. By the *brethren* are meant the members of the church at Ephesus; whom the apostle accounted as brethren, being of the same family and household, and would have Timothy reckon and use as such, and not as subjects and servants, to be lorded over. *Thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ*: a minister of Jesus Christ is one of his making, qualifying, calling, and sending; and who makes Christ, the doctrines respecting his person and offices, his grace, righteousness, and salvation, the subject of his ministry; and he is a good one, who, besides having a good work of grace wrought in him, has good gifts and abilities from Christ, and who makes a good use of them, and freely and fully imparts them for the good of others; and being employed in a good work, he abides in it, and nothing can deter or remove him from it; and such an one was Timothy, and so would it be manifest by doing what the apostle hints unto him; as well as he would appear to be *nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine*: by which are meant the truths of the Gospel, called the words of faith, because they are things to be believed, hold forth the object of faith, Christ, and are the means by which faith comes, and is increased: and good doctrine, being the doctrine of the Scriptures, and of Christ, and of his apostles, and according to godliness; and contain good things, which make for the glory of the grace of God, and the comfort and welfare of immortal souls. These are of a nourishing nature; they are the wholesome and salutary words of Christ; they have in them milk for babes, and meat for strong men; by which both grow and thrive, when error eats as does a canker. So Philo the Jew * speaks of the soul, being *nourished with sciences*, and not with food and drink, which the body needs; and a little after he says, you see the food of the soul what it is, it is the continual word of God. Now Timothy, by discharging his work aright, would shew to the brethren, that as he had been nourished and trained up, first under his religious parents, and then under the Apostle Paul; so he still continued in the same truths, and to live and feed upon them, and to be nourished by them: or the words may be rendered actively, *nourishing*; that is, either himself, as the Syriac version renders it, or others; for though all nourishment comes from Christ the head, yet it is ministered by joints and bands to the members; it is conveyed by the means of the word and ordinances, ministered by the preachers of the Gospel, who feed the church with knowledge, and with understanding; and none but those who are nourished themselves are fit to be the nourishers of others; and such an one was this evangelist: for it follows, *whereunto thou hast attained*; he had arrived to a considerable degree of knowledge of Gospel truths, and was still pursuing and following on to know more of them, and was exhorted to continue in them, knowing of whom he had learned them. All this is said by way of encouragement to him to do as the apostle directs.

Ver. 7. *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, &c.*] Either Jewish ones, the traditions of the elders; or those of the Gnostics, concerning God, angels, and the creation of the world; or those doctrines of demons,

and which forbid marriage, and commanded abstinence from meats before mentioned; which are called profane, because impious and ungodly, and old wives' fables; because foolish and impertinent; and which were to be rejected with abhorrence and contempt, in comparison of the words of faith and good doctrine. *And exercise thyself rather unto godliness*; either to the doctrines which are according to godliness, and tend to godly edification, which the above fables did not, study these, meditate on them, digest them, and deliver them to others; or to a godly life and conversation, exercise thyself, to have a conscience void of offence to God and men; or to internal religion, inward godliness, the exercise of the graces of faith, hope, love, fear, reverence, humility, &c. or rather to the spiritual worship of God, according to his will, not in a formal, cold, and customary way, but with the heart, in truth and sincerity, in faith, and with fervency and purity.

Ver. 8. *For bodily exercise profiteth little, &c.*] Meaning not the exercise of the body in the Olympic games, as by running, wrestling, &c. which profited but little, for the obtaining of a corruptible crown at most; though since a word is used here, and in the preceding verse, borrowed from thence, there may be an allusion to it: much less exercise of the body for health or recreation, as riding, walking, playing at any innocent diversion; which profits but for a little time, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; and the latter renders the phrase *bodily recreation*: nor is the exercise of the body in the proper employment of trade and business, to which a man is called, and which profits for the support of life for a little while, intended; nor any methods made use of for the mortification of the body, and the keeping of it under, as watchings, fastings, lying on the ground, scourging, &c. but rather mere formal external worship, as opposed to godliness, or spiritual worship. There ought to be an exercise of the body, or a presenting of that in religious worship before God; there should be an outward attendance on the word and ordinances; but then, without internal godliness, this will be of little advantage: it is indeed shewing an outward regard to public worship, and may be a means of keeping persons out of bad company, and from doing evil things; but if this is trusted to, and depended on, it will be of no avail to everlasting life; see Luke xiii. 26, 27. *but godliness is profitable unto all things*; to the health of the body, and the welfare of the soul; to the things of this life, and of that which is to come; to themselves and others, though not to God, or in a way of merit: *having promise of the life that now is*; of the continuance of it, of length of days, of living long in the earth, and of enjoying all necessary temporal good things, the mercies of life; for God has promised to his spiritual worshippers, to them that fear him, and walk uprightly, that their days shall be prolonged, that they shall want no good thing, nor will he withhold any from them that is for their good, that is proper and convenient for them: *and of that which is to come*; even of eternal life; not that eternal life is merited or procured hereby; for it is the free gift of God, and is not by any works of men, for other-

wise it would not be by promise; for its being by promise shews it to be of grace: there is nothing more or less in it than this, that God promises glory to his own grace; for internal godliness, which animates and maintains spiritual worship, is of God, is of his own grace, and every part of it is a free gift of his, as faith, hope, love, fear, &c.

Ver. 9. *This is a faithful saying, &c.*] A true one, and to be believed, that godliness has such promises annexed to it; see 1 Pet. iii. 10, 11. Matt. vi. 33. Psal. lxxxiv. 11, 12. *and worthy of all acceptation*; by all godly persons, to encourage them to the exercise of godliness.

Ver. 10. *For therefore we both labour, &c.*] Not in the word and doctrine, though they did; nor in the exercise of internal godliness, though there is a work in faith, and a labour in love; nor with their own hands, at their trades and business, to support themselves, and others; but by enduring hardships and afflictions, as stripes, imprisonment, weariness, pain, watchings, fastings, hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness; see 2 Cor. xi. 23—27. *And suffer reproach*; with patience and cheerfulness. The Alexandrian copy, and another manuscript, read, *we strive*; or contend even to an agony, combating with sin, Satan, and the world, with profane men, and with false teachers; and to all this they were animated by the promises made to godliness; and therefore they shewed it by their practices, or rather by their sufferings, that they believed it to be a true and faithful saying; and which is further confirmed by what follows: *because we trust in the living God*; for the accomplishment of the said promises, who has power, and therefore can, and is faithful, and therefore will, make good what he has promised; and since it is life he has promised, faith is the more encouraged to trust in him, since he is the living God, in opposition to, and distinction from, lifeless idols; he has life in himself, essentially, originally, and independently, and is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, unto others. Wherefore there is good reason to trust in him for the fulfilling of the promises of the present and future life, made unto godliness. *Who is the Saviour of all men*; in a providential way, giving them being and breath, upholding them in their beings, preserving their lives, and indulging them with the blessings and mercies of life; for that he is the Saviour of all men, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, is not true in fact. *Specially of those that believe*; whom though he saves with an eternal salvation; yet not of this, but of a temporal salvation, are the words to be understood: or as there is a general providence, which attends all mankind, there is a special one which relates to the elect of God; these are regarded in Providence, and are particularly saved and preserved before conversion, in order to be called; and after conversion, after they are brought to believe in Christ, they are preserved from many enemies, and are delivered out of many afflictions and temptations; and are the peculiar care and darlings of Providence, being to God as the apple of his eye: and there is a great deal of reason to believe this, for if he is the Saviour of all men, then much more of them who are of more worth, value, and esteem with him, than all the world beside; and if they are saved by him with the greater

salvation, then much more with the less; and if he is the common Saviour of all men, and especially of saints, whom he saves both ways, then there is great reason to trust in him for the fulfilment of the promises of life, temporal and eternal, made to godliness, and godly persons. This epithet of God seems to be taken out of Psal. xvii. 7. where he is called מוֹשִׁיעַ הַצָּרִים, *the Saviour of them that trust*, or believe.

Ver. 11. *These things command and teach.*] What are to be commanded, command, and what are to be taught, teach; command to refuse and reject all profane and fabulous doctrines, and exhort to the exercise of true godliness, and teach the profitableness of that, and declare the promises made unto it, and assert the truth and acceptableness of them; command, order, and encourage believers to labour and suffer reproach for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, in hope of enjoying the said promises, and teach them to trust in the God of their lives, and the Saviour of all men; and whereas to this authoritative way of teaching, Timothy's youth might be objected by himself, and others; it follows,

Ver. 12. *Let no man despise thy youth, &c.*] Timothy was now a young man; some think he was about three-and-twenty years of age; but he might be older, and yet be so called. Saul is said to be a young man, when he held the clothes of them that stoned Stephen, when he must be at least thirty years of age, some say thirty-five; since thirty years after that he styles himself Paul the aged, when he must be sixty years of age and upwards, Acts vii. 58. Philem. ver. 9. Young men are sometimes honoured by God with great gifts, for usefulness both in church and state, as Samuel, David, Solomon, Daniel, and his companions; nor should they be despised on account of their age, when they have gifts suitable to their office, and behave well in it, but, on the contrary, ought to be esteemed for their works' sake; and such should take care that no man has an opportunity or reason to treat them with contempt on that account: the apostle's sense is, either that Timothy, being in office, should not suffer any man to use him contemptuously; but exert his power and authority, and magnify his office, and not allow men to trample upon him, or use him ill, though he was a young man; which sense suits with the preceding words: or rather his meaning is, that he would have him so conduct and behave himself, as he had taught him to behave, in the house and church of God, and so fill up his place and office, and live such an exemplary life and conversation, that there might be no occasion for any to despise his age, or him, on the account of it: and this agrees with what follows, *but be thou an example of the believers*; the members of the church, before called brethren, from their relation to one another, and here believers, from their concern with Christ, the object of their faith; a more honourable character cannot be given of men, though treated with great contempt in this age of infidelity. The Mahometans would engross this character to themselves, calling themselves the believers, and reckoning all others infidels; but to them only it belongs, who believe in Christ unto righteousness and life everlasting. Now sometimes young men may be examples to older ones; and all that are in office in the church, especially in the ministry,

whether old or young, should be ensamples to the flock, and that in the following things: *in word*; meaning either the word of truth, the doctrine of the Gospel; by delivering that which is according to the rule of God's word, shewing in it incorruptness, gravity, and sincerity, and by holding it fast; all which may be for the imitation of others, to receive the pure doctrine, and retain it: or rather this may respect common discourse; which should not be corrupt, filthy, nor foolish; but should be always with grace, seasoned with salt, or should be grave and serious, wise and prudent, pleasant, profitable, and edifying. *In conversation*; in the family, church, and world; which should be as becomes the Gospel of Christ, in all godliness and honesty, with simplicity and godly sincerity; so as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, recommend it to others, stop the mouths of gainsayers, and obtain a good report of them that are without. *In charity*; in love to God, to Christ, and one another; without which, if a man has the tongue of men and angels, or ever such great and excellent gifts, he is nothing. *In spirit*; in the exercise of spiritual gifts; in spiritual talk and conversation; and in fervency of spirit, or true zeal for the honour of God, the glory of the Redeemer, the spread of his Gospel, truths, and ordinances, and the support of the same. This clause is wanting in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions. *In faith*; in the exercise of the grace of faith; in holding fast the profession of faith; and in retaining the doctrine of faith, with all integrity, faithfulness, and constancy, standing fast in it, striving and contending for it. *In purity*; or chastity of body, in opposition to all impurity of the flesh, by fornication, adultery, and the like; which was very proper to be suggested to a young man: though this may also have respect to all that is before said, as to purity of language, conversation, love, zeal, and faith.

Ver. 13. *Till I come, &c.*] To Ephesus; where the apostle hoped to be shortly, but was prevented; he afterwards came to Miletus, and sent for the elders of Ephesus thither, when he took his final leave of them. He mentions this circumstance, not as if Timothy was to attend to the following things no longer, but to quicken him to an attendance to them from the consideration of his being shortly with him. *Give attendance to reading*; that is, of the Scriptures, which the Jews call *בקרית*, *reading*.¹ "Says R. Tanchum Bar Chanilai, for ever let a man divide his years or life into three parts; one third (let him spend) in the Mikra, (the Scriptures, and the reading of them,) another third in the Misna, and the other third in the Talmud." And this is to be understood, not of the reading of the Scriptures in public, for the advantage of others; a custom which obtained in the Jewish synagogues; see Acts xiii. 15. and xv. 21. but in private, for his own use and service, that he might be more perfect, and more thoroughly furnished for the work and office to which he was called; for the Scriptures are the fund of spiritual knowledge, as well as the test and standard of doctrine, out of which all must be fetched, and by which it must be

tried; and if Timothy, who had known the Scriptures from a child, had been trained up in them, and was always conversant with them, had need to give diligent attention to the reading of them, then much more others: as also *exhortation, to doctrine*; as he was privately to read the Scriptures, for his own benefit, he was publicly to expound them, or preach from them, to the advantage of others; for these two, exhortation and doctrine, are branches of the ministerial work, which reading furnishes and qualifies for. *Exhortation* intends the stirring up of believers to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; and is a considerable part of the work of the ministry, and on which a minister of Christ should much insist; and it becomes the saints to suffer every word of exhortation from them, and receive it kindly, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Rom. xii. 8. Heb. xiii. 22. The word signifies also *consolation*, and which is another branch of the ministry. Believers are oftentimes disconsolate through the prevalence of corruptions, the power of Satan's temptations, and the hidings of God's face, and need comfort; when the ministers of the Gospel should be *Barnabases*, sons of consolation, and should speak comfortably to them; for which they are qualified by the God of all comfort, who comforts them in all their tribulations, that they might be capable of speaking good and comfortable words to others. *Doctrine* designs the teaching and instructing of the church in the mysteries of the Gospel; opening and explaining the truths of it; defending them against all opposers, and refuting errors and heresies contrary to them. This is the evangelic Talmud; and these three, *reading, exhortation, and doctrine*, may answer to the above three things the Jew advises men to divide their time among, the Mikra, Misna, and Talmud: reading answers to the Mikra, and indeed is no other; and exhortation to the Misna, or oral law; and doctrine to the Talmud, and which also that word signifies; but the apostle would have Timothy spend his time in, and give his attention to that which might be truly beneficial to himself, and profitable unto others.

Ver. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, &c.*] What qualifies men for the work of the ministry is a *gift* from God: it is not of nature, nor is it mere natural abilities and capacity; nor is it any thing acquired, it is not human learning, or the knowledge of languages, arts, and sciences; nor is it special saving grace; for a man may have all these, and yet not be apt to teach, or fit for the ministry; but it is a peculiar and distinct gift, it is a gift of interpreting the Scriptures, and of dispensing the mysteries of grace to the edification of others; which, when it meets in a man with all the rest before mentioned, makes him very considerable: and this gift is *in* a man; it is a treasure put into earthen vessels, a good treasure in the heart, out of which a good minister of Christ brings forth many good things, things new and old, both for the delight and profit of men: and this gift is by no means to be neglected; this talent should not be hid in the earth, or wrapped up in a napkin; it should not lie dormant and useless, but should be stirred up, cultivated, and improved, as it may by reading, meditation, and prayer. And in order to en-

¹ T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 19. 2.

force this exhortation on Timothy, the apostle adds, *which was given thee by prophecy*; that is, it was prophesied of before-hand, by some of the prophets in the church, that a very extraordinary gift should be bestowed upon this young man, which would make him a very useful person in the church of God; see ch. i. 18. and since it was now given, he ought not therefore to neglect it: or it was given him, as some read it, *with prophecy*, that he should use it, and it should be of great advantage to many souls; or, together with this gift of preaching, he had also a gift of foretelling things to come; or it may be, the words may be better rendered, *for prophecy*: that is, for preaching, for prophesying is frequently used for preaching; see 1 Cor. xiii. 2. and xiv. 1, 3, 31. and then the sense is, that this gift was given him to qualify him for the interpreting of the Scriptures, the explaining of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and for the preaching of the Gospel; and therefore he should not neglect it, but use it for this purpose: and he adds, that it was given him *with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*; or of the *eldership*, or elders. *So* *ἐπίσκοπος*, *eldership*, is used by the Septuagint on Exod. iii. 16, 18. for the elders of Israel. Now of these elders Paul was one, 2 Tim. i. 6. nor is it unusual to call the apostles elders; see 1 Pet. v. 1. 2 John 1. and 3 John. 1. Who joined with the apostle, in the imposition of hands on Timothy, is not certain; I should think only apostles, since here was a gift of the Holy Ghost came along with it; and it was only through the laying on of the hands of the apostles that the Holy Ghost was given. Philip, an evangelist, laid not hands on the believing Samaritans; but Peter and John, apostles, were sent down from Jerusalem to Samaria to do it, whereby many received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, fitting them to take the care of those new converts, and to spread the Gospel further in those parts, Acts viii. 5, 12, 14, 17, 18. And since gifts have ceased being conveyed this way, the rite of laying on of hands in ordinations seems useless, and of no avail. The apostle in calling those that joined with him, in putting hands on Timothy, the *presbytery* or *eldership*, may have some reference to *זקני העדה*, *the elders of the congregation*, which laid hands on the bullock for a sin-offering, Lev. iv. 15. by whom some understand the great sanhedrim^m; othersⁿ, not all the elders, but some particular persons, in number three; and so the ordination of a Rabbi was by three^o; hence we read of *כְּמִינָה בְּזֻקִימָה*, *imposition of hands by the elders*^p.

Ver. 15. *Meditate on these things, &c.*] Not only on those instructions, advices, and exhortations, which the apostle had given him, throughout this chapter, which might be very useful to him, often to think of, and revolve in his mind, and seriously consider and reflect upon; but upon the Scriptures, the reading of which he had recommended to him, and the doctrines contained therein; it becomes every man not only to read, but meditate on the word of God, and much more ministers of the Gospel. The Scriptures should be read with care, and be industriously and labori-

ously searched into, as men dig in mines for silver or golden ore; and passages in it should be carefully compared together, the more obscure with those that are more plain and easy; and the whole is to be studied with great attention and application: *give thyself wholly to them*: to the reading of the Scriptures, meditation upon them, and preaching the doctrines contained in them, clear of all secular affairs, or worldly business and employment. The apostles threw off the branch of deaconship, or ministering to the poor, that they might give themselves up wholly to the ministry of the word, and prayer; and much more should worldly business be cast off, where the circumstances of ministers and churches will admit of it; a Christian soldier, or minister of the Gospel, ought not, if possible, to be entangled with the affairs of this life; he finds enough to do without, in the discharge of his ministerial function; and though the apostles sometimes wrought with their own hands, yet it was not because they had so much leisure from the ministry, or time on their hands, or because they had not a power of forbearing working, but out of necessity, see Acts xx. 34. 1 Cor. ix. 6, 7. 2 Tim. ii. 4. or these words may be rendered, *be thou in these things*; let thine heart be in them; for if a minister's heart is not in his work, if he does not take delight in it, it will be a slavery and drudgery to him; spend all thy time and strength in them, give thyself continually to them, and be always diligent and laborious in them: *that thy profiting may appear to all*: that it may be manifest to all that attend the ministry of the word that there is an increase in gifts, a growing in spiritual knowledge, an improvement of the talents bestowed; or that this profiting or increase might appear in *all things*; in every branch of the ministry, both in exhortation or consolation, and in doctrine; or that it might be manifest *among all*; that is, all that hear might receive some profit, might learn, and be comforted and edified; faith might be increased, and the joy of it be furthered; and all under the ministry visibly thrive and flourish.

Ver. 16. *Take heed unto thyself, &c.*] Not as a man, or a Christian only, but as a minister; and as every minister should take heed to his life and conversation, that it be exemplary, as in ver. 12. to his gifts, that they be not lost, or neglected, but used and improved; to the errors and heresies abroad, that he be not infected with them; and to his flock, which is the other part of himself, that he feed it with knowledge and understanding: *and to thy doctrine*: preached by him, that it be according to the Scriptures, be the doctrine of Christ, and his apostles, and according to godliness; that it tend to edification, and is pure, incorrupt, and all of a piece; and that it be expressed in the best manner, with all boldness and plainness; and that he defend it against all opposition: *continue in them*; or *with them*; the members of the church at Ephesus; or rather in the doctrines of the Gospel; which should be done, though a majority is against them; though rejected by the wise, learned, and rich; though not to be comprehended by carnal

^m Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 8.

ⁿ Siphri in Maimon. in Misn. ib. c. 9. sect. 7.

^o Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

^p T. Hieros. Horajot, fol. 40. 2.

reason; and though loaded with reproach and scandal; and though persecuted, yea even unto death for them: *for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself*; a minister by taking heed to himself, and doctrine, saves himself from the pollutions of the world, from the errors and heresies of false teachers, from the blood of all men, and from all just blame in his ministry. *And them that hear thee*: by being an example to them in doctrine and conversation, a minister is the means of saving and preserving those that attend on him, from erroneous principles, and immoral practices; and by faithfully preaching the Gospel to his hearers, he is

instrumental in their eternal salvation; for though Jesus Christ is the only Saviour, the only efficient and procuring cause of salvation, yet the ministers of the Gospel are instruments by which souls believe in him, and so are saved; the word preached by them, being attended with the spirit of God, becomes the ingrafted word, which is able to save, and is the power of God unto salvation; and nothing can more animate and engage the ministers of the word to take heed to themselves and doctrine, and abide therein, than this, of being the happy instruments of converting sinners, and saving them from death; see Jam. v. 20.

C H A P. V.

IN this chapter the apostle lays down rules about the manner of rebuking persons, suitable to their several ages; gives directions concerning widows, both old and young; and instructs Timothy how to behave towards elders in office on different accounts. The rules for giving reproof to old men, as fathers; to young men, as brethren; to elder women, as mothers; and to the younger, as sisters, are in ver. 1, 2. Next follow the directions about taking care of widows, who are to be honoured and maintained by the church, that are widows indeed, ver. 3. not such who have relations that are capable of taking care of them, who ought to do it, and not burden the church; since so to do is an act of piety, a requiting parents for their former care and kindness, and is good and acceptable in the sight of God, ver. 4. but such who are desolate and alone, and have no husbands nor children, nor any to support their wants, but wholly depend on the providence of God, and are constant at the throne of grace crying for help and relief, which shews they are living Christians; whereas such who spend their time in sinful lusts and pleasures, are dead while they live; wherefore if members of churches, with respect to this business, would be blameless, they ought to take care of the former, and reprove the latter, ver. 5, 6, 7. And as for those persons who cast their poor widows upon the church, and won't provide for them, when they are able, they are to be looked upon as deniers of the faith, and to be worse than the Heathens themselves, ver. 8. The qualifications of widows to be taken care of by the church, besides those before mentioned, are, that they be sixty years of age, having been the wife of one man, and well known for their good works, some of which are particularly mentioned, ver. 9, 10. but those who are under the age fixed, and especially are fit for marriage, and the procreation of children, should be rejected, because of their lasciviousness, idleness, tattling, and busying themselves about other people's matters; these, on the contrary, should be directed to marry, bear children, take care of household affairs, and give no occasion to the enemy to reproach and blaspheme; and the rather such advice should be taken, since there had been some sad instances of apostacy in such persons, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. And then the apostle repeats his order to believers, to take care of their poor widows, who were able to do it themselves, that so the church might not

be burdened, and might be able to relieve such as were real and proper objects, ver. 16. And then follow rules with respect to elders in office, as that those that rule well, and labour in the ministry of the word, should be honourably maintained; which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture in the Old Testament, and by a saying of Christ's in the New, ver. 17, 18. that an accusation should not be received against one of such a character, but by two or three witnesses, ver. 19. and that such of them that fell into any notorious sin should be publicly rebuked, in order to make others afraid to sin, ver. 20. And these things the apostle, in the most solemn manner, charges Timothy, in the sight of God, Christ, and the angels, to observe, without partiality, ver. 21. To which he adds, that he would not have him be hastily concerned in the ordination of any one as an elder, lest he should involve himself in his sin, whereas by acting otherwise he would be free, ver. 22. and then inserts some advice to himself, to take care of his health, ver. 23. and concludes the chapter with observing, on occasion of what he had said, ver. 22. that some men's sins were open, and their characters were easily discerned, and others were private, and such were also the good works of others; which made the case either more easy or more difficult to determine what was to be done; and therefore nothing should be done suddenly and rashly, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *Rebuke not an elder*, &c.] By whom is meant, not an elder in office, but in age; for elders by office are afterwards spoken of, and particular rules concerning them are given, ver. 17, 19. Besides, an elder is here opposed, not to a private member of a church, but to young men in age; and the apostle is here giving rules to be observed in rebuking members of churches, according to their different age and sex, and not according to their office and station; and this sense is confirmed by a parallel text in Tit. ii. 2-6. Now an ancient man, a member of a church, is not to be rebuked in a sharp and severe way; the word here used signifies to smite or strike; and so the Arabic version renders it, *do not strike an elder*; meaning not with the hand, but with the tongue, giving hard words, which are as heavy blows; reproof is a smiting, and there is a gentle and a sharp one, Psal. cxli. 4. Tit. i. 13. It is with the former, and not the latter, that a man in years is to be reprov'd, when he is in a fault,

whether with respect to doctrine or practice, as such persons may be as well as younger ones; and when they are observed to err, they should not be roughly and sharply dealt with: *but entreat him as a father*; as a child should entreat a father, when he is going out of the way; give him honour and respect, fear and reverence, and persuade him to desist; entreat and beseech him to return to the right path of truth and holiness; use him as a father in Christ, that has known him that is from the beginning, and as of long standing in the church: this must be understood of lesser crimes, and not of atrocious and flagitious ones, obstinately continued in, to the great scandal of religion, and dishonour of the Gospel; for then severer methods must be used; see Isa. lxx. 20. But though this is the sense of the passage, yet the argument from hence is strong, that if an elder in years, a private member, who is ancient, and in a fault, is not to be roughly used, but gently entreated, then much more an elder in office. *And the younger men as brethren*: the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *as thy brethren*. Timothy was a young man himself; and as he was to consider an elderly man as his father, and use him accordingly; so he was to consider young men as equal with him, at least in age, and take the more freedom with them, in reproving them for their faults, and use somewhat more authority with them; and yet consider them as brethren in Christ, and reprove them in a brotherly way, and with brotherly love.

Ver. 2. *The elder women as mothers, &c.*] When they offend in any point, they are to be reasoned, and argued, and pleaded with, as children should with their mothers; see Hos. ii. 2. and are to be considered as mothers in Israel, and to be treated with great tenderness and respect. *The younger as sisters*: using the freedom as a brother may with a sister; and considering them as sisters in Christ, and in a way becoming the relation, tell them their faults freely and privately, but *with all purity*; in such manner as to preserve chastity in looks, in words, and actions.

Ver. 3. *Honour widows that are widows indeed.*] Who those are, see in ver. 5, 9, 10. The honour to be given them is not a putting of them into the office of a deaconess, in the church; which office, some think, is referred to in Acts vi. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 11. and ver. 9. and did obtain in some of the primitive churches; and it might be that some of these widows, the apostle here and hereafter speaks of, might be preferred to the rest, and be set over them, and have the care of such, who were more infirm; but then this could only be the case of some, whereas the honour here spoken of is what is to be given to all that are really widows; and therefore rather regards some external honour and respect to be shewn them, by words and actions; and especially it designs an honourable provision for them, and maintenance of them; in which sense the word is used in ver. 17. and in Matt. xv. 4, 5, 6. So, with the Jews, giving gifts to persons, and making presents to them, is called honour. When Manoaah asked the angel's name, that he might do him honour, when his saying came to pass, Judg. xiii. 17. the sense, according to them, is, "that I may inquire in what place I

may find thee, when thy prophecy is fulfilled, and "give thee דורון, *a gift*; for there is no honour but "what signifies a gift, as it is said, Numb. xxii. 17, "*honouring I will honour thee.*" So giving gifts to the poor, or providing for their maintenance, is doing them honour; and that this is the sense here, appears by what follows in the context.

Ver. 4. *But if any widow have children or nephews, &c.*] Such are not widows indeed; they are not desolate, or alone, or without persons to take care of them; their children or nephews should, and not suffer the church to be burdened with them. Wherefore it follows, *let them learn first to shew piety at home*; which some understand of the widows, who, instead of casting themselves upon the church for a maintenance, or taking upon them the office of a deaconess, to take care of others, should continue in their own families, and bring up their children and nephews in like manner as they have been brought up by their parents, which will be more pleasing and acceptable unto God; but it is better to interpret it of their children; and so the Ethiopic version expresses it, *let the children first learn to do well to their own house, or family*. It is the duty of children to take care of their parents in old age, and provide for them, when they can't for themselves: this is a lesson they ought to learn in the first place, and a duty which they ought principally to observe; they should not suffer them to come to a church for relief, but first take care of them themselves, as long as they are in any capacity to do it; and these should be their first care before any others; so to do is an act of piety, a religious action, a pious one; it is doing according to the will and law of God, and is well-pleasing to him: *and to requite their parents*: for all the sorrow, pain, trouble, care, and expenses they have been at in bearing and bringing them forth into the world, in taking care of them in their infancy, in bringing them up, giving them an education, providing food and raiment for them, and settling them in the world; wherefore to neglect them in old age, when incapable of providing for themselves, would be base ingratitude; whereas to take care of them is but a requital of them, or a repaying them for former benefits had of them: *for that is good and acceptable before God*: it is good in itself, and grateful, and well-pleasing in his sight; it is part of the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; and which, as other actions done in faith, is acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Ver. 5. *Now she that is a widow indeed, &c.*] A real widow, whom the Jews call נכורה, *a perfect one*, in opposition to one that is divorced, or a brother's widow, that has had the shoe plucked off for her: and such an one as the apostle means, is one that is *desolate, or alone*: who has neither husband to take care of her, nor children or nephews to shew kindness to her, nor any worldly substance to subsist upon: *but trusteth in God*; not in man, nor in an arm of flesh, but in the living God, the giver of all good things, the Judge of widows; who vindicates their cause, avenges the injuries done them, protects and defends them, and relieves their wants, and gives all encouragement to them, to trust in him; see Jer. xlix. 11.

* Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 109. 4.

† Jarchi in Ezek. xliv. 22.

and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day: as the widow Anna did, Luke ii. 36, 37. A widow indeed is one that has no outward dependence, betakes herself to the Lord, puts her confidence in him, and cries to him continually for a daily supply; and such an one, amidst all her poverty and meanness, is a living believer, one that lives by faith on the Lord; and is profitable, and useful to the church by her prayers and supplications made for them, as well as for herself; whereas she that is in the next verse described is just the reverse.

Ver. 6. *But she that liveth in pleasure, &c.*] Voluptuously, and deliciously; lives a wanton, loose, and licentious life, serving divers lusts and pleasures: is dead while she liveth; is dead in trespasses and sins, while she lives in them; is dead morally or spiritually, while she lives a natural or corporeal life. There is a likeness between a moral and a corporeal death. In a corporeal death, the soul is separated from the body; and in a moral death, souls are separated from God, and are alienated from the life of God; and are without Christ, who is the author and giver of spiritual life; and have not the spirit, which is the spirit of life: death defaces and deforms the man, and a moral death lies in the defacing of the image of God, first instamped on man, and in a loss of original righteousness; for as death strips a man raked of all, as he was when he came into the world, so sin, which brings on this moral death, has stripped man of his moral righteousness, whereby he is become dead in law, as well as in sin: and as in death there is a privation of all sense, so such who are dead, morally or spiritually, have no true sense of sin, and of their state and condition; are not concerned about sin, nor troubled for it, but rejoice in it, boast of it, plead for it, and declare it: between such persons and dead men there is a great similitude; as dead men are helpless to themselves, so are they; they can do nothing of, nor for themselves, in matters of a spiritual nature; and as dead men are unprofitable unto others, so are they to God, and man; and as dead men are hurtful and infectious to others, so they by their evil communications corrupt good manners; and as dead bodies are nauseous and disagreeable, so are such persons, especially to a pure and holy Being; and as dead men are deprived of their senses, so are these: they are blind, and cannot see and discern the things of the spirit of God; they have not ears to hear the joyful sound of the Gospel, so as to understand it, approve of it, and delight in it; they have no feeling, nor are they burdened with the weight of sin; nor have they any taste and savour of the things of God, but only of the things of men; so that in a spiritual sense they are dead, while they are alive. It is a common saying to be met with in Jewish writers, רשעים בחייהו קריין מתים, the wicked whilst alive are said to be dead¹. And they say² also, that men are called מתים, dead, from the time they sin; and that he that sins is accounted כמת, as a dead man³.

Ver. 7. *And these things give in charge, &c.*] Concerning rebuking persons of a different age and sex, and concerning the maintenance of widows; and par-

ticularly that children provide for their parents when helpless; and that widows trust in God, and give themselves to prayer and supplication, and not live in sin: that they may be blameless; before men, and in the view of the world, and not be chargeable with any notorious crime; though none are without blame in themselves, and before God, but as considered in Christ Jesus.

Ver. 8. *But if any provide not for his own, &c.*] Not only for his wife and children, but for his parents, when grown old, and can't help themselves: and specially for those of his own house; that is, who are of the same household of faith with him; see Gal. vi. 10. and so the Syriac version renders it, and especially those who are the children of the house of faith; for though the tie of nature obliges him to take care of them, yet that of grace makes the obligation still more strong and binding; and he must act both the inhuman and the unchristian part, that does not take care of his pious parents: wherefore it follows, he hath denied the faith; the doctrine of faith, though not in words, yet in works; and is to be considered in the same light, and to be dealt with as an apostate from the Christian religion. And is worse than an infidel: for the very Heathens are taught and directed by the light of nature to take care of their poor and aged parents. The daughter of Cimon gave her ancient father the breast, and suckled him when in prison. Eneas snatched his aged father out of the burning of Troy, and brought him out of the destruction of that city on his back; yea, these are worse than the brute creatures, and may be truly said to be without natural affections; such should go to the storks and learn of them, of whom it is reported, that the younger ones will feed the old ones, when they can't feed themselves; and when weary, and not able to fly, will carry them on their backs. The Jews⁴ have a rule or canon, which obliged men to take care of their families, which runs thus: "as a man is bound to provide for his wife, so he is bound to provide for his sons and daughters, the little ones, until they are six years old; and from thenceforward he gives them food till they are grown up, according to the order of the wise men; if he will not, they reprove him, and make him ashamed, and oblige him; yea, if he will not, they publish him in the congregation, and say such an one is cruel, and will not provide for his children; and lo, he is worse than an unclean fowl, which feeds her young."

Ver. 9. *Let not a widow be taken into the number, &c.*] That is, of widows, to be maintained by the church; though some choose to understand these words of the number of such who were made deaconesses, and had the care of the poor widows of the church committed to them; and so the Arabic version renders it, if a widow be chosen a deaconess; but the former sense is best, for it appears from ver. 16. that the apostle is still speaking of widows to be relieved: now such were not to be taken under the church's care for relief, under threescore years old; for under this age it might be supposed they would marry, and so not be desolate, but would have husbands to provide for them; or they

¹ T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 19. 2. & Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1. 2. & 84. 1. Jarchi in Gen. xi. 33. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xvii. 6.

² Tzeror Hammor, fol. 5. 2.

³ Ib. fol. 6. 2. & 127. 9.

⁴ Maimon. Hilchot Isbot, c. 12. sect. 14.

might be capable of labour, and so of taking care of themselves. The age of sixty years was by the Jews² reckoned זקנה, *old age*, but not under. *Having been the wife of one man*; that is, at one time; for second marriages are not hereby condemned, for this would be to condemn what the apostle elsewhere allows, Rom. vii. 2, 3. Nor is the sense only, that she should be one who never had more husbands than one at once; for this was not usual for women to have more husbands than one, even where polygamy obtained, or where men had more wives than one: this rather therefore is to be understood of one who had never put away her husband, and married another, which was sometimes done among the Jews; see Mark x. 12. and this being a scandalous practice, the apostle was willing to put a mark of infamy upon it, and exclude such persons who had been guilty of it from the number of widows relieved by the church.

Ver. 10. *Well reported of for good works, &c.*] Both by the members of the church, and by them that were without: particularly *if she have brought up children*; that is, *well*, as the Arabic version adds; in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; commanding them, as Abraham did, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment; training them up in the paths of religion and virtue, from which they will not so easily depart when grown up. *If she have lodged strangers*; as Abraham and Lot did, who entertained angels unawares: this may be understood of strangers in common, but especially of the brethren, ministers, and others, who came from distant parts, and travelled about to spread the Gospel of Christ. The Jews say many things בכבוד אכסניא, *in honour of hospitality*, or entertaining of strangers, especially of receiving into their houses the disciples of the wise men, and giving them food and drink, and the use of their goods; this was what gave persons a very great character with them, and highly recommended them. *If she have washed the saints' feet*; which was usual in those hot countries, where they wore sandals only, partly for refreshment, and partly for the removal of dust and filth, contracted in walking; instances of this we have in several places of Scripture, Gen. xviii. 4. and xix. 2. It was such a common piece of civility, that our Lord complains of the neglect of it towards him, Luke vii. 44. it was what he did to his own disciples, and in so doing set them an example of what they should do to one another, John xiii. 14. and being a mean and low office, and which very likely was done by the servants of the house; the sense may be, if she has condescended to do the meanest office for the saints. *If she have relieved the afflicted*; either in body, with her purse; or in mind, by visiting them, and speaking comfortably to them: in general, *if she have diligently followed every good work*; not only have done good works at certain times, but has followed that which is good; has closely pursued it, and that with great eagerness and diligence; has been constant and indefatigable in the performance of it.

Ver. 11. *But the younger widows refuse, &c.*] To admit them into the number of widows relieved by

the church; partly because they are fit for labour, and so can take care of themselves; and partly because they may marry, as the apostle afterwards advises they should, and so would have husbands to take care of them: *for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ*; that is, being at ease, and without labour, live a wanton, loose, and licentious life, and in carnal lusts and pleasures, contrary to the commands of Christ, and to the reproach and dishonour of his name: *they will marry*; not that it would be criminal in them to marry, or that second marriages are unlawful; for the apostle afterwards signifies that it was right, fit, and proper that such should marry; but his sense is, that marriage being the effect of wantonness, would not be so honourable in them, and especially after they had made application to the church for relief, and had declared themselves widows indeed, and desolate, and such as trusted in God, and gave themselves up to supplication and prayer; wherefore it would be much better for them, and more to the credit of religion, to marry first, than afterwards, and it would be best not to apply at all to the church; and if they should, it would be most advisable to reject them, for the said reasons.

Ver. 12. *Having damnation, &c.*] Not for their second marriage, but for their wantonness against Christ, or their sinful and luxurious way of living, contrary to the Gospel of Christ: and this is to be understood not of eternal damnation, which cannot, with propriety, be said to be had now; but either of the reproach and scandal cast upon them, and religion, for their wantonness; or the judgment and censure of the church for the same; or having sin, and the guilt of sin upon them, in which sense the word is used, Rom. v. 16. *Because they have cast off their first faith*; or that faith which they first professed, even the doctrine of faith; which they may be said to cast off, because they walked not according to it, their conversation was not becoming their profession of it; and though they continued to profess the same faith they did in words, yet in works they denied it, or cast it off; for which reason they fell under the notice, judgment, and condemnation of the church, as well as exposed themselves to the reproach of men.

Ver. 13. *And without they learn to be idle, &c.*] Being at ease, and without labour, living at the expense of the church: *wandering about from house to house*; having nothing else to do: such an one is what the Jews² call אלמנה שובבית, *the gadding widow*; who, as the gloss says, "goes about and visits her neighbours continually; and these are they that corrupt the world." Of this sort of women must the Jews be understood, when they say³, it is one of the properties of them to be יוצאות, *going out*, or gadding abroad, as Dinah did; and that it is another to be דברית, *talkative*, which agrees with what follows: *and not only idle, but tattlers also*; full of talk, who have always some news to tell, or report to make of the affairs of this, or the other person, or family: *and busy-bodies*; in the matters of other persons, which don't concern them: *speaking things which they ought*

² Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.

³ T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 69. 2.

² T. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 1.

³ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 3.

not: which either are not true, and, if they are, are not to be spoken of; and carried from place to place: this is a very great inconvenience, the apostle observes, arising from the admission of such young widows to be relieved and maintained at the church's charge.

Ver. 14. *I will therefore that the younger women marry, &c.*] Or *the younger widows* rather; and so some copies read; for this is not the apostle's advice to young women in general, though it will suit with them, but with younger widows in particular, of whom he is speaking: *bear children*; and bring them forth, and feed, and nourish them, and bring them up in a religious way: *guide the house*; manage domestic affairs, direct, order, or do what is proper to be done for the good of the family; which is much more commendable than to throw themselves upon the church, and live an idle and wanton life, and after that marry: and so *give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*; that is, either that Satan, the grand adversary of the saints, might have no opportunity to reproach them, and cast in their teeth their unbecoming walk, or accuse them before the throne; or that any enemy of the Christian religion might have no room nor reason to speak evilly of Christ, his Gospel, truths, and ordinances, on account of the disorderly conversation of any that profess his name; or that the *ο αντιχριστος*, the great opposer of Christ, the man of sin, and son of perdition, even antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 4. might have no handle from hence to speak reproachfully of marriage, and forbid it, under a pretence of sanctity, as in ch. iv. 3.

Ver. 15. *For some are already turned aside after Satan.*] Meaning some of those younger widows, whom the apostle knew, and had observed to have departed from the faith they first professed, and turned their backs on Christ, and gave themselves up to carnal lusts and pleasures, and an idle and impure life and conversation, walked according to the course of this world, and the prince of it, by whom they were led captive at his will; for so every one that apostatizes from a profession of Christ, and follows either false teachers, and their doctrines, as the Gnostics that condemned marriage, or any sinful and impure way of life, may be said to turn aside after Satan; and as the apostle knew this to be fact, from his own observation, he therefore gives the above advice.

Ver. 16. *If any man or woman that believeth have widows, &c.*] That is, if any member of a church, whether a brother or a sister, have mothers or grandmothers, or any near relations widows, in mean circumstances, and incapable of taking care of themselves: *let them relieve them*; out of their own substance; which is what the apostle before calls shewing piety at home, and requiting their own parents: *and let not the church be charged*; or burdened with the maintenance of them: *that it may relieve them that are widows indeed*; that the church may be in a better capacity, its stock not being expended on others, to supply the wants of those who are really widows; who have neither husbands, nor children, nor any relations, to provide for them; nor any thing in the world to support themselves with.

Ver. 17. *Let the elders that rule well, &c.*] By whom are meant not elders in age; though such ought to be

honoured and respected, and to have a proper maintenance either from their children or the church, when reduced, and incapable of helping themselves; but then this is what should be done to all such persons, whereas the elders here are particularly described as good rulers and labourers in the word and doctrine; besides, elders in age are taken notice of before; nor are civil magistrates intended, such as were called the elders of Israel; for though such as discharge their office well are worthy of honour, yet it does not belong to any of them to labour in preaching the doctrine of the Gospel: nor are deacons designed, for they are never called elders in Scripture; nor is their work ruling, but serving of tables; nor does the ministry of the word belong to them as such; nor is any maintenance allowed them from the church on account of their office: nor are lay-elders meant, who rule, but teach not; since there are no such officers appointed in the churches of Christ; whose only officers are bishops or elders and deacons: wherefore the qualifications of such are only given in a preceding chapter. There are no other that rule in churches, but such who also speak to them the word of God; wherefore by him that rules, and the labourer in word and doctrine, are not meant two distinct orders, but different persons of the same order; some of these ruling well, but do not take so much pains in the ministry of the word; whilst others of them both rule well and labour in the word, and who are to be reckoned deserving of the honour hereafter mentioned. These are called *elders*, because they are commonly chosen out of the senior members of the churches, though not always, Timothy is an exception to this; and because of their senile gravity and prudence, which were necessary in them: and they may be said to *rule*, because they are set in the highest place in the church, and over others in the Lord, who are to submit themselves to them, and obey them. Christ's church is a kingdom, he is King of it, and his ministering servants are rulers under him; and who rule *well* when they rule not with force and cruelty, or lord it over God's heritage; but when they govern according to the laws which Christ the King and lawgiver has prescribed; when they explain and enforce those laws, and shew them to the people, and see that they are put in execution; and when they discharge this part of their work with diligence and prudence. Now let such be *counted worthy of double honour*; which some understand of honour in this world, and in the world to come, and which they have; they are honoured now by Christ, though reproached by the world, by being called unto, qualified for, and succeeded in the work of the ministry; and when they have faithfully discharged it, they will be honoured by him hereafter, and be introduced into his joy with commendation, and shine as the stars for ever and ever. But rather this is to be understood both of that outward respect that is to be shewn them by words and actions; and of a sufficient maintenance that is to be provided for them; in which sense the word *honour* is used in this chapter before; see the note on ver. 3. and some think that the comparison is between the widows before mentioned, and these elders; that if poor widows in the church are to be honoured and maintained, then much more the officers

of it; these are worthy of more honour, even of double honour, or a larger and a more honourable maintenance: and indeed this seems to be the meaning of the word *double* when used both in an ill and in a good sense; see Rev. xviii. 6. 2 Kings ii. 9. and is an allusion to the first-born among the Jews, who was to have a double portion of his father's goods, Deut. xxi. 17. and so may here signify, that the ministers of the Gospel ought not to have a short and scanty, but a large and honourable maintenance. *Especially they who labour in the word and doctrine*; which lies in a constant reading of the Scriptures, the word of God, and diligently searching into them, and comparing them together, in order to find out the mind and will of God in them; in a daily meditation upon them, and study of them; and in frequent and fervent wrestling with God, or prayer to him, to give an understanding of them; and in endeavouring to find out the sense of difficult passages, which are hard to be understood; and in providing for the different cases and circumstances of hearers, that every one may have a portion; and in the choice of apt and proper words to express truth in, to the capacities of all: this is labouring in the word in private; besides which there is labouring in doctrine, in public; in preaching the Gospel constantly, boldly, and faithfully; in holding it fast against all opposition, and in defending it by argument, both by word and writing. The phrase seems to be Jewish, a like one is often to be met with in Jewish writings: Rabbenu was sitting לעי באורייתא, "and labouring in the law before the congregation of the Babylonians at Tzipore^b;" and again^c, "R. Jonah gave tithes to R. Acha bar Aila, not because he was a priest, but because he לעי באורייתא, laboured in the law;" and they say^d, "there is no greater reward for a man in the world, as for him לעי באורייתא, who labours in the law;" hence we read^e of עמל תורה, the labour of the law, which they say the mouth is made for, and of labourers in the law^f; and such persons they judged worthy of the greatest respect, and to be preferred to others. For, they say^g, "if a congregation is obliged to give a salary to a doctor (or ruler of the synagogue), and to a minister of the congregation, and it is not in their power to give to both; if the ruler is a famous man, and great in the law, and expert in doctrine, he is to be preferred, but if not the minister of the congregation is to be preferred."

Ver. 18. *For the Scripture saith, &c.*] In Deut. xxv. 4. thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; see the notes on 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. The ox, for its strength and labour, is a fit emblem of a Gospel minister; and its treading the corn out of the husk and ear aptly represents the beating out, as it were, of Gospel truths, by the ministers of it, their making the doctrines of the Gospel clear, plain, and evident to the understandings of men; wherefore, as the ox was not muzzled when it trod out the corn, but might freely and largely feed upon it, so such who labour in the preaching of the Gospel ought to have a sufficient

and competent maintenance: for which purpose this citation is made, as also the following: and the labourer is worthy of his reward; which seems to be taken from Luke x. 7. which Gospel was now written, and in the hands of the apostle; who here, by two testimonies, the one from Moses, and the other from Christ, supports the right of the honourable maintenance of the ministers of the Gospel.

Ver. 19. *Against an elder receive not an accusation, &c.*] A charge of any crime: but before two or three witnesses; good sufficient ones, who are capable of well-attesting the fact: a charge against a pastor of a church is not to be easily received; it should not be listened to privately, unless it clearly appears by such a number of witnesses; nor should it be brought publicly before the church, until it is privately and previously proved, by a sufficient number of credible witnesses, that it is really fact. The sense is, not that judgment shall not pass against him but by such a number of witnesses, or that the evidence upon his trial shall consist of such a number; for this is no other than what ought to be in the case of a private member, and of every man, according to Deut. xix. 15. But the sense is, that the affair of an elder shall not be put upon a trial, much less sentence pass, until it has been privately proved against him, by proper testimonies, beyond all exception; only in such a case, should a church admit a charge against its elder. The reason of this rule is, because of his high office and the honour of the church, which is concerned in his, as well as of religion; for it carries in it some degree of scandal for such a person to be charged, even though he may be cleared; as also because of his many enemies, who through envy, malice, and the instigation of Satan, would be continually pestering the church with charges, could they be easily admitted.

Ver. 20. *Them that sin rebuke before all, &c.*] This the apostle adds to the above rule, to shew that he was far from screening wicked ministers, or elders, guilty of flagitious crimes, and gross enormities: for these words, though they may be applied unto, and may hold good of all offenders, that are members of churches; yet they seem chiefly to regard elders, even such who sin, who continue to sin, who live in sin, in some notorious sin or another; which is evident and known, to the great scandal of religion, and dishonour of the Gospel: and so some read the words, *them that sin before all, rebuke*: not only admonish once and again, but degrade them from their office, and withdraw from them, as from other disorderly persons, and cut them off, and cast them out of the church, and that in a public manner; and so the Arabic version renders it, *before the congregation*: which was done only in case of notorious offences: and which rule is observed by the Jews, and runs thus^h; "a wise man, an elder in wisdom, and so a prince, or the father of the sanhedrim, that sins, they don't excommunicate him (with Niddui) always בפּרדּוּס, publicly, unless he does as Jeroboam the son of Nebat and his compa-

^b Bereshit Rabba, sect. 33. fol. 28. 3.

^c T. Hieros. Massor, Shenit, fol. 36. 2.

^d Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 4. & passim.

^e T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 2.

^f Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 4.

^g Jore Dea, Tit. 251. sect. 13.

^h Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 1.

"nions; but when he sins other sins, they chastise him privately." The end is, that *others also may fear*: that other elders, or other members of the church, or both, may fear to do the same evil things, lest they incur the same censure and punishment: the Syriac version reads, *other men*; and the Arabic version, *the rest of the people*. The phrase seems to be taken out of Deut. xiii. 11. and xvii. 13.

Ver. 21. *I charge thee before God, &c.*] Who sees and knows all things, and is a righteous and most impartial Judge; with whom there is no respect of persons, and in whose place and stead, the judges of the earth, both civil and ecclesiastical, stand; and to whom they are accountable for the judgment they pass on men and things; and in whose house or church Timothy was, whose business he was doing, and which ought to be done, with a view to his glory; wherefore the apostle gives him this solemn charge as in his sight: *and the Lord Jesus Christ*: who also is God omniscient; and is Jesus Christ the righteous, the Head of the church, and the Judge of quick and dead; before whose judgment-seat all must appear; where there will be no respect of persons, nor any partiality used. *And the elect angels*; by whom are meant not some of the angels, the more choice, excellent, and principal among them; as the seven angels in Tobit xii. 15. among whom Raphael is said to be one. But this is a spurious account, and not to be credited; nor was it an ancient tradition of the Jews, that there were seven principal angels; see the note on Rev. i. 4. The Chaldee paraphrase on Gen. xi. 7. is mistaken by Mr. Mede, where not *seven*, but *seventy* angels are spoken of: but here all the good angels are designed, called sometimes the holy angels, and sometimes the angels in heaven; and here, by the Syriac version, *his angels*; either the angels of God, as they are sometimes styled; or the angels of Jesus Christ, being made by him, and being ministers to him, and for him; and also *elect*, because chosen to stand in that integrity and holiness, in which they were created; and to enjoy everlasting glory and happiness, whilst others of the same species were passed by and left to fall from their first estate, and appointed to everlasting wrath and damnation: so that it may be observed that God's election takes place in angels as well as in men; and which flows from the sovereign will and pleasure of God; and was made in Christ, who is their head, and by whom they are confirmed in their happy state; and in which they must be considered in the pure mass, since they never fell; and which may serve to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of election with respect to men. Now before these the apostle charges Timothy; since they are near to the saints, encamp about them, minister unto them, and are concerned for their good; are spectators of their actions, and witnesses of what is done in churches, since they frequently attend the assemblies of the saints, and will descend with Christ, when he comes to judge the world in righteousness: the mention of them in this charge gives no countenance to the worshipping of angels, since they are not set upon a level with God and Christ; nor is the charge delivered before them as judges, but as witnesses; nor

are the words in the form of an oath, but of a charge; the angels are not sworn by, or appealed unto; only in their presence is this solemn charge given; and it may be observed, that even inanimate creatures, the heavens and the earth, are sometimes called upon as witnesses; and besides, it was usual with the Jews to make such kind of obtestations. So Agrippa¹, in his speech to the Jews, exhorting them to fidelity to the Romans, beseeches them by their holy things, *και των ιερων αγγελων του Θεου, and the holy angels of God*, and their common country, that is, the good of it, that they would remain steadfast. What is the amount of this charge follows, *that thou observe those things*: either all that are contained in the epistle, or more particularly the rules prescribed in this chapter; concerning rebuking members of a different age and sex, providing for poor widows, and taking care of the ministers of the Gospel, and chiefly what regards the discipline of the church with respect to the elders of it; as not to admit an accusation against them, unless it is sufficiently evident, and yet not connive at notorious sinners, but rebuke them publicly; and this charge belongs not only to Timothy, but to the whole church, and to all succeeding ministers and churches in all ages. The manner in which these things are to be observed is, *without preferring one before another*; or, as the words may be rendered, *without prejudgment*; that is, without prejudging a case, or determining, before hearing, how it shall be; or as the Syriac version renders it, *in nothing let thy mind be prepossessed*; the sense is, that he should attend to any case that should come before him in the church, without prejudice or prepossession, and hearken to what is said on both sides; and judge impartially, and not in haste, but weigh well and consider the evidence that is given, and then determine as the case appears; so the Arabic version renders it, *without haste*, or precipitancy; to which agrees the advice of the men of the great congregation, or Ezra's congregation, who were in his time, and succeeded him; *הווי מותנים בדין, be slow in judgment*², or long at it; that so by strict and close examination, things not known at first may be discovered: and when judgment is passed, it should not be through affection to one party, and disrespect to another; which is called in Scripture a respect of persons, and here a preferring one to another; and which is further explained by adding, *doing nothing by partiality*; or by inclining to one side more than to another. A judge should not preponderate to either side, but should hold the balance of justice even, and do nothing to turn the scale one way or another, but as the weight and truth of the evidence direct; and such a rule should be observed in all church-affairs.

Ver. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man, &c.*] Which is not to be understood of removing censures from off offenders, upon their repentance, which should not be suddenly and hastily done; and which it seems in later times has been done by imposition of hands; but since no such custom obtained in the apostle's time, and a taking off of censures is never in Scripture signified by this phrase, it cannot be intended here; but rather the admission of persons into the work of the ministry,

¹ Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4.

² Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1. Vid. Maimon in ib.

and the installing of them into the office of an elder or pastor; upon whom, in these early times, hands were laid by the apostles, whereby gifts were conveyed, as on Timothy; see the note on ch. iv. 14. And from this rite this act was so called, as it might be when it was laid aside; just as, with the Jews, an ordination of one of their doctors is called *סמיכה*, *imposition of hands*, though they performed it by words, and not by laying on of hands; which now by them is not judged necessary¹: and then the sense is, do not hastily and at once admit any person into the sacred work of the ministry, or constitute him an elder, or pastor, over a church of Christ; but let him be first proved, and let it plainly appear, that he has the grace of God in him, and has gifts for public service bestowed on him; that he is sound in faith, and of a good life and conversation; and a man of uprightness and fidelity; *neither be partaker of other men's sins*; of any of the members of the church; by doing the same, joining with them therein, or by consenting to them and taking pleasure in them, as done by others; by con-
 viving at them, and not restraining them, nor reproving for them: or rather this refers to rash and hasty ordinations of ministers; and either regards the sins of those who lay hands suddenly on men, and with whom the apostle would not have Timothy join, that he might not be a partner in their sins; or else the sins of those that are ordained, and these, whether before or after their ordination; which such involve themselves in, who either rashly and ignorantly ordain such persons; and much more if they do it, knowing them to be such: and these sins may include both immorality and error; see 2 John 10, 11. *Keep thyself pure*; not from his own sins, the sin of nature, in-dwelling sin, and actual transgressions; no man is, or can be pure, from either of these; nor can any man keep himself; Christ only is able to keep them from falling. But the apostle's meaning is, that he should keep himself pure from the sins of others, by not rashly and suddenly admitting any into the ministry; just as the apostle was pure from the blood of all men, by faithfully preaching the Gospel; so he suggests that Timothy would be pure from partaking of other men's sins, by observing a strict discipline in the house of God. Some refer this to chastity of body, in opposition to the sin of uncleanness, which his youthful age and the temptations about him might expose him to the danger of; and which is scandalous and infamous in a minister of the word. Which sense serves to shew the connexion of the following words, which otherwise seem to stand unconnected.

Ver. 23. *Drink no longer water, &c.*] Though it was commendable in him to keep under his body, as the apostle did, by abstemious living, and not pamper the flesh and encourage the lusts of it, and so preserve purity and chastity; yet it was proper that he should take care of his health, that it was not impaired by too much severity, and so he is incapable of doing the work of the Lord. And it seems by this, that his long and only use of water for his drink had been prejudicial to his health: wherefore the following advice

was judged proper: *but use a little wine*; some, by *a little wine*, understand not the quantity, but the quality of the wine; a thin, small, weak wine, or wine mixed with water; and so the Ethiopic version renders the words, *drink no more simple water*, (or water only,) *but mix a little wine*; though rather the quantity is intended, and which is mentioned. Not as though there was any danger of Timothy's running into an excess of drinking; but for the sake of others, lest they should abuse such a direction, to indulge themselves in an excessive way; and chiefly to prevent the scoffs of profane persons; who otherwise would have insinuated that the apostle indulged intemperance and excess: whereas this advice to the use of wine, was not for pleasure, and for the satisfying of the flesh, but for health, *for thy stomach's sake*; to help digestion, and to remove the disorders which might attend it: the Ethiopic version renders it, *for the pain of thy liver*, and *for thy perpetual disease*; which last might be a pain in his head, arising from the disorder of his stomach: the last clause we render, *and thine often infirmities*; or weaknesses of body, occasioned by hard studies, frequent ministrations, and indefatigable pains and labours he endured in spreading the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 24. *Some men's sins are open before-hand, &c.*] Some men are such open and notorious sinners, that there is no need of any inquiry about them, or any examination of them; or any witnesses to be called to their character, in order to pass judgment concerning them; they even prevent and supersede any formal process about them. With such persons, the apostle intimates, Timothy could have no difficulty upon him, what to do with them; should they be proposed for the ministry, he would know at once what to do with them; namely, reject them. There would be no danger of his laying hands suddenly on such; for the following phrase, *going before to judgment*, is not to be understood of God's judgment, or of the last and future judgment of the great day, but of human judgment: it is true indeed that some men's sins are manifest and barefaced, before that day comes; whilst others are so private, that they will not be known till that day declares them, and brings to light the hidden things of darkness: and much such a way of speaking is used by the Jews; who say^m, "whoever commit-
 " teth one transgression, (a notorious one,) in this
 " world, it joins to him, and goes before him ליום הדין
 " to the day of judgment." But this sense agrees not with the context; and with what propriety soever it may be said, of some men's sins going before to judgment, it cannot be said with any, that others follow after judgment; since at the general judgment, every work, both good and bad, with every secret thing, will be brought into it; and nothing will follow after that: wherefore the next clause, *and some men they follow after*; that is, some men's sins follow after, is to be understood of their following after human judgment; or of their appearing in the light after judgment has been passed upon them, which before were hid: and the sense of the whole is this, that the characters

¹ Mifn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Juchasin, fol. 60. 1. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 1, 2.

^m T. Bab. Sota, fol. 3. 2. Vid. Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1.

of some men are so well known, and it is so plain a case, that they are destitute of the grace of God; have not ministerial gifts; or are unsound in the faith; or are men of immoral lives and conversations; so that there can be no dispute about them, whether they are to be admitted into the ministry of the word or rejected. But there are other persons who may be proposed, whose sins or errors are so private, that they may not be known; and yet may appear afterwards; wherefore it is proper to take time, and not be too hasty, or lay hands suddenly on men.

Ver. 25. *Likewise also the good works of some are manifest before-hand, &c.*] The characters of some men, on the other hand, are so fair and bright; and it is so clear a point, that they have received the grace of God in truth; and have a rich furniture for the ministry; and are sound in the doctrine of faith; and

are men of such godly lives and conversations, that they prevent any formal inquiry, examination, and judgment; and there can be no difficulty in admitting them at once: and therefore the above rule is not designed for such persons, but to guard against those with whom things don't appear so very clear and manifest: *and they that are otherwise cannot be hid*; if they are men of bad principles or practices, they will be discovered in time; for there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed; time will make all things manifest; their errors and sins will break out, and be exposed: and therefore it is right to wait a while, and not to be quick in the reception of them into the Gospel ministry; for otherwise, much mischief may be done to the souls of men, and much dishonour brought on the ways and doctrines of Christ.

C H A P. VI.

IN this chapter the apostle gives some instructions to servants; lays down some rules, by which to judge of false teachers; advises to contentment; exposes the sin of covetousness; exhorts Timothy to avoid sin, and follow after things that are good, to be constant in his warfare, the issue of which would be eternal life; gives him a charge with respect to himself, and orders him what he should enjoin others, particularly the rich, and what he should do himself; and wishes grace unto him, to enable him to discharge his duty. The instructions to servants are of two sorts; first, to such who had unbelieving masters, whom they ought to honour and obey; that the name and doctrine of Christ be not evil-spoken of: and then to such as had believing masters, that they despise them not being brethren, but should the more cheerfully serve them; because believers in Christ, beloved of God, and partakers of his grace; which duties are worthy to be insisted upon in the Gospel ministry, ver. 1, 2. and such who teach not these things are to be accounted false teachers, whose characters are given in several particulars; as men unsound, proud, ignorant, quarrelsome, and covetous, and to be withdrawn from, ver. 3, 4, 5. And from hence the apostle exhorts to contentment; and argues for it, partly from the gain of it along with godliness; and partly from the consideration of what men are, when they come into the world, and what they will be, when they go out of it; and also from having food and raiment, which include all the necessaries of life, ver. 6, 7, 8. And then he exposes the folly and danger of covetousness, being the root of all evil; an enemy to true religion and godliness; and the cause of ruin and destruction, ver. 9, 10. Wherefore he addresses himself to Timothy, in particular, to avoid every thing of this kind; and to follow the reverse of those things that were in the false teachers; to fight the good fight of faith, and then lay hold on eternal life; to which he encourages him, from his vocation, and the profession he had made, in a very public manner, ver. 11, 12. And then follows a solemn charge unto him, given him before God and Christ; that he would observe what had been commanded him in the most perfect manner,

until the appearance of Christ; which is certain, and may be concluded will be, from the various epithets of God; who will make him manifest in his own time, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. To which is added an injunction on Timothy to charge rich men not to be elated with their riches, nor trust in them, since they are uncertain things; but in God, from whom they have received such a plentiful measure of them; that they be beneficent to others, which will turn to their own advantage in the issue, ver. 17, 18, 19. And to close all, he is very urgent upon Timothy, to keep the Gospel pure and incorrupt, he was intrusted with; and avoid every thing that was opposite to it, as profane and mere babbling, and having only a shew of knowledge, but not that itself; and the rather, since some profane teachers and professors of the Gospel had erred from it: and concludes with wishing him grace, to enable him to attend to the several instructions which had been given him, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *Let as many servants as are under the yoke, &c.*] Not under the yoke of the law of God, or under the yoke of Christ; though the servants here spoken of were under both; but *under the yoke of government*, as the Arabic version renders it; that is, under the yoke of men, in a state of servitude, under the government of masters, and in their service; being either apprentices to them, or bought with their money, or hired by them: *count their own masters worthy of all honour*; and give it to them; which includes subjection to them; obedience to all their lawful commands, which are consistent with religion and reason, with the laws of God, and with the light of nature; and all reverence of them, and respect unto them, expressed by words and gestures: and all this is to be given to their own masters to whom they belong; who have a property in them; whose money or goods they are; and that be they what they will, as to their religion and temper; whether they be believers or unbelievers; or whether they be good and gentle, kind and humane; or whether they be froward, peevish, and ill-natured; *that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed*; by unbelieving masters, who, should their believing servants be refractory, disobedient, rebellious, or dis-

respectful, would be apt to say, what a God do these men serve? is this their religion? is this the Gospel they talk of? does their doctrine teach them such things, to be disobedient to their masters, and carry it disrespectfully to them? does it disengage them from the laws of nature, and dissolve the bonds of civil society, and destroy the relation that subsists between man and man? If this be the case, away with their God and their doctrine too. Wherefore the apostle exhorts, that if believing servants have any regard to that name they are called by, and call upon, and to the doctrine of the Gospel they have embraced and professed; that they would be obedient and respectful to their masters; that they may have no occasion to speak reproachfully of God, and of the Gospel.

Ver. 2. *And they that have believing masters, &c.*] That believe in one God, in opposition to the Gentiles, that held many gods, and in Jesus Christ, in distinction from the Jews; who believed in him with the heart, and professed him with their mouths, and held the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. What is said before, is said to servants that had unbelieving masters; who would be ready to blaspheme, should they act amiss. Servants were under a snare both ways, through the insinuations of false teachers; who suggested, that their servitude was not consistent with their Christian liberty; that they ought not to serve wicked men, because being called of God, they were advanced above them; nor good men, because they were upon a level with them. But the apostle teaches another doctrine; *let them not despise them, because they are brethren;* of the same family named of Christ, and of the same household of God, and of faith, and have the same father; for though with regard to spiritual blessings, privileges, and ordinances, they were equal; yet not with regard to temporal and civil affairs; and therefore should not treat them with less respect, or be more backward to obey their lawful commands, on that account: *but rather do them service;* more heartily, and with a greater good will, as to the Lord; these masters belonging to him, and being engaged in his cause; which they, their servants, by yielding a cheerful obedience to them, are assisting in: and the rather, *because they are faithful;* in lesser things, in giving to them, their servants, what is just and equal, proper food and suitable raiment, and their just wages; and in using their wealth and riches in a good way, for the interest of Christ, the assistance of the poor saints, and the spreading of the Gospel; and so in greater things, by holding fast the profession of their faith, adhering to Christ, his truths and ordinances: or *because they are believing, or believers;* it is the same word as before used; and therefore they should be precious to them, and high in their esteem; for faith is a precious grace, and such as have it are chosen of God, and precious: *and beloved;* of God, who had chosen them to salvation; and of Christ, who had redeemed them by his blood; and of the saints, who are taught of God to love one another; and this is another reason why they should be served, and not despised; and a third follows: *partakers of the benefit;* of the free grace of God; of redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ, and of all spiritual blessings in him; and therefore should serve

them the more cheerfully. The Syriac version renders it, *such as enjoy rest in, or are refreshed by their service;* or *by their service to them,* as the Arabic version: the sense is, that when believing servants serve their believing masters readily and faithfully, their masters are well-pleased with them, delight in their service, and consider it as a benefit to them, and a kindness done them; and which therefore should animate and encourage them to serve them. Some understand these characters of *faithful and beloved,* of the servants themselves; that because they are such; therefore they should serve, and not despise their believing masters; and particularly the last clause, which may be rendered, *who in return receive a benefit* from them, as food, raiment, and wages; and besides, they are used with humanity and kindness, and in a manner becoming Christians; to which agrees the Ethiopic version, which renders it, *who will receive and help you;* will take care of you, and assist you, and supply you with what is proper and necessary: *these things teach and exhort;* the Syriac and Arabic versions add *them;* the servants. The apostle was not above instructing and exhorting persons of such a capacity, and in so low a state of life; and it became Timothy to do so likewise; and every minister of the word.

Ver. 3. *If any man teach otherwise, &c.*] Or another doctrine, as the Syriac version renders it; a doctrine different from what the apostle had now taught, concerning the duty of servants to their masters; as did the false teachers, who despised dominion or government; not only civil government, and so spoke evil of rulers and magistrates; and church-government, and therefore reviled the apostles, elders, and pastors of churches; but family-government, and encouraged disobedience to parents and masters; see 2 Pet. ii. 10: Jude ver. 8. or *teach another doctrine,* from that of the Bible, of Christ and his apostles: *and consent not to wholesome words;* such as the doctrines of the Gospel; they are food to the saints, milk for babes, and meat for strong men; they are sweet and savoury food to a spiritual taste; they are nourishing, and the means of a spiritual growth; they are salutary and healthful; they have no corruption, taint, or poison in them: *even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ;* the doctrines which he preached when on earth, who was anointed with the spirit of God without measure, to preach the Gospel, and by whom all the doctrines of grace and truth came; or the doctrines relating to Christ, to his person, offices, grace, righteousness, sacrifice and satisfaction; to what he is, has done, does, and will do. *And to the doctrine which is according to godliness.* The whole Gospel is the mystery of godliness; it is the truth that is after it, and it has a tendency to promote true godliness in heart and life: even such is the nature of the more distinguishing doctrines of it, which are charged with licentiousness; as the doctrine of eternal and personal election; for though it is not of works, but of grace, yet holiness is a means fixed in election, and an end secured by it; it is the source and spring of all real holiness; holiness of heart is an evidence of it to believers themselves; and holiness of life is an evidence of it to the world; nor can any thing more powerfully engage men to it than the consideration

that they are chosen of God to grace and glory. The covenant of grace, which is absolute and unconditional, provides for both internal and external holiness; and the promises of it, under the influence of grace, powerfully operate in the minds of believers, to the cleansing of them from all impurity of flesh and spirit, and to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord: and so the doctrines of free justification, by the righteousness of Christ, which does not make void the law, nor discourage good works; and of Christ's bearing the sins of his people, and making satisfaction for them, that they being dead to sin might live unto righteousness; and of redemption of them by the blood of Christ from sin, Satan, and the law, which is done that they might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and of the effectual vocation of them, which is with an holy calling; and of their final perseverance in grace and holiness, are all of them doctrines according to godliness, and greatly encourage and promote it: now, whoever does not accede to these truths, and acquiesce in them, but differs from them, and teaches the reverse of them, he is a false teacher, and is all that the apostle says in the next words.

Ver. 4. *He is proud, &c.*] Or swelled and puffed up with a vain conceit of himself and his own notions, and treats with an haughty air the faithful ministers of the word. The doctrines of grace are of an humbling nature, especially when they are spiritually and experimentally understood and received; but notional knowledge, knowledge of natural things, and the doctrines of men, such as are of their own invention, fill the mind with pride and vanity: *knowing nothing*; as he ought to know; not any thing that is solid and substantial; nothing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: he may have knowledge of natural and civil things, but not of spiritual ones; he may have collected a medley of knowledge together, but what will be of no real use either to himself or others: *but doting about questions and strifes of words*: or he is *sick or diseased*; his mind is distempered; he is like one in a fever, that is delirious; his head is light and wild; his fancy is roving, and he talks of things he knows not what; his head runs upon *questions*: foolish and unlearned ones, about the law and works, and the necessity of them to justification and salvation; concerning genealogies, and other fruitless and unprofitable subjects: *and strifes of words*: mere logomachies; contending and quarrelling more about words than things, which tend to no profit, but to the subverting and confounding of hearers. The ill effects of which are as follow: *whereof cometh envy*; at the superior gifts and talents of others; at their success, and any little degree of honour and respect they have from others; which shews that such men, in whom this vice is a governing one, are carnal men, for this is a work of the flesh; and that they are destitute of charity, or the grace of love, which envieth not: also from hence comes *strife*: contention, quarrelling; the peace and comfort of particular persons, and even of whole communities, are broken and destroyed hereby; for foolish and unlearned questions gender strifes, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. which are very unbecoming the servants of the Lord, and very uncomfortable to the churches of Christ: yea, these also produce *railings*; at one another, and especially at

the faithful ministers of the Gospel; for when the false teachers cannot overcome them by Scripture and argument, they fall to railing and reviling of them: or entertain *evil surmises*; groundless suspicions: or from hence follow, as the words may be rendered, *wicked opinions*: concerning the being, perfections, purposes, and providence of God; concerning the person and offices of Christ; concerning the law and Gospel, grace and good works; and so the Syriac version renders it, *an evil opinion of the mind*.

Ver. 5. *Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, &c.*] Who being corrupt in their principles, and corrupters of the word of God, dispute in a very froward and perverse way, rubbing and galling one another, and so provoke to wrath and anger, and every evil work: *and destitute of the truth of Christ*, who is the truth, knowing nothing of him spiritually and savingly; and of the Gospel, the word of truth; and also of the truth of grace, being carnal, sensual, and having not the spirit of God. *Supposing that gain is godliness*; such were Simon Magus and his followers, and other false teachers, who made merchandise of men, looked every one for his gain from his quarter, and acted as if there was nothing in religion but worldly profit and gain; these served themselves, their own bellies, and selfish interests, and not the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore the apostle gives the following advice to Timothy, and through him to all ministers and churches, *from such withdraw thyself*: do not come near them; have nothing to do with them; do not lay hands on them, or admit them into the ministry; do not suffer them to preach, or encourage them by hearing them: if in the church, cast them out; have no communion with them, neither in a civil nor in a religious way; avoid all conversation with them. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions omit this clause; and it is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in Beza's Claromontane Exemplar, but is in other copies.

Ver. 6. *But godliness with contentment is great gain.*] By *godliness* is not meant any particular grace, but all the graces of the spirit of God; as faith, hope, love, fear, &c. the whole of internal religion, as it shews itself in outward worship, and in all acts of holiness of life and conversation; and which the doctrine that is according to godliness teaches and engages to; and this is gain, very great gain indeed. A man possessed of true godliness is a gaining, thriving, man: such as are godly, or truly gracious, they are come into good and happy circumstances, and are possessors of the true, solid, satisfying, durable, and unsearchable riches of grace; all their debts are paid, they are richly clothed, and deliciously fed, and are in a good family, even the household of God, who before were in debt, arrayed in rags, were in a starving condition, and strangers and foreigners; yea, they are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, and have both a right and a meetness for the heavenly inheritance; they are now made kings and priests to God, and, in the present state of things, have God to be their portion, and exceeding great reward; they have an interest in Christ, and in all spiritual blessings in him, and have the spirit as the earnest of their future inheritance; they are rich in faith, and in good works; their souls, which were lost, are gained, and shall be saved with an everlasting sal-

vation; and ere long they will be possessed of all the riches of glory, signified by a house not made with hands, a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, an incorruptible inheritance, and a kingdom and glory: how great is the gain of godliness! And what adds to this gain, and now goes along with it, is *contentment*; for this is not to be considered as the condition of godliness being great gain, as if it was not so without it; but as the effect of godliness, what that produces, and as a part of its gain. The word here used signifies *sufficiency*; and so it is rendered in the Vulgate Latin version: it designates a competency of the good things of this life; and what that is, is expressed in ver. 8. and such God gives to them that fear him, his godly ones, who shall lack no good thing convenient for them; for godliness has the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come; and God does give to such all things pertaining to life and godliness, even all things richly to enjoy. The word indeed properly signifies *self-sufficiency*, which in its strict sense, only belongs to God, who is *El-Shaddai*, God all-sufficient and self-sufficient; but here it intends such a sufficiency as a man himself judges to be so; for this phrase does not so much design the thing itself, which is a sufficiency, as the opinion, the sense which the godly man has of it, who himself judges it, as Jacob did, to be enough; and such a man is content with what he has, and thankful for it, submits quietly to the will of God, and patiently bears every adverse providence: and this is now the fruit and effect of godliness, or true grace, and is a considerable part of that gain which godliness brings with it; and such a man is a happy man indeed, let his circumstances be what they will. The Jews have a saying^a, that "he is a rich man whose spirit rests in, or is contented with his riches;" that is, as the gloss explains it, "who rejoices in his portion, be it little or much;" thus, though godliness is not gain, nor gain godliness, in the sense of the false teachers, yet is it true gain in a spiritual sense.

Ver. 7. *For we brought nothing into this world, &c.*] Which is a reason both clearly shewing that godliness is great gain, since those who have it brought nothing into the world with them but sin, and yet are now in such happy circumstances as before described; and that godly persons should be content with what they have, even of worldly things, seeing they are so much more than they had when they came into the world, into which they came naked; and which should be a quieting consideration under the most stripping providences; see Job i. 21. and it is *certain we can carry nothing out*: as men come into the world, so will they go out of it; nor will they need their worldly substance after death, any more than they did before they were born; and what they now have, and use not, will then be lost to them, whatever gain it may be to others: wherefore it becomes them cheerfully to use what they have, and be content therewith; see Eccl. v. 15, 16. The Jews have a saying like this^b, that "as a man comes (into the world), בְּרִישׁוֹ, simply or nakedly, so he goes out in like manner."

Ver. 8. *And having food and raiment, &c.*] Food includes all things necessary to be ate and drank, of

which there is a great variety, and is here expressed in the plural number; and *raiment* every necessary covering, as the word used signifies, and includes an habitation, which is a cover and shelter from the inclemencies of the weather. And now having all these comforts and necessaries of life, food to eat, and drink to extinguish thirst and refresh, raiment to put on, and a house to dwell in, *let us be therewith content*: there is very good reason why the saints should be content; since more than these things cannot be enjoyed; and these they have with a blessing, and as a fruit and token of the love of God to them; these were all that Jacob desired, Agur petitioned for, and Christ directs his disciples daily to pray for; and which to have, is to have enough, a proper sufficiency and competency: the words may be rendered, *we shall be content with them*: which the apostle could say for himself, Timothy, and others, who had been content, even when they wanted these things. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, *we are content*; and the Syriac version, *food and raiment are sufficient for us*; and so the apostle sets himself, and others, as examples of contentment to be imitated and followed.

Ver. 9. *But they that will be rich, &c.*] Not they that are rich; for some rich men are good men, and do much good with their riches; and are as free from temptations and snares, and foolish and hurtful lusts, as other persons, as Abraham, Joseph of Arimathea, Gaius, and others were; but such that would be rich, who labour after, make haste for it, and are resolved upon it, at any rate, right or wrong, as there be thousands, who never attain to it; so that the apostle does not point at rich men particularly, but at such who are determined to be rich, whether they ever are so or no: these *fall into temptation*; not in such sense in which the phrase is used in Jam. i. 2. but in such sense as Christ uses it, Matt. vi. 13. namely, a falling into temptation to sin, so as to be drawn away by it, and overcome with it: *and a snare*; the Vulgate Latin version reads, *the snare of the devil*, and so Beza's Claramontane copy; which perhaps is taken from ch. iii. 7. and though this seems not to be the genuine reading, yet it may give the true sense: Satan may be compared to a fowler; his temptations to sin are his nets and snares; and they that will be rich, are the birds that are caught and entangled therein, out of which sometimes it is impracticable to extricate themselves: and into *many foolish and hurtful lusts*: carnal and worldly lusts, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which are the things that are in the world, and draw the affections to them; yea, what sin is there but such persons may, and do fall into; as defrauding of the neighbour, oppressing the poor, lying, perjury, theft, murder, rapine, violence, and injustice of every kind? so that they may be said to be *many*, and some of them are *foolish*. All sin is folly, and every wicked man is a foolish one, and acts a part quite contrary to reason; but some evil ways are notoriously silly, weak and foolish, and which they that will be rich make use of to get money; though others of them are sly and artful enough, and all of them are *hurtful* to their credit and reputation, or to the health of their bodies, and especially to the welfare

^a T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 25. 2.

^b Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 36. 8.

of their immortal souls. So the phrase *צַרְדֵּיךָ טַפְשָׁא*, *their foolish lust*, is used by the Targumist in Ezek. xx. 25, and the corruption of nature in general is by the Jews called the old and foolish king, in Eccl. iv. 13. They ask¹, “why is he called a king? because all obey him; why is he called old? because he is joined to him (a man) from his birth to his old age; and why is he called *בְּסֵל*, *foolish*? because he teaches him an evil way, which he knows not how to warn him of again.” *Which drown men in destruction and perdition*: that is, in utter ruin, in the ruin both of soul and body; and which is irrecoverable, like that of the drowning of a man in the sea, with a millstone about his neck; such folly and danger do those expose themselves to, who will be rich at any rate.

Ver. 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil, &c.*] Of all the evils before mentioned, and of others; not money itself, as silver and gold, which are God's creatures, and his gifts, and may be used to, and answer many good purposes; but the love of it, and not any love of it; for there may be a lawful love of it, and desire after it, so far as it is requisite to the necessaries of life, to answer the calls of Providence, the duties we owe to God and men, to serve the interest of Christ, and do good to fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians: but it is an immoderate insatiable desire after it, and an inordinate love of it, which is here meant, such as is properly idolatry: as when a man loves it, not only besides, but above God; serves it as if it was God, and places his trust and confidence in it, independent of God, and his providence; such love of it is the source and spring of all iniquity, as above; it was the sin of Judas, and the root of all his iniquity. The phrase is Jewish. So idolatry is said to be *עֵינֵי כָל עֲוֹנוֹתָי*, *עֵינֵי*, *the root of all iniquities*²; see Heb. xii. 15. *which while some coveted after*; in a greedy and insatiable way: *they have erred from the faith*; the doctrine of faith. Observing that the professors of it are generally poor, they have declined that path, and have not so much as heard the word; and if they have heard and embraced it, yet when persecution arises because of it, they drop their profession of it; or else their minds are so filled with worldly cares, and deceitful riches, that the word is choked, and becomes unprofitable, and by and by, Demas-like, they forsake it, having loved this present world. *And pierced themselves through with many sorrows*; riches are therefore fitly compared to thorns, which give great trouble and uneasiness, both in getting and keeping them; and oftentimes the reflection upon the unlawful ways and means made use of to obtain them, gives very pungent pain and distress; see Job xx. 15—29. The apostle seem to allude to the Hebrew word *בָּצַע*, used for a covetous man, which signifies one that pierces, cuts, and wounds, as such an one does both himself and others.

Ver. 11. *But thou, O man of God, &c.*] Not only by creation, as every man is; nor merely by special grace, as every one is, that is chosen of God, redeemed by Christ, and regenerated and sanctified by the spirit; but by his peculiar office, as an evangelist and minister of the word, being qualified for, and devoted to, and employed in the service of God. The phrase is taken

out of the Old Testament, where the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, are so called, 2 Kings i. 9. and iv. 7, 9. *flee these things*; the Arabic version reads *these abominations*; namely, all questions and strifes of words, from whence so many evils follow, ver. 4, 5. and all worldly gain, selfish interest, and mercenary views in religion; a wicked resolution to be rich, at any rate, and an immoderate love of the things of the world, and an eager pursuit after them, which very expose to great danger, and even utter ruin; things very unbecoming any professor of religion, but much more a minister of the Gospel. *And follow after righteousness*; not for justification before God, that he had followed after, and attained unto, which is the righteousness of Christ, and not of the law; but for the honour of religion before men; and intends the doing of justice between man and man, giving every one their own, which an undue affection for the world sometimes leads men from: *godliness*; spiritual religion, holiness of heart, and conversation, which has the promise of this life, as well as of the other, and with contentment is great gain; wherefore to pursue this is much better than greedily to run after the riches of this world, or with the false teachers to suppose that godliness lies in worldly gain, or in securing to a man his worldly interest: *faith*; the grace of faith, which looks not to things seen, which are temporal, but to things not seen, which are eternal; and leads off the mind from sublunary enjoyments to God, and Christ, and the glories of another world; and is the leading grace to all others, and the foundation of good works, without which there is no pleasing God in acts of moral righteousness, or in any acts of religious worship, which may be called *godliness*: *love*; to God, which is inconsistent with serving mammon, or with an immoderate love of money; and to Christ, which will put a man on seeking, not his own things, but the things of Christ; and to the saints, which will direct him to serve them by acts of beneficence and liberality: *patience*; in bearing reproaches and indignities; in suffering injuries, loss of goods, imprisonment, and every sort of persecution, for the sake of the Gospel; which a covetous disposition will not admit of: last of all, *meekestness*; or humility, not seeking great things, but being content with a lower station of life; for generally 'tis pride that puts men upon a determination to be rich at any rate: it may also design meekness in instructing the ignorant, in refuting error, and in reproving offenders.

Ver. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith, &c.*] The apostle suggests to Timothy, that he had other business to do than to mind the things of this world; his life was a state of warfare; he was a soldier, and was not to entangle himself with the things of this life; he had many enemies to engage with, as Satan, and his principalities and powers; sin, and the lusts of the flesh; the world, and the men of it, and a great fight of afflictions to endure with them; as also false teachers, with whom particularly he was to fight the good fight of faith, that so the truth of the Gospel, which they resisted, might continue with the saints. This fight is called the *fight of faith*; partly in opposition to the law, and to *מלחמתה של תורה*, *the fight, or war of the*

¹ Midrash Kohélet, fol. 70. 2.

² R. David Kimchi in Isa. xxvii. 9.

law, the Jews' so much talk of; and in which the false teachers, in the apostle's time, were so much engaged, and against whom the apostles set themselves; and partly because the doctrine of faith, the faith of the Gospel, the faith once delivered to the saints, is what they earnestly contended, strove, and fought for; and because the grace of faith, as conversant with the Scriptures of truth, was the weapon they fought with: and this may be called a *good* fight, because it is in a good cause, the cause of God and truth; and under a good Captain, Jesus Christ the Captain of our salvation; for which good weapons are provided, even the whole armour of God, and which are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty; to which may be added, that those who are engaged in this fight may be sure of victory, and the crown of glory, life, and righteousness: so that when they have done fighting they have nothing else to do but to *lay hold on eternal life*: as Timothy for his encouragement is here bid to do. Eternal life is the prize of the high calling of God, which is held up, and held forth to those who are fighting the Lord's battles; and this they should look unto as the recompense of reward; and this they may lay hold upon, even now by faith, believing their interest in it, their right unto it, and that they shall enjoy it; of which they may be the more assured, because of their effectual vocation: *wherunto thou art also called*; not barely by the external ministration of the Gospel, in which sense many are called, but few chosen and saved; but internally, by the special grace and power of the spirit of God; and such who are so called, are not only called to grace, but to eternal glory; and the God of all grace, who has called unto it, of his sovereign good will and pleasure, is faithful, and will bestow it. The word *also* is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and in all the Oriental versions; but it seems to be emphatical, and is used to strengthen Timothy's faith, as to the enjoyment of eternal life; since it was not only the reward of grace, following upon the good fight of faith, but was that also to which he was called by the grace of God: *and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses*; both before the brethren at Lystra, at his baptism and admission into the church, before whom he gave an account of his faith, and made a profession of it; and who, upon this, and his agreeable life and conversation, gave a good report of him to the Apostle Paul, Acts xvi. 1, 2. and before the apostle, and the rest of the elders, when they laid their hands on him, whereby an extraordinary gift was conveyed unto him, 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. or it may be before the men of the world, some violent persecutors, before whom he bravely, and with great intrepidity, professed his faith in Christ Jesus; and which he continued constantly to do, in every place wherever he came; and which being done so often, and so publicly, is a reason why he should keep on till the battle was over.

Ver. 13. *I give thee charge in the sight of God, &c.*] Who is omniscient and omnipotent: *who quickeneth all things*; all creatures, for all animate creatures have their life, motion, and being in him; and who quick-

eneth all his people, at first conversion, when dead in sin, and afterwards when dull and lifeless; and who will quicken the dead at the last day. This seems to be mentioned to strengthen Timothy against the fears of death, that should he die in fighting the Lord's battles, he was able to raise him from the dead, and would do it. *And before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession*; or rather *under Pontius Pilate*; or, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, *in the time of Pontius Pilate*; for this may refer not only to the confession Christ made in his presence, at his examination by him, when he owned himself to be a King, declared the nature of his kingdom, and signified that the end of his incarnation was to bear a testimony to the truth; but it may also refer to the faithful, plain, and open witness Christ bore to truth throughout the whole of his ministry, under Pontius Pilate, by his doctrine and miracles, and at last by his sufferings and death, which he endured under him; and this is mentioned for Timothy's imitation, and to encourage him, and all other saints, to hold fast the profession of their faith to the end.

Ver. 14. *That thou keep this commandment, &c.*] Meaning either what he had now last of all enjoined him, to fight the good fight of faith; or the whole of the orders he had given him throughout the epistle, relating both to the doctrine and discipline of the house of God; or rather the work and office of preaching the Gospel, which was committed to him by the Holy Ghost, and enjoined him by the commandment of the everlasting God: and this the apostle, before God and Christ, charges him to observe and keep, in the following manner, *without spot, and unrebukeable*; the sense is, that he would discharge his ministerial function with all faithfulness and purity; that he would sincerely, and without any adulteration, preach the pure Gospel of Christ; and that he would so behave in his life and conversation, that his ministry might not be justly blamed by men, or he be rebuked by the church here, or by Christ hereafter: and this he would have him do, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*; to judge the quick and dead at the last day, and which will be very illustrious and glorious. Now Christ is hid from the eyes of men, but to them that look for him he'll appear a second time in great glory; in the glory of his father, and of his own, and of the holy angels; and when his saints will appear with him in glory; and this the apostle the rather mentions, since every man's work and ministry will then be made manifest; this bright day of Christ's appearing will declare it, and every one must give an account of himself, and his talents, unto him: and this shews that the apostle did not design this charge, and these instructions, for Timothy only, but for all other ministers of the Gospel, till the second coming of Christ; though this was then, as now, so much unknown, when it would be, that it could not be said but Timothy might live unto it.

Ver. 15. *Which in his times he shall shew, &c.*] For though the time of Christ's appearing is unknown, yet the thing itself is certain; God will bring it about, and make it manifest in his own time, in the time that is fixed and appointed by him; and which is only

^r Zohar in Numb. fol. 99. 4. T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 69. 2. & Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1. Megilla, fol. 15. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. & 111. 2.

Midrash Ruth, fol. 31. 4. Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 2. Caphtor, fol. 93. 2. & Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. & Jarchi in Cant. iii. 8.

known unto him, and which he keeps in his own power, and has reserved in his own breast: *who is the blessed*; the Syriac version reads, *the blessed God*; who is blessed in himself, in his Son and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature; who is God all-sufficient, has enough in himself for himself, and for all his creatures; who is the fountain and the author of all blessedness, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, which any of them are, or shall be possessed of: *and only Potentate*; or Governor of the whole world, which can be said of none but himself: he is the Governor among the nations, and over all the nations of the earth; his kingdom rules over all other kingdoms; and he has his power and government from himself, whereas all other potentates have their power from him, as follows: *the King of kings, and Lord of lords*; from whom they receive their sceptres, crowns, and kingdoms; by whom they reign, and are continued in their power; for he sets up kings, and removes kings at his pleasure, and to him they must be accountable for all their administrations another day; and at present they are under his influence, and at his control; he has their hearts, and their counsels, as well as kingdoms, in his hands, and under his overruling providence; and causes all to answer his wise and eternal purposes. These titles are used by the Jews, who style him, *אֲדֹנָי כָּל הָאֲדֹנָיִם מֶלֶךְ*, *עַל כָּל הַמְּלָכִים*, *Lord of all lords, King over all kings* *. The same name is given to Christ, Rev. xix. 16. which shews him to be equal with the father.

Ver. 16. *Who only hath immortality, &c.*] Angels are immortal, and so are the souls of men, and so will be the bodies of men after the resurrection; but then neither of these have immortality of themselves, they have it from God; who only has it, of himself, originally, essentially, and indivisively. *Dwelling in that light which no man can approach unto*; in this present, frail, and mortal state; yea, angels themselves can't bear the lustre of it, but cover their faces with their wings; for God is light itself, as well as clothes himself with light, as with a garment; and is the father and fountain of lights to all his creatures. *Whom no man hath seen, nor can see*; nowhere but in Christ, at least spiritually and savingly; and that but very imperfectly in the present state: the sin, frailty, and mortality of human nature must be taken away, in order to inherit the kingdom of God, and enjoy the beatific vision of him; which saints in heaven have, who see him as he is, and in such sort as no man now does, or can see him: *to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen*. Which may be considered either as a wish, that such honour, power, and glory might be ascribed unto him, as we supply it; or as an assertion that it is given to him, as it is by the angels, and by the saints in heaven and in earth.

Ver. 17. *Charge them that are rich in this world, &c.*] Or in the things of this world. The Arabic version reads, *in this present world*: in distinction from the world to come: some are poor in this world, and rich in another; others are rich in this world, and poor, and wretched, and miserable in the world to come: some are rich in both worlds, and such were at least some of those the apostle here refers to, who were members of the church

at Ephesus, which was a rich city, and some rich men in it were called by the grace of God; and to distinguish these from others, who, though poor in this world, were rich in grace and in spiritual gifts, he so calls them; as well as to observe that their riches were like the world they were in, deceitful, empty, unsatisfying, and perishing: these the apostle would have not only spoke to, instructed, exhorted, and entreated, but strictly charged and commanded, without paying any regard to their worldly grandeur and riches, *that they be not high-minded*; the Ethiopic version reads, *that they be not lifted up in this world*; with their wealth and worldly substance, and look down from the height of their honour and riches with contempt upon the poor, entertaining high thoughts of themselves, as if their bodies were of another matter and make, when they have all one Maker, are of one blood, and of the earth, earthly, and must return to it; or as if their souls were more large and capacious, and they were wiser and more knowing, whereas riches are not always to men of understanding, a fool may be rich, and a wise man poor; or as if they were the peculiar favourites of heaven, when, for the most part, God chooses and calls the poor of this world; or as if others were unworthy of their looks, company, and conversation. Riches produce pride; rich men are apt to be proud of themselves, and despise others; and therefore this evil is taken notice of, as what they are to be cautioned against, and charged to the contrary: *nor trust in uncertain riches*; or *in the uncertainty of riches*: they are here to-day, and gone to-morrow; no man that is possessed of them can be sure of them a moment; they make themselves wings and flee away; he that gives them, can take them away at pleasure: and there are various ways by which they are suddenly, and at once taken from the owners of them; as by loss in trade, by shipwreck, by inundations, by fire, by thieves, &c. and yet men are apt to promise themselves a continuance of them, and to have their dependence upon them, and place their trust and confidence in them, yea, even good men; and that very much to the neglect of, and disregard to the providence of God, which is always best and safest in every circumstance and station of life to depend upon, as follows: *but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*; almost every word carries in it an argument or reason why he should be trusted, because he is *God*, and not a creature; the *living God*, who has life in himself, essentially and originally; is the author, giver, and maintainer of life in others; and who always is, ever continues unchangeably the same: and *giveth all things*; every good gift comes from him; all the gifts of nature, and bounties of Providence; and as he gives, he can take away, and therefore should be only regarded; and he gives all things *richly*, largely, and plentifully; what is necessary and convenient, and abundantly more than men deserve: and that *to enjoy*; not to lay up, but to use for support, refreshment, and pleasure, though not to abuse.

Ver. 18. *That they do good, &c.*] Rich men sometimes do much ill to themselves, to the hurt of their bodies, by luxury, intemperance, and debauchery, and

to their souls, to the ruin of them; and to others by fraud, oppression, and violence; for it is in the power of their hands to do much evil, and also to do much good, as they should; and much is required of them, since much is given them to do good with, and for which they are accountable: it becomes them, and especially such as believe in Christ, to do every good work in general, and to do acts of beneficence in particular, both to all men, and to the household of faith. *That they be rich in good works*; or abound in the performance of them, as Dorcas is said to be full of good works and alms-deeds; and to reckon that their true riches lie more in the exercise of grace, and in the fruits of it, doing good works, than in their worldly enjoyments. The phrase seems to be Rabbinical. Frequent mention is made of עשיר בתורה, *rich in the law*, and עשיר במצות, *rich in the commandments*; and it is said¹, no man is poor but he that is without the law, and good works, for the riches of a man are the law, and good works. *Ready to distribute*; unasked; and when they are asked, do not turn away, and put off, but give at once, and without grief, and with cheerfulness; want no arguments to press them to it, nor use any against it. *Willing to communicate*; of their good things to the necessities of the poor, making them common to them, and them partakers of them. Some render the word *sociable*, in opposition to that moroseness, stiffness, and those haughty and forbidding airs, with which rich men are apt to treat the poor, when they should be affable and courteous to them, and admit them to a free conversation with them.

Ver. 19. *Laying up in store for themselves.* &c.] Laying up a treasure in heaven, which will be for themselves to enjoy to all eternity; whereas what they lay up here is for others, for their children or friends, and sometimes for strangers, and they know not who, whether for a wise man or a fool, yea, even for enemies: so it is said of King Munbaz, when he dispersed his father's treasures to the poor, his brethren and friends came about him, complaining of it; to whom he said², "my fathers treasured up below, I treasure up above. My fathers treasured up for others, I treasure up for myself; לעצמי, *for myself*: my fathers treasured up for this world, I treasure up for the world to come." So it follows here, *a good foundation against the time to come*: by which is meant, not a foundation of happiness, for that is laid already, and by God himself; and much less by doing acts of beneficence is that foundation laid; for there is no other foundation of happiness, life, and salvation, that can be laid, besides what is laid, which is Jesus Christ: nor is the apostle speaking of laying a foundation here, to build upon, but of laying up a foundation in heaven, by which he intends happiness itself; and which he calls a *foundation*, because it is solid and substantial, permanent and durable, in opposition to the uncertain, precarious, transitory, and perishing enjoyments and treasures of this life; and *good*, because profitable, when the laying up of worldly riches is often to the hurt of its owners, and will be useful, when they will not profit; and besides, will always continue, and be a foundation that will always

support them, and never give way: now to lay up this is no other than to seek those things which are above, to shew a concern for them, and to set the affections on them, and live in the comfortable hope and expectation of enjoying them. The phrase is the same with that in Matt. vi. 19, 20. and takes in a regard to spiritual riches, the riches of grace now, such as sanctifying, justifying, and pardoning grace through Christ; which will be a good foundation *against the time to come*: and will give both a right and meetness for the enjoyment of the heavenly treasures, which will be for futurity, even to all eternity. *That they may lay hold on eternal life*; not by way of merit, but as the free gift of God, which the riches of grace give a title to, and a fitness for; and which shall be laid hold upon, and enjoyed by all that seek the true riches. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *true life*; for the present life is rather a shew, an appearance of life, than life itself.

Ver. 20. *Keep that which is committed to thy trust,* &c.] That is, the Gospel, see ch. i. 11. which is a rich treasure put into earthen vessels, and ought to be kept pure and incorrupt, and faithfully dispensed, and diligently preserved, that so it may be continued genuine and sincere, and not be either adulterated and depraved, or be taken away by false teachers. And it may also include his gifts for the ministration of it, which were to be kept in use, and stirred up, and not neglected, but cultivated and improved to the advantage of the church, and of the interest of Christ: *avoiding profane and vain babblings*; about the law, and circumcision, and other things, which the false teachers insisted much on, and amused their hearers with; and which were vain, empty, useless, and unprofitable talk. Some copies, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, *profane newnesses of words*; or new words, which ought not to be introduced, for they often bring in new doctrines: the form of sound words, the wholesome words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, should be held fast; and especially all new words should be avoided, which are contrary to them, or in the least weaken them, or detract from them. *And oppositions of science falsely so called*; the false teachers boasted of their science and knowledge, but it was not true, solid, spiritual, and saving; it was not an experimental knowledge of the Gospel; it was not the excellent knowledge of Christ, which has eternal life connected with it; it was merely notional and speculative; it was idle, empty, and useless, mere Pagan philosophy, and vain deceit, upon which they formed antitheses, or oppositions and objections to the truths of the Gospel; and even opposed themselves, and the word of God, as well as the faithful ministers of it.

Ver. 21. *Which some professing,* &c.] Pretending to be masters of the above science, boasting and making great shew of it, and valuing themselves upon it: *have erred concerning the faith*; have wandered from the way of truth, and gone into the path of error; have fallen from the doctrine of faith, and made shipwreck of it, and become entire apostates: from the danger

¹ Zohar in Num. fol. 91. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 173. 4. & Tzerer Hamoor, fol. 15. 2.

² Raya Mehimna in Exod. fol. 48. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 11. 1.

³ T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 1. 1.

attending vain jangling, the use of new words, the profession of a false science, and making objections from it against the truth, does the apostle dissuade Timothy from them, since they generally issue in apostacy. *Grace be with thee. Amen.* This the apostle wishes to him, that he might be enabled to discharge every branch of his duty he had pointed to him in this epistle, and to keep him from all evil, and every false way, and preserve him safe to the kingdom and glory of God. And which he doubted not but would be his case, and therefore puts his *Amen* to it. The Alexandrian copy and Arabic version read, *grace be with you. Amen.*

The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana. This last

clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy and Syriac version; and indeed, in the apostle's time, Phrygia was not known by such an appellation as *Pacatiana*, which was given it some years after by the Romans; and which shews, that the subscriptions to the epistles are not only of human authority, but of later date, at least some of them. The Arabic version calls it the metropolis of Phrygia, and leaves out *Pacatiana*; and one of Beza's manuscripts, instead of *Laodicea*, reads *Macedonia*, from whence, as from Philippi, or some other city there, he thinks it was written; and several learned men have been of opinion that it was written from Philippi.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

THAT this epistle was written to Timothy, whilst he was at Ephesus, where the apostle in his former epistle had desired him to stay, is evident from his making mention of some persons in it, who were Ephesians; as Onesiphorus, whom he commends, and Alexander the coppersmith, of whom he complains: and that this epistle was written by the apostle, when he was at Rome, is no less evident; for he expressly calls himself a prisoner, ch. i. 8. and speaks of being then in trouble, and in bonds, ch. ii. 9, 10. and the persons that send their salutations in it to Timothy were Romans, ch. iv. 21. but at what time it was written is not so certain: it seems by ch. iv. 7. that it was but a little time before his martyrdom; though those words may only signify, that he was now very much on the decline of life, was now grown an old man, and in continual expectation of death, and was in a constant readiness for it, come when it would; having faithfully discharged his duty, and his warfare being as good as accomplished, and his race almost run out; for he afterwards presses Timothy to come to him, and that before winter; and desires him to bring with him his cloak, books, and parchments, which one would think he would have

little occasion for, if just upon his martyrdom: besides, he says he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, that by him the preaching of the Gospel might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear it; and expresses his confidence, that he should be again delivered, ver. 9, 13, 17, 18. And it looks as if this epistle was written before the epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, since it appears that Timothy did come to him at Rome, as here desired, and is joined with the apostle in those epistles. Some, therefore, have placed this epistle in the year 58, or 59, about the fourth or fifth of Nero's reign. The design of it is to stir up Timothy to the faithful and diligent discharge of his duty, as a minister of the Gospel; to abide constantly by the truths of it, and to animate him to suffer patiently, cheerfully, and courageously for the sake of it; and to warn him against false teachers, and their errors, who were already risen, and would afterwards arise, and be followed by such who had itching ears, and could not bear sound doctrine; but this should be no discouragement to him in the prosecution of his work; and lastly, to desire his presence with him at Rome, being now destitute of his several assistants.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle expresses his great affection for Timothy, and highly commends him; exhorts him to various things relating to his office, as a preacher of the Gospel; and concludes with taking notice of the kindness shewn him by Onesiphorus. The inscription and salutation are in ver. 1, 2. and then follows the preface

to the epistle, in which the apostle testifies his great love to Timothy, and commends him; by declaring his thankfulness to God, that he had reason always to remember him in his prayers; by his desire to see him again, who had shed so many tears for him, that his joy might be filled; and by taking notice of his unfeigned faith, the same with that which had dwelt in

his ancestors, ver. 3, 4, 5. And then he proceeds to exhort him to the exercise and improvement of his ministerial gift; to shew a fortitude of mind, and a manly spirit in the cause of Christ; and to suffer cheerfully for the sake of it, ver. 6, 7, 8. and in order to animate and encourage him to the same, he gives a summary of the Gospel, as containing in it the great doctrines of salvation, and eternal life, according to the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, ver. 9, 10. and observes, that he himself was appointed a preacher of it to the Gentiles, ver. 11. and instances in himself, as suffering for it, without being ashamed; and as having a strong confidence in Christ, as able to keep him, and what he had committed to him, ver. 12. and then returns to his exhortation to Timothy to hold fast the Gospel of Christ; to which he urges him from the consideration of the nature and value of it, being a form of sound words, and that famous good thing, and of the means and manner in which he came to the knowledge of it; and chiefly from its being committed to him by the Holy Ghost, that dwelt in him; and also because of the general defection of the Asian professors from it, ver. 13, 14, 15. but he excepts one person, Onesiphorus by name, whom he commends for his kindness to him both at Ephesus and at Rome; and therefore entreats of the Lord mercy, both for him and his house, at the great day, ver. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*] Not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ, from whom he was sent; by whom he was qualified; in whose name he came, and ministered; and whom he preached. Of his name Paul, and of his office, as an apostle, see the note on Rom. i. 1. into which office he came *by the will of God*; not by the will of man, no, not of the best of men, of James, Cephas, or John, or any of the other apostles; nor by his own will, he did not thrust himself into this office, or take this honour upon himself; nor was it owing to any merits of his, which he always disclaims, but to the will and grace of God; it was by the secret determining will of God, that he was from all eternity separated unto the Gospel of Christ; and it was by the revealed will of God to the church, that he, with Barnabas, was set apart to the ministry of the word; see Rom. i. 1. Acts xiii. 2. *According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus*; or *with respect unto it*; this points at the sum and substance, or subject-matter, and end of his apostleship, for which this grace was given to him, which was to publish the free promise of life and salvation by Jesus Christ. *By life* here is meant, not this corporeal life, which, and a continuation of it, were promised in the covenant of works, on condition of man's obedience to it; but eternal life, the promise of which is a free promise made by God, of his own free sovereign will and pleasure, in the covenant of grace, from everlasting; and is an absolute and unconditional one, not at all depending upon the works of the law, or obedience to it; see Rom. iv. 14, 16. Gal. iii. 18. and this promise is *in Christ*, in whom all the promises are yea and amen: for it was made before the world began, Tit. i. 2. when the persons on whose account it was made were not in actual being; but Christ, their head and representative, then existed; and to him it was given, and into his hands was it put

for them, where it is sure to all the seed; and not only the promise, but the life itself is in him, and which is here intended. Christ, as Mediator, asked it of his father for all his people, and he gave it to him, where it is hid safe and secure. Christ is the Prince or author of life; he is the procuring cause of it; he was sent, and came, that his sheep might have it; he gave his flesh, his human nature for it; and by his sufferings and death removed all obstructions which sin had thrown in the way, and opened the way for their enjoyment of it; and he is the giver of it to as many as the father has given him; nor is it to be had in any other way, or of any other; but of him; and it lies in the knowledge of him, communion with him, and conformity to him. Now it is the business of Gospel ministers, not to direct persons to work for life, or to seek to obtain eternal life by their own works of righteousness, but to hold forth the word of life, or to shew men the way of life and salvation by Christ alone.

Ver. 2. *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son, &c.*] Not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; and not on account of his being an instrument of his conversion, but by reason of that instruction in the doctrines of the Gospel which he gave him, it being usual to call disciples children; and he calls him so, because as a son, he, being young in years, served with him, and under him, as a father, in the Gospel of Christ; for whom he had a very great affection, on account of his having been a companion with him in his travels, and very useful to him in the ministry, and because of his singular and eminent gifts, great grace, religion, and holiness: *Grace, mercy, and peace, &c.* see the note on 1 Tim. i. 2.

Ver. 3. *I thank God, &c.*] After the inscription and salutation follows the preface to the epistle; which contains a thanksgiving to God upon Timothy's account, and has a tendency to engage his attention to what he was about to write to him in the body of the epistle. God is the object of praise and thanksgiving, both as the God of nature and providence, and as the God of all grace; for every good thing comes from him, and therefore he ought to have the glory of it; nor should any glory, as though they had not received it: and he is here described, as follows, *whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience*; the apostle served God in the precepts of the law, as in the hands of Christ, and as written upon his heart by the spirit of God, in which he delighted after the inward man, and which he served with his regenerated mind; and also in the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, in which he was very diligent and laborious, faithful and successful: and this God, whom he served, was the God of his *forefathers*, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of Benjamin, of whose tribe he was, and also of his more immediate ancestors. The Ethiopic version renders it, *from my original*; for though he preached the Gospel of Christ, and asserted the abrogation of the ceremonial law, yet he worshipped the one, true, and living God, the God of Israel, and was not an apostate from the true religion, as his enemies would insinuate: and this service of his was performed with a *pure conscience*: every man has a conscience, but the conscience of every natural man is defiled with sin; and that is only a pure one, which

is sprinkled and purged with the blood of Christ; and whereby a person is only fitted to serve the living God, without the incumbrance of dead works, and slavish fear, and with faith and cheerfulness; and such a conscience the apostle had, and with such an one he served God. For this refers not to his serving of God, and to his conscience, whilst a Pharisee and a persecutor; for however moral was his conduct and conversation then, and with what sincerity and uprightness soever he behaved, his conscience was not a pure one. He goes on to observe what he thanked God for, *that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day*; that God had laid him upon his heart, and that he had such reason to remember him at the throne of grace continually. We learn from hence, that the apostle prayed constantly night and day; and if so great a man as he stood in need of continual prayer, much more we; and that in his prayers he was not unmindful of his friends, though at a distance from him; and in both these he is to be imitated: it becomes us to pray without ceasing: to pray always, and not faint and give out, to pray every day and night; and to pray for others as well as for ourselves, for all the saints, yea, for our enemies, as well as for our friends.

Ver. 4. *Greatly desiring to see thee, &c.*] In his former epistle he had desired him to stay at Ephesus, there being some work for him to do, which made it necessary he should continue; but now having answered the apostle's purpose, and he standing in need of him at Rome, being without any assistant there, some having left him, and others were left by him in other places, and others were sent by him elsewhere; and it having been some time since he saw Timothy, he longed for a sight of him: *being mindful of thy tears*; shed either at the afflictions and sufferings of the apostle, of which Timothy, being his companion, was an eye-witness, and he being of a truly Christian sympathizing spirit, wept with those that wept; or at their parting from each other, as in Acts xx. 37, 38. *that I may be filled with joy*; at the sight of him, and not at the remembrance of his tears; for the last clause is to be read in a parenthesis, and these words stand not connected with that, but with the preceding part of the text. The apostle intimates, that a sight of his dearly beloved son Timothy would fill him with joy amidst all his troubles and afflictions he endured for the Gospel: this is an instance of hearty, sincere, and strong affection.

Ver. 5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, &c.*] This caused him to give thanks to God for it, whose gift it is, and made him the more desirous of seeing one, who was a true believer, and an Israelite indeed. This is to be understood of the grace of faith, which was implanted in the heart of Timothy by the spirit of God, and was genuine and sincere; he believed with the heart unto righteousness; his faith worked by love to God, and Christ, and to his people, and was attended with good works; *which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois*: who was his grandmother, not by his father's side, who was a Greek, but by his mother's side; and so the

Syriac version renders it, *thy mother's mother*; who, though she might not know that the Messiah was come in the flesh, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he, yet believed in the Messiah to come, and died in the faith of it, and in a dependence upon righteousness and salvation by him; and so her faith was of the same kind with Timothy's; and which dwelt in her, and continued with her to the last: *and thy mother Eunice*: who was a Jewess, and a believer in Christ, Acts xvi. 1. though her name is a Greek one, and so is her mother's name; hers signifies *good victory*, and is the name of one of the Nereides, the daughters of Oceanus*; and her mother's signifies *better, or more excellent*. She lived, it seems, if her mother did not, to know that Christ was come, and that Jesus, the son of Mary, was he; and she believed in him for righteousness, life, and salvation; and in her this faith dwelt and abode to the end. *And I am persuaded that in thee also*; not only that faith was in him, and that that was unfeigned, but that it also dwelt, remained, and would continue with him to the end of life; for true faith is an abiding grace, it is a gift of God, that is irrevocable, and without repentance; Christ is the author and finisher of it, and prays that it fail not, whose prayers are always heard; it is begun, carried on, and performed by the power of God, and has salvation inseparably connected with it. Now when the same faith is said to dwell, first in his grandmother, and in his mother, and in him, this is not to be understood as if this grace was conveyed from one to another by natural generation; for grace comes not that way, only sin; men are not born of blood, but of God; but the sense is, that the same like-precious faith was obtained by one, as by another. This was a rich family mercy, and deserved special notice, as being a thing uncommon, and required a particular thanksgiving; and is designed as a motive and encouragement to stir up Timothy to the exercise of that grace, and every other gift God had bestowed upon him, as in the following verse.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, &c.*] Because of the great affection the apostle had for Timothy, and because of that confidence he had of him, that unfeigned faith dwelt in him, as well as because this had had a place in his relations before him; he therefore acts the part of a kind monitor to him, and, upon these considerations, doubts not of succeeding in his following admonition: *that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee*; by the gift is meant his ministerial gift; for what qualifies men for the ministry, is not any thing natural in them, nor acquired by them, but what is given unto them, and that of God: and this was in him; it continued with him; it was not lost by him, nor taken from him, as gifts may be, when they are not used; and yet it seems as if there was some decline, some backwardness and indifference as to the exercise of it: he might be too remiss, negligent, and forgetful of it; wherefore the apostle puts him in mind to stir it up: there is in the word used a metaphor taken from coals of fire covered with ashes, as if almost extinct, and need to be blown up into a flame, and a very apt one it is;

* Hesiod. Theogonia, Apollodorus de Deor. Orig. l. 1. p. 5. Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 13.

since the gifts of the spirit, especially his extraordinary ones, such as ministers in those times had, are compared to fire: see Matt. iii. 11. Acts ii. 3. and these may be rekindled or increased, when they seem on the decline, by reading, meditation, prayer, and the frequent exercise of them. Agreeably to this the Arabic version renders it, *that thou kindle the fire of the gift of God which is in thee*; and the rather the apostle took this freedom with Timothy, not only because of his superior age and office, but because this gift was through his means; *by the putting on of my hands*; though not alone, but with the rest of the presbytery; see the note on 1 Tim. iv. 14.

Ver. 7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, &c.*] A pusillanimous, cowardly spirit, so as to be afraid of men or devils, of what they will say or do; and so as to be discouraged in, sink under, or be deterred from the work of the Lord, the preaching of the Gospel, opposing the errors of false teachers, and reproving men for their sins, and doing other parts of the ministerial function; such a spirit is not from God, and such a fear brings a snare: *but of power*, and such is the spirit of God, who is called *power from on high*: Luke xxiv. 49. by which the minds of Christ's servants are fortified against reproaches and persecutions for his sake, and are strengthened to resist Satan's temptations, to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, to quit themselves like men, in opposition to false teachers, and to do the will and work of God: *and of love*: to God, and Christ, and his church, and which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; and such who have it seek not their own ease and credit, but the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the good of souls; and having such a spirit, and fired with such love, they are not easily intimidated by the adversary; *and of a sound mind*: in the principles and doctrines of the Gospel; and which shews itself in a prudent conduct and behaviour; in sobriety, moderation, temperance, purity, and honesty; all which may be signified by the word here used: and those who have such dispositions and qualities from God, will not easily give way to the enemies of religion, or decline their duty for fear of them.

Ver. 8. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, &c.*] Either that testimony which Christ bore personally by his doctrine and miracles, and by his sufferings and death: or rather the Gospel so called, because it comes from Christ, and because it is a testimony concerning him; concerning his person, his offices, his righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; concerning his obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; and concerning life and salvation by him: and which no preacher or professor of Christ has reason to be ashamed of, it being so true in itself, so great, so glorious, and so useful; and whoever is, Christ will be ashamed of him another day: *nor of me his prisoner*; for Paul was now a prisoner at Rome, but not for any capital crime, or for any immorality, but for the sake of Christ, and for preaching his Gospel; wherefore none of his friends had any reason to be ashamed of him; he was suffering in a glorious cause, and setting a noble example to others; it looks as if Timothy was some-

what blameworthy in this respect. *But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel*: the Gospel is here represented as a person suffering afflictions, and the apostle would have Timothy suffer them as that did, and along with it; he means those afflictions which come upon men for preaching and professing the Gospel; for though the Gospel is a Gospel of peace, yet, through the corruption and depravity of men, it brings a sword, division, and trouble. Tribulation arises on account of it; and this should be endured patiently, and constantly, for the sake of it: *according to the power of God*: which is only sufficient to enable persons to bear them; and is mentioned for the encouragement of Timothy and others, to endure them cheerfully.

Ver. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us, &c.*] And therefore should not be ashamed of his Gospel, but should readily partake of the afflictions of it, depending on his power to support under them. There is a salvation previous to vocation: there is a temporal salvation; a special providence attends the elect of God, as soon as born; God's visitation in a very special manner preserves their spirits; they are kept from many imminent dangers, and some of them from the grosser immoralities of life; and there is a chain of providences, as the fixing of their habitations, bringing to such a place, and under such a ministry, with various other things, ways and methods, which lead on to effectual vocation: and there is a preservation of them in Christ Jesus, antecedent to vocation, Jude 1. God had a mind to save some; he pitched on his own son to be the Saviour of them; he put those persons into his hands, where they are safely preserved; so as not to be damned, and everlastingly perish, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, their original corruption, and actual transgressions, until called by grace: yea, that spiritual and eternal salvation, which is by Jesus Christ, is before calling; this was resolved upon from eternity; a council of peace was formed; a covenant of grace was made; a promise of life given; persons were fixed upon to be saved; a Saviour was appointed, and blessings of grace were put into his hands; and all according to an eternal purpose. Salvation was not only resolved upon, but the scheme of it was contrived from eternity, in a way agreeable to all the divine perfections, in which Satan is most mortified, the creature abased, and the elect effectually saved; nay, salvation is obtained before calling, for Christ being called to this work, and having undertaken it, was in the fulness of time sent to effect it, and is become the author of it: the thing is done, and all that remain are the application of it, which is in effectual vocation, and the full possession of it, which will be in heaven. The calling here spoken of is not to an office, nor a mere call by the external ministry of the word, but a call by special grace, to special privileges, to grace and glory; and is an high and heavenly one, and is here called holy; for it follows, *with an holy calling*. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, *with his holy calling*: the author of it is holy; it is a call to holiness, and the means of it are holy; and in it persons have principles of grace and holiness implanted in them; and are influenced to live holy lives and conversations: *not according to our works*;

neither salvation nor vocation are according to the works of men: nor salvation; works are not the moving cause of it, but the free love and favour of God; nor the procuring cause of it, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor the adjutant or helping cause of it, for his own arm brought salvation alone: nor vocation; which must be either according to works before, or after; not according to works before calling, for such are not properly good works, being destitute of faith in Christ, and proceeding neither from a right principle, nor to a right end; not according to works after calling, for as they are after it, they are the fruits of calling grace, and cannot be the cause, or rule, and measure of it: *but according to his own purpose and grace*; salvation is according to both: it is according to the purpose of God; God resolved upon the salvation of some; in pursuance of this resolution, he set up Christ as the Mediator; and it being necessary that he should be man, this was agreed to, and a body was prepared him; the time of his coming was fixed, called the fulness of time; and his sufferings and death, with all the circumstances of them, were determined by God. And it is according to grace; the resolution for it, and the contrivance of it, are owing to the grace of God; and which also appears in the making of a covenant; in setting up Christ as the Mediator of it; in the mission of him into this world; and in all the parts and branches of salvation: in the choice of persons to it; in the redemption of them by Christ; in their justification by his righteousness; in the pardon of their sins through his blood; in their adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and eternal glory; and the end of it is the glory of the grace of God. Vocation is also according to both the purpose and grace of God: it is according to his purpose; the persons called are fixed upon by him; whom he predestinates he calls; none are called, but whom God purposed to call; and for their calling no other reason can be assigned but the sovereign will of God, nor can any other reason be given why others are not called; the time of their vocation is fixed in the decrees of God; and the place where, and means whereby, and occasion whereof, all are predetermined by him: and this is also according to grace; the author of it is the God of all grace; and in it is made the first discovery of grace to sinners; nothing out of God could move him to do it, and so it is sovereign grace; it is of some men, and not all, and so is distinguishing grace; it is of sinners, and so is free grace; and it is both to grace and glory, and so is rich grace: and it is according to grace *which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*: it is a gift, and a free gift, not at all depending upon any conditions in the creature, and entirely proceeding from the sovereign will of God; and it was a gift from eternity; there was not only a purpose of grace in God's heart, and a promise of it so early, but there was a real donation of it in eternity: and though those to whom it was given did not then personally exist, yet Christ did, and he existed as a covenant-head and representative of his people; and they were in him, as members of him, as represented by him, being united to him; and this grace was given to him for them, and to them in him; in whom they were chosen, and in whom they were blessed with all spiritual

blessings. The Ethiopic version reads, *in Christ Jesus, who before the world was*; but without any foundation.

Ver. 10. *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, &c.*] The grace according to which the elect of God are saved and called; though it was given to them in Christ, before the world was, yet lay hid in the heart of God; in his thoughts, council and covenant; and in Jesus Christ; and in the types, shadows, sacrifices, prophecies, and promises of the Old Testament; but is now made manifest in the clearness, freeness, and abundance of it by the appearance of Christ, as a Saviour in human nature; who is come full of grace and truth, and through whom there is a plentiful exhibition of it to the sons of men: *who hath abolished death*; the law of sin and death, which is the cause of death; and has destroyed him which has the power of it, the devil; he has abolished corporeal death with regard to his people, as a penal evil, he has took away its sting, and removed its curse, and made it a blessing to them; and he has utterly, with respect to them, abolished the second death, so as that it shall have no power over them, or they ever be hurt by it; all which he did by dying, and rising again: for though he died, yet he continued not under the power of death; but rose again and triumphed over it, as having got the victory of it; and the keys of it are in his hand: *and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel*. Christ was the first that rose again from the dead to an immortal life; the path of life was first shewn to him, and brought to light by him; and though the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was known by the Old-Testament saints, yet not so clearly as it is now revealed in the Gospel; and in which is so fully attested the resurrection of Christ, and of many of the saints with him, as well as the general resurrection at the last day: and besides, eternal life, which is the free gift of God, lay hid in his purpose, promise, and covenant, and in his son Jesus Christ, into whose hands it was put; and which he has brought to light in a more clear manner than ever it was before; by his appearance in human nature, by his personal ministry, by his death and resurrection from the dead, and through the Gospel, as preached by his ministers; which gives an account of the nature of it, shews the way unto it, and points out and describes the persons that shall enjoy it.

Ver. 11. *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, &c.*] Both from eternity, in the counsel and purpose of God, Acts ix. 15. and in time, by the church at Antioch, and the prophets in it, according to the express order of the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 2. And if ever there was a preacher of the Gospel, Paul was one; he preached purely, powerfully, publicly, constantly, boldly, and with all faithfulness and integrity: *and an apostle*: that is, of the Gentiles, as follows, and as he elsewhere styles himself, Rom. xi. 13. for it does not run so smooth and easy to connect this with the word Gospel. In ver. 1. he is called the apostle of Jesus Christ, because he was sent by him; and here the apostle of the Gentiles, because he was sent to them; and this by the same appointment, by which he became a preacher: *and a teacher of the Gentiles*; though all the apostles, by their commission, were sent to

teach all nations, or the Gentiles in the several parts of the world, as well as Jews; yet the apostle was eminently a teacher of them; his work chiefly lay among them; the Gospel of the uncircumcision, or the ministrations of the Gospel to the uncircumcised Gentiles, was committed to him; and he was a teacher of them in faith and verity, as in 1 Tim. ii. 7. The Alexandrian copy only reads, *and a teacher.*

Ver. 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things, &c.]* The present imprisonment and bonds in which he now was; these, with all the indignities, reproaches, distresses, and persecutions, came upon him, for the sake of his being a preacher of the Gospel; and particularly for his being a teacher of the Gentiles: the Jews hated him, and persecuted him, because he preached the Gospel, and the more because he preached it to the Gentiles, that they might be saved; and the unbelieving Gentiles were stirred up against him, for introducing a new religion among them, to the destruction of their idolatry and superstition; and these sufferings which he endured were many; and he was appointed to them, as well as to the Gospel, which he preached. *Nevertheless I am not ashamed;* neither of the Gospel, and the truths and ordinances of it, for which he suffered; but he continued to own and confess it constantly, and to preach it boldly; none of these things moved him from it: nor of the sufferings he endured, for the sake of it; since they were not for murder, or theft, or sedition, or any enormity whatever, but in a good cause; wherefore he was so far from being ashamed of them, that he took pleasure in them, and gloried of them. Nor was he ashamed of Christ, whose Gospel he preached, and for whom he suffered; nor of his faith and hope in him. For it follows, *for I know whom I have believed.* A spiritual knowledge of Christ is necessary to faith in him: an unknown Christ cannot be the object of faith, though an unseen Christ, as to bodily sight, may be, and is. Knowledge and faith go together: they that truly know Christ, believe in him, and the more they know him, the more strongly do they believe in him: such who spiritually and savingly know Christ, have seen the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and they approve of him, as their Saviour, being every way suitable to them, and disapprove of all others; they love him above all others, and with all their hearts; and they put their trust in him, and trust him with all they have; and they know whom they trust, what an able, willing, suitable, and complete Saviour he is. This knowledge which they have of him, is not from themselves, but from the father, who reveals him to them, and in them; and from himself, who gives them an understanding that they may know him; and from the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: and be it more or less, it is practical, and leads to the discharge of duty, from a principle of love to Christ; and is of a soul-humbling nature, and appropriates Christ to a man's self; and has always some degree of certainty in it; and though it is imperfect, it is progressive; and the least measure of it is saving, and has eternal life connected with it: and that faith

which accompanies it, and terminates on the object known, is the grace, by which a man sees Christ in the riches of his grace; goes to him in a sense of need of him; lays hold upon him as a Saviour; receives and embraces him; commits its all unto him; trusts him with all; leans and lives upon him, and walks on in him till it receives the end of faith, even eternal salvation. *And I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* By that which he had committed to him is meant, not the great treasure of his labours and sufferings for Christ, as if he had deposited these in Christ's hands, in order to be brought forth at the great day of account to his advantage; for though his labours and sufferings were many, yet he always ascribed the strength by which he endured them to the grace of God; and he knew they were not worthy to be compared, nor made mention of, with the glory that was to be revealed in him. Rather this may be understood of the souls of those he had been instrumental in the converting of, whom he had commended to Christ, hoping to meet them as his joy and crown of rejoicing another day; though it seems best of all to interpret it either of his natural life, the care of which he had committed to Christ, and which he knew he was able to preserve, and would preserve for usefulness until the day appointed for his death; or rather his precious and immortal soul, and the eternal welfare and salvation of it: and the act of committing it to Christ, designs his giving himself to him, leaving himself with him, trusting in him for eternal life and salvation, believing he was able to save him to the uttermost; even unto the day of death, when he hoped to be with him, which is far better than to be in this world; and unto the day of the resurrection, when both soul and body will be glorified with him; and to the day of judgment, when the crown of righteousness will be received from his hands. And what might induce the apostle, and so any other believer, to conclude the ability of Christ to keep the souls of those that are committed to him, are, his proper deity, he having all the fulness of the Godhead, or the perfections of deity dwelling in him; his being the Creator and upholder of all things; his having accomplished the great work of redemption and salvation, by his own arm; his mediatorial fulness of grace and power; and his being trusted by his father with all the persons, grace, and glory of the elect, to whom he has been faithful. And now the consideration of all this, as it was a support to the apostle, under all his afflictions, and sufferings for the Gospel, and in a view of death itself, so it may be, as it often has been, a relief to believers, under all the sorrows of this life, and in a prospect of death and eternity. Philo the Jew^b speaks in like manner as the apostle here of *παροικιασθησιν ψυχης, the depositum of the soul;* though he knew not where to commit it for safety, as the apostle did, and every true believer does.

Ver. 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words, &c.]* By words are meant, not mere words, but doctrines; for the servants of the Lord should not strive about words, to no profit, or be too tenacious of them.

^b Quis rer. Divin. Hæres. p. 498, 499.

Indeed when words have long obtained, and have been very useful to convey just ideas of truth to the mind, they are not to be easily parted with, though they are not syllabically expressed in Scripture, unless other and better words can be substituted in their room; and especially they are to be tenaciously abode by, when the apparent design by dropping or changing them is to set aside the truths signified by them; such as trinity, unity, essence, person, imputed righteousness, satisfaction, &c. But here words design doctrines, the words of faith and good doctrine, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; and which are said to be *sound*, in opposition to the words and doctrines of false teachers, which are corrupt and unsound, and are pernicious, and eat as do a canker; and because they are so in themselves; they are not only sweet and pleasant, but salutary and nourishing; they are milk for babes, and meat for strong men; they are food for faith, and nourish up to eternal life. The *form* of them either intends the manner of teaching them, which should be in apt and acceptable words, plain and easy to be understood, and not with the enticing words of men's wisdom; or a brief summary, a compendium of Gospel truth. It was usual with both Jews and Christians to reduce the principles of their religion into a narrow compass, into a short form or breviary. The Jew had his *form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law*, Rom. ii. 20. which was a rule to himself, and an instruction to others; and such a form, or Jewish creed, may be seen in Heb. vi. 1, 2. The Apostle Paul gives a summary of the Gospel, which he preached, and which he reduces to two heads; repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 20. and an excellent compendium and abridgment of the Gospel, and a glorious form of sound words, we have in Rom. viii. 29, 30. and such an one Timothy had heard and received from the apostle, as a *pattern* for him hereafter to preach by, as this word signifies; and as it is rendered in 1 Tim. i. 16. There seems to be an allusion to painters, who first make their outlines, and take a rough draught before they lay on their colours and beautiful strokes; and which rough draught and first lines are the rule and pattern of their after-work; and which they never exceed, but keep within the compass of: so there is a set of Gospel truths, which may be called the analogy or proportion of faith, which are a rule and pattern, as for hearers to judge by, so for ministers to preach according to, 1 Tim. vi. 3. Gal. i. 8, 9, 2 John 9, 10. And such a form or pattern was the apostle's doctrine to Timothy, and which he full well knew: and this form includes the doctrines concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the proper deity and distinct personality of each of them; concerning the everlasting love of the three Persons to the elect, the covenant of grace, and the transactions in it relating to them; their personal and eternal election in Christ, and his suretyship-engagements for them; the state and condition of men by the fall, and through sin, as that Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity, and a corrupt nature propagated from him, and that man is altogether impure, and entirely impotent to all that is spiritually good; as also such doctrines as concern particular redemp-

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tion by Christ, satisfaction for sin by his sacrifice, free and full pardon by his blood, and justification by his imputed righteousness: regeneration and sanctification by the powerful and efficacious grace of the spirit of God; and the final perseverance of the saints to eternal glory, as the free gift of God. And this is a form never to departed from, but to be *held fast*, as Timothy is exhorted; which supposes that he had it, as he had, not only in his head, but in his heart; and that there was danger of dropping it through the temptations that surrounded him, the reproach and persecution the Gospel lay under, and through the sleight of false teachers, who lay in wait to deceive, and to take every opportunity of wringing it out of his hands; and therefore it became him, as he had it, not only to hold it forth, and publish it, but to hold it fast, in opposition to any wavering about it, or cowardice in it, or departure from it in any degree. And the argument to hold it fast follows, *which thou hast heard of me*; both in private conversation, and in the public ministry of the word; and which the apostle had not from men, but by the revelation of Christ; and therefore was to be depended upon, and to be abode by, or held fast, in the manner next directed to: *in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*; in the exercise of faith, and from a principle of love; which two graces always go together, and have Christ, as here, for their object: though this clause may be connected with the word *heard*, and the sense be, either that Timothy had heard Paul preach these sound doctrines with great faith and faithfulness, and with much fervency and affection to Christ, and the souls of men; or Timothy had heard them himself, and embraced and mixed them with faith, and received them in love: or it may be read in connexion with *the form of sound words*; the sum of which is faith in Christ, and love to him; the Gospel is the doctrine of faith; and it puts men on discharging their duty from love to Christ.

Ver. 14. *That good thing which was committed to thee, &c.*] By which he means either his ministerial work and office, which is a good work, the dispensation of which was committed to him, and which it became him so to observe, as that the ministry might not be blamed; or else the good and excellent gifts of the spirit, which qualified him for the discharge of that work, and which were not to be neglected, but to be stirred up, exercised, and improved, lest they should be lost, or took away; or rather the Gospel, which was committed to his trust, to preach; and this may be called a good thing, from the author of it, who is good, whence it is named the Gospel of God, and the Gospel of Christ; and from the matter of it, it consists of good things come by Christ, the High-priest, and which it publishes, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal salvation by him; and from the end and use of it, it being both for the glory of God, the magnifying the riches of his grace, and the exaltation of Christ; and also is the power of God in regeneration and sanctification unto salvation to every one that believes. And it being said to be *committed* to Timothy, denotes the excellency of it; that it is a treasure, as indeed it is a rich one, it contains the riches of grace, even the unsearchable riches of Christ, and is more valuable than thousands of gold and silver;

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and that it is a trust, and requires faithfulness in ministers, who are the stewards of it; and that it is to be accounted for. Wherefore great care should be had in dispensing and keeping it: *keep by the Holy Ghost*. It should be kept pure and uncorrupt, free from all the adulterations and mixtures of men; and safe and sound, that it be not snatched away from the churches by false teachers. And whereas the apostle knew, that neither Timothy, nor any other, were sufficient of themselves, for these things, he directs to the keeping of it by the Holy Ghost; who makes men overseers of churches, bestows gifts upon them, to fit them for their work, and leads them into all the truths of the Gospel; and under his influence and teachings, and by the assistance of his grace, are they enabled to discharge their trust, abide by the Gospel, and persevere in the ministration of it to the end. *Which dwelleth in us*; in all believers, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and in all the churches, which are built up by him, an habitation for God; and in all the ministers of the word, to direct, instruct, support, and uphold them; and who dwells with them, and continues in them, and that for ever, John xiv. 16, 17.

Ver. 15. *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia, &c.*] Either those that followed the apostle from Asia to Rome; or who came from thence thither, upon business, and were upon the spot when the apostle was in his greatest troubles, and yet all forsook him and no man stood by him; or else the churches and ministers in Asia, that is, a great number of them; for it cannot be said of every minister and church, and of all the members of churches there, what follows, *he turned away from me*; were ashamed of him, because of his chain, and despised him under his afflictions, and had him in abhorrence and contempt, and revolted from his doctrine; though the defection was very general, and the apostle appeals to Timothy for the truth of it, as a fact well known to him: *this thou knowest*; Timothy being at Ephesus, which was in Asia; and since there was so great an apostacy in the country where he was, the above exhortations were very reasonable, to hold fast the form of sound words, and keep the good thing committed to him; seeing so many were falling off from the truth of the Gospel: *of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes*; who very likely were ministers of the word, and who had shone for a while, but were now stars fallen from heaven, had erred from the faith, and were become apostates, and proved men of corrupt minds, and deceivers of the people; and it may be that these were more open and infamous than some others, or might be more known to Timothy, and therefore are particularly mentioned. They are both of them said to have been of the seventy disciples; see the note on Luke x. 1. and afterwards followers of Simon Magus. The name of the first of these signifies a *fugitive*, and such was he from the cause of Christ. Pliny^c makes mention of a town in Asia, called Phygella, from the fugitives which built it; and the latter signifies born of Mercury; there was one of the name in Tertullian's time, against whom he wrote.

Ver. 16. *The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, &c.*] Who seems to have been one of Asia, and of Ephesus, and is an exception from the general apostacy, or from those that turned away from the apostle; and therefore he prays that the Lord would shew mercy to his family; that he would give regenerating grace and mercy to such of them as were without it, or pardoning grace and mercy, or the great mercy of eternal life and salvation by Christ; and this doubtless was a prayer in faith, upon the promises of God, and upon instances and examples, in which God has remarkably shewn mercy to the families of good men, who have faithfully served him, and abode in his interest in times of trouble; thus the house of Obed Edom was blessed for the sake of the ark, that was taken care of by them; the reasons of this prayer and good wishes follow: *for he oft refreshed me*; both with his Christian visits, and spiritual conversation, which to the apostle, in the heat of his affliction and persecution, were like a fan in hot weather, cooling and reviving, as the word signifies; and also by supplying him with the necessaries of life, as food and raiment, or money to purchase them with. He answered to his name, which signifies, *one that brings profit*: he is said to be one of the seventy disciples; see the note on Luke x. 1. and afterwards to be bishop of Corone: *and was not ashamed of my chain*; the Syriac version adds, *with which I am bound*; in which he lay, or by which he was held, and led by a soldier; see Acts xxviii. 16, 20. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the apostle, though he was bound with a chain; nor was he ashamed of the cause for which he suffered; and the apostle proposes him to Timothy, as an example worthy of imitation, in those times of defection. See ver. 8.

Ver. 17. *But when he was in Rome, &c.*] Upon some business or another, where the apostle was a prisoner: *he sought me out very diligently, and found me*; as there might be many prisons in Rome, he went from one to another, till he found him; and was one of those to whom Christ will say hereafter, *I was in prison and ye came unto me*, Matt. xxv. 36. or the reason of his going from place to place in quest of him was this; the apostle was not in any particular place of confinement, but had a lodging where he was kept by a soldier, and which with some difficulty Onesiphorus found out: the manner of his bonds was this; he had a long chain fastened at one end to his right arm, and at the other to the left arm of the soldier that kept him, who constantly attended him in this form, wherever he went; and it is possible that in this way he might have liberty to go about and visit his friends; and this might still make it more difficult for Onesiphorus to find him.

Ver. 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day, &c.*] In return for his diligent seeking till he found the apostle. By *mercy*, he means the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; or that crown of righteousness and everlasting glory and happiness, which will be a grant from the Lord, or a free gift through Jesus Christ; the effect of pure grace and mercy, and not of merit.

^c Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29.

The apostle does not propose to requite him himself; he knew it was out of his power; but he had an interest in the Lord, and at the throne of grace; and he makes use of that in his favour, and prays the Lord that he might find mercy of him: and the meaning is either, that he prayed to God, that he might find mercy of him; or he prayed particularly to the Lord Jesus Christ to act the part of a Mediator for him with his father, that he might enjoy eternal life through him; or he prayed to God the father, that he would grant that he might find mercy at the hands of Jesus Christ his son, the Judge of quick and dead, who, at the great and last day, will give the crown of righteousness to all that love him, and his appearance: *and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well: or better.* Timothy being at Ephesus, of which city Onesiphorus seems to have been, and

that when the apostle was there, he very freely communicated to him, as Timothy, who was with him there, knew very well: the apostle does not forget, but remembers former kindnesses, as well as takes notice of present favours, and which shews a grateful mind. The phrase, *unto me*, is not in the Greek copies, though it is in the Vulgate Latin and in all the Oriental versions; wherefore the words may be understood of the things which Onesiphorus had ministered to Timothy, and to the church at Ephesus, and to the poor saints there; which Timothy was *better* acquainted with than the apostle could be, he being on the spot: and now since there were so many fallen off, and so few that remained hearty and faithful, but one Onesiphorus to all them that were in Asia; the apostle exhorts to firmness and constancy, in a dependence on the spirit and grace of God, as follows.

C H A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle continues his exhortations to Timothy, with respect both to his office and his conversation, and closes with the character of a minister of the Gospel. The apostle having exhorted Timothy, in the former chapter, to abide by the Gospel, notwithstanding whatsoever he might suffer for it, here points out to him that grace and strength in Christ, which he would have him have recourse unto, to enable him to discharge his duty, ver. 1. and that the Gospel might continue, he advises him to take care of a succession, and to commit the Gospel preached by him to others, whose qualifications for it are faithfulness and aptitude to teach, ver. 2. and in order to animate him to labour diligently in the Gospel, and suffer cheerfully for it, he observes to him that he was a soldier, and must endure hardships, and not indulge to the ease and pleasures of life; was a runner in a race, and therefore must strive before he received the crown; and was as an husbandman that must first labour before he partakes of the fruit: which things he would have him seriously consider; and desires that the Lord would give him understanding in them, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. and then with the same view, to encourage him to suffer for the Gospel of Christ, he puts him in mind of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, as a summary of the Gospel, and a specimen of what he had heard of him, ver. 8. and instances in his own sufferings for it, the nature, use, and end of them, by way of example and imitation, ver. 9. 10. and for the same purpose mentions several useful sayings and pithy sentences, as true and to be depended on, ver. 11, 12, 13. which he would have Timothy put his hearers in mind of, and especially those to whom he committed the Gospel to preach; charging them, in a solemn manner, not to strive about words, which is not only unprofitable, but hurtful, ver. 14. and with respect to himself, he exhorts him to diligence and study, in interpreting and explaining the word of God, that so he might be approved unto God, and not be ashamed before men, ver. 15. and on the contrary, to avoid false doctrines, as being profane, empty, and

mere babble; and as tending to greater impiety; and as being dangerous and threatening, like the spreading canker; of which he gives instances in Hymeneus and Philetus, ver. 16, 17. whose error was, that the resurrection was already past; and succeeded in the spreading of it, to the subversion of the faith of some, ver. 18. However, for the comfort of real believers, 'tis observed, that notwithstanding such errors, and the success of them, the foundation stands sure; God has a certain knowledge of his own people, and will keep them; and therefore it becomes such who either call on the name, or are called by the name of Christ, to depart from such evil doctrines, ver. 19. and that such things happening in the world, and in churches, should not be thought strange, the apostle illustrates the case by a simile of a great house, which has vessels of all sorts in it, and for different uses and purposes, ver. 21, 22. Wherefore, to conclude his exhortations to Timothy, he advises him to flee those lusts which are incident to youth; to follow things that are good, and to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, which tend to strife, ver. 22, 23. which leads him on to give the character of a servant of the Lord, or a preacher of the Gospel; that he must not strive, but be gentle, patient, and meek, in instructing adversaries; for which he should have an aptness; and is encouraged to act this part, from the consideration of success under a divine blessing; namely, bringing such persons to repentance, and to own the truth, and the recovery of them out of the snare of the devil, ver. 24, 25, 26.

Ver. 1: *Thou therefore, my son, &c.*] The illative particle, *therefore*, shews the connexion between this and the preceding chapter; the appellation, *thou, my son*, expresses the apostle's tender affection for Timothy, and is the rather used to engage his attention to the advice he was about to give him; which is, that since he had received the true grace of God, and unfeigned faith dwelt in him; and since he had such gifts, qualifying him for the work of the ministry; and since so good a thing as the glorious Gospel of the blessed God was committed to his trust; and since there were

so many who had departed from it, and so few that abode by it, he would have him *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*; by which may be meant either the free favour and love of God in Christ, Rom. viii. 39. which is in itself always strong, immovable, and unalterable; and is the strength and security of the saints, though they have not always the same strong believing views of it; and to be strong in it, is to be rooted and grounded in it, and to have a strong sense and firm persuasion of interest in it, and that nothing can separate from it: or else the Gospel, which is a declaration of grace, and is in Christ, and comes by him; and to be strong in it, is to preach it boldly, to defend it bravely, and courageously oppose every error and heresy, and every abettor thereof; and it also becomes every private believer to hold it fast, stand fast in it, abide by it, and earnestly contend for it; and so the phrase may stand opposed to *תקפה באוריתא*, or *גבר*, *one strong in the law*, which is so often used by the Jews⁴: or rather by grace is meant the fulness of grace which is in Christ, for the supply of his people; for in that grace which is in him, and not in that which is in themselves, should their dependence be. It is very agreeable to be strong in grace received, in point of exercise, but not in point of contentment; so as to rest satisfied with the present measure of it, without growing in it, and going on to perfection; and much less in point of consolation, so as to derive peace and comfort from it; and still less in point of trust and confidence in it; for it is but a creature, though a very glorious one, being the workmanship of God, and very variable as to its exercise, and as yet imperfect; and not that, but the object of it, is to be trusted in: though indeed a person's enjoyment of everlasting glory and happiness may be strongly concluded from the work of grace which is begun in him; that being an immortal seed, and a well of living water springing up into eternal life; and with which glory is inseparably connected. But grace in Christ is what believers should always have recourse unto, and exercise faith on; and not only believe that there is such a fulness of grace in Christ, which they have both heard of and seen, and which they know is laid up for them, and given to them, and is sufficient for them; but they should go forth out of themselves unto it, and draw water with joy out of the full wells of salvation in Christ: and this grace is of a strengthening nature, both to ministers of the word, to enable them to fulfil their ministry, to bear reproaches, afflictions, and persecution for the Gospel, and the infirmities of weak brethren; and to private believers, to strengthen them against every corruption, temptation, and snare, to exercise every grace, and discharge every branch of duty.

Ver. 2. *And the things that thou hast heard of me, &c.*] Meaning the doctrines of the Gospel, the form of sound words. The Arabic version renders it, *the secrets, or mysteries that thou hast heard of me*; the mysteries of the grace of God, which he had often heard him discourse of, unfold and explain: *among many witnesses*; or by them; which some understand of the testimonies out of Moses, and the prophets, with which the apostle confirmed what he delivered; for

the doctrines of justification, pardon of sin, &c. by Christ, were bore witness to by the prophets; though rather the many persons, who, with Timothy, heard the apostle preach, and were and would be sufficient witnesses for Timothy, on occasion, that what he preached and committed to others were the same he had heard and received from the Apostle Paul; unless reference should be had here to the time of imposition of hands upon him, when he received some ministerial gifts, or an increase of them; at which time the apostle might deliver to him the form of doctrine he was to preach, and that in the presence of the presbytery, who joined in the action, and so were witnesses of what was said to him: *the same commit thou to faithful men*; who not only have received the grace of God, and are true believers in Christ, but are men of great uprightness and integrity; who having the word of God, will speak it out boldly, and faithfully, and keep back nothing that is profitable, but declare the whole counsel of God, without any mixture or adulteration; for the Gospel being committed to their trust, they would become stewards, and of such it is required that they be faithful; and therefore this is mentioned as a necessary and requisite qualification in them; and not only so, but they must be such *who shall be able* or sufficient *to teach others also*. No man is sufficient for these things of himself, but his sufficiency is of God; it is he who makes men able ministers of the word, by giving them gifts suitable for such work; so that they have a furniture in them, a treasure in their earthen vessels, an understanding of the sacred Scriptures, a gift of explaining them, and a faculty of speaking to edification; and so are apt to teach men, to their profit and advantage. The Ethiopic version renders it, *who are fit to teach the foolish*.

Ver. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardness, &c.*] *Or afflictions*; as in ch. iv. 5. The same word is used there as here, and properly signifies, *suffer evil*; and means the evil of afflictions, as persecutions of every kind, loss of name and goods, scourging, imprisonment, and death itself, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel: *as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*. Christ is the Captain of salvation, the Leader and Commander of the people, who are made a willing people in the day of his power; or when he raises his forces, and musters his armies, these are volunteers, who willingly enlist themselves into his service, and under his banners fight his battles; and such who manfully behave against sin, Satan, and the world, are his good soldiers; such are all true believers in Christ, and particularly the ministers of the word, whose ministry is a warfare, and who fight the good fight of faith; and besides the above enemies, which they have in common with other saints, have to do with teachers, who are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Ver. 4. *No man that warreth, &c.*] Who is a soldier, and gives himself up to military service, in a literal sense: the Vulgate Latin version, without any authority, adds, *to God*; as if the apostle was speaking of a spiritual warfare; whereas he is illustrating a spiritual warfare by a corporeal one; and observes, that no one, that is in a military state, *entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*; with civil affairs, in distinction

⁴ Targum in Ruth ii. 1. & in Psal. lxxxii. 1. & cxii. 3. & in Eccl. x. 17. & in Cant. viii. 10. vid. T. Bab. Seta, fol. 14. 1. & Tzerer Hammor. fol. 9. 3.

from military ones. The Roman soldiers might not follow any trade or business of life, or be concerned in husbandry, or merchandize of any sort, but were wholly to attend to military exercises, and to the orders of their general; for to be employed in any secular business was reckoned an entangling of them, a taking of them off from, and an hindrance to their military discipline: and by this the apostle suggests that Christ's people, his soldiers, and especially his ministers, should not be involved and implicated in worldly affairs and cares; for no man can serve two masters, God and mammon; but should wholly give up themselves to the work and service to which they are called; and be ready to part with all worldly enjoyments, and cheerfully suffer the loss of all things, when called to it, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel: *that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier*; his captain, or general, who has enlisted him, enrolled and registered him among his soldiers; whom to please should be his chief concern; as it should be the principal thing attended to by a Christian soldier, or minister of the Gospel, not to please men, nor to please himself, by seeking his own ease and rest, his worldly emoluments and advantages, but to please the Lord Christ, in whose book his name is written.

Ver. 5. *And if a man also strive for masteries, &c.*] In the Olympic games, by running, wrestling, leaping, &c. *yet is he not crowned*; with a corruptible, fading crown, a crown made of herbs and leaves of trees, as parsley, laurel, &c. *except he strive lawfully*; according to the laws and rules fixed for those exercises; so no man that calls himself a Christian, minister, or any other, can expect the crown of life, the prize of the high calling of God, except he runs the race set before him, in the right way; looking to Christ, the mark, pressing through all difficulties, towards the prize, and holds on and out unto the end.

Ver. 6. *The husbandman that laboureth, &c.*] In manuring his ground, in ploughing, in sowing, in weeding, in reaping, &c. *must be first partaker of the fruits*: of his labour, before others; and the design may be to observe that the ministers of the word ought first to be partakers of the grace of God, the fruits of the spirit, and of the Gospel, and rightly and spiritually understand it, before they preach it to others; or that such who labour in the word and doctrine, ought in the first place to be taken care of, and have a sufficient maintenance provided for them, 1 Cor. ix. 7, 11. or that as they shall have in the first place some seals and fruits of their ministry, in the conversion of souls, so they shall shine in the kingdom of heaven as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. Though the words may be rendered, and which seems more agreeable to the context, and to the apostle's argument, *the husbandman must first labour before he partakes of the fruits*; so a minister of the Gospel must first labour, and endure hardships in this life, before he sits down in the kingdom of heaven, and takes his rest, and enjoys the crown of glory, which fades not away, which the chief Shepherd shall give unto him.

Ver. 7. *Consider what I say, &c.*] The advice given by the apostle to Timothy, to be strong in the grace

of Christ; to commit the doctrines of the Gospel to faithful and able men; and to endure hardness for the sake of it: as also the characters which he bore as a soldier, a runner in a race, or a wrestler, and an husbandman; and therefore must not expect ease and rest, but war, difficulties, toil, and labour; and likewise under what titles Christ was to be regarded; as his General, and Captain of salvation, that commanded him; as the righteous Judge, that held the prize and crown for which he was running; and the chief Shepherd, who would reward all his labours; and moreover, the glorious reward of grace itself, he might expect, as eternal life, when he had fought the good fight; the crown of righteousness, when he had finished his course, or run his race; and a crown of glory that fades not away, when the chief Shepherd should appear: and by putting him upon the consideration of these things, he suggests, that they were matters of moment and importance, and would be of great use to him in assisting and encouraging his faith, amidst all trials and exercises; and whereas they were expressed in figurative terms, taken from the soldier, the runner in a race, and the husbandman, they might not at first view be so easy to be understood; and therefore he would have him think of them, and meditate upon them, and weigh them in his mind; as well as he would not have him take things upon trust from him, but examine them whether they were right or no; though he doubted not but that they would be found to be agreeable to the standard of truth: wherefore he prays as follows, *and the Lord give thee understanding in all things*; in all the above things, and in all others; in all the doctrines and mysteries of grace, and in all the rules of conduct in life. No man has of himself an understanding in spiritual things; this is the gift of God; and where it is given there is need of an increase of it, and always of such a prayer for it. The Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, *the Lord will give thee, &c.* and so the words are a promise, an encouragement to Timothy, to consider well of these things; for he might assure himself, that, in so doing, God would give him more understanding in them.

Ver. 8. *Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, &c.*] This is said either as an encouragement to suffer hardness in the cause of Christ; since he, who though he was of the seed of David, of the blood-royal, and heir to his crown, yet suffered and died; and whereas he rose again from the dead, those who suffer for his sake shall rise also, and live and reign with him for ever: or else as a specimen of the form of sound words, or of the things which Timothy had heard of the apostle: for this, with what follows, is a summary of them: Christ being of the seed of David, according to the flesh, or human nature, is expressive of his incarnation; shews that he was really come in the flesh, and was truly man; and that he assumed human nature with all its frailties and infirmities, excepting sin, and was, like David, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; and it includes his whole life, and his righteousness, and obedience to the law of works, and points him out as the true Messiah, who was well known to the Jews by the name of the son of David. And now the apostle puts Timothy in mind,

that he was raised from the dead ; which implies that he died ; and so includes all the doctrines relating to his death ; as that he died to make reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction for the sins of his people, and to procure peace for them, and the full remission of all their iniquities ; and to obtain redemption for them, from sin, Satan, the law, and its curses ; as well as it expresses his resurrection from the dead, for their justification : and this being his first step to glory, has connected with it his ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, intercession for the saints, and his second coming to judgment ; and is therefore particularly mentioned, because it is an article so comprehensive, and is a fundamental one, and of the greatest importance to faith, and was what was struck at in those times : the apostle adds, *according to my Gospel* ; meaning not the Gospel of Luke, in which there is a clear account given of the resurrection of Christ, said to be written by him, at the instigation, and under the direction of the apostle, and published with his approbation, as some think ; but the doctrine of the Gospel, and which he calls his, not because he was the author, or the subject of it ; for in these respects it is the Gospel of God, and of Christ ; but because it was committed to him, and he was intrusted with it, and fully and faithfully preached it ; and in distinction from another Gospel, that of the false teachers ; and agreeably to this doctrine, which the apostle everywhere taught, Christ was raised from the dead ; so the Ethiopic version renders it, *as I have taught*.

Ver. 9. *Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, &c.*] As a malefactor, as if guilty of some capital crime ; as an enemy to the law of Moses, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition everywhere, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, Acts xxiv. 5. The Ethiopic version renders it, *as a thief*. The trouble he suffered were reproaches, persecutions, whipping, beating, stoning, imprisonment : for he adds, *even unto bonds* ; for he was now a prisoner, and in chains ; nor was it the first time, he was in prisons frequent ; and all this for the sake of the Gospel, which he preached, concerning the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ : *but the word of God is not bound* ; for the apostle, whilst a prisoner at Rome, had the liberty of dwelling by himself, in his own hired house, though held in chains, and guarded by a soldier, and of receiving his friends, and of preaching the Gospel to as many as would come to hear him, Acts xxviii. 16, 17, 23, 30, 31. as well as of sending letters to the churches ; for several of his epistles were written by him when a prisoner, as those to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians ; and this to Timothy, and also that to Philemon : so that the Gospel was not restrained, or the apostle restrained from publishing it, both by word of mouth, and by writing ; which was a great support to him under his troubles. Moreover, the Gospel was the more spread through the bonds of the apostle, and met with great success ; it became known in Cæsar's palace, and was the means of the conversion of some of his household ; and many of the brethren, through his bonds, became bolder to preach the Gospel of Christ ; so that it had a free course, and was glorified : and sometimes so it is, that persecution is

a means of the greater spread of the Gospel ; which was an effect that followed upon the persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, upon the death of Stephen, Acts viii. 1, 2, 3, 4. And indeed, when God opens an effectual door, none can shut it, though there be many adversaries ; and when he gives the word a commission, there is no stopping it ; when it comes in power, it bears down all before it ; it can't be fettered and bound by men, though men may be fettered and bound for the sake of it.

Ver. 10. *Therefore I endure all things for the elects' sakes, &c.*] There is a certain number of persons whom God has chosen in Christ from everlasting unto salvation, who shall certainly be saved ; for these Jesus Christ suffered and died ; and on their account is the Gospel sent, preached, and published to the world ; for their sakes are ministers fitted and qualified for their work, and have their mission and commission to perform it, and suffer what they do in the execution of it ; and since it was for the sake of such, whom God had loved and chosen, that the apostle endured all his reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, he was the more cheerful under them ; and the consideration of it was a support unto him : *that they may also obtain* ; as well as himself, and other chosen vessels of salvation, who were called by grace already ; for the apostle is speaking of such of the elect, who were, as yet, in a state of nature : *the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory* ; salvation is only by Christ Jesus, and in him ; and this is only for the elect of God ; and it is published in the Gospel, that they might obtain it ; and in all ages they do obtain it, or enjoy it : the thing itself is obtained by Christ for them, through his obedience, sufferings, and death ; and it is published in the everlasting Gospel, that they might come to the knowledge of it ; and in effectual vocation it is brought near by the spirit of God, and applied unto them ; and they have now both a meetness for it, and a right unto it, and shall fully enjoy it in heaven ; for it has *eternal glory, or heavenly glory*, as in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, annexed to it ; or rather the full enjoyment of it will consist in an eternal and heavenly glory, which will be put upon the saints, both in soul and body, and remain to all eternity.

Ver. 11. *It is a faithful saying, &c.*] This may refer either to what goes before, that all things, all reproaches and sufferings, through the ministration of the Gospel, are endured for the elects' sake ; and that they shall certainly obtain salvation in Christ, and enjoy eternal glory, to which they are predestinated : or to what follows, which being of moment and importance, and difficult to be believed, as that death led to life, and sufferings were the way to the kingdom ; the apostle prefaces it in this manner, affirming the truth of it, that it was sure and certain, and to be believed, and depended on as such. *For if we be dead with him* ; with Christ, as all his people are, by virtue of union to him ; they are dead with him, he and they being one, in a legal sense ; when he died, they died with him ; being crucified with him, as their head and representative, their old man, their sins, were also crucified with him, being imputed to him, and laid upon him ; and through the efficacy of his death, they became dead to sin, both to its damning

and governing power, and so are planted together in the likeness of his death; so that as he died unto sin once, and lives again to die no more, they die unto sin, and are alive to God, and shall live for ever. Moreover, this, agreeably to what follows, may be understood of the saints dying for Christ's sake, and the Gospel, whereby they are conformed unto him, and feel the fellowship of his sufferings, and so may be said to be dead with him: and such may assure themselves of the truth of what follows, *we shall also live with him*; as many as were crucified with Christ, and buried with him, rose with him from the dead, and were justified in him, as their head and representative; the free gift came on them to justification of life; and they that are dead to sin, through the efficacy of his death, live a life of sanctification, which they have from him, and is maintained and supported by him, and is to his glory; and they live a life of communion with him, in whose favour is life; and though they die, and for his sake, they shall rise again; and because he lives, they shall live also, even a life of glory, happiness, and endless pleasure. And this is part of the faithful saying, and to be believed, and is believed by the saints: see Rom. vi. 8. Moreover, since the word *him* is not in the original text, and the elect are spoken of in the preceding verse, what if the sense should be this, this is true doctrine, and a certain matter of fact, if we and the elect of God die together in the same cause, and for the sake of Christ, and the Gospel, we shall live together in everlasting bliss and glory?

Ver. 12. *If we suffer, &c.*] With him, with Christ, as in Rom. viii. 17. all the elect suffered with Christ when he suffered; they suffered in him the whole penalty of the law, all the righteousness, strictness, and severity of it; and they are partakers of the benefits of his sufferings, as peace, pardon, righteousness, redemption, and everlasting salvation. And such being called by grace, and having made a profession of Christ, they suffer shame and reproach, loss of credit and reputation, and sometimes loss of goods, and corporeal punishment, and even death itself: but though they do, and if they should, they may be satisfied of the truth of this, *we shall also reign with him*; they reign with him now in the kingdom of grace; grace reigns in their hearts, where Christ, the King of glory, has entered, and has set up his throne, and where he dwells by faith, they being made kings and priests unto God by him; and they shall reign with him in his kingdom here on earth, for the space of a thousand years; and they shall reign with him in glory to all eternity: this is certain, for this kingdom is prepared for them, it is given to them, they are called unto it, and have both a right unto, and meetness for it; see Rom. viii. 17: *if we deny him, he also will deny us*; there is a denying of Christ in words; so it is denied by the Jews that Christ is come in the flesh, and that Jesus is the Messiah; and some that have bore the Christian name, though very unworthily, have denied his true deity, his real humanity, proper sonship, and the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for pardon, justification, and atonement: and there is a denying of him in works; so some that profess to know him, and do own him in his person and

offices, yet in works deny him; their conversation is not becoming their profession of him; they have the form of godliness, but deny the power of it: there is a secret and silent denying of him, when men are ashamed of him, and do not confess him; and there is an open denying of him, by such who set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh throughout the earth; there is a partial denying of Christ, which was Peter's case, though his faith in him, and love to him, were not lost; and there is a total denying of him, a thorough apostacy, and from which there is no recovery; and if there be any such apostates among those who have named the name of Christ, he will deny them, he will not own them for his another day; he will set them at his left hand; he will declare he knows them not, and will banish them from his presence for evermore. This is another branch of the faithful saying; this will certainly be the case; Christ himself has said it, Matt. x. 33.

Ver. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, &c.*] The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *if we believe not him*. This may be understood, either of such who are altogether destitute of faith; who do not believe in Christ at all; and particularly do not believe what was just now said concerning his denying such that deny him, but mock and scoff at his coming, and at a future judgment: this unbelief of theirs won't make void his faith or faithfulness; see Rom. iii. 3. he'll abide faithful to his word of threatening; and what he says in Mark xvi. 16. will be found to be an everlasting truth: or it may be understood of true believers, whose faith sometimes is very low, as to its exercise on Christ, and with reference to their future glory and happiness; but Christ is faithful to all his covenant-engagements for them, to bring them to glory, and to every word of promise concerning their happiness, and to every branch of the faithful saying above mentioned; and he is ever the same in his love to them, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and his salvation is an everlasting and unchangeable one; nor do the saints' interest in it, and security by it, depend upon their acts of believing, or their frames, but upon the firmness and unchangeableness of Christ, the object of faith. *He cannot deny himself*: he can't go contrary to his word; that would be to act contrary to his nature and perfections, and would be a denying of himself, which is not possible; wherefore his faithfulness will never fail, even though the faith of his people does, as to the exercise of it.

Ver. 14. *Of these things put them in remembrance, &c.*] Meaning either his hearers, or those to whom he was to commit the things he had heard of the apostle, and who must expect to suffer afflictions, and endure hardships, for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; wherefore to remind them of the above sayings might be of use and comfort to them. This clause is wanting in the Arabic version. *Charging them before the Lord*: the omniscient God, as in his sight, as they will answer it to him another day; see 1 Tim. v. 21. and vi. 13. *that they strive not about words*; it became them to strive and contend for the form of sound words, for the wholesome words or doctrines of our Lord Jesus, but not about mere words, and especially

such as were to *no profit*; to no advantage to truth, nor to themselves nor others; were not to edification, to spiritual edification, to godly edifying, which is in faith: but to the *subverting of the hearers*; the confounding of their minds, misleading their judgments, and overthrowing their faith; and therefore were not only unprofitable, but hurtful and pernicious, and by all means to be avoided.

Ver. 15. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy reads, *to Christ*; see Rom. xvi. 10. Not unto men, as pleasing them; for such who study to please men, are not the servants of Christ; and sometimes those that are approved to and by men, are disapproved of by God and Christ: but unto God, shewing all fidelity and uprightness; speaking out the Gospel openly, and freely, with all sincerity, as in the sight of God; commending themselves to him, and to every man's conscience, by manifestation of the truth; and such will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" another day. *A workman that needeth not to be ashamed*; the ministry of the word is a work, and it is a good work; and those that perform it aright are worthy of honour and esteem; and it requires industry, diligence, and application, and for which no man is sufficient without the grace of God; and those who are employed in it are workmen, workers together with God, and labourers in his vineyard: and such who are faithful and diligent ones, *need not to be ashamed*; such do not cause shame, neither in themselves nor in others, as false teachers do, who foam out their own shame, and as negligent ministers of the word, and such whose lives are not agreeable to the doctrines they preach; nor have they any reason to be ashamed, neither of the Gospel, which they preach, nor of their sufferings, which they endure for the sake of it, nor of their upright ministrations of the word; and as they are not afraid to suffer shame for the sake of Christ now, they'll not be ashamed before him at his coming. *Rightly dividing, or cutting the word of truth*; that is, the Scriptures of truth, Dan. x. 21. which come from the God of truth, are concerning Christ, who is the truth, and are dictated and led into by the spirit of truth, and contain in them nothing but truth: to divide the word, is not merely to divide the text into its proper parts, though care should be taken that this be done aright; and some think that the allusion is to the verses of the Hebrew Bible, which are called פְּסוּקִים, *divisions, sections, or cuttings*, from the word פָּסַק, *to cut or divide*, being cut or divided one from another; hence those that were employed in the law, and were conversant with the sacred writings, and exercised therein, were called פְּסוּקִים בְּתוֹרַת, *cutters, or dividers of the law**: and so בַּעַל פֶּסוּק is one that is well versed in the Bible, and knows every part of it, and readily uses it, in speaking or writing; and such an one was Timothy, ch. iii. 15. though I rather think the apostle refers to a wrong way of dividing the Scriptures by the Jews, to which he opposes the right dividing of them. They had used not only to take away a letter out of one word, and add it to another, and so expound the text, but to remove words in it, and make that which went before

to go behind, and that which was behind to go before; and this they call a sharp knife, which דוֹרֵךְ דוֹרֵךְ וּמַפְסֵק הַכְּתוּבִים, *cuts and divides the Scriptures*†: but this way, which his countrymen used, the apostle would not have Timothy, and other Gospel ministers, make use of; for this is not rightly to divide, but to mangle and tear in pieces the word of truth. Moreover, to divide the word of truth, or to *cut it*, is to cut it open, and dissect its several parts, and search and look into the inside and bottom of it, for to find out every truth contained in it, and lay them open to others; and may be, as some have thought, an allusion to the cutting open the sacrifices, and laying the parts of them aright, and in a decent manner: to which may be added, that since ministers of the Gospel are stewards, and who, when wise and faithful, give to every one of the household their portion of meat in due season; the metaphor may be taken from such, and from masters and governors of families, who cut up the food, and distribute it to each, according to their age and appetite; and so the ministers of the Gospel are to distribute the spiritual food of the word to babes in Christ, and to grown Christians, according to their capacities, and suitable to their cases and circumstances, dividing to every one what is proper for him: in short, one that divides the word of truth rightly, is, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, one that *rightly handles*; or, as the Syriac version, that *rightly preaches the word of truth*; who gives the true sense of Scripture, does not pervert and wrest it, and take from it, or add to it; who points out the truth in it, and shews unto men the way of salvation, and plainly and faithfully preaches the Gospel contained in it, without keeping back any thing that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God. This same Greek word is used by the Septuagint in Prov. iii. 6. and xi. 5. where it answers to the Hebrew word יָשַׁר, which signifies to direct the way, and make it plain; and may here design a plain and open interpretation of the word of God: and to answer these several characters in the text should be the studious concern of every Gospel minister; and *study* is necessary thereunto; it requires great care that a man take heed to himself, and to his doctrine; and great industry, diligence, and application, and much reading, meditation, and prayer.

Ver. 16. *But shun profane and vain babblings, &c.*] The ministry of false teachers is mere babbling; a voice, and nothing else, as the man said of his nightingale; a sound of words, but no solid matter in them; great swelling words of vanity, like large bubbles of water, look big, and make a great noise, but have nothing in them; contain nothing but vain, empty, idle, and trifling stuff; what is unprofitable and unedifying, yea, what is profane, contrary to the nature and perfections of God, and not agreeable to the doctrine which is according to godliness; and being palmed upon the Holy Scriptures, is a profanation of them. And all such wicked and empty prate, and babbling, is to be shunned, avoided, and discouraged, refused, and rejected; and, as much as can be, a stop should be put to it, both by ministers and hearers of the word. *For they will increase unto more ungodliness*;

* Vid. Fuller Miscell. Sacra, l. 2. c. 16.

† Halichot Olim, part. 4. c. 3. p. 192.

meaning either that such babblings, if used and encouraged, will grow more and more profane and wicked; or the persons that use them, the unruly and vain talkers, will grow more daring, bold, and impudent, will wax worse and worse, and from one error will proceed to another, for such seldom stop; and having abused one passage of Scripture, will go on to attack another, and will not cease, till they have wrested the whole Scripture to their own destruction, and that of others.

Ver. 17. *And their word will eat as doth a canker, &c.*] Or *gangrene*, which gnaws and feeds upon the flesh, inflames and mortifies as it goes, and spreads swiftly, and endangers the whole body; and is therefore to be speedily taken notice of, and stopped. It is wrongly rendered *canker*, which is a different disease. "The word *gangrene* is Greek, and is derived by some authors from the Paphlagonian *gangra*, a goat; it being the character of a goat to browse the grass all around without shifting. It is juster, perhaps, to derive it from the Greek word, γάσσω, γάσσω, *manduco, consumo*, I eat, I consume. "The *gangrene* is a disease of the flesh of the part which it corrupts, consumes, and turns black, spreading and seizing itself of the adjoining parts, and is rarely cured without amputation.—By the microscope, a *gangrene* has been discovered to contain an infinite number of little worms engendered in the morbid flesh; and which continually producing new broods, they swarm, and overrun the adjacent parts: if the *gangrene* proceed to an utter spiacelation (or mortification), and be seated in any of the limbs, or extreme parts, recourse must be had to the operation of amputation." And so the errors and heresies of false teachers worm and spread, and feed upon the souls of men, and eat up the vitals of religion, or what seemed to be such, and even destroy the very form of godliness; and bring destruction and death, wherever they come; and when they get into Christian churches, threaten the ruin of them; and therefore are to be opposed in time, and those infected with them to be cut off. *Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus*: these were some of the principal among the false teachers, the chief authors and spreaders of error and heresy: the former of these is mentioned before in 1 Tim. i. 20. along with Alexander, as guilty of blasphemy, and as delivered up to Satan for it. Philetus is a Greek name as well as the other, though it is sometimes found in Roman inscriptions^b: it is very likely that these were both in Asia, and probably in Ephesus, or near to it, since the apostle mentions them by name to Timothy, that he might beware of them.

Ver. 18. *Who concerning the truth have erred, &c.*] That is, the two persons just mentioned; they fell from the truth, wandered and departed from it; they did not keep to the Scriptures of truth, but deviated from them; they missed that mark, and went astray into gross errors and mistakes; rejected the Gospel, the word of truth, in general, and particularly in saying, *that the resurrection is past already*; and no other is to be expected; or that there was no future resurrection of the dead: their error was, as some think, that there

is no other resurrection than that of parents in their children, who, though they die, live in their posterity; or than the resurrection of Christ, and of the saints, that rose at the same time; or rather, that there is no other resurrection than the spiritual one, or regeneration, which is a quickening of dead sinners, or the resurrection of them from the death of sin, to a life of grace; which seems to be the truest account of their principle, seeing this is what has been received and propagated by others since: though some have thought that they gave into the Palingenesia of the Pythagoreans, who supposed that when men die, their souls go into other bodies; and that these men imagined, that this is all the resurrection that will be: and others have been of opinion, that their notion was, that whereas the deliverance of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity is signified by a resurrection of them, in Ezek. xxxvii. that this is the resurrection they meant was past, and no other to be looked for; but that which has been fixed upon seems to be the truest account: *and overthrow the faith of some*; the Ethiopic version reads, *of many*; that is, of nominal professors of religion; not of true believers, for true faith cannot be overthrown. Hence it follows,

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, &c.*] That faith, which is the faith of God's elect, is of the operation of God, and is the gift of his grace, and of which Christ is the author and finisher, is firm and immovable as a foundation; it is solid and substantial; it is the substance of things hoped for; and it is permanent and abiding; it stands sure, being supported by the power of God, and prevalent mediation of Jesus Christ; and so cannot be overthrown by false teachers, when an historical faith, or the faith of temporary believers may: or the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is here meant, which was said to be past by the above false teachers; which is a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, without which the preaching of it is vain, and faith is vain; and which is a doctrine of God, of pure revelation; and this will be effected by his power: this stands sure upon the testimony of the patriarchs, prophets, and of Christ, and his apostles; upon the sure word and writings both of the Old and New Testament; and will stand its ground against all opposition, and will have its certain effect; for the Lord Jesus knows who are his distinctly and perfectly; nor will he lose them, nor any thing that belongs to them; not their bodies, any more than their souls, nor any dust of theirs, but will raise it up at the last day. Or else the doctrine of eternal election may be here designed; which is the foundation of all spiritual blessings, of faith and of holiness, of joy and comfort here, and happiness hereafter, and even of complete and everlasting salvation; and is of God's laying, and is owing to his sovereign pleasure and free rich grace; and stands sure, not on the foot of works, but upon the unchangeable and unfrustrable will of God; and this secures from a final and total deception by false teachers: and also into the account may be taken the persons of God's elect themselves; who are of God's founding, and are as immovable as the firmest foundation whatever, even as rocks and

^a See Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word *Gangrene*.
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^b Vid. Kirchman. de Fuener. Roman. l. 3. c. 10. p. 390.

mountains, and stand sure upon the rock of ages, Christ Jesus, and shall never perish; nor can they be deceived by false Christs and false prophets, but will remain safe and sound, when the faith of ever so many is subverted by them. *Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his*: faith is sealed and insured to God's elect, by his fore-knowledge and predestination of them; so that they certainly have it, and shall never lose it: and their election is according to God's fore-knowledge of them; which designs not a foresight of their faith, holiness, and good works, as the motives of his choosing them; nor a bare prescience of their persons; but such a fore-knowledge as includes special love to them, which is distinguishing, unchangeable, and everlasting; and this being a seal affixed to all the elect, shews the distinguishing grace of God in their election, the secrecy of it, and its firmness and irrevocableness, and also the safety of the chosen ones; things being sealed, to distinguish one thing from another, and to keep things secret, or to render them firm and authentic. So, among the Jews, seals were used in buying and selling, that it might be known what was bought, and to confirm the purchase¹. The inference from this comfortable doctrine is, *and let every one that nameth the name of Christ*; or of the Lord, as the Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read; that is, whoever either are called by the name of Christ, or Christians, or whoever call upon his name: let them *depart from iniquity*; both from doctrinal iniquity, the errors and heresies of the above false teachers, which increased to ungodliness, and ate as a gangrene, and were the subversion of the faith of some; and from all practical iniquity, which those men, and their followers, especially the Gnostics, were guilty of; and, generally speaking, when men make shipwreck of faith, they put away a good conscience: and the apostle may also mean, that all such should depart from iniquitous men, from men whether of bad principles or practices, or both, and have no fellowship with them, it being unworthy of the name by which they were called. Some reference seems to be had to Numb. xvi. 5, 26. and so the false teachers, and their followers, may be compared to Korah, and his company, and the elect of God to Moses, and the Lord's people, who were bid to depart from the tents of those wicked men; and who stood firm, sure, and safe, when the earth opened, and swallowed up the others.

Ver. 20. *But in a great house, &c.*] This simile the apostle makes use of, to shew that it need not seem strange, nor should it be distressing to any one's mind, to hear that men of such wicked principles and practices should be in the church of God, who are before mentioned; since in every great house or palace, the house of a nobleman, or palace of a king, there is a variety of vessels of different matter, and for different uses, and some are mean, despicable, and dishonourable; and so it is in the church of God: for by this *great house*, in the application of the simile, is not meant the world, as some think; for though that is a house built by God, who built all things; and is a

very large one, and full of inhabitants, comparable to vessels; and there are in it both good and bad, as always have been; yet it is no startling thing to any man, that there should be bad men in it; rather the wonder is, that there should be any good; but by this house is meant the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, 1 Tim. iii. 15. see the note there. *There are not only vessels of gold and of silver*; persons who are members of the visible church, who are comparable to gold and silver, for their worth and value, and preciousness in the sight of Christ, who accounts them his jewels, and peculiar treasure; and for their excellency and usefulness in the church, by reason of those differing gifts bestowed upon them; and for their lustre and purity, both of doctrine and of life; and for their solidity and duration: *but also of wood, and of earth*: there are others in a visible church-state, who are like to dry wood, destitute of the grace of God, and are fit matter for Satan to work upon, and by them raise and increase the flames of contention and division, and will be fit fuel for everlasting burnings; and there are others who are sensual, and carnal, and worldly, who mind earth, and earthly things, and have no spirituality, nor spiritual-mindedness in them: *and some to honour*; who are designed for honourable service, and behave honourably, and are worthy of honour in the church; are honourable officers, or members in it; and are to the honour of Christ, and the Gospel; and shall at last enjoy honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life. *And some to dishonour*; who are to the disreputation of the church, the dishonour of religion, and scandal of the Gospel; by them God is dishonoured, his ways evil-spoken of, his doctrines blasphemed, and his name reproached; and who are themselves dishonourable among men now, and will be covered with shame and everlasting contempt hereafter.

Ver. 21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these, &c.*] That is, if a man clears himself, and keeps himself clear from such men as Hymeneus and Philetus, who are comparable to wooden and earthen vessels, and are dishonourable ones; if he shuns their defiling company, and polluting principles; if he keeps clear of their heresies, and is not carried away with the errors of these wicked men, and is not drawn aside by them into immoral practices, but stands fast in the faith, and departs from iniquity: *he shall be a vessel unto honour*; he will be made manifest, and appear to be a vessel chosen to honour; and will be an honourable member of the church here, and will be honoured by Christ hereafter: *sanctified*; he will appear to be one that is set apart by God the father, and whose sins are purged away by the blood of Christ, and who is sanctified internally by the spirit of God; for external holiness springs from internal holiness, and is an evidence of it: *and meet for the master's use*: the use and service of Christ, who is the master of the house; either for the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, or for some service or another, which he calls him to, and employs him in. *And prepared unto every good work*; which an unregenerate man is not; he is to every good work reprobate; he is not capable of

¹ Maimon. Hilchot Mechira, c. 7. sect. 6, 7, 8.

performing good works; he is not prepared for them, nor ready at them; but a true believer, one that is regenerated, and sanctified by the spirit of God, he is created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and has in the performing of them right principles, aims, and ends, as well as a supply of grace, by which he is enabled to do them.

Ver. 22. *Flee also youthful lusts, &c.*] Meaning not lusts of uncleanness, lasciviousness, and filthiness; nor any of those follies and vanities which the youthful age usually lusts and desires after, to which Timothy was not inclined; but such lusts as are apt to prevail with young ministers of the Gospel, such as vain glory, popular applause, seeking to have the pre-eminence, contentions with, and contempt of others, and the like. *But follow righteousness; the righteousness of Christ; or doing that which is just between man and man, and as one man would choose another should do to him; or rather integrity and faithfulness in the ministry of the word, without seeking honour from men: faith; both as a doctrine and grace; or veracity and truth in preaching the Gospel, striving for that, and not through ambition, and for the pre-eminence: charity; or love, to God and Christ, and to his people; without which all gifts and works are of no avail; and which will engage a man to bear much, and to hope and believe all things: peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart; peace is to be pursued and followed after with all men, as much as possible, but especially with the saints, the true worshippers of God; who draw nigh to him with true hearts, and call upon him in the sincerity of their souls: great care should be taken that peace be maintained with them; for they have great interest at the throne of grace; and God is nigh unto them, and hears their prayers. The Alexandrian copy reads, with all that love the Lord.*

Ver. 23. *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, &c.*] Such as have no solid wisdom in them, and are foreign from the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, and are unuseful and unedifying; such ought to be avoided, publicly and privately; they should not be started in the public ministry, nor attended to in private conversation; as being unworthy of the notice of a minister of the Gospel wise and learned, and useless to the church, and to his hearers. *Knowing that they do gender strife; about words, and contentions, which break the peace of churches, and hinder the profit of souls, and the progress of the Gospel.*

Ver. 24. *And the servant of the Lord must not strive, &c.*] By the servant of the Lord is not meant any believer in common, but a minister of the word, as Timothy was; such an one ought not to strive about words to no profit, about mere words, and in a litigious, quarrelsome manner, and for mastery and not truth; though he may, and ought to strive for the faith of the Gospel; this is praiseworthy in him: *but be gentle unto all men; not only to troubled minds, and wounded consciences, by supplying them with the precious promises and truths of the Gospel; and to backsliders, by restoring them in a spirit of meekness; but even to those who contradict the truth, and themselves, by mild and kind instructions. Apt to teach, shewing a willingness to instruct the ignorant and obstinate, and making use of abilities given for that*

purpose, notwithstanding all discouragements; for it follows, *patient, or bearing evil; not only the infirmities of weak brethren in the church, and the reproaches and persecutions of profane men in the world; but also the contradictions and oppositions of the adversaries of truth, so as not to be irritated and provoked, or to be discouraged, and desist from the defence of the Gospel.*

Ver. 25. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, &c.*] To the truth; resist it and deny it; or contradict some other tenets and principles of theirs, or the Scriptures, which they themselves allowed to be the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice, and so are self-convinced and self-condemned. These are to be instructed, being ignorant, and in a tender and gentle manner, though very perverse and obstinate. *If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth: repentance here designs a repentance of errors in principle, a change of mind upon conviction, and such as issues in a free and ingenuous confession, and acknowledgment of the truth before opposed; and such a repentance is the gift of God: it is he that opens the eyes of the understanding, and works conviction in the mind, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus; and induces men to repent of their errors, confess their mistakes, and own the truth; even as repentance of evil practices is not owing to the power of men, nor to the bare influence of means, but to the efficacious grace of God, it being a grant from him. And though this is not certain, that God will give repentance to such contradictors and blasphemers of his Gospel; yet as it is his will, that all his chosen ones should come to repentance, and that some of all sorts should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; and seeing these things have been brought about under and by the ministry of the word, it is an encouragement to the ministers of the Gospel to continue their instructions in the manner here directed.*

Ver. 26. *And that they may recover themselves, &c.*] Or awake, and come to themselves, and appear to be sober, and in their right mind: the metaphor is taken from drunken men, who are overcharged, and are not in their senses, and being stupified fall asleep; and like these are persons intoxicated with errors and heresies, who when their minds are enlightened, and they are convinced of their evil tenets, repent of them, come to themselves, and acknowledge the truth, and so escape out of the snare of the devil; for as carnal lusts and pleasures are the snares and nets, in which Satan, who may be compared to a fowler, catches some; so errors and heresies are those with which he insnares others: *who are taken captive, or alive, by him at his will; such are taken in his nets and snares, as creatures are taken alive, by fowlers, and huntsmen; and they are held fast, and become his captives, and his slaves, and do his will, being led by him to whatsoever he pleases; he works powerfully in them, and they readily comply with him, and obey his lusts. Though some understand this, not of the will of the devil, but of the will of God; and that the sense is, that such persons are held captive by Satan, as long as it is the pleasure of God, and no longer; when the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive*

is delivered; and so it is an encouragement to the ministers of the word to go on in instructing, hoping this may be the case. Others connect this phrase, *to his will*, or *according to his will*, as they differently render it, with the word, *recover*; and then the meaning is, that such, repenting of their errors, might escape out

of the snare of Satan, in which they were taken alive; that so they might do the will of God, by professing and holding fast his truths; or that their repentance, recovery, and escape out of Satan's snare and captivity, are according to the will of God, and his sovereign good pleasure.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle delivers out a prophecy of the last days, shewing how perilous the times will be, describing the persons that will live in them, and what will be their end; and in opposition to these men, proposes himself an example in doctrine and sufferings; and encourages Timothy to persevere, and highly commends the sacred writings. The prophecy begins ver. 1. the description it gives of hypocrites, formal professors, and false teachers, that should rise up in the last days, and perilous times spoken of, is in ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. And these are compared to the magicians of Egypt for the corruption of their minds, the badness of their principles, and their opposition to truth, and for their exit, and the issue of things; they will be stopped in their progress, and their folly exposed, ver. 8, 9. and as the reverse of these men, the apostle gives an account of his own doctrine, conversation, and sufferings; which he proposes to Timothy for imitation, as being well known to him, and as also the common state of all godly persons in this life, being a suffering one, ver. 10, 11, 12. nor can it be expected that it should be otherwise, since false teachers, who are wicked and deceitful men, grow worse and worse, ver. 13. And then the apostle exhorts Timothy to abide by, and continue in the doctrines of the Gospel, from the assurance he had of the truth of them, from the consideration of his having learned them of the apostle, and especially from their agreement with the holy Scriptures, which he had knowledge of from a child, ver. 14, 15. which Scriptures are commended, partly from the useful effect of them, making men wise unto salvation; and chiefly from the author of them, being by the inspiration of God; and also from the profitableness of them, both for doctrine and manners, and especially to furnish a Gospel minister for the work he is called unto, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *This know also, &c.*] That not only men of bad principles and practices are in the churches now, as before described in the preceding chapter, but that in succeeding ages there would be worse men, if possible, and the times would be still worse; this the apostle had, and delivered by a spirit of prophecy, and informed Timothy, and others of it, that he and they might be prepared for such events, and fortified against them: *that in the last days perilous times shall come*; or *hard and difficult times to live in*; not by reason of the outward calamities, as badness of trade, scarcity of provisions, the ravages of the sword, &c. but by reason of the wickedness of men, and that not of the profane world, but of professors of religion; for they are the persons afterwards described, who will make the

times they live in difficult to others, to live soberly, righteously, and godly; the days will be evil, because of these evil men: or they will be *troublesome* times, very afflicting and distressing to pious minds; as the places and times, and men and customs of them were to Lot, David, Isaiah, and others: and also *dangerous* ones to the souls of men; who will be beguiled by their fair speeches, and specious pretences, to follow their pernicious ways, which will bring destruction upon them; their doctrines will eat as a gangrene, and their evil communications will corrupt good manners, before observed. And these times will be *in the last days* of the apostolic age, and onward to the end of the world: the Jews generally understand by this phrase, when used in the Old Testament, the days of the Messiah; and which are the last days of the world, in comparison of the times before the law, from Adam to Moses, and under the law, from thence to Christ; and even in the times of the apostles, at least towards the close of them, great numbers of men rose up under the Christian name, to whom the following characters well agree, as the Gnostics, and others; and who paved the way for the man of sin, the Romish antichrist, whose priests and votaries are here likewise described to the life: so that these last days may take in the general defection and apostasy of the church of Rome, as well as those times, which followed the apostles, and those which will usher in the second coming of Christ. The Ethiopic version renders it, *in the latter days will come an evil, or bad year.*

Ver. 2. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, &c.*] Not in a good sense, as men may be, and as such are who love their neighbours as themselves, and do that to others they would have done to themselves; and who take all prudent and lawful care to preserve the life and health of their bodies, and seek in a right way the salvation of their immortal souls: but in a bad sense, as such may be said to be, who only love themselves; their love to God, and Christ, and to the saints, being only in pretence, not in reality; and who do all they do in a religious way, from a principle of self-love, and to selfish and mercenary ends; either to gain glory and applause from men, or to merit something for themselves at the hands of God, without any view to the glory of God, the honour and interest of Christ, and the good of others; and ascribe all they have and do to themselves, to their industry, diligence, power, free will, worth, and merit, and not to the grace of God: and this character may be seen in the principles and practices of the church of Rome, in their doctrines of merit and free will, in works of supererogation, &c. *Covetous*; lovers of silver, greedy of filthy lucre, doing

nothing but for money; every one looking for his gain from his quarter; making merchandise of the souls of men; and which are reckoned among the wares of Babylon, the Romish antichrist, Rev. xviii. 13. No penny, no pater-noster. *Boasters*; of their wealth and riches, of their honour and grandeur; *I sit a queen*, &c. Rev. xviii. 7. of their numbers, of their holiness, of the infallibility of their popes, of their having the true knowledge, and certain sense of the Scriptures, and of having all power in heaven and in earth. *Proud*; as have been the popes of Rome; exalting themselves above all that is called God, above all princes, kings, and emperors of the earth; deposing one, excommunicating another, treading upon their necks, obliging them to hold their stirrups whilst they mounted their horses; the pride of the popes, cardinals, priests, and the whole clergy of the church of Rome, is notorious. *Blasphemers*; of God, and of his son Jesus Christ; sitting in the temple as God, as antichrist does, shewing himself that he is God; assuming that to himself which belongs to God only, which is to forgive sin; calling himself Christ's vicar on earth; taking upon him to enact new laws, and to dispense with the laws of God, and Christ; and has a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 5, 6. *Disobedient to parents*: as many of the votaries of the antichristian church have been; who have withdrawn themselves from under the care of their parents, and their fortunes too out of their hands, when they have been in their power; and have shut themselves up in cloisters, monasteries, and nunneries, without the leave and consent, or knowledge of their parents. *Unthankful*: to God, for what is enjoyed by them, ascribing all to themselves, and to their merit and good works; and to men, to the princes of the earth, by whom they were first raised to, and supported in their dignity; as the popes of Rome were by the Roman emperors, and whom they in return tyrannised over, and dethroned at pleasure. *Unholy*; notwithstanding his holiness the pope at the head of them their holy father, and holy mother church, and holy priests, and holy orders they talk of; yet are without the fear of God, or any regard to him, living most unholy lives and conversations, Dan. xi. 37.

Ver. 3. *Without natural affection*, &c.] To parents, or children, or wife; parents thrusting their children into religious houses, cloisters, &c. against their wills; children leaving their parents without their knowledge or consent; married bishops and priests being obliged to quit their wives, and declare their children spurious; with many other such unnatural actions. *Truce-breakers*; or covenant-breakers; stirring up princes to break through their treaties and covenants with one another; dissolving the allegiance of subjects to their sovereigns, and moving them to rebellion against them; loosing the marriage-bond between husband and wife; making void all oaths, contracts, and agreements, among men, which stand in the way of their designs; teaching that no faith is to be kept with heretics. *False accusers*: or devils, being like Satan, the accuser of the brethren, charging all that depart from their communion with schism and heresy. *Incontinent*; though

they pretend to the gift of continency, yet give themselves up to all lasciviousness, and work all uncleanness with greediness; or *intemperate* in eating and drinking, indulging themselves in rioting and drunkenness: *she hath lived deliciously*, Rev. xviii. 7. *Fierce*; like beasts of prey; such was Rome Pagan, in the times of the ten persecutions; and such has been Rome Papal, exercising the greatest cruelties and barbarities on the saints, being drunk with their blood. *Despisers of those that are good*; or *without love to good*; both to good works, to which they are reprobate, notwithstanding all their pretensions to them, and bluster about them; and to good men, whom they hate.

Ver. 4. *Traitors*, &c.] To their princes and sovereigns, whose deaths they have contrived and compassed, and whom they have assassinated and murdered; and have been betrayers of the secrets of persons, which they have come at by auricular confession to them; and of their best and nearest friends, to preserve and secure themselves. *Heady*; rash, daring, bold, and impudent, fit to say and do any thing, though ever so vile and wicked. *High-minded*; puffed and swelled up with a vain conceit of themselves, and speaking great swelling words of vanity; *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*; lovers of sinful pleasures, or the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, and not God; serving divers lusts and pleasures, and not God; making a god of their belly; sensual idolaters, delighting themselves in their carnal lusts, and not in the service of God.

Ver. 5. *Having a form of godliness*, &c.] Either a mere external shew of religion, pretending great piety and holiness, being outwardly righteous before men, having the mask and vizard of godliness; or else a plan of doctrine, a form of sound words, a scheme of truths, which men may have without partaking of the grace of God; and which, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, the church of Rome has; or else the Scriptures of truth, which the members of that church have, and profess to hold to, maintain and preserve; and which contains doctrines according to godliness, and tend to a godly life and godly edification: *but denying the power thereof*; though in words they profess religion and godliness, the fear of God, and the pure worship of him, yet in works they deny all; and though they may have a set of notions in their heads, yet they feel nothing of the power of them on their hearts; and are strangers to experimental religion, and powerful godliness: or though they profess the Scriptures to be the word of God, yet they deny the use, the power, and efficacy of them; they deny the use of them to the laity, and affirm that they are not a sufficient rule of faith and practice, without their unwritten traditions; and that they are not able to make men wise, or give them a true knowledge of what is to be believed and done, without them; and that the sense of them is not to be understood by private men, but depends upon the infallible judgment of the church or pope: *from such turn away*; have no fellowship with them, depart from their communion, withdraw from them, and come out from among them: this passage sufficiently justifies the reformed churches in their separation from the church of Rome.

Ver. 6. *For of this sort are they which creep into*

houses, &c.] Privily and unawares, in a clandestine manner, and insinuate themselves into families, by fawning and flattering, and under specious pretences to knowledge and virtue. The Syriac version uses a word, from whence comes חולדה, *Chulda*, which signifies *a weasel*; suggesting, that their entrance into houses was like to the way of that creature, which is sometimes covered, and sometimes open: there was also a gate of the temple, which was called *Huldah*; whether there is any allusion in the word to that, may be inquired.^k *And lead captive silly women*; the coming of antichrist is after the working of Satan; as Satan attacked the woman, and not the man, and beguiled Eve and not Adam, so these his instruments and emissaries, work themselves into the affections of the weaker vessel, and into the weaker sort of women, as the diminutive word here used signifies; and gain upon them, instil their principles into them, attach them to their interests, captivate them to them, and lead them as they please: *laden with sins*; covered with them, full of them, and so ready to receive any set of principles that would encourage them to continue in them; or else were pressed down with a sense of them, their consciences being awakened, and they under some concern on account of them, and so fit persons for such deceivers to gain upon, by pretending to great sanctity and religion, and by providing them with pardons and indulgences, and putting them upon penance, &c. though the former sense seems most agreeable, and is confirmed by what follows, *led away with divers lusts*. The Alexandrian copy adds, *and pleasures*; that is, sinful ones; though this may be understood, not of unclean lusts, but of the itch and desire after new teachers, and new doctrines, and practices, which prevail in weak women, and by which they are governed and led away.

Ver. 7. *Ever learning, &c.*] Some new notion and practice or another: *and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*; partly because of the teachers, which they heap up to themselves, who are unapt to teach, are blind and ignorant guides, and know not the truth, but are enemies to it, and resist it; and partly because of themselves, the sins they are laden, and the lusts they are led away with, which hinder them from coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Ver. 8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, &c.*] These were not Jews, who rose up and opposed Moses, as Dathan and Abiram did, as some have thought; but Egyptian magicians, the chief of those that Pharaoh sent for, when Moses and Aaron came before him, and wrought miracles; and who did in like manner by their enchantments, Exod. vii. 11. upon which place the Targum of Jonathan has these words: "and Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians; and Janis and Jambres, the magicians of the Egyptians, did so by the enchantments of their divinations." And the same paraphrast on Exod. i. 15.

calls them by the same names; and this shews from whence the apostle had these names, which are not mentioned in any place in the Old Testament; namely, from the traditions and records of the Jews, with which he was well acquainted: there is no need to say he had this account by divine revelation, for some of the Heathens had knowledge of this story some such way. Numenius, the philosopher, speaks of Jannes and Jambres as Egyptian scribes, and famous for their skill in the magic art; and who opposed themselves to Moses when the Jews were driven out of Egypt.^l Pliny also makes mention of Jamne and Jotape as magicians; though he wrongly calls them Jews, and places Moses with them^m, as Jannes likewise is by Apuleiusⁿ. It is commonly said by the Jews^o, that these were the two sons of Balaam, and they are said to be the chief of the magicians of Egypt^p; the latter of these is called in the Vulgate Latin version Mambres; and in some Jewish writers his name is Mamre^q, by whom also the former is called Jochane or John; and indeed Joannes, Jannes, and John, are the same name; and R. Gedaliah^r says, that their names in other languages are John and Ambrose, which is not unlikely. Mention is made of the sons of Jambri in 1 Maccab. ix. 36. whom Josephus^s calls the sons of Amaræus. These are said to be the persons that told Pharaoh, that a child should be born among the Israelites, by whom the whole land of Egypt should be destroyed, and which was the reason of Pharaoh's giving such a charge to the Hebrew midwives^t; also the making of the golden calf is ascribed to them^u; for, according to the Jews, they afterwards became proselytes; but these things are not to be depended on: however, certain it is, that they withstood Moses by their enchantments, and hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that, for a while, he would not let the children of Israel go. Now between these magicians, and the Papists before described, there is a very great agreement; as these men were Egyptians, so the Papists may be called, since Rome is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, Rev. xi. 8. as the one were, so the other are idolaters, who worshipped devils, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, Rev. ix. 20. and both sorcerers, using the magic art; Rev. ix. 21. and they both pretended to miracles; though what they did were no other than lying wonders, 2 Thess. ii. 9. Rev. xiii. 13, 14. and both agreed to keep the people of God in bondage, as much, and as long as they could: and particularly, as the magicians of Egypt withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; the truth of one God, by their worshipping of images; and of one Mediator, by making use of angels, and saints departed, to intercede with God for them; and of justification by the righteousness of Christ, by introducing the doctrine of works, of merit, and supererogation; and of pardon and cleansing by the blood of Christ, and atonement by his sacrifice, by their pardons, indulgences, penance,

^k Vid. L. Empercur in Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3.

^l Apud Euseb. Præparat. Evangel. l. 9. p. 411.

^m Nat. Hist. l. 30. c. 1.

ⁿ Apolog. p. 248.

^o Targum Jon. in Numb. xxii. 22. & Zohar in Numb. fol. 78. 3. & Chronicon Moisis, fol. 6. 2.

^p Targum Jon. in Exod. i. 15. & vii. 11. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 1.

^q T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 85. 1. Midrash Shemot Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 97. 3. & Aruch. in voce.

^r Shalsheleth Hakabala, fol. 7. 1.

^s Antiq. l. 13. c. 1. sect. 2.

^t Targum Jon. in Exod. i. 15.

^u Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 1. & in Numb. fol. 78. 3. Shalsheleth, ib.

purgatory, and the sacrifice of the Mass; yea, they resist the Scriptures of truth, not allowing them to be a sufficient rule without their unwritten traditions, and even Christ, who is truth itself, in all his offices, prophetic, priestly, and kingly. *Men of corrupt minds*: of bad principles, holding antichristian tenets, derogatory to the grace of God, and glory of Christ; giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; like Jannes and Jambres, who were given to magic arts, and were under the influence of Satan: *reprobate concerning the faith*: men of no judgment in the doctrine of faith; who have not their senses exercised to discern good and evil, to try things that differ, and approve the more excellent, but call good evil, and evil good: or as those who are disobedient and wicked in their lives, are said to be to every good work reprobate, Tit. i. 16. so these are said to be reprobate to the faith; that is, to have no liking of it, or value for it, but despise it, hate it, and reject it; and upon that account, as they are like reprobate silver, whom God has rejected, they ought to be rejected by men.

Ver. 9. *But they shall proceed no further, &c.*] They may proceed to more ungodliness, and wax worse and worse in error; but they shall proceed no further than the magicians of Egypt, who did lying wonders, hardened Pharaoh's heart, and deceived him and the Egyptians; but could not destroy the Israelites, nor hinder their departure out of Egypt, when their time was come: so these wicked men do false miracles, harden the popes of Rome, and deceive the nations subject to them; but they can't deceive the elect of God, nor destroy the church of God, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor could they hinder the reformation, or the departure of the Lord's people out of Babylon. *For their folly should be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was*: as the folly of Jannes and Jambres was, when Aaron's rod devoured theirs; and when they could not produce lice, but was obliged to own to Pharaoh, that that plague was the finger of God; and when they could not stand before Moses, because of the boil that was upon them, Exod. vii. 12. and viii. 18, 19. and ix. 11. And so the Arabic version renders it, *as is manifest the folly, or madness of these two*; and it is notorious in how many instances the frauds, impostures, tricks, and villainies of the church of Rome, and its votaries, have been detected and exposed; which have been the means of hindering them from proceeding any further than they have. The Alexandrian copy reads, *their understanding*; that which they pretended to have of divine things.

Ver. 10. *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, &c.*] This, with what follows, is said in opposition to the characters, principles, and practices of the above wicked men, and for the imitation and encouragement of Timothy, and of others, whether ministers or private believers: the apostle calls the doctrine he delivered, *my doctrine*; not because he was the author of it, or that it was a scheme of principles formed and contrived by him; but because it was the doctrine which he had received from God, which was given him to preach, and which he did preach purely and faithfully; otherwise it was the doctrine of Christ, and the same with that which was preached by the rest of the apostles; and which was the doctrine of the Scriptures, and was

according to godliness; and as preached by him, was all of a piece, and without any adulteration, or mixture, and was open and manifest, and well known to Timothy, and others; for he used no hidden things of dishonesty, nor did he conceal his principles, or keep back any thing that was profitable. And as well known was his *manner of life*; both his civil life, how he spent his time, not in ease and idleness, but oftentimes in labour with his own hands; nor did he live in a sensual and voluptuous manner, but frequently was in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness; and likewise his religious life, and conversation, not only in the church, which was spent in the ministry of the word, and ordinances; but in the world, which, by the grace of God, was in simplicity and godly sincerity, in a very just, holy, and unblamable manner: his life was agreeable to his doctrine, and ornamental to his profession: and even the secrets of his mind, his views, his aims and ends in all he did, which are signified by his *purpose*, were open and manifest; and which were not to obtain glory and applause from men, nor to gather wealth and riches for himself; but that God might be glorified in the salvation of men; that Christ might be magnified both in his life and death; that his Gospel might be spread, his kingdom be enlarged, and that many souls might be converted and brought to the knowledge of him; and hence he became all things to all, that he might gain some. And as the doctrine of *faith*, embraced, professed, and preached by him, was well known, so no less conspicuous was the grace of faith in him, with respect to his interest in God's everlasting love, in salvation by Jesus Christ, and in eternal glory and happiness; of which he had a full assurance, and which remained constant and firm in him to the end. Unless rather his faithfulness in the discharge of his ministerial work should be here designed, for which he was very remarkable; as also for his *long-suffering* both towards those that were without, the open enemies and persecutors of the Gospel, and towards them that were within, the brethren, whose infirmities he bore; and also for the success of the Gospel, as the husbandman has long patience, and waits long for the former and latter rain: to which is added *charity*; which suffers long, and is kind; and may include his love to God, to Christ, and to the souls of men; which was very great, and particularly to his countrymen, the Jews, and also to the Gentiles; and especially to the churches he was more immediately concerned with, and even to all the saints: this is left out in the Alexandrian copy: it follows, *patience*; in bearing all indignities, reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; by which he was not in the least moved, but persevered with great courage and constancy to the end.

Ver. 11. *Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, &c.*] In Pisidia; where the Jews that contradicted and blasphemed his doctrine, and envied his success, stirred up the chief of the city, both men and women, against him, and Barnabas; who persecuted them and expelled them out of their coasts, Acts xiii. 45, 50. and also at Iconium; where both Jews and Gentiles made an assault upon them, to use them ill, and stone them, Acts xiv. 5. and likewise at Lystra; where the apostle was stoned, and drawn out of the

city, and left for dead, Acts xiv. 19. And these instances are the rather mentioned because they were done in those parts, where Timothy had lived, Acts xvi. 1. and so knew the truth of these things, not only from the apostle's mouth, but from the testimonies of others; and perhaps he might have been a witness to some of them himself: *what persecutions I endured*; not only in the above places, but elsewhere; see a detail of them in 2 Cor. xi. 23—28. *but out of them all the Lord delivered me*: see 2 Cor. i. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, this he says to the glory of the grace and power of God, to whom he ascribes all his deliverances; and for the encouragement of Timothy, and other saints, under sufferings, who may hope and believe that the Lord will deliver them in his own time and way, Psal. xxxiv. 19.

Ver. 12. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, &c.*] All that live according to the will of God revealed in his word; and to the glory of God, as the end of all their actions; and which the grace of God in the Gospel, and in their own hearts, teaches them; and who have the principles of a godly life from Christ, and derive the fresh supplies of grace and life from him, to maintain it; in whom their life is hid, and who live by faith upon him; all such that live, and that *will* live so, are desirous of living after this manner; in whom God has wrought in them both to will and to do, and are concerned when it is otherwise with them: these *shall suffer persecution*; it is the will of God, and the appointment of heaven; Christ has foretold it, that so it shall be; and he the head has suffered it himself, and it is necessary that his members should, that they may be conformed unto him; it is the way Christ himself went to glory, and through many tribulations his people must enter the kingdom; and this is the common lot and certain case of all the saints, in one shape or another; for though all do not suffer confiscation of goods, beating, scourging, imprisonment, or a violent death; yet all are more or less afflicted and distressed by wicked men, and are subject to their reproaches and revilings, which are a branch of persecution; and that for professing Christ, and living a godly life in him, and under his influence: and since such suffer as Christians, and not as evildoers; and this is the common condition of the people of God in this world, it should not be thought strange, but be cheerfully endured; to encourage to which is the apostle's view in this passage.

Ver. 13. *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, &c.*] By *evil men* are meant, not sinful men in common, as all are by nature and practice; nor only open profane sinners, but rather wicked men under a form of godliness, as before; and who are full of wickedness and malice against truly godly persons, even as the devil himself, of whom the same word is used, when he is called the wicked one; and this is a reason why true professors of religion must expect persecution, seeing as there ever were, so there ever will be such sort of men, who will not grow better, but worse and worse. The word for *seducers*, signifies sorcerers, enchanters, a sort of jugglers; and as the other, it well suits with the ecclesiastics of the church of Rome, who pretend to miracles, and do lying wonders, and by their sorceries deceive all nations, Rev.

xviii. 23. and these *shall wax worse and worse*; in principle and in practice, in ungodliness, and in error, in wickedness and malice against the saints, and in the arts of deceiving; so the church of Rome is never to be expected to be better, but worse; at the time of the fall of Babylon she will be an habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird, Rev. xviii. 2. *deceiving*; not God, but themselves and others, even all nations, excepting the elect of God; which they do by their good words and fair speeches, and by their shew of devotion and religion, and by their pretended miracles and lying wonders: and *deceived* by the old serpent, the devil, under whose power and influence they are, in whose snare they are taken, and by whom they are led captive, and will at last share the same fate with himself, and be cast into the same lake of fire and brimstone.

Ver. 14. *But continue thou in the things, &c.*] That is, in the doctrines of the Gospel, and not be moved away from them, either through the malice or persecutions, or the cunning sleight of men that lie in wait to deceive; and which is an exhortation suitable to the godly in all ages: and what follow are so many reasons enforcing it: *which thou hast learned*; not merely in a theoretical way, as arts and sciences are learned, but in a spiritual and experimental manner; a comfortable knowledge and experience of which he had attained unto; and were not like those in ver. 7. who had been ever learning, and yet could not come to the knowledge of the truth: and since therefore he had learned the truths of the Gospel, and had attained to a good understanding of them, it was his duty, as it is the duty of all such, to abide by them: and *has been assured of*: the doctrines of the Gospel are certain things; they are truths without controversy; there is a full assurance of understanding of them, which men may arrive unto, and which ministers should, since they are to affirm them with certainty. Scepticism is very unbecoming one that calls himself a minister of the Gospel; and when a man is assured of the truth and reality of Gospel doctrines, it would be shameful in him to drop them, or depart from them: *knowing of whom thou hast learned* them. The apostle means himself, though he modestly forbears the mention of himself: and it is another argument why Timothy should continue steadfastly in the doctrines of the Gospel, seeing he had learned them of so great an apostle of Christ; whose mission, as such, was abundantly confirmed by miracles and success, and who had received these doctrines by immediate revelation from Christ; so that it was all one as if Timothy had learned them from Christ himself. The Alexandrian copy reads the word *whom*, in the plural number, as if the apostle referred to more teachers of Timothy than himself; however, he doubtless was the principal one.

Ver. 15. *And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, &c.*] And therefore must know that the doctrines he had learned were agreeable to them; and so is another reason why he should continue in them. The Jews very early learned their children the holy Scripture. Philo the Jew says ^v, ἐκ παιδείας ἡλικίας;

from their very infancy; a phrase pretty much the same with this here used. It is a maxim with the Jews², that when a child was five years of age, it was proper to teach him the Scriptures. Timothy's mother being a Jewess, trained him up betimes in the knowledge of these writings, with which he became very conversant, and under divine influence and assistance, arrived to a large understanding of them; and it is a practice that highly becomes Christian parents; it is one part of the nurture and admonition of the Lord they should bring up their children in: the wise man's advice in Prov. xxii. 6. is very good. From hence the apostle takes occasion to enter into a commendation of the sacred writings; and here, from the nature and character of them, calls them the *holy Scriptures*; to distinguish them from profane writings; and that because the author of them is the Holy Spirit of God; and even the amanuenses of him, and the penmen of them, were holy men of God; the matter of them is holy, both law and Gospel; and the end of writing them is to promote holiness; the precepts, promises, and doctrines contained in them are calculated for that purpose; and even the account they give of the sins and failings of others, are for the admonition of men: and next these Scriptures are commended from the efficacy of them: *which are able to make thee wise unto salvation*. Men are not wise of themselves; they are naturally without an understanding of spiritual things; and the things of the spirit of God cannot be known by natural men, because they are spiritually discerned; particularly they are not wise in the business of salvation, of which either they are insensible themselves, and negligent; or foolishly build their hopes of it upon their civility, morality, legal righteousness, or an outward profession of religion: but the Scriptures are able to make men wise and knowing in this respect; for the Gospel is one part of the Scriptures, which is the Gospel of salvation, and shews unto men the way of salvation. The Scriptures testify largely of Christ, the Saviour; and give an ample account both of him, who is the able, willing, suitable, complete, and only Saviour, and of the salvation which is wrought by him; and describe the persons who do, and shall enjoy it: not that the bare reading of the Scriptures, or the hearing of them expounded, are able to make men wise in this way; but these, when accompanied with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, are; when he who endited the Scriptures removes the veil from their eyes, opens their understandings, and gives them light and knowledge in them: and then may persons be said to be wise unto salvation, when they not only have a scheme of it in their heads, but are in their hearts sensible of their need of it, and know that there is salvation in no other but in Christ; and when they look to him for it, to his righteousness for justification, to his blood for peace, pardon, and cleansing, to his sacrifice for atonement, and to his fulness of grace for a continual supply, and to him for eternal life and glory; when they rejoice in him and his salvation, and give him all the glory of it: the apostle adds, *through faith which is in Christ Jesus*; wisdom to salvation lies not in the knowledge of the law the

Jew boasted of; nor in the works of it, at least not in a trust and confidence in them for salvation; for by them there is no justification before God, nor acceptance with him, nor salvation: but true wisdom to salvation lies in faith, which is a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and a holy confidence in him; and that salvation which the Scriptures make men wise unto, is received and enjoyed through that faith, which has Christ for its author and object; which comes from him, and centres in him, and is a looking to him for eternal life.

Ver. 16. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, &c.*] That is, all holy Scripture; for of that only the apostle is speaking; and he means the whole of it; not only the books of the Old Testament, but of the New, the greatest part of which was now written; for this second epistle to Timothy is by some thought to be the last of Paul's epistles; and this also will hold good of what was to be written; for all is inspired by God, or breathed by him: the Scriptures are the breath of God, the word of God and not men; they are *written by the spirit*, as the Syriac version renders it; or *by the spirit of God*, as the Ethiopic version. The Scriptures are here commended, from the divine authority of them; and which is attested and confirmed by various arguments; as the majesty and loftiness of their style, which in many places is inimitable by men; the sublimity of the matter contained in them, which transcends all human understanding and capacity ever to have attained unto and discovered; as the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, &c. The purity and holiness of them before observed, shew them to be the word of him that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; as also their harmony and agreement, though wrote by different persons, in different places, and ages, and at sundry times, and in divers manners; what seeming inconsistencies are observed in them may, with labour and industry, by divine assistance, be reconciled. The predictions of future events in them, as particularly concerning Josiah and Cyrus, by name, long before they were born, and especially concerning Jesus Christ, and which have had their accomplishment, and many others in the New Testament both by Christ and his apostles, are a proof that they could not be the writings of men, but must have the omniscient God for their author; and the impartiality of the writers of them, in not concealing the mean extract of some of them, the sins of others before conversion, and even their sins and failings afterwards, as well as those of their nearest relations and dearest friends, strengthens the proof of their divine authority; to which may be added, the wonderful preservation of them, through all the changes and declensions of the Jewish church and state, to whom the books of the Old Testament were committed; and notwithstanding the violence and malice of Heathen persecutors, particularly Dioclesian, who sought to destroy every copy of the Scriptures, and published an edict for that purpose, and notwithstanding the numbers of heretics, and who have been in power, as also the apostacy of the church of Rome; and yet these writings have been preserved, and kept pure and incorrupt, which is not the case of other

writings; nor are there any of such antiquity as the oldest of these: to which may be subjoined the testimony of God himself; his outward testimony by miracles, wrought by Moses and the prophets, concerned in the writings of the Old Testament, and by the apostles in the New; and his internal testimony, which is the efficacy of these Scriptures on the hearts of men; the reading and hearing of which, having been owned for the conversion, comfort and edification of thousands and thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand: and is *profitable for doctrine*; for the discovering, illustrating, and confirming any doctrine concerning God, the being, persons, and perfections of God; concerning the creation and fall of man; concerning the person and offices of Christ, redemption by him, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, reconciliation and atonement by his sacrifice, and eternal life through him, with many others. The Scripture is profitable for ministers to fetch doctrine from, and establish it by; and for hearers to try and prove it by: *for reproof*; of errors and heresies; this is the sword of the spirit, which cuts all down. There never was, nor is, nor can be any error or heresy broached in the world, but there is a sufficient refutation of it in the Scriptures; which may be profitably used for that purpose, as it often has been by Christ and his apostles, and others since in all ages: *for correction*: of vice; there being no sin, but the evil nature of it is shewn, its wicked tendency is exposed, and the sad effects and consequences of it are pointed out in these writings: *for instruction in righteousness*; in every branch of

duty incumbent upon men; whether with respect to God, or one another; for there is no duty men are obliged unto, but the nature, use, and excellency of it, are here shewn: the Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and practice; and thus they are commended from the usefulness and profitableness of them.

Ver. 17. *That the man of God may be perfect, &c.*] By *the man of God* may be meant every one that in a special relation belongs to God; who is chosen by God the Father, redeemed by the Son, and called by the Spirit; but more especially a minister of the Gospel; for as it was usual to call a prophet under the Old Testament by this name, it seems to be transferred from thence to a minister of the New Testament, see 1 Tim. vi. 11. and the design of the Scriptures and the end of writing them are, that both preachers of the word, and hearers of it, might have a perfect knowledge of the will of God; that the former might be a complete minister of the Gospel, and that nothing might be wanting for the information of the latter: *thoroughly furnished unto all good works, or every good work*; particularly to the work of the ministry, which is a good one; and to every part and branch of it, a thorough furniture for which lies in the holy Scriptures; from whence, as scribes well instructed in the kingdom of heaven, do Gospel ministers bring forth things new and old, both for delight and profit: though this may be also applied to all good works in common, which the Scriptures point unto, give directions about, as well as shew where strength is to be had to perform them.

C H A P. IV

IN this chapter the apostle charges Timothy to perform his office as an evangelist with great diligence, constancy, and faithfulness, with reasons for it; gives some hints of several particular persons mentioned, which made him very desirous that Timothy would come quickly to him; relates how things were with him when he made his first defence at Rome; and concludes the epistle with salutations, and his usual blessing. The charge is made in the most solemn manner in the sight of God, and of Christ, as Judge of quick and dead; and directs to the several parts of the ministerial work, and the manner in which they should be performed, ver. 1, 2. The reason of which charge is, because the time was hastening on that sound doctrine would not be endured, and men would depart from the truth to fables and false teachers, ver. 3, 4. Wherefore the apostle repeats his charge and exhortation to Timothy, though in other words, to be vigilant, patient, courageous, and faithful in the discharge of his office, ver. 5. adding a fresh reason moving to it, taken from the apostle's death being at hand; which is expressed by a sacrifice, and by a departure out of the world, ver. 6. which leads him to give an account of his past conduct in fighting the good fight, finishing his course, and keeping the faith, ver. 7. and of his firm belief of eternal glory and happiness, ver. 8. and next he desires Timothy to use all diligence to come quickly to him,

ver. 9. his reasons for which were, because he had scarce any body with him: one had forsook him through love of the world; another was gone to Thessalonica; a third to Galatia, and a fourth to Dalmatia; only Luke the evangelist was with him; and as for Tychicus, he had sent him to Ephesus: he therefore desires he would bring Mark with him, and his cloak, books, and parchments he had left at Troas, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13. and then takes notice of persons that had used him ill, particularly Alexander the coppersmith; he wishes justice might be done him; and advises Timothy to beware of him, because of his opposition to the doctrines of the Gospel, ver. 14, 15. and also of others that neglected him, who forsook him when he defended himself: however, he prays that this might not be charged upon them; and observes the goodness of God in standing by him and delivering him; and expresses his faith and confidence that he should be delivered and preserved safe to eternal glory, ver. 16, 17, 18. and next follow the apostle's salutations of some persons at Ephesus, and an account of two others, one at Corinth, and another at Miletum; and a repetition of his request to Timothy, to come quickly to him, and before winter; and then some salutations of persons at Rome, sent by Timothy; and the whole is concluded with the apostle's usual benediction, ver. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *I charge thee therefore before God, &c.*] Whose word the Scriptures are, and by whom they are inspired; who had made Timothy an able minister of the New Testament, and to whom he was accountable for his ministry: *and the Lord Jesus Christ*: who is equal with God, and bestows ministerial gifts on men, and from whom Timothy had his; whose Gospel he preached; in whose cause he was embarked; and before whom he must appear, to give an account of his ministry, talents, and souls under his care: *who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom*; it is certain there will be a general judgment: the day is appointed, and Christ is ordained the Judge of all men; all judgment is committed to him, and he is ready to exercise it; for which he is abundantly qualified, being God omniscient and omnipotent; and which he will execute in the most righteous and impartial manner. The persons that will be judged by him are, *the quick and the dead*; by which are meant, not the different parts of men, their souls which are living and immortal, and their bodies which die and will be raised from the dead, though they will be judged in their whole persons; nor the different sorts of men, as good men, who are made alive by the spirit and grace of God, and evil men, who are dead in trespasses and sins, and die in their sins; though this is a truth that God will judge both the righteous and the wicked: but rather by the *quick*, are meant, such as will be found alive at Christ's coming; and by the *dead*, such as having been dead, will be raised by him; and in short, the characters include all mentioned; who must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. The time when this will be, is, *at his appearing, and his kingdom*; which may be considered as an *hendyadis*, expressive of one and the same thing; and so the Syriac version renders it, *at the revelation of his kingdom*; or as two things, the one as antecedent and preparatory to the other; the former refers to the appearance of Christ at the last day. He appeared frequently to the Old-Testament saints in a human form; and he really appeared in human nature in the fulness of time; and after his resurrection to his apostles and others, and even after his ascension to some; and he appears in a spiritual manner to believers in all ages; but to them that look for him, he will appear a second time in person, in a most glorious manner: for the present he is received up into heaven, where he is as it were hid, and is unseen to corporeal eyes; but in his due time he will be manifested in his own and his father's glory, and in the glory of his angels; and this appearance will be greatly to the advantage of the saints, who will then appear in glory, and be like him, and see him as he is, and hence they look for it, and love it; and at this time will be the judgment, and then will the kingdom of Christ take place. Christ has a kingdom now, and ever had, which is not of this world, but is of a spiritual nature; and which will be more manifest in the latter day, by the spread of the Gospel, the numerous instances of conversion, and the revival of powerful religion and godliness, which we commonly call the spiritual reign of Christ; but the kingdom here designed, is the personal reign of Christ, for a thousand years: at the beginning of which will be the judgment of the saints,

who having the crown of righteousness given them by the Judge, will reign with him as kings and priests; and at the end of this period will be the judgment of the wicked. The charge made before these two divine Persons, God and his Son Jesus Christ, follows.

Ver. 2. *Preach the word, &c.*] Either Christ the essential Word, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel ministry; or the word of truth and faith, the Gospel of salvation, the word of righteousness, peace, and reconciliation by Christ; which is to be preached, or published, in like manner as heralds proclaim the will of their princes; openly, publicly, and with a loud voice, without adding to it, or taking from it; speaking out the whole, and keeping back no part of it; and that with all courage and boldness: some copies read, *the word of God*; and the Ethiopic version, *his word*; that is, the word of Christ: *be instant in season, out of season*; that is, be constant and assiduous in the work of the ministry; be always and wholly in it, either preparing for it, or performing it; or doing those things which are annexed to it, or follow upon it; redeem time, and take every opportunity of dispensing the mysteries of grace, as a faithful steward of them; not only make use of the common and stated seasons for the ministration of the word and ordinances, but embrace every other that offers; make use not only of those seasons which may seem commodious and advantageous both to preacher and hearer, and promise usefulness and success, but even such as may seem incommodious and disadvantageous to flesh and blood; such as times of persecution and opposition; but none of these things should deter and move from the preaching of the Gospel. Several parts of the ministerial function to be insisted on and attended to are next mentioned, as being within the solemn charge given before God and Christ: *reprove*; errors, and men for their errors and heresies; make use of convincing arguments taken out of the Scriptures, which are profitable for reproof of this kind; and which reproof sometimes is to be given with sharpness, as the case requires, that men may be sound in the faith. *Rebuke*; or chide for sin; some privately, others more publicly, according to the nature and circumstances of the offence; some more gently, others more roughly, as is needful. *Exhort*; to all the duties of religion respecting God and man; to shew love, and to do good works; to hold fast the profession of faith, and walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and to persevere in faith and holiness: or *comfort*, as the word may be rendered; for as the ministers of the Gospel are in some cases to be *Boanergeses*, sons of thunder, so in other cases they should be *Barnabases*, sons of consolation; and comfort distressed minds, by preaching the comfortable doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation by Jesus Christ: *with all long-suffering*; or patience. The success of the Gospel ministry should be patiently waited for, as husbandmen do for the fruits of the earth. Those that give into error, and oppose themselves to the truth, should be instructed in meekness; and those who are overtaken in a fault should be gently rebuked, and restored in such a spirit; and every exhortation should be pressed as persons are able to bear it: *and doctrine*; in a way that is instructive and teaching, and in agreement with

the doctrine of the Scriptures, which are profitable for that purpose.

Ver. 3. *For the time will come, &c.*] This is a reason of the solemn charge above given: the time referred to was future, when the apostle wrote, but quickly came on; and the characters of it have appeared more or less in all ages since; and in none more than in ours: *when they will not endure sound doctrine*; the Gospel which contains the wholesome words of Christ, and is sound itself, having no corruption in it, and salutary in its effects to the souls of men; and yet such is the depravity of some men, both in principles and practice, that they cannot receive it, nor bear to hear it, turn their backs on it, express their indignation at it, and treat it not only with neglect, but with ridicule and contempt: *but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers*; not being content with the ministry of one man only, or of a few, though of their own sort; but must follow many, and have heaps of them; which seems to express not only the number of false teachers which they accumulate to themselves, but the confused and indiscreet choice they make of them; and that after their own lusts; choosing to hear such as either indulge them in their sinful lusts and pleasures; or are agreeable to their private corrupt sentiments, in opposition to the generally received doctrine of faith. It is a blessing to have pastors and teachers after God's heart, and who preach according to the word of God; these feed men with knowledge and understanding, Jer. iii. 15. but it is a curse upon a people, when they are left to choose teachers after their hearts' lusts: *having itching ears*; always desirous of new things, as the Athenians of old; or loving to have their ears scratched and tickled with smooth things; that are pleasing and agreeable to natural men, and carnal minds; as the purity of human nature, the power of man's free will, the excellency of his righteousness, and the merit of his works, and the like; see Isa. xxx. 9, 10. Now, this being the case, should not discourage, but rather animate the ministers of the Gospel to preach it; for should they desist, in all likelihood the Gospel would soon be gone.

Ver. 4. *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, &c.*] The solid truths of the Gospel, not being able to bear the hearing of them: *and shall be turned unto fables*; things idle, trifling, useless, and unprofitable; and which are no better than old wives' fables; some respect may be had either to Jewish fables, or to the miraculous mythologies of the Gentiles, or of the Gnostics, and others: but in general, it includes every thing that is vain, empty, and senseless; and this is to be considered as a just judgment upon them; that since they like not to retain the knowledge of the truth, but turn away their ears from it, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, a mind void of sense and judgment, to attend to things idle and fabulous.

Ver. 5. *But watch thou in all things, &c.*] Relating to himself, his doctrine, and conversation; and to others, to feed the flock of God under his care, to know the state of them, and care for them; to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger, and see the laws of Christ put in execution; either in allusion to shepherds, who watch over their flocks

night and day; or to watchmen that are upon the walls of cities, or go about them; or to the priests and Levites in the temple: *endure afflictions*; the Alexandrian copy adds, *as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, as in ch. ii. 3. meaning reproaches and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, from without, and all trials and exercises from within, through the infirmities and ill conduct of the saints themselves; all which are to be endured patiently, cheerfully, and courageously; so as not to be moved by them to desist from the work of the ministry: *do the work of an evangelist*; which may design either an officer, then in the church, distinct from apostles and prophets on the one hand, and pastors and teachers on the other; and was below the former, and above the latter; and was aiding and assisting to the apostles, and such an one Timothy may be thought to be: or it may intend a preacher of the Gospel in common; and to do the work of such an one is not to read lectures of morality, or to preach up justification and salvation by the works of the law; or to mix law and Gospel together, and confound them both; but to preach peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation alone by Jesus Christ, and through the free grace of God: *make full proof of thy ministry*: the work of the ministry, which lies in preaching the Gospel, and administering ordinances, and doing all the duties belonging to it, which is to fulfil it, or discharge it; and which gives full proof of a man's being a true and faithful minister of the word; particularly when he diligently and constantly attends to his work; seeks not his own things, but the things of Christ; cheerfully and patiently suffers for Christ and his Gospel, and lives an agreeable life and conversation.

Ver. 6. *For I am now ready to be offered, &c.*] Or *poured out*, as a libation, or a drink-offering; or as the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar; which is expressive of martyrdom, and shews that the apostle knew what death he should die; for which he was habitually ready; and this sacrifice of himself was not to atone for sin, his own, or others; Christ's death was the only sacrifice for sin, and that is a complete one, and needs no other to be added to it; but this was in the cause of Christ, and for the confirmation of the Gospel, and the faith of the saints in it: so covenants have been confirmed by libations or drink-offerings of wine; and this was an offering acceptable unto God, in whose sight the death of his saints is precious; as the wine in the drink-offering is said to cheer God, that is, to be acceptable to him: *and the time of my departure is at hand*; death is not an annihilation of man, neither of his body, nor of his soul; the one at death returns to dust, and the other to God that gave it; death is a dissolution of soul and body, or a dissolving of the union that is between them, and a resolution of the body into its first principles; hence the Syriac version renders it, *the time in which I shall be dissolved*; and the Vulgate Latin version, *the time of my resolution*. Death analyzes men, and reduces them to their first original earth; it is a removing of persons from one place and state to another; from an house of clay, from this earthly house of our tabernacle, to an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, to everlasting habitations, and mansions in Christ's father's house. This phrase, *a departure*, is an easy

representation of death, and supposes an existence after it; see the note on Phil. i. 23. Now there is a *time* for this; saints are not to continue here always; this is a state of pilgrimage, and a time of sojourning, and which is fixed and settled; the time for going out of this world, as well as for coming into it, is determined by God, beyond which there is no passing; the number of men's days, months, and years, is with him; and the apostle knew partly from his age, and partly from his situation, being in bonds at Rome, and it may be by divine revelation, that his time of removing out of this world was very near; and which he mentions, to stir up Timothy to diligence, since he would not have him long with him, to give him counsel and advice, to admonish him, or set him an example.

Ver. 7. *I have fought a good fight, &c.*] The fight of faith; the same as in 1 Tim. vi. 12. see the note there: *I have finished my course*, or race; the race of life set before him, his course of years; his days were extinct, the grave was ready for him, and he for that; his last sands were dropping, and he was just going the way of all flesh; or else he means the course of his ministry, which he desired to finish with joy, and was now finishing; see Acts xiii. 25. and xx. 24. he was now got to the end of his line, to Rome, where he was to be a martyr for Christ, Acts xxiii. 11. so that he now concluded his work was done, and his warfare accomplished: *I have kept the faith*; by which he means, not so much the grace of faith, that was kept by Christ, the object, author, and finisher of it, and through his effectual grace and powerful intercession; but rather the profession of faith, which he had held fast without wavering; and chiefly the doctrine of faith, which was committed to his trust, which he had kept pure and uncorrupt against all opposition; unless his faithfulness and integrity in the ministerial work should be thought rather to be intended; and which sense is favoured by the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, which render it, *I have kept my faith*; or have been faithful to my trust, as a good steward of the mysteries of God; not concealing and keeping back any thing that was profitable, but declaring the whole counsel of God; and now what remained for him was the crown of righteousness; and this he says for the comfort and encouragement and imitation of Timothy and others. The phrase seems to be Jewish; it is said ⁷ by the Jews, that he that does not keep the feast of unleavened bread, is as he who does not ^{נשך} נשך, ^{מדינתא} מדינתא, *keep the faith of the holy blessed God.*

Ver. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, &c.*] The happiness of the future state of the saints is signified by a crown, on account of the glory and excellency of it; and in perfect agreement with the character of the saints, as kings; and who are raised to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and have a kingdom prepared for them; and this is called a crown of *righteousness*, because it comes through the righteousness of Christ; it is that which gives a right unto it, and without which it cannot be enjoyed; and because it is obtained and possessed in a righteous way, and not by force and

usurpation, as crowns sometimes are: it is God the father's free gift unto his children, what they are born heirs unto, and have a meetness for, through regenerating and sanctifying grace, and have a legal title to it through the righteousness of Christ. Moreover, this may be expressive of the perfect holiness and righteousness of the heavenly state, and of the saints in it, wherein will dwell none but righteous persons, and who will be entirely without sin. And this happiness, signified by a crown, is *laid up*; in the covenant of grace for the saints, which is ordered in all things and sure; and in Christ, in whose hands their persons are, and their grace is, and with him also is their life of glory hid and secured: and this also is laid up in heaven, and reserved there, and that *for me*, and thee; for particular persons, for all the vessels of mercy, for all that are chosen in Christ Jesus, and redeemed by his blood, and sanctified by his spirit; *which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.* By the Lord is meant the Lord Jesus Christ; as is evident from his character, as a Judge, for the father judgeth no man; and from mention being made hereafter of his appearing; Christ is ordained Judge of quick and dead, for which he is abundantly qualified, and a *righteous* one he will be; he is righteous as God, and as man, and as Mediator, in the discharge of all his offices, and so he will be as a Judge, in the administration of that office; righteousness will be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; and from Christ, under this character, the apostle expected to receive all his future glory and happiness; and that both in a way of gift, as a free-gate gift from him, and through him, and in a way of righteousness; and this seems to be a Jewish way of speaking. One of the Septuagint interpreters, whom Ptolomy king of Egypt sent for from Judea, to translate the law of Moses into Greek, in answer to a question put to him by the king, uses this phrase of ^{ετιμας δικαιοσυνης} ετιμας δικαιοσυνης, *a crown of righteousness*; and which he represents as the gift of God ²: *at that day*; either at the day of death, the time of his dissolution, which was at hand; or at the day of the resurrection, and of the last judgment, when Christ will appear under the above character: and the apostle further observes, to the comfort and encouragement of Timothy, and others, that this happiness was not intended and prepared for himself only, but for others: *and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*; that is, his appearing at his second coming; which is to be loved, and so looked for by the saints, not only because it will be glorious in itself, in its attendants and consequences, but will be of great advantage to the saints; Christ will appear unto salvation to them, and so to their joy; they will appear with him in glory, and be like him, and enjoy the everlasting vision of him. The devils believe this appearance of Christ, but tremble at it; wicked men will behold him, and fear; saints know, believe, and love both Christ and his appearing; and such will wear that crown: the Ethiopic version renders it, *who love him at his coming*; all that love him now, will love him then.

Ver. 9. *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.*]

⁷ Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 9.

² Aristot. Hist. 72. Interpr. p. 91. Ed. Oxen.

From Ephesus, where Timothy was, to Rome, where the apostle was; and this request did not arise purely from a desire of seeing Timothy, as in ch. i. 4. but rather because he had some things to say to him, relating to the care of the churches, and the good of the interest of Christ, which he chose not to write with ink and paper; and he desires the rather that he would use diligence, and hasten his coming to him; partly because winter was coming on, when travelling would not be so safe and comfortable, ver. 21. and partly because the time of his death was at hand, ver. 7. and also because he was almost alone.

Ver. 10. *For Demas hath forsaken me, &c.*] Of this person, see the note on Col. iv. 14. It does not appear by what is said in this clause, and in the following, that he entirely apostatized; he might forsake the apostle, and yet not forsake Christ and his interest, or make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience: his faith might be right, though low, and his love sincere, though not fervent; and through a fear of persecution, and loss of life, he might be tempted to leave the apostle, and withdraw from Rome, for his own safety; which though it was far from being commendable in him, yet may be accounted for in this state of frailty and imperfection, consistent with the grace of God; and it should seem that he afterwards was delivered from this temptation, and returned to the apostle, Col. iv. 14. Philem. 24. for when those epistles were written, both Timothy and Mark, who are here wrote for, ver. 9, 11. were with the apostle, Col. i. 1. and Philem. i. and especially he ought to be thought very well of after all this, if Demas is only a contraction of Demetrius, and he is the same who is so much commended many years after this, in 3 John v. 12. *having loved this present world*, not the sins and corruptions of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; such a love is inconsistent with the love of the father and the grace of God; nor an immoderate love of worldly substance, or of money, which is the root of all evil; but a love of life, or of a longer life in this present world; he was desirous of living longer in this world, and chose not to hazard his life by staying with the apostle, a prisoner at Rome; and therefore left him, and provided for his own safety and security: *and is departed unto Thessalonica*: which perhaps was his native country; and however he was at a sufficient distance from Rome, where he might judge himself safe; and if he was a worldly and earthly-minded man, this was a fit place for him, being a place of trade and business: and this doubtless gave rise to a tradition, that he afterwards became a priest of the idol gods among the Thessalonians. Epiphanius^a places him among the heretics Ebion and Cerinthus, as if he was one of them. *Crescens to Galatia*: he might not depart on the same account as Demas, but might be sent by the apostle to Galatia, to visit the churches there, to set things in order, and establish them in the faith, and bring an account of their state. Epipha-

nus^b, instead of Galatia, reads Gallia, or France; and so does Eusebius^c and the Ethiopic version; and Jerom asserts^d, that Crescens preached in France, and was there buried; though others say he was bishop of Chalcedon in Galatia, and put him among the seventy disciples; see the note on Luke x. 1. The Syriac version calls him *Crispus*, and the Arabic version *Priscus*. *Titus to Dalmatia*; who Titus was is well known; the place he went to, Dalmatia, is a country in Europe, a part of Illyricum, where the apostle had preached, Rom. xv. 19. see the note there. Pliny says^e, that part of Pannonia, which lies to the Adriatic sea, was called Dalmatia; it had its name from Dalmius, a city in it. The Alexandrian copy reads *Dermatia*. Here the apostle had doubtless been useful for the conversion of souls, and planting of churches, and therefore sent Titus thither, to assist them in their state and condition, and bring him an account of them. For in the *second* and *third* centuries we read of churches in Dalmatia; and likewise in the *fourth* century; for there were bishops from Dalmatia in the synod at Sardica; and in the *fifth* century, Glycerius was bishop of Salo, a city in this country; and in the *sixth* century, one Malchus was bishop of the Dalmatian church^f.

Ver. 11. *Only Luke is with me, &c.*] The beloved physician, who wrote the Gospel that bears his name, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, and was a constant companion of Paul's in his travels and sufferings: *take Mark, and bring him with thee*: who might be at Ephesus, or somewhere in Timothy's way as he came to Rome. This seems to be the same with John Mark of Jerusalem, the son of Mary, the sister of Barnabas, and who was with Paul and Barnabas in their travels, and who parted from them at Pamphylia; on whose account, and for that reason, there was so great a difference between Paul and Barnabas, as to separate upon it; but now the apostle had entertained a better opinion of him, and was reconciled unto him, and was very desirous of his company and assistance; and which he had, Col. iv. 10. Philem. 24. *For he is profitable to me for the ministry*; that is, of the Gospel, to assist in preaching it.

Ver. 12. *And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.*] To supply the place of Timothy, whilst he came to Rome, and continued there: so careful was the apostle of the church there, that they might not be without the ministry of the word during his absence; see Eph. vi. 20, 21.

Ver. 13. *The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, &c.*] About the word here rendered a *cloak*, interpreters are not agreed: some take it for a garment, and about this they differ; some would have it to be a dignified robe, such as the Roman consuls and senators of Rome wore; which is not likely, this being not suitable to the apostle's character, state, and circumstances. Others take it to be a coarser and meaner garment, wore in cold and rainy weather, to preserve from the inclemencies of it; and winter now

^a Contra Hæres. Hæres. 51.

^b Ibid.

^c Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 4.

^d Catalog. Script. Eccles. sect. 13. p. 90.

^e Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 25.

^f Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6. c. 9. p. 425. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 8.

coming on, ver. 21. the apostle sends for it; which he perhaps had left at Troas in the summer season, as he came: but others take it to be a kind of desk or scrutoire, to put papers in, or a chest for books, a book-press; and so the Syriac version renders it; and which agrees with what follows. Jerom understands it of a book itself, of the Hebrew volume of the Pentateuch, Troas, where this cloak, or book-press, or book was, was a city in Asia Minor, that stood upon, or near the same place where old Troy stood, and from whence it seems to have had its name, and lay in Timothy's way from Ephesus to Rome; see the note on Acts xvi. 8. and xx. 7. and as for Carpus, he was Paul's host when he was at Troas. Some make him to be first bishop of Laodicea, and then of Crete; he is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Bcrytus in Thrace; see the note on Luke x. 1. *When thou comest, bring with thee; he would have him call for it at Troas as he came by, and bring it with him: and the books; that were in it, or were there, besides the Hebrew Pentateuch: the apostle was a great reader of books, of various sorts, both Gentile and Jewish, as appears by his citations out of the Heathen poets, and his acquaintance with Jewish records, Acts xvii. 28. 1 Cor. xv. 33. Tit. i. 12. 2 Tim. iii. 8.* And though he was now grown old, and near his exit, yet was mindful and careful of his books, and desirous of having them to read; and herein set an example to Timothy and others, and enforced the exhortation he gave him, 1 Tim. iv. 13. *But especially the parchments; which might contain his own writings he had a mind to revise before his death, and commit into the hands of proper persons; or some observations which he had made in his travels, concerning persons and things; though it is most likely that these were the books of the Old Testament, which were written on parchments, and rolled up together; and hence they are called the volume of the book; and these the apostle had a special regard for, that whatever was neglected, he desired that these might not, but be carefully brought into him.*

Ver. 14. *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil, &c.*] This seems to be the same person that was at Ephesus in the tumult, when the apostle was there, Acts xx. 33, 34. and whom he afterwards delivered to Satan, along with Hymeneus, for blasphemy, 1 Tim. i. 20. It was very likely he had lately been at Rome, though now returned to Ephesus, and had done great injury to the apostle's character, and had reproached and reviled him as a man of bad principles and practices; his business is mentioned, to distinguish him from any other of that name, and to shew the insolence of the man, that though he was an illiterate person, and in such a mean station of life, yet took upon him to resist the apostle and his doctrine. *The Lord reward him according to his works; which may be considered either as an imprecation upon him, as knowing him to be a wicked blasphemer, and a reprobate person; and which arose, not from private resentment, and on account of the private injury he had done to him; but from a pure zeal for*

the glory of God, and the honour of his name, without mingling his own spirit and passions with it: or as a prophecy, or declaration of what would be; and so the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, *the Lord will render to him, &c.*

Ver. 15. *Of whom be thou ware also, &c.*] For he was now at Ephesus; and since he was such a malicious, ill-natured, and troublesome person, as well as a blasphemer, an heretic, and had been delivered up to Satan, it was very advisable to shun his company, and have no conversation with him, and be upon the guard against him, that he might have no opportunity of doing hurt to him, or to the church at Ephesus: *for he hath greatly withstood our words: or doctrines; the truths of the Gospel preached by Paul and Timothy, which he opposed himself to, and resisted with all his might, and endeavoured to confute and overthrow; and wherein he was deficient in argument, he made up with railing and blasphemy; and this was the true reason of the apostle's imprecations on him, and why he would have Timothy beware of him, and avoid him, and not the personal injury he had done him.*

Ver. 16. *At my first answer no man stood with me, &c.*] Meaning, that when he made his first defence against the charges laid unto him in one of the courts of judicature in Rome, no man appeared in his cause, to speak to his character, to be a witness for him, or plead his cause: *but all men forsook me; all his friends, all that came with him from Judea, or from Asia; see ch. i. 15. being timorous of coming into danger, and of the loss of their lives; as the disciples of Christ were, when he was apprehended, who all at that time forsook him and fled: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge: that this sin may not be imputed to them, or they be punished for it, but that it might be pardoned; so differently does he express himself on the account of these, than on the account of the coppersmith; he sinning through malice, wilfully and obstinately, these through surprise, temptation, and weakness.*

Ver. 17. *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, &c.*] Either personally appearing to him, as in Acts xxiii. 11. or by the ministry of an angel, Acts xxvii. 23, 24. or else by granting him his gracious presence, which was what Christ had not when he was forsaken by his disciples: the presence of God or Christ is more than all friends whatever, and is often enjoyed by the believer, when they drop him; and is a bulwark against all enemies and fears of them; if God is with him, and on his side, though friends fail, and enemies rage, he has nothing to fear: *and strengthened me: inwardly with strength in his soul, with might in his inward man, unto all long-suffering with joyfulness: he was weak in himself, and could do nothing without Christ; Christ was his strength, in him it lay, and to him he looked for it; of which he often had experience, and now afresh; he strengthened him to plead his own cause, to make his defence without fear; he gave him presence of mind, boldness, courage, and intrepidity, freedom of thought and expression; and*

put it into his heart what he should say, and gave him a mouth and wisdom, which his adversaries could not resist. All which he takes notice of with thankfulness, admiring the divine goodness to him, and taking nothing to himself: and the end of this was, *that by me the preaching might be fully known*; that is, that the doctrine of the Gospel, preached by him, might be made fully known by him; as to the author and original of it, to be of God, and not of men; and as to the matter of it, to be spiritual, and not concerning the things of the world; and as to the effects and consequences of it, to have no tendency to raise sedition and disturbances in commonwealths, but, on the contrary, promote peace and love: and that all the Gentiles might hear; in Cæsar's palace, or in the courts of judicature at Rome, and all over Rome, and from thence in other parts of the empire, what a Gospel it was that was preached by the apostle; and if not by his personal ministry, at least by his epistles he afterwards wrote in prison: however, the effect of his defence, the Lord being with him, and strengthening him, was his deliverance: and *I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion*; from death he was threatened with, which, like a lion, gaped upon him to devour him; or from Satan the roaring lion, who desired to have had him, and sought to have intimidated him, and brought him to have denied his Lord, to have deserted his cause, and blasphemed his name; or else from Nero the Roman emperor, so called from his power and fierceness. So Tiberius is called by Marsyas, Agrippa's freeman, when he brought the news of his death to his master^a; and Ahasuerus by Esther^b; and Nero himself is called a civil beast by Apollonius Tyanæus¹; though some think that not Nero, but Helius, whom he had appointed governor in his room, he being at this time in Greece, is here meant, before whom Paul was tried, and out of whose hands he was delivered.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, &c.*] From wicked and unreasonable men, and all their attempts upon him, and from all afflictions by them; not but that he expected afflictions as long as he was in the world, but he knew that God would support him under them; and in his own time and way deliver out of them; and at last entirely by death, when he should be no more attended with them; and from all the temptations of Satan, and his evil designs upon him, and from sin and iniquity; not that he expected to live free of Satan's temptations, or without sin, but he believed that he should be kept from sinking under the former, and from being under the dominion of the latter; and should not be left to deny his Lord, desert his cause, blaspheme his name, and apostatize from him: *and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom*: the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints in heaven; so called, both because of its nature and place, and to distinguish it from the church, which is Christ's kingdom in this world, though it is not of it; and from his personal reign with his saints on earth, for the space of a thousand years; whereas this will be for ever: and unto this the apostle be-

lieved he should be preserved, as all the saints will be, notwithstanding the persecutions of the world, the temptations of Satan, and their own corruptions; for they are secured in an everlasting covenant, and in the hands of Christ; and have not only angels to encamp about them, and salvation, as walls and bulwarks to them, but God himself is a wall of fire around them, and they are kept by his power unto salvation; and besides, this heavenly kingdom is prepared for them, and given to them; they are chosen to be heirs and possessors of it; they are called unto it, and Christ is gone to receive it in their name, to prepare it for them, and will come again and introduce them into it: *to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen*: of the present deliverance, and of all others he had, or should receive, as well as of the provision of the heavenly kingdom for him, and of his preservation to it.

Ver. 19. *Salute Prisca and Aquila, &c.*] The same with Priscilla and Aquila: and so the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read here; who were of the same occupation with the apostle, and with whom he wrought at Corinth, and whom he left at Ephesus; and who seem by this salutation to have continued there, Acts xviii. 2, 3, 18, 19. *And the household of Onesiphorus*: who also lived at Ephesus, and whose kindness to the apostle, when he was at Rome, is before mentioned, ch. i. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 20. *Erastus abode at Corinth, &c.*] He was chamberlain of that city, Rom. xvi. 23. who being sent along with Timothy into Macedonia, Acts xix. 22. very probably went from thence into Achaia, to Corinth, his native place, where he stayed. *But Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick*. Trophimus was an Asian, of the city of Ephesus, the same that is spoken of in Acts xx. 4. and xxi. 29. Some say he suffered martyrdom the same day the Apostle Paul did; but others say, that after that time he was bishop of Arles in France. This man went with the apostle into Asia, and from thence to Jerusalem, and came along with him in his voyage to Rome, but falling sick by the way, was left at Miletum. Some, instead of Miletum, would read Melita, that being the island Paul, and the ship's company, escaped to, when they were shipwrecked, Acts xxviii. 1. here it is supposed Trophimus was left sick. Others have observed, that there was a city called Miletus in the island of Crete, under which Paul sailed, Acts xxvii. 7. see Plin. l. 4. c. 12. and is the place intended; but there is no need to suppose either of these; no doubt Miletum, near to Ephesus, is meant; and as the apostle sailed by the coast of Asia, Acts xxvii. 7. on which shore Miletum was, there's no difficulty in supposing him put ashore there. The Alexandrian copy reads *Melotus*.

Ver. 21. *Do thy diligence to come before winter, &c.*] When travelling would not be so safe and comfortable: the apostle consults Timothy's good, as well as his own advantage. *Eubulus greeteth thee*. Eusebius^k makes mention of one of this name of Mangana, who suffered martyrdom with one Adrian at Cæsarea;

^a Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 7. sect. 10.

^b Apocryph. Esther. xiv. 13.

¹ Philostrat. Vit. Apo'lon. l. 4. c. 12.

^k Eecl. Hist. l. 9. de Martyr. Palestin. c. 11.

but he can't be thought to be the same with this, since he suffered in the times of Dioclesian. And *Pudens*, and *Linus*, and *Claudia*; the first of these is said to be a person of figure at Rome, and of the senatorial order, and the father of two pious virgins, Praxis and Pudentiana. He is put among the seventy disciples; see the note on Luke x. 1. Mention is made by Pliny the younger¹, of Servilius Pudens, a Roman; and Martial, a poet of those times, speaks^m of the marriage of Pudens and Claudia, and of Aulus Pudens. Linus is said to be the first bishop of Rome after the martyrdom of Peter and Paulⁿ. Though some will have it, that he was bishop of Rome in the time of Peter, and that he and one Cletus were co-pastors with Peter; and Platina, who wrote the Lives of the Popes, first makes Peter to consecrate Clement his successor, and to commend the chair, and the church of God, to him, and yet afterwards places Linus, and not Clement, as his immediate successor; yea, puts Cletus also before Clement; so much are the Papists at a loss about, and so little account can they give of the boasted succession of their popes from Peter, that they are not agreed about his immediate successor. This Linus is said to be born at Volterra in Tuscany, and to be of the family of the Moors, whose father was one Herculeus, who sent him at twenty-two years of age to Rome, for the sake of his studies; at which time, as is pretended, Peter came thither, by whom he was converted, and with whom he continued as a fellow-helper in the Gospel. He is moreover said to be bishop of Rome ten years, (Platina says eleven,) three months, and twelve days, and to have suffered martyrdom under Saturninus the consul, whose daughter he had delivered from a diabolical possession, and was buried

in the Vatican. He is reckoned among the seventy disciples of Christ, but very wrongly; see the note on Luke x. 1. The name is a Latin one, and is often mentioned by Martial the poet. And Claudia is the name of a woman, very likely of considerable note. Some think she was the wife of Pudens, the same Martial speaks of, and is said to be a Briton. And all the brethren: that is, of the church of Rome, these all sent greeting to Timothy.

Ver. 22. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit, &c.*] To counsel and advise in every difficult matter; to comfort under every distress; to supply with all grace in every time of need; and to strengthen and fit for every part and branch of duty. *Grace be with you, Amen*: which is the apostle's common salutation in all his epistles. The Syriac version renders it, *grace be with thee*; but the Greek copies read in the plural, *with you*; which shews that the epistle was designed for the use of the whole church, as well as of Timothy. The subscription follows, which is not in many ancient copies, and is not to be depended on.

The second epistle unto Timotheus; so far is right; this is certainly the second epistle to Timothy: ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians; this is omitted in the Syriac version; nor is it likely, much less certain, that he ever was bishop of Ephesus, or ordained as a bishop of any place, but was rather an evangelist, ch. iv. 5. *was written from Rome*: this is evident from his being a prisoner when he wrote it, ch. 1. 8. And yet in the Alexandrian copy it is said to be written from Laodicea: *when Paul was brought before Nero the second time*; but whether he was before Nero at all is a question, or only before a Roman governor or judge.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL

TO

TITUS.

TITUS, to whom this epistle is inscribed, was a Greek, an uncircumcised Gentile, and so remained; nor did the apostle circumcise him, as he did Timothy, when he became his companion; nor did the apostles at Jerusalem oblige him to be circumcised, when Paul took him with Barnabas along with him thither, Gal. ii. 1, 3. He was a man of great grace, and large gifts, and very dear to the apostle: he calls him his brother, his partner, and fellow-helper, and says he walked in the same spirit, and in the same steps,

2 Cor. ii. 13. and viii. 23. and xii. 18. He was employed by the apostle much, and sent into various parts, on different occasions: he sent him to Corinth, to finish there the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, 2 Cor. viii. 6, 16, 17. and to Dalmatia, to know the state of the saints there, and to confirm them in the faith, 2 Tim. iv. 10. As he was a Greek, so his name is a Greek name, yet used among the Romans, as Titus Vespasian, and others^a; and among the Jews, so we read of R. Chijah bar טיטוס, *Titus*^b, and of

¹ L. 10. ep. 10.^m Epigram. l. 4. ep. 10. 23. l. 6. ep. 45. l. 7. ep. 10.ⁿ Iren. adv. Heres. l. 3. c. 3. Euseb. Ec. Hist. l. 3. c. 2, 4. & l. 5. c. 6.

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^a Vid. Martial. Epigram. l. 1. ep. 18. l. 7. ep. 48.^b T. Hieros. Trunot, c. 8. fol. 45. 3.

Y y

R. Judah ben Titus^c: when and where this epistle was written, is not very easy to determine; some think it was written between the first and second time the apostle was in bonds at Rome; and certain it is, that he was not in bonds when he wrote it, for he desires Titus to meet him at Nicopolis, ch. iii. 12. from whence some have supposed it to be written, as the subscription shews; but others think it was wrote much earlier, and when the apostle was at Ephesus, towards the close of his three-years' stay there, before he went into Macedonia; but it seems rather that it was written when he returned from Macedonia into Greece: he left Titus at Crete, and staying in Greece three months, he intended to have sailed to Syria, but was prevented by the Jews lying in wait for him, upon which he steered his course to Macedonia again; and as he was going there, or when there, writes this letter to Titus, to come to him at Nicopolis. The occasion of it was partly the judaizing preachers, and false teachers, that

got into that island, and were corrupting the principles of the people; and partly the unbecoming conversation and practices of some professors of religion: and whereas the apostle had left Titus in Crete, to finish what he had begun, and to put the churches in order, and see that they had proper officers, particularly pastors over them, that they might be taken care of, both with respect to doctrine and practice; the design of this epistle is to lay before Titus the several qualifications of a pastor, which might be an instruction to him, and to the churches, in the choice and ordination of them; and to stir him up to zeal and diligence in refuting false teachers, and dealing with heretics; and to put him upon exhorting the saints to the discharge of their duty, in every branch of it, from the best principles, by arguments taken from the grace of God, and the doctrines of it. This epistle is supposed to be written about the year 55.

C H A P. I.

THIS chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, the apostle's salutation and preface to it; an account of the qualifications of an elder, or pastor of a church; a description of false teachers; and a charge to Titus to rebuke the Cretians for their errors and immoralities. The inscription and salutation are in ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. in which the writer of the epistle is described by his name and office; by the faith and hope he had; and by the ministration of the Gospel, committed to him by the order of Christ: and the person to whom it is written is mentioned by name; and is described by the spiritual relation he stood in to the apostle, and to whom he wishes grace, mercy, and peace: the preface to the epistle is in ver. 5. which gives the reason of the apostle's leaving Titus in Crete, which was to set things in order there, and to ordain elders in all the churches; which leads him to point at the necessary qualifications of them for his direction; some of which respect their moral life and conversation, and others their doctrine, and are in ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. and on occasion of the latter, and which is a reason why the elders should be sound in the faith, and hold it fast, the apostle takes notice of the false teachers that were in Crete, whom he describes by their noisy, vain, and deceitful talk; by their being pernicious and hurtful to whole families; and by their covetousness and sensuality, which is confirmed by a testimony out of one of the Cretian poets, ver. 10, 11, 12. wherefore he charges Titus sharply to rebuke either these false teachers, or those they had corrupted, that they regard sound doctrine, and not Jewish fables, and the commandments of erroneous men, ver. 13, 14. and instances in things forbidden in the law of Moses as unclean, which were not now to be attended to by those who were pure in heart, and sound in faith, to whom all things were pure and lawful; and as for others that were impure, whose minds and consciences were defiled, and were unbelieving, nothing was pure

to them, ver. 15. and who are further described as professors in words of the true knowledge of God, and yet practically were deniers of him; and as abominable in their nature and actions, disobedient to law and Gospel, and unfit for any good work whatever, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *Paul, a servant of God, &c.*] So James styles himself, Jam. i. 1. and others of the apostles, as Peter and Jude, call themselves the servants of Jesus Christ; and as does the Apostle Paul also; and both seem to be esteemed by them as high characters and titles of honour, by which they chose to be described and known. Paul, before his conversion, was a servant of sin, of divers lusts and pleasures, and which he owns in this epistle, ch. iii. 3. but being called by grace, he became free from the vassalage of sin, and became a servant of God, and of righteousness; and henceforward, from a principle of grace, and being constrained by love, served the Lord, and yielded obedience to his commands and ordinances, with all readiness and cheerfulness: though this character belongs to him in a higher sense than it does to believers in common; and respects his ministerial service, or his serving God in the Gospel of his son; in which he, and others, were eminently the servants of the most high God, whose business greatly lay in shewing unto men the way of salvation. *And an apostle of Jesus Christ:* constituted, qualified, and sent by him to preach his Gospel; and who had his mission, commission, and doctrine from him; and was an ambassador of his, who personated him, and preached him; and had a power of working miracles to confirm his mission and ministry; and so had all the signs and proofs of an apostle in him; see the note on Rom. i. 1. *And according to the faith of God's elect:* which may either denote the agreement there was between the ministry of the apostle, and the faith of the choice and eminent saints of God, under the former dispensation; he saying no other things

^c T. Hieros. Trumot Bicurim, fol. 65. 4. & Succa, fol. 55. 4.

than what Moses, and the prophets did; and laying no other foundation of salvation than they did, and which is therefore called the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and directing souls to the righteousness, sacrifice, and blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, to which the faith of Old-Testament saints looked, and by whose grace they were justified, pardoned, and saved, as we are: or else the way and manner in which he became an apostle: it was *by, in, or through the faith of God's elect*, as the Syriac version renders it; he was chosen of God, and brought as such to believe in Christ, and then called to be an apostle: or rather this may regard the end of his apostleship, and be rendered, *unto the faith of God's elect*; that is, either he was appointed an apostle, to preach the doctrine of faith, which once he destroyed, and which is but one, and is common to all the elect, and what is commonly received, and embraced by the elect of God, in all ages; or to be a means and instrument of bringing the elect of God to that faith in Christ, which is peculiar to them; see Rom. i. 5. and x. 17. There are some persons who are styled *the elect of God*; these are not all men, some are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, ungodly men, fore-ordained to condemnation, and given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned; nor the Jews only, nor all of them, for though, as a nation, they were chosen, above all others, to many outward privileges, yet they were not all chosen to special grace, and eternal glory; only a remnant, according to the election of grace: but these are some of both, Jews and Gentiles; some of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; these were chosen in Christ from eternity, and are the peculiar objects of the affection and care of God, whom he calls, justifies, and glorifies: and there is a special *faith* that belongs to these; which is a spiritual looking to Christ, a going to him, a laying hold and leaning on him, and trusting in him for salvation; and this faith is peculiar to the elect of God; all men have it not, and those that have it, have it through the free gift of God; nor is it given to any but to the chosen ones. The reason why the Jews did not believe in Christ was, because they were not of this number, John x. 26. And this faith is secured and made sure to them by their election; they are chosen to it, and through it to salvation; they believe in consequence, and by virtue of it; and certainly obtain it in all ages, as well as righteousness, life, and salvation; and it is that by which they are known to be the elect of God: and the apostle mentions it in this form, and manner, to distinguish it from other faith; the faith of devils, and of reprobates, and the historical and temporal faith of hypocrites, and nominal professors. *And the acknowledging of the truth*: by which is meant the Gospel, often called the truth, and the word of truth; in distinction from that which was shadowy, the ceremonies of the law; and in opposition to that which is false, it being from the God of truth, concerning Christ, who is the truth; and containing nothing but truth, and what is led into by the Spirit of truth. Now to preach, spread, and defend this, was the apostle constituted in his office as such; and which he did preach with all clearness and faithfulness, to bring souls to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it, and so to an acknowledgment, a public owning

and professing of it: *which is after godliness*: the Gospel is a doctrine according to godliness; the truths of it have an influence, both on internal and external godliness; they direct to, and promote the worship and fear of God, and a religious, righteous, sober, and godly life and conversation.

Ver. 2. *In hope of eternal life, &c.*] Or for the hope of eternal life: in order to bring souls to the hope of it: this is another end of the Gospel ministry, as to bring God's elect to faith in Christ, and to the knowledge and acknowledgement of the truth, as it is in Jesus, so to the hope of eternal glory and happiness: in a state of nature, they are without the grace of hope, or any true ground and foundation of it; and though it is the gift of God's grace, and is implanted on the soul by the spirit of God in regeneration; yet the Gospel is the means of producing it at first, as well as afterwards of encouraging and increasing it; for in it, Christ the foundation of hope is proposed, and set forth before awakened and convinced sinners: the object of this hope is *eternal life*; not any thing now seen and enjoyed, for that is not hope; not any thing in this present life, but something future; a life of perfect bliss and happiness with Christ to all eternity; which is a hope laid up in heaven, an inheritance reserved there; a life which is secured in the hands of Christ, which he has a power to give, and does give to all his sheep, and is the gift of God through him: and of which it is further said, *which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*; eternal life is a promise, and so of free grace, and not by the works of the law, which is inconsistent with a promise: it is the promise of God, who is faithful to his word, and *cannot lie*; being the God of truth, that can neither deceive, nor be deceived: this does not contradict his omnipotence, but argues the perfection of his nature, which cannot admit of any thing that implies weakness and mutation: and this promise was made before the world was, as early as the choice of God's elect in Christ, and the gift of grace to them in him; as early as the covenant was made with him, and he was set up as the Mediator of it; who was present to receive this promise as their head and representative for them, and to whom it was made as federally considered in him, and in whom it was secured for them; see 2 Tim. i. 1.

Ver. 3. *But hath in due times manifested his word, &c.*] Either Christ, his essential Word; or the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; or rather his word of promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus: *through preaching*; through the ministry of the word by the apostles; in which Christ is revealed in the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and in which the Gospel, that was ordained before the world was, and is the fellowship of the mystery which was hid in God, is published; and in which the promise of eternal life, which lay in God's heart, in the covenant of grace, and in the hands of Christ, and which with Christ, and his Gospel, were hid under the dark types, shadows, and sacrifices of the law, is clearly made known: *in due times*: appointed by God, agreed on between the Father and the Son, and suitable to the state, case, and condition of men; when the law of

Moses, and the light of nature, legal sacrifices, and moral power, had been sufficiently tried, the one in the Jewish, the other in the Gentile world; and after that the son of God was become incarnate, which was in the fulness of time; and when he had suffered for the ungodly, which was in due time; see 1 Tim. ii. 6. *Which is committed unto me*; that is, which preaching or ministry of the word, the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which, as a trust, was deposited in the hands of the apostle, and of which he was a faithful steward: according to the commandment of God our Saviour; either God the father, so called, ch. iii. 4. compared with ver. 6. and who is the Saviour of all men in a providential way, and of all the elect in a way of special grace, by his son Jesus Christ; and by whom the apostle was appointed and separated to the preaching of the Gospel; and by whom this was committed to his trust: or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and properly God, the great God, and our Saviour, ch. ii. 13. and who is the only Saviour of lost sinners; and he it was that personally appeared to Paul, and made him a minister of the word, committed the Gospel to him, and gave him a commandment, and orders to preach it among the Gentiles, Acts xxvi. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 4. *To Titus, mine own son after the common faith, &c.*] Not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; the apostle being the instrument of his conversion, as he was of the conversion of Onesimus, and of many of the Corinthians, and therefore is said to beget them, Philem. ver. 10. 1 Cor. iv. 15. and so was their spiritual father, and they his children: Titus was, in this sense, his *own son*, or a true son, a legitimate one; a true convert; one really born again; a sincere believer, an Israelite indeed: and this he was *after the common faith*; either the doctrine of faith, which is but one, and is common to all the saints; or the grace of faith, which though different in degrees, yet is alike precious faith in all; the same for nature, kind, object, operation, and effects: and this phrase is used to shew in what sense Titus was son to the apostle; as he was a believer, and no otherwise. *Grace, mercy, and peace, &c.* which is the apostle's usual salutation; see 1 Tim. i. 2. The word *mercy* is left out in the Claromontane copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete, &c.*] Not in his voyage to Rome, Acts xxvii. 7. but rather when he came from Macedonia into Greece, Acts xx. 2. Crete is an island in the Mediterranean sea, now called Candy; see the note on Acts ii. 11. Here Paul preached the Gospel to the conversion of many; but not having time to finish what he begun, left Titus here for that purpose: *that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting*: that is, form the young converts into Gospel order, into a regular Gospel church-state; settle a proper discipline among them; instruct them more largely into the doctrines of the Gospel; and correct their manners, and direct them in every thing, both with respect to faith and practice: *and ordain elders in every city*: for this island, though it was not above fifty miles in breadth, and two hundred

and seventy in length, yet had an hundred cities in it^d; and it seems as if the Gospel had been preached in most, if not all of them, and churches were formed: however, in as many of them as there were churches, the apostle would have Titus see to it, and take care that they had proper officers fixed in them, particularly elders, pastors, or overseers, to preach the Gospel, and administer the ordinances to them, to watch over them in the Lord, and put the laws of Christ's house in execution, and keep up a strict discipline in it, according to the will of God. What Titus was to do in this affair, was to put the churches upon looking out, and choosing from among themselves proper persons for such service, and to direct, assist, and preside at the elections and ordinations of them: for we are not to suppose, that the ordination of elders was the sole act of Titus, or alone resided in him; but in like manner as Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church, by the suffrages of the people, signified by the stretching out of their hands; in which they directed, presided, and also assisted in prayer, with fasting, Acts xiv. 23. *as I had appointed thee*; when he left him at Crete; when he gave him orders and instructions, both with respect to the persons, and their qualifications, whom he would have ordained, and with respect to the manner in which it should be done: the former of these he repeats in the following verses. From all which it clearly appears, that there were churches in Crete, and pastors placed over those churches; very probably the Cretes, who were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 11. and heard Peter's sermon, and were converted by him, some of them returning to their own country, might first bring the Gospel to this island, and lay the foundation of a Gospel church-state here. It seems by what is said in this text, that the Apostle Paul was in this island himself, and preached the Gospel, and after him Titus, whom he left behind; and if any credit is to be given to the subscription of this epistle, he was the first bishop of the church in it: and it is certain, that in the *second* century there were churches in this island, particularly at Gortyna, and other places, to whom Dionysius^e, bishop of Corinth, wrote letters, in which he greatly extols Philip their bishop; and in another letter of his to the Gnosians, or to the church at Gnosus, another city in Crete, he makes mention of Pinytus as their bishop, and whom he commends for his orthodox faith, great knowledge of divine things, and care of his flock; and both these lived in the times of the Emperors Antoninus Verus and Commodus^f; which churches, no doubt, continued in the *third* century, since in the *fourth* we read of bishops sent from Crete to the synod at Sardica: and in the *fifth* century, a bishop of Gortyna in Crete is reckoned among the bishops in the council of Chalcedon: and in the *sixth* century, Theodorus, bishop of the same place, subscribed in the fifth synod at Constantinople: and in the *seventh* century, Paul archbishop of Crete, Basil bishop of Gortyna, with several other bishops of churches in the island, were present at the sixth synod at Constantinople: and in the *eighth* century, as appears from the acts of the Nicene synod, Helias was

^d Pliu. l. 4. c. 12. Mela. l. 2. c. 14. Strabo, c. 16.

^e Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 24.

^f Sophronius in Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. c. 38. 40.

bishop of Crete, Anastasius bishop of Gnossus, a city in it, and Melito, Leontius, and Galatas, bishops of other places in the same island: and in the ninth century, a bishop of Gortyna, in defence of the cause of Christ, became a martyr^g; so far churches, and bishops, bearing the Christian name, are to be traced in this island.

Ver. 6. *If any be blameless, &c.*] In his outward life and conversation, not chargeable with any notorious crime; see the note on 1 Tim. iii. 2. *the husband of one wife*; see the note as before: *having faithful children*; legitimate ones, born in lawful wedlock, in the same sense as such are called *godly* and *holy*, in Mal. ii. 15. 1 Cor. vii. 14. for by *faithful children* cannot be meant converted ones, or true believers in Christ; for it is not in the power of men to make their children such; and their not being so can never be an objection to their being elders, if otherwise qualified; at most the phrase can only intend, that they should be brought up in the faith, in the principles, doctrines, and ways of Christianity, or in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *Not accused of riot*; or chargeable with sins of uncleanness and intemperance, with rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness; or with such crimes as Eli's sons were guilty of, from which they were not restrained by their father, and therefore the priesthood was removed from the family: *or unruly*; not subject, but disobedient to their parents; see the notes on 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

Ver. 7. *For a bishop must be blameless, &c.*] This shews that a bishop and an elder is the same; and the Syriac version here renders it, *an elder*: the character or qualification necessary to him is the same as before, and in like manner to be understood; unless it should more particularly refer to his faithfulness in the discharge of his office: since it follows, *as the steward of God*: one appointed by God over his household and family, the church, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season; one that dispenses the manifold grace, or various doctrines of the grace of God, and mysteries of Christ; and of such an one it is required, that he be faithful, both to his Lord and master, to the trust committed to him, and to the persons under his care. *Not self-willed*; not doing things in the worship and house of God, in the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, according to his own will, but according to the will of God, revealed in his word; otherwise what he does will come under the name of will-worship: or obstinate, stubborn, and inflexible, conceited of his own sense and judgment, and resolute to have his own will and way in all things relating to the affairs of God's house. The word signifies one that is pleased with himself, has an over-weening opinion of himself, is proud and haughty, and despises others: *not soon angry*; but slow to wrath, which shews a man to be a man of understanding, and fit to teach others, which an angry man is not. It is a saying of R. Hillel^h, that "neither one that is ashamed (to ask questions) learns well, nor one that is angry teaches well." And the

Jews sayⁱ, that "the law is not rightly explained but "by one that is not angry." Hence, that direction^k, "for ever let a man be meek as Hillel, and not angry "as Shammai;" who were two of their principal doctors, the heads of their schools, in the times of Christ: a man that rules his own spirit, and has the command of his temper and passions, is fit to govern in the church of God. *Not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre*; see the notes on 1 Tim. iii. 3.

Ver. 8. *But a lover of hospitality, &c.*] See the note on 1 Tim. iii. 2. *a lover of good men, or of good*; the Syriac version renders it, *of good things*; as prayer, preaching, reading, meditation, spiritual conversation, and every religious exercise: or *of good men*; for such an elder or bishop has chiefly to do and converse with; and if he is not a lover of them, their company will be disagreeable to him, and he will be of no advantage to them; and if he does not love the souls of men, he will not naturally care for their state, or be concerned for their good. *Sober*; in body, using moderation in diet and dress; and in mind, being prudent, modest, and humble, and thinking soberly of himself, and others, as he ought. *Just*; righteous in his dealings with men, giving to every one their due; upright and sincere in his conversation with the saints; and faithful in his counsel, admonitions, and reproofs. *Holy*; devout towards God, constant in all religious exercises in the closet, family, and church; and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. *Temperate*; in eating and drinking; continent from the lusts of the flesh; and even abstaining from those things which might be lawfully used, though inexpedient, for the sake of the weak, the peace of the church, and the glory of God.

Ver. 9. *Holding fast the faithful word, &c.*] The doctrine of the Gospel, so called because it is true, and to be believed; it is the word of truth, and truth itself, and contains nothing but truth; and because it never deceived any that gave credit to its doctrines, and its promises; and because it is pure, unmixed, and unadulterated, and is the sincere milk of the word; and because in it is a glorious display of the faithfulness of God, to his perfections, to his holiness and justice, to his law, and to his covenant, word, and oath; and of the faithfulness of Christ, to him that appointed him, and to his covenant-engagements, and which has appeared in the discharge of his several offices: and this is not only to be held forth by the elder, but to be held fast, and tenaciously abode by; in opposition to all wavering about it, departure from it, dropping or concealing any part of it, and pusillanimity concerning it; whatever temptations there may be to the contrary, through popular applause on the one hand, and reproaches and persecutions on the other; and though there may be many that may endeavour to wring it out of his hands; see 2 Tim. i. 13. *as he hath been taught*; or *according to doctrine*; that is, according to the doctrine of the Scriptures, Christ, and his apostles; according to the doctrine that lies in the Scriptures, that was delivered by Christ, and preached by his

^g Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. c. 9. p. 425. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 265. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 4.

^h Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 5.

ⁱ Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 2086.

^k T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.

apostles; whatever is according to that should be held fast: or *which is for doctrine*, which tends to teach, instruct, and edify the *minds* of men, that ought to be constantly abode by: or as the elder himself has been taught, not by men, in a theoretical way, as logic, rhetoric, and other arts and sciences are taught; for such who are only taught the faithful word in this way, are not likely to hold it fast, in a time of temptation; but as he has been taught it experimentally by the spirit of God; and such an one, who has not only the knowledge of it in his head, but the experience of it in his heart, will hold it, and hold it fast against all opposition: *that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*; sound doctrine is the faithful word, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which being retained, qualify an elder to discharge the following branches of his office; to *exhort* the members of churches to their duty, according to their age, sex, state, and condition, as in ch. ii. to which the doctrines of grace influence and engage; or to *comfort* them, as the word also signifies, and the Alexandrian copy reads, *to comfort them in all tribulation*; and this is one considerable part of the elder's work, to comfort souls under affliction, whether of body or mind; and sound doctrines, or the doctrines of the Gospel, are wonderfully suited to such a purpose: and the other part of his work is, *to convince gainsayers*; such who resist the truth, oppose themselves to it, cavil at it, and object against it; these are to be refuted, and convinced by the Scriptures, and arguments taken from them, as the Jews were by Apollos, Acts xviii. 28. and nothing is so powerful to do it as sound doctrine, and holding fast the faithful word.

Ver. 10. *For there are many unruly, &c.*] Persons who are not subject to the law of God, or Gospel of Christ; whose spirits are not subject to the prophets; and who will not submit themselves to them that have the rule over them, nor attend to the admonitions of the church, nor be brought into any regularity and order; and there were many of this sort, who were not sent forth by Christ, or his churches, but went forth of themselves, and were corrupters of the word; and therefore Christ's ministers ought to hold fast the faithful word, and convince such opposers by sound doctrine; and *rain talkers*; who deliver out in their discourses empty, trifling, superficial, and frivolous things; which have no solidity and substance in them, nor do they tend to edification; only great swelling words of vanity, vain jangling and babbling about things to no profit. *And deceivers*; both of themselves and others; who lie in wait to deceive, and are deceitful workers; and by their good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple; and so are dangerous persons, and of pernicious consequence: especially they of the circumcision; or of the Jews, as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, not the unbelieving Jews, but such as professed Christianity, judaizing Christians, who joined Moses and Christ, and blended the law and Gospel together; who taught

that circumcision, and the observance of other ceremonies of the law, were necessary to justification and salvation; and hereby did a great deal of mischief among the churches.

Ver. 11. *Whose mouths must be stopped, &c.*] Or they be silenced, by reasons and arguments fetched out of the word of God; as were the Sadducees and Pharisees by Christ, so that they durst ask him no more questions; and as the Jews at Damascus were by Saul, who confounded them, proving in the clearest and strongest manner, that Jesus was the very Christ: *who subvert whole houses*; into which they creep; that is, whole families, whose principles they corrupt, whose faith they overthrow, and carry them away with their own errors; and therefore, since this was the case not of a single person, or of a few, but of whole families, it was high time to attempt to convince them, and stop their mouths, that they might proceed no further: *teaching things which they ought not*; which were not agreeable to the perfections of God, to the Scriptures of truth, to sound doctrine, and which were hurtful and pernicious to the souls of men: and that only *for filthy lucre's sake*; having no regard to the glory of God, the honour and interest of Christ, or the good of immortal souls; only seeking to gain popular applause and honour from men, and to gather and increase worldly substance. Covetousness was a sin which the Cretians were remarkably guilty of¹.

Ver. 12. *One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, &c.*] This was Epimenides, in whose Poems stand the words here cited; the apostle rightly calls him *one of themselves*, since he was a Cretian by birth, of the city of Gnossum; it is reported of him, that being sent by his father to his sheep in the field, he by the way, at noon, turned aside into a cave, and slept fifty-seven years^m; and he is very properly called a *prophet* of their own; for in Crete Jupiter had his prophetsⁿ, and he might be one of them: the priests among the Heathens were called prophets; so Baal's priests are called the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the groves, 1 Kings xviii. 19. Besides, Epimenides was thought to be inspired by the gods: he is called by Apuleius^o, a famous fortune-teller; and is said by Laertius^p to be very skillful in divination, and to have foretold many things which came to pass; and by the Grecians were supposed to be very dear to the gods; so Balaam, the soothsayer and diviner, is called a prophet, 2 Pet. ii. 16. Add to this, that the passage next cited stands in a poem of this writer, entitled, *Concerning Oracles*; and it is easy to observe, that poets in common were usually called *vates*, or prophets; so that the apostle speaks here with great propriety. Now concerning the inhabitants of Crete, Epimenides, a native of the place, and a person of great character and repute among them, said, *the Cretians are always liars*: lying is a sin common to human nature, and appears in men as early, or earlier than any other; and all men are guilty of it, at one time or another; but all are not habitually liars, as it seems these

¹ Cornel. Nepos, l. 23. c. 9.

^m Laert. l. 1. Vita Epimenidis.

ⁿ Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 17.

^o Florida, sect. 15.

^p lb.

Cretians were: lying was a governing vice among them; they were not only guilty of it in some particular instances, but always; not only for saying that Jupiter's sepulchre was with them, when it was the sepulchre of Minos his son, which they had fraudulently obliterated; and for which ⁹ Callimachus charges them with lying, and uses these very words of Epimenides; though he assigns a different reason from that now given, which is, that Jupiter died not, but always exists, and therefore his sepulchre could not be with them: but this single instance was not sufficient to fasten such a character upon them; it was a sin they were addicted to: some countries are distinguished by their vices; some for pride; some for levity, vanity, and inconstancy; some for boasting and bragging; some for covetousness; some for idleness; some for effeminacy; some for hypocrisy and deceit; and others, as the Cretians, it seems, for lying; this was their national sin ¹⁰; and this is said by others, as well as Epimenides. Crete is, by Ovid ¹¹, called *meiata Creta*, lying Crete. Hence, with the Grecians, to *cretize*, is proverbially used for to lie; this is a sin, than which nothing makes a man more like the devil, or more infamous among men, or more abominable to God. The Ethiopic version, instead of Cretes, or Cretians, reads *hypocrites*. Other characters of them, from the same Heathen poet, follow, *evil beasts: slow bellies*; by *evil beasts* are meant beasts of prey, savage and mischievous ones; see Gen. xxxv. i. 20, 33. and are so called, to distinguish them from other beasts, as sheep, and the like, which are not so; and perhaps Crete might abound with such evil beasts; for the Cretians are said ¹² to excel in hunting; and to these they themselves are compared, by one of their own prophets, for their cruelty, and savage disposition: so cruel persecutors are compared to beasts, 1 Cor. xv. 32. and the false teachers, the apostle has respect to in citing this passage, were cruel, if not to the bodies, yet to the souls of men, whom they poisoned and destroyed. And the Cretians are called, by the poet, *slow bellies*: partly for their intemperance, their gluttony and drunkenness; which suited with the false teachers, whose God was their belly, and which they served, and not the Lord Jesus; and partly for their sloth and idleness, eating the bread of others without working.

Ver. 13. *This witness is true, &c.*] The apostle confirms what the poet had said; he knew it to be fact from his own experience, and by the observation he had made when in the island: he does not say, that all that Epimenides had said, in the poem referred to, was true; but this character, which he had given of the Cretians, and which he cites, and uses to a good purpose; from whence it may be observed, that the writings of the Heathen poets may be read with profit, and be used to advantage, if carefully and prudently attended to; for what is truth, let it come from whom, or by what means it will, ought to be received. *Wherefore rebuke them sharply*: not merely upon the testimony of the poet, but upon the confirmation of it by the apostle; and not because of these general and national characters, but because these things personally

and particularly belonged to the persons before described; whom the apostle would have rebuked, both for their bad principles, teaching things that they ought not; and for their immoralities, their lying and deceit, their intemperance, luxury, and idleness, things very unbecoming the Christian name; and therefore since their offences were of an heinous nature, and they lived in them, and were hardened and obstinate, and were like to have a bad influence on others, they must be rebuked *sharply*: rebukes ought to be given according to the nature of offences, and the circumstances of them, and the offenders; some are to be given privately, others publicly; some should be reproved with gentleness and meekness, and be used in a tender and compassionate way; others more roughly, though never in a wrathful and passionate manner, yet with some degree of severity, at least with great plainness and faithfulness; laying open the nature of the evils guilty of in all their aggravated circumstances, without sparing them in the least; doing, as surgeons do by wounds, though they take the knife, and use it gently, yet cut deep, to the quick, and go to the bottom of the wound, and lay it open: and so the phrase may be rendered here, *rebuke them cuttingly*; cut them to the quick, and spare them not; deal not with them as Eli with his sons, 1 Sam. ii. 23. but speak out, and expose their crimes, severely reprove them, that others may fear: and *that they may be sound in the faith*: that they may be recovered from their errors, to the acknowledgment of the truth; that they may receive the sound doctrine of faith, the wholesome words of Christ, and speak the things which become them, and use sound speech, which cannot be condemned; and that they may be turned from their evil practices, and appear to be sound, as in the doctrine, so in the grace of faith; or that that by their works may appear to be genuine, true, and unfeigned; and that they may be strong and robust, hale and healthful, and not weak and sickly in the profession of their faith. Rebukes being to persons infected with bad principles and practices, like physic to sickly constitutions, a means of removing the causes of disorder; and in rebukes, admonitions, and censures, this always ought to be the end proposed, the good of the persons rebuked, admonished, and censured.

Ver. 14. *Not giving heed to Jewish fables, &c.*] Concerning God himself, the angels, and the creation of man; concerning the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; concerning the Messial, and his earthly kingdom, and the feast that will be made for the righteous in his days, which will consist of flesh, fish, and fowl, Behemoth, Leviathan, and Zuz, and of wine kept in the grape from the foundation of the world; and concerning the rolling of the dead through the caverns of the earth at the resurrection, with a multitude of other things which were traditionally received. *And commandments of men*: the traditions of the elders, which the Jews charged the disciples of Christ with the transgression of; and he, on the other hand, very justly reproached them with breaking the commands of God, by attending to them, Matt. xv. These were the laws

⁹ Hymn. 1. in Jovem, v. 8.

¹⁰ Alex. ab Alex. l. 4. c. 13.

¹¹ De Arte Amandi, l. 1.

¹² Alex. ab Alex. ib.

and traditions of the fathers, which the Apostle Paul was brought up in, and was zealous of, before his conversion, Acts xxii. 3. Gal. i. 14. and which these judaizing preachers and professors, he here has respect to, were fond of, though they were made by men, *that turn from the truth*; or *hate* it, as the Syriac version renders it; who were enemies unto it, as Hillel and Shammai, the heads of the traditional doctors, and as the Jews, and their Rabbins in general were; and therefore their commandments, of all men, should not be given heed to, by those that bear the Christian name.

Ver. 15. *Unto the pure all things are pure, &c.*] The apostle having made mention of Jewish fables, and the traditions of the elders, takes notice of some darling notions, that these judaizing Christians had imbibed or retained; that there were some things, which being touched, or handled, or tasted, occasioned uncleanness, and which the apostle denies to them that are *pure*; by whom are meant, not such who are so in their own eyes, who yet may not be cleansed from their filthiness; nor do any become pure through ceremonial, moral, or evangelical performances, done by them; they are only pure, who are justified from all sin by Christ's righteousness, and are clean through the word or sentence of absolution spoken by him; and who are washed from their sins in his blood, and have that sprinkled upon their consciences, by which they are purged and cleansed from all sin; and who have the clean water of sanctifying grace sprinkled upon them, and have clean hearts, and right spirits created in them; and whose hearts are purified by faith, and have true principles of grace and holiness formed in them; whose graces are pure and genuine, their faith is unfeigned, their love is without dissimulation, and their hope without hypocrisy; and who, in consequence of all this, love pureness of heart, speak the pure language of Canaan, hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and follow after purity of life and conversation: to these *all things are pure*; whatever they touch, or handle, or eat, nothing can defile them; for it is not what enters into man that can pollute him; nor is any creature unclean of itself, but good, and to be received with thanksgiving; see Matt. xv. 11. Rom. xiv. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5. *But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure*; all mankind are *defiled* with sin; they are altogether become filthy; there is none good, no, not one; and all of them, or that belong to them, are unclean; the members of their body, and the powers and faculties of their soul, their mind and conscience, understanding, will, and affections; there is no place clean: they are originally so, from their first conception and birth; and they are actually defiled by their own evil thoughts, words, and doings: some are openly impure, like the dog and the swine, who wallow in their impieties, such are the profane part of the world; others are more secretly so, as those of a pharisaical complexion, nominal Christians, and formal professors; and such the apostle has here in view: and who, notwithstanding their profession of the Christian religion, were *unbelieving*; they had not true faith in Christ, though they professed it; they were not in-

deed unbelieving, as the Jews, who rejected Jesus as the Messiah; yet they did not purely and cordially embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, nor yield a spiritual and cheerful subjection to the ordinances of it; but were for mixing the ceremonies of the law with the institutions of Christ: and to these were *nothing pure*; right and lawful to be done, or not done, even in the case supposed, about eating things forbidden by the ceremonial law; to eat them would be to eat with offence, to their own consciences, on their principles, and so be evil, Rom. xiv. 20. and to abstain from them on account of laws not in force, would be superstition and will-worship, and so criminal, Col. ii. 21, 22, 23. There is nothing that defiled persons can do, but what is unclean; as are their persons, so are their offerings and works, Hagg. ii. 14. and being destitute of true faith, whatever they do is sin, and not any thing they do can be acceptable and well-pleasing to God, Rom. xiv. 23. Heb. xi. 6. There were some things among the Jews, which were prohibited to them that were defiled, and were free to them that were pure: thus, for instance, "the flesh of the most holy things, and the flesh of those which are lightly holy, boiled with flesh of delight, (or common flesh,) are forbidden לִמְבֵּאִים, *to the defiled*, but are free לַטְהוֹרִים, *to the pure*." Which one of their commentators thus explains; "the flesh of the most holy things is forbidden to strangers, though pure; the flesh of things lightly holy is free to strangers that are pure, but forbidden to them that are defiled." Whether there may be any allusion to this, may be considered: however, the reason the apostle gives why nothing is pure to the impure, is, because of the pollution of the superior powers and faculties of their soul: *but even their mind and conscience is defiled*; there is nothing in them, or that belongs to them, that is pure; their mind or understanding, which conceives and judges of things, and forms notions of them; and the conscience, which draws conclusions from them, are both defiled with sin; and what then must the thoughts, the words and actions of such persons be? it matters not what they do, or abstain from, what they touch, taste, or handle, or if they do not, they sin in all they do.

Ver. 16. *They profess that they know God, &c.*] That there is a God; that there is but one, only, true, and living God, the God of Israel, as professed by the Jews; and that this God is Father, Son, and Spirit, as believed by the Christians: for the persons the apostle speaks of were judaizing Christians. Yet this knowledge was but notional; it lay in theory and profession only; they had not a spiritual experimental knowledge of God in Christ, which only has eternal life connected with it: *but in works they deny him*. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *in their own works*; they were not professed, but practical atheists; they owned there was a God, and boasted of their knowledge of him; but their lives and conversations shewed that they had no true knowledge of him, and that the fear of him was not before their eyes; these gave the lie to their profession; they practically denied that faith they professed to hold, and the power of godliness, of which they had the form. *Being abominable*;

* Misn. Orla, c. 2. sect. 17.

* Bartenora, in Misn. Orla, c. 2. sect. 17.

in the sight of God, however esteemed by men; and notwithstanding the vizard and mask of sanctity and religion they put on, which could not screen them from the omniscience of God, who will one day declare he knows them not, and will bid them depart from him, being workers of iniquity. *And disobedient; to God; to his law, and Gospel; to his ministers and churches; and even to parents and civil magistrates; for of this cast were the false teachers, and their followers, as may be learned from many passages. And unto every good work reprobate; or unaccustomed, unused to them, as the Arabic version renders it; or rather without judgment, and understanding, concerning them; there was no good in them, nor was it in them to do good; to do*

good they had no knowledge, nor any inclination; they were unfit for it, and had not a capacity to perform it; they were not good themselves, and therefore could not do good; the tree must first be made good, ere its fruit will be good; they were without Christ, and without his spirit, and grace, without which no man can do any thing that is spiritually good; they had no true faith, and therefore what they did was sinful; they had neither right principles, from which, nor right ends to which they acted, and therefore were not qualified for the performance of good works; which require that men should be good men, created in Christ Jesus, be believers in him, and have principles of truth and love, and views to the glory of God.

C H A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle exhorts Timothy to the discharge of his office with respect to all sorts of persons, of every age, sex; and condition, he was concerned with, giving reasons for it, taken from the nature of the Gospel of Christ: he exhorts him in general to insist in his public ministry on those things, which were agreeable to sound doctrine, ver. 1. and particularly what became aged men and aged women, and young men and young women, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. in all which, both with respect to doctrine and practice, he desires him to be a pattern to them, that so even his very adversaries may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of him, ver. 7, 8. And next he charges him to exhort servants to obey their masters, and seek to please them, and not contradict them, and to be faithful to them; that so the doctrine of God their Saviour, professed by them, might be adorned in all things, ver. 9, 10. And the reasons why the apostle would have duty urged on persons of every age, sex, and state, are taken from the nature of the Gospel being a doctrine of grace and salvation, which was preached to all sorts of persons, ver. 11. and from the efficacy of it, in teaching men to deny sin, and live a holy life and conversation, ver. 12. and from an expectation of eternal glory and happiness at the appearance of Christ, which the Gospel encourages to, ver. 13: and from the end of Christ's giving himself for his people, and redeeming them from sin, the sum and substance of the Gospel, which was, that they might be purified, and be zealous of good works, ver. 14. and these exhortations were to be delivered by Titus with authority, and in such a manner, that he might not be despised, ver. 15.

Ver. 1. *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.*] Concerning sound doctrine, and the form of it, see the note on 2 Tim. i. 13. The things which become it are a good life and conversation, the various duties incumbent on professors of religion, according to their different station, age, and sex, which are observed in some following verses; these become the Gospel of Christ, and are ornamental to the doctrine of God our Saviour; and these are to be spoken of by the ministers of Christ, in their proper places, and at proper times; who ought not to be dumb, and keep silence at any time, but especially when there are many

unruly and vain talkers: sound doctrine ought to be spoken out openly and publicly, fully and faithfully, with great plainness and evidence, that it may be understood and known by all; and with much certainty, without hesitation, as being, without controversy, undoubted truth; and with all boldness, not fearing men, or seeking to please them; and it should be constantly and continually spoken, in season, and out of season; and care should be taken that it be spoken consistently, and in an uniform manner, that there be no clashing and contradiction; and the duties of religion, which become sound doctrine, should be set in their true light, and proper place, as fruits of the grace of God, and to glorify him; these should be spoken out plainly, frequently insisted upon, and warmly and zealously urged, as being decent things, for the honour of God, the recommending of religion, the good of mankind, and the service of one another: as particularly,

Ver. 2. *That the aged men be sober, &c.*] Or vigilant, and watchful over themselves, their conduct and conversation, lest being evil, it should be drawn into an example by younger persons: this is to be understood not of men in office, of presbyters or elders; for their characters are described in the preceding chapter; but of men in years, of ancient men, that are professors of religion, and members of churches: who should also be grave: in their behaviour, speech, and dress; levity of conversation, frothy language, and airy dress, are very unbecoming aged persons: and who ought to be temperate; in eating and drinking, especially the latter, to which old age is most addicted; and care should be taken that they be not over-charged with it, and that day overtake them unawares, since they are upon the brink and borders of eternity: the word is rendered discreet in ver. 5. and sober in 1 Tim. iii. 2. and both are characters suitable to men in years. *Sound in faith, in charity, in patience;* though they may be unhealthful in their bodies, and become decrepit through age, they should be sound in their minds; in the doctrine of faith, lest they should lead others into error; and their faith in Christ should appear to be right and genuine; and their love to God, to Christ, and to his people, should be real and sincere, and be taken off from the things of the world, of time and sense; an

affection for which is an evil that frequently cleaves to old age; and patience should have its perfect work; not only to bear the infirmities of body, brought on by age; but whatsoever sufferings they may be called unto for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, in their last day; and to run out the race that is set before them.

Ver. 3. *And the aged women likewise, &c.*] Speak also to them the things which become their profession, and what is right for them to be, and do: these aged women design not persons in office, who were ancient widows, and had some care of the poor; or presbyteresses, as some call them, the wives of presbyters or elders, as being distinct from deaconesses; but godly women in years, who are to be instructed and exhorted: *that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness; or holy women, sanctified by the spirit of God; and who are priestesses unto God, as the word may signify, being made so by Christ unto the Father, as men are made kings and priests by him; such ought to be in their clothing, and in their speech, and in the whole of their conduct and conversation, as become the character which they bear, and the profession they make: not false accusers; of the brethren, and sisters, which is to act the part of the devil; and indeed, the same word is here used which is commonly given to him; not raising false reports of, bringing false charges against members of churches, and so making differences and divisions among them. Not given to much wine; or serving it, or being enslaved by it, which is very scandalous in any, especially in the female sex, and yet was what was too common in the eastern countries. Teachers of good things; both by example and by instruction, but in their own houses privately; for they were not suffered to teach publicly, or to speak in the church; these should be teachers, not of old wives' fables, of superstitious customs, rites, and ceremonies, of the intrigues of love, and of things filthy and obscene, which are too often handed down to posterity by such persons; but of things that are solid and substantial, useful and improving, honest and honourable, chaste and pure. Particularly,*

Ver. 4. *That they may teach the young women to be sober, &c.*] Or to be chaste, modest, and temperate; or to be wise and prudent in their conduct to their husbands, and in the management of family affairs, who have had a large experience of these things before them. *To love their husbands; to help and assist them all they can; to seek their honour and interest; to endeavour to please them in all things; to secure peace, harmony, and union; to carry it affectionately to them, and sympathize with them in all afflictions and distresses; for this is not so much said in opposition to placing their affections on other men, and to the defilement of the marriage-bed, as to moroseness and ill nature. To love their children: not with a fond, foolish, loose, and ungoverned affection; but so as to seek their real good, and not only their temporal, but spiritual and eternal welfare; to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and to use and keep proper discipline and government over them; for otherwise, amidst all the fondness of natural affec-*

tion, a parent may be said to hate a child, Prov. xiii. 24.

Ver. 5. *To be discreet, &c.*] Or temperate in eating and drinking, so the word is rendered in ver. 2. or to be sober both in body and mind; or to be wise and prudent in the whole of their conduct, both at home and abroad: *chaste; in body, in affection, words and actions, having their love pure and single to their own husbands, keeping their marriage-bed undefiled. Keepers at home: minding their own family affairs, not gadding abroad, and inspecting into, and busying themselves about other people's matters. This is said in opposition to what women are prone unto. It is reckoned among the properties of women, by the Jews, that they are רוצניות, gadders abroad: they have some rules about women's keeping at home; they say, "a woman may go to her father's house to visit him, "and to the house of mourning, and to the house of "feasting, to return a kindness to her friends, or to "her near relations—but it is a reproach to a woman to go out daily; now she is without, now "she is in the streets; and a husband ought to "restrain his wife from it, and not suffer her to go "abroad but about once a month, or twice a month, "upon necessity; for there is nothing more beautiful "for a woman, than to abide in the corner of her "house; for so it is written, Psal. xlv. 13. *the king's "daughter is all glorious within.*" And this they say^a is what is meant by the woman's being an help-meet for man, that whilst he is abroad about his business, she is בבית, וישבת בבית, sitting at home, and keeping his house; and this they observe is the glory and honour of the woman. The passage in Isa. xlv. 13. concerning an image being made after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house, is by the Targum thus paraphrased: "according to the "likeness of a man, according to the praise of a woman, to abide in the house." Upon which Kimchi has this note, "it is the glory of a woman to continue at "home, and not go abroad." The tortoise, which carries its house upon its back, and very rarely shews its head, or looks out of it, was, with the ancients, an emblem of a good housewife. These also should be instructed to be good or kind to their servants, and beneficent to the poor, and to strangers, towards whom, very often, women are apt to be strait-handed, and not so generous and liberal as they should be: obedient to their own husbands; see the notes on Eph. v. 22, 24. that the word of God be not blasphemed; by unbelieving husbands, who, by the ill conduct of their wives, would be provoked to speak ill of the Gospel, as if that taught disaffection and disobedience to them.*

Ver. 6. *Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*] Temperate, chaste, modest, moderate, wise, and prudent in all things: this is said to Titus, as being his province to instruct and exhort the young men; as it were proper and convenient for aged women to teach the young women how they should behave and conduct themselves.

Ver. 7. *In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works, &c.*] It was not enough for Titus, and so neither for any other Gospel minister, to deliver out

^a Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 3.

^b Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 13. sect. 11.

^a Tzeror Hammor, fol. 5. 4.

sound doctrine, and to exhort persons of different ages and sexes to the things which become it, but he should through the whole of his conversation be a pattern of every good work unto them; for they that are the shepherds of the flock, are not only to feed them with knowledge, and with understanding, but to be ensamples to them, as well as they who are under their care ought to walk, as they have them for an example; see 1 Tim. iv. 12. *In doctrine, shewing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity*; the apostle here either returns again to his advice about doctrine, that it should be delivered out pure and incorrupt, free from error and heresy, and every mixture and invention of man's; and with all gravity of speech and countenance, without levity in expression, and airiness of gesture; and that it be the sincere milk of the word that is given forth, and that with all integrity and uprightness of soul: or else this refers to the life and conversation of the teacher, as answering to his doctrine, and going along with it; and the sense is, in, or with doctrine, along with the doctrine preached, let the conversation be pure and incorrupt, free from the pollutions of the world, and from any governing vice; and let it be attended with gravity in word, gesture, look, and dress; and with all sincerity, faithfulness, and simplicity, in all our dealings, either with the saints, or with the men of the world.

Ver. 8. *Sound speech that cannot be condemned, &c.*] In the public ministry, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus should be used, and the doctrines of the Gospel be expressed, as near as can be, in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and not in the enticing words of man's wisdom; such speech or language should be chosen, that is plain, easy, and acceptable, and conveys just ideas of things; and which being agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, and the analogy of faith, cannot be justly found fault with: or this may refer to private conversation, in which no rotten speech, or corrupt communication should proceed out of the mouth; nothing but what is pure, sound, graceful, and edifying; no filthiness, nor foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, and are rightly condemned. *That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed*; that is, that he who is on the other side of the question, who opposes the truths of the Gospel, and is an adversary to them; whether he be an Heathen philosopher, or a Jewish Rabbi, or a judaizing teacher, or an heretical man, under the Christian name, may be put to shame and confusion; partly on account of that incorruptness in doctrine and conversation, which he observes in the true and faithful ministers of the word, and is wanting in himself; and so being convinced, may be converted and brought to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth; and partly on the account of the false charges and accusations brought by him against such: *having no evil thing to say of you*; whether with respect to doctrine or practice. The Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental versions, read *us*, instead of *you*. The whole body is reproached for the sake of one or more.

Ver. 9. *Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, &c.*] And not others, whether they be believers, or unbelievers, gentle or forward, all their lawful commands ought to be obeyed; see the note on Eph. vi. 5. and *to please them well in all things*; not only to obey and

serve them, and do what they order, but to seek and endeavour to do it in such a way as may be grateful, acceptable, and well-pleasing to them, whereby an interest in their affection, esteem, and commendation, may be gained: and this should be done always, and in all things, that are not contrary to a good conscience and to the Christian religion, and to the laws of God and nature. *Or that they may be well-pleased in all things*; that is, be satisfied and contented with such things as they have, and in their state and condition as servants, and cheerfully abide in the calling wherein they are called: *not answering again*; replying to their masters' orders, or complaints, either in a pert, or saucy, or grumbling manner; an evil very incident to servants, and which greatly provokes.

Ver. 10. *Not purloining, &c.*] Or stealing, embezzling their master's substance, taking away, and making use of what is their property, keeping back part of money or goods committed to their trust: the word is used in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 2. *but shewing all good fidelity*; approving themselves to be faithful servants in every thing they are intrusted with: *that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*; Christ is our alone Saviour, and he is truly and properly God, and so fit and able to be a Saviour; and the Gospel is his doctrine, not only what he himself preached, when on earth, but it is a doctrine concerning him; concerning his deity, and the dignity of his person, and concerning his office as Mediator, and the great salvation by him; and which are so many reasons why it should be adorned by a suitable life and conversation; for this is what becomes the Gospel of Christ, throws a beauty upon it, and is ornamental to it; and in this way the doctrine of Christ may be, and ought to be, adorned by servants, as well as others: to adorn the Gospel, is first to believe and receive it, then to profess it, and hold fast that profession, and walk worthy of it. Two of Stephens's copies read, *in, or among all men*.

Ver. 11. *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, &c.*] By which is meant, not the free love and favour of God, which lies in his own heart; for though that is productive of salvation, and is the source and spring of it, and what brings it forth, and is far from encouraging licentiousness, but instructs in real piety, and constrains to obedience to the will of God; yet this does not appear, nor has it been, nor is it made manifest unto all men, but is peculiar to the Lord's own people; nor does it design the grace of God wrought in the hearts of believers; for though salvation is strictly connected with it, and it powerfully influences the lives and conversations of such, who are partakers of it; yet it has not appeared to, nor in all men; all men have not faith, nor hope, nor love, nor any other graces of the spirit: but by the grace of God is intended the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of the grace of God; called so, because it is a declaration of the grace of God, and of salvation by it: and is the means, in the hand of the spirit, of conveying grace to the heart, and implanting it in it; in which sense the phrase is used in Acts xx. 24. 2 Cor. vi. 1. Heb. xii. 15. and this is called the Gospel of salvation, the word of salvation, and salvation itself, and so may be said to bring it; it brings and publishes the good news

of it; it shews unto men the way of salvation; it gives an account of the Saviour himself, that he is the great God, and so fit to be a Saviour; that he was appointed by God the father to be his salvation; that he was sent, and came to work out salvation; and that he is become the author of it; and that he is the only Saviour, and an able, willing, and complete one: it gives an account of the salvation itself; that it is the salvation of the soul; that it is a great one, and includes both grace and glory; that it is everlasting, and all of free grace; and it points out the persons who are interested in it, and shall enjoy it, even all those that are chosen to it, and are redeemed, reconciled, and justified by the blood of Christ, and are brought to believe in him: and the Gospel not only brings the news of all this to the ear, in the external ministrations of...; but it brings it to the heart, and is the power of God unto salvation, when it comes, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost; or when it comes under the powerful influences and application of the spirit of God. Some read this clause thus, *that bringeth salvation to all men*; to which agrees the Syriac version, which renders it, *כָּל מְדוּרָתָא*, *that quickeneth or saveth all*; and so the Arabic version: but then this cannot be understood of every individual person; for the Gospel has not brought salvation to every one in any sense, not even in the external ministry of it; there have been multitudes who have never so much as heard the outward sound of salvation by Jesus Christ, and fewer still who have had an application of it to their souls by the spirit of God; to many to whom it has come, it has been an hidden Gospel, and the savour of death unto death: it follows indeed, *hath appeared to all men*; which supposes it to have been hid, as it was, in the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God; and in Jesus Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; and in the covenant of grace, of which the Gospel is a transcript; and in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law: it was in some measure hid from angels, who desire to look into it, and from the Old-Testament saints, to whom it was not known as it is now, by the apostles and prophets; and it was entirely hid from the Gentiles, the times of whose ignorance God overlooked: and it suggests, that it now appeared or shone out more clearly, and more largely. The Gospel had been like a candle lighted up in one part of the world, only in Judea, but now it shone out like the sun in its meridian glory, and appeared to all men; not to every individual person; it has neither shined upon, nor in every one: it did not in the apostle's time, when it appeared the most illustrious, and shone out the most extensively, as well as the most clearly; nor has it in ages since, nor does it in ours; there are multitudes who know nothing of it, and are neither under its form nor power: but this is to be understood of all sorts of men, of every nation, of every age and sex, of every state and condition, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, masters and servants; which sense well agrees with the context, ver. 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10. and the words are a reason why the apostle would have duty urged on all sorts of persons, because the Gospel was now preached to all; and it had reached the hearts of all sorts of men; particularly the Gentiles may be intended, from whom the Gospel was before hid, and

who sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death; but now the great light shined upon them, and the Gospel was no more confined to one people only, but was preached to every creature under heaven, or to the whole creation; namely, to the Gentiles, pursuant to the commission in Mark xvi. 15.

Ver. 12. *Teaching us, &c.*] Not all men, to whom the Gospel appears in its outward ministry; for there are many who externally receive the Gospel, and profess it, who are never influentially taught by it to deny sin, or love holiness of life; they profess in words to know it, but in works deny it; they have a form of godliness, but deny its power: but the persons effectually taught by the Gospel are the *us*, to whom it was come, not in word only, but in power; and so taught them, not only doctrinally, but with efficacy, both negative and positive holiness, as follows: *that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*; all impiety, or sin more immediately against God; or which is a violation of the first table of the law, as idolatry, will-worship, superstition, perjury, and the like; and all sinful lusts, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; which fill the world, and are reigning lusts in it, and which are common to the men of the world; and they are under the power of: *to deny* these, is to abhor and detest them, and to abstain from them, and have nothing to do with them: and this lesson of self-denial, or of the denial of sinful self, the Gospel teaches, and urges upon the most powerful motives and arguments; and when attended by the spirit of God, does it effectually: so that *we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*: not only temperately, but wisely and prudently, as children of the light, on whom, and into whom the Gospel has shined; and *righteously* among men, giving to every man his due, and dealing with all according to the rules of equity and justice; as being made new men, created unto righteousness, and true holiness; and as being dead to sin, through the death of Christ, and so living unto righteousness, or in a righteous manner; and as being justified by the righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel: and *godly*; in a godly manner, according to the word of God, and agreeably to the will of God; and in all godly exercises, both public and private, and to the glory of God: and that as long as *in this present world*; which lies in wickedness, and in which there are so many strong temptations to a contrary way of living. The Gospel then is no licentious doctrine; it is according to godliness, and teaches and promotes it; it is an holy faith, yea, a most holy faith; wherefore it is a vile slander to charge it with leading to looseness of life and conversation.

Ver. 13. *Looking for that blessed hope, &c.*] Not the grace of hope; though that being a good hope through grace, and a hope of blessedness, may be called a blessed hope; yet this the saints have already implanted in their hearts in regeneration, and can't be said to look for it: rather Christ, the object and ground of hope, who is our hope, and Christ in us the hope of glory, who is blessed for evermore; and in the enjoyment of whom the happiness of the saints hereafter will greatly consist; and whom they look for, and expect from heaven, and who is expressly mentioned in the next clause: but as this may be something distinct

from that, it may be best, by this blessed hope, to understand the thing hoped for, eternal glory and happiness; called elsewhere the hope of righteousness, and the hope laid up in heaven, Gal. v. 5. Col. i. 5. and which will lie in the beatific vision of God and Christ; in a perfect knowledge of them, in communion with them, and conformity to them; and in the society of angels and glorified saints; and in a freedom from all evil, outward and inward, and in the possession of all good: and to be looking for this, is to be desiring it with the heart and affections set upon it, longing to be in the enjoyment of it, and yet waiting patiently in the exercise of faith and hope; for looking includes all the three graces, faith, hope, and love; and particularly the former, which is always attended with the latter; for it is such a looking for this blessedness, as that a man firmly believes he shall partake of it: and there is good reason for a regenerate man so to look for it; since it is his father's gift of free grace, and is laid up for him; Christ is gone to prepare it by his presence, mediation, and intercession; yea, he is gone, as the forerunner, to take possession of it in his name: this man is begotten again to a lively hope of it; he is called by the grace of God unto it; he is a child of God, and so an heir of it; he has a right unto it, through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and has a meetness for it through the sanctifying grace of the spirit; and who is in him as the earnest and pledge of it: now such a firm expectation of the heavenly glory does the Gospel, the doctrine of the grace of God, teach, direct, and encourage to; for these words must be read in connexion with the preceding, as a further instruction of the Gospel, as well as what follows: *and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; not two divine persons, only one, are here intended; for the word rendered *appearing*, is never used of God the father, only of the second person; and the prepositive article is not set before the word *Saviour*, as it would, if two distinct persons were designed; and the copulative *and* is exegetical, and may be rendered thus, *and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ*; who, in the next verse, is said to give himself for the redemption of his people: so that here is a very illustrious proof of the true and proper deity of Christ, who will appear at his second coming, for of that appearance are the words to be understood, as the great God, in all the glories and perfections of his divine nature; as well as a Saviour, which is mentioned to shew that he will appear to the salvation of his people, which he will then put them in the full possession of; and that the brightness of his divine Majesty will not make them afraid: and this appearance will be a glorious one; for Christ will come in his own glory, in the glory of his deity, particularly his omniscience and omnipotence will be very conspicuous; and in his glory as Mediator, which will be beheld by all the saints; and in his glory as a Judge, invested with power and authority from his father, which will be terrible to sinners; and in the glory of his human nature, with which it is now crowned; and in his father's glory, in the same he had with him before the world was, and which is the same with his, and in that which he'll receive from him as man and Mediator, and as the Judge of the whole earth; and

in the glory of his holy angels, being attended with all his mighty ones: to which may be added, that saints will be raised from the dead, and with the living ones appear with Christ in glory, and make up the bride, the Lamb's wife, having the glory of God upon her; so that this will be a grand appearance indeed. Now this the Gospel directs, and instructs believers to look for, to love, to hasten to, most earnestly desire, and yet patiently wait for, most firmly believing that it will be: and this the saints have reason to look for, with longing desire and affection, and with pleasure, since it will be not only glorious in itself, but advantageous to them; they'll then be glorified with Christ, and be for ever with him.

Ver. 14. *Who gave himself for us, &c.*] Not another, or another's, but himself; not merely his own things, but his own self; not the world, and the riches of it, not gold and silver, and such-like corruptible things, as the price of redemption; not the cattle on a thousand hills for sacrifice; not men nor angels, but himself; all that belong to him, all that is near and dear, his name, fame, credit, and reputation; his time, strength, and service: all the comforts of life, and life itself; his whole manhood, soul, and body, and that as in union with his divine person; which he gave into the hands of men, and of justice, and to death itself, to be a ransom-price of his people, and for a propitiation and sacrifice for their sins, to be paid and offered in their room and stead: not for all mankind, but for many; for us, for all the elect of God, for the church; and who are represented when he gave himself, or died for them, as ungodly, sinners, and enemies: this was a free and voluntary gift, and is an unspeakable one; who can say all that is contained in this word *himself*? it is an instance of the greatest love, of love that passeth knowledge; God, because he could swear by no greater, swore by himself; and Christ, because he could give no greater gift, nor any greater instance of his love, gave himself, for the following ends and purposes: *that he might redeem us from all iniquity*: sin brings into bondage and slavery, redemption is a deliverance from it; sin binds guilt upon the sinner, and lays him under obligation to punishment, and renders him liable to the curse and condemnation of the law; Christ was made sin, and a curse for his people, that he might redeem them from both, and deliver them from the punishment due to sin; which he has done by bearing it in his own body on the tree, whereby he has redeemed them from all iniquity, that so if shall not be their ruin, or they come into condemnation on account of it; even from original sin, and from all actual transgressions; from all which his blood cleanses, and his righteousness justifies, and which God, for his sake, freely and fully forgives. Christ was called to this work by his father, to which he agreed; and the plan of redemption being drawn in the everlasting council, and the whole adjusted and fixed in the covenant of peace; promises and prophecies were given out of it, and in the fulness of time Christ was sent, and came to effect it; and he has obtained eternal redemption for us, through the price of his own blood, which could have never been wrought out by any creature; and wherein all the divine perfections are glorified; and is a plea-

teous and complete one; it includes in it, or connects with it, the blessings of justification, peace, pardon, adoption, and eternal life. It follows as another end of Christ's giving himself, or what is a branch of redemption, or consequent upon it, *and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; all mankind are filthy and unclean by nature, in all the powers and faculties of their souls; nor can they cleanse themselves from their impurity of flesh and spirit, by any thing that they can do: Christ has a peculiar people among these, a church whom he loves, and for whom he has given himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse them from their sins; which he has done by shedding his blood for them, and washing them in it, which cleanses from all sin, and he has purified them unto himself, for his own use and service, for his pleasure and delight, and to his glory; that they might be a proper habitation for him now; and that they might be made ready for him, to have the marriage between him and them consummated; and that they might be presented to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, and be with him, both in the new Jerusalem state, into which nothing that defiles, or is defiled, enters, and in heaven, to all eternity. Now these people, for whom Christ has given himself, and whom he has redeemed and purities, are a *peculiar people*; for whom Christ has a peculiar love, in whom he takes a peculiar delight, and to whom he grants peculiar nearness to himself, and bestows peculiar blessings on them, and makes peculiar provisions for them, both for time and eternity; these are Christ's own, his possession, his substance, what he has a special right to by his father's gift, his own purchase, and the conquest of his grace; and they are a distinct and separate people from all others, in election, redemption, effectual vocation, and in Christ's intercession, and will be in the resurrection-morn, at the day of judgment, and to all eternity; and they are, as the word also signifies, an excellent and valuable people; they are Christ's portion and inheritance; they are his peculiar treasure, his jewels, whom, as such, he values and takes care of. The Syriac version renders it, *a new people*. And they who are redeemed and purified

by Christ, through the power of his grace upon them, become a people *zealous of good works*; not in order to their justification and salvation, but in obedience to the will of God, and to testify their subjection and gratitude to him, and for his honour and glory, and for the credit of religion, and the good of men, These not only perform them, but perform them from principles of truth and love, and with a zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his Gospel; and with an holy emulation of one another, striving to go before, and excel each other in the performance of them.

Ver. 15. *These things speak and exhort, &c.*] Sound doctrine, the doctrine of grace, the doctrines of salvation and redemption by Christ, of peace, pardon, and cleansing by his blood; these speak out clearly, plainly, publicly, boldly, and faithfully: and the things which become sound doctrine; the duties of religion suitable to every age and sex, a denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, a sober, righteous, and godly life and conversation, exhort unto; and encourage the saints to be zealous of good works, and comfort them with the expectation of the blessed hope, and glorious appearance of Christ. *And rebuke with all authority*; such as imbibe errors and heresies, or indulge to vice and wickedness, with the authority both of Christ and his church, in the name of the one, and by the order and vote of the other, that the reproof may come with the greater weight; and in a grave and solemn manner, suitable to the dignity of the ministerial office and character, and with that sharpness and severity the offence requires. *Let no man despise thee*; as negligent in the discharge of his office, or as doing it in a pusillanimous manner, or as behaving in his life and conversation unworthy of the character he bore, and so is a direction to himself; or else it may be considered as designed for the churches in Crete, and the professors of religion, and to be an instruction to them to value Titus, and treat him with respect, and not with contempt; which shews that this epistle was not written for Titus only, or for his own use, but for the service of others. The Ethiopic version reads, *let no man deceive thee*.

CH A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle exhorts Titus to press various duties incumbent on Christians, with arguments engaging to them; gives him some directions about dealing with heretics, and some instructions about private matters, and particular persons, and closes it with salutations. And first, he charges him to put his hearers in mind of their duty, to be subject to civil magistrates, and readily perform whatever is right and proper for them to do; and to abstain from blaspheming and brawling, and to exercise gentleness and meekness to all men, ver. 1, 2. The arguments inducing thereunto are taken partly from their former state and condition, whilst unregenerate, when they were as ignorant and as wicked as other men, they are exhorted to behave well to; and partly from the consideration of the salvation they were now partakers of,

ver. 3, 4. which leads on the apostle to give an account of its causes and means: the moving cause of it is the love and mercy of God; the way and means in which it is brought about, are not works of righteousness done by men, but the regenerating and renewing grace of the spirit, which is plentifully bestowed through Jesus Christ the Saviour, and justification by the free grace of God, by virtue of which men become heirs unto, and have an hope of eternal life, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. which several blessings of grace should be constantly insisted on in the ministry of the word, in order to engage believers carefully to perform good works; and because such doctrines are good in themselves, and profitable to men; whereas questions, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law, are foolish, vain, and unprofitable, and to be avoided, ver. 8, 9. where-

for an heretical man should be rejected from all Christian conversation and communion, after he has been admonished at least twice, seeing he is off of the foundation, has sinned, and is self-condemned, ver. 10, 11. Next the apostle desires Titus to meet him at Nicopolis, where his design was to pass the winter, upon sending two ministering brethren to Crete, who are mentioned by name, ver. 12. and that he would accommodate two others, who are also named, with every thing convenient for their journey, ver. 13. and charges him to exhort the brethren under his care to learn to be diligent and industrious in the performance of good works, which have their necessary uses, and prevent unfruitfulness, ver. 13, 14. And the epistle is concluded with salutations, and the apostle's usual benediction, ver. 15.

Ver. 1. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, &c.*] Not angels, good or bad, which are sometimes so called, but men in high places; the higher powers ordained of God, as the apostle elsewhere calls them; and which the Apostle Peter distinguishes into the king as supreme, and into governors under him: the Roman emperor and senate, the consuls, and proconsuls, deputies and governors of provinces and islands, are here meant; particularly such who were appointed over the island of Crete. Now the reasons why the apostle exhorts Titus to put in remembrance those that were under his care, to yield a cheerful subjection to their superiors, were, because the Jews, from whom the Christians were not distinguished by the Romans, were reckoned a turbulent and seditious people; which character they obtained, partly through the principles of the Scribes and Pharisees, which they at least privately entertained, as not to give tribute to Cæsar, or be under any Heathen yoke; and partly through the insurrections that had been made by Judas of Galilee, and Theudas, and others; and besides, there were many Jews in the island of Crete, and the Cretians themselves were prone to mutiny and rebellion: to which may be added, that the false teachers, and judaizing preachers, that had got among them, despised dominion, and were not afraid to speak evil of dignities, according to the characters which both Peter and Jude give of them, and taught the saints to abuse their Christian liberty, and use it for a cloak of maliciousness, to the great scandal of the Christian religion. *To obey magistrates*; inferior ones; in all things that are according to the laws of God, and right reason, that do not contradict what God has commanded, or break in upon the rights and dictates of conscience; in all things of a civil nature, and which are for the good of society, and do not affect religion, and the worship of God: hence it follows, *to be ready to every good work*; which may be taken in a limited and restrained sense, and design every good work enjoined by the civil magistrate; and all right and lawful obedience that belongs to him, as giving to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, tribute, custom, fear, and honour to whom they are due; and which should be done readily and cheerfully: or it may be understood more comprehensively of good works in general, which wicked men are reprobate to, and unfit for; and which they that are sanctified are meet for, and ready to;

though this may not only intend their capacity, fitness, and qualifications, for the performance of good works, but their alacrity, promptitude, and forwardness unto them.

Ver. 2. *To speak evil of no man, &c.*] As not of one another, so not of the men of the world, to the prejudice of their names and characters, which are tender things, and ought to be gently touched; nor of magistrates, principalities, and powers, of persons in dignity and authority, which the false teachers were not afraid to speak evil of, and by their principles and practices taught others to do the same: *to be no brawlers*; or *fighters*, either by blows or words; not litigious and quarrelsome, wrangling and striving about things to no profit, and to the detriment and disturbance of civil government, churches, neighbourhood, and families; which is very unbecoming the followers of Jesus, who strove not, nor cried, nor was his voice heard in the streets. But *gentle, shewing all meekness to all men*; yielding and giving way, rather choosing to suffer wrong than to brawl, contend, and litigate a point; taking the advice of Christ in Matt. v. 39, 40, 41. carrying it in a meek and humble manner to men of all ranks and degrees, whether superior or inferior, rich or poor, bond or free, Jews or Gentiles, members of the church, or men of the world.

Ver. 3. *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, &c.*] Nothing has a greater tendency to promote humility, and check pride in the saints, than to reflect upon their past state and condition, what they themselves once were; and this is a reason why magistrates, though evil men, should be obeyed in things good and lawful, and why no man should be spoken evil of, and why every man should be treated in a gentle manner, and used with mildness and meekness; since the apostle himself, and Titus, and other saints, whom he designed this as an instruction for, were formerly, in their unregenerate state, just such persons themselves; and therefore should not glory over them, and treat them in a contemptuous manner: and besides, the same grace that had made a difference in them, could make one in these also, and which might be made in God's own time: and particularly, whereas they observed great ignorance in these men, they should consider that they also had been *foolish*, and without understanding of things, divine and spiritual, and neither knew their own state and condition, nor the way of salvation by Christ; yea, the apostle himself, though he had a zeal for God, yet not according to knowledge; he did not know lust, nor the exceeding sinfulness of sin, until he was enlightened by the spirit of God; he was ignorant of the righteousness of God, and went about to establish his own, which he imagined to be blameless; and thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus: *disobedient*; both to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; disbelieving the truths of the Gospel, and unsubjected to the ordinances of it, notwithstanding the evidence with which they came, and the miracles by which they were confirmed. *Deceived*; by the old serpent Satan, who deceives the whole world; and by an evil heart of unbelief, as well as by false teachers and leaders; and so, as the word signifies, were wandering about in darkness and ignorance, and were as sheep going astray, until they were

returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. *Serving divers lusts and pleasures*; the lusts of the flesh are many and various, which promise pleasure to them that obey them, though that is but imaginary, and very short-lived, and which subjects persons to bondage and slavery; for such who indulge to these things, are overcome by them, led captive, and brought into bondage, and are the servants of sin, vassals and slaves to their own corruptions; and such these saints had been, here spoken of: *living in malice and envy*; they had not only malice and envy in their hearts against their fellow-creatures, but practised it in their lives; yea, their lives were a continued series of malice and envy; particularly this was true of the apostle, who haled men and women out of their houses, and committed them to prison; breathed out slaughter and threatenings against the saints; was exceeding mad against them, persecuted them to strange cities, and compelled them to blaspheme, and gave his vote for punishing them with death. *Hateful, and hating one another*; abominable in the sight of God, as considered in themselves, and on account of their nature and practices; and to be abhorred by all good men; and who, by their continual feuds, quarrels, and animosities among themselves, shewed an hatred, an abhorrence of one another.

Ver. 4. *But after that, &c.*] After all this series and course of wickedness; notwithstanding all this foolishness, disobedience, deception, bondage to sin, envy, malice, and malignity; or when all this was, as the word may be rendered, amidst all this iniquity; when these persons were in the full career of sin, and so had done no preparatory works, or had any previous qualifications and dispositions for the grace of God: *the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared*; unto them; and the Ethiopic version adds, *unto us*. The apostle takes the advantage of the above character of himself, and others in their former state, to set off and magnify the grace of God in their conversion; so contraries, as black and white, illustrate each other. By *God our Saviour* is not meant the Lord Jesus Christ, though he is commonly designed by our Saviour, and is several times called God our Saviour in this epistle; see ch. i. 3. and ii. 10, 13. and who is truly God, and the only Saviour of lost sinners; and whose kindness and love towards them has appeared in many instances; as in his suretyship-undertakings for them, in his assumption of their nature, and in his suffering and dying in their room and stead: and yet it appears from ver. 6. that God our Saviour here, is distinguished from Jesus Christ our Saviour there; and therefore here must be understood of God the father; who contrived the scheme of salvation, appointed Christ to be his salvation, and made a covenant with him, in which it it secured, and sent him in time to obtain it, and through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, saves all his people: it is his kindness and love to men that is here spoken of; and which designs not his general and providential goodness and kindness, which extends to the whole human nature, and to all the individuals of it; but his special love and grace shewn in his kindness in Christ Jesus; that

good will to men the angels sung of at Christ's incarnation; or that free favour and love of God towards elect men, which is sovereign and special, from everlasting to everlasting, unchangeable and unspeakable, which is better than life; the excellency of which cannot be expressed, and which has shewn itself in various instances: it is said to have *appeared*; because it was hid from all eternity in the heart of God, in the thoughts of his heart, in his purposes, counsel, and covenant, and has been made manifest in time; particularly, it has broke forth and shewed itself in the mission of Christ into this world, and in redemption and salvation by him; wherein God has manifested and commended his love, and shewn forth the exceeding riches of his grace; and also in effectual vocation, which being a time of life, is a time of love, and is owing to the great love of God, and is a fruit and evidence of his everlasting and unchangeable love; and it is this instance and appearance of it, which is here meant, since it follows the account of the state and condition of the saints by nature; and is what was made to them when in this state, by which means they were brought out of it.

Ver. 5. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, &c.*] The great instance of the kindness and love of God our Saviour is salvation; which the apostle denies that it is brought about by any works, even the best works of men; for *works of righteousness* are works done according to a righteous law, and in obedience to it; and in a righteous manner, from right principles of grace, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; or otherwise they are not righteous actions, or works of righteousness; wherefore not works before, but after conversion, are here meant; for works before conversion are not properly works of righteousness: besides, these are such which we have done, who formerly were as before described, but now are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Now salvation, neither in whole, nor in part, is by these, either as causes, conditions, or means; see the note on 2 Tim. i. 9. *מעשים צדיקה*, *works of righteousness*, is a Jewish phrase used for righteous or good works²: but according to *his mercy he saved us*; the mercy of God is natural and essential to him, but the acting and exercise of it, towards this or the other objects, are sovereign and free, and according to his will; the effects of it are many, he is rich and abundant in it; and they are channelled in, and flow forth through the blood and righteousness of Christ; and this is the moving cause of salvation: this moved God to make a covenant with his son, the blessings of which are the sure mercies of David, and in which God is merciful to the sins and unrighteousnesses of his people; it is owing to the tender mercy of God, that Christ, the day-spring from on high, has visited the earth; and the glory of it is very conspicuous in the affair of redemption by him; the pardon of sin is according to the multitude of God's tender mercies; and regeneration springs from the abundance of it; and even eternal life is the effect of it. Now according to this, God has *saved* his people; salvation is not only a thing determined, and resolved

² Seder Tephilot, Ed. Amsterdam, fol. 46. 2.

on in the mind of God, but is actually and completely accomplished by Jesus Christ, and an application of it is made to the saints in effectual calling; and because of the certain enjoyment of the whole of it, even eternal glory, the saints are said to be saved already; as they are also in faith and hope, as well as in Christ, their head and representative; see the note on Eph. ii. 8. It follows, as the means of salvation, *by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*: by the former is meant, not the ordinance of water-baptism; for that is never expressed by washing, nor is it the cause or means of regeneration; the cause being the spirit of God, and the means the word of God: and besides, persons ought to be regenerated before they are baptized; and they may be baptized, and yet not regenerated, as Simon Magus; nor is it a saving ordinance, or a point of salvation; nor can it be opposed to works of righteousness, as this washing is; for that itself is a work of righteousness; see Matt. iii. 15. and if persons were saved by that, they would be saved by a work of righteousness, contrary to the text itself: but regenerating grace is meant, or a being born of water, and of the spirit; that is, of the grace of the spirit, comparable to water for its purity and cleansing virtue: hence such who are regenerated and sanctified, are said to be washed and cleansed, having their hearts purified by faith, and their consciences purged from sin by the blood of Christ: by the latter, *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, is meant either the fruit and effect of the former, even newness of life and conversation, under the influence of the Holy Spirit; or else the gradual increase and progress of the work of grace upon the soul, renewed day by day in the spirit of the mind, by the Holy Ghost; or rather it means the same thing with regeneration, and is added partly as explanative of the washing of regeneration, shewing that that is no other than the new creature, the new man, the new heart, and new spirit, formed in the soul, in effectual vocation; and partly to observe that the Holy Ghost is the author of it. Now it is in this way God saves his people, namely, by regenerating and renewing them; in this is the first appearance and discovery of the love of God to them; this is their open passage into a state of grace, and without this there is no entrance into glory; this is the foundation of all grace and good works, and by which saints appear to be heirs of the heavenly inheritance.

Ver. 6. *Which he shed on us abundantly, &c.*] Or richly: either which love he shed abroad in the hearts of those whom he regenerated and renewed by his spirit; or which water of regeneration, that is, grace, comparable to water, he plentifully shed, and caused to abound where sin had done; or rather *whom*, or which Holy Spirit, with his gifts and graces, such as faith, hope, and love, and every other, he poured forth in great abundance on them; see Isa. xiv. 3. 1 Tim. i. 14. *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*; the love and kindness of God the father our Saviour, comes through him; the mercy of God streams through him; the salvation itself is by, and through him; the grace communicated in regeneration and renovation is out of his fulness; the spirit himself is given forth from him; and every supply of grace, by which the work is carried on, comes out of his hands; and every thing

wrought in us, that is well-pleasing in the sight of God, is through him; and even the gift of God, eternal life itself.

Ver. 7. *That being justified by his grace, &c.*] This is another way and means, as well as regeneration, by which God saves his people; for he saves no unjustified ones; no unrighteous persons shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; such as are without the wedding-garment, and robe of Christ's righteousness, shall be cast into outer darkness: whom God saves, he justifies by the righteousness of his son; and whomsoever he justifies, them he saves. The justification here spoken of is a declarative one, which takes place in regeneration; and which that is in order to, as here expressed, *that being justified*: regeneration does not justify any, but makes the justified to appear to be such; justification is an act of God's gracious will conceived in his mind from eternity, by which he wills not to impute sin to his people, but to Christ their surety; and that they should be accounted righteous through the righteousness of his son; in which act of his will the whole essence of justification in his sight lies: this was pronounced on Christ, as their head and representative at his resurrection, when he, as such, was justified, acquitted, and discharged, and they in him; and this is declared in the conscience of a sinner, by the spirit of God, at his regeneration, when he passes from death to life; and this declaration is here intended, and which is the same with justification by faith; and is here said to be by the grace of God, as justification in every view is, and stands opposed to works of righteousness done by men, by which no man can be justified in the sight of God; in what sense justification is by the free grace of God, see the note on Rom. iii. 24. *We should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life; or according to hope we should be made heirs of eternal life.* Eternal life is an inheritance, and so is not acquired by labour and industry, nor purchased, but is a free gift; it is a bequest of God the father to his children, of his own free good will and pleasure; and it belongs only to children; they only are heirs, and they become such by adopting grace; neither regeneration, nor justification, make them the children of God, and heirs of the grace of life, but make them appear to be so: God, by his gracious act of adoption, puts them among the children, and gives them the goodly heritage; and this adoption lies in eternal predestination in Christ, in whom the inheritance is obtained on that account, Eph. i. 5, 11. Regeneration shews them to be the adopted ones, and gives them the nature of children, and a meetness for the inheritance; and justification gives them a right unto it, upon the foot of justice, and opens a way for their enjoyment of it, consistent with the justice and holiness of God; see Gal. iv. 4, 5. wherefore such as are washed with the washing of regeneration, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and justified by the grace of God; these are manifestly heirs of eternal life, of salvation, of a kingdom and glory, of all things, even of God himself, who is their portion, and exceeding great reward; and such in regeneration are begotten to a lively hope of it, and by this they are saved, Rom. viii. 24. And thus the apostle makes regeneration by the free mercy of God, and justification by his grace,

and special adoption, and heirship, with a good hope through grace, the way and means in which God saves his people, who were like others by nature, and brings them to the enjoyment of eternal happiness.

Ver. 8. This is a *faithful saying*, &c.] Meaning the whole of what is before expressed, concerning the state and condition of God's elect by nature; the appearance of the love and kindness of God to them in effectual vocation; the salvation of them, according to the mercy of God, and not by works of righteousness; regeneration, and renovation by the spirit of God, in which such an abundance of grace is communicated; and justification by the free grace of God, as God's way of salvation; and by which men are made to appear to be heirs of eternal life, and to have hope of it: now all, and each of this is a faithful saying, is true doctrine, and to be believed, professed, and published: wherefore it follows, *and these things I will that thou affirm constantly*; that is, the above doctrines; the Arabic version renders it, *I will that thou be firm in these things*; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, *I will that thou confirmest them*: the sense of the apostle is, that he would have Titus be assured of those truths himself; be at a point about them, and without any doubt or hesitation concerning them; and abide firm and constant in them, and speak of them with certainty, boldness, and confidence to others; and endeavour to confirm and establish them in them: for which purpose he would have them be frequently inculcated and insisted on; and that with this further view, *that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works*; for *wa, that*, does not design the subject-matter of the charge, or what the apostle would have constantly affirmed, but the end, and final event and issue of it; and nothing can more strongly engage to a studious concern for the performance of good works than the frequent insisting upon the above doctrines of grace: by *good works*, are meant, not merely honest trades, and the lawful occupations and businesses of life, which should be carefully attended to, and diligently followed, in order to be useful and profitable to themselves, their families, and others; but every good work, every branch of duty, moral, civil, and religious: to *maintain* these according to the signification of the word used, is to excel in them; to outdo others; to go before others, by way of example, and so to provoke to love and to good works; and to make them the employment and business of men's lives; for which there should be a thoughtfulness, a carefulness, a studious concern, especially in those who *have believed in God*; who are regenerated and renewed by the spirit of God, and are justified by faith in the righteousness of Christ; who believe in him for peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation: these are under great obligations to perform good works; the love of Christ should constrain them to them; and they are the only persons that are capable of doing them well, for they are sanctified, and made meet, and ready for every good work; they are created in Christ Jesus to them; they have the spirit of Christ in them, and the strength of Christ with them, without which they can't be performed well; and they have faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God. *These things are good and*

profitable unto men; which is to be understood not of good works, though these are good in themselves, and profitable to men in their effects; being done among them, and before them, they set them an example of doing good likewise, when evil communications corrupt good manners; and many of them issue in their temporal good, profit, and advantage: but rather the doctrines of the Gospel are here designed, which are before briefly treated of, and are said to be a faithful saying; and which the apostle would have affirmed with certainty and constancy, in order to engage believers to the performance of good works; and that for this reason, because these doctrines are *good, excellent, valuable, and precious, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones*: the author, matter, end, and use of them are good; they come from God; they are concerning Jesus Christ, and his grace; they contain good tidings of good things; and are exceeding useful to influence faith, hope, love, and a cheerful obedience to the will of God: they are *profitable* in the hands of the spirit of God for conviction, conversion, comfort, and edification; for the quickening and enlightening of dead and dark sinners; for the reviving, establishing, and building up of the saints; they are the wholesome words of Christ, and are according to godliness, and are nourishing, when other doctrines eat as a canker: and this sense is confirmed, not only by what goes before, but by what follows after in the next verse; where insipid notions and controversies are opposed unto them, as unprofitable and vain.

Ver. 9. *But avoid foolish questions, &c.*] Such as were started in the schools of the Jews; see 2 Tim. ii. 23. *and genealogies*; of their elders, Rabbins, and doctors, by whom their traditions are handed down from one to another, in fixing which they greatly laboured; see 1 Tim. i. 4. *and contentions and strivings about the law*; the rites and ceremonies of it, and about the sense of it, and its various precepts, as litigated in the schools of Hillel and Shammai, the one giving it one way, and the other another; and what one declared to be free according to the law, the other declared forbidden; which occasioned great contentions and quarrels between the followers of the one, and of the other, as both the Misna and Talmud shew: and agreeably to this sense, the Syriac version renders it, *the contentions and strifes of the scribes*; the Jewish doctors, who were some on the side of Hillel, and others on the side of Shammai; as well as went into parties and strifes among themselves, and oftentimes about mere trifles; things of no manner of importance; wherefore it follows, *for they are unprofitable and vain*; empty things, of no manner of use, to inform the judgment, improve the mind, or influence the life and conversation.

Ver. 10. *A man that is an heretic, &c.*] An heretic, according to the notation of the word, is either one that makes choice of an opinion upon his own judgment, contrary to the generally received sense of the churches of Christ, and prefers it to theirs, and obstinately persists in it; separates from them, forms a party, and sets himself at the head of them, whom he has drawn into the same way of thinking with himself: or he is one that removes and takes away a fundamental doctrine of Christianity, which affects par-

ticularly the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity, and personality of Father, Son, and Spirit, and especially the doctrines relating to the person, office, and grace of Christ; one that brings in, or receives damnable doctrines; speaks or professes perverse things, and draws away disciples after him; or is among such disciples: for though schism and heresy do differ, and every schismatic may not be an heretic, yet every heretic is a schismatic; he makes a rent in the doctrine of Christ, and makes parties and divisions in his church; and such are not always to be contended and disputed with, but to be avoided and rejected: *after the first and second admonition reject*: have nothing to do with him; have no society with him; admit him not to private conversation; and eject him from church-communion, after he has been publicly admonished twice by the order of the church; for this is not to be understood of private admonition, by a particular person or persons; as in the case of private offences, Matt. xviii. 15, 16. but of public admonition, in the name of the church. An admonition with the Jews did not continue less than seven days^a; some say^b thirty; that is, there were so many days before it was out, or between one and another.

Ver. 11. *Knowing that he that is such is subverted, &c.*] Or overturned and demolished; he is like an edifice, that is not only decaying, and falling, but is entirely everted, and pulled down; so that there is no hopes of a restoration or recovery; he is in a desperate condition, having opposed the person, or office, or sacrifice of Christ; having either trodden the son of God under foot, or counted his blood common, or done despite unto the spirit of grace; in either of which cases there is no more sacrifice for sin: *and sinneth*; not practically, but doctrinally, and wilfully after he has received the knowledge of the truth; by denying the truth he received, in which he continues, notwithstanding the evidence of the word of God is against him; and notwithstanding the arguments taken from it by the ministers of the Gospel, to convince him; and notwithstanding the admonitions of the church to recover him out of the snare of the devil: *being condemned of himself*; not that an heretic is one that is convinced in his own conscience that he is in an error, and that that is a truth which he opposes; and yet he obstinately persists in the one, and continues to set himself against the other; for then, none but an hypocrite, that conceals his true sentiment, can be an heretic; nor can any man be known to be one unless he accuses himself; since no man can know the heart of another; and it would be impracticable in a church to deal with heretics, or reject and excommunicate them: but either the meaning is, that he is such an one, who by his own practice has condemned himself; for whereas he has separated himself not only from the faith of the church, but from the church itself; by so doing he practically condemns himself, or judges himself unworthy of the communion of the church, and so justifies the church in their rejection and exclusion of him: or rather, an heretic is one who having professed Christianity, and received the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, and still professes to

abide by the same, and that all doctrine is to be tried by them, and to be approved or condemned as that agrees or disagrees with them, stands condemned by those Scriptures, which he himself allows to be the rule of decision and determination; and so may be said to be self-condemned.

Ver. 12. *When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, &c.*] These were both of them ministers of the Gospel; there is no mention of Artemas anywhere else; some say he was one of the seventy disciples, and that he was afterwards bishop of Lystra; but these are uncertain things; see the note on Luke x. i. the name is a contraction of Artemidorus. Tychicus is often spoken of; and a very great character is given of him by the apostle, in Eph. vi. 21. *be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis*; which was a city, not in Epirus, but in Thrace, situated by the river Nessus, and had its name from a victory obtained there: hither the apostle would have Titus come to him, after one or other of the above ministers were come to Crete; for as the apostle had the care of all the churches upon him, he would not remove a minister from one place to another, without making a provision in their room: his reasons for having Titus come to him, might be either to know the state of the churches in Crete; or because he stood in need of his assistance; or to send him elsewhere: *for I have determined there to winter*; that is, to continue there all the winter; not without labour, but to preach the Gospel, and administer the ordinances to the saints there: and whereas he says *there*; this shews that this epistle was not written from thence, as the subscription asserts; for then he would have said *here*, and not *there*.

Ver. 13. *Bring Zenas the lawyer, &c.*] Whether he was brought up to the civil law, either among the Greeks or Romans, is not certain; it may be he was a Jewish lawyer, or scribe, an interpreter of Moses's law among the Jews; for with them a lawyer and a scribe were one and the same, as appears from Matt. xxii. 35. compared with Mark xii. 28. and the Syriac version here calls him a *scribe*, and the Ethiopic version a *scribe of the city*; which looks as if it was a civil office he bore; but however, be he what he will, he seems to have been now a preacher of the Gospel, being joined with Apollos, who certainly was one: he is said to have been one of the seventy disciples of Christ, and afterwards bishop of Diospolis; see the note on Luke x. 1. his name is the contraction of Zenodorus: him the apostle would have Titus bring, and Apollos, on their journey diligently; who was a Jew born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; who had preached at Corinth, but was now at Crete; and whom the apostle, with Zenas, would have provided with every thing necessary for their journey: *that nothing be wanting unto them*: which might be proper for them in their travels, to make them comfortable, and their journey pleasant and easy.

Ver. 14. *And let ours also learn to maintain good works, &c.*] By which are not only meant honest trades, as some choose to render the words: it is true, that a trade is a work; and an honest lawful employ-

^a T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1.

^b Beresbit Rabba, sect. 33. fol. 98. 2.
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ment of life is a good work; and which ought to be maintained, attended to, and followed, and to be learnt, in order to be followed. The Jews say, that he that does not learn his son a trade, it is all one as if he taught him to rob or steal; hence their doctors were brought up to trades; see the note on Mark vi. 3. as was the Apostle Paul, though he had an education under Gamaliel: and such an one is to be learned and maintained for necessary uses, for the good of a man's self, and for the supply of his family; for the assistance of others that are in need; for the support of the Gospel, and the interest of Christ; and for the relief of poor saints; that such may not be unfruitful and useless, in commonwealths, neighbourhoods, churches, and families. The Jews say^c, "there are four things which a man should constantly attend to with all his might, and they are these; the law, *good works*, prayer, דרך ארץ, and *the way of the earth, or business*; if a tradesman, to his trade; if a merchant, to his merchandise; if a man of war to war." But though this may be part of the sense of these words, it is not the whole of it; nor are acts of beneficence to the poor of Christ, to the household of faith, to strangers and ministers, to whom good is especially to be done, only intended; though they may be taken into the account, in agreement with the context; but all good works in general, which are done in conformity to the revealed will of God, in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, are meant: to maintain them, is to endeavour to outdo others in them, not only the men of the world, but one another; and to set examples of them to others, and to provoke one another, by an holy emulation, to them; and to be constant in the performance of them: and which believers may learn partly from the Scriptures, which contain what is the good and perfect will of God; these shew what are good works, and direct unto them, and furnish the man of God for them; and also the grace-part of the Scripture, the doctrines of the grace of God, teach to deny sin, and to live sober, righteous, and godly lives; and from the examples of the apostles and followers of Christ; and above all from Christ himself, the great pattern and exemplar of good works: and this lesson of good works is to be learnt by *ours*; meaning not only those of the same function, who were in the same office, ministers of the Gospel, as were the apostle and Titus; but all that believed in God, who were of the same Christian community and society, professors of the same religion, and partakers of the same grace; and were not only nominally, but really of the same number, even of the number of God's elect, the redeemed from

among men, the family of Christ, sharers in the common faith, and heirs of the grace of life; who lie under the greatest obligations to learn to do good works: *for necessary uses*; not to make their peace with God, or to atone for their sins, or to procure the pardon of them, or to cleanse them from them, or for their justification before God, or to obtain salvation and eternal life; but to glorify God, testify their subjection to him, and gratitude for mercies received; to shew forth their faith to men; to adorn the doctrine of Christ, and a profession of it; to recommend religion to others; to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: and *that they be not unfruitful*; in them, and in the knowledge of Christ; good works are the fruits of the spirit, and of his grace; they are fruits of righteousness; and such as are without them are like trees without fruit, useless and unprofitable.

Ver. 15. *All that are with me salute thee, &c.*] All the apostles, fellow-labourers, and the ministers of the Gospel that were with him; and all the members of the church where he was, sent their Christian salutation to Titus; he being a person greatly esteemed, and whose praise was in all the churches: *greet them that love us in the faith*; not merely as men, as their countrymen, as related to them in the flesh; or on account of any external things, but as believers; because of the doctrine of faith, professed and preached; and because of the grace of faith obtained and possessed; or who love us faithfully, sincerely, and uprightly, from their hearts, and not in word and tongue only: *grace be with you all, Amen*; which is the common concluding salutation in all Paul's epistles. This shews that this epistle was not designed for Titus only, but for the saints at Crete. *It was written to Titus the first bishop of the church of the Cretians.* But this subscription, as many others, is not to be depended upon; it is not very likely that Titus was bishop of this church at all; since his stay there was but short, nor indeed elsewhere, seeing he was an evangelist; though this is asserted both by Eusebius^d, and Sophronius^e, who adds, that he died and was buried here: and what follows, that it was written *from Nicopolis of Macedonia*, does not seem to be just, as may be concluded from ver. 12. Many learned men think it was written from Colosse, or some neighbouring place; though when he wrote his epistle to the Colossians it looks as if he had never been there before: the Syriac version adds, *sent by the hands of Zenas and Apollos*; which is not unlikely, since he desires they might be accommodated by Titus with what was necessary for the remaining part of their journey, ver. 13.

^c T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2. & Gloss. in. ib.

^d Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 4.

^e In Hieron. Eccl. Script. Catalog. sect. 12.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL

TO

PHILEMON.

THIS epistle was written by the Apostle Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, as appears from its inscription and subscription; and seems to have been written at the same time, in the year 60, and sent by the same hand, as the epistle to the Colossians; seeing the same persons were with the apostle at the writing of both, and send their Christian salutations in the one, as in the other; compare ver. 23, 24. with Col. iv. 10, 12, 14. and Archippus, the minister in Colosse, is made mention of in both, Philem. ver. 2. Col. iv. 17. and it is very probable that Philemon, to whom it was written, was a Colossian, since Onesimus, his servant, on whose account, and by whom it was sent, is said to be one of the Colossians, Col. iv. 9. Philemon is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and afterwards Bishop of Gaza; see the note on Luke x. 1. The occasion of the epistle was this; Philemon's servant, Onesimus, having either embezzled his master's goods, or robbed him, ran away from him, and fled to Rome, where the apostle was a prisoner in chains in his own hired house, under the custody of a soldier, and where he received all that came, and preached the Gospel to them, Acts xxviii. 30. and among those that went to hear him, this fugitive servant was one, and was converted under his ministry; and who not only received the grace of God, but had such gifts bestowed on him as qualified him to be a preacher of the word. Now the design of this epistle is to recon-

cile Philemon to his servant, and to entreat him to receive him again, not only as a servant, but as a brother in Christ; and the most proper and prudent methods and arguments are used to engage him to it. The epistle, though it is a familiar one, and short, is very instructive; it shews great humility in the apostle, and that he did not think it below him to be concerned in doing such an office as to reconcile a master to his servant, and which is worthy of imitation; as also it teaches the right that masters have over their servants, which is not lost by their becoming Christians, and even ministers of the Gospel; and that recompense should be made unto them for injuries done by them: it likewise displays the riches of the grace of God, in the conversion of such a vile creature: and the wonderful providence of God in overruling that which was sinful in itself, running away from his master, to the greatest good, even the conversion of him; and is an instance of surprising grace: and from hence may be learned, that there is salvation in Christ for the chief of sinners; and that the conversion of them is not to be despaired of. The authority of this epistle was not questioned by the ancient writers, and stands always in their catalogues of the canon of the Scripture; and Marcion the heretic, who either rejected, or changed, or mutilated the rest of the epistles, could not lay his hands on this, because of the brevity of it, as Tertullian^a and Jerom^b observe.

THIS epistle has an inscription, salutation, and preface, the same with others, which are in ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. the principal view of it is to persuade Philemon to receive his servant Onesimus; the arguments used are taken from the general character he had for love to the saints, and people of God, and therefore it was hoped he would act up to it in this instance, ver. 5, 6, 7. from the consideration of the person who made the suit to him, who could have used authority, but chose rather to entreat him in love; and also of his age, and the condition in which he was, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, ver. 8, 9. from the spiritual relation Onesimus was in to the apostle, who had begotten him in his bonds, ver. 10. from the present usefulness of him, both to Philemon and the apostle, who before was useless, ver.

11. from the strong affection the apostle had for him, being as his own bowels, ver. 12. from his unwillingness to do any thing without his consent, though he could have detained him upon the foot of equity and justice, to have served him in his stead, ver. 13, 14. from the overruling providence of God, which had so ordered it, that he should depart from him for a time, that he might be received for ever, ver. 15. from the character under which he could now be received, not as a servant, but as a beloved brother, ver. 16. from the partnership and association in which the apostle and Philemon were, ver. 17. from the assurance he gave him of repaying him whatever his servant owed him, and making good whatever he had injured him in, ver. 18, 19. and from that pleasure, delight, and refresh-

^a Advers. Marcion. l. 5. c. 21.

^b Proëm. in Philem.

ment he should have, should he receive him, ver. 20. And, upon the whole, the apostle expresses his confidence that he would grant his request, obey his commands, and even do more than he had mentioned to him, ver. 21. And then gives him some hope of his being delivered from prison, through the prayers of Philemon, and others, and of seeing him shortly; and therefore desires he would prepare a lodging for him, ver. 22. and closes with the salutations of several friends to him, mentioned by name, with their characters, ver. 23, 24. and with his own common salutation, ver. 25.

Ver. 1. *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, &c.*] Not made a prisoner by Christ, though he was apprehended, laid hold on, and detained by Christ as a prisoner of hope, at his conversion; but this is not intended here: but he was a prisoner at Rome for the sake of Christ, on account of professing him, and preaching in his name; his bonds were for the sake of the Gospel of Christ; and therefore they are in this epistle called the bonds of the Gospel. He was not a prisoner for any capital crime, and therefore had no reason to be ashamed of his chain, nor was he; but rather gloried in it, as his taking this title and character to himself, and prefixing it to this epistle shews; and which he chooses to make use of rather than that of a servant of God, or an apostle of Christ, as he elsewhere does, that he might not be by constraint, or authority, but by love, move the pity and compassion of Philemon to grant his request, and receive his servant; which, should he deny, would be to add affliction to his bonds: and that this is his view in the choice of this character, is manifest from ver. 8, 9. *and Timothy our brother*, not according to the flesh, or as being of the same country, for he was the countryman of neither of them; nor only on account of his being a regenerate man, born of God, a child of God, and of the same family; but chiefly because he was of the same function, was a minister of the Gospel: him the apostle joins with himself in the epistle, and so in the request, because he might be well known to Philemon, and be much respected by him; and to shew that they were united in this affair, and both desired this favour of him; hoping that by their joint application it would be obtained: *unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer*: the name of Philemon is Greek; there was a Greek poet of this name, and a Greek historian that Pliny made use of in compiling his history: there is indeed mention made in the Jewish writings*, of a Rabbi whose name was פלימון, *Philemo*; but this our Philemon seems to have been an inhabitant of Colosse, and rather to have been a Gentile than a Jew; he was a rich and hospitable man, and greatly respected, and therefore here called, *our dearly beloved*: that is, dearly beloved by the apostle and Timothy, not only as being a believer, but as being also generous and useful in his station, and likewise as he was a minister of the Gospel; for so the next phrase, *and fellow-labourer*, seems to import; for though such are sometimes said to be labourers and fellow-helpers with the apostle, who assisted in carrying on the interest of Christ, with their purses, and prayers, and private conversation;

yet as it is used in this same epistle, of such who were in the work of the ministry, ver. 24. it is very probable it is so to be understood here: and now though these expressions of affection and respect were without dissimulation; nor were they mere compliments; yet the intention of them was to work upon the mind of Philemon, to reconcile him to his servant; suggesting, that as he had an interest in the affections of the apostle and others, this would be a means of establishing it, and would be acting agreeably to his character, as a minister of the Gospel.

Ver. 2. *And to our beloved Apphia, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy reads, *to sister Apphia*; and the Vulgate Latin version, *to the beloved sister Apphia*: for this is a woman's name; and it is thought that she was the wife of Philemon, since she is placed next to him, and before Archippus, a minister of the word; and very prudently is she wrote to, and justly commended, in order to engage her to use her interest with her husband to receive his servant again, who otherwise might have stood against it, and been a very great hindrance to a reconciliation: this clause is wanting in the Ethiopic version: *and Archippus our fellow-soldier*; that this Archippus was a preacher of the Gospel at Colosse is manifest from Col. iv. 17. wherefore the apostle styles him a fellow-soldier; for though this character belongs to private Christians, who are enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the Captain of salvation, and fight under his banners, against sin, Satan, and the world, being accoutred with the whole armour of God, and are more than conquerors through Christ that has loved them; yet it very eminently belongs to the ministers of the Gospel, who are more especially called upon, to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ; to war a good warfare, to fight the good fight of faith; and besides the above enemies common to all believers, to engage with false teachers, and earnestly contend for the faith of the Gospel, that so it may continue with the saints. Now this man was in the same company, and in the same service, engaged in the same common cause, against the same enemies, and under the same Captain, and was expecting the same crown of immortality and glory, and therefore he calls him his fellow-soldier; and he wisely inscribes his epistle to him, that he might make use of the interest he had in Philemon, and his wife, to bring this matter to bear, the apostle writes about: *and to the church in thy house*: not in the house of Archippus, but in the house of Philemon; and designs not the church at Colosse, as though it met at his house; but his own family, which for the great piety and religion which were among them, and for the good order and decorum in which they were kept, were like a church of themselves; and here again the apostle acts the wise part, in order to gain his point, by taking notice of them, who might some of them have been injured or affronted by Onesimus, when with them; and so entertained some resentment against him, and might put a bar in the way of his reception into the family again.

Ver. 3. *Grace to you and peace, from God, &c.*] Which is the same form of salutation used in the

* T. Bab. Sota, fol. 4. 1. & Menachot, fol. 37. 1. & Juchasin, fol. 101. 1. 103. 1. & 159. 2.

other epistles; see the note on Rom. i. 7. for though this epistle is but a very small one, yet it is introduced in the same form as the larger epistles are; and has an inscription in the former verse, a salutation in this, and a preface in the three following.

Ver. 4. *I thank my God, &c.*] Meaning on account of Philemon, for the grace bestowed upon him, hereafter mentioned; see the note on Rom. i. 8. *making mention of thee always in my prayers*; as he did of other saints, Rom. i. 9. Eph. i. 16. Phil. i. 3, 4. Col. i. 3. 1 Thess. i. 2. the apostle was a man much in prayer, frequent at the throne of grace; and he prayed not for himself only, but for all the saints, for all the churches and ministers of the Gospel; whom he not only bore upon his mind and heart, but made mention of them, it may be by name; however, he remembered them, and put up petitions, with thanksgivings, for them; and so he did for Philemon; and which he takes notice of with the same view as before: the word, *always*, is so placed in the original text, as to be put either to his thanks to God, or his prayers, and may be true of both; the Syriac and Arabic versions join it to the former; and the Vulgate Latin and the Ethiopic versions place it to the latter.

Ver. 5. *Hearing of thy love and faith, &c.*] Those two spring from the free favour and love of God, and are the pure gifts of his grace; and therefore thanks are to be given for them to God; nor are they to be ascribed to the power and will of man; they are the fruits of the spirit of God; and are the principal ingredients in sanctification, which is entirely his work; and they are in all regenerate persons; and are the evidences of regeneration; by which it is known that men are passed from death to life; and they always go together, and are inseparable from each other: there cannot be true faith where love is wanting, for faith works by love; and there cannot be real love, where there is not faith; they only love the saints aright, who love them in the faith, and because of it; and these graces are visible, and to be known by their fruits, whereby they come to be heard of, and talked of, as these in Philemon were. Faith in the heart is confessed by the mouth; and love, both to Christ and to his people, shews itself, as well as faith, in works of righteousness. Sometimes faith is put before love, it being a leading grace, and the great receiver of all the blessings of grace; and here love is placed before faith, because of its being more excellent on account of its continuance and duration; or there may be no design at all in it; but rather, as sometimes one, and sometimes another is mentioned first, it shews that they are upon an equal foot, and both have their proper place and usefulness; the objects of them follow: *which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints*; which are either to be considered as equally objects of the same grace, or as distinct ones; that is, either that Christ is the object both of faith and love, and the saints are the object both of faith and love; or else these graces are to be distinguished by their respective objects; as that faith is toward Christ, and love toward all the saints: that Christ is both the object of faith and love is certain; nor is there any difficulty to consider him as such; faith is equally to be exercised on him, as on God the father; and he is indeed the immediate object

of faith, and by whom men believe in God; and he is to be loved, and is loved by his people above all things, and at all times, and in sincerity: and that the saints are the objects of the love of all truly gracious souls, is a plain case; but the greater difficulty is, how they should be the objects of their faith; and yet there are instances of this, Exod. xiv. 31. 2 Chron. xx. 20. and indeed, true love believes all things, and hopes all things, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. But it seems better to divide these objects according to the different graces, and to consider faith as being towards our Lord Jesus; which is a looking towards Christ, a moving towards him, a laying hold upon him, and embracing him, a staying and leaning on him, a living upon him, and walking in him; and which in Philemon might be a strong one, as well as unfeigned, and operative: and love may be considered as being toward all saints; for though all men are, in a sense, to be loved, and kindness to be shewn to them, and that even to enemies, yet more especially the saints; who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and who are internally sanctified by the Spirit, and are enabled to live soberly and righteously: and all of these are the objects of love, whether rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, of meaner or larger abilities; for they are all equally loved by God, redeemed by Christ, and regenerated by his Spirit; are justified by his righteousness, are all the children and heirs of God, and are called in one hope of their calling; and love to them should be unfeigned, fervent, active, and laborious, and as Christ has loved us; and such was Philemon's love, as well as it was universal: and this distribution of these graces to their respective objects may be confirmed from a parallel place in Col. i. 4. which epistle was written and sent at the same time with this.

Ver. 6. *That the communication of thy faith, &c.*] The grace of faith itself can't be communicated from one to another; a believing parent can't communicate it to his children, nor a master to his servants, nor a minister to his hearers; but an account of it, of its actings and exercises, of the joy of it, and of the peace a soul is filled with through believing, may be given to the mutual comfort and edification of saints; and it may be shewn forth to others by the fruits of it, works of righteousness: but here it seems to design acts of beneficence, communicating to the necessities of others, as flowing from faith; and these words are to be connected with ver. 4. as a part of the apostle's prayers, as what is contained in the preceding verse is the matter of his thanksgiving. And his prayer is, that such a communication of good things, which springs from faith, *may be effectual*; to answer some very good purposes, the good of others, and the service of the interest of Christ, and the glory of God; or, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, only by the change of one letter, that it *may be evident*; to which the Syriac version seems to incline, rendering it, that it *may be fruitful in works*; or shew itself in fruits of righteousness, in works of mercy and kindness; and the apostle's sense is, that it might be more and more so: *by the acknowledging of every good thing that is in you in Christ Jesus*; the meaning is, that every good thing that is in the saints, or among them, should be acknowledged to come to them in and through Christ Jesus, in whom all fulness

of grace dwells, and from whom all is imparted; and that every good thing that is communicated, or done in faith, which is effectual to any good purpose, should be owned as done by the grace and strength of Christ, and be done to his saints, as if done to himself, and be directed to his glory: the phrase, *in you*, respects not Philemon only, but Apphia, Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house; the Arabic version reads, *in us*.

Ver. 7. *For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, &c.*] In the expressions and acts of it to the poor saints; for which reason the apostle gives thanks for it before; and it is a pleasure and comfort to an ingenuous mind, though it is not in his power to do good to the poor saints himself, to see that others have both abilities, and a heart to relieve them: *because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother*; meaning, not only that their bellies were filled with food, for the phrase is used in ver. 20. where that cannot be intended; but their hearts were filled with gladness, the load upon their spirits, the pressures upon their minds were removed, and they had an inward pleasure in their souls, and rest, refreshment, and comfort, through the liberal communications of Philemon to them; who did what he did cheerfully, that so it did their souls good, as well as their bodies; and in doing which, he acted the part of a brother in Christ.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ, &c.*] Or use much freedom of speech in the name of Christ, as an ambassador of his, and great authority as his apostle, which was given him for edification: *to enjoin thee that which is convenient*; which became him as a believer in Christ, and a minister of the Gospel; which was his duty, and was obligatory upon him, agreeable to the doctrines of Christ; who taught men to love their enemies, to be reconciled to their brethren, that had offended them, especially when they repented; and therefore it was fit and proper that he should receive his servant again, since God had called him by his grace, and given him repentance for his sins: upon this foot the apostle could have commanded him, as he did in other cases, 2 Thess. iii. 6, 12, but he chose not to address him in an authoritative way, but by way of entreaty, as follows.

Ver. 9. *Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, &c.*] Either for the sake of the great love which the apostle bore to Philemon, being, as he calls him, his dearly beloved, he took this method; or because of Philemon's great love to all the saints before mentioned, he was encouraged to proceed in this manner, hoping on that account to have success; or it may be, it was for the sake of that love with which God had loved him, and which he puts him in mind of, to engage him to grant his request; that seeing God the Father had loved him, and chosen him in Christ; and Christ had loved him, and redeemed him by his blood; and the Holy Spirit had loved him, and sanctified him by his grace, that therefore he would receive his servant again for the sake of this love; who also was the object of it; see Rom. xv. 30. The Alexandrian copy reads, *for, or through necessity*, as if necessity obliged him to his request. *Being such an one as Paul the aged*; or

the elder; meaning either in office, which he might mention with this view, that his request might have the greater weight and influence; or else in years, and which he might observe partly to move compassion in Philemon, and that he might not grieve him in his old age, as he would, should he deny his request; and partly to suggest to him, that the advice he was about to give him, to receive his servant, did not come from a raw young man, but from one well stricken in years, with whom were wisdom and understanding; and therefore not to be treated with neglect or contempt: how old the apostle was at this time, is not certain; he could not be less than sixty years of age, or he would not have called himself an old man; for no man was so called by the Jews, but he that was at the age of sixty^b. Some editions of the Vulgate Latin version, as that of the London Polyglot Bible, read, *seeing thou art such an one as Paul the aged*; as if Philemon was an old man, as the apostle was, and therefore he would not lay his commands upon him, as an ancient man might upon a young man, but rather entreat him as equal to him in years: but then it follows, which does not appear to be true of Philemon, or that he was in the like case, *and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ*; which is observed with the same view as in ver. 1. see the note there.

Ver. 10. *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, &c.*] Now he comes to the request itself, and mentions by name the person on whose account he makes it, and whom he calls his son; not merely because of his affection to him, but because he really was his spiritual father; he had been the happy instrument of his conversion, and he was his son according to the common faith, or in a spiritual sense: hence it follows, *whom I have begotten in my bonds*; which is to be understood of a begetting again, or of regeneration; not as if the apostle was the efficient cause of it, as the nature of it shews, it being expressed by men's being born from above; by their being quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins; by being made new creatures, and transformed in the renewing of their minds; by Christ being formed in them, and by a partaking of the divine nature; and who is sufficient for these things? besides it is expressly denied to be of man, but is always ascribed to God, Father, Son, and Spirit; but as being the instrument and means of it, through the preaching of the Gospel, the word of truth, by which God of his own will, and by the power of his grace, regenerated this person; and this is said to be done *in his bonds*; by which it appears, that the word of God was not bound, but had a free course, and was glorified, and the bonds of the apostle were the means of the spread of it; and that it was attended with great power, to the conversion of souls; and this circumstance is mentioned to engage Philemon to regard the entreaty of the apostle; he had been the instrument of begetting many souls to Christ; but this man was begotten by him in his bonds, when he was a prisoner, and so was peculiarly dear to him.

Ver. 11. *Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, &c.*] Yea, injurious and hurtful; one that was an

^b Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 1.

eye-servant, that loitered away his time, and set an ill example to fellow-servants; and not only so, but embezzled his master's goods, and robbed him, and run away from him. So every man, in his state of unregeneracy, is an unprofitable man, Rom. iii. 12. unprofitable to God, to men, and to themselves; their sins will not profit them, though they may promise them liberty and pleasure; nor will their riches, should they lose their own souls: nor their own righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation; nor even an outward profession of religion: yea, they are not only said to be unprofitable, but are represented as good for nothing; hence they are compared to dishonourable and unserviceable vessels; to briars and thorns, and the earth which brings them; to the salt that has lost its savour, and is fit neither for the land, nor for the dunghill; to rotten figs, to chaff, and dross of metals: yea, they are hurtful and injurious to themselves, on whom they bring ruin and destruction; to others, to wicked men, whom they more and more corrupt, and harden in sin; and to good men, whom they grieve; and also to the interest and glory of God, whose laws they transgress, and against whom they sin, affront his justice, and provoke the eyes of his glory. *But now profitable to thee and to me*; that is, he was now likely to be so, to be profitable to Philemon, as a servant, and to the apostle as a ministering brother. Some think there is in this an allusion to his name Onesimus, which signifies *profitable*; before he did not answer to his name, but now he was a true Onesimus, really a profitable person; grace, of an unprofitable man, makes a profitable one. Such an one is profitable to himself; his godliness is gain unto him, it having both the promise of this life, and of that which is to come; and he is profitable to others, if he has gifts qualifying him for the public work of the ministry, as Onesimus seems to have had; then he is made and becomes very useful to many for conviction, conversion, comfort, and edification; and if only a private believer, he is often profitable to others, by relating the work of God upon his soul; he is serviceable to the interest of Christ, for the support of the ministry, and supply of the poor; he is useful by his good examples, and prayers, in the neighbourhood, town, city, or nation, in which he dwells. This argument from profit, the apostle knew would be an engaging one.

Ver. 12. *Whom I have sent again, &c.*] From Rome to Colosse, or to Philemon, wherever he was, along with this epistle: *thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels*; meaning his son, who, in a spiritual sense, came out of his bowels, to whom he stood in the relation of a spiritual father; so the Syriac version renders it, *as my son, so receive him*; see Gen. xv. 4. 2 Sam. xvi. 11. and for whom he had a most strong affection, and tender regard; his bowels yearned for him, and he suggests by this expression, that should he reject him, it would give him the utmost pain and uneasiness; and he should be obliged to cry out as the Prophet Jeremy did, *my bowels, my bowels, I am pained at the very heart*; Jer. iv. 19. wherefore he entreats him to receive him again into his house and family, into his service, and into his heart and affections, where the apostle had received him.

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Ver. 13. *Whom I would have retained with me, &c.*] At Rome, where the apostle was a prisoner: *that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel*; the apostle was in bonds, not for any crime, for any immorality he had been guilty of, but for the sake of the Gospel, for professing and preaching that; for this he was an ambassador in bonds, as he elsewhere says, Eph. vi. 20. Now he would have kept Onesimus with him, either to have waited upon him, in his bonds, and to have provided for him the necessaries of life; or to have assisted him in the ministration of the word, in the room of Philemon, who, had he been there, would have been employed in such service; so that if the apostle had retained him, he would have been acting not for himself, but in the room of his master, and doing what he should have done, had he been on the spot. This the apostle observes to prevent an objection that might have been made; that since Onesimus was become so profitable to him, why did he send him back? why did he not keep him for his own service? this he obviates and removes, by signifying he should have done it, but for the following reason.

Ver. 14. *But without thy mind would I do nothing, &c.*] Which shews great modesty and humility in the apostle, that though as such he had an authority, which he could have used, as well as had understanding and judgment how to have used it without consulting Philemon, or having his sense of this affair, yet chose to consult him: and it also shews the strict regard the apostle had to equity and justice, that he would do nothing with another man's servant without his consent; he would not seem to alienate, or encroach another man's right and property, whatever power he might have, as an apostle, to have retained Onesimus as a minister to him. *That thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly*; that is, that his goodness in forgiving his servant, and renouncing all claim and property in him, and admitting him to continue in the service of the apostle, might not look like a forced thing; but that it might appear to be a voluntary action, when he should of himself return him, after he had been thus sent to him, and received by him.

Ver. 15. *For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, &c.*] The apostle in this clause seems to soften this business of Onesimus in running away from his master; he calls it not a running away, but a departure, an absence from him, and that but for a little while; and suggests that the hand of God might be in it; that there was an overruling providence that attended it, such as was in Joseph's going down into Egypt; and that this separation of Onesimus from his master, for a short time, was in order that they should come together again, and never part more, as follows: *that thou shouldst receive him for ever*; or during life, referring to the law in Exod. xxi. 6. or to all eternity, since they were in the same spiritual relation, partakers of the same grace, and had a right to the same heavenly inheritance, and should be together with Christ for evermore.

Ver. 16. *Not now as a servant, &c.*] That is, not only as a servant, for a servant he was, and was to be received as such; his call by grace had not dissolved

the civil relation that was between him and his master, though it had added to it something that was above it, and greater than it: *but above a servant*; in a higher condition, as the Arabic version renders it, than a servant; not barely considered in that relation, but as being in one much preferable to it: *a brother beloved, specially to me*; a brother in Christ, and to be beloved on that account, as he was especially by the apostle, who had been the instrument of his conversion; see Col. iv. 9. *But how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord*? both in a natural and civil sense, as being of the same nation and country, and as being part of his family, his servant, and now become an useful and profitable one; and, in a spiritual sense, being in the Lord, belonging to the Lord Jesus, to that family which is named of him, being a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God, and therefore must be doubly dear to him.

Ver. 17. *If thou count me therefore a partner, &c.*] A companion and friend, who reckon each other's affairs and interest their own: the word answers to חֵבֵר, a word often used in Talmudic writings, for an associate of the doctors or wise men: here it may mean also a partner both in grace, and in the ministry; one that shared in the same gifts and graces of the spirit of God, and one that was to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light: now if Philemon reckoned the apostle such an one, as he doubtless did, as being engaged in the same common cause, and a partaker of the same common faith, and interested in the same common salvation; then he treats him on account of Onesimus, in the following manner, *receive him as myself*; intimating, that he was as dear to him as himself; that he loved him as his own soul; and that he should take whatever respect and affection were shewn to him as done to himself; and that he would have him receive him into his house, his heart and affections, as he would receive him the apostle himself, should he come to him.

Ver. 18. *If he hath wronged thee, &c.*] By squandering away his time, spoiling his work, or corrupting his fellow-servants: *or oweth thee ought*; by embezzling his master's goods, robbing him of his money, and running away from his service: *put that on mine account*; signifying that he would be answerable for all, and make good all debts and damages.

Ver. 19. *I Paul have written it, with mine own hand, &c.*] Meaning either this epistle, which being short, he used no amanuensis, but wrote it all himself, and which might be taken as an engagement to do what he promised; or else a bill, a promissory note, written with his own hand, which he sent along with Onesimus, by which he laid himself under obligation to give Philemon full satisfaction in every thing, in which he had been injured by his servant; adding, *I will repay it*: this was not an ironical expression, nor a piece of vanity in the apostle; he spoke seriously, and heartily, and meant what he said; and though his circumstances were often so mean, that he was forced to work with his own hands to minister to his necessities; yet such was his interest in the churches, and such their obligation to him, on account of his personal and useful ministrations to them, that he could easily raise a sum of money among them, upon

any emergent occasion; so that Philemon had a good surety and paymaster of the apostle: and this shews his great humility to be a bondsman for a servant, and to make good damages and debts brought on in a scandalous manner; as also that suretyship in some cases is lawful, though it ought to be cautiously, and for very good reasons, entered into: and this engagement of the apostle for Onesimus bears some resemblance with, and may serve to illustrate the suretyship of Christ, for his people, they, and Onesimus, being much in a like condition; as he was an unprofitable and run-away servant, so they are all gone out of the way, and together become unprofitable; and Christ engaged with his father to bring them back again, and set them before him; and by his sufferings and death has brought them nigh, which were afar off: as he had wronged his master and was indebted to him, so they have injured the law of God, affronted his justice, and incurred his displeasure; and having owed to him more than ten thousand talents, and having nothing to pay, Christ engaged to satisfy law and justice, to make reconciliation for them, and pay all their debts; all which he has accordingly done; their sins have been placed to his account, imputed to him, and charged upon him; and he has bore them, and the punishment due to them, and so has satisfied for them, and restored that which he took not away. *Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides*; having respect to his conversion, which he was the happy instrument of; the apostle was his spiritual father, and he was his son, according to the common faith; he had been the instrument of saving his soul from death; he had been the means of that in the hand of God, which all his riches, and the riches of his friends and relations, could never have procured: the salvation of his soul, his better part, was instrumentally owing to him, and so his whole self; and therefore, what favour might he not ask of him? and what was it he could, or should deny him? this the apostle introduces in a very artificial manner, and does not insist upon it, but suggests, that should he forgive the injuries and debts, he had took upon him to make satisfaction for, it would not be an equivalent to the debt he owed to him. From hence may be observed, how greatly obliged regenerated persons are to those, who have been the means and instruments of their conversion.

Ver. 20. *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord, &c.*] Though the apostle was his spiritual father, having been the instrument of his conversion, yet he calls him his brother, as being a partaker of the same grace, and a minister of the same Gospel; and intimates to him, that should he grant his request, and receive his servant again, it would give him great joy and pleasure, and that not of a carnal, but of a spiritual kind, even joy in the Lord; he should rejoice in the presence of the Lord, and before him, concerning him; he should rejoice in his faith in the Lord, and love for him, and obedience to him; all which would be discovered in such a conduct: the Syriac version renders it, as an assurance to himself, *I shall be refreshed by thee in our Lord*; not doubting but that he would gratify him in the thing he asked

of him, which would be a refreshment to him; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *may I enjoy thee in the Lord*: meaning not his company and presence, either in this world, or in the world to come; but that he might enjoy or receive the favour from him he had petitioned him for, for the Lord's sake; the Arabic version renders it, as a reason why he should do it, *I have been profitable to thee in the Lord*; confirming what he had said before, that he owed himself to him; he having been useful to him in bringing him to the knowledge of Christ, and faith in him; and the Ethiopic version refers it to a promise, *I will repay in our Lord*; in spiritual things in our Lord, if not in things temporal: *refresh my bowels in the Lord*; or *in Christ*; as the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read; and by his *bowels*, he either means Onesimus, as in ver. 12. who, in a spiritual sense, came forth out of his bowels; or else himself, his soul, his spirit, his inward parts; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *refresh my soul*; and the sense is, that he desired in the Lord, and for his sake, that he would receive Onesimus again, which would give him an inward pleasure, and refresh his spirit; and indeed he intimates, that nothing could be more cheering and reviving to him.

Ver. 21. *Having confidence in thy obedience, &c.*] In his obedience of faith to Christ, and his Gospel; he having been made willing in the day of his power to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; and being constrained by his love, and the spirit of Christ having wrought in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure: *I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say*: the knowledge the apostle had of Philemon's cheerful obedience to Christ in all the parts of duty, encouraged him to write to him, on this head; believing that he would even do more than he had desired of him.

Ver. 22. *But without prepare me also a lodging, &c.*] Not that the apostle expected or desired any grand apartment to be fitted up for him; a room with such furniture as the Shunamite provided for the man of God was sufficient for him, and what he would have been entirely contented with; but his view in this was, to let Philemon know that he hoped to be released from his bonds, and that he might expect to see him; and this he hinted to him, in order to stir him up to receive his servant sooner, and the more readily; who otherwise might have been indifferent to it, and negligent of it, thinking he should never see the apostle's face any more. *For I trust, that through your prayers I shall be given you*; to minister in the Gospel again among them: the apostle was a man of prayer himself, and he had a very great regard to the prayers of others, and often desired an interest in them; that he might perform his ministerial work as it should be; that he might have success in it; and that he might be delivered from the unbelieving Jews, and from wicked and unreasonable men; and he had some secret hope and trust in his own mind, that through the prayers of the saints he should be delivered from his bonds, and go up and down preaching the Gospel as heretofore: he

doubtless was acquainted with the case of Peter, for whom prayer was made incessantly by the church, when in prison, and he had deliverance; however, he knew that the prayers of the saints availed much with God; but whether this hope and expectation of his were answered, is a matter of doubt and question: some think he was released, and went into several parts, and preached the Gospel, and then was taken up again, and committed to prison, and suffered under Nero, some years after; and others think not.

Ver. 23. *There salute thee Epaphras, &c.*] Who was a Colossian, and minister of the church at Colosse, and so might be well known to Philemon, who seems to have been of the same place and church; see Col. 1. 7. and iv. 12, 13. his name is omitted in the Ethiopic version: *my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus*; this good man, and minister of Christ, might have been sent by the Colossians, as Epaphroditus was by the Philippians, to the apostle at Rome, to pay him a visit, and comfort and assist him under his afflictions; and staying and preaching the Gospel there, was committed to prison, or was laid in bonds, as the apostle was, and upon the same account; namely, for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel. For by this time Nero began to persecute the Christians, which he did in the better and more moderate part of his reign; for among several things for which he is commended by the historians^b, this is one; "*Afflicti supplicis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae*": "the Christians were punished, a sort of men of a "new and bad religion." and Epaphras being at Rome, when this persecution broke out, was taken up and put in prison, as were also Aristarchus, Col. iv. 10. and Timothy, Heb. xiii. 23.

Ver. 24. *Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, &c.*] Marcus was Barnabas's sister's son, the son of that Mary, in whose house the church met, and prayed for Peter when in prison; whose name was John Mark, whom Saul and Barnabas took along with them to Antioch, and from thence, in their travels, to other parts; but he leaving them at Pamphylia, was the occasion of a contention between Saul and Barnabas afterwards, when returned to Antioch; the latter insisting on his going with them again, and the former refusing it on account of his departure from them; which contention rose so high that they parted upon it, Acts xii. 12, 25. and xiii. 5, 13. and xv. 37, 38, 39. though after this the apostle was reconciled to him; he approving himself to be a faithful and useful minister of the Gospel; and therefore he desires Timothy to bring him along with him, 2 Tim. iv. 11. and if this epistle was wrote after that, he was now come to him; however, he was now with him, whether before or after: Aristarchus was a Macedonian of Thessalonica; or very likely the apostle had been the instrument of converting him there, and who followed him from thence, and attended him wherever he went; he was with him in the uproar raised by Demetrius at Ephesus, and accompanied him into Asia; went with him in his voyage to Rome, and was now a fellow-prisoner there, Acts xix. 29. and xx. 4. and xxvii. 2. Col. iv.

^b Suetonius in Vita Neronis, c. 16.

10. Demas is the same with him who is mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 10. and if this epistle is later than that, it should seem that he was restored from his fall, and was returned to the apostle. Lucas is the same with Luke the Evangelist, the beloved physician, the brother whose praise was in all the churches, and a constant companion of the apostle, in his travels; and who wrote the book called, *The Acts of the Apostles*: these the apostle styles, *my fellow-labourers*, being all ministers of the Gospel; and this shews the apostle's great humility, so to call them, when they were far from being on an equal foot with him in office, gifts, or usefulness: and the Christian salutations of these persons are sent to Philemon, with this view, to engage

him the more to attend to the apostle's request, in which they all joined.

Ver. 25. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*] Not with his spirit only, but with the spirit of Apphia and Archippus, to whom also the epistle was sent; and therefore the word is in the plural number; and the Syriac version adds pertinently enough, *my brethren*: the salutation is the same as in all the epistles; the form of it agrees with Gal. vi. 18. the subscription of the epistle is, *written from Rome, to Philemon, by Onesimus, a servant*; that is, it was written by the Apostle Paul when at Rome, and sent to Philemon by the hands of Onesimus, who was his servant, and upon whose account the letter was written.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE HEBREWS.

THAT this epistle was written very early appears from hence, that it was imitated by Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, who took whole sentences out of it; and therefore it could not be a new work, as Eusebius^a observes: it has been denied to be authentic by some heretics, as the Marcionites and Arians, but has been generally received as such by the orthodox: some indeed doubted of it, because it was not received by the Roman church, as an epistle of the Apostle Paul^b; though others, who have thought it was not his, as Origen, yet looked upon it as genuine^c. It has been ascribed to different persons, as to Barnabas, to Apollos, to Luke the Evangelist, and to Clement of Rome, but without any just reason. Clement of Alexandria, a very ancient writer, asserts it to be the Apostle Paul's^d; and his name stands in the title of it, in all R. Stephens's exemplars, and in all Beza's copies, excepting one, and so it does in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and that it is his, is highly probable from the agreement there is between this, and other epistles of his; compare ch. i. 2, 3. with Col. i. 15, 16. and ch. v. 12, 13, 14. with 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. and ch. xii. 1. with 1 Cor. ix. 24. and ch. xiii. 7, 17. with 1 Thess. v. 11, 12. and ch. xiii. 9. with Eph. iv. 14. and ch. xiii. 18. with 2 Cor. i. 12. and ch. xiii. 20. with Rom. xv. 13. and xvi. 20. 1 Thess. v. 23. and many other places; and also from the order and method of it, first treating of doctrines, and then proceeding to practical exhor-

tations, which is the common form of Paul's epistles: to which may be added various circumstances; as that it was written from Italy, where Paul was a prisoner; and the mention the author of it makes of his bonds, and of Timothy, as well known unto him, who was Paul's companion; besides, the token of his epistles appears in this, namely, his usual salutation to the churches; see ch. xiii. 23, 24, 25. But above all, the testimony of the Apostle Peter is greatly in favour of its being his, 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. from whence it clearly appears, that the Apostle Paul did write an epistle to the Hebrews; for to them Peter wrote; see 1 Pet. i. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 1. and what epistle could it be but this? and what Peter refers to is to be found in it; see ch. x. 25, 36, 37. and which is written with great wisdom; in none of Paul's epistles is there a greater discovery of his knowledge of divine mysteries than in this; and in it also are things hard to be understood, ch. v. 11. The common objections to its being his are, its not bearing his name, the diversity of its style, and the author of it seeming to be not an apostle, but a disciple of the apostle's: as to his not setting his name to it, the reasons might be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and not so much of the Jews; and because of the prejudice of the Jews against him, both believers and unbelievers; wherefore had his name been to it, it might have prevented the usefulness of it to the one, and have stirred up the rage of the other: as to the difference of style, different

^a Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 39.
^b Ib. c. 3. & l. 6. c. 20.

^c Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25.
^d Ib. c. 14.

subjects require a different style; and yet in many things there is a likeness, as before observed: and as to the author's not being an apostle, which is concluded from ch. ii. 3. the word *us* there is to be understood of the believing Hebrews, the disciples of the apostle, and not inclusive of the author, by a figurative way of speaking often used by Paul; and besides, the apostle received a confirmation of the Gospel from Ananias, who might have been an hearer of Christ, though he was at first taught it by Christ himself; add to this, that whoever was the writer of it, it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and when several of the apostles were living, and therefore he could never design by those words to put himself in a succeeding generation. The persons to whom this epistle was written were Hebrews, or Jews; so called, as some think, from the name of Abraham, the father of them; or, as others, from his passing over the river Euphrates, when he came out of Chaldea into Palestine. So Abram the Hebrew, in Gen. xiv. 13. is by the Septuagint rendered *αγγελος*, *one that passes over*, taking it to come from the word עבר, which signifies to *pass over*; with this compare Josh. xxiv. 3. and this is the opinion of some of the Jewish Rabbins^a; though it seems rather that they were called so from Heber, who lived at the time of the confusion of languages; see Gen. x. 21. Numb. xxiv. 24. And this is the sense of many Jewish writers, ancient and modern, of Josephus^b, of Jonathan ben Uzziel^c, of R. Nehemiah^d, of Aben Ezra^e, and Kimchi^f, and others; see the note on 2 Cor. xi. 22. And these were the Hebrews that dwelt in the land of Judea, and particularly at Jerusalem; nor were they the unbelieving inhabitants of those parts, but believers in Christ, who

were embodied in a Gospel church-state. It was a tradition of the ancients¹, that this epistle was written originally in Hebrew, and was translated into Greek, either by Luke the Evangelist, or by Clement of Rome. But for this there is no foundation; no Hebrew copy can be produced; Munster's edition of it in Hebrew is a translation from the Greek, in which it was, no doubt, originally written, that being the common language, and well known to the Jews; and which appears from the citations in it out of the Old Testament, which are made, not from the Hebrew text, but from the Greek version; and besides, had it been wrote in Hebrew, the writer would not have interpreted the Hebrew words, Melchizedek and Salem, as he does, in ch. vii. 2. The time of its writing was before the destruction of Jerusalem, which in this book is signified by the coming of the Lord, and the day approaching; and after Timothy was released from prison, and some time within the two years of his own imprisonment at Rome, when he hoped for a release, as his epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon shew. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year 62, and in the eighth of Nero. And the occasion and design of it is, to set forth the superior excellency of Christ to angels and men, to Moses, to Joshua, to Aaron, and his sons, and the preferableness of his priesthood and sacrifice to the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices; to teach the Hebrews the true knowledge of the mysteries of their law; to point out to them the design, use, and abrogation of its ceremonies; and to prepare them for what afflictions and persecutions they would be called to endure for Christ; and to exhort them to perseverance, and to strengthen them against apostacy, as well as to instruct them in the various duties of religion.

C H A P. I.

THE intention of this epistle being to demonstrate the superior excellency of the Gospel revelation to the legal one, the apostle begins with the divine author of it, in which they both agree, and observes that in other things they differ. The revelation under the law was made in times past, the Gospel revelation in these last days; the former was made to the Jewish fathers that were of old, the latter to the then present apostles; the one was made at sundry times, and in divers manners, the other was made at once, and in one way; the one was made by the prophets of the Lord, the other by his own son, ver. 1, 2. and therefore the latter must be the more excellent; in proof of which the author enlarges on the character of the son of God, with respect to his person, office, and glory; shewing that he is heir of all things, the Maker of the worlds, of the same nature and glory with his father; is omnipotent, and upholds all things by the word of his power; is the High-priest of his people, who has made satisfaction for their sins, and purged them from

them, and is now at the right hand of God; ver. 2, 3. He goes on to prove that he is more excellent than the angels, by a variety of arguments, and these supported by testimonies from the Scriptures; as that he has a more excellent name than any of them, being called the Son of God, ver. 4, 5. which is proved from Psal. ii. 7. 2 Sam. vii. 12—16. that he is the object of the worship of angels, ver. 6. which is required of them, Psal. xcvi. 7. that he is their Maker and Creator, ver. 7. which appears from Psal. civ. 4. that he has an everlasting kingdom, is a righteous King, and is richly anointed above his fellows, ver. 8, 9. which is the sense of some passages in Psal. xiv. 6, 7. and that he is the founder and former of the heavens, and of the earth, and will endure when they shall not, ver. 10, 11, 12. which is confirmed by testimonies out of Psal. cii. 25, 26, 27. that he sits at the right hand of God, where none of the angels were ever admitted, ver. 13. as is clear from Psal. cx. and besides, the angels, as they are ministers made by him, they are

^a Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3. Jarchi in Gen. x. 21. & xiv. 13.

^b Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4.

^c Targum in Gen. x. 21.

^d In Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3.

¹ In Gen. x. 21. & in Jonan, 1. 9

² Sopher Shorashim, rad. 727.

³ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 14. Hieronymi Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 15. fol. 91. Tom. 1.

sent out from him to wait on his people, the heirs of salvation, and minister to them, and therefore he must be greater than they, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, &c.*] The apostle begins the epistle with an account of the revelation God has made of his mind and will in former times: the author of this revelation is God, not essentially, but personally considered, even God the Father, as distinguished from his Son in the next verse; for the revelation under the Old Testament is divine, as well as that under the New; in this they both agree, in whatsoever else they differ: and this revelation was made at several times, at different seasons, and to different persons; and consisted of a variety of things relating to doctrine and worship, and concerning the Messiah, his person and office; of whom, at different times, there were gradual discoveries made, both before and after the giving of the law, from the beginning of the world, or the giving forth of the first promise, and in the times of the patriarchs, of Moses, David, Isaiah, and other prophets: and this was delivered in various manners; sometimes by angels; sometimes in a dream; at other times by a vision; and sometimes by Urim and Thummim: and this he spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets; by Moses, and other succeeding prophets, as David, Isaiah, Jeremy, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and others; who were sent to the Jewish fathers, the ancestors of the people of the Jews, to whom they prophesied and declared the will of God, as they were moved and inspired by the Holy Ghost: and the apostle suggests, by this way of speaking, that it was a long time since God spake to this people; for prophecy had ceased ever since the times of Malachi, for the space of three hundred years; and this time past includes the whole Old-Testament dispensation, from the beginning to the end of it, or of prophecy in it.

Ver. 2. *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, &c.*] This is the Gospel revelation, or the revelation in the Gospel dispensation; which though it comes from the same author the other does, yet in many things differs from it, and is preferable to it; and indeed the general design of this epistle is to shew the superior excellency of the one to the other; the former was delivered out in time past, but this in these last days: the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and several other copies, read, in the last of these days: perfectly agreeable to the phrase באחרית הימים, used in Gen. xlix. 1. Numb. xxiv. 14. Isa. ii. 2. to which the apostle refers, and in which places the days of the Messiah are intended; and it is a rule with the Jews^m, that wherever the phrase, *the last days*, is mentioned, the days of the Messiah are designed: and they are to be understood not of the last days of the natural world, but of the Jewish world and state; indeed the times of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation, may be called the last days of the natural world, according to the tradition of the house of Elias; which teaches, that the duration of the world will be six thousand years, and divides it into three parts, the last of which is assigned to the Messiah, thus; two thousand years void, (or without the law,) two thou-

sand years the law, and two thousand years the days of the Messiahⁿ: but it is best to understand this of the last days of the Mosaic economy, or Jewish dispensation; for the Messiah was to come before the Jewish civil and church states were dissolved; before the sceptre departed from Judah, and before the second temple was destroyed; and he was to come at the end, or toward the close of both these states; and which is called the end, or ends of the world, Hab. ii. 3. Heb. ix. 26. 1 Cor. x. 11. and quickly after Jesus, the true Messiah was come, an end was put to both these: from whence it may be observed, that the Messiah must be come; that the Mosaic economy, and Jewish worship, will never be restored again; that the Gospel revelation being made in the last days, ought to be regarded the more, it being the last revelation God will ever make. Moreover, this differs from the former in this respect, that was made to the fathers, this to us; meaning either the apostles in particular, or the Jews in general, to whom the apostle is writing: this shews that the Gospel revelation was first made to the Jews; and it being made to them personally, they were under great obligation to regard it; and that God had not cast off his people; and that though he had greatly indulged their fathers, he had shewed greater favour to them, having provided some better thing for them: and there is a difference between these two revelations in the manner in which they were made; the former was at sundry times, and in divers manners, the latter was made at once, and in one way; that was delivered out in parts, and by piece-meal, this the whole together; the whole mind and will of God, all his counsel, all that Christ heard of the father; it is the faith that was once, and at once, delivered to the saints; and it has been given out in one way, by the preaching of the word: to which may be added, that formerly God spoke by many persons, by the prophets, but now by one only, by his son; who is so not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; being his own son, his proper son, begotten of him, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and so infinitely preferable to the prophets: he is a son, and not a servant, in whom the father is, and he in the father, and in whom the spirit is without measure; and God is said to speak by him, or in him, because he was now incarnate; and what he says from God should be attended to, both on account of the dignity of his person, as the son of God, and because of the authority he came with as Mediator: whom he hath appointed heir of all things; which must be understood of him not as God, and Creator; for as such he has a right to all things; all that the father has are his; the kingdom of nature and providence belongs to him, he being the Former and Maker of all things; but as Mediator, who has all things committed to him, to subserve the ends of his office; and has a kingdom appointed him, and which he will deliver up again: the word *all* may refer either to persons or things; to persons, not angels, good or bad, though both are subject to him, yet neither are called his inheritance; but elect men, who are his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and to things relating to these persons, and for their use and service,

^m Kimchi & Aben Ezra in Isa. ii. 2.

ⁿ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

in time, and to all eternity; as all temporal things, and all spiritual ones, the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the gifts and graces of the spirit, and eternal glory and happiness, the saints' inheritance, who are joint-heirs with Christ. *By whom also he made the worlds*; this is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, and their way of speaking, who make mention of three worlds, which they call, the upper world (the habitation of God), the middle world (the air), and the lower world^o (the earth); and sometimes they call them the world of angels (where they dwell), the world of orbs (where the sun, moon, and stars are), and the world below^p (on which we live); and it is frequent in their writings, and prayer-books^q, to call God רבן כל העולמים, *Lord of all worlds*; see the note on ch. xi. 3. these God made by his son, not as an instrument, but as an efficient cause with him; for by him were all things made, whether visible or invisible; and the preposition *by* does not always denote instrumentality, but sometimes efficiency; and is used of God the father himself, and in this epistle, ch. ii. 10.

Ver. 3. *Who being the brightness of his glory, &c.*] *Or of glory*; of God the father, the God of glory, and who is glory itself; so called on account of his glorious nature and perfections; and because of the glorious manifestations of them in his works of creation and providence, and in the various dispensations of his grace, and especially in his son; and because he is the author of all glory, in the creatures, in the whole world, in Christ as man and Mediator, and in his own people. Now Christ is *the brightness* of this, as he is God; he has the same glorious nature and perfections, and the same glorious names, as Jehovah, the Lord of glory, &c. and the same glory, homage, and worship given him: the allusion is to the sun, and its beam or ray; so some render it *the ray of his glory*; and may lead us to observe, that the Father and the Son are of the same nature, as the sun and its ray; and that the one is not before the other, and yet distinct from each other, and cannot be divided or separated one from another: so the phrase זן יקריה, *the brightness of his glory*, is used of the divine Being, in the Chaldee paraphrases^r; see Wisdom vii. 26. *And the express image of his person*: this intends much the same as the other phrase; namely, equality and sameness of nature, and distinction of persons; for if the Father is God, Christ must be so too; and if he is a person, his Son must be so likewise, or he can't be the express image and character of him; see the note on Col. i. 15. *And upholding all things by the word of his power*; the Syriac version renders it, *by the power of his word*, to the same sense, only inverting the words. The Targumist on 2 Chron. ii. 6. uses a phrase very much like this, of God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; because, adds he, סביל כלא ברדע נבורתיה, *he bears, or sustains all things by the arm of his power*; and the words are to be understood not of the Father, upholding all things by his essential and powerful Word, his Son; but of the Son himself, who upholds all creatures he has made; bears up the pillars of the universe; preserves every creature in its being, and supports it,

and supplies it with the necessaries of life; and governs all, and providentially orders and disposes of all things in the world, and that by his all-powerful will; which maketh it manifest, that he is truly and properly God, and a very fit person to be a priest, as follows: *when he had by himself purged our sins*; the Arabic and Ethiopic versions seem to refer this to God the Father, as if he, by Christ, made the expiation of sin, and then caused him to sit down at his right hand; but it belongs to the Son himself, who of himself, and by himself alone, and by the sacrifice of himself, made atonement for the sins of his people; which is meant by the purgation of them: he took their sins upon himself, and bore them, and removed them far away, and utterly abolished them, which the priests under the law could not do: and when he had so done, he *sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*; by *Majesty* is meant God the father, to whom majesty belongs; who is clothed with it, and which is before him: and his *right hand* designs his power, greatness, and glory, and is expressive of the high honour Christ, as man, is possessed of; for his sitting here denotes the glorious exaltation of him in human nature, after his sufferings, and death, and resurrection from the dead; and shews that he had done his work, and was accepted, and was now enjoying rest and ease, honour and glory, in which he will continue; and the place of his session, as well as of the habitation of God, at whose right hand he sits, is *on high*, in the highest heavens.

Ver. 4. *Being made so much better than the angels, &c.*] Christ is so much better than the angels, as the Creator, than the creature; as an independent being, than a dependent one; as he that blesses, than he that is blessed; as he that is worshipped, than he that worships; as a king, than his subjects; as a master, than his servants; and as he that sends, than he that is sent: and Christ may be said to be *made so*, when he was manifested and declared to be so; and he was actually preferred to them, and exalted above them in human nature, after he had expiated the sins of his people, and when he was set down at the right hand of God, as in the latter part of the preceding verse, with which these words stand connected; for in his state of humiliation, and through his sufferings and death, he was made lower than they; but when he was risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, he was placed at the right hand of God, where none of them ever was, or ever will be: besides, the phrase, *being made*, signifies no more than that *he was*; and so the Syriac version renders it, and *he was so much better than the angels*; and so the Ethiopic version, *he is so much better*: and this is observed, to prove him to be more excellent than any creature, since he is preferred to the most excellent of creatures; and to shew, that the Gospel dispensation is superior to the legal dispensation, which was introduced by the ministration of angels; and to take off the Jews from the worship of angels, to which they were prone: and this doctrine of his could not be well denied by them, since it was the faith of the Jewish church, that the Messiah should be preferred to the angels: for in their ancient writings they say of him,

^o Tzerur Hammor, fol. 1. 4. & 3. 2. 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1.

^p Tzerur Hammor, fol. 82. 2. Caphtor, fol. 90. 1.

^q Seder Tephillot, fol. 5. 2. & 40. 2. Ed. Amstelod.

^r Targum in 2 Sam. xxii. 12. & in Cant. v. 10.

he shall be exalted above Abraham, he shall be lifted up above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels; and that he is above them, appears from what follows, *as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*; which is that of the Son of God, a name peculiar to him; and which belongs to him in such a sense as it does not to angels, as is evident from the following verse: and though this name is not founded on his office, as Mediator, but arises from his nature and relation to God; yet he was declared to be the Son of God, and it was made manifest, that this name of right belonged to him, upon the discharge of his office, at his resurrection and ascension to heaven; and therefore he is said to obtain it by inheritance; or he appeared to inherit it of right, and that it was his possession for evermore.

Ver. 5. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, &c.*] That is, he never said to any of the angels what he has said to Christ; namely, what follows, *thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*: for though angels are called the sons of God, Job i. 6. and ii. 1. and xxxviii. 7. yet are never said to be begotten by him; or, with this clause annexed to it, *this day have I begotten thee*; nor are they ever so called in a proper sense, or in such sense as Christ is: this is said to Christ, and of him, in Psal. ii. 7. and that agreeably to the sense of the Jewish church at this time, or the apostle would never have produced it to the Hebrews in such a manner; and not only the whole psalm in general, but this verse in particular, is owned by Jewish writers¹, both ancient and modern, to belong to the Messiah. Christ is the Son of God, not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; he is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God; and as such is owned and declared by Jehovah the Father, in these words; the foundation of which relation lies in the begetting of him; which refers not to his nature, either divine or human: not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs must be also, being the same undivided nature, common to all three; much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without father; nor to his office, as Mediator, in which he is not a son, but a servant; besides, he was a son, previous to his being a prophet, priest, and King; and his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office; or by which that is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has respect to his divine person; for as, in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so it is in divine generation; though care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like; nor can the modus, or manner of it, be conceived, or explained by us: the date of it, *to-day*, designs eternity, as in Isa. xliii. 13, which is one continued day, an everlasting now; and this may be applied to any time and case, in which Christ is declared to be the son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, his

transfiguration on the Mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as it is in Acts xiii. 33. see Rom. i. 4. and at his ascension to heaven, when he was made Lord and Christ, and his divine sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time, and case, more especially referred to here. *And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son*; which words are taken from 2 Sam. vii. 14. and the sense is, not that he should be his son by adoption; or that he would be instead of a father to him; or that he should be as dear to him as a son is to a father; but that he was really and properly so; and he would make it manifest, and own him as such, as he did at Jordan's river, upon the Mount, and at his resurrection and ascension; though the words are spoken of Solomon, as a type of Christ, they properly belong to the antitype, who is greater than Solomon.

Ver. 6. *And again, when he bringeth the first-begotten into the world; &c.*] By the *first-begotten* is meant Christ. This is a name given him in the Old Testament, and is what the Hebrews were acquainted with, and therefore the apostle uses it; it is in Psal. lxxxix. 27. from whence it seems to be taken here, and which the ancient Jews² acknowledge is to be understood of the Messiah; who, as the Son of God, is the only-begotten of the Father, and was begotten from eternity, as before declared, and before any creature had a being, and therefore called the first-born of every creature, Col. i. 15. and is sometimes styled the first-begotten from the dead; he rose the first in time, and is the first in causality and dignity; and he may be called the first-born, with respect to the saints, who are of the same nature with him, and are partakers of the divine nature, and are adopted into the family of God, though they are not in the same class of sonship with him; and the bringing of him into the world may refer to his second coming, for this seems agreeable from the natural order of the words, which may be rendered, *when he shall bring again, &c.* that is, a second time, and from Psal. xcvi. from whence the following words are cited; and from the glory he shall then have from the angels, who will come with him, and minister to him; and not to his resurrection from the dead, when he was exalted above angels, principalities, and powers; though, as we read the words, they seem to regard his first coming into this habitable world, at his incarnation and birth, when he was attended with angels, and worshipped by them, according to the order of God the father, as follows: *he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him*; these words are cited from Psal. xcvii. 7. where the angels are called *Elohim*, gods. So Aben Ezra on the place observes, that there are some (meaning their doctors) who say, that *all the gods are the angels*; and Kimchi says, that the words are not imperative, but are in the past tense, instead of the future, *all the angels have worshipped him*; that is, they shall worship him; as they have done, so they will do. According to our version, they are called upon to worship God's first-born, his only-begotten son, with a religious worship and adoration, even *all* of them, not one excepted;

¹ Tanchuma apud Huls. p. 321.

² Zohar in Nuumb. fol. 92. 2. Maimon. in Misn. Saahedrin, c. 11. 1. & Abarbanel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 37. 4. & 38. 1.

³ Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4.

which shews, that Christ, as the first-begotten, is the Lord God, for he only is to be served and worshipped; and that if angels are to worship him, men ought; and that angels are not to be worshipped, and that Christ is preferable to them; and the whole sets forth the excellency and dignity of his person. Philo the Jew * often calls the Logos, or Word of God, his first-begotten.

Ver. 7. *And of the angels he saith, &c.] Or to the angels, as in the following verse, to the son, which stands opposed to this; and the words said to them, or of them, are found in Psal. civ. 4. who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire: this cannot be understood of the wind and lightning, and of God's making these his messengers and ministers to do his will; for such a sense is not suitable to the scope of the psalm, from whence they are taken, nor to the order of the words in which they stand; for it is not said he makes spirits, or winds, his angels, and flaming fire his ministers, but the reverse; and is contrary to the design of the apostle in citing them, which is to shew the superiority of Christ to angels, of whom it is said, that they are made spirits: they are spirits, created ones, and so differ from God the Creator: they are incorporeal ones, and so differ from men; they are immaterial, and so die not; they are spiritual substances subsisting in themselves: and they are made such by God the Father, and by the Son the Lord Jesus Christ, within the six days of the creation, and all at once; for it is not to be supposed that the Lord is daily making them; and this proves the son to be God, as well as more excellent than the angels; unless this is to be understood of the daily disposal of them in providence, in causing winds, thunder, lightning, and the like. Some choose to supply the word with as, and read, who maketh his angels as winds; for invisibility, velocity, power, and penetration: and his ministers as a flame of fire: and these are the same with the angels, for they are ministers to God; they attend his presence; are ready to perform any service for him; they sing his praise, and are his chariots in which he rides: and they are ministers to Christ; they attended at his incarnation: were solicitous for his preservation, ministered to him in distress, assisted at his resurrection, and accompanied him in his ascension, and will be with him at his second coming: and they are as a flame of fire, so called from their great power, force, and swiftness; and from their burning love, and flaming zeal, hence named seraphim; and because they are sometimes the executioners of God's wrath, and will descend in flaming fire, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven: angels sometimes appear in fiery forms; the chariots and horses of fire, by which Elijah was carried up to heaven, were no other than angels, in such forms: so the Jews * say of the angels, "all the angels, their horses are horses of fire, and their chariots fire, and their bows fire, and their spears fire, and all their instruments of war fire." And they have a notion, that an angel is half water, and half fire †.*

Ver. 8. *But unto the son, he saith, &c.] What he*

does not to angels, and which sets him infinitely above them; which shews him to be a Prince and King, and not a servant, or minister; and which even ascribes deity to him: *thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: this, with what follows in this verse, and the next, is taken out of Psal. xlv. 6, 7. which psalm is not spoken of Solomon, to whom many things in it will not agree; he was not fairer than other men; nor was he a warrior; nor was his throne for ever and ever; and much less a divine person, and the object of worship; but the Messiah, and so the ancient Jews understand it: the Targum applies it to him, and mentions him by name in ver. 2. and some of their modern writers † affirm it is said of the Messiah; though Aben Ezra seems doubtful about it, saying, it is spoken concerning David, or Messiah his son, whose name is so, Ezek. xxxvii. 25. Deity is here ascribed to the son of God; he is expressly called God; for the words will not bear to be rendered, thy throne is the throne of God, or thy throne is God; or be supplied thus, God shall establish thy throne: nor are the words an apostrophe to the father, but are spoken to the king, the subject of the psalm, who is distinguished from God the father, being blessed and anointed by him; and this is put out of all doubt by the apostle, who says they are addressed to the son, who is not a created God, nor God by office, but by nature; for though the word Elohim is sometimes used of those who are not gods by nature; yet being here used absolutely, and the attributes of eternity, and most perfect righteousness, being ascribed to the person so called, prove him to be the true God; and this is the reason why his throne is everlasting, and his sceptre righteous, and why he should be worshipped, served, and obeyed. Dominion and duration of it are given to him; his throne denotes his kingly power, and government; which is general, over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked, even the greatest among them, the kings and princes of the earth: and special, over his church and people; and which is administered by his spirit and grace in the hearts of his saints; and by his word and ordinances in his churches; and by his powerful protection of them from their enemies; and will be in a glorious manner in the latter day, and in heaven to all eternity; for his throne is for ever, and on it he'll sit for ever: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; he'll have no successor in it, nor can his government be subverted; and though he will deliver up the kingdom to the father, it will not cease. A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; the sceptre is an ensign of royalty; and a sceptre of righteousness, or rightness, is expressive of the justice of government; the Syriac version renders it, a sceptre stretched out; which is a sceptre of mercy, as the instance of Ahasuerus stretching out his sceptre to Esther shews; and such is the Gospel of Christ, which holds forth and declares the mercy, grace, and love of God to men through Christ; and which may be called a sceptre of righteousness, since it reveals and directs to the righteousness of Christ, and encourages to works of righteousness; but here it designs the righteous administration of Christ's kingly office; for just and true*

* De Agricultura, p. 195. De Confus. Ling. p. 329, 341. De Sominis, p. 597.

† Sopher Jetzirah, p. 16. Ed. Rittangel.

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† T. Hieros. Roshhashana, fol. 58. 1.

‡ Kimchi & R. Sol. ben Melech in loc. & R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49. 2.

are, have been, and ever will be his ways, as King of saints.

Ver. 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, &c.*] Christ loves righteous persons and righteous works, faithfulness and integrity, and a just administration of government, every thing that is holy, just, and good; which has appeared in the whole course of his life on earth, in working out a righteousness for his people, and in encouraging righteousness in them, which he leads them in the way of; and his love of justice will still more appear at the last day, when he will judge the world in righteousness, and give the crown of righteousness to proper persons: and he hates iniquity; or *unrighteousness*, as the Alexandrian copy and another read; as being contrary to his nature, both as God and man, and to the righteous law of God; which has appeared by his inveighing against it, and dehorting from it; by his severity exercised towards delinquents; by his suffering for it, and abolishing of it; and by chastising his own people on account of it; and his abhorrence of it will still more appear at the day of judgment, when all workers of iniquity, professors and profane, will be bid to depart from him: *therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*; the anointer is the God of Christ; that is, God the father, who is the God of Christ, as man; and is so called, because he prepared and formed the human nature of Christ, and supported it under all its sufferings, and has glorified it; and as such Christ prayed unto him, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him: the anointed is the son of God, the son spoken to, and is called God in the preceding verse; though he is not anointed as God, but as Mediator, to be prophet, and priest, and King: what he is anointed with is not material oil, but spiritual, the Holy Ghost, as it is explained in Acts x. 38. called the oil of gladness, in allusion to the use of oil at feasts and weddings, for the delight and refreshment of the guests; and because of the spiritual effects of joy and gladness, both on Christ, as man, and on his people. Now Christ was anointed as Mediator from all eternity; that is, he was invested with his office as such; and at his conception and birth he was filled with the Holy Ghost; who also descended on him at his baptism, after which he went about doing good, and healing diseases; but here it seems to refer to the time of his ascension, when he was declared to be Lord and Christ, the anointed one; and received gifts for men, the fulness of the spirit without measure, and with which he was anointed above his fellows; by whom are meant, not the angels, nor the kings and princes of the earth; but the saints, who are so called, because they are of the same nature, and are of the same family, and are partakers of the same spirit, and grace; and having received the unction from him, are also kings, priests, and prophets, and will be companions with him to all eternity. Now the reason of his being anointed, or exalted, and made Lord and Christ, is, because he loves righteousness; see Phil. ii. 7, 8. or rather, because he is anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure, therefore he loves righteousness; for the words may be rendered, *thou lovest righteousness — because God, thy God, hath anointed thee.*

Ver. 10. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, &c.*] The person here addressed, as the Lord or Jehovah, and as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is the same with the son spoken to, and of, before; for the words are a continuation of the speech to him, though they are taken from another psalm, from Psal. cii. 25, 26, 27. The phrase, *thou, Lord*, is taken from ver. 12. and is the same with, *O my God*, ver. 24. and whereas it is there said, *of old*, and here, *in the beginning*, the sense is the same; and agreeably to the Septuagint, and the apostle, Jarchi interprets it by כְּתוּלָה, *at, or from the beginning*; and so the Targum paraphrases it, כִּן שְׂרוּיָא, *from the beginning*, that the creatures were created, *sc.* that is, in the beginning of the creation, which is the apostle's meaning; and shews the eternity of Christ, the Lord, the Creator of the earth, who must exist before the foundation of the world; and confutes the notion of the eternity of the world: and the founding of it shews that the earth is the lower part of the creation; and denotes the stability of it; and points out the wisdom of the Creator in laying such a foundation; and proves the deity of Christ, by whom that, and all things in it, were made: *the heavens are the works of thine hands*; there are more heavens than one; there are the airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the third heaven; and they were created in the beginning, as the earth was, Gen. i. 1. and are the immediate work of Christ; they were made by himself, not by the means of angels, who were not in being till these were made; nor by any intermediate help, which he could not have, and which he did not need: the phrase is expressive of the power of Christ in making the upper parts of the creation, and of his wisdom in garnishing them, in which there is a wonderful display of his glory; and the whole serves to set forth the dignity and excellency of his person.

Ver. 11. *They shall perish, &c.*] That is, the heavens and the earth; not as to the substance of them, but as to the quality of them; the present form and fashion of them shall pass away; the curse will be removed from them, and they will be renewed and purified, but the substance of them will continue; otherwise there would be no place, either for the righteous or the wicked. *But thou remainest*; without any change or alteration, neither in his natures, divine or human, as God or man, nor in his office as Mediator; as a priest, he has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession; as a King, his kingdom is an everlasting one, and of it there will be no end; and as a prophet, he'll be the everlasting light of his people. *They all shall wax old as doth a garment*; garments in time wax old, and lose their beauty and usefulness, unless when a miracle is wrought, as in the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness. Now the heavens, and the light thereof, are as a garment and a curtain, Psal. civ. 2. and these, together with the earth, will in time come to their end of usefulness, in the present form of them; see Isa. li. 6.

Ver. 12. *And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, &c.*] In order to lay them aside, and make no use of them in the manner they now are; just as clothes, when they are grown old, or out of fashion, are folded up, and laid aside from use at present, or are put into

another form. In the Hebrew text it is, *as a vesture shalt thou change them*; but the sense is the same, for a garment is changed by folding it, or turning it; agreeably to which Jarchi interprets the Hebrew phrase thus, "as a man turns his garment to put it off;" the Vulgate Latin version reads as the Hebrew does, and one of the manuscripts of New College, Oxford. *And they shall be changed*; as to their form and use, not as to their being; for a change, and an annihilation, are two things: *but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail*; which is expressive of the immutability of Christ, in his nature and perfections, in his person and offices, in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and of his duration or continuance, in opposition to the fading and transitory nature of the heavens and earth, and of all outward enjoyments: and this may serve to take off the heart from the one, and set it upon the other; and to strengthen our faith in Christ, and encourage us to expect a continuance of blessings from him; all supplies of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter.

Ver. 13. *But to which of the angels said he at any time, &c.*] That is, he never said to any of them in his council, or covenant; he never designed to give them any such honour, as hereafter expressed; he never promised it to them, or bestowed it on them; he never called up any of them to so high a place, or to such a dignity: *sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*; yet this he said to his son, Psal. cx. 1. for to him, the Messiah, are they spoken, and have had their fulfilment in him; see the note on Matt. xxii. 44. and therefore he must be greater than the angels.

Ver. 14. *Are they not all ministering spirits, &c.*] Servants to God, to Christ, and to his people, and therefore must be inferior to the son of God. The phrase is Rabbinical; frequent mention is made in Jewish writings * of מלאכי הרושית, *the angels of ministry, or the ministering angels*; this is their common appellation with the Jews; and the apostle writing to such, uses a like phrase, well known to them, and ap-

peals to them, if the angels were not such spirits. *Sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?* the persons they minister to, and for, are those, *who shall be the heirs of salvation*; that is, of eternal glory, which will be possessed by the saints, as an inheritance: hence it belongs to children, being bequeathed to them by their father, and comes to them through the death of Christ, of which the spirit is the earnest; and this shews that it is not of works, and that it is of an eternal duration, and takes in all kind of happiness: and of this the saints are heirs now; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *who are heirs of salvation*; nor should it be rendered, *who shall be heirs*, but rather, *who shall inherit salvation*; for this character respects not their heirship, but their actual inheriting of salvation: and the ministry of angels to, and for them, lies in things temporal and spiritual, or what concern both their bodies and their souls; in things temporal, in which they have often been assisting, as in providing food for their bodies, in curing their diseases, in directing and preserving them in journeys, in saving and delivering them from outward calamities, in restraining things hurtful from hurting them, and in destroying their enemies; in things spiritual, as in making known the mind and will of God to them, in comforting them, and suggesting good things to them, and in helping and assisting them against Satan's temptations; and they are present with their departing souls at death, and carry them to heaven, and will gather the elect together at the last day. *And they are sent forth to minister to them in such a way*; they are sent forth by Christ, the Lord and Creator of them, who therefore must be superior to them; they don't take this office upon themselves, though, being put into it, they faithfully and diligently execute it, according to the will of Christ: and this shews the care of Christ over his people, and his kindness to them, and the great honour he puts upon them, to appoint such to minister to them; and since they are of so much use and service, they ought to be respected and esteemed, though not worshipped.

C H A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle, from the superior excellency of Christ, by whom the Gospel revelation is come, discoursed of in the preceding, urges the believers he writes to, to a more diligent attention to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to which he adds another motive inducing thereunto, lest those things should be let slip, and be lost, ver. 1. and then, by another argument from the less to the greater, that if the law, which was given by angels, could not be broke with impunity, then how should such escape divine punishment that neglected and despised the Gospel, which is a doctrine of salvation, was delivered by the Lord himself, and confirmed by various testimonies and miracles, ver. 2, 3, 4. And besides the Gospel dispensation is not put into the hands of angels, but into the hands of Christ, to whom all things are

subject, which is proved out of Psal. viii. 4, 5, 6. and which proof shews, that though Christ, on account of his sufferings and death, was for a while made lower than the angels, yet being now crowned with glory and honour, he is above them, and they are subject to him, since all things are, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. And this anticipates an objection that might be taken from hence against what the apostle had asserted in the foregoing chapter, concerning the superiority of Christ to angels; and this leads him on to observe the reason of the sufferings and death of Christ, and also of his incarnation; that the moving cause of Christ's sufferings and death was the grace and good will of God; that he did not suffer for himself, but for others, for every one of those described in the context; that inasmuch as he was the surety of those persons, it was

* T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. & 14. 1, 2. & 16. 1. Taanith, fol. 11. 1. & Megilla, fol. 15. 2. & in Zohar passim.

agreeable to the justice of God, and it could not be otherwise, but he must be made perfect through suffering; and this was the way to bring many sons to glory, ver. 9, 10. and as for his incarnation, or his becoming man, that was necessary, that the sanctifier and the sanctified might be of the same nature, that he might be able to call them brethren and children, ver. 11, 12, 13. as he does, for which are cited Psal. xxii. 22. and xviii. 2. Isa. viii. 18. and because the children he engaged to bring to glory were partakers of flesh and blood; and also that he might be capable of dying, and by dying destroy the devil, and deliver his timorous people, who, through fear of death, lived in a continual state of bondage, ver. 14, 15. for which reason he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham, ver. 16. And besides, it was necessary he should be in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be merciful to them, and faithful to God, and be in a state and condition capable of sympathizing with them, and succouring them under their temptations, which he was able to do by suffering through temptation himself, ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed, &c.*] This is an inference from the apostle's discourse in the preceding chapter; since he, by whom God has spoke in these last days, is his son, who is infinitely above the angels, they being his creatures, and worshippers of him, and ministers to him, and his; therefore the greater regard should be had to the Gospel spoken by him: even to the things which we have heard; which are no other than the truths of the Gospel, which had been preached unto them, and which were heard by the apostles, who had preached them to them; and they had heard them from them, or from Christ himself, and were what their forefathers had desired to hear, and which the carnal ear has not heard; for there is an internal and an external hearing of the Gospel. Now it becomes the hearers of it to give heed, or attend unto it, to beware of that which is pernicious and hurtful, and to regard that which is good and profitable; and this giving heed takes in a close consideration of Gospel truths, a diligent inquiry into them, a valuable esteem of them, a strict adherence to them, and a watchfulness to retain what is heard, and to conform unto it: and this was to be done more earnestly than their forefathers had, or than they themselves had; or this may be put for the superlative degree, and signify, that they should give the most earnest heed; for they had the most abundant reason to give heed, since what they heard was not from Moses, and the prophets, to whom they did well to take heed, but from Christ the son of God, who was greater than they: lest at any time we should let them slip: and this either respects persons; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *lest we should run out*; and the Syriac version, *lest we should fall*; and the Arabic version, *lest we should fall from honesty*; which may intend partial slips and falls, to which the people of God are subject; and which are offences owing to inactivity to the word; for the Gospel, duly attended to, is a preservative from falling: or it may respect things, even the doctrines of the Gospel, lest we should let

them slip out of us, through us, or besides us: the metaphor seems to be taken either from leaking vessels, which let out what is put into them; or to strainers, which let the liquor through, and it falls on the ground, and cannot be gathered up, and so becomes useless; and which is expressive of unprofitable hearing of the word, through inattention, negligence, and forgetfulness, and the irrecoverableness of it, when it is gone: the Gospel may be lost to some that hear it, as to any real benefit and advantage by it; and some who hear the Gospel may be lost and perish; but the grace of the Gospel can never be lost.

Ver. 2. *For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, &c.*] This is a description of the law, from whence the apostle argues to a stricter regard to the Gospel, as from the lesser to the greater: this is called the word, and a terrible one it was; it was a voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; it was the word spoken with an articulate voice, and was heard by the Israelites, and it was spoken by angels. Jehovah the father's voice was never heard; when he came to give the law, ten thousand angels came along with him; and the ministry of these he used in the delivery of the law; by them he spoke it; they formed in the air the voices heard; it was ordained by them, and given by the disposition of them; see Acts vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. To which agree those words of Herod, spoken to the Jews, recorded by Josephus^p; that we learn of God, *δὲ ἀγγέλων*, by angels, the best of doctrines, and the most holy things in the law. And this was steadfast; firm, and sure, being the word of God, which cannot pass away, until it be fulfilled: it was confirmed by terrible signs attending it, and by the people's assent unto it; the penalty of it is sure and certain, in case of disobedience; and as to the form and ministration of it, it remained until Christ, the end of it, came; and as to the matter of it, so far as of a moral nature, it still remains: the judicial and ceremonial parts of it are abrogated; and the whole of it is abolished, as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and as to the curse and condemnation of it, and with respect to justification by it; but it still continues as a cursing law to all that are under it; and as a means of conviction to sinners in the hands of the spirit; and as a rule of walk and conversation to saints, as in the hands of Christ: and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; every precept of the law had a penalty annexed to it; and every breach of it was punished as that penalty required; and that according to the strict justice of God, and the just demerit of sin; and none escaped, but suffered the punishment due to the violation of the precept either in themselves, or in their surety; so steadfast and immovable was this law.

Ver. 3. *How shall we escape, &c.*] The righteous judgment of God, and eternal punishment: if we neglect so great salvation? as the Gospel is, which is called salvation; in opposition to the law, which is the ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation by Christ; and is the means of bringing it near, and of the application of it in conversion, and so is the power of God unto it: and it is a

great salvation; the Gospel which reveals it is great, for the author of it is Christ; it has been confirmed by miracles, and attended with great success; and has in it great things, great mysteries, and exceeding great and precious promises: and the salvation which it declares is great; it is the produce of great wisdom; it is wrought by a great person, by a Saviour, and a great one, and who is the great God, and our Saviour; it has been procured at great charge and expense, even at the expense of the blood and life of the son of God; and has been obtained through great difficulties; and is the salvation of the soul, the more noble part of man; and it is a complete and everlasting one: to neglect this, is to be careless of it; to contemn it, and to despise the ministers of it; and to make any thing else but Christ the way of salvation: and the danger such are in is very great; it is not possible that they should escape divine vengeance, since their sin is so great, and attended with such aggravating circumstances; for it is a contempt of the grace and wisdom of God in providing such a Saviour, and a trampling under foot the son of God, and a counting his blood as a common thing; and besides, there's no more sacrifice for sin, they can have nothing to atone for it; and that God, whom they offend hereby, is both omniscient and omnipotent, and there will be no escaping out of his hands: to which must be added, that this Gospel of salvation is that *which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord*; by the Lord Jesus Christ himself; the Gospel was preached by him, and he was extraordinarily qualified for it; and he spake it as never man did: it was preached by John indeed, and by all the prophets before him, and to the Israelites in the wilderness, and to Abraham before them, and even to Adam in Eden's garden, which was the first time it was spoken; but then it was spoken to him by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, the essential Word, the son of God, as the ancient Chaldee paraphrases, which express the sense of the old Jewish church, shew: besides, it began most fully and clearly to be preached by him in the days of his flesh, so as it never was preached before, nor since; grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth came by him, in all their fulness and glory: and *was confirmed unto us by them that heard him*; the Gospel is in itself firm and stable; nor did the words of Christ need any confirmation, who is truth itself, the *Amen*, and faithful witness; but in condescension to human weakness, and by reason that Christ, as man, was not everywhere, and that by the mouth of more witnesses it should be established, he sent forth his apostles to preach it; who heard it from him, and they published it to the Jews first, as these were to whom the apostle writes, and then to the Gentiles. And though the apostle had it first by revelation from Christ himself, Gal. i. 11, 12. it was confirmed to him by Ananias.

Ver. 4. *God also bearing them witness, &c.*] The apostles of Christ; God testifying to their mission and commission, and the truth of the doctrine they preached: *both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles*; such as taking up serpents without hurt, healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, and raising

the dead, and casting out devils, and the like; all which were for the confirmation of the Gospel preached by them: a sign, wonder, or miracle, for these signify the same thing, is a marvellous work done before men, by the power of God, to confirm a divine truth; God is the sole author of miracles; and they were done in the first ages of Christianity, when they were necessary, to give evidence of the truth of it, and to establish men in it; and these were various, as before observed: *and gifts of the Holy Ghost*; such as besides gifts of healing and working miracles, gifts of foretelling things to come, discerning of spirits, speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. *according to his own will*; either according to the will of God, who bore testimony by these miracles and gifts; or according to the will of the Holy Spirit, who distributed them to men severally as he pleased, 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Ver. 5. *For unto the angels, &c.*] Though angels were concerned in the giving of the law, and were frequently employed under the former dispensation, in messages to men, and in making revelations of God's mind and will to them, yet to them *hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak*: by which is meant, not the future state of eternal glory and happiness in heaven, as opposed to this world, and the present state of things; though there may be much truth in this sense, as that the present world is in subjection to angels, and the world to come is not; the present world is much in subjection, though it is not put into subjection, to evil angels, who usurp a power over it, hence Satan is called the god and prince of this world; and it is in some sense in subjection to good angels, as they are used by God in the execution of his providential care and government, in influencing and assisting at the councils of princes, in inflicting God's judgments on kingdoms and nations, and in the special care of his own people: but the world to come, as opposed to this, is not at all subject to them; they are employed in carrying the souls of departed saints thither, and shall be with them there, and join with them in their service; but they'll not be as kings, nor even as children, but as servants; much less is heaven at their dispose to give to whomsoever they please; it is only in this sense in subjection to Christ, the Prince of life, who has power to give eternal life to as many as the father has given to him: but it is not of this world the apostle is speaking; he is speaking of something now, which bears this name, and in proof of it cites a passage out of Psal. viii. where mention is made of sheep, and other things, which cannot refer to the world of glory: rather it designs the new heavens and new earth at the resurrection, and day of judgment, for these will not be put in subjection to angels; though of these the apostle is not speaking in the context: it seems therefore to intend the Gospel, and the Gospel dispensation and church-state, in opposition to the Jewish state, and legal dispensation, which was called a world, and had in it a worldly sanctuary, and worldly ordinances, which is now at an end; and at the end of which Christ came, and then another world took place, here called *the world to come*, as the times of the Mes-

siah are frequently called by the Jews *עולם הבא*, *the world to come*, the Gospel dispensation, the apostle was treating of in the preceding verses, in distinction from the law, the word spoken by angels; for the Gospel was not spoken by them; but by the Lord: the Gospel state is very properly the world to come, with respect to the Old-Testament saints, who were looking for it, and in which old things are past away, and all things are become new; angels desire to look into the mysteries of it, and learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God; but not they, but men, are the dispensers of the doctrines of it; and Christ, he is the Head, King, Governor, and Father of this new world: so instead of *everlasting father*, the Septuagint render the clause in Isa. ix. 6. *πατήρ τῶν πολλοῦν αἰώνων*, *the father of the age, or world to come*; and hence mention is made in the Jewish writings of *עלמא דתתא דמשחיה*, *the world to come of the Messiah*^d.

Ver. 6. *But one in a certain place testified, &c.*] That is, David, for he is the penman of the psalm, out of which the following words are taken; and though his name is not mentioned by the apostle, nor the particular place, or the psalm pointed at, as in Acts xiii. 33, 35, yet this was not through ignorance of either, nor out of disrespect to the penman; but because the apostle is writing to Jews, who were conversant with the Scriptures, and knew full well who said the words, and where they were: and it is usual with the Jews to cite passages in this manner; and the form by which the passage is introduced, by the word *testified*, is quite agreeable to their way of citing Scripture, of which there is another instance in ch. vii. 17. and I think that this form is only used in this epistle to the Hebrews, with which they were acquainted: it is common with them to say, *הומרה העידה*, *the law testified*^e, as it is said in such or such a place; and here the apostle produces a passage, as a witness and testimony of the truth of what he had said, that the Gospel dispensation is not put in subjection to angels, but to the Messiah: the passage stands in Psal. viii. 4. which psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah, as appears from the inapplicability of it to others; and from the application of a passage in it to the children in his time, Matt. xxi. 16. by Christ himself, and of the passage here by the apostle; nor in any other time was the name of the Lord excellent in all the earth, with which the psalm begins and concludes: *Saying, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?* this is not to be understood of mankind in general: not of man in a state of innocence; there were no babes nor sucklings in paradise, nor enemies to restrain; *Enosh*, the word for man, signifies a frail mortal man, which Adam then was not; nor could he be called the son of man; nor can it so well suit with him, to be said to be made a little lower than the angels, and then crowned with glory and honour: nor of man as fallen, for all things are not subjected unto him; but of Christ, with whom every thing agrees, as the name by which he is called, *Enosh*, a frail man; for he was a man encompassed with infirmities; of no note and esteem among men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; was subject to death, and did die; and is often

called the son of man: what is said of him suits with him, as that God was *mindful of him*; which may be expressive of his love and delight in, and choice of his human nature, to be taken into union with his divine person; and of his counsel and covenant in preparing it for him; and of his uniting it to his person; and of his providential care of it, and great affection for it; of his unktion of it, and of his great regard to it in its sufferings, by supporting it, and in raising it from the dead: and also that he *visited* him; not in a way of wrath, but of favour, with his presence, with the gifts and graces of his spirit, with divine supports, and spiritual peace and joy; all which in itself it was not deserving of, nor could it claim; and therefore these things are spoken of as favours, and in a way of admiration.

Ver. 7. *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, &c.*] In the Hebrew text it is, *than Elohim*, which some render, *than God*; but it is rightly rendered by the apostle, *than angels*; and so the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it. Christ was made a little lower than the angels, through the assumption of the human nature, which is inferior to angels, especially the corporeal part of it, and in this Kimchi makes the lessening to be; and more especially as that was assumed by Christ, with the infirmities of it; and by reason of the straits and indignities he was brought into in it; besides, he was in it made under the law, which was given by angels, and to some parts of which they are not subject; and sometimes he stood in need of the ministry and support of angels, and had it; particularly he was made lower than they, when he was deprived of the gracious presence of God, and in the time of his sufferings and death; and which seem chiefly to be respected, as appears from ver. 9. and the word *little* may not so much intend the degree of his humiliation, as the duration of it; for it may be rendered, *a little while*; in which sense it is used in Acts v. 34. as the Hebrew word *מעט* is in Psal. xxxvii. 10. and so may respect the time of his suffering death; and at most the time from his incarnation to his resurrection; for he could not continue long in this low estate, which is matter of joy to us; he could not be held by the cords of death, but must rise, and be exalted above angels, as he is: and he was made so low by God, Jehovah the father, whose name is excellent in all the earth, Psal. viii. 1. he pre-ordained him to this low estate; he prepared a body for him, and had a very great hand in his sufferings and death; though neither of these were contrary to his will: *thou crownest him with glory and honour*; with that glory he had with the father before the world was, and which followed upon his sufferings and death; for through them he entered into it, and upon his resurrection had it, and he is ascended on high, where he has the honour to sit at the right hand of God, which none of the angels have; and therefore is now above them, though once for a while below them, and they are now subject to him: *and didst set him over the works of thy hands*; over angels, principalities, and powers; over the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, and all things in it, and made him

^d Targum in 1 Kings iv. 33.

^e T. Bah. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 1. Maimon. Hiltchot Yesode Hattorah, 3. 7. sect. 6. & Melech, c. 11. sect. 1. Vid. Aben Ezra in Lev. xvi. 8.

higher than the heavens, and gave him a name above every name.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet, &c.*] Good angels, men and devils, all things in heaven, earth, and sea; see 1 Pet. iii. 22. *for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him*; there is no one person or thing that is not subject to Christ; the subjection is the most universal, either voluntary or involuntary; whether they will or no, they are, and must be subject; God has left nothing but what he has put under his power: *but now we see not yet all things put under him*; this seems to be an objection, and even a contradiction to what is before said; which may be removed by observing, that though this general subjection is not seen by us, it does not follow that it is not; and though it is not as yet visible, yet it will be: and besides, the apostle's sense may be, that no such general subjection to any mere man has ever been seen and known; as not to Solomon, nor Ahasuerus, nor Cyrus, nor Alexander the great, nor Julius, nor Augustus Cæsar, nor any other; and this he may observe, to shew the inapplicability of this passage to any but to Jesus Christ; and this sense is confirmed by what follows.

Ver. 9. *But we see Jesus, &c.*] Not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the mind, and understanding; that he is Jesus, as the Syriac version reads; and that he is designed in the above words; and that he has all things made subject unto him; and that he was humbled, and now exalted, as follows: *who was made a little lower than the angels*; in his state of humiliation; see the note on ver. 7. *for the suffering of death*: this clause may be considered either as connected with the preceding; and then the sense is, that Jesus became lower than the angels, by, or through suffering death; in that respect he was lower than they, who die not; this proved him to be in a condition below them; and shewed how pertinent the above words were to him, and how they were fulfilled in him: or with the following; and then the meaning is, that because Jesus suffered death in the room and stead of his people; humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, when he was very low indeed, therefore he is *crowned with glory and honour*; see Phil. ii. 8, 9. and the note on ver. 7. *that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*; that is, Christ was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and assuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: *to taste death*, is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings; see the note on Matt. xvi. 28. and signifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterness of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curse of the law; though he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taste; and it includes all kinds of death, he tasted of the death of afflictions, being a man of sorrows all his days, and a corporeal death, and what was equivalent to an eternal one; and so some think the words will bear to be rendered, *that he by the grace of God might taste of every death*; which rendering of the words, if it could be established, as it is agreeable to the context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an argument from this place, in

favour of the universal scheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any disregard to him, or because he deserved it, but his *grace*, free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ransom; to pre-ordain him to be the Lamb slain; to send him in the fullness of time, and give him up to justice and death: the Syriac version reads, *for God himself through his own grace tasted death for all*; Christ died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a surety, in their room and stead, and that not for every individual of mankind; for there are some he knows not; for some he does not pray; and there are some who will not be saved: the word *man* is not in the original text, it is only *υμεις παντες*, which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered *for the whole*; that is, the whole body, the church for whom Christ gave himself, and is the Saviour of; or distributively, and be translated, *for every one*; for every one of the sons God brings to glory, ver. 10. for every one of the *brethren*, whom Christ sanctifies, and he is not ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, ver. 11, 12. for every one of the members of the *church*, in the midst of which he sung praise, ver. 12. for every one of the *children* God has given him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood, ver. 13, 14. and for every one of the *seed* of Abraham, in a spiritual sense, whose nature he assumed, ver. 16.

Ver. 10. *For it became him, for whom are all things, &c.*] This is not a periphrasis of Christ, who died, but of God the father, who delivered him to death; and who is the final cause of all things, in nature, and in grace, all things being made for his pleasure and for his glory; and he is the efficient cause of all things, as follows: *and by whom are all things*; all the works of creation, providence, and grace: *in bringing many sons to glory*; not to worldly glory, but to the heavenly glory, which they are undeserving of; and which was long ago prepared for them; is at present hid; is weighty, solid, durable, yea, eternal: the persons whom God, of his rich grace, brings to this, are *sons*; who are predestinated to the adoption of children; are regenerated by the spirit of God; believe in Christ; and have the spirit of adoption given them, and so being children, are heirs of glory: and these are *many*; for though they are but few, when compared with others, yet they are many, considered by themselves; they are many that God has ordained to eternal life, and given to Christ, and for whom he has given himself a ransom, and whom he justifies; and accordingly there are many mansions of glory provided for them in their father's house, whose act it is to bring them thither: he has chosen them to this glory, and prepared it for them; he sent his son to redeem them; he reveals his son in them, the hope of glory; he calls them to his eternal glory, and makes them meet for it, and gives them an abundant entrance into it: and *him it became*—*to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*; Christ is the *Captain of salvation*, and is so called, because he is the author of it; and he is the Prince and Commander of these sons, who are committed to his charge, and are under his care; and is their guide and leader; and who is gone before them to prepare their mansions of glory

for them; and he is made *perfect through sufferings*: he suffered all that the law and justice of God could require; and hereby he became perfectly acquainted with the sufferings of his people, and a perfect Saviour of them; and in this way went to glory himself: and it became God the father, the first cause, and last end of all things, since he had a design to bring all his adopted sons to glory, that his own son should perfectly suffer for them; this was agreeable to, and becoming the perfections of his nature, his wisdom, his veracity, his justice, grace, and mercy.

Ver. 11. *For both he that sanctifieth, &c.*] Not himself, though this is said of him, John xvii. 19. nor his father, though this also is true of him, Isa. viii. 13. but his people, the sons brought to glory, whose salvation he is the Captain of; they are sanctified in him, he being made sanctification to them; and they have their sanctification from him, all their grace and holiness; and they are sanctified by him, both by his blood, which expiates their sins, and removes the guilt of them, and by his spirit, working internal principles of grace and holiness in them, who are by nature, and in their unregenerate state, guilty and unclean: *and they who are sanctified*: the sons brought to glory; they are not naturally holy, nor so of themselves, they are made holy; all that are sons are made holy; whom God adopts into his family, he regenerates: sanctification is absolutely necessary to their being brought to glory; and between the sanctifier and the sanctified there is a likeness, as there ought to be: they are *all of one*: they are both of one God and father, Christ's God is their God, and his father is their father; they are of one body, Christ is the head, and they are members; they are of one covenant, Christ is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, and they share in all its blessings and promises; they are of one man, Adam, Christ is a son of Adam, though not by ordinary generation, they descend from him in the common way; they are all of one nature, of one blood; Christ has took part of the same flesh and blood with them: *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren*; Christ, and these sons that are sanctified, stand in the relation of brethren to each other; Christ is the first-born among many brethren; he is a brother born for the day of adversity, and one that sticks closer than a brother: and this relation is founded both upon the incarnation of Christ, who thereby became his people's *Goel*, or near kinsman, yea, brother, Cant. viii. 1. and upon their adoption into his father's family, which is made manifest by their regeneration, and by their doing his father's will under the influence of his grace and spirit, Matt. xii. 49, 50. and this relation Christ owns; he called his disciples brethren, when God had raised him from the dead, and given him glory; and so he will call all his saints, even the meanest of them, in the great day, Matt. xxviii. 10. and xxv. 40. and *he is not ashamed to do it*; he does not disdain it, though he is God over all, and the son of God, and is also in his human nature made higher than the heavens; which shews the wonderful condescension of Christ, and the honour that is put upon the saints; and may teach them not to despise the

meanest among them: such a relation the Jews own will be between the Messiah and the Israelites. The Targumist on Cant. viii. 1. paraphrases the words thus; "when the King Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel, the children of Israel shall say unto him, Come, be thou with us, *לאח*, for a brother, or be thou our brother." Nor can they say this will reflect any discredit upon Christ, when they make such a relation to be between God and them. The Israelites, they say^f, are called, *אחים לרקנה*, the brethren of the holy blessed God; in proof of which they often produce Psal. cxxii. 8. as being the words of God to them; and again, interpreting those words in Lev. xxv. 48. *one of his brethren may redeem him*, this, say^g they, is the holy blessed God.

Ver. 12. *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, &c.*] These words, with the following clause, are cited from Psal. xxii. 22. as a proof of what the apostle had before asserted; and that this psalm is to be understood, not of the Jewish nation, or people of Israel, nor of Esther, nor of David, but of the Messiah, appears from the title of it, *Ajeleth, Shahar*, which signifies the morning hind; from the particular account of Christ's sufferings in it; from his several offices herein pointed to; from the conversion of the Gentiles it prophesies of; and from several passages cited from hence, and applied to Christ; see Matt. xxvii. 35, 39, 43, 46. And these are the words of Christ addressed to his father; whose name he promises to declare to his brethren; meaning not the Jews, in general, his brethren according to the flesh; but his disciples and followers, particularly the twelve apostles, and the five hundred brethren to whom he appeared after his resurrection; and indeed all the saints and people of God may be included: and by his name he would declare to them, is not meant any particular name of his, as Elohim, El-shaddai, Jehovah, or the like; but rather he himself, and the perfections of his nature, which he, the only-begotten son, lying in his bosom, has declared; though the Gospel seems chiefly to be designed; see John xvii. 6, 26. and this Christ declared with great exactness and accuracy, with clearness and perspicuity, and with all integrity and fidelity: he spoke it out plainly, and concealed no part of it; as he received it from his father, he faithfully made it known to his people; this is expressive of Christ's prophetic office, of his preaching of the Gospel, both in his own person, and by his ministers: *in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee; or a hymn*; this is to be understood not of the church above, but of the church below; and not of the synagogue of the Jews, but of the disciples of Christ, and of his singing an hymn to God, with and among them, as he did at the institution of the supper, Matt. xxvi. 30. for though the number of the apostles was but small, yet they made a congregation or church, and which was a pure and glorious one. With the Jews^h, ten men made a congregation.

Ver. 13. *And again, I will put my trust in him, &c.*] These words are taken not from Isa. viii. 17. where, in the Septuagint version, is a like phrase; for they are not the words of the Messiah there, but of the pro-

^f Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 3. & in Lev. fol. 3. 3. & 9. 3. & 22. 2.

^g Tzeror Hammor, fol. 106. 3.

^h Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6.

phet; and besides, the apostle disjoins them from the following words, which stand there, by saying, *and again*; but they are cited from Psal. xviii. 2. in which psalm are many things which have respect to the Messiah, and his times; the person spoken of is said to be made the head of the Heathen, to whom unknown people yield a voluntary submission, and the name of God is praised among the Gentiles, ver. 43, 49. The Targum upon it makes mention of the Messiah in ver. 32. and he is manifestly spoken of under the name of David, in ver. 50. and which verse is applied to the Messiah, by the Jews, both ancient and modern¹; and these words are very applicable to him, for as man he had every grace of the spirit in him; and this of faith, and also of hope, very early appeared in him; he trusted in God for the daily supplies of life, and that he would help him in, and through the work of man's salvation; see Psal. xxii. 9, 10. Isa. l. 7, 8, 9. he committed his spirit into his hands at death, with confidence, and believed he would raise his body from the dead; and he trusted him with his own glory, and the salvation of his people; and this is a citation pertinent to the purpose, shewing that Christ and his people are one, and that they are brethren; for he must be man, since, as God, he could not be said to trust; and he must be a man of sorrows and distress, to stand in need of trusting in God. *And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me*; this is a citation from Isa. viii. 18. in which prophecy is a denunciation of God's judgments upon Israel, by the Assyrians, when God's own people among them are comforted with a promise of the Messiah, who is described as the Lord of hosts; who is to be sanctified, and be as a sanctuary to the saints, and as a stone of stumbling to others; and the prophet is ordered to bind and seal up the doctrine among the disciples, at which he seems astonished and concerned, but resolves to wait; upon which Christ, to encourage him, speaks these words; for they are not addressed to God, as the Syriac version renders them, *behold I and the children, whom thou hast given me, O God*; in which may be observed, that the saints are children with respect to God, who has adopted them, and with respect to Christ, who is their everlasting father; that they were given to Christ as his spiritual seed and offspring, as his portion, and to be his care and charge; and that this is worthy of attention, and calls for admiration, that Christ and his people are one, and that he is not ashamed to own them before God and men.

Ver. 14. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, &c.*] By the children are meant, not the children of this world, or the men of it; nor the children of the flesh, or Abraham's natural seed; nor visible professors of religion; nor the apostles of Christ only; but all the children of God, the children given to Christ; and the sons that are brought to glory: these are *partakers of flesh and blood*; of human nature, which is common to them all, and which is subject to infirmity and mortality; and the sense is, that they are frail mortal men: and this being their state and case,

he also himself took part of the same; Christ became man also, or assumed an human nature like theirs; this shews that he existed before his incarnation, who of himself, and by his own voluntary act, assumed an individual of human nature into union with his divine person, which is expressive of wondrous grace and condescension: Christ's participation of human nature, and the children's, in some things agree, in others they differ; they agree in this, that it is real flesh and blood they both partake of; that Christ's body is not spiritual and heavenly, but natural as theirs is; and that it is a complete, perfect, human nature, and subject to mortality and infirmity like theirs: but then Christ took his nature of a virgin, and is without sin; nor has it any distinct personality, but from the moment of its being subsisted in his divine person: and now the true reason of Christ's assuming such a nature was on account of the children, which discovers great love to them, and shews that it was with a peculiar view to them that he became man; hence they only share the special advantages of his incarnation, sufferings, and death: and his end in doing this was, *that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*; the devil is said to have the power of death, not because he can kill and destroy men at pleasure, but because he was the first introducer of sin, which brought death into the world, and so he was a murderer from the beginning; and he still tempts men to sin, and then accuses them of it, and terrifies and affrights them with death; and by divine permission has inflicted it, and will be the executioner of the second death. The apostle here speaks in the language of the Jews, who often call Samael, or Satan, כְּלֵאֵן דְּמוּת, *the angel of death*, in their Targums², Talmud¹, and other writings³; and say, he was the cause of death to all the world; and ascribe much the same things to him, for which the apostle here so styles him: and they moreover say⁴, that he will cease in the time to come; that is, in the days of the Messiah: and who, being come, has destroyed him, not as to his being, but as to his power; he has bruised his head, destroyed his works, disarmed his principalities and powers, and took the captives out of his hands, and saved those he would have devoured: and this he has done by death; *by his own death*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; whereby he has abolished death itself, and sin the cause of it, and so Satan, whose empire is supported by it.

Ver. 15. *And deliver them, who through fear of death, &c.*] This is another end of Christ's assuming human nature, and dying in it, and thereby destroying Satan, that he might save some out of his hands: who were *all their life-time subject to bondage*; meaning chiefly God's elect among the Jews; for though all men are in a state of bondage to the lusts of the flesh, and are Satan's captives; yet this describes more particularly the state of the Jews, under the law of Moses, which gendered unto bondage; which they being guilty of the breach of, and seeing the danger they were exposed to on that account, were subject, bound, and held fast in and under a spirit of bondage: and that *through fear of*

¹ Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Tzerer Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

² Targum Jon. in Gen. iii. 6. & in Hab. iii. 5.

³ T. Bab. Succa, fol. 53. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & 90. 2.

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⁴ Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1, 2. Tzerer Hammor, fol. 6. 2. & 22. 4. Caphtor, fol. 96. 3. & alibi.

² Baal Hatturim in Numb. iv. 19.

death; through fear of a corporeal death; through fear of chastisements and afflictions, the forerunners of death, and what sometimes bring it on; and through fear of death itself, as a disunion of soul and body, and as a penal evil; and through fear of what follows it, an awful judgment: and this the Jews especially were in fear of, from their frequent violations of the precepts, both of the moral, and of the ceremonial law, which threatened with death; and this they lived in a continual fear of, because they were daily transgressing, which brought on them a spirit of bondage unto fear: and, as Philo the Jew^o observes, nothing more brings the mind into bondage than the fear of death: and many of these, even all the chosen ones among them, Christ delivered, or saved from sin, from Satan, from the law, and its curses, from death corporeal, as a penal evil, and from death eternal; even from all enemies and dangers, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Ver. 16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, &c.*] Good angels; for they are all along spoken of in this book; and it would have been impertinent to have said this of evil angels: and this is to be understood not of a denying help and assistance to the angels; for though they have not redemption from Christ, which they needed not, yet have they help from him; they are chosen in him, and are gathered together under him; and he is the head of them, and they are upheld and sustained by him in their being, and well-being: but of a non-assumption of their nature; there was no need of it with respect to good angels, and there was no salvation designed for evil ones; and to have assumed the nature of angels, would have been of no service to fallen man; an angelic nature is not capable of death, which was necessary to atone for sin, save men, and destroy Satan: this negative proposition is very strongly put, *he never took*, as the Vulgate Latin version more rightly renders it; at no time, in no place; nor is it said in any place of Scripture that he did; this is a certain truth, and not to be disputed. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *he took not of, or from angels*; he took not any individual from among them: *but he took on him the seed of Abraham*; not all his posterity, but some individual, as the word seed is sometimes used, Gen. iv. 25. and xv. 3. Christ assumed human nature as derived from Abraham; for the Messiah was to spring from Abraham, and is promised, as that seed of his, in whom all nations should be blessed; and he was particularly promised to the Jews, the seed of Abraham, to whom the apostle was writing; and it was with a view to Abraham's spiritual seed, the children of the promise, that Christ partook of flesh and blood: the word here used signifies to catch hold of any one ready to perish, or to lay hold on a person running away, and with great vehemence and affection to hold any thing fast, that it be not lost, and to help persons, and do good unto them; all which may be observed in this act of Christ's, in assuming an individual of human nature, in Abraham's line, into union with his divine person; whereby he has saved those that were gone out of the way, and were ready to perish, and done them the greatest

good, and shewn the strongest affection to them: and from hence may be learned the deity and eternity of Christ, who was before Abraham, as God, though a son of his as man; and his real humanity, and that it was not a person, but a seed, a nature he assumed; and also the union and distinction of natures in him: and Christ's taking human, and not angelic nature, shews the sovereignty of God, and his distinguishing grace and mercy to men.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, &c.*] The adopted sons of God, who were brethren before Christ's incarnation, being from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children: Christ's incarnation was in time, and after that many of the brethren existed; and it was only for their sakes that he assumed human nature; and therefore it was proper he should be like them in that nature, in all things: in all the essentials of it; it was not necessary that he should have it by natural generation; nor that it should have a subsistence in itself as theirs: and in all the properties and affections of it, that are, not sinful; for it did not behove him to be like them in sin, nor in sickness, and in diseases of the body: and in all temptations; though in some things his differ from theirs; none of his arose from within; and those from without could make no impression on him: and in sufferings, that there might be a conformity between the head and members; though there is in some things a difference; his sufferings were by way of punishment, and were attended with wrath, and were meritorious, which can't be said of theirs; but that he should have an human nature, as to its essence and perfection, like to theirs, was necessary: it was proper he should be truly and really man, as well as truly God, *that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest*; he could not be an *high-priest*, offer sacrifice for sin, and make intercession, unless he was man; nor could he be a *merciful* and compassionate one, sympathize with his people in their sorrows, temptations, and sufferings, unless he was like them in these; nor would he be a *faithful*, that is, a true and lawful one otherwise, because every high-priest is taken from among men: *in things pertaining to God*; in things in which God has to do with his people, as to preside in his name over them, to declare his will unto them, and bless them; and in things in which the people have to do with God, to offer to God a sacrifice for their sins, to present this sacrifice to him, to appear in his presence for them, to carry in their petitions, and plead their cause as their advocate: *to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*; of God's covenant-people, the people he has chosen for himself, and given to his son; and whom Christ saves from their sins, by making satisfaction for them, to the law and justice of God, which is here meant by reconciliation: and in order to this, which could not be done without blood, without sufferings and death, it was proper he should be man, and like unto his brethren: the allusion seems to be to the two goats on the day of atonement, one of which was to be slain, and the other let go; which were to be, as the Jews say^p, אֲלִיקֵה, *alike*, in colour, in stature, and in price; and so were the

^o Quod omnis Probus Liber, p. 868.

^p Misna Yoma, c. 6. sect. 1.

birds to be alike in the same things, that were used at the cleansing of the leper⁴: and the Jews tell us⁵, that the high-priest was to be greater than his brethren, in beauty, in strength, in wisdom, and in riches; all which is true of Christ.

Ver. 18. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, &c.*] By Satan, at his entrance on his public ministry, and a little before his death; which was done, not by stirring up sin in him, for he had none, nor by putting any into him, which could not be done, nor could Satan get any advantage over him; he solicited him to one thing and another, but in vain; though these temptations were very troublesome, and disagreeable, and abhorrent to the pure and holy nature of Christ, and so must be reckoned among his sufferings, or things by which he suffered: and as afflictions are sometimes called temptations, in this sense also Christ suffered, being tempted, with outward poverty and meanness, with slight and neglect from his own relations, and with a general contempt and reproach among men: he was often tempted by the Jews with ensnaring questions; he was deserted by his followers, by his own disciples, yea, by his God and father; all which were great trials to him, and must be ac-

counted as sufferings: and he also endured great pains of body, and anguish of mind, and at last death itself. And so he is able to succour them that are tempted; as all the saints, more or less, are, both with Satan's temptations, and with afflictions in the world, which God suffers to befall them, on various accounts; partly on his own account, to shew his grace, power, and faithfulness in supporting under them, and in delivering out of them; and partly on his son's account, that they might be like unto him, and he may have an opportunity of succouring them, and sympathizing with them; and also on their own account, to humble them, to try their faith, to excite them to prayer and watchfulness, and to keep them dependent on the power and grace of God: and these Christ succours, by having and shewing a fellow-feeling with them; by praying for them; by supporting them under temptations; by rebuking the tempter, and delivering out of them: and all this he is able to do; he must be able to succour them as he is God; and his conquering Satan is a convincing evidence to the saints of his ability; but here it intends his qualification, and fitness, and readiness to help in such circumstances, from the experience he himself has had of these things.

C H A P. III.

THE apostle having discoursed, in the preceding chapters, concerning the dignity of Christ's person, and his wondrous grace in the assumption of human nature, and suffering in the room and stead of his people, exhorts the Hebrews in this to a serious consideration of him, attention to him, and faith in him, and constancy in it; the arguments he uses to engage them to these things are taken from the grace and benefit they themselves were partakers of through him, from the office in which he was, and his faithfulness to his father in the discharge of it, ver. 1, 2. which is illustrated in the case of Moses, who was faithful in the house of God, and whom Christ excelled, and therefore was worthy of more honour; partly, because he is the builder of the house; and partly, because he is a son in it, when Moses was only a servant; which house is Christ's own, and consists of true and steadfast believers in him, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. wherefore the exhortation to regard him is renewed, enforced, and expressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. which are taken out of Psal. xcvi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. and applied to the present case: hence the apostle cautions against unbelief, as being a great evil in itself, and bad in its consequence, causing persons to depart from the living God, ver. 12. in order to prevent which he advises to a daily exhortation of each other to their duty, that so they might not be hardened in sin through the deceitfulness of it, ver. 13. and the rather it became them to be concerned to hold fast their faith in Christ to the end, since this is the grand evidence of being a partaker of him, ver. 14. And then the exhortation in the above passage of Scripture is recited, ver. 15. to shew, that

though not all the persons spoken of, yet some did provoke the Lord by their unbelief, and unbecoming carriage, ver. 16. wherefore, by the example of punishment being inflicted on such, of which instances are given in the forefathers of these people, such as their carcases falling in the wilderness, and their not entering into the land of Canaan, which they could not, because God swore they should not, being grieved and provoked by them, and because of their unbelief, they are dissuaded from the same evils, lest they should be punished in like manner, ver. 17, 18, 19.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore, holy brethren, &c.*] The apostle calls the Hebrews *brethren*, not because they were of the same natural stock and lineage, but because they were in the same spiritual relation; they all had the same father, belonged to the same family, were the adopted sons of God, the brethren of Christ, of one another, and of the apostle; and they were *holy*, not by birth, nor by their external separation from other nations, but through sanctification of the spirit; and they were so by profession, and in the opinion of the apostle: *partakers of the heavenly calling*; by which is meant not any business, or employment of life; nor a call to any office in church or state; nor a mere external call by the ministry of the word; but an internal special call of grace, to the enjoyment of the blessings of grace here, and to glory hereafter; and which is not according to works, but according to the grace of God, and is by powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace: and this is said to be *heavenly*, because the grace by which the saints are called is from heaven, and it is to heaven they are called; and the means of their calling, the Gospel, is from heaven; and this epi-

⁴ Misna Negsim, c. 14. sect. 5.

⁵ T. Bab. Horayot, fol. g. 1. Maimon. Cete Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 1. 3 D 2

thet is used to show the excellency of their vocation, and to distinguish it from all others : and this the Hebrews are said to be *partakers* of; which shews, that God had not utterly cast off that people, and yet that they were not the only persons that enjoyed the grace of effectual vocation, they were but partners with others; and that the saints are alike sharers in this blessing, they are called in one hope of their calling; and it denotes the truth and reality of it: the duty they are exhorted to is, to *consider the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*; the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, only *Jesus*; who is called the *apostle*, because he was sent of God to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and do the will of God, particularly to obtain redemption and salvation for his people, which mission does not suppose any inequality of persons, or change of place, or any compulsion or disrespect to Christ, but love to men; and is to be understood of him as in office as Mediator, and shews his authority, and that he was no impostor. The high-priest among the Jews was, on the day of atonement, considered as *שליח, an apostle, or messenger*; for so the elders of the sanhedrim address him on that day, saying, "Lord high-priest, we are the messengers of the sanhedrim, and thou art שליח, our apostle, or messenger," and the messenger of the sanhedrim." And it follows here, and *the high-priest of our profession*: which may be understood either objectively, whom they professed, both by words or deeds; for a profession of him should be public, visible, and sincere; or efficiently, he being the author, sum, and substance of the religion, faith, and Gospel which was professed by them: and he is to be *considered* in the greatness and dignity of his person, as the son of God; and in his wondrous grace and love in assuming human nature, and dying for his people; and in the relations he stands in to them as a father, husband, brother, friend; and in his several offices, as Mediator, and particularly as sent of God, to be the Saviour of sinners; and as the high-priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice, and ever lives to make intercession; and all this to encourage the saints to hold fast their profession of him.

Ver. 2. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, &c.*] Or *made him*: Christ, as man, was made, but not as God; nor is the apostle speaking of the divine nature of Christ, but of his offices: wherefore this phrase designs the constitution and settlement of him in office; which may take in the eternal appointment of him as Mediator; the open promise of him in time; his mission, unction, and attestation from God; and his manifestation and declaration as such, at his ascension and session at God's right hand, when he was made Lord and Christ. Now, as Mediator, he had a trust reposed in him; as the persons of all God's elect, and a fulness of all grace for them; the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and eternal life and happiness; and also the glory of God in their salvation: which

trust he has faithfully discharged as an apostle, and high-priest; in a declaration of the whole will of God; in acknowledging it was his father's doctrine he brought, and in seeking not his own, but his father's glory; in redeeming and saving the persons committed to him; in distributing his grace to them; and in bringing them safe to glory; and in taking care of things pertaining to God: *as also Moses was faithful in all his house*; the passage referred to is in Numb. xii. 7. and which seems not so much to intend the fidelity of Moses in managing the affairs of God's house, as the largeness of the trust reposed in him, the dignity and honour conferred on him, and the power and authority he was invested with, in having the whole house of Israel committed to his care and charge, in which he exceeded all other prophets; and so the faithfulness of Christ is not so much to be understood of the discharge of his trust, as of the trust itself; and the sense is, that he was trusted much by God the father, who constituted him Mediator, even as Moses was; and this sense best agrees with ver. 5, 6. And De Dieu has observed, that the Hebrew word מִשְׁנֵי, in Misnic writings, signifies, as it does, one that is trusted, or is fit to be trusted, as Christ and Moses were; though the former is much more worthy than the latter, as follows.

Ver. 3. *For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, &c.*] Moses was counted worthy of glory and honour, and had it given him, both by God and by men; by God, as appears from the work he called him to, to deliver his people Israel, to reveal his mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them; and from the favours he shewed him, as the miracles he did by him, the near converse he admitted him to, and the view he gave him of his glory, which he made to pass before him, and his regard to him at his death and burial, as well as the testimony he gave of him; and he was counted worthy of honour by men, and who gave it him, as Pharaoh and his people, and the Israelites. The Jews give very great commendations of him; they call him a father in the law, a father in wisdom, and a father in prophecy; and say, that he is the father, master, head, and prince of all the prophets; yea, the great prophet expected in the last days, they say, will be but next to Moses, their master: they observe, that there were more miracles wrought by, and for him, than were wrought by, and for all the prophets that have been since the world began; so that he not only exceeded them in the excellency and sublimity of prophecy, but in the multitude of miracles; but Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and has it given him by God, angels, and men: he is a greater Saviour than Moses; Moses was but a temporal saviour, but he is the author of spiritual and eternal salvation: he is a greater prophet than Moses, being the only-begotten son of God, who lay in the bosom of the father, and has declared him, his mind and will, his Gospel, grace, and truth, as Moses never did: he is a greater King than he, being

¹ Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

² Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 2.

³ T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 12. 1.

⁴ Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 2. Maimon. Yesode Hatterah,

c. 7. sect. 6. Obede Cochabim, c. 1. sect. 3. & in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 3.

⁵ Maimon. Teshubah, c. 9. sect. 2.

⁶ Menassch ben Israel, Conciliat. in Deut. qu. 11.

made higher than the kings of the earth: he did more miracles than Moses, and had a greater testimony from God than he had, as that he was his beloved son, and to be heard; he was also raised from the dead, and is set down at the right hand of God, and is appointed Judge of all; he is ministered to, and worshipped by angels, is believed on by men, who ascribe the whole glory of their salvation to him. *Inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house; this house, or temple, as the Arabic version renders it, is the church, of which Christ is the builder; though not to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit, who are coefficient builders with him, nor of ministers of the Gospel as instruments, nor of believers in a private capacity, who build up one another; but he has the chief concern in the building, which lies in the conversion of souls, and in the edification of them, and is carried on by his spirit in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and from hence he has a glory; see Zech. vi. 12, 13. a greater glory than Moses, seeing he was but a part of this house, at most but a pillar in it; but Christ is the builder, foundation, and cornerstone.*

Ver. 4. *For every house is built by some man, &c.] Or by some one; for a house does not build itself: this is true of houses properly taken, or improperly, as nations, tribes, families, and kindred, of the whole church in general, of particular congregations, and of individual believers; the greatest saints, even apostles and prophets, such an one as Moses, are built by and upon Christ; their persons are built on him; they receive all their gifts for edification from him, and all their success is owing to him; though they are to be esteemed of in their proper places; the apostle's design is to bring down the high esteem the Jews had of Moses, that they might rightly value Christ. *But he that built all things is God; Christ has built all things, and therefore he is God, and must be infinitely above Moses; for this is not to be understood of God the father, and of the creation of the world, and of all things in it by him; but of Christ, and of his building the church, and of his ordering and managing of that, and all affairs relating to it; such as the constitution of it, settling the worship of God, and the ordinances in it, the redemption and salvation of the members of it, and its rule and government; all which prove him to be God, and above Moses.**

Ver. 5. *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, &c.]* Moses was not only a servant to the Israelites, but he was also the Lord's servant, a servant of his choosing, sending, and approving; he was a servant in holy things, and served the Lord heartily, sincerely, and ingenuously, with all becoming fear and reverence, respect, and honour, and with all ready and cheerful obedience; the house in which he was a servant, was not his own, but belonged to God, even the son of God, as appears from the following verse; he was not a servant in the world, and with respect to civil things, and the affairs of Providence, but in the church of God, and in divine things; and he was faithful here, and that in all things; he did

all things exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the Mount; and the apostle strongly affirms all this, as well he might, since there was full proof of it, and God himself had bore a testimony to it: and the end of his being a servant here was, *for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after*; these words may regard his faithful testification of God's will to the people of Israel, after he was fixed as a servant in God's house; or what he said afterwards concerning the Messiah, of whom he spake and wrote, and of whom he bore an honourable testimony, Deut. xviii. 15. or they may have respect to the things spoken after Moses's time, by the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, which agreed with the testimony of Moses; or to the things afterwards spoken of in this epistle; to which may be added, that Moses in his office was typical of things to be spoken and done by the Messiah, when he came; as his deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; his leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, to Canaan's land; his giving them the law from Mount Sinai; the erection of the tabernacle, with all its furniture, and the institution of sacrifices and the like.

Ver. 6. *But Christ as a son over his own house, &c.]* As Moses was not, though the Jews say that he was מֵאֲרִיב רַבִּית^a and בַּעַל הַבַּיִת^b, lord and master of the house; yea, בֶּן בֵּיתוֹ, the son of the house^c; but this he was not: Christ is the son and heir, the Lord and master; he is a son, not by creation, or by adoption, or by office, but by nature: hence it appears that he is God, and is equal with God; and this his sonship is the foundation of his office, and hereby he becomes the heir of all things: and when he is said to be *as a son*, it does not intend mere resemblance; but is expressive of his right to heirship and government, and of the esteem and reverence he had in his house, and of his fidelity as a son there; and though he was a servant, as man and Mediator, and had a great piece of service to perform, and which he has performed with diligence and faithfulness, yet he was also a son, Lord and heir, מֵאֲרִיב Moses was not; and he is over the house of God, as King, priest, and prophet in it, and as the first-born, son and heir, and as the master and governor of it; and which is called his own, because given him by the father, purchased by himself, and which he has built, and in which he dwells: *whose house are we*; believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles; who, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, in whom Christ dwells by faith; and over whom he presides and reigns: *if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* These words are not to be understood as a condition of the former assertion; nor is a final falling away from grace to be inferred from hence, for the supposition proves not such an inference, but the contrary; namely, that they that have true faith, hope, and confidence, shall keep them to the end; and therefore are the house of Christ: besides, the doctrine of apostacy is quite repugnant to the apostle's argument; according to which, Christ might have no house, and can have none till men have perse-

^a Zohar in Lev. fol. 9. 2.

^b Tzeror Hammor, fol. 35. 2.

^c Lexic. Cabalist. p. 203.

vered: but the apostle's design is to give a word of exhortation to himself and others, to hold fast the confidence; and so the words are rather descriptive of the persons, who are the house of Christ; such who have a good hope, through grace, wrought in them, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and can use freedom of speech and boldness at the throne of grace; and have an holy confidence of interest in the love of God, and salvation by Christ, and go on in the exercise of these graces to the end of their days.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, &c.*] In Psal. xcvi. 7. *to-day if you will hear his voice*; either the precepts of Christ, to hear which is to obey them; and this is an acknowledgment to Christ as King of saints, and is a testimony of love to him, and is well-pleasing in his sight; and in which the saints find pleasure themselves, and profit also: or the Gospel of Christ, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace and reconciliation; of pardon and righteousness; of liberty, redemption, and salvation by Christ; and to hear it, is not only to hear it externally, but internally, so as to understand it, and distinguish it from the voice of a stranger, and to approve of it, and believe it, and put in practice what is heard: and *to-day* may intend some festival-day in David's time, when, and on account of which, this psalm was penned; as the feast of tabernacles, which was a type of Christ tabernacling in human nature; or it may regard the time of man's life, while it is day, or the present instant of life: or rather the whole Gospel dispensation. The psalm from whence these and some following words are taken, belongs to the Messiah; for the person the subject of it, is called the rock of our salvation; and every thing in it is applicable to him; as the ascription of deity, and divine worship; the creation and preservation of the universe; yea, he is represented as a shepherd, and the saints as his sheep; which plainly points at the office of Christ; and these very words are often made use of by the Jews, and applied to the Messiah, shewing that if the Jews would repent but one day, or keep the sabbath but one day, the son of David, the Messiah, would come; since it is said, *to-day if you will hear his voice*^d; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders *בְּיְמֵי, his Word*, his essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ver. 8. *Harden not you hearts, &c.*] There is a natural hardness of the heart; the heart of man is like a stone, destitute of spiritual life, motion, and activity; it is senseless, stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, on which no impressions can be made, but by powerful grace: and there is an acquired, habitual, and voluntary hardness of heart, to which men arrive by various steps; as entertaining pleasing thoughts of sin; an actual commission of it, with frequency, till it becomes customary, and so habitual; an extenuation or justification of it, and so they become hardened against all reproofs and sermons, and to all afflictions and judgments; are insensible and past feeling, and openly declare for sin, and glory in it: and there is a hardness which God's people are liable

to, and should guard against; and which is brought on by a neglect of private and public worship, and by keeping bad company, and through the ill examples of others, and by giving way to lesser sins; for all sin is of an hardening nature: *as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness*; the Jews provoked God in the wilderness by their unbelief, murmurings, ingratitude, and idolatry; and they tempted him there by distrusting his power and goodness; hence one of the places in which they murmured against him was called Massah and Meribah, Exod. xvii. 7. and it is an aggravation of their sin, that it was in the wilderness, after they had been just brought out of bondage into liberty, and had lately had such an instance of the power and goodness of God, in bringing them through the Red sea; and where they could have no human supplies, and therefore should have been entirely dependent on God, and trust in him.

Ver. 9. *When your fathers tempted me, &c.*] This the apostle cites and repeats, to expose the glorying of the Jews in their ancestors; to dissuade them from following their sinful practices; to deter them from the same by observing both their sin and punishment; and to heighten their regards to the voice and Gospel of Christ: *proved me*; this is either an explication of the former phrase; or it may design the experience this people had of the power and goodness of God, notwithstanding their tempting and provoking the Lord by a distrust of them; which is an aggravation of their sin and ingratitude, and shews the forbearance of God, and that wicked men may partake of outward favours: *and saw my works forty years*; that is, God's works of providence, in furnishing them with the necessaries of life, in guiding, protecting, and supporting them for the space of forty years, in the wilderness; and his miracles, and the punishment of their enemies; yet they saw and perceived not, but all this time sinned against the Lord, see Deut. xxix. 2—8. the space of time, *forty years*, is in the psalm placed to the beginning of the next verse, and is joined with God's grief and indignation at the people, as it is also by the apostle, in ver. 17. but the people's sin, and God's grief at it, being of equal duration, it matters not to which it is placed, and therefore to both; perhaps, one reason of its being repeated, and so much notice taken of it is, because there was just this number of years from Christ's sufferings, to the destruction of Jerusalem; which the apostle might have in view.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, &c.*] *דָּוִד הַקּוֹבֵר*, the generation of the wilderness, as the Jews often call them; and which they say was more beloved than any generation^e; and yet they won't allow them a part in the world to come; see the note on the following verse. When God is said to be grieved with them, it is to be considered as an anthropopathy, as speaking after the manner of men, as in Gen. vi. 5, 6. The word signifies, that he was wearied by them, and weary of them; that he loathed them, and was displeased with them; it shews the notice God took of their sin; the heinousness of it,

^d T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 109. 3. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 3.

^e T. Hieros. Avoda Zarc, fol. 39. 2.

his discipency at it, and determination to punish it: the cause of his grief and indignation were their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry: *and said, they do always err in their heart*; all sins are errors, or aberrations from the law of God; all men err in this sense: these people erred in their hearts, for there is error in the understanding, and will, and affections, as well as in life and actions; and they may be said to err in their hearts, because their sins not only sprung from the heart, but they were done heartily, or with their hearts, and that continually; which shews the sottishness of this people: their stubbornness and rebellion; their want of integrity, and their constancy in sinning: heart-sins, as well as others, are taken notice of by God: *and they have not known my ways*: they did not take notice of God's ways of providence towards them; nor did they approve of, and delight in his ways of worship and duty, or in his commands.

Ver. 11. *So I swear in my wrath, &c.*] Swearing is ascribed to God, to shew the certainty of the thing spoken of; as of mercies, when he swears in love, and by his holiness; so here, of punishment, when he swears in wrath, in indignation, in sore displeasure, and the threatened evil is irrevocable and inevitable: *they shall not enter into my rest*; into the land of Canaan, called God's rest, because he promised it, and gave it to the Israelites as their rest; and where he himself had a place of rest; and where he gave the Messiah, the author of peace and rest; and which was a type of heaven, that rest from toil and labour, which remains for the people of God; and into which it is said this generation did not enter; for the Jews say, "the generation of the wilderness have no part in the world to come:" but this seems too harsh, for doubtless there were many who died in the wilderness, that went safe to heaven, notwithstanding all their sins and provocations.

Ver. 12. *Take heed, brethren, &c.*] This exhortation is founded upon the state and case of their ancestors before given, as a warning and caution to the then present Hebrews; and whom the apostle styles *brethren*, to shew that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealousy was a godly one, and not an evil suspicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs should be given in love: *lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief*; or such an evil heart, in which unbelief prevails, and is predominant: there is in every man, whether a profane sinner, or an hypocritical professor, an evil heart, and an unbelieving one; and there is unbelief in regenerate persons, which when cherished and encouraged by them is a great evil, and should be avoided; and this sin is aggravated by the many instances of God's grace, and by the many declarations of it, and by the exceeding great and precious promises God has made, and by the great discoveries of his love to their souls in times past: and this sin, when it gets ahead, has a very great influence on the heart, to make it evil; and unbelief was the first sin of man, at least it very early appeared; it is the mother-sin, and puts persons upon every sin; it defiles the conscience, hardens the heart, renders the word unprofitable, unfits for duty,

and makes men unstable, and therefore to be shunned; and especially because of the dreadful effect following: *in departing from the living God*; that is, from Christ, who is the son over his own house, and whose voice is to be heard; for of no other is the apostle speaking in the context; and who is not only the son of the living God, but he is himself the living God; he is life in himself, and is the fountain and author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This is mentioned to exalt the person of Christ, the apostle and high-priest of our profession; and to discover the greatness and heinousness of the sin of such as depart from him and his Gospel, and to deter men from it: there is a final and total departure from Christ, from his Gospel and ordinances, from his people, and from a former profession of faith, which is never to be found in true believers; for they are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; but there is a partial departure, and for a while, which they are liable to, and is attended with bad effects to them, and should be guarded against: saints should take heed of themselves, and of their hearts, and of the unbelief of them, that they do not in the least depart from Christ, by letting go their hold of him, or by a non-exercise of faith upon him; and this should be the care and concern of every individual member of the church, and at all times; unbelief is very dishonourable to God and Christ; contradicts the word and promises of God; is uncomfortable to the saints; it is a sin that very easily besets, and is very provoking to God, and is highly resisted by him.

Ver. 13. *But exhort one another daily, &c.*] In order to prevent unbelief and apostacy. The phrase is sometimes rendered, *comfort one another*, or, *yourselves together*, as in 1 Thess. v. 11. which the saints may do, by discoursing together about divine things; by praying together; by instructing one another in the doctrines of the Gospel; by putting one another in mind of the covenant of grace, and its promises; and by observing the near approach of everlasting happiness with Christ. And though the business of exhortation greatly belongs to ministers of the word, yet it ought not to be neglected by private believers; who ought, when it becomes necessary, to exhort one another to prayer; to an attendance on the word and ordinances; to a regard to their conversations; to a close adherence to their profession; and to a believing view and consideration of Christ, the apostle and high-priest of it; and to a due concern for his truth and interest: and this should be done in love, with good and consolatory words, and in things, in which the saints are concerned, and do themselves regard; and it is an affair which requires prudence and faithfulness; and supposes that God's own people may be dull, heavy, and sluggish; and this is to be done *daily*, every day, as often as there is an occasion, and an opportunity for it; and *while it is called to-day*; while the Gospel dispensation continues; or while the time of life lasts. This shews that the phrase *to-day*, in Psal. xcvi. did not respect David's time only. The Syriac version renders it, *until that day which is called to-day*; until the everlasting day appears, when there

will be no need of such exhortations, nor any danger of what follows: *lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*; actual sin, which is a transgression of the law; every sin is of an hardening nature, and by being often committed, an habit is contracted, and a callousness brought upon the heart and conscience; or the corruption of nature, in-dwelling sin, may be meant; an evil and a corrupt heart, which deceives through promises of pleasure, or profit to a man's self, or of secrecy and impunity; it suggests the power a man has to repent at pleasure, and the mercy of God, by which means the man is drawn in to it, and by frequent repeating it, grows hardened in it.

Ver. 14. *For we are made partakers of Christ, &c.*] Being loved by him, given to him, and chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and so participate of all spiritual blessings in him; for this respects something past, and may be rendered, *we have been made*. The phrase is expressive of union to Christ, which is not by faith on man's part, and by the spirit on Christ's part, but by his everlasting love, taking his people into an oneness with himself; thereby becoming their head, surety, and representative, which is the ground and foundation of all the blessings of grace being imparted to them: hence arises communion; as this is a conjugal union, there is communion of names, of persons, of goods, of honour and dignity, and of everlasting glory; as it is a federal or representative union, hence a non-imputation of sin, justification, and freedom from condemnation; and as it is an union of head and members; hence a communication of life, and the security of it, and of all grace and strength; hence holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance, and everlasting happiness both of soul and body: *if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end*; by *confidence* is meant faith, which is an hypostasis, or subsistence, which is the word here used; and is so called, because it gives a kind of subsistence, substance, or being, to things it is concerned with, Heb. xi. 1. and because it is a great support to believers, under their various exercises; and is that by which they have an open, spiritual, and comfortable subsistence, and abiding in Christ: the *beginning* of it, which is to be held fast, is either Christ himself, who is the *αρχη*, the beginning, the author, and finisher of faith; and so this shews from whom, and in what way, this grace is distributed; and is expressive of communion with Christ, and is an evidence of the participation of him: or else the Gospel, which is the means of implanting faith, and directs to that which is the ground and foundation of it; and this is to be held fast, and never to be departed from: or else the grace of faith itself, which is a grace but begun, not yet finished, but shall continue, and is to be held fast, and constantly exercised; and perseverance in believing on Christ is an evidence of union to him.

Ver. 15. *While it is said to-day, &c.*] Exhort one another, and hold fast Christ and his Gospel, and faith and confidence therein; what follows is a repetition of the citation in ver. 7, 8. in order to make a further improvement of it; which shews, that the words belong to the present times of the Gospel, and contain in them matter of moment, and great concern; and

that Scripture instructions and exhortations are of perpetual use.

Ver. 16. *For some, when they had heard, &c.*] The Arabic version adds, *his voice*; the law on Mount Sinai; the voice of words, with the voices and thunderings that attended it; the book of the covenant read; the whole system of laws and ordinances delivered to Moses, and by him to them; and also the Gospel, for that was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, and heard by them; as appears from ch. iv. 2. and which seems chiefly intended: and yet some of the hearers of it *did provoke*; not only Moses, to speak unadvisedly with his lips; but they provoked Jehovah himself, and the angel of his presence, and his Holy Spirit, by their idolatry, ingratitude, and unbelief; and the aggravation of their sin is, that they did it when they had heard the Gospel, and while they were hearing it; which shews that the Gospel may be heard to no advantage; as when it is heard in a careless and indifferent manner; when it makes no impression, takes no place, and has no root; when the world and the things of it are the great concern of the mind, while hearing it; when it is not attended with the power and spirit of God; when it is not received in love, nor mixed with faith, nor put in practice: and hence the Gospel heard, comes to be an aggravation of men's condemnation: *howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses*; that is, they did not all provoke, but some did; which is another aggravation of their sin; they were just come out of Egyptian bondage; brought out of it by the Lord, with the mighty and outstretched arm of his power; and yet they provoked him: and this was done by Moses; by the hand of Moses, as the Syriac version renders it; by his means, by him as an instrument; and yet they provoked him: but however all did not, yet these were but few; it seems only Caleb and Joshua, out of six hundred thousand; God will have a few to serve him in the worst of times.

Ver. 17. *But with whom was he grieved forty years? &c.*] As is said in Psal. xcvi. 10. see the note on ver. 10. *was it not with them that had sinned*; not merely by committing personal iniquities, and particular provocations, which all men are guilty of, but by committing public sins; they sinned as a body of men; they joined together in the commission of sin; every sin is grieving to God, because it is contrary to his nature, is an act of enmity to him, is a transgression of his righteous law, and a contempt of his authority; but especially public sins, or the sins of a multitude, and when they are persisted in, which was the case of the Israelites; they sinned against him during the forty years they were in the wilderness; and so long was he grieved with them: the Alexandrian copy reads, *with them that believed not*; which points out the particular sin these men were guilty of, and which was so grieving to God, and suits well with the apostle's design: *whose carcasses fell in the wilderness*; and so never entered into the land of Canaan. They died in the wilderness; and they did not die common and natural deaths, at least not all of them; their deaths were by way of punishment; in a way of wrath; in a judicial way: the Syriac version renders it, *their bones fell in the wilderness*; they lay scattered and un-

buried, and exposed to view, as an example of divine vengeance, see Numb. xiv. 29.

Ver. 18. *And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, &c.*] As in Psal. xcvi. 11. see the note on ver. 11. *but to them that believed not?* the Lord; notwithstanding the signs and wonders he shewed among them, they would not be persuaded by Moses and Aaron, by Joshua and Caleb, to be still and quiet, to cease murmuring, and submit to the will of God, and believe in him; they were disobedient, stubborn, and rebellious, and would go up, when they were bid not to go up; for which reason God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into

the good land. Unbelief is a source of sin, and cause of judgment, being greatly provoking to God.

Ver. 19. *So we see that they could not enter in, &c.*] To God's rest, the land of Canaan, for they died by the plague before the Lord, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness, before they came to it, Numb. xiv. 37, 45. and the reason was, *because of unbelief*; their distrust of God, his power, and his providence; this instance is produced by the apostle, to shew the evil nature of unbelief, and the sad effects of it; to deter persons from it, and that they might take heed of encouraging it; and which instance he further improves in the following chapter.

C H A P. IV.

FROM the punishment inflicted on the unbelieving Hebrews, who died in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest made mention of in the preceding chapter, the apostle proceeds to caution the present Hebrews of his time, and who professed faith in Christ, lest seeing there was a rest, and a promise of entering into it, they should seem to come short of it, ver. 1. and the rather, since they that fell in the wilderness had the Gospel preached to them as well as they; and the reason why it did not profit was, because it was not received by faith, ver. 2. as also seeing it is by faith that believers now enter into rest, ver. 3. which rest is not the rest of the seventh day, on which God rested; nor the rest of the land of Canaan, which Joshua led the Israelites into; for if he had entered them into the rest the apostle means, David, so many hundred years after him, would not have made mention of another rest, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. wherefore it follows that there is another rest for the people of God, which he that enters into ceases from his own works, as God did from his, ver. 9, 10. and this is the rest that every one that professes faith in Christ, should be solicitous and diligent to enter into, lest he should fall short of it through unbelief; as the unbelieving Israelites did of their rest, ver. 11. and the arguments engaging to such a concern are taken from the properties and perfections of Christ, the essential Word of God; particularly from his omnipotence and his omniscience, ver. 12, 13. And seeing he is by nature the son of God, and by office a great high-priest that is entered into heaven for his people, the encouragement is great to hold fast the profession of faith in him they have made, ver. 14. and the rather since he is a sympathizing high-priest, as he must needs be, since he has been tempted, afflicted, and has suffered every way as his people, and is in all respects like them, excepting that he has no sin, ver. 15. and this consideration should engage believers to come to the throne of grace with all boldness, and in expectation of having grace and mercy bestowed on them for the supply of their daily wants, ver. 16.

Ver. 1. *Let us therefore fear, &c.*] Not with a fear of wrath and damnation; nor with a fear of diffidence and distrust of the power, grace, and goodness of God; but with a cautious fear, a godly jealousy, a careful circumspection, and watchfulness: *lest a promise being*

left us of entering into his rest: not the land of Canaan, the type of heaven, but rather heaven itself, the ultimate glory: there is a rest of the body in the grave, from work, service, and labour, and from distempers and diseases, where it rests under the guardianship of the spirit, until the resurrection-morn; and there is a rest of the soul before the resurrection, in the arms of Christ, with whom it immediately is, upon its departure from the body; and there is a rest both of soul and body after the resurrection, from sin, from afflictions, from Satan's temptations, from unbelief, doubts, and fears, and from all enemies: and this may be called the rest of God, because he is the author and giver of it; and it will lie much in communion with him; and besides, heaven is the place of God's rest, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. and the possession and enjoyment of the heavenly glory is often signified by an entering into it: and there is a promise of this, which is left in Christ's hands, and shall never fail; though some who have hoped for it may come short of it, or at least seem to do so: but rather a rest under the Gospel dispensation is here intended, since it is a rest believers enter into now, ver. 3. and since the Gospel church is represented as a state of peace and rest, Isa. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. and which lies in a more clear and comfortable application of the blood and righteousness of Christ to the saints; in a freedom from a spirit of bondage to fear, and from the yoke of carnal ordinances, and in the enjoyment of Gospel privileges and ordinances; and this is God's rest, which he has provided for New-Testament saints, and into which they enter by faith, and a profession of it; and the Gospel is the promise or declaration which was left among these Hebrews, and in the world, to encourage them so to do: *lest any of you should seem to come short of it*; either of the promise, or the rest promised; which if understood of the heavenly glory, the sense is, that though true believers shall not come short of that, yet they may seem to others to do so; and therefore should be careful of their lives and conversations, that they might not seem to come short; and this they should do, for the glory of God, the honour of Christ and his Gospel, and the good of others; but if the rest, and the promise of it, intend the Gospel and its dispensation, the meaning is, that saints should be concerned so to behave, that they might not

seem to fail of the doctrine of the grace of God, and to be disappointed of that rest and peace promised in it. One of Stephens's copies read, *lest any of us*; which seems most agreeable both to what goes before, and follows.

Ver. 2. *For unto us was the Gospel preached, &c.*] The Gospel is the good news and glad tidings of salvation by Christ; and this may be said to be preached, when men preach not themselves, nor read lectures of morality, nor mix law and Gospel together, nor make justification and salvation to be by works, nor set persons to make their peace with God, or get an interest in Christ; but when they preach Christ and salvation alone by him; and so it was preached to the Hebrews, and that more fully, and with more clearness, power, and success than formerly; and which is a privilege and blessing; and is sometimes blessed for the conviction of sinners, for regeneration, for the implanting of faith, and the comfort of believers. The words may be rendered, *we were evangelized*; as such may be said to be, who have a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ alone; who derive their peace and comfort, not from their works, but from him; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the love of God; and who desire to perform all duties aright, and depend on none: now though this was true of the apostle and others, yet is not the sense here, because of what follows, *as well as unto them, or even as they*; for though the Gospel was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, in the ministry of Moses, and by types and sacrifices; yet they were not evangelized by it, or cast into a Gospel mould, or brought into a Gospel spirit: however, it was preached unto them; which shews the antiquity of it; the sameness of the method of salvation in all ages; the necessity of salvation by Christ, and the unity of Christ's church under different dispensations: *but the word preached did not profit them*; that is, the Gospel, which is here called *the word of hearing*, as it may be rendered; because it is and may be heard; and there is a necessity of hearing, in order to faith in Christ: the word signifies a rumour, or report: the Gospel is a report of Christ, his person and offices; of his great love to sinners, and of what he has done for them; but though it is a word of hearing, a report made, and the word preached, yet to some it is unprofitable; it has no good effect upon them; yea, it is the savour of death unto death to them, and the aggravation of condemnation; and the reason of the inefficacy and unprofitableness of the word to the Israelites was, *its not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*; the Gospel is as food, and faith is the hand that receives it, and takes it, and tastes of it, and eats it, and concocts and digests it; and when this is the case, it is profitable and nourishing; but when it is otherwise, it is not. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and five of Beza's ancient copies, and as many of Stephens's, with others, read, *they were not mixed* referring it not to the word, but to persons; and so read the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and the sense is, that the generality of the Israelites did not join themselves in faith, in believing in God, to Caleb and Joshua; who hearkened to the Lord, and received and obeyed his word; and so the word became useless to them:

there ought to be an union or conjunction of the saints, and the bond of this union is love; and the thing in which they unite is faith, believing in Christ, and the doctrine of faith, which is but one; and though the word may be profitable to others who are not in the communion of the saints; yet forsaking the assembly of the saints, and not constantly attending with them, or not mixing with them continually in public worship, is one reason of the unprofitable hearing of the word when it is preached to them.

Ver. 3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest, &c.*] Not eternal rest; all believers shall enjoy this, and they only; but this is not now, or at present enjoyed, unless things future may be said to be present, because of faith in them, and the certainty of them, but spiritual rest in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which is a rest from the burden of the law of Moses, and from all toil and labour for life, and salvation by works, and lies in an enjoyment of much inward peace of soul, notwithstanding the world's troubles and Satan's temptations; and such who believe the word or Gospel preached, and Christ in it, not with a general and historical faith, or only in profession, but with the heart, and in truth, these enjoy this rest; they are kept in perfect peace, and have much spiritual ease and comfort: this character distinguishes them from the unbelieving Israelites of old, and from present hypocrites and formal professors: *as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest*: the words are in Psal. xcvi. 11, and are before cited in ch. iii. 11. see the note there: they entered not in because of unbelief; none but believers enter into spiritual rest. The apostle applies this proof to his design, by removing all other rests, and particularly by shewing that it does not mean God's rest from the works of creation: *although the works were finished from the foundation of the world*: that is, though the works of creation, all that God designed to make, were finished and perfected within the first six days of the world, and then God rested or ceased to work in a creative way; yet this is not the rest designed in the passage of Scripture cited, nor is it that rest which believers enter into.

Ver. 4. *For he spake in a certain place, &c.*] Gen. ii. 2. that is, Moses, the penman of that book spoke, or God by him: *of the seventh day on this wise*: of the seventh day of the world, or from the creation of the heavens and the earth: *and God did rest the seventh day from all his works*: of creation, but not of providence; for in them he works hitherto; nor does this rest suppose labour with fatigue and weariness, and ease and refreshment from it; only cessation from working in a creative way, and the utmost delight, complacency and satisfaction in what he had done. The Alexandrian copy leaves out the phrase, *the seventh day*.

Ver. 5. *And in this place again, &c.*] In Psal. xcvi. 11. he speaks again of another rest distinct from that on the seventh day; which, and not the latter, is what believers under the Gospel dispensation enter into: *if they shall enter into my rest*: that is, unbelievers shall not enter into it; as the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into the typical rest, so neither shall any unbeliever enter into the Gospel rest, the antitype of the former.

Ver. 6. *Seeing therefore it remaineth, &c.*] It follows

by just consequence, *that some must enter therein*; for God's swearing concerning some, that they should not enter into his rest, supposes that others should: *and they to whom it was first preached*; to whom the Gospel was first preached, namely, the Israelites in the wilderness: *entered not in because of unbelief*; see ch. iii. 19.

Ver. 7. *Again he limiteth a certain day, &c.*] Since the seventh day of the creation was a day of rest which God entered into, and not man; and since the land of Canaan was a typical rest, which the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into, because of unbelief; and yet there must be persons, and there must be a time for them to enter into the true rest which God has left a promise of; therefore he has limited, fixed, and appointed a certain day, the Gospel dispensation, for believers to enter into it: *saying in David*: or by David, who was the penman of the 95th psalm, as may be learned from hence; and this is agreeably to, and confirms a rule which the Jews give, that those psalms which are without a title were written by David²; the spirit of God spake in him and by him, and plainly pointed out another day of rest from the above-mentioned: *to-day, after so long a time*; as two thousand five hundred years from the first seventh day to David's time, and five hundred years from the times of Moses and Joshua, to his: *as it is said*; the Alexandrian copy reads, *as it is before said*, or, *above said*, as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that is, in Psal. xc. 7, 8. before cited, ch. iii. 7, 8. *to-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*; see the note on ch. iii. 7, 8.

Ver. 8. *For if Jesus had given them rest, &c.*] That is, Joshua; for Hosheah, Joshua, and Jesus, are one and the same name; or Jesus himself, as two of Stephens's copies read; and so Joshua is called Jesus by the Septuagint interpreters on Exod. xvii. 10. and xxiv. 13. and other places where he is mentioned; and also by Josephus³, and Philo⁴ the Jew. The Syriac version, lest any should mistake this for Jesus Christ, adds, *the son of Nun*; who is certainly the person designed, as the apostle's reasoning shews; who was an eminent type of Jesus Christ: there is an agreement in their names, both signify a saviour, Joshua was a temporal saviour, Christ a spiritual one; and in their office they were both servants; and in their qualifications for their office, such as wisdom, courage, faithfulness, and integrity. Joshua was a type of Christ in many actions of his life; in the miracles he wrought, or were wrought for him; in the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained; in saving Rahab and her family; in receiving the Gibeonites, who came submissively to him; and in leading the children of Israel into Canaan's land, which he divided to them by lot: but though he brought them into a land of rest, into the typical rest, where they had rest for a while from their temporal enemies, yet he did not give them the true spiritual rest: had he, *then would he not afterward have spoken of another day*; that is, God, in David's time, and by him, would not have so long after appointed another

day of rest; meaning, not any particular day of the week, but the whole Gospel dispensation, in the times of the Messiah; wherefore the apostle concludes as follows.

Ver. 9. *There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.*] Not all mankind; nor the people of the Jews only; rather the people of God, both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Testament; the people whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, with whom he has made a covenant in him, and whom Christ saves from their sins, and calls by his grace; and the rest which remains for them is not a new sabbath-day, but a sabbatism: and this does not so much design eternal rest in heaven; though the Jews often call that a sabbath; the 99th psalm they say is a psalm for the time to come, *שבת שבת, which is all sabbath*, and the rest of eternal life⁵: but rather this intends the spiritual rest believers have in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which they now enter into, and of which the apostle had been treating; and as for the word *remaineth*, this does not denote the futurity of it, but the apostle's inference or consequence from what he had said; and the sense is, it remains therefore, and is a certain fact, a clear consequence from what has been observed, that there is another rest distinct from God's rest on the seventh day, and from the rest in the land of Canaan; which were both typical ones of the present rest the saints now enjoy: so the Jews call the world to come the times of the Messiah, *שבת הברית, the great sabbath*⁶.

Ver. 10. *For he that is entered into his rest, &c.*] This is to be understood not of believers, nor of their entrance into the Gospel rest, or into eternal rest, but of the Lord Jesus Christ; for a single person is only spoken of, and not many, as in ver. 3. and the rest entered into is his own, which cannot be said of any other; and besides, a comparison is run between his entrance into rest, and ceasing from his works, and God's resting the seventh day, and ceasing from his, which can only agree with him; and besides, Christ is immediately spoken of, and at large described in ver. 12, 13, 14. Now he entered into his rest, not when he was laid in the grave, but when he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, as having done his work; and this is the ground and foundation of the saints' rest under the Gospel dispensation; for these words are a reason of the former, as appears by the causal particle *for*: and now being at rest, *he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his*; Christ had works to do, as preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, and obtaining the redemption and salvation of his people: these were given him to do, and he undertook them, and he has finished them; and so ceases from them, as never to repeat them more; they being done effectually, stand in no need of it; and so as to take delight and complacency in them; the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand, the effects of his labour answering his designs; just as God ceased from the works of creation, when he had finished them.

² Aben Ezra & Kimchi Prefat. in Tillim.

³ Antiqu. Jud. l. 4. c. 7. sect. 2. c. 8. sect. 46, 47, 48. & l. 5. c. 1. sect. 1. & passim.

⁴ De Charitate, p. 698, 699, 700.

⁵ Misn. Tamid, c. 7. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 3. Massecheth Sopherim, c. 18. sect. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 5. 1.

⁶ Zohar in Gen. fol. 81. 4. Shaare Orn, fol. 17. 1. Caphtor, fol. 84. 1.

Ver. 11. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, &c.*] Not eternal rest; this is not to be entered into now; nor is an entrance into it to be obtained by labour; salvation is not by works; eternal life is a free gift; good works don't go before to prepare heaven for the saints, but follow after: nor is the saints' entrance into it a precarious thing; God has promised it, and provided it for his people; Christ is in the possession of it, and is preparing it for them; and the spirit of God is working them up for the self-same thing, and Christ will give them an abundant entrance into it: but the Gospel rest is here meant, that rest which believers now enter into, and is at this present time for them, ver. 3, 10. and though true believers are entered into it, yet their rest, peace, and joy in Christ, is not full; they enter by degrees into it, and by believing enjoy more of it: and this is to be laboured for by prayer, hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; and this requires strength, diligence, and industry; and supposes difficulties and discouragements, through the corruptions of the heart, and the temptations of Satan; and this is designed to quicken and awaken a godly jealousy in God's people, over themselves: *lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief*; into the sin of unbelief, and into punishment through it, as the Israelites did; who sinning, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and they entered not into God's rest, as he swore they should not: true believers may fall into sin, and from a degree of the exercise of grace, and of the steadfastness of the Gospel; but they cannot finally and totally fall away, because they are kept by the power of God; yet they may so fall, as to come short, or at least seem to come short of enjoying the rest and peace of the Gospel state: external professors may fall from the Gospel, and the religion they have professed, and come short of the glory they expected; and fall into just and deserved punishment, in like manner as the unbelieving Israelites did.

Ver. 12. *For the word of God is quick and powerful, &c.*] This is to be understood of Christ, the essential Word of God; for the Word of God was a known name of the Messiah among the Jews; see the note on John i. 1. and therefore the apostle makes use of it when writing to them: and the words are introduced as a reason why care should be taken, that men fall not off from the Gospel, because Christ, the author, sum, and substance of it, is the living God, omnipotent and omniscient; for not a thing, but a person is spoken of, who is a Judge, and a critical discerner of the secrets of men's hearts: and certain it is, that this Word is spoken of as a person, and is said to be a priest in the following verses; to which may be added, that the several things said of the Word exactly agree with Christ: he is the *Word of God*; as the word is the birth of the mind, he is the only-begotten of the father; he is the Word that spoke for the elect in the council and covenant of grace, and that spoke all things out of nothing in creation; he is the Word that has been promised, and spoken of by the prophets from the beginning of the world; and is the interpreter of his father's mind, and our Advocate with the father: he is

quick, or, as it may be better rendered, *living*; he has life in himself as God, he is the living God; he is the living Redeemer and Mediator, and he lives for ever as man; he is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal: and he is powerful, as he appears to be in the creation and sustentation of all things; in his miracles and ministrations; in the work of man's redemption; in the preservation of his people, and in his advocacy and intercession: *and sharper than any two-edged sword*; or *more cutting* than one, by the words of his mouth, by the power of his spirit, and the efficacy of his grace; for his mouth itself is as a sharp sword, and out of it comes forth one, Isa. xlix. 2. Rev. xix. 13, 15. by which he pierces the hearts of men, cuts them to the quick, and lays them open. Jehovah is called a two-edged sword with the Jews^m; and Philo the Jew speaks of the flaming sword of the Logosⁿ. *Piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow*; the like property Philo the Jew ascribes to the Logos, or Word; he calls him *repave*, a cutter, and says he cuts and divides all things, even all sensible things, yea, atoms, and things indivisible^o; the apostle seems here to have respect to the several names with which the soul of man is called by the Jews, נפש רוח ונשמה, *soul, spirit, and breath*^p; the latter of these, they say, dwells between the other two. Some by the soul understand the natural and unregenerate part in man, and by the spirit the renewed and regenerate part, which though sometimes are not so easily distinguished by men, yet they are by Christ; others think the soul designs the inferior faculties, the affections; and the spirit the superior ones, the mind and understanding; but the apostle's meaning seems to be this, that whereas the soul and spirit are invisible, and the joints and marrow are covered and hid; so sharp and quick-sighted, and so penetrating is the divine Word, that it reaches the most secret and hidden things of men: and this sense is confirmed by what follows, and is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*; Christ knows what is in man; he is the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men; and this will be more apparent at the last day, when he will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and will critically inquire, and accurately judge of them.

Ver. 13. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, &c.*] Christ is the Lord God omniscient; there is no creature, in general, rational, or irrational, animate or inanimate, but what are known to him, and seen by him; for all creatures are made, and upheld by him, and he is omnipresent; and in particular, there is no man but is manifest to him; so ברית, *creature*, is often used by the Rabbins for *man*: all men, openly profane men, who are enemies to Christ, and his people, are under his eye and notice; he knows their persons, he sees their actions, even those that are most secretly devised and performed against him, and his saints; and he takes such notice of them, as to bring them into judgment for them; he knows formal professors of religion, and upon what foot they

^m Zohar in Cab. Lex. p. 364.

ⁿ De Cherubim, p. 112.

^o Quis rerum divin. Heres, p. 499, 500, 510, 511, 512.

^p Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & 112. 1, 2 & in Exod. fol. 58. 3, 4. & in Lev. fol. 29. 2. T. Hieros. Celaim, fol. 31. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 1.

have taken up their profession; and how they keep their lusts with their profession; he can distinguish between profession and grace; and he knows and observes the springs and progress of their apostacy: and as for true believers, he knows their persons, and knows them to be his; he sees their sins and their weaknesses; he takes notice of their graces, and observes their wants; and there is nothing in them, or belongs to them, but what is before him, even the secret desires of their souls. So Philo the Jew says †, the divine Word reaches to, and comprehends all things, nothing escapes him: and this phrase is very commonly used of the divine Being by the Jews, *דכל גלוי לפניו*, *all things are manifest before him* †; and this being used of Christ, is no inconsiderable proof of his proper deity: *but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* The words are an allusion to wrestlers, who exercised naked, and took each other by their necks and collars; and when one was thrown upon his back, as the word rendered *opened* is by some translated, he was publicly exposed and known: or to the putting of a creature in such a posture when sacrificed; or rather to the cutting of it up, and laying open its entrails: and especially to the manner of doing it among the Jews, with which these persons, the apostle writes to, were acquainted: and it was this; when the lamb for the daily sacrifice was slain, the priest hung it up by the foot, and skinned it; and when he came to the breast, he cut off the head; and having finished the skinning of it, he divided the heart, and took out the blood; then he cut off the shoulders; and when he came to the right leg, he cut it off, and then cut it down through the chine-bone, and *כילו גלוי לפניו*, *all of it was manifest before him* †. The very phrase before used. The word here used seems to answer to *ערה*, which, with the Arabians, signifies, to *know*, or make known; and *כעריה*, with the Rabbinis, is used for a companion, a familiar one that is well known; the theme in the Hebrew, is, *ערה*, the *neck*. The last clause, *with whom we have to do*, manifestly points at the person here spoken of, Jesus Christ: saints have a concern with him now, as their way to the father, as their Saviour and Redeemer; they have to do with his blood for pardon and cleansing, and with his righteousness for justification, and with his fulness for every supply of grace; and with him as their King to rule over them, protect and defend them, and as their prophet to teach them, and their high-priest to intercede for them. Moreover, the words may be rendered, *to whom we must give an account*; and so the Syriac version renders them, *to whom they give an account*: as all men must at the great day: and all this that is said of the Word of God should engage to care, watchfulness, and circumspection in the course of a profession of religion.

Ver. 14. *Seeing then that we have a great high-priest, &c.*] That Christ is a priest, and an high-priest, has been observed already, in ch. ii. 17. but here he is called a *great* one, because of the dignity of his person, as follows, and the virtue of his sacrifice; and because of the place where he now officiates as a priest, hea-

ven; and with respect to the continuation of his priesthood; and likewise because he makes others priests unto God; and this great high-priest is no other than the Word of God before spoken of: so the divine Logos, or Word, is often called a priest, and an high-priest, by Philo the Jew †. This great high-priest believers *have*, and have an interest in him; he is called to this office, and invested with it; he has been sent to do his work as a priest; and he has done the greatest part of it, and is now doing the rest; and saints receive Christ as such, and the blessings of grace from him, through his sacrifice and intercession: *that is passed into the heavens*; he came down from thence, and offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and having done this, he ascended thither again, to appear for them, and to make intercession for them; whereby he fully answers to his character as the great high-priest: and what makes him more fully to appear so is what follows, *Jesus, the son of God*; the former of these names signifies a Saviour, and respects his office; the latter is expressive of his dignity, and respects his person; who is the son of God in such sense as angels and men are not; not by creation, nor adoption; but by nature; not as man and Mediator, but as God, being of the same nature with his father, and equal to him; and 'tis this which makes him a great high-priest, and gives virtue and efficacy to all he does as such: wherefore, *let us hold fast our profession*; of faith, of the grace and doctrine of faith, and of Christ, and salvation by him, and of the hope of eternal life and happiness; which being made both by words and deeds, publicly and sincerely, should be held fast; which supposes something valuable in it, and that there is danger of dropping it; and that it requires strength, courage, and greatness of mind, and an use of all proper means; and it should be held without wavering; for it is good and profitable, it recommends the Gospel; and it has been made publicly before witnesses; and not to hold it fast is displeasing to God, and resented by him: and the priesthood of Christ is an argument to enforce this duty, for he is the high-priest of our profession; he has espoused our cause, and abode by it; he has bore witness to the truth of the Gospel himself; he prays for the support of our faith; he pities and succours; and he is passed into the heavens, where he appears for us, owns us, and will own us.

Ver. 15. *For we have not an high-priest, &c.*] That is cruel and unmerciful; the saints have an high-priest, but not such an one: *which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*; such as bodily diseases and wants, persecutions from men, and the temptations of Satan; under all which Christ sympathizes with his people; and which sympathy of his arises from his knowledge and experience of these things, and the share he has had of them, and from that union there is between him and his people: and it is not a bare sympathy, but is attended with his assistance, support, and deliverance; and the consideration of it is of great comfort to the saints: *but was in all points tempted like as we are*; of the temptations of Christ, and of the

† De Sacrif. Abel, p. 140.

† Tzeror Hammor, fol. 122. ♀ Vid. Seder Tephillot, fol. 981. 1. Ed. Basil.

† Misna Tamid, c. 4. sect. 2.

† Alleg. 1. 2. p. 76. De Profugis, p. 466. & de Somniis, p. 597.

saints, see the note on ch. ii. 18. yet *without sin*; there was no sin in his nature; though he was encompassed about with infirmities, yet not with sinful infirmities, only sinless ones; nor was there any sin in his temptations; though he was solicited to sin by Satan, yet he could find none in him to work upon; nor could he draw him into the commission of any sin.

Ver. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, &c.*] Either to Christ, who is before spoken of as an high-priest, and who was typified by the mercy-seat, to which there seems to be an allusion; and coming to him as a priest upon his throne is very proper: to him saints come for pardon and cleansing, and for a justifying righteousness, for the acceptance of their persons, and the presentation of their services, and for every supply of grace; and to him they may come *boldly*, since he stands in the relations of a father, husband, and brother, and from him they may expect to receive mercy, since it is kept for him, and with him, and is only dispensed through him; and in him they may hope to find grace, since all fulness of it dwells in him; and help in every time of need, since their help is laid on him. Or else to God the father, since Christ, the high-priest, is the way of access to God, and it is by him the saints come unto the father; who is represented as on a *throne*, to shew his majesty, and to command reverence; and as on a *throne of grace*, to encourage distressed souls to come unto him; and to express his sovereignty in the distribution of his grace: and this coming to him is a sacerdotal act, for every believer is a priest; and is not local, but spiritual, and with the heart, and by faith; and chiefly regards the duty of prayer, and a drawing nigh to God in that ordinance with spiritual sacrifices to offer unto him: and this may be done *boldly*; or with *freedom of speech*; speaking out plainly all that is in the heart, using a holy courage and intrepidity of mind, free from servile fear, and a bashful spirit; all which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith in the person, blood, and righte-

ousness of Christ, a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy, and a holy confidence of being heard by him; and such a spirit and behaviour at the throne of grace are very consistent with reverence of the divine Majesty, with submission to his will, and with that humility which becomes saints. The Jews often speak of הוֹיֵן כִּסֵּא, *a throne of judgment*, and כִּסֵּא רַחֲמִים, *a throne of mercy*; and represent God as sitting upon one or other of these, when he is dispensing justice or mercy; and the latter they sometimes call, as here, כִּסֵּא הַסֵּד וְרַחֲמִים, *a throne of grace and mercy*; and so they make the first man Adam to pray to God after this manner; "let my prayer come before the throne of thy glory, and let my cry come before רַחֲמֵיךָ, *the throne of thy mercy*." The end of coming hither is, *that we may obtain mercy*; the sure mercies of David, the blessings of the everlasting covenant; particularly pardoning mercy, and the fresh application of it, and every other blessing of grace that is needful: and there's reason to expect it, since there is mercy with God; and it is with Christ, as the head of the covenant; and it is ready for those that ask it; and it has been obtained by many, and is everlasting. *And find grace to help in time of need*; the Syriac version renders it, *in time of affliction*; which is a time of need, as every time of distress is, whether from the immediate hand of God, or through the persecutions of men, or the temptations of Satan: and help at such times may be expected; since not only God is able to help, but he has promised it; and he has laid help on Christ: and gives it seasonably, and at the best time; and it springs from grace, yea, it is grace that does help; by which may be meant, the discoveries of God's love, and the supplies of grace from Christ: which may be hoped for, seeing God is the God of all grace; and he is seated on a throne of grace; and all fulness of grace dwells in Christ: to find grace often, signifies to find favour with God, to be accepted by him, as well as to receive grace from him.

C H A P. V.

THE apostle having made mention of Christ as an high-priest, in the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give an account of an high-priest, and applies the character of him to Christ; and shews that he is of another order of priesthood than that of Aaron, even of the order of Melchisedec; of whom he could say many things, but the Hebrews were dull of hearing them; which leads him to blame them for their rudeness, and non-proficiency. The description of the high-priest is taken from his relation to men, separation from them, and ordination for them; from his oblation of their gifts and sacrifices; from his sympathy with them, and from his call of God, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. all which are accommodated to Christ; as his vocation of God, ver. 5, 6. confirmed by two testimonies out of Psal. ii. 7. and cx. 4. his being a man, and having infir-

mities, though sinless ones, and his sympathy with men, and compassion on them, ver. 7. his obedience and sufferings, and the oblation of himself, whereby he became the author of salvation to his people, which is the main thing in his priesthood, ver. 8, 9. and which was not of the order of Aaron, though in some things there was an agreement with it, but of the order of Melchisedec, ver. 10. of whom the apostle could say many surprising things; but these Hebrews were dull of apprehension, and incapable of receiving them, ver. 11. And then he proceeds to blame them for their dullness, which he aggravates by the time they had been in the school of Christ, when it might have been expected they would have been teachers of others; by their being yet scholars, and of the lowest class, who had need to be taught the first rudiments of the Christian religion;

^u Targum in Psal. xxix. 10. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 3. & in Numb. fol. 91. 2. & 93. 2.
^v Megillat Esther, fol. 95. 1.

^x Raziel, fol. 32. 1.

^y Ibid. fol. 3. 1.

yea, by their being as babes that stood in need of milk, and could not bear meat, ver. 12. And then follows a description both of babes, and of adult persons; such as are unskilful in the word of righteousness are babes, and use milk; but those who exercise their spiritual senses, to discern between good and bad doctrine, are adult, and can digest strong meat, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 1. *For every high-priest taken from among men, &c.]* Every one that was an high-priest under the law was a man, and not an angel; and it was proper he should be so, that he might be a priest for men, have compassion on them, and offer for them; and he was among the number of common men, and was taken out from them, and chosen and separated from the rest of men, as Aaron and his sons were from the children of Israel, Exod. xxviii. 1. And such an one is *ordained for men*; in their room and stead, and for their good; and above them, as the word sometimes signifies; he was exalted unto, and invested with a superior office, to which he was ordained according to the law of a carnal commandment, by anointing with oil, and without an oath. *In things pertaining to God*; in things in which God had to do with men; and so he presided over them in the name of God, and declared the will of God unto them, and blessed them; and in things in which men had to do with God; and so he appeared in their name, and represented their persons, and presented their sacrifices to God, as follows: *that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*; free-will offerings, peace-offerings, burnt-offerings, sin and trespass-offerings, all kind of sacrifice.

Ver. 2. *Who can have compassion on the ignorant, &c.]* Who have committed sins of ignorance, and bring their sacrifices for them; these he does not insult and upbraid, nor break out into anger and indignation against; but pities them, and sympathizes with them; has a just measure of compassion suitable to their condition, and bears with them with great moderation and temper: *and on them that are out of the way*; of God's commandments; who are like sheep going astray, and turn to their own way; who transgress the law of God, and err from it; perhaps such who sin knowingly and wilfully, and through infirmity, are meant: *for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity*; not of body only, but of mind, sinful infirmity; he had much of it, it beset him all around; he was *clothed* with it, as the Syriac version renders it; as Joshua the high-priest was with filthy garments, Zech. iii. 3.

Ver. 3. *And by reason hereof, &c.]* Because of his sinful infirmity: *he ought, as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins*; as he offered sacrifice for the sins of the people, so he was obliged to offer for his own sins; in this Christ differed from the high-priest, for he had no sin of his own to offer for, ch. vii. 27. but he had, and therefore offered for them, Lev. xvi. 11. and made a confession of them: the form of which, as used on the day of atonement, was this; "he put both his hands upon the bullock, and confessed, and thus he said: I beseech thee, O Lord, I have done wickedly, I have transgressed, I have sinned before thee, I and my house; I beseech thee, O Lord, pardon the in-

quities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done wickedly, transgressed, and sinned before thee, I and my house." And this he did a second time on that day.²

Ver. 4. *And no man taketh this honour to himself, &c.]* That is, the honour of the priesthood: the office of the high-priest was a very honourable one; it was a peculiar honour to Aaron, and his sons, to be separated unto it; their instalment into it was very grand and solemn; at that time they were anointed with oil, and clothed with glorious garments, and sacrifices were offered for them; they had an honourable maintenance assigned them, and a large retinue of priests and Levites to attend them; great respect and reverence were shewn them: but their principal honour lay in the work they performed; in representing the whole body of the people; in offering gifts and sacrifices for them; in blessing them; and in the resolution of difficult cases brought unto them; in all which they were types of Christ, the high-priest. Now no man might take this honourable office upon himself, or intrude himself into it, or obtain it by any unjust method, or in any other way than by a call from God; nor did any man dare to do it, until of late, when some got into it of themselves, and were put in by the Roman governors, and even purchased it of them³: so Joshua ben Gamla became an high-priest⁴; and some have thought the apostle has some respect to these wicked practices, and tacitly reproves them, as what ought not to be: for no one ought to be in this office, *but he that is called of God*, as was Aaron; whose call was immediately from the Lord, and was unquestionable: Moses was ordered to separate him, and his sons, from the children of Israel, and instal them into this office; they were destroyed by fire, or swallowed up by the earth, that disputed his call; and this was confirmed by a miracle, by his dry rod budding, blooming, and bringing forth almonds: and the apostle instances in him, because his call was so remarkable and authentic; and because he was the first high-priest of the Jews, and from whence the rest descended, who were lawful ones.

Ver. 5. *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, &c.]* It was a glorifying of Christ, to make him an high-priest; not as God, for as such no addition can be made to his glory; yea, it was a condescension in him to become a priest: but as man; it was an honour to the human nature to be united to the son of God; and to be separated from others to this office; and to be called unto it, qualified for it, and invested with it; and to be of the order he was, and to do the work; and the very assistance he had in it, for the accomplishment of it, was a glorifying of him, for which he prayed; and the work being done, he had glory given him by his father; and an ascription of glory is made to him by angels and saints: but Christ did not take this high and honourable office to himself, nor the glory of it; indeed, he did not receive it from man, nor was he made a priest according to the ceremonial law; yet he did not intrude himself into this office: *but he that said unto him, thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee*; he appointed him to this office; he sent

² Misna Yoma, c. 3. sect. 8. & c. 4. sect. 2.

³ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. s. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. sect. 3.

⁴ Misn. Yebamot, c. 6. sect. 4. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 18. 1.

him to execute it; he anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows; he consecrated and established him in it with an oath; and prescribed to him what he should do, suffer, and offer; and declared to him what he might expect as the reward thereof. These words are taken out of Psal. ii. 7. see the note on ch. i. 5. and they are not to be considered as constitutive of Christ's priesthood, as if that was intended by the begetting of him as a son; but as descriptive of the person, who called him to it, who stood in the relation of a father to Christ, and Christ in the relation of a son to him; therefore the one was very proper to call, and the other a very fit person to be called to this office, being every way capable of executing it, to the glory of God, and to the good of men.

Ver. 6. *As he saith also in another place, &c.*] Or *psalm*, namely, in Psal. cx. 4. that is, the same person, even God the father, who spake the words before cited, also expressed the following: *thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*: that the psalm, from whence these words are taken, belongs to the Messiah, see the note on Matt. xxii. 44. and this very passage is applied unto him by the Jewish writers^c; and had not this been the general sense of the Jewish church at this time, the apostle writing to Hebrews would not have produced it; and it very clearly expresses the priesthood of Christ, the eternity of it, and the order according to which it was; and it being not according to the order of Aaron, but of another, shews the change of the priesthood, and so of the law; of Melchisedec, see the note on ch. vii. 1.

Ver. 7. *Who in the days of his flesh, &c.*] Or *of his humanity*, as the Arabic version renders it; or *when he was clothed with flesh*, as the Syriac version; in the time of his humiliation, when he was attended with the sinless infirmities of the flesh, or human nature; it may take in the whole course of his life on earth, especially the latter part of it: it is not to be concluded from hence, that he has not flesh now, or is not in the flesh; for it is certain that he had flesh after his resurrection; only now he is free from all the infirmities of the flesh, the pains, and sorrows, and griefs of it, which he endured when here on earth: *when he had offered up prayers and supplications*: as he often did in many parts of his life, particularly in the garden, and upon the cross, when he offered up himself: and as the days of Christ's flesh were filled up with prayers and supplications, so should ours be also: the word for *supplications* signifies branches of olive-trees, covered with wool^d; which such as sued for peace carried in their hands, and so came to signify supplications for peace: the manner in which these were offered up by Christ was *with strong crying and tears*; with a most vehement outcry, with a loud voice, as when on the cross; and though there is no mention of his tears at that time, or when in the garden, no doubt but he shed them: all that Christ did, and said, are not written; some things were received by tradition, and by inspiration; Christ wept at other times, and why not at these? and there are some circumstances in his prayers which intimate as much, Matt. xxvi. 38. and xxvii.

46. Luke xxii. 44. which shews the weight of sin, of sorrow, and of punishment, that lay upon him, and the weakness of the human nature, considered in itself: and it may be observed to our comfort, that as Christ's crying and tears were confined to the days of his flesh, or to the time of his life here on earth, so shall ours be also. Mention is made of תפלות *strong prayers*^e, in Jewish writings. The person to whom Christ offered his prayers is described in the following words, *unto him that was able to save him from death*; from a corporeal death, as he could, but that it was otherwise determined; or rather to raise him from the dead, to deliver him from the state of the dead, from the power of death, and the grave, as he did; and so the Syriac version renders it, *to quicken him from death*; to restore him from death to life: *and was heard in that he feared*; or *by fear*; by God, who was the object of his fear, and who is called the fear of Isaac, Gen. xxxi. 42. he was always heard by him, and so he was in the garden, and on the cross; and was carried through his sufferings, and was delivered from the fear of death, and was saved from the dominion and power of it, being raised from the dead by his father: or *he was heard because of his fear*, or *reverence*; either because of the dignity and reverence of his person, in which he was had by God; or because of his reverence of his father.

Ver. 8. *Though he were a son, &c.*] The son of God, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature, being the only-begotten of the father, having the same nature and perfections with him: *yet learned he obedience*; not to his parents, or civil magistrates, though that is true; nor merely to the precepts of the law, which he did; but unto death: through sufferings he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross: and this he learnt; not that he was ignorant of the nature of it; nor was he destitute of an obedient disposition to it; but the meaning is, he had an experience of it, and effected it; and which was voluntary, and done in our room and stead; and is the rule and the measure of our righteousness before God: and this he learned, *by the things which he suffered*: from men, from devils, and from the justice of God. Christ's sonship did not exempt him from obedience and sufferings; this shews the dignity of Christ's person, that he is the son of God, not as Mediator, for as such he is a servant; and it would be no wonder that he should learn obedience as a servant; and this shews also the great humility and condescension of Christ in obeying and suffering for us; though so great a person; and likewise the vile nature of sin, and the strictness of divine justice: and we may learn from hence, not to expect to be exempted from sufferings on account of sonship; nor to conclude we are not sons, because we suffer; and that afflictions are instructive, and by them experience is learned.

Ver. 9. *And being made perfect, &c.*] In his obedience, through sufferings; having completed his obedience, gone through his sufferings, and finished his sacrifice, and being perfectly glorified in heaven:

^c Moses Hadarsan apud Galatin. l. 10. c. 6. Abot R. Nathan, c. 34.

^d Harpocration. Lex. p. 152. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. sect. 5. c. 2.

^e Tzeror Hamor, fol. 37. 4.

he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; the salvation Christ is the author of it eternal; it was resolved upon from eternity, and contrived in it; it was secured in the everlasting covenant, in which not only a Saviour was provided, but blessings both of grace and glory: and it is to eternity; and stands distinguished from a temporal salvation, and is opposed to eternal damnation; it is the salvation of the soul, which is immortal; and it takes in both grace and glory, which are of a durable nature; and the continuance of it is owing to the abiding and lasting virtue of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness: and Christ is the cause or author of this salvation, by his obedience and sufferings; by obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of the law; by the price of his blood, and by the power of his arm; by his death and by his life; by his sacrifice on the cross, and by his intercession in heaven; by bestowing grace here, and glory hereafter: this shews that salvation is done, and that Christ is the sole author of it, and that all the glory of it should be given to him; and those to whom he is the author of salvation, are such as hearken to the voice of his Gospel, and obey him in his ordinances. Christ is not the author of salvation to all men; all men do not obey him; all those whom Christ saves, he brings them to an obedience to himself; for his obedience for them does not exempt them from obedience to him, though their obedience is no cause of their salvation; Christ himself is the alone author of that.

Ver. 10. *Called of God an high-priest, after the order of Melchisedec.* על דברתי, according to what is said of him, Psal. cx. 4. there is a resemblance between Melchisedec and Christ; many things that are said of the one, agree with the other: there is a likeness in Melchisedec to Christ; in his person, and what is said of him, that he was without father and mother; and in his office as a priest, and in the manner of his instalment into it; and in the antiquity, dignity, and perpetuity of it; and this is repeated for the further confirmation of Christ's priesthood, and is a conclusion of the truth of it from sufficient evidence: this does not so much design the constitution of Christ as priest, nor the call of him to that office, as the denomination or surnaming of him a priest of Melchisedec's order, because of the agreement between them; and contains a reason of Christ's being the author of eternal salvation, because he is a priest for ever; and prevents any objections against Christ's priesthood, and opens a way to discourse more largely concerning it.

Ver. 11. *Of whom we have many things to say, &c.* Either of Melchisedec, or of Christ, or of his priesthood, or of all of these; since the apostle does largely treat of them in the following chapters: he says many things concerning Melchisedec in the seventh chapter, and many things of Christ, and his priesthood, in those that follow; Christ is a large and inexhaustible subject in the Gospel ministry, and what a Gospel minister delights to dwell on; and it is a fund and stock from whence he is furnished with things of the greatest usefulness, and of the utmost importance: and hard to be uttered; as were many things respecting Melchisedec, mentioned in ch. vii. 3. and also concerning Christ, and his priesthood: abstruse and difficult things are to be

looked into, considered, searched after, and insisted on: the whole Scripture is profitable, and the whole counsel of God is to be declared, and things hard to be explained should be attempted; this is the way to an increase of light and knowledge; though it becomes ministers to consult their own abilities, and the capacity of their hearers, that they don't go beyond them: *seeing ye are dull of hearing*; this dullness of hearing is thought by some to arise from their afflictions; or from their attachment to the law of Moses; or rather from their sluggishness, indocility, and want of industry; and oftentimes this arises from pride and prejudice, and irreverence of the word of God; and frequently from the deceitfulness of riches, and the cares of this life.

Ver. 12. *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, &c.* These Hebrews had had great advantages; they were not only descended from Abraham, and had the law of Moses, and the writings of the Old Testament, but some of them had enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and however of his apostles; and it was now about thirty years from the day of Pentecost, in which the gifts of the Holy Ghost were bestowed in such an extraordinary manner, and a large number were converted, and a church-state settled among them; and therefore considering the length of time, the opportunities and advantages they had enjoyed, it might have been expected, and indeed it is what should have been, that they would have been teachers of others, some in a private, and some in a public way: from whence it may be observed, that to have time for learning, and yet make no proficiency, is an aggravation of dullness; moreover, that men ought to be hearers, and make some good proficiency in hearing, before they are fit to be teachers of others; also, that persons are not only to hear for their own edification, but for the instruction of others, though all hearers are not designed for public teachers; for to be teachers of others, requires a considerable share of knowledge: to which may be added, that the churches of Christ are the proper seminaries of Gospel ministers. But this was so far from being the case of these Hebrews, that the apostle says of them, *ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God*; by the oracles of God are meant the Scriptures, not the law of Moses only, but all the writings of the Old Testament, which were given by the inspiration of God, and are authoritative and infallible; and by the first principles of them are intended, either the first promises in them, concerning the Messiah; or the institutions, rites, and ceremonies of the law, which are sometimes called στοιχεια, elements, Gal. iv. 3, 9. where the same word is used as here; and which were the alphabet and rudiments of the Gospel to the Jews: or else the apostle designs the plain doctrines of the Gospel, which were at first preached unto them, in which they needed to be again instructed, as they were at first; so that instead of going forward, they had rather gone back: and are become such as have need of milk; of the types, shadows, and figures of the law, which were suited to the infant state of the church, who by sensible objects were directed to the view of Gospel grace; or of the plain and easier parts of the Gospel, comparable to milk for their purity,

sweetness, nourishing nature, and being easy of digestion: and *not of strong meat*: such as the deep things of God, the mysteries of the Gospel; those which are more hard to be understood, received, and digested; such as the doctrines of the Trinity, of God's everlasting love, of eternal election and reprobation, of the person of Christ, the abrogation of the law, &c.

Ver. 13. *For every one that useth milk, &c.*] And sits down contented with the first principles of the Gospel, such as are easily taken in and digested; or makes use of the ceremonial law, as a schoolmaster to teach him the Gospel: is *unskilful in the word of righteousness*; the Gospel, which is a doctrine of righteousness; not of works of righteousness done by men, and of justification by them, or of a man's own righteousness; but of the pure, perfect, and everlasting righteousness of Christ: and 'tis called so, because it is the means of stripping a man of his own righteousness; and of revealing the righteousness of Christ unto him; and of working faith in him to lay hold upon it; and of discovering the agreement there is between the righteousness of Christ, and the justice of God; and of teaching men to live soberly, righteously, and godly: and such are unskilful in it, who either have no knowledge of the doctrine of justification; of the matter of it, Christ's righteousness; of the form of it, by imputation; and of the date of it, before faith: or have a very confused notion of it, joining their own works with Christ's righteousness, for justification, as many judaizing professors did; or who, if they have a notional knowledge of it, have no practical concern in it; don't believe with the heart unto righteousness; have not the experience, sweetness, and power of this doctrine upon them; and do not live lives agreeable to it: *for he is a babe*. This word is used sometimes by way of commendation, and is expressive of some good characters of the saints; such as harmlessness and inoffensiveness, humility, and meekness, a desire after the sincere milk of the word, freedom from rancour and malice, hypocrisy and guile; but here it is used by way of reproach, and denotes levity and inconstancy, ignorance and non-proficiency, want of digestion of strong meat, and incapacity to take care

of themselves, as standing in need of tutors and governors.

Ver. 14. *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, &c.*] Or *perfect*; see 1 Cor. ii. 6. This does not intend a perfection of justification; for though some have a greater degree of faith than others, and a clearer discovery of their justification, yet babes in Christ are as perfectly justified as more grown and experienced believers; nor a perfection of sanctification, for there is no perfection of holiness but in Christ; and though the work of sanctification may be in greater perfection in one saint than in another, yet all are imperfect in this life; and as to a perfection of parts, babes have this as well as adult persons: but it designs a perfection of knowledge; for though none are entirely perfect, yet some have arrived to a greater degree of the knowledge of Gospel mysteries than others, and to these the strong meat of the Gospel belongs; they are capable of understanding the more mysterious parts of the Gospel; of searching into the deep things of God; and of receiving and digesting the more sublime truths of the Christian religion: *even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*; that is, their spiritual senses, the internal senses of the understanding and judgment, signified by external ones; as by seeing the sun; hearing the voice of Christ; savouring or smelling a sweet odour in the things of God, and Christ; tasting that the Lord is gracious; feeling and handling the word of life, as these are held forth in the everlasting Gospel: and these being exercised on their proper object, by use, an habit is contracted; and such are qualified for discerning, as between moral good and evil, and the worse and better state of the church, and between law and Gospel, so between the doctrines of Christ, and the doctrines of men; who find they differ: the doctrines of Christ such experienced persons find to be good, wholesome, nourishing, and salutary; and the doctrines of men to be evil, to eat, as does a canker, and to be pernicious, poisonous, and damnable; and the discernment they make, and the judgment they form, are not according to the dictates of carnal reason, but according to the Scriptures of truth, and their own experience.

C H A P. VI.

IN this chapter the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews not to rest in the rudiments of the Christian religion they had learned; and much less to lay them again in the foundation after the Jewish manner, of which he instances in six particulars; but to seek after a perfect knowledge of evangelic truths, which, under a divine permission, was his determination to do, ver. 1, 2, 3. which was the best method to prevent apostasy, he dissuades from; by giving the characters of apostates, shewing how far they may go in the knowledge of divine things, and yet fall away; by asserting the impossibility of their repentance and recovery, with the reason of it, taken from the blackness of their crimes, ver. 4, 5, 6. and the difference be-

tween them, and true believers, he illustrates by two sorts of earth, the one takes in the rain that comes down from heaven, and brings forth herbs for the use of its dresser, and is blessed of God: such are true believers in Christ, ver. 7. the other bears thorns and briars, and is rejected and cursed, and in the issue burned; and to such earth the above apostates may be compared, ver. 8. but lest the believing Hebrews, such as were truly gracious among them, should conclude that this was their case, and that it was desperate; and lest they should think the apostle had an ill opinion of them, he declares he was otherwise persuaded of them, and hoped and believed they were interested in the things of salvation, ver. 9. the reasons

of which persuasion are taken from the work of grace, which was wrought in them; from their laborious love they shewed to the name of God, and to his people, and which they continued to shew: and from the righteousness of God in not forgetting all this, ver. 10. And then he proceeds to exhort them to diligence in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, that so they might arrive to a full assurance of hope, ver. 11. and not to indulge slothfulness, but to be followers of the saints that were gone before them; whose character is, that through faith, and patience, they had inherited the promises, things the apostle would have those believers imitate them in, ver. 12. and particularly instances in Abraham, the father of this people, and of all believers; who having a promise from God, to which an oath was annexed, patiently waited for it, and obtained it, ver. 13, 14, 15. and having made mention of an oath, the apostle takes notice of the nature and use of one among men, ver. 16. and of the design of God in making use of one himself, which was to confirm his promise, and shew its immutability to the heirs of it; and that by observing these two immutable things, which could never fail, they might have solid and abiding comfort: even all such, who, under a sense of danger, flee to Christ for refuge, who is the ground of hope proposed to them in the Gospel, to lay hold upon, ver. 17, 18. and because of the firmness of the grace of hope, as it is conversant with Christ, and is cast on him, the good ground of it, it is compared to an anchor; and is said to be sure and steadfast, and to enter within the vail, where Christ is gone as a forerunner; and which is an encouragement to that grace to enter in after him; who is further described by his name Jesus, by his office as an high-priest, and by the order of which he is, that of Melchisedec, ver. 19, 20. which is mentioned, to lead on to what the apostle had to say concerning him, in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, &c.*] The Gospel is the doctrine of Christ, and is so called, because Christ, as God, is the author of it; as Mediator, he received it from his father; as man, he was the preacher of it; and he is also the sum and substance of it: the principles of this doctrine are either the easier parts of the Gospel, called *milk* in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which are not to be left with dislike and contempt, nor so as to be forgotten, nor so as not to be recurred to at proper times; but so as not to abide in and stick here, without going further: or rather the ceremonies of the law, which were the elements of the Jews' religion, and the *beginning*, as the word may be here rendered, of the doctrine of Christ; which were shadowy and typical of Christ, and taught the Jews the truths of the Gospel concerning Christ: in these the believing Jews were very desirous of sticking, and of abiding by them, and of continuing them in the Gospel church; whereas they were to be left, since they had had their use, and had answered what they were designed for, and were now abolished by Christ. *Let us go on to perfection*; in a comparative sense, to a more perfect knowledge of things, which the clear revelation and ministry of the Gospel lead unto; and which the rites

and ceremonies, types and figures of the law, never could: *not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works*; the Syriac version reads this by way of interrogation, *do ye lay again, &c.* and makes the third verse to be an answer to it: the phrase, *not laying again the foundation*, is to be read in connexion, not only with this article of repentance, but with each of the other five articles, the foundation of which is no more to be laid again than this: and not laying it again, either means not teaching it, and so refers to the apostle, and other ministers of the word, who should not insist upon the following things, at least not stick there, but go on to deliver things more sublime and grand; or not hearing it, and so refers to the Hebrews, who should seek after a more perfect knowledge of evangelical truths than the following articles exhibited to them: and the several parts of this foundation, which are not to be laid again ministerially, by preachers, or attended to by hearers, design either the first things, with which the Gospel dispensation was ushered in; or rather, and which I take to be the true sense, the general principles and practices of the Jews under the former dispensation; for these are not the six principles of the Christian religion, as they are commonly called, but so many articles of the Jewish creed; some of which were peculiar to the Jews, and others common to them, with us Christians: thus, *repentance from dead works*, does not intend evangelical repentance, the doctrine of which is to be ministerially laid, and the grace itself to be exercised over and over again; but a repentance which arose from, and was signified by the sacrifices of slain beasts; for by them the Jews were taught the doctrine of repentance, as well as remission of sin; and in and over them did they confess their iniquities; yea, every beast that was slain for sacrifice carried in it a conviction of sin, an acknowledgment of guilt; and it was tacitly owning, that they, for whom the creature was slain, deserved to be treated as that was, and die as that did. So the Jews' say, "when a man sacrifices a beast, he thinks in his own heart, I am rather a beast than this; for I am he that hath sinned, and for the sin which I have committed I bring this; and it is more fitting that the man should be sacrificed rather than the beast; and so it appears that, *על ידי קרבנו הוא יודם*, by the means of his offering he repents." But now, under the Gospel dispensation, believing Jews, as these were to whom the apostle writes, were not to learn the doctrine of repentance from slain beasts, or to signify it in this way; since repentance and remission of sins were preached most clearly to them in the name of Christ: nor were they to lay again another part of this foundation, or a second article of the Jewish creed, and of faith towards God; which article is expressed in language agreeable to the Jewish dispensation; whereas evangelical faith is usually called the faith of Christ, or faith in Christ, or towards our Lord Jesus Christ; but this respects faith in God, as the God of Israel: hence says our Lord to his disciples, who were all Jews, *ye believe in God*: ye have been taught, and used to believe in God, as the God of Israel; *believe also in me*, as his son and the Messiah, and the Mediator between God and

^f Nizzachon Vet. p. 11. Ed. Wagenstein.

man, John xiv. 1. so that now they were not only to have faith towards God, as the God of Israel, and to teach and receive that doctrine; but to have faith in Christ as the Saviour of lost sinners, without the intermediate use of sacrifices.

Ver. 2. *Of the doctrine of baptisms, &c.*] Some read this divisively, *baptism and doctrine*, as the Ethiopic version; as if the one respected the ordinance of baptism, and the other the ministry of the word; but it is best to read them conjunctively: and by which most understand the Gospel ordinance of water-baptism, so called by a change of number, the plural for the singular, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, who render it *baptism*; or because of the different persons baptized, and times of baptizing, as some; or because of the trine immersion, as others; or because of the threefold baptism of spirit, blood, and water, which have some agreement with each other; or because of the baptism of John, and Christ, though they are one and the same; or because of the inward and outward baptism, the one fitting and qualifying for the other; and so the doctrine of it is thought to respect the necessity, use, and end of it; but since there is but one baptism, and the above reasons for the plural expression are not solid, and sufficiently satisfying, it is best to interpret this of the divers baptisms among the Jews, spoken of in Heb. ix. 10. which had a *doctrine* in them, to that people; teaching them the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, and leading them to it, to wash in for sin, and for uncleanness; but now, since this blood was shed, they were no more to teach nor learn the doctrine of cleansing by the blood of Christ this way; nor any more to be led unto it through these divers baptisms, ablutions, and purifications. *And of laying on of hands*; the foundation of this was to be no more laid, nor the doctrine of it to be any longer taught and learned in the way it had been; for not the rite, but the doctrine of laying on of hands is here intended; and it has no reference to the right of laying on of hands by the apostles, either in private persons, or officers of churches; for what was the doctrine of such a rite, is not easy to say; but to the rite of laying on of hands of the priests, and of the people, upon the head of sacrifices; which had a doctrine in it, even the doctrine of the imputation of sin to Christ, the great sacrifice. It was usual with the Jews^a to call the imposition of hands upon the sacrifice, simply, סמיכה, *laying on of hands*; and they understood by it the transferring of sin from the persons that laid on hands, to the sacrifice, on which they were laid; and that hereby, as they express it, sins were separated from them, and, as it were, put upon the sacrifice^b; but now believers were no longer to be taught and learn the great doctrine of the imputation of sin, by this rite and ceremony, since Christ has been made sin for them, and has had sins imputed to him, and has bore them in his own body on the tree: *and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment*; articles of faith, which distinguished the Jews from the Gentiles, who were greatly strangers to a future state, the resurrection of

the dead, and judgment to come: these are doctrines of pure revelation, and were taught under the Old Testament, and were believed by the generality of the Jews, and are articles which they hold in common with us Christians; yet the believing Hebrews were not to rest in the knowledge of these things, and in the smaller degrees of light they had in them, under the former dispensation; but were to go on to perfection, and bear forward towards a greater share of knowledge of these, and other more sublime doctrines of grace; since life and immortality are more clearly brought to light by Christ through the Gospel.

Ver. 3. *And this will we do, if God permit.*] That is, leave the rites and ceremonies of the law, which were the rudiments, or first principles of the Gospel, and go on to a more perfect knowledge of Gospel truths; and not lay again as the foundation of the ministry, or insist upon them as if they were the main things, even the above articles of the Jewish creed, especially in the way and manner in which they had been taught and learnt: the sense is, that the apostle and his brethren in the ministry were determined to insist upon the more solid and substantial parts of the Gospel, and which tended to bring on their hearers to perfection; and that it became the believing Hebrews to seek after a greater degree of knowledge under the ministry of the word. It is, or at least should be, the determination of a Gospel minister, to preach Christ, and the great truths of the Gospel; and whosoever God has called him to it, though there may be many adversaries; and though he may be reproached, calumniated, and deserted: resolution in preaching the Gospel, and adhering to it, is very commendable in a minister; and it is very laudable in hearers to attend to it, stand by it, and search further into it; and which both should determine upon with a regard to the will of God, *if God permit*: God's permission is much to be observed in the ministry of the word, in giving gifts to men, in placing them out here and there, where they shall exercise them, in directing them to subjects, and in making their ministry useful and successful: and it may be observed in general, that nothing can be done, or come to pass, good or bad, but what God permits or wills to be done; no good things, no actions, civil, natural, moral, or spiritual; no evil things, the evil of punishment, afflictions, the persecutions of wicked men, the temptations of Satan, heresies, and even immoralities.

Ver. 4. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c.*] The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, *baptized*; and the word is thought to be so used in ch. x. 32. And indeed baptism was called very early *illumination* by the ancients, as by Justin Martyr¹, and Clemens Alexandrinus², because only enlightened persons were the proper subjects of it; and the word *once* here used seems to confirm this sense, since baptism, when rightly administered, was not repeated; but then this sense depends upon an use of a word, which it is not certain did as yet obtain; nor does the apostle take notice of baptism in a parallel place, ch. x. 26, 27. This gave rise to, and seems

^a Misa. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 8. & Bartenora in ib.

^b R. Levi ben Gerson in Exod. fol. 109. 1. & in Lev. fol. 117. 2.

¹ Apolog. 2. p. 64.

² Pedagog. l. 1. c. 6. p. 93.

to favour the error of Novatus, that those who fall into sin after baptism are to be cut off from the communion of the church, and never more to be restored unto it; contrary to the promises of God to returning backsliders, and contrary to facts, as well as to the directions of Christ, and his apostles, to receive and restore such persons; and such a notion tends to set aside the intercession of Christ for fallen believers, and to plunge them into despair: it is better therefore to retain the word *enlightened*, in its proper sense, and to understand it of persons enlightened with Gospel knowledge; there are some who are savingly enlightened by the spirit of God, to see the impurity of their hearts and actions, and their impotency to perform that which is good, the imperfection of their own righteousness to justify them, their lost state and condition by nature, and to see Christ and salvation by him, and their interest in it; and these being *once* enlightened, never become darkness, or ever so fall as to perish; for if God had a mind to destroy them, he would never have shewn them these things, and therefore can't be the persons designed here; unless we render the words, as the Syriac version does, *it is impossible*—*דרתב ידשתן*, *that they should sin again*; so as to die spiritually, lose the grace of God, and stand in need of a new work upon them, which would be impossible to be done: but rather such are meant, who are so enlightened as to see the evil effects of sin, but not the evil that is in sin; to see the good things which come by Christ, but not the goodness that is in Christ; so as to reform externally, but not to be sanctified internally; to have knowledge of the Gospel doctrinally, but not experimentally; yea, to have such light into it, as to be able to preach it to others, and yet be destitute of the grace of God: *and have tasted of the heavenly gift*; either faith, or a justifying righteousness, or the pardon of sin, or eternal life; which are all spiritual and heavenly gifts of grace, and which true believers have real tastes of; and hypocrites please themselves with, having some speculative notions about them, and some desires after them, arising from a natural principle of self-love. Some think the Holy Ghost is intended; but rather Christ himself, the unspeakable gift of God's love, given from heaven, as the bread of life. Now there are some who have a saving spiritual taste of this gift; for though God's people, whilst unregenerate, have no such taste; their taste is vitiated by sin, and it is not changed; sin is the food they live upon, in which they take an imaginary pleasure, and disrelish every thing else; but when regenerated, their taste is changed, sin is rendered loathsome to them; and they have a real gust of spiritual things, and especially of Christ, and find a real delight and pleasure in feeding by faith upon him; whereby they live upon him, and are nourished up unto eternal life, and therefore can't be the persons here spoken of: but there are others who taste, but dislike what they taste; have no true love to Christ, and faith in him; or have only a carnal taste of him, know him only after the flesh, or externally, not inwardly and experimentally; or they have only a superficial taste, such as is opposed to eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, by faith, which is proper to true believers; the gust they have is but temporary, and arises from selfish principles. *And were made par-*

takers of the Holy Ghost; not his person, nor his special grace; there are some who so partake of him, as to be united to him, in whom he becomes the principle of spiritual life, and motion: such have the fruits of the spirit, and communion with him; they enjoy his personal presence and inhabitation in them; they have received him as a spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration and sanctification, as the spirit of faith, and as a comforter; and as a spirit of adoption, and the earnest and seal of future glory; but then such can never so fall away as to perish: a believer indeed may be without the sensible presence of the spirit; the graces of the spirit may be very low, as to their exercise; and they may not enjoy his comforts, gracious influences, and divine assistance; but the spirit of God never is, in the above sense, in a cast-away; where he takes up his dwelling, he never quits it; if such could perish, not only his own glory, but the glory of the Father, and of the Son, would be lost likewise: but by the Holy Ghost is sometimes meant the gifts of the spirit, ordinary or extraordinary, 1 Cor. xii. 4—11. and so here; and men may be said to be partakers of the Holy Ghost, to whom he gives wisdom and prudence in things natural and civil; the knowledge of things divine and evangelical, in an external way; the power of working miracles, of prophesying, of speaking with tongues, and of the interpretation of tongues; for the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost seem chiefly designed, which some, in the first times of the Gospel, were partakers of, who had no share in special grace, Matt. vii. 22, 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.

[Ver. 5. *And have tasted the good word of God, &c.*] Not the Lord Jesus Christ, the essential Word of God, who seems to be intended before by the heavenly gift; but rather, either the Scriptures of truth in general, which are the word of God, endited by him, and contain his mind and will; which he makes use of for conviction, conversion, instruction, and comfort; and which are preserved by him: and these are a *good word*; they come from him who is good; they are a revelation of good things; they make known things true, pleasant, and profitable: or else the Gospel in particular, of which God is the author; and in which is a wonderful display of his wisdom and grace; and which he owns and blesses for his own glory, and the good of others: and this is a *good word*, the same with *דבר טוב*, *good matter*, or *word*, in Psal. xlv. 1. *פתגם טובי*, *my good word*, or *the word of my goodness*, in the Targum on Isa. lv. 11. for it is the word of righteousness, reconciliation, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. And there is a special and spiritual taste of this good word, which is delightful, relishing, and nourishing; and such who have it can never totally and finally fall away; because they who taste it, so as to eat and digest it, and be nourished by it, to them it becomes the ingrafted word, which is able to save them: but there is such a taste of this word as is disrelishing, as in profane sinners, and open opposers and persecutors of the word, or as in hypocrites and formal professors; which is only an assent to the Scriptures, as the revelation of God, or a superficial knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel without the experience of them, and a temporal faith in them, and a natural affection for them, and pleasedness with them for a time; as the Jews, and

Herod with John's ministry, and the stony-ground hearers. *And the powers of the world to come*; meaning either the state of the church, and the glorious things relating to it, after the first resurrection, which they might have some notional apprehensions of; or the ultimate state of glory and happiness, the powers of which are the immortality, incorruption, and glory of the body, the perfect holiness and knowledge of the soul, entire freedom from all evils of every kind, full communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and a complete enjoyment of all happiness for ever; which hypocrites may have a notional knowledge of, a natural desire after, and delight in the contemplation and hope of, as Balaam had; or rather the *δραματις*, miracles and mighty works in the former part of the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, the Jews' world to come, see the note on ch. ii. 5. are intended; which many, as Judas and others, were able to perform, who were not sincere Christians, or true believers.

Ver. 6. *If they shall fall away, &c.*] This is not supposed of true believers, as appears from ver. 9. nor is it to be supposed of them that they may fall totally and finally; they may indeed fall, not only into afflictions and temptations, but into sin; and from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace, and from a degree of steadfastness in the Gospel; but not irrecoverably: for they are held and secured by a three-fold cord, which can never be broken; by God the Father, who has loved them with an everlasting love, has chosen them in Christ, secured them in the covenant of grace, keeps them by his power, has given them grace, and will give them glory; and by the Son, who has undertook for them, redeemed and purchased them, prays and makes preparations in heaven for them, they are built on him, united to him, and are his jewels, whom he will preserve; and by the Holy Ghost, whose grace is incorruptible, whose personal in-dwelling is for ever, who himself is the earnest and seal of the heavenly inheritance, and who having begun, will finish the good work of grace: but falling away, so as to perish, may be supposed, and is true of many professors of religion; who may fall from the profession of the Gospel they have made, and from the truth of it, and into an open denial of it; yea, into an hatred and persecution of what they once received the external knowledge of; and so shall fall short of heaven, and into condemnation: for, *to renew them again unto repentance*, is a thing impossible: by *repentance* is meant, not baptism of repentance; nor admission to a solemn form of public repentance in the church; nor a legal repentance, but an evangelical one: and so to be *renewed* unto it is not to be baptized again, or to be restored anew to the church by repentance, and absolution; but must be understood either of renovation of the soul, in order to repentance; or of the reforming of the outward conversation, as an evidence of it; or of a renewing of the exercise of the grace of repentance: and to be renewed *again* to repentance does not suppose that persons may have true repentance and lose it; for though truly penitent persons may lose the exercise of this grace for a time, yet the grace itself can never be lost: moreover, these apostates before described

had only a shew of repentance, a counterfeit one; such as Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas had; and consequently, the renewing of them again to repentance, is to that which they only seemed to have, and to make pretensions unto; now to renew them to a true repentance, which they once made a profession of, the apostle says, is a thing *impossible*: the meaning of which is not only that it is difficult; or that it is rare and unusual; or that it is unsuitable and improper; but it is absolutely impossible: it is impossible to these men to renew themselves to repentance; renovation is the work of the Holy Ghost, and not of man; and repentance is God's gift, and not in man's power; and it is impossible for ministers to renew them, to restore and bring them back, by true repentance; yea, it is impossible to God himself, not through any impotence in him, but from the nature of the sin these men are guilty of; for by the high, though outward attainments they arrive unto, according to the description of them, their sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which no sacrifice can be offered up, and of which there is no remission, and so no repentance; for these two go together, and for which prayer is not to be made; see Matt. xii. 32. Heb. x. 26, 27. 1 John v. 16. and chiefly because to renew such persons to repentance, is repugnant to the determined will of God, who cannot go against his own purposes and resolutions; and so the Jews¹ speak of repentance being withheld by God from Pharaoh, and from the people of Israel; of which they understand Exod. ix. 16. Isa. vi. 10. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. and say, that when the holy blessed God withholds repentance from a sinner, *אניני יכרל לשׁוּב*, *he cannot repent*; but must die in his wickedness which he first committed of his own will; and they further observe^m, that he that profanes the name of God has it not in his power to depend on repentance, nor can his iniquity be expiated on the day of atonement, or be removed by chastisement: *seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh*; who is truly and properly God, begotten of the Father, and of the same nature with him, in whom he greatly delights; this is Christ's highest name and title; and it was for asserting himself to be the Son of God that he was crucified; and his being so puts an infinite virtue in his sufferings and death; and it heightens the sin of the Jews, and of these apostates, in crucifying him. He was once crucified, and it is both impossible and unnecessary that he should be, properly speaking, *crucified afresh*, or *again*; it is impossible, because he is risen from the dead, and will never die more; it is unnecessary, because he has finished and completed what he suffered the death of the cross for; but men may be said to crucify him again, when, by denying him to be the son of God, they justify the crucifixion of him on that account; and when they lessen and vilify the virtue of his blood and sacrifice; and when both by errors and immoralities they cause him to be blasphemed, and evil-spoken of; and when they persecute him in his members: and this may be said to be *done to themselves afresh*; not that Christ was crucified for them before, but that they now crucify him again, as much as in them lies; or *with themselves*, in their own breasts and

¹ Maimon. Hilchot. Teshuba, c. 6. seet. 3.

^m Vid. R. David Kimchi in Isa. xxii. 14.

minds, and to their own destruction. Now this being the case, it makes their renewal to repentance impossible; because, as before observed, the sin they commit is unpardonable; it is a denial of Christ, who gives repentance; and such who sin it must arrive to such hardness of heart as to admit of no repentance; and it is just with God to give up such to a final impenitence, as those, who knowingly and out of malice and envy crucified Christ, had neither pardon nor repentance; and besides, this sin of denying Christ to be the son of God, and Saviour of men, after so much light and knowledge, precludes the way of salvation, unless Christ was to be crucified again, which is impossible; for so the Syriac version connects this clause with the word *impossible*, as well as a foregoing one, rendering it, *it is impossible to crucify the son of God again, and to put him to shame*; and so the Arabic version. Christ was put to open shame at the time of his apprehension, prosecution, and crucifixion; and so he is by such apostates, who, was he on earth, would treat him in the same manner the Jews did; and who do traduce him as an impostor and a deceiver, and give the lie to his doctrines, and expose him by their lives, and persecute him in his saints.

Ver. 7. *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, &c.*] Here the apostle illustrates what he had before been speaking of, by a simile taken from the earth, to which men in general answer, who are of the earth; earthy and unregenerate men and carnal professors are of earthly minds; they are like the earth when it was rude and without form, and cursed by God; and are as insensible as the earth: but the earth is particularly distinguished into that which is fruitful, and which is unfruitful; and the former is spoken of in this verse, to which true believers in Christ agree; who are the good ground, into which the seed of God's word is received, and brings forth fruit; these are God's tillage or husbandry: and the rain that comes upon them may signify either the grace of Christ, which, like rain, is an instance of his sovereignty, and what he alone can give, and not the vanities of the Gentiles; and which he gives to persons undeserving of it; and which refreshes, revives, and makes fruitful: or else Christ himself, Psal. lxxii. 6. Hos. vi. 3. whose first coming was like rain much desired, and long expected; and so is his spiritual coming very desirable, delightful, refreshing, and fructifying: or rather his Gospel, Deut. xxxii. 2. Isa. lv. 9. which comes from above, and is the means of softening hard hearts, of reviving distressed and disconsolate minds, and of making barren souls fruitful; which is done by coming oft upon them, at first conversion, and afterwards, alluding to the former and latter rain; and may refer to the receiving of more grace, even grace for grace, out of Christ's fulness, through the ministration of the word, which is drank in by faith, under the influence of the spirit of God: *and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed*; God the father, who is the husbandman, and ministers of the Gospel, who are labourers under him; and where the Gospel comes in power, it brings forth the fruits of the spirit, the fruits of righteousness, the fruits meet for repentance; and which are to the glory of God the father, and are answerable to the means he makes use of, the

ministry of the word and ordinances; and no man can bring forth fruit without Christ, his spirit, and grace: and such earth, or those signified by it, *receiveth blessing from God*; both antecedent to all this, and which is the cause of fruitfulness; and as consequent upon it, for such receive more grace, even all the blessings of grace, and at last the blessing of glory; and all this being in a way of receiving, shews it to be of gift, and of pure grace.

Ver. 8. *But that which beareth thorns and briers, &c.*] To which wicked men answer; who are unfruitful and unprofitable, and are hurtful, pricking and grieving, by their wicked lives and conversations, by their bitter and reproachful words, and by their violent and cruel persecutions; and particularly carnal professors, and especially apostates, such as before described; for to such earth, professors of religion may be compared, who are worldly, slothful, defrauding and overreaching, carnal and wanton; as also heretical men, and such as turn from the faith, deny it, and persecute the saints: and the things or actions produced by them are aptly expressed by *thorns and briers*; such as errors, heresies, and evil works of all kinds; and which shew that the seed of the word was never sown in their hearts, and that that which they bear, or throw out, is natural to them: and such earth is *rejected*; as such men are, both by the church, and by God himself; or *reprobate*, as they are concerning the faith, and to every good work; and are given up by God to a reprobate mind: and is *nigh unto cursing*; and such men are cursed already by the law, being under its sentence of curse and condemnation; and are nigh to the execution of it; referring either to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was near at hand; or to the final judgment, when they shall hear, Go, ye cursed: *whose end is to be burned*; with everlasting and unquenchable fire, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Ver. 9. *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, &c.*] The apostle addresses the believing Hebrews, as *beloved*; being beloved by the Lord, not as the descendants of Abraham, but as the elect of God, and so as loved with an everlasting love; and which might be known to themselves, by its being shed abroad in their hearts, and by their being called by grace, and by their love to him, and to his people: and from hence they might conclude they should not fall away, as the apostates before spoken of; since, in consequence of being beloved by God, they were chosen in Christ unto salvation; Christ was given to die for them; they had the spirit sent down into their hearts; they were justified, pardoned, and adopted; nor could they be separated from the love of God: and the apostle also so calls them, because they were beloved by him, not merely as being his countrymen, but as saints; and this he says to testify his affection to them; to shew that what he said was not from hatred of them, or prejudice to them; and that his exhortations, cautions, and reproofs, might be better taken; and particularly that they might credit what he here says, that he was *persuaded better things of them*, than what he had said of others in ver. 4, 5, 6. even such as are expressed in ver. 10. he was persuaded they had the true grace of God; whereas the above-mentioned persons had only gifts, when in the height of their profession; and

the least degree of grace is better than the greatest gifts men can be possessed of: grace makes a man a good man, not gifts; a man may have great gifts and not be a good man; grace is useful to a man's self, gifts are chiefly useful to others; grace makes men fruitful, when gifts leave them barren in the knowledge of Christ; grace is lasting, when gifts fail, and cease and vanish away; grace will abide the fire of persecution, when gifts will not; grace is saving, gifts are not: *and things that accompany salvation*; which enter into salvation; are ingredients in it, and parts of it, and with which salvation is connected; such as faith, love, &c. or which mutually touch or follow one another in the chain of salvation; as to be predestinated, justified, called, adopted, sanctified, and, at last, glorified: *though we thus speak*; concerning others, as in the preceding verses: the hard things spoken by him of some, were consistent with such persuasions in general; for there might be some among them to whom the aforesaid characters belonged; and saying such things might be a means to make others watchful and careful.

Ver. 10. *For God is not unrighteous, &c.*] He is just and true, righteous in all his ways and works; there is no unrighteousness nor unfaithfulness in him; and this the apostle makes a reason of his strong persuasion of better things concerning the believing Hebrews; because he was well satisfied of the good work upon them, and he was assured that God was not unrighteous and unfaithful: *to forget your work*; which is not to be understood of any good work done by them, for these are generally expressed in the plural number; and besides, these, if at all, are designed in the next clause; moreover, external good works, or such as appear to men to be so, are performed by hypocrites; nor can they be said to be better things, at least, not such as men are saved by: men may fall from these; and supposing them intended, the merit of works cannot be established, as is attempted from hence by the Papists; for the apostle could only consider them as fruits, not as causes of salvation; they are imperfect, and cannot justify, and therefore cannot save; they don't go before to procure salvation, but follow after, and, at most, but accompany; and though God does remember and not forget them, this is owing to his grace, and not to their merit; God's righteousness in remembering them regards not a debt of justice, but a point of faithfulness: but this is to be understood of the work of God upon them, called in Scripture a good work, and the work of faith; and is elsewhere joined, as here, with the labour of love; see 1 Thess. i. 3. and this might be called their work, not because wrought by them, but because it was wrought in them; and the grace that came along with it was exercised by them: now from hence the apostle might be persuaded of better things of them, even such as accompany salvation; since this work is a fruit of everlasting and unchangeable love, and is itself immortal, and the beginning of eternal life; and particularly faith is the effect of electing grace; shall never fail; is the means of the saints' preservation; and is connected with everlasting salvation: it follows, *and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name*; the word *labour* is omitted in the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: this may be understood either of love to God, the

name of God being put for himself; who is to be loved for his own sake, on account of the perfections of his nature, as well as for the works of his hands; and which is to be shewed for the sake of glorifying him: and this love is laborious; it sets a man to work for God; nor are any works to be regarded but what spring from love to God, and to his name; and from hence the apostle might entertain a good hope of these persons, since their love to God was an effect of God's love to them, is a part of the work of grace, and cannot be lost; all things work together for good to such as love God; and these have a crown of life promised unto them: or else it may be understood of love to the saints, as follows, *in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister*; in seeking both their temporal and spiritual good; and though all men in general are to be loved, yet especially the saints, who are set apart by God, whose sins are expiated by Christ, and who are sanctified by the Spirit; and love to them being laborious, and appearing in many instances, and this shewn for the Lord's sake, for his name's sake, might lead the apostle more strongly to conclude better things of them, even things of a saving nature; since charity or love to the saints is better than gifts, and is the evidence of grace, of passing from death to life, and of being the disciples of Christ; see 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 11. *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, &c.*] In the constant exercise of the graces of faith and love, and in ministering to the necessities of the saints: there is a spiritual labour, diligence, and industry to be used by the saints; and former diligence is a motive to future; and is a means of attaining to full assurance, as appears by what follows; and this is to be shewn for the glory of God, for the evidence of the above graces, and for an example and encouragement to other saints: and the persons addressed being *every one*, this shews the apostle's impartiality in his exhortations, and served to remove all groundless suspicions in particular persons; and the manner of his addressing them shews his hearty concern for their welfare, his mildness and gentleness towards them, and his design to encourage them to go forward; and that his exhortation might have the greater weight, he uses the plural *we*; and this exhortation, put in this form, moreover shews that what he had said before had no tendency in some things to encourage despair, or in others carelessness and indolence: and what he had in view in the whole was, that they might arrive to the full assurance of hope unto the end; not only that they might keep up an hope, but attain to the full assurance of it; as to interest in the love and grace of God; in the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises; in God, as a covenant God and father; in Christ, as a Saviour and Redeemer; and as to the truth of the work of grace upon their souls, and their right and meetness for the possession of eternal glory and happiness: the phrase, *unto the end*, may either respect the continuance of the grace of assurance; or refer to the shewing forth of their diligence and industry in ministering to the saints, as they had done, to the end of their lives.

Ver. 12. *That ye be not slothful, &c.*] With respect to hearing the word, and attendance on every ordinance; with respect to the use of means for the in-

crease of knowledge, faith, and hope; and with respect to ministering to the saints; but on the contrary, should take every opportunity of improvement and doing good: *but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*; or things promised; not the land of Canaan, nor the coming of the Messiah; but either grace and salvation by Christ; or eternal life, which is expressed by a promise, to shew that it is not by any works, or merits of men; that it is wholly of grace, and shall certainly be enjoyed: and it is expressed in the plural number, *promises*, because it is the grand promise, which is inclusive of all others; and because it has been given out at various times, and in different manners: and the possession of it being signified by *inheriting*, it shews that this is their father's gift and legacy, which they have as children; and which comes to them through the death of Christ, and of which the spirit is the seal; and comes not by works of righteousness done by them: and the means through which saints that are gone before are come to the enjoyment of this happiness, are *faith and patience*: not that *faith* is the cause of, or what gives right to the inheritance, but it designs a course and walk of believing, at the end of which, saints come to glory; and *faith* is connected with salvation, and salvation with that; and through *faith* believers are preserved unto it: and *patience* is joined with *faith*, as a fruit and evidence of it; and supposes troubles which are patiently endured before men come to the possession of the inheritance: now the apostle exhorts these Hebrews to be followers and imitators of such, in diligence, faith, and patience, when they need not doubt of inheriting the same promised blessedness they do.

Ver. 13. *For when God made promise to Abraham, &c.*] The apostle proposes Abraham as a pattern, because he was the father of these Hebrews, and of all believers; and because they were interested in the promise made to him, and had a right to the same blessing with him; and because he was remarkable for his faith and patience: *the promise made to him is not that in Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3. nor that in Gen. xv. 1, 4, 5, 13, 14. but that in Gen. xxii. 16, 17.* for that only had an oath annexed to it: and this was made by Jesus Christ, there called the Angel of the Lord, and here God; and who is truly and properly so; and than whom there is none greater; and who elsewhere, as here, is said to swear by himself, Isa. xlv. 23. as follows: *because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself*; swearing is ascribed to a divine person after the manner of men, and in condescension to them; and who is never introduced swearing, but in matters of moment and of great importance; the note of Philo the Jewⁿ on the passage in Gen. xxii. from whence the following words are cited, is worthy of observation, being very near the apostle's words; "well does he (God) confirm the promise with an oath, and with an oath that becomes God; for you see that God does not swear by another, for nothing is better than himself, but by himself, who is the best of all; but some have suggested as if it was inconvenient to swear, for an oath is taken for the sake of faith; but God alone is faithful," &c.

Ver. 14. *Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, &c.*] Which is expressive of the certainty of the blessings; the reality and substantiality of them; the abundance of them, and the continuance of the same: and of this nature are all spiritual blessings; as to be chosen of God; to have God to be a covenant God and father; to be justified, pardoned, adopted, and sanctified, and so have a right and title to eternal happiness: *and multiplying I will multiply thee*; meaning both in his natural and spiritual seed, which has had its accomplishment.

Ver. 15. *And so, after he had patiently endured, &c.*] He waited long for a son, from whom the Messiah was to spring, after he had had the promise of one; and he endured many afflictions with patience, in his journeys from place to place, throughout his life to the end: *he obtained the promise*; he was greatly blessed in temporal things; he lived to see the son of the promise, and his sons; he saw the day of Christ by faith, and now inherits the heavenly glory, which is the thing chiefly designed.

Ver. 16. *For men verily swear by the greater, &c.*] These words contain a reason why God swore by himself, and why his promises, having an oath annexed to them, ought to be believed. Men when they swear, they swear by the greater; not by themselves, as God does, because there is one greater than they; not by any of the creatures on earth, nor by the angels in heaven, but by God; because he is the God of truth, the searcher of hearts, and who can take vengeance on perjurers: and an oath may lawfully be taken, when it is truth that is sworn to, and is just and good; and in cases of weight and moment; and in what is possible and right to perform; and when it is done with deliberation, in the fear of God, with a view to his glory, and the good of men: for an oath is of a moral nature, what God has commanded, and he himself has taken; it has been used by Christ, and by the saints of the Old and New Testament; and is prophesied of the New-Testament saints, as what they should practise; and is a part of religious worship: *and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife*; it is used to confirm things that are doubtful, and in dispute; and to put an end to strife and contention; so Philoⁿ the Jew says, "by an oath things doubtful are determined, and things uncertain are confirmed, and what were not believed receive credit." The manner in which an oath was taken among the Jews, to which, the apostle writing to such, must be thought to have respect, was this; "he that swore took the book of the law in his hand, and he stood and swore by the name (of God), or by his surnames; and the judges did not suffer any one to swear but in the holy tongue; and thus he said, behold I swear by the God of Israel, by him whose name is merciful and gracious, that I do not owe this man any thingⁿ." The Hebrew word שבעתי, used for an oath, is of the root שבע, which signifies to fill, satiate, satisfy; for an oath being taken about matters in controversy, not clear but doubtful, give content unto and satisfy the minds of men; and the same word also signifies seven, a number of fulness and perfection; an oath being for the perfecting

ⁿ Leg. Allegor. l. 2. p. 98.

ⁿ De Somniis, p. 567.

ⁿ Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm. 123.

and finishing an affair in debate; agreeably, when covenants were made by oaths, seven witnesses were used, Gen. xxi. 28, 29, 30. and Herodotus says⁹, as Cocceius^r observes, that the Arabians, when they swore at making covenants, anointed the stones with blood.

Ver. 17. *Wherein God, willing, &c.*] Or *wherefore*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it; that is, whereas an oath is used among men to confirm any thing that might be doubted; therefore God, in condescension to the weakness of men, made use of one; being very desirous and determined, *more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel*; by which is meant, not the Gospel nor the ordinances of it, though these are sometimes called the counsel of God; but the decree of God, concerning the salvation of his people by Jesus Christ, which is immutable; as appears from the unchangeableness of his nature, the sovereignty of his will, the unsearchableness of his wisdom, the omnipotence of his arm, and the unconditionality of the thing decreed, and from that and the purpose of it being in Christ: and the immutability of this, God was willing to shew *more abundantly* than in other purposes, though all God's purposes are unchangeable; or than had been shewn to the Old-Testament saints; and more than was necessary, had it not been for man's weakness: even to the *heirs of promise*; not any earthly temporal promise, but the promise of grace and glory; the promise of eternal life; the heirs of which are not only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or God's elect among the Jews, but all that are Christ's; who are justified by his righteousness, believe in him, and are the children of God; for as many as are such are heirs of eternal glory, and of the promise of it: and that the unchangeableness of God's purpose in saving them by Christ might be manifest to them, and be out of all doubt, he *confirmed it by an oath*: his counsel and purpose; he not only determined in his mind that he would save them, and promised it in his covenant; but he also, to confirm it the more to the persons concerned in it, if possible, annexed his oath to it; or *he interposed or acted the part of a Mediator by an oath*; which some refer to Christ's mediation between God and Abraham, when he swore unto him, as before observed; but rather it expresses the interposition of the oath between God's purpose and promise, and man's weakness: God did as it were bind himself by his oath, or lay himself under obligation, or become a surety, for the fulfilment of his purpose and promise; which shews the superabounding grace of God, the weakness of man, and what reason the heirs of promise have to believe.

Ver. 18. *That by two immutable things, &c.*] God's counsel and oath, which never change and alter, and from which he never varies: *in which it was impossible for God to lie*; fail or deceive, nor, indeed, in any thing else, besides his counsels, promises, and oath, see Tit. i. 2. *we might have a strong consolation*; the saints often stand in need of consolation, by reason of sin, Satan, and the world; and it is the will of God that

they should be comforted; and he would have them have *strong consolation*; that which is solid and abiding, and an abundance of it; and this much depends on the immutability of God's counsel and oath: *who have fled for refuge*; either in allusion to mariners, as some think; who make all the haste they can to their port and haven, and are glad when they arrive there, and there cast anchor; of which mention is made in the next verse: or to runners in a race, who make up to the mark, in order to lay hold on the prize; hence Christ is afterwards spoken of as a forerunner: or rather to such as fled to the cities of refuge, which were a type of Christ; the names of these cities were, Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Romath, and Golan; Josh. xx. 7, 8. and the situation of them, according to the Jews^r, was like two rows in a vineyard. Hebron in Judah was over-against Bezer in the wilderness; Shechem in Mount Ephraim was over-against Ramoth in Gilead; Kedesh in Mount Naphtali was over-against Golan in Bashan: the names of these several cities agree with Christ; Kedesh signifies *holy*, as Christ is, both as God and man, and is made sanctification to his people; Shechem is *the shoulder*, and Christ has not only bore the sins of his people in his own body, on the tree, but he bears and carries their persons, and has the government of them on his shoulders, where they are safe and secure; Hebron may be interpreted *fellowship*, and the saints have not only fellowship with Christ; but with the father through him; Bezer may be rendered *a fortified place*; Christ is a strong hold, a tower, a place of defence, whither the righteous run, and are safe; Ramoth signifies *exaltations*; and may fitly be applied to Christ, who is exalted at God's right hand, and who will exalt those that trust in him in due time: Golan may be translated *manifested*; Christ the son of God has been manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil; and he will be revealed from heaven in a glorious manner at the last day: these cities were known to be such; and they were open to all Israelities and proselytes, that killed any person at unawares; and they were open at all times; and the way to them was made plain and large; every year care was taken to make the way good, to remove every hillock, or any thing that hindered; if there was a river in the way, to make a bridge over it; and where more ways met, to set up pillars with a hand to them, and these words written on it, מִקְלָט מִקְלָט, *refuge, refuge*; nor was the road to be less in breadth than thirty-two cubits^s; and there was always room in these cities; and whoever fled there was safe; but those that were found without died: thus Christ is known to be a refuge for distressed sinners; and he is open to all that come unto him, and at all times; the way of life and salvation by him is plainly pointed out in the Gospel, and by the ministers of it; who are appointed to direct unto him, and to remove all impediments and discouragements from such who are seeking to him; and though so many have been received and saved by him, still there is room for more; and whoever betake themselves to him

⁹ Thalia, l. 3. c. s.

^r Lexic. Rad. מִקְלָט col. 848.

^s T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 9. s.

^t T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 31. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 232, 3. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 5. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Afirm. 76. Bartenora in Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 6.

are safe, but those that are without him die and perish: so Philo the Jew * makes the divine Word, or Logos, to be the chief and most profitable refuge to fly unto, of all the six which he takes notice of; and the Jews have a notion that in the time to come, in the days of the Messiah, three other cities of refuge will be added †. There is in some things a difference between Christ and these cities of refuge; there were six of these, but there is no other than Christ; the cities of refuge were only for such who shed blood ignorantly, but Christ is a refuge for all sorts of sinners; they were in a kind of exile who fled to them, but in Christ is complete liberty; it was possible that such might die in them, but those that are in Christ never die the second death; and at best those who fled thither were only saved from a temporal death, † whereas those who betake themselves to Christ are saved with an everlasting salvation. Now *fleeing* to Christ, implies danger in the persons that flee, as such are in danger, in themselves, of the curse and condemnation of the law, of the wrath of God, and eternal death; it supposes a sense of this danger, which when right comes from the spirit of God; it shews guilt of conscience, and a consciousness of the insufficiency of other refuges, and a knowledge of Christ, as a suitable one; and is expressive of haste and hearty desire to be there: *to lay hold on the hope set before us*; by which is meant, not the grace of hope, but either heaven hoped for, or rather Christ the object of hope; who is not only set down at God's right hand, but is set forth in the Gospel and in the ordinances, both by the spirit of God, and by the ministers of the word; that men may look and go to him, and trust and believe in him, to the saving of their souls; where he is in sight, near at hand, accessible to; the way to him is straight-forward; and here he abides: and he is set before us to be laid hold upon, which intends an act of faith; which grace lays hold on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is done in a view of fulness and safety in him, and under a sense of danger otherwise; it supposes grace, and that in exercise and somewhat strong; and some degree of resolution and courage of faith, and the steadfastness and continuance of it; the soul determining, if it perishes it will perish here; and it shews that Christ and his grace are to be touched and laid hold upon by faith.

Ver. 19. *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, &c.*] This world is as a sea; the church in it, and so every believer, is as a ship; the port that is bound unto is heaven; Christ is the pilot, and hope is the anchor: an anchor is cast on a bottom, out of sight; and when the ship is in a calm, or in danger of a rock, or near the shore; but is of no service without a cable; and when cast aright, keeps the ship steady: so hope is cast on Christ; whence he is often called hope itself, because he is the ground and foundation of it, and who is at present unseen to bodily eyes; and the anchor of hope without the cable of faith is of little service; but being cast aright on Christ, keeps the soul steady and immovable: in some things there is a difference between hope and an anchor; an anchor is not

of so much use in tempests as in a calm, but hope is; the cable may be cut or broke, and so the anchor be useless, but so it can't be with faith and hope; when the ship is at anchor, it does not move forward, but it is not so with the soul, when hope is in exercise; the anchor of hope is not cast on any thing below, but above; and here it is called the anchor of the soul, to distinguish it from any other, and to shew the peculiar benefit of it to the soul. Pythagoras makes use of the same metaphor †; "riches (he says) are a weak anchor, glory is yet weaker; the body likewise; principalities, honours, all these are weak and without strength; what then are strong anchors? prudence, magnanimity, fortitude; these no tempest shakes." But these philosophical moral virtues are not to be compared with the Christian's grace of hope, which is *both sure and steadfast*; it is in itself a grace firm and stable; it is permanent and can never be lost; and it is still more sure and steadfast, by virtue of what it is fixed upon, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and by the immutability, faithfulness, and power of God it is concerned with; and through the aboundings and discoveries of divine love, grace, and mercy; and from the instances of grace to the vilest of sinners: *and which entereth into that within the vail*; the holy of holies, heaven itself; in allusion to the vail which divided between the holy and the holy of holies: the things within the vail, or in heaven, which hope entering into fixes upon, are the person of Christ, who is entered there, and appears in the presence of God for his people; his blood which he has carried along with him, and by which he is entered there; his justifying righteousness, by which the law is fulfilled, the two tables of stone in the ark of the testimony; the sweet incense of his mediation, which is continually offered up by him; the mercy-seat, or throne of grace, on which Jehovah sits as the God of grace; and all the glories of heaven; all which hope is concerned with, and receives strength and vigour from: and their being within the vail, is expressive of their hiddenness and invisibility at present, and of their safety and security, as well as of their sacredness; and this shews a difference between the hope of believers and others, whose hope fixes upon things short of these; and likewise the great privilege of a believer, who being made a priest unto God, has liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all. The Jews † speak of a vail in the world to come, which some are worthy to enter into.

Ver. 20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, &c.*] Christ was a runner; he had a race to run, which lay in going about to heal diseases, in preaching the Gospel, in obeying the law, and in suffering death for his people; which race was run by him with great swiftness, strength, and courage, with patience, cheerfulness, and joy, and is now ended; as appears from the accomplishment of salvation, from his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; from the glorification of his human nature, and its everlasting freedom from the dominion of death: and this race is run out, as a *forerunner*; Christ

* De profugis, p. 464.

† T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. Maimon. ut supra, sect. 4.

* Apud Stobæum, Serm. I.

† Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 3.

is the most excellent runner; there is none like him; there is none that can come up to him; he has out-ran and exceeded all others; he has performed in the best manner; he has run out his race first, and has entered into heaven first by his own blood; and he has cleared the way thither, and opened the gates of heaven for his people; and is a guide and pattern for them to follow: and he is the forerunner for them, as well as entered for them; for he was born, and he lived, and died for them, for their good and service; and he is entered into heaven for them, as man and Mediator,

and as their high-priest; where he represents their persons, appears and intercedes for them, takes care of their affairs, and presents their services; prepares mansions of glory for them, and takes possession of heaven in their name, and opens the way for them to follow him thither; all which gives great encouragement to hope to enter now, where Jesus is: who is *made an high-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*; see ch. v. 6, 10. This is repeated here, to lead on to what the apostle had to say concerning Melchisedec in the following chapter.

C H A P. VII.

THE apostle having made mention of Melchisedec in the latter part of the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give some account of him, and of the excellency of his priesthood, and to shew that Christ is a priest of his order, and is superior to Aaron and his sons. He first declares what Melchisedec was, that he was both king and priest; he names the place he was king of, and tells whose priest he was, even the priest of the most high God; and goes on to observe what he did, that he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, that he blessed him, and took tithes of him, ver. 1, 2. and then interprets his name, and royal title, the one signifying king of righteousness, the other king of peace; that for any thing that can be learned from the Scriptures, it is not known who was his father or his mother; what his lineage and descent; when he was born, or when he died; and that he is like to the son of God, and continues a priest, ver. 2, 3. upon which the apostle calls upon the Hebrews to consider the greatness of his person; and as it appears from that single instance of his receiving tithes from the patriarch Abraham, ver. 4. by which it is evident, that he is greater than the Levites; and which is demonstrated in the following particulars: the Levites received tithes of their brethren that came out of Abraham's loins, as they did, but Melchisedec, whose descent was not from them, received tithes from Abraham himself, and besides blessed him; and it is a clear case, that the lesser is blessed of the greater, ver. 5, 6, 7. the Levites were mortal men that received tithes, but a testimony is bore to Melchisedec, that he lives, ver. 8. yea, Levi himself paid tithes to Melchisedec, since he was in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchisedec met him, and took tithes of him; and therefore must be greater than Levi, ver. 9, 10. And next the apostle proves the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood from this consideration, that there is another priest risen up, not of the order of Aaron, but of the order of Melchisedec, of which there would have been no need, if the Levitical priesthood had been perfect; nor would it have been changed, as it is, and which has also made a change of the law, by which it is established, necessary, ver. 11, 12. that the priest that is risen up is not of the order of Aaron, is clear, because he is of another tribe, even of the tribe of Judah, to which the priesthood did not belong, ver. 13, 14, and that he is of the order of Melchisedec, and

so not according to the ceremonial law, but after the power of an endless life, is manifest from the testimony of the sacred Scripture, ver. 15, 16, 17. which lies in Psal. cx. 4. and that the ceremonial law, on which the Levitical priesthood stood, is changed and abrogated, is strongly asserted, and the reasons of it given, because it was weak and unprofitable, and made nothing perfect; and this was disannulled by Christ, the better hope brought in, who has made something perfect, and through whom we have access to God, ver. 18, 19. Moreover, the superior excellency of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical one is shewn in several particulars; the priests of Aaron's order were made without an oath; Christ was made with one, as is evident from the above-cited testimony, ver. 20, 21, 22. they were many, he but one; they were mortal, and did not continue, he continues ever, having an unchangeable priesthood, ver. 23, 24. wherefore, as they were not suffered to continue by reason of death, their priesthood was ineffectual; they could not take away sin, and save sinners; but Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that draw nigh to God by him, as a priest, and that because he ever lives to complete his office by intercession, ver. 25. wherefore such an high-priest as he is, must become men, and be suitable to them, especially since he is pure and holy, and in such an exalted state, ver. 26. and this is another difference between him and the priests under the law; they were men that had infirmity, and were guilty of sins themselves, and so had need to offer for their own sins, and then for the sins of others; but Christ, the son of God, who was consecrated a priest for evermore, by the word of the oath, had no sin of his own to offer sacrifice for, only the sins of his people, which he did once, when he offered himself, ver. 27, 28.

Ver. 1. *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, &c.*] Various have been the opinions of writers concerning Melchisedec; some have thought him to be more than a man; some, that he was an angel; others, that he was the Holy Ghost; and others, that he was a divine person superior to Christ, which needs no refutation; others have supposed that he was the son of God himself: but he is expressly said to be like unto him, and Christ is said to be of his order; which manifestly distinguish the one from the other; besides, there is nothing said of Melchisedec which proves him to be

more than a man: accordingly others take him to have been a mere man; but these are divided; some say that he was Shem, the son of Noah, which is the constant opinion of the Jewish writers²: but it is not true of him, that he was without father, and without mother, an account of his descent being given in Scripture; nor is it probable that he should be a king of a single city in Ham's country, and Abraham be a stranger there: others say, that he was a Canaanitish king, of the posterity of Ham; others affirm him to be a perfect sinless man, and that all that is said of him in Genesis, and in this context, is literally true of him; but that he should be immediately created by God, as Adam, and be without sin as he, are things entirely without any foundation: others take him to be a mere man, but an extraordinary one, eminently raised up by God to be a type of the Messiah; and think it most proper not to inquire curiously who he was, since the Scripture is silent concerning his genealogy and descent; and that as it should seem on purpose, that he might be a more full and fit type of Christ; and this sense appears best and safest. Aben Ezra says, his name signifies what he was, the king of a righteous place: Salem, of which he was king, was not Shalem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, Gen. xxxiii. 18. afterwards called Salim, near to which John was baptizing, John iii. 23. where is shewn the palace of Melchisedec in its ruins, which can't be, since that city was laid to the ground, and sowed with salt by Abimelech, Judg. ix. 45. but Jerusalem is the place; which is the constant opinion of the Jews³, and is called Salem in Psal. lxxvi. 2. The interpretation of this word is given in the next verse; some of the Jewish writers referred to say, that it was usual for the kings of Jerusalem to be called Melchisedec and Adoni-zedek, as in Josh. x. 3. just as the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh. This king was also *priest of the most high God*, as he is said to be, Gen. xiv. 18. for he was both king and priest, in which he was an eminent type of Christ; and his being a king is no objection to his being a priest, since it was usual for kings to be priests; and though the Hebrew word *Cohen* sometimes signifies a prince, it can't be so understood here, not only because the word is rendered *priest* by the Septuagint, and by the apostle, but because he is called the priest of God; and Christ is said to be of his order: and he is styled the priest of God, because he was called and invested by him with this office, and was employed in his service; who is said to be the most high God, from his dwelling on high, and from his superior power to all others, and to distinguish him from idol-gods; this is a character of great honour given to Melchisedec; *who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings*; the four kings, whose names are mentioned in Gen. xiv. 1. whom Abraham slew, and over whom he got an entire victory, with only three hundred and eighteen men of his own house, after they had conquered the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela: which shews that war is lawful; that enemies may be slain

in war; that kings may fall as well as other men; and that those who have conquered others, may be conquered themselves: and as he was returning with his spoils, Melchisedec met him; not alone, which is not to be supposed of so great a person; nor empty, for he brought with him bread and wine, not for sacrifice, as the Papists would have it; but as Jarchi, a Jewish interpreter on the place observes, they used to do so to such as were fatigued in war; for this is to be considered as a neighbourly action, done in point of interest and gratitude, and was a truly Christian one, and very laudable and commendable; and doubtless had something in it typical of Christ, who gives to hungry and weary saints the bread of life, and refreshes them with the wine of divine love and grace: *and blessed him*; Abraham, and the most high God also: the form of blessing both is recorded in Gen. xiv. 19, 20. This was not a mere civil salutation, nor only a congratulation upon his success, nor only a return of thanks for victory, though these things are included; nor did he do this as a private person, but as the priest of the most high God, and blessed him in his name authoritatively, as the high-priest among the Jews afterwards did, Numb. vi. 23—27. and in this he was a type of Christ, who blesses his people with all spiritual blessings, with redemption, justification, pardon, peace, and all grace, and with eternal glory.

Ver. 2. *To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, &c.*] Or *tithes*, as in Gen. xiv. 20. Philo the Jew^b renders the Hebrew phrase, *מעשר ככך*, just as the apostle does *δραστην απο παντων*, *a tenth part of all, or out of all*; not of all that he brought back, as Lot's goods, or the king of Sodom's, or any others; just as the spoils of the enemy, as in ver. 4. which is no proof of any obligation on men to pay tithes now to any order of men; for this was a voluntary act, and not what any law obliged to; it was done but once, and not constantly, or every year; it was out of the spoils of the enemy, and not out of his own substance, or of the increase of the earth; nor was it for the maintenance of Melchisedec, as a priest, who also was a king, and was richly provided for; but to testify his gratitude to God, for the victory obtained, and his reverence of, and subjection to the priest of God. *First being by interpretation king of righteousness*; or a *righteous king*, as Melchisedec was; not the king of a righteous place, as Aben Ezra thought, a place wherein dwelt righteousness, or righteous persons; but it was his proper name, which so signifies, and in which he was a type of Christ; who is righteous, not only as God, and as man, and as Mediator, but particularly in the administration of his kingly office: his kingdom lies in righteousness, as well as peace; the subjects of it are righteous persons, and all his ways are just and true; his Gospel, by which he rules, is a declaration of righteousness; and he himself is the author of righteousness to all his people: *and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace*; and may respect his peaceable government; and is very applicable to Christ, the Prince of peace; whose kingdom is a king-

² Targum in Jon. & Jerus. Jarchi, Baal Hatturim, Levi ben Gerson & Abendana in Gen. xiv. 18. Bemidbar Raaba, sect. 4. fol. 182. 4. Pirke Eliczer, c. 8. Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 16. 2. Shulelelet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2. Peritzol. Itinera Mundi, p. 17.

^a Targ. Ouk. Jou. & Jerus. Levi ben Gerson, Aben Ezra & ben Melece in Gen. xiv. 18. Tosaphot T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1.

^b De Congressu, p. 433.

dom of peace; his sceptre is a sceptre of peace; his royal proclamation is the Gospel of peace; and his subjects are the sons of peace; and he himself is the author of peace, not only between Jew and Gentile, but between God and his people; and he is the donor of peace, external, internal, and eternal. So Philo the Jew^c interprets this name, *king of peace*, just as the apostle does.

Ver. 3. *Without father, without mother, without descent, &c.*] Which is to be understood not of his person, but of his priesthood; that his father was not a priest, nor did his mother descend from any in that office; nor had he either a predecessor or a successor in it, as appears from any authentic accounts: or this is to be interpreted, not of his natural, but scriptural being; for no doubt, as he was a mere man, he had a father, and a mother, and a natural lineage and descent; but of these no mention is made in Scripture, and therefore said to be without them; and so the Syriac version renders it; *whose father and mother are not written in the genealogies*; or there is no genealogical account of them. The Arabic writers tell us who his father and his mother were; and some of them say that Peleg was his father: so Elmacinus^d, his words are these; Peleg lived after he begat Rehu two hundred and nine years; afterwards he begat Melchisedec, the priest whom we have now made mention of. Patricius^e; another of their writers, expresses himself after this manner: "they who say Melchisedec had neither beginning of days, nor end of life, and argue from the words of the Apostle Paul, asserting the same, do not rightly understand the saying of the Apostle Paul; for Shem, the son of Noah, after he had taken Melchisedec, and withdrew him from his parents, did not set down in writing how old he was, when he went into the east, nor what was his age when he died; but Melchisedec was the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Salah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah; and yet none of those patriarchs is called his father. This only the Apostle Paul means, that none of his family served in the temple, nor were children and tribes assigned to him. Matthew and Luke the evangelists only relate the heads of tribes: hence the Apostle Paul does not write the name of his father, nor the name of his mother." And with these writers Sahid Aben Batric^f agrees, who expressly affirms that Melchisedec was אֲבִי פֶלֶג, *the son of Peleg*: though others of them make him to be the son of Peleg's son, whose name was Heraclim. The Arabic Catena^f on Gen. x. 25. *the name of one was Peleg*, has this note in the margin; "and this (Peleg) was the father of Heraclim, the father of Melchisedec;" and in a preceding chapter, his pedigree is more particularly set forth: "Melchisedec was the son of Heraclim, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber; and his mother's name was Salathiel, the daughter of Gomer, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah; and Heraclim, the son of Eber,

married his wife Salathiel, and she was with-child, and brought forth a son, and called his name Melchisedec, called also king of Salem: after this the genealogy is set down at length. Melchisedec, son of Heraclim, which was the son of Peleg, which was the son of Eber, which was the son of Arphaxad, &c. till you come to, which was the son of Adam, on whom be peace." It is very probable Epiphanius has regard to this tradition, when he observes^g, that some say that the father of Melchisedec was called Eracla, and his mother Astaroth, the same with Asteria. Some Greek^h writers say he was of the lineage of Sidus, the son of Ægyptus, a king of Lybia, from whence the Egyptians are called: this Sidus, they say, came out of Egypt into the country of the Canaanitish nations, now called Palestine, and subdued it, and dwelled in it, and built a city, which he called Sidon, after his own name: but all this is on purpose concealed, that he might be a more apparent type of Christ, who, as man, is *without father*; for though, as God, he has a father, and was never without one, being begotten by him, and was always with him, and in him; by whom he was sent, from whom he came, and whither he is gone; to whom he is the way, and with whom he is an advocate: yet, as man, he had no father; Joseph was his reputed father only; nor was the Holy Ghost his father; nor is he ever said to be begotten as man, but was born of a virgin. Some of the Jewish writers themselves say, that the Redeemer, whom God will raise up, shall be *without father*ⁱ. And he is *without mother*, though not in a spiritual sense, every believer being so to him as such; nor in a natural sense, as man, for the Virgin Mary was his mother; but in a divine sense, as God: and he is *without descent or genealogy*; not as man, for there is a genealogical account of him as such, in Matt. i. and Luke iii. and his pedigree and kindred were well known to the Jews; but as God; and this distinguishes him from the gods of the Heathens, who were genealogized by them, as may be seen in Hesiod, Apollodorus, Hyginus, and other writers; and this condemns the blasphemous genealogies of the Gnostics and Valentinians. It follows, *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*; that is, there is no account which shews when he was born, or when he died; and in this he was a type of Christ, who has no beginning of days, was from the beginning, and in the beginning, and is the beginning, and was from everlasting; as appears from his nature as God, from his names, from his office as Mediator, and from his concern in the council and covenant of peace, and in the election of his people; and he has no end of life, both as God and man; he is the living God; and though as man he died once, he'll die no more, but lives for ever. It is further said of Melchisedec, *but made like unto the son of God*: in the above things; from whence it appears, that he is not the son of God; and that Christ, as the son of God, existed before him, and therefore could not take this character from his incarnation or resur-

^c Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 75.

^d In Hottinger. Sinægia Orientale, l. 1. c. 8. p. 269, 254.

^e In ib. p. 305, 306, 254.

^f In Mr. Gregory's Preface to his Works.

^g In ib.

^h Contra Hæres. Hæres. 55.

ⁱ Suidas in voce Melchisedec, Malala, l. 3. Glycas, Cedrenus, & alii.

^j R. Moses Hadarsan apud Galatin. l. 3. c. 17. & l. 8. c. 9.

rection: *abideth a priest continually*; not in person, but in his antitype Christ Jesus; for there never will be any change of Christ's priesthood; nor will it ever be transferred to another; the virtue and efficacy of it will continue for ever; and he will ever live to make intercession; and will always bear the glory of his being both priest and King upon his throne: the Syriac version renders it, *his priesthood abides for ever*; which is true both of Melchisedec and of Christ.

Ver. 4. *Now consider how great this man was, &c.*] Melchisedec, of whom so many great and wonderful things are said in the preceding verses: and as follows, *unto whom the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils*; of Abraham's giving tithes to him, see the note on ver. 2. and Melchisedec's greatness is aggravated, not only from this act of Abraham's, but from Abraham's being a *patriarch*, who did it; he was the patriarch of patriarchs, as the sons of Jacob are called, Acts vii. 8, 9. he is the patriarch of the whole Jewish nation, and of many nations, and of all believers, the friend of God, and heir of the world; how great then must Melchisedec be, to whom he paid tithes? and how much greater must Christ, the antitype of Melchisedec, be?

Ver. 5. *And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, &c.*] Or Levites; who are of the tribe of Levi, whose descent is from him: *who receive the office of the priesthood*; as some of them were priests, though not all; and the Levites therefore are sometimes called priests. R. Joshua ben Levi says, that in twenty-four places the priests are called Levites; and this is one of them, Ezek. xlv. 15. *and the priests and Levites, &c.* ^h *these have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law*; the ceremonial law, Numb. xviii. 20—26. these they took of all the people of Israel in the rest of the tribes, by the commandment of God, on account of their service in the tabernacle; and because they had no inheritance in the land; and to shew that the Israelites held their land of God himself: *that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham*; who are their brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, though of different tribes; and from these they receive, notwithstanding they are the sons of Abraham: but here a difficulty arises, how the Levites that were priests can be said to receive tithes from the people, when they received the tenth part of the tithes, or the tithe of tithes from the Levites, Numb. xviii. 26. Neh. x. 38. but it should be observed, that it was not necessary that the Levites should give these tithes to the priests themselves; an Israelite might do it, and so give the Levites the less; on which account the priests may be said to receive from the people; besides, Ezra in his time ordered, that the first tithe should not be given to the Levites, but to the priests, because they would not go up with him to Jerusalemⁱ.

Ver. 6. *But he whose descent is not counted from them, &c.*] That is, Melchisedec, whose genealogy or pedigree is not reckoned from the Levites, nor from any from whom they descend; his lineal descent is not the same with theirs; and so did not receive tithes by any law, as they did, but by virtue of his superiority: *received tithes of Abraham*; not from the people, or

his brethren, but from Abraham, the father of the people of Israel, and of Levi himself: *and blessed him that had the promises*; of a son, and of the Messiah, that should spring from him, in whom all nations should be blessed, and of the land of Canaan, and of the blessings of grace and glory. This shews that Melchisedec had a descent, though it was not known; and that, since his descent was not the same with the Levites, he was a more proper type of Christ, who belonged not to that, but another tribe.

Ver. 7. *And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater.*] This is a self-evident truth, and is undeniably; it admits of no controversy, and can't be gainsayed; that he that blesseth is greater in that respect than he that is blessed by him; as the priests were greater in their office than the people who were blessed by them; and so Melchisedec, as a priest of the most high God, and as blessing Abraham, was greater than he; and so must be greater than the Levites, who sprung from him; and his priesthood be more excellent than theirs; and consequently Christ, his antitype, and who was of his order, must be greater too; which is the design of the apostle throughout the whole of his reasoning.

Ver. 8. *And here men that die receive tithes, &c.*] The priests and Levites were not only men, and mortal men, subject to death, but they did die, and so did not continue, by reason of death, ver. 24. *but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth*; which is to be understood of Melchisedec; who is not opposed to men, as if he was not a man, nor to mortal men, but to men that die; nor is he said to be immortal, but to live: and this may respect the silence of the Scripture concerning him, which gives no account of his death; and may be interpreted of the perpetuity of his priesthood, and of his living in his antitype Christ; and the testimony concerning him is in Psal. cx. 4.

Ver. 9. *And as I may so say, &c.*] With truth, and with great propriety and pertinence: *Levi also who receiveth tithes*; or the Levites, who receive tithes according to the law of Moses from the people of Israel: *paid tithes in Abraham*; that is, to Melchisedec; and therefore Melchisedec must be greater than they, and his priesthood a more excellent one than theirs; since they who receive tithes from others gave tithes to him.

Ver. 10. *For he was yet in the loins of his father, &c.*] Abraham; namely, Levi and his whole posterity; which is to be understood seminally, just as all mankind were in the loins of Adam, when he sinned and fell, and so they sinned and fell in him; and so Levi was in Abraham's loins, *when Melchisedec met him*; which, as it proves Melchisedec to be greater than Levi, and much more Jesus Christ, who is a priest of his order, which is the grand thing the apostle has in view; so it serves to illustrate several points of doctrine, in which either of the public heads, Adam and Christ, are concerned, with respect to their seed and offspring; such as personal election in Christ, an eternal donation of all blessings of grace to the elect in him, eternal justification in him, the doctrine of original sin, and the saints' crucifixion, burial, resur-

^h T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 86. 2. & Baccorot, fol. 4. 1.

ⁱ Maimon. Hilchot Masser, c. 1. sect. 4.

rection, and session in Christ, and together with him.

Ver. 11. *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, &c.*] The priesthood which was established in the tribe of Levi; so called, to distinguish it from that which was before this institution, from the times of Adam, as well as from the priesthood of Melchisedec, and from the priesthood of Christ, and from that of his people under the Gospel, who are all priests; as well as to restrain it to the subject of the apostle's discourse: the design of which is to shew, that there is no perfection by it; as is clear from the priests themselves, who were but men, mortal men, sinful men, and so imperfect, and consequently their priesthood; and from their offerings, between which, and sin, there is no proportion; and at best were but typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and could neither make the priests nor the worshippers perfect, neither in their own consciences, nor in the sight of God: moral actions are preferred before them, and yet by these there is no perfection, justification, and salvation; to which may be added, that the sacrifices the priests offered did not extend to all kind of sins, only to sins of ignorance, not to presumptuous ones; and there were many under that dispensation punished with death; and at most they only delivered from temporal, not eternal punishment, and only entitled to a temporal life, not an eternal one. *For under it the people received the law*: not the moral law, which was given to Adam in innocence, and as it came by Moses, it was before the Levitical priesthood took place; but the ceremonial law, and which was carnal, mutable, and made nothing perfect: the Syriac version renders it, *by which a law was imposed upon the people*; to regard the office of priesthood, and the priests in it, and bring their sacrifices to them; and the Arabic version reads, *the law of the priest's office*; which office was after the law of a carnal commandment, and so imperfect, as is manifest from what follows: for had perfection been by it, *what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?* that there was another priest promised and expected, and that he should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and who was to make his soul an offering for sin, is certain, Ezra ii. 63. Psal. cx. 4. Isa. liii. 10. and such an one is risen, even Jesus of Nazareth; and yet there would have been no need of him, and especially that he should be of a different order from Aaron's, had there been perfection by the Levitical priesthood.

Ver. 12. *For the priesthood being changed, &c.*] Not translated from one tribe, family, or order, to another, but utterly abolished; for though it is called an everlasting priesthood, yet that is to be understood with a limitation, as the word *everlasting* often is, as relating to things under that dispensation; for nothing is more certain than that it is done away: it was of right abrogated at the death of Christ, and it is now in fact; since the destruction of Jerusalem, the daily sacrifice has ceased, and the children of Israel have been many days without one, and without an ephod. And the

Jews themselves own, that the high-priesthood was to cease in time to come^m, and which they say Azariah the son of Oded prophesied of in 2 Chron. xv. 3. *There is made of necessity a change also of the law*; not the moral law, that was in being before the priesthood of Aaron, nor do they stand and fall together; besides, this still remains, for it is perfect, and cannot be made void by any other; nor is it set aside by Christ's priesthood: though there is a sense in which it is abolished; as it is in the hands of Moses; as it is a covenant of works; as to justification by it; and as to its curse and condemnation to them that are Christ's; yet it still remains in the hands of Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; and is useful, and continues so on many accounts: but either the judicial law; not that part of it which is founded on justice and equity, and was a means of guarding the moral law, for that still subsists; but that which was given to the Jews as Jews, and some parts of which depended on the priesthood, and so ceased with it; as the laws concerning the cities of refuge, raising up seed to a deceased brother, preserving inheritances in families, and judging and determining controversies: or rather the ceremonial law, which was but a shadow of good things to come, and was given but for a time; and this concerned the priesthood, and was made void by the priesthood of Christ; for that putting an end to the Levitical priesthood, the law which related to it must unavoidably cease, and become of no effect. This the Jews most strongly deny; God, theyⁿ say, will not change nor alter the law of Moses for ever. The 9th article of their creed, as drawn up by Maimonides, runs thus^o: "I believe with a perfect faith that this law *לֹא תִהְיֶה מְבֻטָּלָה*, shall not be changed, nor shall there be another law from the Creator, blessed be his name." But the reasoning of the apostle is strong and unanswerable.

Ver. 13. *For he of whom these things are spoken, &c.*] In Psal. cx. 4. and in the type of him Melchisedec, in the preceding verses; for not Melchisedec is here meant, but the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by what follows; the antitype of Melchisedec, the Lord our righteousness, the Prince of peace, the priest of God, that lives for ever, without father, without mother, &c. *pertaineth to another tribe*; the tribe of Judah, and not the tribe of Levi: *of which no man gave attendance at the altar*; either of burnt-offering or of incense; that is, no man waited there, or took upon him and exercised the priest's office that was of the tribe of Judah: no man might lawfully do it; Uziah, indeed, thrust himself into the priest's office, who was of that tribe, and went into the temple and burnt incense upon the altar of incense; but then he had no right to do it, and was punished for it.

Ver. 14. *For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, &c.*] Out of the tribe of Judah; it is certain that the Messiah was to spring from that tribe, Gen. xlix. 10. 1 Chron. v. 2. he was to be of the family of Jesse, and of the house of David; and hence he is sometimes called David himself; and so the Jews expect that he will come from the tribe of Judah, and

^m Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 4.

ⁿ Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amstêrd. fol. 2. 1.

^o Apud Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil. fol. 86. 2.

not from any other^p; and it is evident that Jesus, who is our Lord by creation, redemption, and the conquest of his grace, sprung from this tribe: this is clear from the place of his birth, Bethlehem of Judah; and from his reputed father Joseph, and real mother Mary, being both of the house of David; and this was known to the Jews, and it is owned by them that he was near to the kingdom^q, which he could not be if he was not of that tribe; and hence he is called the lion of the tribe of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood; he said many things of it in Deut. xxxiii. 8. and relates many things concerning it as spoken by Jacob, but nothing about the priesthood, as if it belonged to that, or that any that should spring from it should exercise that office. The Alexandrian copy, the Claromontane manuscript, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, concerning the priests; whence it follows that there is a change of the priesthood, and that the Messiah, as he was not to be, so he is not a priest of Aaron's order, not being of the same tribe.

Ver. 15. *And it is yet far more evident, &c.*] From a fact which cannot be denied; for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest; or another has risen, even Jesus the son of David, of the tribe of Judah; another from Aaron, one that is not of his family or tribe, but one like to Melchisedec: hence we learn that Melchisedec and Christ are not the same person; and that the order and similitude of Melchisedec are the same; and that Christ's being of his order only imports that there is a resemblance and likeness between him and Melchisedec, in many things, which are observed in the beginning of this chapter: and this arising does not intend Christ's setting up himself, only his appearance in this form; and being expressed in the present tense, denotes the continual being, and virtue of his priesthood.

Ver. 16. *Who was made, &c.*] Not as man, much less as God; but as a priest, constituted and appointed one: not after the law of a carnal commandment; either the ceremonial law in general, which was a carnal one, if we consider the persons to whom it belonged, the Israelites according to the flesh; it was incumbent upon, and might be performed by such who were only carnal; and it was performed by and for men that were in the flesh, or mortal; and if we consider the matter of it, the subject on which various of its rites were exercised was the flesh or body, and which were performed by manual operation; and the sacrifices of it were the flesh of beasts; and these were for the sins of the flesh, and for the removing the ceremonial uncleanness of it; and the virtue of them reached only to the purifying of the flesh; and the whole of it is distinct from the moral law, which is spiritual, and reaches to the spirit or soul of man; whereas this only was concerned about temporal and external things: or else the law of the priesthood is particularly intended; or that commandment which respected the priesthood of Aaron; which law regarded the carnal descent of his sons; enjoined a carnal inauguration of them, and provided for their succession and continuance in a

carnal way; after which, Christ the great high-priest did not become one: but after the power of an endless life; this may be understood either of the Gospel, according to which Christ is a priest; and which is called life, in opposition to the law which is the ministration of death; and because it is the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints; and points out Christ the way of life, and has brought life and immortality to light: and may be said to be endless, in distinction from the law, which is temporary; and because it is itself permanent and everlasting; contains in it the promise of eternal life, and is the means of bringing souls unto it: and there is a power goes along with it; which distinguishes it from the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, which is abolished, because of the weakness of it; for it is attended with the power of the spirit of God, and is the power of God unto salvation: or else this intends the endless life which Christ has, in and of himself; and which qualifies him for a priest; and stands opposed to the mortality of the priests, and to that law which could not secure them from it: the priests died, and the law by which they were priests could not prevent their death; Christ is the living God, the Prince of life, he had power to lay down his life as man, and power to take it up again; and his life, as man, is an endless one, which qualifies him for that part of his priestly office, his intercession and advocacy: or it may design that power, which his father has given him as Mediator, of an endless life, both for himself and for all his people; and regards chiefly his ever living as a priest, and the perpetuity of his priesthood, and the continual virtue and efficacy of it.

Ver. 17. *For he testifieth, &c.*] That is, either David, the penman of the psalm, or rather the Holy Ghost, the edifier of it, or God in the Scripture, in Psal. cx. 4. of this form of citing Scripture, see the note on ch. ii. 6. *thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*; see ch. v. 6, 10. and vi. 20.

Ver. 18. *For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment, &c.*] Not the moral law; though what is here said of the commandment may be applied to that; that is sometimes called the commandment, Rom. vii. 12, 13. it went before the promise of the Messiah, and the Gospel of Christ, and the dispensation of it; it is in some respects weak; it cannot justify from the guilt of sin, nor free from the power of it, nor secure from death, the punishment of it, nor give eternal life; though it has a power to command, accuse, convince, and condemn: and it is also unprofitable in the business of justification and salvation; though otherwise it is profitable to convince of sin, to shew what righteousness is, and to be a rule of conversation to the saints in the hand of Christ; yet not this, but the ceremonial law is meant, which is the commandment that respected the Levitical priesthood, and is called a carnal one, and is inclusive of many others, and which distinguishes that dispensation from the Gospel one: and this may be said to be going before; with respect to time, being before the Gospel state, or the exhibition of the new covenant of grace;

^p Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 62. 2.

^q T. Bab. Saahedin, fol. 43. 1.

and with respect to use, as a type or shadow of good things to come; and as it was a schoolmaster going before, and leading on to the knowledge of evangelical truths: and this is now disannulled, abrogated, and made void; the middle wall of partition is broken down, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances is abolished: *for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof*; the ceremonial law was *weak*: it could not expiate or atone for sin, in the sight of God; it could not remove the guilt of sin from the conscience, but there was still a remembrance of it; nor could it cleanse from the filth of sin; all it could do was, to expiate sin typically, and sanctify externally to the purifying of the flesh; and all the virtue it had was owing to Christ, whom it prefigured; and therefore, being fulfilled in him, it ceased: and it was *unprofitable*; not before the coming of Christ, for then it was a shadow, a type, a schoolmaster, and had its usefulness; but since his coming, who is the body and substance of it, it is unprofitable to be joined to him; and is of no service in the affair of salvation; and is no other than a grievous yoke of bondage; yea, is what renders Christ unprofitable and of no effect, when submitted to as in force, and as necessary to salvation; and because of these things, it is abolished and made null and void. The Jews, though they are strenuous assertors of the unalterableness of the law of Moses, yet sometimes are obliged to acknowledge the abrogation of the ceremonial law in the times of the Messiah; the commandment, they say ^r, meaning this, shall cease in the time to come; and again, "all sacrifices shall cease in the future state, or time to come, (*i. e.* the times of the Messiah,) but the sacrifice of praise ^s."

Ver. 19. *For the law made nothing perfect, &c.*] Or no man; neither any of the priests that offered sacrifices, nor any of the people for whom they were offered: it could not perfectly make atonement for sin; nor make men perfectly holy or righteous; it could neither justify nor sanctify; neither bring in a perfect righteousness, nor bring men to perfect holiness, and so to eternal life and salvation: *but the bringing in of a better hope* did; not the grace of hope; that is not something newly brought in, the saints under the Old Testament had it; nor is it better now than then, though it has greater advantages and more encouragement to the exercise of it: nor heaven and eternal glory, the thing hoped for; the saints under the legal dispensation hoped for this, as well as believers under the present dispensation; nor is what the latter hope for better than that the former did: nor is God the author and object of hope intended; the phrase of bringing in will not suit with him; besides, he is distinguished from it, in the next clause: to understand it of the Gospel, the means of hope, and of encouraging it, is no ill sense; that standing in direct contradistinction to the law: but the priesthood of Christ, of which the apostle is treating in the context, is generally understood, which is the ground of hope; for all promises respecting eternal life are confirmed by it, and all blessings connected with it procured; and it is better than the Aaronical priesthood, under the law; and a better

ground of hope than the sacrifices of that law were: Christ himself may be designed, who is often called hope, being the object, ground, and foundation of it; and is a better one than Moses, or his law, Aaron, or his priesthood; and it is by him men draw nigh to God; and the bringing in of him or his priesthood shews that Christ's priesthood was not upon the foot of the law, and that he existed as a priest, before brought in, and as a better hope, though not so fully revealed; and it may have respect to his coming in the flesh, being sent, or brought in by his father: now the bringing in of him and his priesthood did make something perfect; it brought to perfection all the types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament, the whole law, moral and ceremonial; it brought in perfect atonement, reconciliation, pardon, righteousness, and redemption; it perfected the persons of all God's elect; and perfectly provided for their holiness, peace, comfort, and eternal happiness: some read the words *but it*, the law, was *the bringing in of a better hope*: the law led unto, made way for, and introduced Christ, the better hope; and so the Arabic version, *seeing it should be an entrance to a more noble hope*; the Syriac version renders it, *but in the room of it entered a hope more excellent than that*; than the law: *by the which we draw nigh unto God*: the father, as the father of Christ, and of his people in him, and as the father of mercies, and the God of all grace; and this drawing nigh to him is to be understood not locally but spiritually; it includes the whole worship of God, but chiefly designs prayer: and ought to be done with a true heart, in opposition to hypocrisy; and in faith, in opposition to doubting; and with reverence and humility, in opposition to rashness; and with freedom, boldness, and thankfulness: and it is through Christ and his priesthood that souls have encouragement to draw nigh to God; for Christ has paid all their debts, satisfied law and justice, procured the pardon of their sins, atonement and reconciliation for them; he is the way of their access to God; he gives them audience and acceptance; he presents their prayers, and intercedes for them himself.

Ver. 20. *And inasmuch as not without an oath, &c.*] Our version supplies as follows, *he was made priest*; which well agrees with what is said in the next verse; the Syriac version renders it, *and which he confirmed to us by an oath*; that is, the better hope, Christ and his priesthood, said to be brought in, and by which men draw nigh to God; this is established by the oath of God himself, referring to Psal. cx. 4. afterwards cited in proof of it.

Ver. 21. *For these priests were made without an oath, &c.*] The priests of the tribe of Levi, and of the order of Aaron, were installed into their office, and invested with it, without an oath; no mention is made of any when Aaron and his sons were put into it in Moses's time; nor was any used afterwards, neither by God, nor by the priests, nor by the people; it is true indeed that after the sect of the Sadducees arose, the high-priest on the day of atonement, was obliged to take an oath that he would not change any of the customs of the day ^t; but then this regarded

^r T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 2.

^s Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1. & sect. 27. fol. 168. 4.

^t Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

not his investiture, but the execution of his office; and was an oath of his and not of the Lord's, which is here designed: *but this with an oath*; that is, Christ was made an high-priest with an oath, even with an oath of God; which gives his priesthood the preference to the Levitical priesthood, which was without one; and this oath was made, *by him that said unto him*; the Syriac version reads, *as he said to him by David*; that is, in Psal. cx. 4. David being the penman of that psalm, in which stand the following words of the father to Christ: *the Lord swear and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*: which proves that Jehovah swore that Christ should be a priest, and continue so: swearing, when ascribed to God, is after the manner of men, and is always by himself, and never upon any trivial account; but either to confirm his love to his people, or his covenant with them, or the mission of his son to be the Redeemer, or, as here, his priestly office: and this oath was made not so much on Christ's account, as on account of the heirs of promise, for their consolation; and shews the dignity, validity, importance, and singularity of Christ's priesthood, as well as the durability of it; and of this oath God will never repent: repentance cannot properly fall upon God, on any account; for it is contrary to his holiness and righteousness, and to his happiness, to his unchangeableness, omniscience, and omnipotence; it is indeed sometimes ascribed to him improperly, and after the manner of men; and only regards a change of his outward conduct according to his immutable will; and the change that is made in the creature, and not in God himself: but God will not repent in any sense of the priesthood of Christ, nor of his oath, that it should continue for ever according to the Melchisedecian order; for he was every way qualified for it, and has faithfully performed it.

Ver. 22. *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*] Or *covenant*, for the word signifies both; and what is intended may be called both a testament and a covenant; a testament, because it is founded in the good will and pleasure of God, and respects an inheritance bequeathed by God the father to his children, which was confirmed and comes to them by the death of Christ the testator; and a covenant, it being a compact or agreement made by the father with Christ, as the representative of all the elect; in which promises and blessings of all sorts are provided and secured for them in him; and is called in Scripture a covenant of life and peace, because these are things concerned in it; and is commonly by men called the covenant of grace, because it springs from the grace of God, the subject-matter of it is grace, and the end of it is the glory of God's grace: now this is better than the covenant of works broken by man, and which exposes him to the curse and condemnation of the law; or than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, by which was no perfection; and the form of administration of it under the Gospel dispensation is better than that under the law, for it is now revealed more clearly, and administered without types, shadows, and sacrifices; and the extent of its administration is

larger, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and besides, it is now actually ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, which is therefore called the blood of the everlasting covenant: and of this testament or covenant Christ is the *surety*; the word signifies one that draws nigh: Christ drew nigh to his father in the council of peace, and undertook to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; he substituted himself in their place and stead; he interposed between the creditor and the debtor, and became surety for the payment of the debts of the latter, and so stood engaged for them, and in their room: Christ is not the surety for the father to his people, but for them to the father; as to satisfy for their sins, to work out a righteousness for them, to preserve and keep them, and make them happy; which is an instance of matchless love.

Ver. 23. *And they truly were many priests, &c.*] There were many common priests at a time; and though there was but one high-priest at a time, yet there were many of them in a line of succession from Aaron down to the apostle's time. The Jews say^u, that under the first temple eighteen high-priests ministered, and under the second temple more than three hundred: this shews the imperfection of this priesthood, since it was in many hands; no one continuing and being sufficient to execute it; but Christ is the one and only high-priest; there is no other, nor is there any need of any other: the reason why there were so many under the law was, *because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death*: death has a power to forbid a long continuance in this world, and no man does continue long here: death puts a stop to men's works, and to the exercise of their several callings; no office, even the most sacred, exempts from it; no, not the office of high-priests: these were but men, sinful men, and so died; and their discontinuance by reason of death shews the imperfection of their priesthood: there was another reason besides this which the apostle gives, why the high-priests were so many, and especially about this time; and that is, the office was bought for money, and men that would give most were put into it: hence there were frequent changes; the Jews themselves say, they changed every twelve months^v.

Ver. 24. *But this man, because he continueth ever, &c.*] Though he died, death did not forbid him to continue, as it does other men; he was not forced to die, he died voluntarily; and he continued but for a small time under the power of death; besides, his death was a branch of his priestly office: so that he not only continued in his divine nature, which still had the human nature in union with it, but he continued in his office as a priest, and quickly rose from the dead; and the virtue of his sacrifice always remains, and he himself ever lives as an intercessor: wherefore he *hath an unchangeable priesthood*; which will never be antiquated, and give place to another; nor does it, or ever will it pass from him to another, for it is needless, seeing he lives, and no other is sufficient for it; and it would be injustice to pass it to another; the glory of it is due to him; and this is matter of comfort to the saints, that he sits a priest upon his throne, and that his priesthood always continues.

^u T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 1. Fiske Tosephot Zebachim, Art. 72.

^v T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2.

Ver. 25. *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, &c.*] Because he continues ever, and has an unchangeable priesthood. This is to be understood not of temporal salvation, nor of providential favours, but of spiritual and eternal salvation; and includes a deliverance from all evil here and hereafter, and an enjoyment of all good in this world, and in that to come: Christ was called to this work by his father; he was promised by him to do it, and was sent by him to effect it, and has accomplished it; and this is the reason of his name Jesus, and was the end of his coming into this world, and which the Gospel always represents as such: this work required ability; here was a law to be fulfilled; justice to be satisfied; sin to be bore, removed, and atoned for; many enemies to engage with, and a cursed death to undergo: it was a work no creature, angels, or men, were able to undertake and perform; the priests under the law could not; men cannot save themselves, nor can any creature work out salvation for them: but Christ is able; as appears from the help his father laid on him, who knew him to be mighty; from his own undertaking it, being mighty to save; and from his having completely effected it; and he must needs be able to do it, since he is the mighty God: and he is able to save to the uttermost; *to the utmost perfection*, as the Arabic version renders it; so as nothing can be wanting in the salvation he is the author of, nor any thing added to it; or *for ever*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it; to the utmost of time, even to eternity, as well as to the utmost of men's wants: the persons he is able to save, are such *that come to God by him*; Christ is able to save all the world, were it his will; but not his absolute power is designed by his ability, but that power which by his will is put into act; and reaches not to all men, for all are not saved; and those that are, are described by special characters, as here; they are such who come to God, not essentially considered, but personally, or in the person of the father; and not as an absolute God, but as in Christ; not as on a throne of justice, but as on a throne of grace and mercy; not only as Christ's father, but as theirs; and not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of grace: and this act of coming to him is a fruit of his everlasting love; an effect of Christ's death; is peculiar to regenerate persons; takes in the whole service of God, especially prayer; is not local but spiritual, it is by faith; and supposes spiritual life, and implies a sense of need, and of God's ability and willingness to help: the medium, or mean, by which such come to God, is Christ. Man had access to God in his state of innocence, but sinning, was not admitted; there is no approaching now unto him without a middle person; Christ is the Mediator, who having made peace, atoned for sin, satisfied justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, introduces his people into God's presence; in whom their persons and services are accepted, and through whom all blessings are communicated to them: *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*; Christ ever lives as God, he is the living God; and though he died as man, he is risen from the dead, and will not die again, but live for evermore; and he

lives as Mediator and Redeemer, and particularly as a priest; one branch of whose office it is to intercede for his people: this he does now in heaven; not by vocal prayer and supplication, at least not as in the days of his flesh; or as if he was supplicating an angry Judge; nor as controverting, or litigating, a point in the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his person for them; by the presentation of his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; by declaring his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed on such and such persons; and by recommending the prayers of his people, and removing the charges and accusations of Satan: the things he intercedes for are, the conversion of his that are in a state of nature; the consolation of distressed ones; fresh discoveries of pardoning grace to fallen believers; renewed strength to oppose sin, exercise grace, discharge duty, and bear up under temptations, and deliverance out of them; perseverance in faith and holiness, and eternal glorification; and he intercedes for these things; not for all the world, but for all the elect, even though transgressors; and he is very fit for this work, as the following verse shews; he is the one and only Mediator; and he is a very prevalent intercessor, he always succeeds; and he does this work readily, willingly, cheerfully, and freely; and all this proves him to be able to save; for though the impetration of salvation is by his death, the application of it is owing to his interceding life; had he died and not lived again, he could not have saved to the uttermost; his life is the security of his people's, and he lives for them, and as their representative; the blessed effects of which they constantly enjoy.

Ver. 26. *For such an high-priest became us, &c.*] It is suitable to us, answers to our cases and necessities, is every way such an one as is wanted: who is *holy*; by nature, originally and underivatively, perfectly and completely, internally as well as externally; he was typified by the high-priest, who had holiness to the Lord written on his forehead, and far exceeds any of the priests in holiness; and such an one becomes us, for had he not been holy he could not have entered into the holy place for us, or have appeared there on our account, or have been our sanctification; so Philo the Jew speaks of the true priest as being not man, but the divine Word, and as free from all sin voluntary and involuntary²: *harmless*; without any vitiosity in his nature, without guile in his mouth, or malice in his heart; doing no injury to any man's person or property: the character chiefly regards the innocence and holiness of his life and conversation; and in which he exceeded the priests under the law; and is a suitable one for us, for hereby he was fit to be made sin, and to take it away: *undefiled*; with the sin of Adam, with which all mankind are defiled; with the blood of slain beasts, with which the priests under the law were sprinkled; with the filthy conversation of the wicked, which affects good men: hence he was more excellent than the priests under the law; and one that becomes us, since his blood is the blood of a lamb, without spot and blemish: the high-priests under the law, according to the Jews⁷, were to excel their brethren in knowledge, beauty, and riches; but the dis-

² De Profugis, p. 466, 467. & de Victimis, p. 843.

⁷ Maimon. & Bartemora in Misa, Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3.

tinguishing character of our high-priest is purity and holiness: *separate from sinners*; not but that he took the nature of sinners, though not a sinful nature; and he was often in the company of sinners, when on earth, and was reckoned among them, and as one of them; but he was separated from them in Adam; he was not among the individuals of human nature that sinned in him; and he was brought into the world in a different manner from them, not descending from Adam by ordinary generation; and he had no communion with them in sin; nor did he encourage them to it in the days of his flesh; and now he is removed far from them; and herein he exceeds the priests under the law, and is suitable to us: the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *separate from sins*: the allusion seems to be, to the separating of the high-priest from his own house to one of the courts of the temple seven days before the day of atonement², and so before the burning of the heifer³: *and made higher than the heavens*; than the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens, and than the angels in heaven; and so preferable to the high-priests, and exceedingly agreeable to us, ch. iv. 14. the allusion may be to the carrying of the high-priest on the day of atonement to an upper chamber in the temple, called the chamber of Abtines⁴: this may be understood either of Christ's exaltation in heaven, where angels are subject to him, and his priesthood is completed; or of his excelling the angels in the holiness of his nature, which agrees with the other characters in the text, and stands opposed to the infirmities of the priests.

Ver. 27. *Who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, &c.*] They being sinners, and he not: *to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins and then for the people's*; as they did on the day of atonement; see Lev. xvi. 6, 11, 15, 16. upon which place the Jews^c make the same remark the apostle does here; "he (the high-priest, "they say) offers sacrifices for the sins of the people, "for his own *בקרבתו*, first, *ולביתו*, and afterwards for "the sins of the people:" which was one reason of the imperfection and insufficiency of their sacrifices; but Christ needed not to offer for his own, nor could he, for he had none of his own; what he had was by imputation; wherefore he only needed to offer, and he only did offer, for the sins of the people; not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, even of all God's covenant people; nor did he need to do this daily, as they did; they offered sacrifice daily, the common priests every day, morning and evening, and the high-priest on a stated day once a year, on the day of atonement: *for this he did once, when he offered up himself*;

and in this also he differed from them; they offered not themselves, but what was inferior to themselves, and what could not take away sin, and, therefore, was repeated; but Christ offered himself, his whole human nature, soul and body, and both as in union with his divine nature; and this being offered to God freely and voluntarily, in the room and stead of his people, was acceptable to God: hereby justice was satisfied; the law fulfilled; sin taken away, and complete salvation obtained; so that there never was since any need of his offering again, nor never will be; which shews the perfection and fulness of his priesthood, and the preference of it to the Levitical one.

Ver. 28. *For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity, &c.*] Every word has an emphasis on it, and shews the difference between Christ and these priests: they were many; they were made priests by the law, the law of a carnal commandment, which made nothing perfect, and was disannulled; they were men that were made priests by it, and could not really draw nigh to God, and mediate with him for themselves, or others, nor atone either for their own or others' sins; and they were men that had infirmity, not natural and corporeal, for they were to have no bodily blemishes and deficiencies in them, but sinful ones; and especially such were they who bore this office under the second temple, and particularly in the times of Christ and his apostles^d: *but the word of the oath, which was since the law*; that word which had an oath annexed to it, which declared Christ an high-priest after the order of Melchisedec, was since the law of the priesthood of Aaron; for though Christ was made a priest from eternity, yet the promise which declared it, and had an oath joined to it, was afterwards in David's time, Psal. cx. 4. and this word of the oath maketh *the son*; not a son, but a priest; publishes and declares him to be so: Christ, though a man, yet he is not a mere man; he is the son of God, and as such opposed to men; and therefore is not the son of God as man; and this shews that he was a son before he was a priest, and therefore is not so called on account of his office; and it is his being the son of God which gives lustre and glory to his priestly office, and virtue and efficacy to his sacrifice and intercession, and gives him the preference to all other priests: *who is consecrated for evermore; or perfected, or perfect*; he is perfect in his obedience and sufferings, in his sacrifice, and as he is now in heaven, in complete glory; the law made men priests that did not continue, but Christ is a priest for evermore, and absolutely perfect.

C H A P. VIII.

THE apostle observing that the priesthood of Christ is the sum of what he had treated of in the preceding chapter, proceeds to shew the superior excellency of it in other instances, particularly in the place where Christ now officiates, which is in heaven; he being set

down at the right hand of God there, and so was a minister of the sanctuary, and true tabernacle pitched by God, and not man; whereas the priests of Aaron's line only ministered on earth, and in the typical sanctuary and tabernacle, ver. 1, 2. and after he had ob-

² Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

³ Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 1.

⁴ Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

^d Zohar in Lev. fol. 26. 4.

^e Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. & 9. 1.

served that Christ must have something to offer, meaning his body, to answer to the gifts and sacrifices priests were ordained to offer, ver. 3. he proves the necessity of his ministering in heaven, because if he was on earth he would not be a priest, a complete one, and would have been useless and needless, ver. 4. and besides, it was proper that he should go up to heaven, and minister there, as the antitype of the priests, who, to the example and shadow of heavenly things, served in the tabernacle which was made by Moses, by the order of God, and according to the pattern shewed him in the Mount, ver. 5. and that the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary is much more excellent than the ministry of the priests in the shadowy one, is evident from his being the Mediator of a better covenant, ver. 6. and that the covenant he is the Mediator of is the better covenant, appears from the better promises of which it consists, and from the faultiness of the former covenant, ver. 6, 7. and that that was faulty, and succeeded by another, he proves from a passage in Jer. xxxi. 31—34. in which mention is made of a new covenant, and as distinct from that made with the Jewish fathers, and violated by them; and several of the promises of this new and second covenant are rehearsed, and which manifestly appear to be better than what were in the former, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. from all which the apostle concludes, that a new covenant being made, the old one must be antiquated; and that whereas it was decaying and waxing old, it was just ready to vanish away, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum, &c.*] The scope and drift, the compendium and substance; or the principal of what has been said in or from Psal. cx. 4. and has been discoursed of in the three preceding chapters, is the priesthood of Christ: *we have such an high-priest*; as is described in the foregoing discourse, and in the following words: Christ is a priest, an high-priest, and the saints' high-priest; they are not without one under the Gospel dispensation; and Christ is he, and always continues, in whose sacrifice and intercession they have a share: *who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*; he is *set*, whereas the Levitical priests stood; which shews that he has done his work, and that with acceptance; and is in a state of ease and rest; and is possessed of honour, glory, majesty, and authority, and which continue: the place where he is set is, *on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty*; the same with the right hand of God; for by the throne of the Majesty is meant God the father, in his royal glory and dignity; so Tiphereth, one of the ten numbers in the Jews' Cabalistic tree, whose name is Jehovah, is called כֶּסֶם הַכְּבוֹד, *the throne of glory*; so angels are called thrones, Col. i. 16. but God is a throne of majesty superior to them; and at his right hand sits Christ the great high-priest; which is expressive of his high honour, glory, and power, and even of his equality with God: the phrase, *in the heavens*, may refer both to God the throne of majesty, who is there, and to Christ the high-priest, who is passed into them, and received by them, and sits there.

Ver. 2. *A minister of the sanctuary, &c.*] The hea-

venly one, so called, in allusion to the holy of holies, the type of it; and because it is truly an holy place; and which Christ sanctifies and prepares for his people by his presence and intercession: *or of the holy ones, or saints*; who are sanctified or set apart by God the father, to whom Christ is made sanctification, and who are made holy by the spirit of God; to these Christ is a minister; he was so in his prophetic office, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and in his priestly office, to all the chosen ones, when on earth, offering himself a sacrifice for them, and now he is a minister to them in heaven, interceding for them; and in his kingly office, governing, protecting, and defending them: *or of holy things*; to his people, such as the gifts of his spirit, grace, and all supplies of it, and at last glory; and for them, presenting their sacrifices of prayer and praise to God, which become acceptable to him through his powerful mediation: *and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man*; by which is meant, not heaven, the same with the sanctuary, for this would be an unnecessary tautology, and an explanation of a word by another more obscure; nor is there any reason why it should be added, *which the Lord pitched, and not man*; since every one must believe that heaven is made by God alone; but rather the church of Christ, which is sometimes called a tabernacle, and is a true one, of which the tabernacle of Moses was a type, and is of God's building, and where Christ ministers, being the high-priest over the house of God; though it is best to interpret it of the human nature of Christ, in which he tabernacled among men, and which was typified by the tabernacle of Moses, and therefore is called the *true* one, in distinction from that; for as there God dwelt, and his glory was seen, and he granted his presence to his people, and the sacrifices were brought and offered up there, and to this the people looked when at a distance, and this appeared very coarse without, but within full of holy things; so in Christ's human nature the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; here the glory of God is seen, even in the face of Jesus; and through him God vouchsafes communion with his people; and by him the sacrifices of prayer and praise are offered up; and to him do the saints look for the acceptance of them; and though in the days of his flesh he looked very mean and despicable, yet was full of grace and truth, and of all the gifts of the spirit: and the human nature of Christ was not of man; it was not propagated by human generation, but was produced through the power of the Holy Ghost; and in this tabernacle Christ ministered when on earth, and now ministers in heaven.

Ver. 3. *For every high-priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, &c.*] See the note on ch. v. 1. *wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer*; or *this person*; for the word *man* is not in the text, and seems not so proper a word to be supplied, since it was his human nature that it was necessary he should have to offer; he was a person, and existed as a divine person antecedent to his assumption of human nature: as God, he had nothing to offer, or that was capable of being offered; something to offer as a sacrifice was necessary to him as a priest, but not any thing

was proper to him; Levitical sacrifices would not do, these could not take away sin; besides, the great high-priest was not of the tribe of Levi, nor of the order of Aaron, and therefore could not offer these. An angelic nature would have been improper, that is not capable of dying; and the offering up of such an one would have been of no service to men, for whom priests are ordained; but an human nature is meant, and which it was necessary Christ should have, and offer, for it is for men that he became an high-priest; it was human nature that had offended God, and satisfaction must be made in that nature; and this was capable of suffering and dying; yet not human nature under any consideration was necessary for him to have and offer; not merely as in a state of innocence, without any infirmity, nor as sinful, yet as perfect as to parts and qualities; and a nature, and not a person, was necessary to be had, and to be taken into close and inseparable union to his divine person; and of this there was a necessity, not absolute, or a necessity of coercion and force: Christ was not forced unto it; but on the foot of his suretyship-engagements, and because of making satisfaction for the sin of man, it was necessary; otherwise Christ voluntarily engaged to be a priest, and willingly became man, and freely offered himself, soul and body, in the room and stead of his people.

Ver. 4. *For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, &c.*] The Socinians from hence attempt to prove that Christ was not a priest, and did not offer sacrifice on earth; whereas his coming into the world, and his appearance in human nature, was in the character of a priest, and to qualify himself for one; his death was his sacrifice, which was on earth; and he never offered but one sacrifice; and it was after he had offered himself that he went to heaven; so the sacrifices under the law were first offered, before their blood was carried within: but the meaning is, either if that was on earth, namely, what it was necessary he should have to offer; if his human nature had been earthly, had been of men, had come by ordinary generation, he had not been properly, only typically a priest, at most; and had been no better than the typical ones; yea, he would have been needless, nay, might not have offered, not being of Levi's tribe, and could not have existed as a priest with the sons of Aaron; but he had his human nature in another way, through the power of the Holy Ghost from above, and therefore is said to come from above, from heaven, and to be the Lord from heaven: or the sense is, if he was on earth, and had not died, he had not been a priest; and if he had died and remained under the power of death, he had been a priest of no account and use; and had he rose again and remained on earth, without going to heaven, with his blood and sacrifice, he had not been a perfect priest; if Christ had remained on earth, the Levitical priesthood had remained, and so he would have been no priest, since two priesthoods could not have subsisted together. The Levitical priesthood was in force whilst Christ was on earth; Christ's priesthood was not perfected on earth; the Levitical priesthood remaining whilst he was on earth, proves he was not then a perfect priest, or had not completed his priesthood;

had he been so, that would not have subsisted; it was necessary therefore that Christ should enter into the holy place, to put an end to the Levitical priesthood; moreover, if he had remained on earth, he had been needless; *seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law*; there were priests when Christ was upon earth; their work was to offer gifts the people brought, and sacrifices for sin, and that according to the law of Moses, which till the death of Christ was in full force.

Ver. 5. *Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, &c.*] Things respecting the person, office, and grace of Christ; the priests themselves were types of him; the places they ministered in were an exemplar of the heavenly places, as the word may be rendered, where Christ is; and the things they ministered were shadows of the good things which are by Christ; and the shadows were mere representations, dark, obscure, glimmering ones, and were fleeting and transitory: *as Moses was admonished of God*; by an oracle; he was a peculiar favourite of God, and was the mediator between God and the people of Israel, and what he received was oracle-wise; what he delivered to the people was what he received from God; and what was thus delivered ought to be received as from God: and this admonition or oracle was given him *when he was about to make the tabernacle*; the Levitical one, with every thing appertaining to the worship of God in it: this is ascribed to Moses, though it was made by others, because it was by his direction, and under his care and oversight; and he had this admonition at the beginning of it; and at the finishing of it he looked upon it, and saw that it was all done as the Lord had commanded; *Exod. xxv. 40. and xxxix. 43. for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount*; Moses was taken up into a mountain with God, even Mount Sinai; and whilst he was there, a pattern was given him of the tabernacle and all its utensils; this was not a device of his own, but was shewn him by God; and this pattern reached to every particular thing; and great care and circumspection were used that the most minute thing answered to it. The Jews think this pattern was given him by the ministry of angels; Gabriel, they say, girt himself with a girdle, and shewed to Moses the work of the candlestick; and they further say, that an ark of fire, and a table of fire, and a candlestick of fire, descended from heaven, and Moses saw them, and made according to them: from whence it may be observed that the tabernacle, and tabernacle-worship, were of divine institution; the ceremonious rites of the Jews were not, as some have affirmed, borrowed from the Egyptians; nor were they given as diversions to that people, nor only to preserve them from idolatry, and keep them separate from others, but were designed to lead them to Christ, whom they were typical of; wherefore the abuse, and not the use of them, were condemned under the former dispensation; though they were to continue no longer than till Christ came, and suffered and died; and now they are abolished: moreover, it may be gathered from hence, that whatever is done in a way of religious worship, should be

according to a divine rule; a church of Christ ought to be formed according to the primitive pattern, and should consist, not of all that are born in a nation, province, or parish; nor should all that are born of believing parents be admitted into it; no unholy, unbelieving, and unconverted persons, only such as are true believers in Christ, and who are baptized according as the word of God directs; the officers of a church should be only of two sorts, bishops, elders, pastors or overseers, and deacons; the ordinances are baptism, which should only be administered to believers, and by immersion, and the Lord's supper, of which none should partake, but those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and this should be performed as Christ performed it, and as the Apostle Paul received it from him; the discipline of Christ's house should be regarded, and all the laws of it carefully and punctually put in execution; and a conversation becoming the Gospel should be attended to.

Ver. 6. *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, &c.* Christ has a ministry, he is the minister of the sanctuary, ver. 2. he has obtained this ministry of his father; he was called unto it and engaged in it by him; and he has now obtained it; for though he was called to it from eternity, it was in time he came an high-priest of good things to come; and his ministry is a more excellent one than that of the priests, who offered gifts according to the law, and served to the example and shadow of heavenly things; as abundantly appears from the preceding chapter, and from this, as well as from what follows: *by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant;* the covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation; which is not only better than the covenant of works, that being conditional, this absolute; that stood on the foot of works, this on the foot of grace, and is established in Christ; that being broken and made void, this continues; and not only better than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, which was but a typical one, and is now ceased, but also than the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation; being better than that, as to the manner of its manifestation, which is more full and clear; and as to the extent of its administration, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and as to the ratification of it by the blood of Christ, called from thence the blood of the everlasting covenant; and as to the promises of it, here said to be better: *which was established upon better promises;* which are not now delivered out as before, under the figure of earthly and temporal things; nor under a condition to be performed nor confined to a particular people and nation; and which are attended with a greater measure of the spirit, to open and apply them; and are all secured in Christ Jesus, and confirmed by his blood: and now of this covenant Christ is the Mediator; a mediator is of more persons than one, and of these at variance; and he is a middle person between both; and his business is to bring both parties together, and make peace between them: the two parties in this case are God and man, set at a distance from each other by the sin of man, whereby man is become enmity to God; Christ is the Mediator between God and man, a middle person between both, being both God and man, the days-man, who lays his hands on

both; who brings men to God that were afar off, and makes peace for them by the blood of his cross, and satisfies the justice of God, which he has done by the sacrifice of himself; and now appears in the presence of God for them, and intercedes for them, and applies the blessings of the covenant to them by his spirit, and keeps and preserves them safe to his everlasting kingdom; and for this office he is every way fit, and in this he excels the Levitical priests, and has a ministry superior to theirs, since he is such a Mediator, and a Mediator of such a covenant.

Ver. 7. *For if that first covenant had been faultless, &c.* Not the covenant of works; that was made in paradise, this on Mount Sinai; that was made with Adam and his posterity, this with the Jews only; that had no mediator, this had one, Moses; that was not dedicated with blood, this was; that had no forgiveness of sin in it, this had; under that saints are not, but they were under this; to be under that was no privilege, but to be under this it was, as to the Israelites, who on this account were preferable to all other nations: nor is the pure covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel, meant; for though that was first made, yet is the second in administration; that includes the elect of God among the Gentiles, this only the Jews; that is made only with them, and is made known to them whom God calls by his grace in time, this was made with good and bad; that was of pure grace, this required works in order to life and the enjoyment of its blessings; that is an everlasting covenant, this is done away; and the one is manifestly distinguished from the other in this chapter: but the covenant here designed is the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation, and which was a typical one; the people with whom it was made were typical of the true Israel of God; the blessings promised in it were shadows of good things to come; the works it required were typical of Christ's obedience to the law, in the room and stead of his people, by which he fulfilled it; the sacrifices on which it was established were types of the sacrifice and death of Christ; the mediator of it, Moses, was a type of Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant; and it was confirmed by the blood of beasts, which was typical of the blood of Christ: this covenant was not *faultless*, but was faulty or blameworthy; not that there was any thing sinful and criminal in it, but it was deficient; there was a weakness in it; its sacrifices could not make men perfect, nor take away sin; there wanted a larger supply of the grace of the spirit to write the law of God upon the heart, and to enable men to keep it; there was not in it so full a revelation of the mind and will of God, and of his love and grace, as has since been made; nor did it exhibit a free and full pardon for all sins, unclogged of every condition; the persons that were under it were faulty; hence it follows, that God found fault with them, they could not answer the requirements and end of it: had it been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second; the covenant of grace unveiled in the Gospel dispensation, called the better testament, the better covenant, and the new covenant; in order to introduce which, the first was removed, that this might succeed it; just as because there was no perfection by the Levitical priesthood, it became ne-

cessary that another priest should arise, of another order.

Ver. 8. *For finding fault with them, &c.*] Both with the covenant, which had its faults, and with the people who continued not in it, and were therefore disregarded by the Lord, ver. 9. *he saith, behold, the days come (saith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;* the words are cited from Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. in which God promises a *new covenant*; so called, not because new-made; for with respect to its original constitution, it was made from eternity; Christ the Mediator of it, and with whom it was made, was set up from everlasting; and promises and blessings of grace were put into his hands before the world began: nor is it newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam, and in some measure to all the Old-Testament saints, though it is more clearly revealed than it was; but it is so called in distinction from the former administration of it, which is waxen old, and vanished away; and with respect to the order of succession, it taking place upon the former being removed; and on account of the time of its more clear revelation and establishment being in the last days; and because of its mode of administration, which is different from the former, in a new way, and by the use of new ordinances; and because it is always new, its vigour and efficacy are perpetual; it will never be antiquated, or give place to another; and it provides for, and promises new things, a new heart, a new spirit, &c. to which may be added, that it is a famous, excellent covenant, there's none like it; just as an excellent song is called a new song. The persons with whom this covenant is promised to be made, are the houses of Israel and Judah; which being literally taken, had its fulfilment in the first times of the Gospel, through the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, by whom this covenant was made known to God's elect among the twelve tribes; but being mystically understood, includes both Jews and Gentiles, the whole Israel of God; Israel not after the flesh, but after the spirit; such as were Jews inwardly; God's elect of every nation: the word *conferre*, rendered, *I will make*, signifies, I will consummate, or finish, or end, or fulfil it; which shews the perfection of this covenant, and the imperfection of the former; and that what was typified in the first is fulfilled in this; and that it is now established and ratified by Christ; and is so finished, as to the manifestation and administration of it, that there will be no alteration made in it, nor any addition to it: the time of doing all this is called *the days to come*; the last days, the days of the Messiah, which were future in Jeremiah's time: and a *behold* is prefixed to the whole, as a note of attention, this being an affair of great moment and importance; and as a note of demonstration, or as pointing to something that was desired and expected; and as a note of admiration, it containing things wonderful and marvellous.

Ver. 9. *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, &c.*] The ancestors of the Jews at Mount Sinai: *in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;* which is mentioned,

not only to observe the time when the former covenant was made with the Israelites, which was just upon their deliverance out of Egypt; but also to shew their weakness and inability to have delivered themselves, and the tenderness of God towards them; they were like children, they could not help themselves when God took them by the hand, and brought them forth with an outstretched arm; and likewise to expose their ingratitude, and vindicate his conduct towards them: *because they continued not in my covenant;* though they promised, at the reading of it, that all that the Lord had said, they would hear and do; but their hearts were not right with God, and they were not steadfast in his covenant, and therefore their carcasses fell in the wilderness: *and I regarded them not, saith the Lord;* the words in Jer. xxxi. 32. are very differently rendered in our translation, *although I was an husband unto them;* and so it becomes an aggravation of their sin of ingratitude, in not continuing in his covenant: in the margin it is rendered interrogatively, *should I have continued an husband unto them?* that is, after they had so treated him, no; as if he should say, I will not behave towards them as such; I'll reject them, and disregard them. The Chaldee paraphrase is just the reverse of the apostle's translation, *and I was well-pleased with them:* some render them, *I ruled over them,* as a lord over his servants, in a very severe manner. Others, observing the great difference there is between the Hebrew text, and the apostle's version, have supposed a different Hebrew copy from the present, used by the Septuagint, or the apostle, in which, instead of בעלתי, it was read either בקלתי, or בקלתי, or נקלתי; but there is no need of such a supposition, since Dr. Pocock ^a has shewn, that בעל, in the Arabic language, signifies to loath and abhor, and so to disregard; and Kimchi ^b relates it as a rule laid down by his father, that wherever this word is used in construction with ב, it is to be taken in an ill part, and signifies the same as בקלתי, *I have loathed;* in which sense that word is used in Zech. xi. 8. and so here, I have loathed them, I abhorred them, I rejected them, I took no care of them, disregarded them, left their house desolate, and suffered wrath to come upon them to the uttermost.

Ver. 10. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, &c.*] That is, this is the sum and substance of the covenant, which God promised to make with, or to make manifest and known to his chosen people, the true Israelites, under the Gospel dispensation; or the following are the several articles of that covenant, he proposed to consummate or finish, as before: *after those days, saith the Lord;* after the times of the Old Testament, when the Messiah shall be come, and the Gospel day shall take place. So the Jews ^c apply these days, when they represent the Israelites saying to Moses, O that he (God) would reveal (himself or will) to us a second time! O that he would kiss us with the kisses of his mouth, and that the doctrine of the law was fixed in our hearts; when he (Moses) said to them, this is not to be done now, but לעתיד לבוא, *in the time to come,* (i. e. in the times of the Messiah,) as it is said, Jer. xxxi. 33. *I will put my law, &c. and so.*^d

^a Not. Miscell. in Port. Mosis, p. 9.

^b In Jer. xxxi. 32. & Sopher Shorashim, rad. בעל.

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^c Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

^d Midrash Kohlecet, fol. 64. 3.

they are elsewhere applied to the same times. And the first article in it is, *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*; by the laws of God are meant not the precepts of the ceremonial law, which were now abrogated, but either the moral law, and its commands; which is a transcript of the divine nature, was inscribed on Adam's heart in innocence, and some remains of it are even in the Gentiles, but greatly obliterated through the sin of man; and there is in men naturally a contrary disposition to it; in regeneration it is re-inscribed by the spirit of God; and great respect is had to it by regenerate persons, in which lies one part of their conformity to Christ: or else, since the word *law* signifies sometimes no other than a doctrine, an instruction, the doctrines of grace, of repentance towards God, of faith in Christ, and love to him, and every other doctrine may be intended; and the tables where, according to the tenour of this covenant, these are put and written, are two tables, as before, the *mind* and *heart*; but not two tables of stone, on which the law of Moses was written, partly that it might not be lost, through defect of memory, and partly to denote the firmness and stability of it, as also to point at the hardness of man's heart; but the fleshy tables of the heart; not that part of our flesh that is called the heart; but the souls of men, such hearts as are regenerated and sanctified by the spirit of God, and such minds as are renewed by him: and the putting of them into the mind, designs the knowledge of them, which God gives; as of the moral law, of its spirituality and perfection, shewing that there is no life and righteousness by it, that it is fulfilled by Christ, and is a rule of conversation to the saints; and of all other laws, ordinances, and doctrines of Christ: and the writing them in, or on the heart, intends a filling the soul with love and affection to them, so that it regards them singly and heartily; and a powerful inclination of the heart to be subject to them, through the efficacious grace of God; and which is done not with the ink of nature's power, but with the spirit of the living God, 2 Cor. iii. 3. *And I will be to them a God*; not in such sense as he is the God of all mankind, or as he was the God of Israel in a distinguishing manner, but as he is the God of Christ, and of all the elect in him; and he is their God, not merely as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace; he is so in a covenant way, and as in Christ, and by virtue of electing grace, and which is made manifest in effectual vocation; and as such, he has set his heart on them, and set them apart for himself; he saves them by his son, adopts and regenerates them, justifies and sanctifies them, provides for them, protects and preserves them; and happy are they that are interested in this blessing of the covenant, which is preferable to every thing else; they have every thing, and can want no good thing; they need fear no enemy; all things work together for their good; and God continues to be their God in life and in death; so that they may depend on his love, be secure of his power, expect every needful supply of grace, and to be carried through every duty and trial, and to share in the first resurrection, and to enjoy eternal happiness: *and they shall be to me a people*; not in such sense as all mankind are, or the Jews were in a more peculiar respect, but as all God's

elect are, whether Jews or Gentiles; and who are such whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, and with whom he has made a covenant in him; whom Christ saves from their sins by his blood, and calls them by his grace and spirit, and who give up themselves to him; these are a distinct and peculiar people, a people near unto the Lord, and who are all righteous in Christ, and are made willing in the day of his power on their souls.

Ver. 11. *And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy reads, *citizen*; that is, fellow-citizen; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions: *and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord*: this is not to be understood, so as to set aside the external and public ministry of the word, which is a standing ordinance of God under the Gospel dispensation; or even the private instructions of saints one to another, in Christian conversation, whereby they may build up one another in their most holy faith; but the sense is, that men should not only teach, but the spirit of God should teach with them, and by them; and it stands opposed to particular and pretended revelations, and especially to magisterial dictates; and denotes the abundance of knowledge that should be in Gospel times, which should not be restrained to particular persons, and sets of men, but should be shared by all believers, more or less: *for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest*; from babes to fathers in Christ; not with a natural, but with a spiritual knowledge; not with a general knowledge of him, that he is, but with a special knowledge of him, that he is theirs; not with a legal, but with an evangelical knowledge; not with the knowledge of him in, and through the creatures, but in Christ; and that not speculative, but experimental and practical; such as is attended with faith in him, fear of him, love to him, and a cheerful obedience to his will: the knowledge of the Lord, under the New-Testament dispensation, is greater than under the former dispensation; the subject-matter of it is more distinct; God is more known in the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature, in his titles and characters, and in his son; the manner of it is more clear, open, and perspicuous; the persons to whom it is communicated are more numerous; it is not restrained to Jews, but is given to the Gentiles; and all this owing to a greater effusion of the spirit; see 1 John ii. 27.

Ver. 12. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, &c.*] That is, sin; for all unrighteousness is sin, being contrary to the justice of God, and his righteous law: and the phrase is expressive of God's forgiveness of it, which is a very considerable article of the covenant of grace; mercy is the spring and original of pardon; it is what God delights in, and therefore he pardons freely; it is large and abundant, and hence he pardons fully; and this lays a foundation for hope in sensible sinners: and the way and means, in and by which God pardons, is the propitiatory sacrifice of his son; and the word here rendered *merciful*, signifies *propitious*; God pardons none but those to whom he is pacified, or rendered propitious by Christ; there's no mercy, nor pardon, but through him; he pardons on the foot of reconciliation and satisfaction for sin by Christ; so that forgiveness of sin is an act of justice,

as well as of mercy; or it is an act of mercy streaming through the blood and sacrifice of Christ. *And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more; by which are meant all kind of sin, original and actual; sins before and after conversion; every sin but that against the Holy Ghost, and that God's covenant people are never guilty of; these God remembers no more; he casts them behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, so that when they are sought for, they shall not be found; God will never charge them with them, or punish them for them: this is another phrase to express the forgiveness of sins, and distinguishes the new covenant from the old one, or the former dispensation; in which, though there were many typical sacrifices, and a typical removal of sin, yet there was a remembrance of it every year.*

Ver. 13. *In that he saith a new covenant, &c.*] In the above prophecy, ver. 8. *he hath made the first old; this naturally follows from hence; if the second is new, the first must be old; which is called so, not on account of its date and duration; for the covenant of grace itself is older than this mode of administration of it, and the manifestation of that to the patriarchs was before this covenant, and so was the covenant of works before*

it; but on the account of its faultiness and deficiency, its weakness, and unprofitableness, and especially its being antiquated, and made to give way to another. *Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away;* the apostle argues from the first covenant, being old, to its being near to dissolution, or a disappearance; and the dissolution or disappearance of this covenant was gradual; it began when the Chaldeans seized the land of Canaan; and the ark, an eminent type of Christ, being wanting in the second temple, gave a hint of its waxing old; and both the civil and ecclesiastical government of the Jews were in great confusion under the second temple, at least towards the close of it; and even before the times of Christ, John the Baptist came, and proclaimed the near approach of the Messiah, and his kingdom: this covenant was of right abolished at the time of Christ's death; upon his ascension the spirit was given, and the Gospel published among all nations, by which it more and more disappeared; and in fact it quite vanished away, when the city and temple of Jerusalem were destroyed, which was in a little time after the writing of this epistle; so that the apostle, with great propriety, says, it is *ready to vanish away.*

C H A P. IX.

THE apostle having, in the former chapter, taken notice of the first covenant, in this proceeds to shew what belonged to it, that it had service performed under it, and a place in which it was performed, ver. 1. and he begins with the latter, which he distinguishes into two parts, and shews what was in each of them; in the first, which was the holy place, were a candlestick, table, and shew-bread; in the second, which was the holiest of all, were a golden censer, the ark of the covenant, the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, the tables of the covenant, and the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5. And next, he speaks of the service performed in these places; in the first, the holy place, the common priests entered every day, doing service, as offering sacrifice, &c. ver. 6. and in the second, the holy of holies, only the high-priest entered into, and that but once a year, with blood of slain beasts, which he offered for his own sins, and the sins of the people, ver. 7. and this being shut up, and entered into but once a year, was an indication from the Holy Ghost, that the way into the holiest of all, which this was then a figure of, was not yet made manifest, whilst the tabernacle or temple was standing, in which sacrifices were offered, which could not perfect the offerer of them, or remove guilt from his conscience, ver. 8, 9. which shews the imperfection of that priesthood, it consisting of meats, drinks, baptisms, and carnal ordinances imposed on the Jewish nation until the times of the Messiah, ver. 10. which are now come, and in which there is an accomplishment of all those types and figures; Christ was typified by the high-priest; and he is come as such, and the good things, the law was a shadow of, are come by him; who came into the world by the assumption of human nature, a more perfect tabernacle than the type of it was; and now having

obtained eternal redemption for his people, he is gone into heaven, the most holy place, not as the high-priest, with the blood of slain beasts, but with his own blood, ver. 11, 12. the efficacy of which blood is argued from the lesser to the greater, that if the blood of beasts, and water of separation, sanctified and purified externally, then much more must the blood of Christ purge the conscience from sin, that it may serve God, since Christ offered himself to God without spot, through the eternal spirit, ver. 13, 14. The necessity of Christ's shedding his blood, or of his death, is proved from his being the Mediator of the new covenant, which required the redemption of transgressions under the first testament, that called ones might have the promise of the eternal inheritance, ver. 15. And this is reasoned from the nature of testaments or wills among men, which make the death of the testator necessary, they being of no force while he lives, only after his death, ver. 16, 17. And this is further illustrated by the first testament being dedicated by blood, and every thing belonging to it purged by it, the book, the people, the tabernacle, and all the vessels of it; nor is there any remission of sin, whether typical or real, without shedding of blood, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. wherefore, as it was necessary that the patterns and types of heavenly things should be purified in this manner; it must be more so, that the antitypes should be purified with better sacrifices, even with the sacrifice of Christ, ver. 23. and accordingly Christ is entered into heaven itself, of which the holy places in the tabernacle were figures, there to present and plead his sacrifice on account of his people, ver. 24. not that it was necessary that he should offer up himself again, or often, as the high-priest, his type, went every year into the holy place with the blood of others; for then he must have often suffered since the

world began, of which there was no need, since his appearing once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is sufficient, ver. 25, 26. for as it is the appointment of God, that men should die but once, and then come to judgment, so it was only necessary that Christ should be offered once to bear the sins of all his people, and then appear a second time without any sin at all upon him, to the salvation of those that look for him, ver. 27, 28.

Ver. 1. *Then verily the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, &c.*] The design of the apostle in this chapter, as it stands in connexion with what goes before, is to shew the pre-eminence of Christ, from the tabernacle, and the things in it; as well as from the priesthood and covenant; and as also the abrogation of the Levitical ceremonies in particular, as well as the first covenant in general; and that they were all types and figures of Christ, and had their fulfilment in him: the word *first*, here used, designs not the tabernacle, but the covenant; therefore it is rightly thus supplied in our version, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: which is said to have *ordinances of divine service*; belonging to the service of God, which was performed both by the priests, and by the people; and these ordinances were no other than the carnal ordinances, or rites of the ceremonial law: the word used signifies *righteousnesses*; and they are so called, because they were appointed by a righteous God; and were imposed on the people of the Jews in a righteous way; and by them men became externally and typically righteous; for they were figures and types of justification by the righteousness of Christ, though no complete, perfect, real righteousness, came by them. *And a worldly sanctuary.* Philo the Jew says ¹, it was a type of the world, and of the various things in it; though it was rather either a type of the church, or of heaven, or of Christ's human nature: the better reason of its being so called is, because it consisted of earthly matter, and worldly things; it was in the world, and only had its use in the world, and so is opposed to the heavenly sanctuary; for the Jews often speak of *מקדש שלמעלה*, a *sanctuary above*, and *מקדש שלמטה*, a *sanctuary below*, and of *בשכנא דלעילא*, a *tabernacle above*, and *בשכנא דלתתא*, a *tabernacle below*; which answered to one another: the words may be rendered a *beautiful sanctuary*, a well-adorned one; and such especially was the temple, or sanctuary built by Solomon, rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired and adorned by Herod, Luke xxi. 5. And the Jews say, that he that never saw Herod's building, meaning the temple, never saw a *beautiful* building; see Luke xxi. 5.

Ver. 2. *For there was a tabernacle made, &c.*] By the direction of Moses, according to the pattern shewed him in the Mount: *the first*; that is, the first part of the tabernacle, called the holy place, in distinction from the holy of holies, which was the second part of the tabernacle; for otherwise there were not a first and a second tabernacle; there never was but one tabernacle: *wherein was the candlestick*; that this was in the tabernacle, and on the south side of it, and without

the veil, where the apostle has placed it, is plain from Exod. xxvi. 35. and xl. 24. This was wanting in the second temple^o: it was a type of Christ mystical, or the church; in the general use of it, to hold forth light, so the church holds forth the light of the Gospel, being put into it by Christ; in the matter of it, which was pure gold, denoting the purity, worth, splendour, glory, and duration of the church; in the parts of it, it had one shaft in the middle of it, in which all the parts met and cemented, typical of Christ the principal, and head of the church, whose situation is in the midst of the church, and who unites all together, and is but one: the six branches of it may intend all the members of the church, and especially the ministers of the word; the seven lamps with oil in them, may have a respect to the seven spirits of God, or the spirit of God with his gifts and graces, and a profession of religion with grace along with it: and it was typical of the church in its ornaments and decorations; its bowls, knops, and flowers, may signify the various gifts of the spirit, beautifying ministers, and fitting them for usefulness; and in the appurtenances of it, the tongs and snuff-dishes may signify church-discipline, censures, and excommunications. *And the table and the shew-bread*; the table, with the shew-bread on it, was also in the tabernacle, on the north side of it, and without the veil, Exod. xxvi. 35. and xl. 22. This was also wanting in the second temple^p: the table was typical of Christ, and of communion with him; of the person of Christ; in the matter of it, which was Shittim-wood overlaid with gold, whereby were signified the two natures of Christ in one person; the human nature by the Shittim-wood, which is incorruptible, for though he died he saw no corruption, and is risen again, and lives for ever; and the divine nature by the gold, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; and in the decorations of it, as the border, golden crown, &c. which may respect the fulness of his grace, and the honour and glory he is crowned with, which render him exceeding valuable and precious: and it may be typical of communion with him, either hereafter, when the saints shall sit with him as at a table, and eat and drink with him in the kingdom of his father; or here, to which Christ admits them, and than which nothing is more honourable, comfortable, and desirable; and it may be significative of the ministration of the word and ordinances, of which Christ is the sum and substance, and in which he grants his people fellowship with him: to this table belonged rings and bars to carry it from place to place, which was done by the priests; where the church is, there Christ is, and there is the ministration of his word and ordinances; and which are sometimes moved from one place to another, by the ministers of the word, according to divine direction. *The shew-bread*, on the table, was typical either of the church of Christ, the saints, who may be signified by the unleavened cakes, being true and sincere, and without the leaven of malice and hypocrisy; and by twelve of them, which may represent the twelve tribes of Israel, the whole spiritual Israel of God; and by bread of faces, as the word for shew-bread may be

¹ De Vita Mosis, p. 667.

^o Jarchi in Gen. xxviii. 17.

^p Zohar in Exod. fol. 65. 4. & 94. 4. & 96. 2. & in Lev. fol. 1. 9.

^o T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.

^p Menasseh ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

rendered, since they are always before the Lord, and his eyes are continually upon them; they are set upon the pure table, Christ, on whom they are safe, and by whom they are accepted with God: and the shew-bread being set in rows, may denote their order and harmony; and their being removed every sabbath-day, may signify the succession of saints in the church, as one is removed, another is brought in; and the frankincense put upon each row, shews them to be a sweet savour to God: or else the shew-bread was typical of Christ himself, who is the bread of life, the food of his people; and may be signified by the shew-bread for its fineness and purity, being made of fine flour, Christ is the finest of the wheat, bread from heaven, and angels' food; for its quantity, twelve cakes, with Christ, is bread enough, and to spare, for all the elect; for its continuance, Christ always abides, and such as feed upon him live for ever; for its gratefulness, Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and for its being only for the priests, as only such who are made priests to God, live by faith on Christ; see Lev. xxv. 5—9. Moreover, the intercession of Christ may be prefigured by the shew-bread, or bread of faces, he being the angel of God's presence or face, who appears in the presence of God for his people; and this consisting of twelve loaves, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, shews that Christ represents the whole Israel of God in heaven, and intercedes for them; and whereas the shew-bread always continued, no sooner was one set of loaves removed, but another was put in their room; this may point at the continual intercession of Christ for his people; and the frankincense may denote the acceptableness of it to God. *Which is called the sanctuary; or holy; this refers either to the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, in which the priests in common ministered; or else to the things which were in it, now mentioned, the candlestick-table, and shew-bread; to which the Ethiopic version adds, and the golden censer, which it leaves out in the fourth verse; which version renders these words, and these they call holy; and so the Arabic version, which are called holy things, as they were, as well as the place in which they were; so the candlestick is called the holy candlestick in Ecclesiasticus xxvi. 17. and the ark, candlestick, table, censer, and altar, are called *Κύματα ἁγία, holy vessels*, by Philo the Jew¹; but the former sense seems best, when compared with the following verse.*

Ver. 3. *And after the second veil, &c.*] Were there more veils than one? the Scripture speaks but of one, Exod. xxvi. 31. there was indeed an hanging for the door of the tent, but that is not called a veil; nor was there more than one veil in the tabernacle, nor in the temple of Solomon; but in the second temple, under which the apostle lived, there were two veils, which divided between the holy place, and the holy of holies; and the innermost of these the apostle means: and so the Jewish writers² constantly affirm, that there were

two veils between the said places, and that two new ones were made every year³. So on the day of atonement, when the high-priest went into the most holy place, with the incense, it is said⁴, that "he walked in the temple till he came between the שתי הפרוכות, *the two veils*, which divide between the holy, and holy of holies, and there was the space of a cubit between them." The reason of these two veils may be seen in the account Maimonides gives of this matter⁵: "in the first temple there was a wall which divided between the holy, and holy of holies, the thickness of a cubit; but when they built the second temple, it was doubted by them, whether the thickness of the wall was of the measure of the holy place, or of the measure of the holy of holies; wherefore they made the holy of holies twenty cubits complete, and the holy place forty cubits complete, and they left the space of a cubit between the holy, and the holy of holies; and they did not build a wall in the second temple, but they made שתי פרוכות, *two veils*, one on the side of the holy of holies, and the other on the side of the holy place, and between them a cubit answerable to the thickness of the wall, which was in the first temple; but in the first temple there was but one veil only, as it is said, Exod. xxvi. 33. *and the veil shall divide unto you, &c.*" And to this account other Jewish writers⁶ agree; and the space between the two veils is called by them שַׁרְקִיץ⁷, ταραξις, from the trouble and perplexity this affair gave them. This veil, or veils, might represent the sin of man, which separates between God and men, excludes from heaven; but is removed by the death of Christ, when the veil was rent in twain; so that now there is an open way to heaven; Christ has entered into it by his own blood; and saints have boldness to enter there by faith and hope now, and shall hereafter personally enter into it: or else this veil may signify the ceremonial law, which separated between Jew and Gentile, and is abolished by the death of Christ: or rather it was typical of the flesh, or human nature of Christ, called the veil of his flesh, Heb. x. 20. see the note there. Now within this second veil was the tabernacle, or that part of it, the second part, which is called the holiest of all; which was either typical of Christ, who is called the most Holy, Dan. ix. 24. he being so in both natures, divine and human; or of heaven, for the holy places, made with hands, were figures of heaven, ver. 24. for its holiness, it being the habitation of the holy God, holy angels, and spirits of just men made perfect; and for its invisibility, and the unseen things which faith and hope, which enter within the veil, are the evidence of; and for the things that are in it, typified by the following ones.

Ver. 4. *Which had the golden censer, &c.*] There were various censers used by the priests in the daily service, but this was a peculiar one, which was used by the high-priest on the day of atonement; on other days he used a silver censer, but on that day a golden one,

¹ De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 666.

² T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 106. 1. Vid. Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 667.

³ Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 5. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 16.

⁴ Misna Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 8. 3.

⁵ Hilchot Beth Habbechira, c. 4. sect. 2.

⁶ Gloss. & Tosephot in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 51. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. & in Middot, c. 4. sect. 7.

⁷ Misn. Middot ib. & T. Bab. Yoma ib. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1.

and with it he entered into the holy of holies⁷; and though Moses does not call it a golden one, Lev. xvi. 12. yet Josephus does⁸; and so do the Jewish doctors in the place referred to, with whom the apostle agrees, and to this the allusion is in Rev. viii. 3. but here a difficulty arises, how this can be said to have been in the holy of holies, and within the veil, when, according to Moses, it was without the veil, and was only carried within on the day of atonement; and so Philo the Jew⁹ places it in the other part of the tabernacle; and it seems as if it was to avoid this difficulty, that the Ethiopic version has removed it from this verse to verse the second, and put it among the things that were in the holy place; but there is no need of this, nor to say that the altar of incense is intended, for that is never so called, and, besides, was without the veil too. It should be observed, that the apostle does not say, that the golden censer was laid up in the holy of holies, and kept there, but that it *had* it; as it had it on the day of atonement, when it was carried in there by the high-priest, who there made use of it; and it was for the use of it in that place, that it was peculiarly designed. What was done by it was this, burning coals were with it taken off from the altar before the Lord, and were brought in within the veil, where incense was put upon them, which covered the mercy-seat, that so the high-priest died not. The burning coals signify the very great sufferings of Christ, not only the sufferings of his body, which were very painful, but those of his soul, when the wrath and hot displeasure of God was poured out upon him; and those coals being taken off from the altar before the Lord, shew that the sufferings of Christ were according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; and their being brought within the veil, does not denote that Christ is now in a suffering state, though he is in the midst of the throne, as a lamb that had been slain; but the continued virtue and efficacy of his sufferings, and that our faith and hope, which enter within the veil, have to do with his blood and sacrifice thither carried. And the incense, which was carried in with those coals, typified the intercession of Christ in heaven, which is pure and holy, sweet, fragrant, and perpetual; and the priest having his hands full of it, expresses the fulness of Christ's intercession for all his elect, and for all things for them, and his fulness of merit to plead, which makes his intercession efficacious and prevalent; and hence, through his much incense, the prayers of his people become odorous and acceptable: and the incense being put upon the burning coals in the censer, shews that Christ's intercession proceeds upon the foot of his blood and sacrifice, his sufferings and death; and hence it becomes grateful, and has its influence; the smoke of it covers the mercy-seat, or throne of grace, and makes that accessible; and as the priest, who offers it, never dies, so none of those for whom he intercedes. *And the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold*; this is called the ark of the covenant, because the tables of the covenant, af-

terwards mentioned, were put into it; and that it was overlaid with gold round about, is certain from Exod. xxv. 11. where it is said to be overlaid with pure gold, within and without; and that the ark was within the veil, and in the most holy place, is manifest from Exod. xl. 21. 2 Chron. v. 7. that this was wanting in the second temple, is generally agreed¹⁰; but who took it away, where it was put, or what became of it, various are the sentiments of the Jewish writers: some say¹¹, it was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon, and is meant by the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10. others say¹², that Jeremiah the prophet took it, and hid it in a cave on Mount Nebo; but the more generally received opinion is, that it was hid by King Josiah in some hidden and deep place, which Solomon had built for that purpose under ground, knowing that the temple would be destroyed¹³; and it is often said, that it was hid under the pavement of a room in the temple, called *לשכת דוד העצים*, *the wood room*¹⁴. The ark is, by some, thought to be a type of the church, which is the ark of God, of his building, and where he dwells; the ark of the covenant, or testimony, where the oracles of God, his word and ordinances, are: its being made of Shittim-wood may denote the incorruption and duration of it: and its being covered with gold within and without is expressive of its glory; and its being portable, and carried from place to place, shews that the church is not always in one place; its rings, staves, and priests that bore it, may point at the Gospel, and the ministers of it, the instruments of moving it; and its moving from place to place, and falling into the hands of enemies, were emblematical of the church's afflictions; as its rest at last, in Solomon's temple, may signify the church's rest here and hereafter: but the ark is rather to be considered as a type of Christ; its various names agree with Christ, as the ark of God, the ark of his strength, the glory of God, the face of God, the holy ark, the ark of the covenant, or testimony, yea, Jehovah, and God himself: the time of its making is observable, it was made before the tabernacle, and the tabernacle for the sake of it; Christ is before all creatures, and was set up as Mediator before any thing existed, and all things are for his sake; it being made of Shittim-wood, covered with gold, may denote both the incorruption and glory of Christ; and its several decorations, the graces with which he was adorned, as man and Mediator; its staves and rings may design the word, ordinances, and ministers, whereby he is carried into the several places of the world; here God granted his presence, and counsel was asked of him, and it was brought forth in time of war, as a security from enemies, all which is applicable to Christ; by it wonders were done, as the dividing of Jordan for the Israelites to pass into the land of Canaan, the falling of the walls of Jericho, and the fall of Dagon; so Christ has opened the way for his people to heaven, has spoiled principalities and powers, and his Gospel is powerful to the pulling down the strong holds of sin

⁷ Misa. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4. Maimon. Yom Hacippurim, c. 2. sect. 5.

⁸ Antiqu. l. 3. c. 3. sect. 3.

⁹ De Vita Moysi, l. 3. p. 668.

¹⁰ T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 27. 2. & Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Menassch ben Israel Concil. in Gen. qu. 41. Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8.

¹¹ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3.

¹² Joseph. ben Gorion, l. 1. c. 17. 2 Maccab. ii. 4, 5.

¹³ T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 22. 2. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 4. sect. 1.

¹⁴ Misa. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 1, 2. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1.

and Satan; the moving of the ark from place to place, and its rest in the temple, may signify the rest of Christ, after his many fatigues in this world. *Wherein was the golden pot that had manna*; which Aaron filled with manna by the direction of Moses, who gave it at the appointment of God, that it might be preserved to future ages, as a memorial of the goodness, care, and power of God in feeding the Israelites with it in the wilderness, Exod. xvi. 33, 34. This pot held an omer, which was more than three pints and a half; some say six pints: and though Moses does not call it a golden pot, yet it is so called, not only by the Septuagint in Exod. xvi. 33. but also by Philo the Jew²; nor is it reasonable to think, with some Jewish writers³, that it should be made of earth, which was to continue for ages to come: this also was wanting in the second temple⁴; and this, with Aaron's rod, after mentioned, and other things, is said to be hid when the ark was, and along with it⁵: but how this pot, as well as Aaron's rod, can be said to be in the ark, when it is asserted at the bringing of the ark into the temple, at the dedication of it by Solomon, that there was nothing in it but two tables of stone, 1 Kings viii. 9. 2 Chron. v. 10. and both the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, are said to be before the testimony, Exod. xvi. 34. Numb. xvii. 10. and not in it, is a difficulty. Some, in order to remove it, observe, that the phrase, *wherein*, refers not to the ark, but to the tabernacle; but since the tables of the covenant were in the ark, and these are mentioned with it, and the phrase, *over it*, in the next verse, cannot be understood of the tabernacle, but of the ark, this solution is not satisfactory. Others have observed, that they might be in the ark in Moses's time and in Jeremiah's time, when they are said to be hid, though they were not in Solomon's: and others have taken notice, that the preposition *in*, sometimes signifies *at*, or *with*, as in Col. iii. 1. John i. 28. Eph. vi. 1, 2. and so the sense is, that these were near unto it in the most holy place, and might be in the sides of it, though not within it; for there were places in the sides of the ark to put things into, Deut. xxxi. 26. 1 Sam. vi. 8. And certain it is from the above account from Scripture, that they were near it; and so, by the Jewish writers, they are always mentioned along with it: when that was carried away, and hid, they were hid with it; but what a certain Jewish commentator¹ observes on 1 Kings viii. 9. is so express, as if it was designed to vindicate our apostle: his remark is this: "the intention of this *is* not to deny that there were not the things mentioned in the law, for they were *בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה*, left *in it*, as Aaron's rod, and the pot of manna, only *to deny*, hereby, that there was not any thing of *the law*, save the decalogue." And it should be observed, that it is not said of these, that they were put before the ark, but *before the testimony*; that is, before the tables of the covenant, which were within the ark. The *manna*, in this pot, was typical of Christ; in the signification of its name, whether it comes from *מָנָה*, *manah*, which signifies to appoint,

prepare, and distribute, Christ being appointed, prepared, and distributed, as food for his people; or from *מָנָה*, *man hu*, what is it? the words said by the Israelites, when they first saw it, not knowing what it was; so Christ is unknown to his people until revealed to them; and remains unknown to all natural and unregenerate men: the manna came from heaven, from God, and was a free gift of his, and so Christ: it was round in form, and may be expressive of Christ's perfection, and eternity: it was in colour white, which may signify his purity and innocence; it was sweet in taste, and so is Christ, his fruits, his word and ordinances: it was small in quantity, which may denote the meanness and despicableness of Christ in the eyes of the world: the people went out and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and baked it, and ate, which may be typical of the apprehension, sufferings, and death of Christ, in order to be fit food for the faith of believers. The persons that were fed by it were the Israelites, who were brought out of Egypt, and then in the wilderness, a large number, and men of all sorts, rich, and poor, and who had an equal portion, though very undeserving; so those who are fed by Christ, and nourished with him, the bread of life, are the spiritual Israel of God, whom Christ has redeemed from worse than Egyptian bondage and darkness, though they are yet in the wilderness of this world; and they are a large number, the whole family of God, who receive out of Christ's fulness grace for grace; and there is no difference of high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, male or female; they are all one in Christ, and Christ is all in all; and they have all a whole Christ, though they are very undeserving, being by nature children of wrath as others. And as the Israelites had the manna every day, and all the while they were in the wilderness, so Christ is the daily bread of believers; by him, in his word and ordinances, is his church nourished in the wilderness, to whom he gives to eat of the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness. The *pot*, in which this manna was kept, was typical of the ordinances of the Gospel; in its matter, being made of gold, denoting the preciousness and duration of them; in the bigness of it, holding an omer, shewing that these contain plenty of good things to satisfaction; in the situation of it before the ark, signifying the presence of Christ with his ordinances; and in its use to hold manna, and be a memorial of it to ages to come, as the ordinances have in them food for souls, and are the means of remembering Christ in future generations, till his second coming. *And Aaron's rod that budded*; and not only budded, but bloomed, blossomed, and yielded almonds, Numb. xvii. 8. This also was laid before the ark of the testimony, ver. 10. and may be said to be in it, or with it, in the same sense as the pot of manna was; it was likewise wanting in the second temple⁶, and is said to be hid with the pot of manna, and other things, as before observed: it was a type of Christ: it is affirmed by the Jews, that in the days of the Messiah, the priesthood shall re-

¹ De Cong. Quer. Erud. Gratia, p. 438.

² Mechlita, fol. 20. 1. & Tanchuma, fol. 29. 4.

³ Menasch ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

⁴ T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. & Sota, fol. 22. 3. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. & Horayot, fol. 12. 1. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 4. sect. 1.

⁵ R. Levi ben Gersom in 1 Kings viii. 9. so others in Laniado. Celi Yekar in loc.

⁶ Menasch ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

turn, and the rod of Aaron shall flourish^o; it was, very probably, as some have thought^p, an almond-tree stick, as that in Jer. i. 11, 12. The almond-tree has its name, in Hebrew, from a word which signifies haste and vigilance; it being, as Pliny says^q, the first of trees that buds and blossoms, and is very hasty in putting them forth. An almond-tree rod may be a proper emblem of Christ's speedy incarnation in the fulness of time; and Aaron's almond-tree rod, of his right to the priesthood, and his vigilance in it: this was first a dry rod or stick, and may design the mean descent and appearance of Christ, being born of mean parents, living a mean and obscure life; his entrance on his public ministry, and continuance in it, were without any pomp or grandeur; he was as a root out of a dry ground; and though he did many miracles, these were treated with contempt; and he was at last apprehended, arraigned, and condemned as a malefactor, and died a shameful and an accursed death: it looked very unlikely and unpromising, that he should be the King Messiah; that he should have all power in heaven and in earth; that he should have the wisdom he had, and do the miracles he did; and that he should be the author of eternal salvation; and that such fruits of grace, peace, pardon, and righteousness, should spring from him, as that Aaron's dry rod should bud, blossom, and bear almonds, in which it was a lively figure of Christ; that lying among other rods, and perhaps being like them, may denote Christ's assuming the common nature of men, or an individual of human nature in all things like to man: and this being cut off from the tree, and being a dry stick, may represent the death of Christ; and its budding and blossoming may point at the resurrection of Christ from the dead; and as Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by the budding and blossoming of his rod, so the deity and Messiahship of Christ are confirmed by his resurrection; and its bringing forth almonds may design the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection; and moreover, the almond-tree being, as Philo the Jew says^r, the first of trees that buds and blossoms in the spring, and the last that casts its leaves, it may be, as he observes, a symbol of the priestly tribe; and it may be a figure of the perpetuity of Christ, and his priesthood: and the tables of the covenant; the same with the testimony which was ordered to be put into the ark, and accordingly was, Exod. xxv. 16, 21. and xl. 20. Deut. x. 2, 5. About this there is no controversy; though it is a matter of dispute with the Jews, whether the book of the law was in the ark or no: some say it was in the side of it, and others within it^s; but Maimonides^t says, that Moses wrote the whole law with his own hand before he died, and gave a book (or copy) to every tribe, and one copy he put בְּאֵרוֹן, in the ark: so Jarchi says^u, that the book of the law of Moses was put into the

midst of the ark, and the ark was glorious and beautiful by that which was בְּתוֹכוֹ, within it. These tables were made of stone, an emblem of the hardness of man's heart, which is destitute of spiritual life and motion, senseless and stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, and on which no impressions can be made but by powerful and efficacious grace; and also of the stability and duration of the law, as moral, which is not antiquated by another, nor made void by the Gospel, nor altered in its nature and terms, but remains the same as to the matter of it; though it is now no covenant of works to believers, and they are freed from the curse and condemnation of it: the number of these tables is two; the whole law is reduced by our Lord to two grand precepts of it, Matt. xxii. 37—40. and the fleshy tables, on which it is re-inscribed in regeneration, are the heart and mind, 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. viii. 10. The place where these tables were put is the ark, which was typical of the law being in Christ, not only in his hands, but in his heart, Psal. xl. 8. and in his keeping of which he is the fulfilling end; for he being the surety of his people, and becoming man, answered every part of the law; in the holiness of his nature, in the perfect obedience of his life, and in his sufferings and death, in which he bore the penalty of it: and these tables are called the tables of the covenant, because the law on Mount Sinai was a covenant made with the people of Israel; and was typical of the covenant, of which Christ is the surety and Mediator, and which is ratified by his blood.

Ver. 5. *And over it the cherubim of glory, &c.*] Or *glorious cherubim*, where the *Shechinah*, or divine glory, dwelt, Psal. lxxx. 1. These were over the ark, and were in number two, as were the *cherubim* which God placed at the garden of Eden, Gen. iii. 24. according to the opinion of the ancient Jews^v; and very likely these were made after the form of them. Some have thought them to be birds of a very terrible aspect, which were set there to deter Adam and Eve from coming to the tree of life; and both Philo^w and Josephus^x say, they were winged fowls; but the generality of the Jewish writers take them for angels^y; and some of them say they were destroying angels, or noxious spirits^z, which is not probable; but why angels should be so called, and what was their appearance, there are different opinions. Jerom says^a the word signifies a multitude of knowledge; and indeed Philo the Jew^b observes, that the Greeks would interpret the Hebrew word, much knowledge and understanding; and another Jewish writer^c affirms, that the word *cherubim* is a name for separate intelligences, as if angels were so called from their great knowledge, and that the word is the same as *cerabdim*, as *Rabbins*, doctors, or teachers; but for the most part they interpret it, as *young men*^d, because that

^o Baal Hatturim in Numb. xvii. 5.

^p Joseph. Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 2. Aben Ezra in Numb. xvii. 8.

^q Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 25.

^r De Vita Mosia, l. 3. p. 681.

^s T. Bah. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 1, s. Jarchi in Deut. xxxi. 26.

^t Prefat. in Yad Chuzaka in principio.

^u Gloss. on T. Bah. Avotha Zera, fol. 24. 2.

^v Targum Jon. & Hieros. in Gen. iii. 24.

^w De Vita Mosia, l. 3. p. 668.

^x Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 5.

^y Bereshit Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 19. 1. & Mattanot Cleunah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen. iii. 24.

^z Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in loc.

^a Ep. Paulino, Tom. III. fol. 3. F.

^b Ut supra.

^c H. Samuel Tzartzah, Sopher Mcker Chayim, fol. 8. s.

^d Zohar in Gen. fol. 123. 3. & Imre Binah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen. iii.

^e Kimchi Sopher Shorash. in rad. כְּרֻב, & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 58. 2.

angels have appeared in the form of young men. So in the Talmud^a it is asked, "what does *cherub* signify? says R. Abhu, כרוביא, as a young man, for so in Babylon they call a young man רביא." Some think that the word *cherub* is the same with רכוב, *Recub*, the letters transposed, which signifies a chariot, because God is said to ride upon a *cherub*, and the angels are called the chariots of the Lord, Psal. xviii. 10. and lxviii. 17. Zech. vi. 1. 5. to which may be added, that Ezekiel's vision of the *cherubim* is frequently, by the Jews^b, called מרכבה, *Mercabah*, or the chariot; and mention is made of the chariot of the *cherubim*, in 1 Chron. xxviii. 18. to which reference may be had in Hab. iii. 8. though I rather think, with others, that the word is derived from כרב, *Carab*, which in the Syriac and Arabic languages signifies to plough, and so in the Talmud^c; and a *cherub* took its name from hence, because of the ox, whose face it had, that being a creature made use of in ploughing; and that the face of an ox, and the face of a cherub, is the same, may easily be concluded from Ezek. i. 10. and x. 14. And now because that Ezekiel's *cherubim* had four faces, the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle; and the *cherubim* in the temple were in the same form, as may be gathered from Ezek. xii. 18, 19. those that were placed at the garden of Eden may be thought to be in the same form also: and some of late have fancied, that they were an hieroglyphic of the trinity of persons in the Godhead, signified by the ox, the lion, and eagle; and of the incarnation of the son of God, the face of a man being added to them; to support which notion it is further observed, that the word כרובים should be pronounced *ce-rubbin*, and interpreted, as the mighty ones. But it should be known, that the word is also used in the singular number, Psal. xviii. 10. Ezek. x. 4. and every single *cherub* had these four faces, so that each of them must be a representative of the Trinity, and of the incarnate Saviour, of which only the word in the singular number can be used; and then it can only be said of it, *cerub*, as the mighty one; which observation greatly weakens what is brought to support the fancy: besides, if the *cherubim* were an emblem of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, they would rather be an emblem of a quaternity, and not of a trinity of persons, since each had four faces, and those distinct from each other; for the face of a man is as much a distinct face as any of the rest. Now the human nature of Christ is no distinct person, much less one in the Godhead; and besides is the inferior nature of Christ, whereas the face of the man, in the *cherubim*, is superior to the rest, which are the faces of irrational animals. Moreover, this would give us a similitude of the divine Being, and of that in him which is most incomprehensible by us, the trinity of persons in the Godhead; and so an answer may be given to such questions, the sense of which suggests, that no answer can be returned to them, Isa. xl. 18, 25. and xlvi. 5. and though the second Person often appeared in human form, and in the fulness of

time became incarnate, and the Holy Ghost once descended as a dove, yet the Father's shape was never seen at any time, John v. 37. to which may be added, that this notion seems contrary to the second command, *thou shalt not make unto thee any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above*, Exod. xx. 4. for allowing that the *cherubim* at the garden of Eden were figures made by the Lord himself, 'tis not credible he should make such, he afterwards forbid others to make; besides, the *cherubim* in the tabernacle and temple were the same figures with those in Eden, as is owned; and these were ordered of God to be made by men, and therefore surely can't be thought to be figures, emblems, and representations of God himself in his three divine persons; likewise the *cherubim* are not only distinguished from him, but instead of being figures of him, they are always represented as vehicles on which he sits or rides, Exod. xxxv. 22. Psal. lxxx. 1. and xviii. 10. Once more, it may deserve some little consideration, that the prince of Tyre, a type of antichrist, the man of sin, is called a *cherub*, Ezek. xxviii. 14, 16. which surely can't be in allusion to the divine Being, and the persons in the Godhead, but very well in allusion to angels, the sons of God, as civil magistrates, good and bad, are sometimes called. No doubt there was something signified by the *cherubim* in the tabernacle and temple; but that this should be the mystery of them, is not easy of belief. Philo the Jew makes the *cherubim* to signify the two powers of God, his creative and governing powers^d; and the Jews frequently speak of כרובים, *rua*, the mystery of the *cherubim*: the *cherubim* over the ark, here spoken of, are sometimes allegorized of the two Testaments, the Old and New; the matter of them being of gold may denote the excellency, purity, simplicity, and duration of them; their number is two, as were the *cherubim*; and as they were alike, and of one measure and size, this may intend the agreement between them; the doctrines, promises, prophecies, types, and figures of the Old Testament agree with the New; and the account that the one gives of the person and offices, and grace of Christ, agrees with the other; their situation and position, being placed at the two ends of the mercy-seat, and looking towards it, may denote their being full of Christ, from one end to the other, and their pointing at him, and bearing witness to him; here God also reveals himself, as he did between the *cherubim*; and these are glorious as they were, full of glory, containing the glorious Gospel of the blessed God: though rather the *cherubim* on the mercy-seat were symbols and representations of angels, since to these the Apostle Peter seems to allude, in 1 Pet. i. 12. their being made of gold may denote their excellency, purity, and simplicity; their being on the mercy-seat shews their dependence on Christ, their confirmation by him, and ministrations to him; their having wings, expresses their readiness to do his will; and their looking one to another, signifies their unity and concord among themselves; and their looking to the mercy-seat, their inspection into the mysteries of grace; and

^a T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 2. & Succa, fol. 5. 2.

^b T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. so read instead of *Taanith*, in the original marginal reference to the note on 1 Cor. xi. 10.

^c T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 33. 2. Buva Kama, fol. 96. 3.

^d De Cherubim, p. 112. de Profugis, p. 466. & de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 699.

^e Zohar in Gen. fol. 99. 1. & 122. 4.

their being over the ark, and God being in the midst of them, declares the presence of God with them, whose face they always behold; and as these *cherubim* of glory, they are very glorious creatures, and in the glory of them will Christ come a second time: *shadowing the mercy-seat*; that is, with their wings, as in Exod. xxv. 20. which was typical of Christ; its name agrees with him, a mercy-seat; for in him God shews himself merciful to his people; all the stores of mercy are laid up in him; the mission of him into this world is owing to the mercy of God; and the mercy of God was glorified by him in the redemption of his people; and he himself is the way through which they obtain and receive mercy; and he is also a merciful high-priest to them: the Hebrew word for the mercy-seat, כַּפֹּרֶת, signifies a covering; nor is our English word in sound very different from it; and it was so called, as Kimchi² observes, because it covered the ark: Christ is a covering to his people; their persons are clothed with his righteousness, and all their sins are covered by it; and they are secured from the curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come: the Septuagint interpreters render it by ἀσπίς, the word used here by the Apostle Paul, in Rom. iii. 25. there rendered *propitiation*, and applied to Christ, who has made reconciliation for sin, and through whom God is propitious to his people. The matter, of which the mercy-seat was made, was pure gold, denoting the excellency and preciousness of Christ; the make of it, in its length and breadth, was just the same with the ark, in which the two tables were, Exod. xxv. 10, 17. Christ is the fulfilling end of the law, and exactly answers to all its requirements; his nature, to the holiness and spirituality of it; his righteousness, to all the obedience it commands; and his sufferings and death, to the penalty it enjoins: its situation above the ark shews that there is no mercy but in a way of righteousness, and that Christ stands between God and the law, and, by fulfilling it, covers all the transgressions of it; and being above it, is able to suppress all its accusations and charges: from off the mercy-seat, God communed with his people; the way to communion with God is by Christ; the encouragement to go to God is from him; and the enjoyment of him is through him: on the day of atonement the mercy-seat was sprinkled with blood, typical of the blood of Christ, whereby peace is made, and a way opened into the holiest of all: of which we cannot now speak particularly; not only of the mercy-seat, but of all the things before mentioned; for the word which is in the plural number, and refers to all the preceding things; to discourse of which, largely and particularly, required more time than the apostle had, and must have exceeded the bounds of an epistle. The Ethiopic version renders it in the singular number; of this.

Ver. 6. *Now when these things were thus ordained, &c.*] Or prepared and got ready; that is, when the

tabernacle was finished, and set up, and provided with all its vessels and furniture: *the priests went always into the first tabernacle*; the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, ver. 2. here the common priests went continually every day, morning and evening: the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *the outward tabernacle*, in distinction from the innermost part of the tabernacle, or the most holy place: *accomplishing the service of God*; by offering sacrifices, burning incense, and trimming the lamps, which they did every day: the priests entered into the holy place every day for service; but they might not go in at any other time but the time of service: in the phrase, *of God*, is not in the text, but is a supplement; and it was usual with the Jews to call the worship of the temple, and especially that part of it which lay in sacrifices, עֲבֹדָה, *the service*: Simeon the just used to say, the world stands upon three things; upon the law, וְעַל יְעַל, *and upon the service*, and upon beneficence^m; by *the service*, the commentatorsⁿ on the passage understand sacrifices; and again it is said^o, no man enters into the court לְעֹבְדוֹתָא, *for service*, though he is clean, until he has dipped himself: the word here used in the Greek text is in the plural number, and may be rendered *the services*, because there were several sorts of services performed every day, as before observed, and several sacrifices offered; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *the offices of sacrifices*; and the Ethiopic version, *their offerings*; and the Arabic version, *offices*: and the service which the high-priest performed in the holiest of all once a year, was divers, which is mentioned in the following verses, and is called *service*, ver. 8. it is said, that on the day of atonement there were five עֲבֹדוֹת, *services* of the morning daily sacrifice^p, in which the high-priest ministered in his golden garments: but here the service of the common priests is meant, which was every day; and it becomes such who are employed in sacred service; both to be constant in it, and to do it fully and completely.

Ver. 7. *But into the second went the high-priest alone, once every year, &c.*] Though this is not expressed in so many words in Lev. xvi. 2. only it is said that *Aaron came not at all times into the holy place within the veil*; yet it is the constant and generally received sense of the Jewish writers, in agreement with the apostle here, that the high-priest went into the holy of holies but once a year^q, on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth of the month Tisri, and answers to part of September; not but that he went in more than once on that day, for he went in no less than four times^r; the first time he went in to offer incense; the second time with the blood of the bullock, to sprinkle it; the third time with the blood of the goat; and the fourth time to bring out the censur^s; and if he entered a fifth time, they say he was worthy of death; wherefore Philo the Jew^t seems to be mistaken when he affirms that, if he went in three or four times on the

² Sopher Shorash. rad. כִּפֵּר.

¹ Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.

² Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 2.

³ Maimon & Bartenora in ib.

⁴ Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3.

⁵ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 32. 1.

⁹ T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 4. & 43. 1. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 86. 1.

¹⁰ Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 4. Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 3. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torat, pr. neg. 303.

¹¹ Maimon & Bartenora in Misna Celina, c. 1. sect. 9.

¹² De Legatione ad Caium, p. 1035.

same day, he suffered death, nor was there any pardon for him; and as it was but one day in a year he might enter, so when he did, no other man, either Israelite or priest, might go in along with him; he went in alone without any attendance: the Jews say^u, that a cord or thong was bound to the feet of the high-priest when he went into the holy of holies, that if he died there, the rest might be able to draw him out; for it was not lawful for another priest to go in, no, not an high-priest, none besides him on the day of atonement. Pausanias^w makes mention of a temple of Minerva into which the priests entered once every year; which very likely was observed in imitation of this custom of the Jewish high-priest; who in it was a type of Christ, and of his entrance into heaven, and of his constant and continued intercession there: *not without blood*; for he went in with the blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat; which was typical of the blood of Christ, by which he entered in once into the holy place, into heaven, when he had obtained eternal redemption by it, ver. 12. *which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people*: the bullock was offered by the high-priest for himself and his family; and the goat for the sins of the people of Israel, even all their iniquities, transgressions, and sins, Lev. xvi. 11, 15, 16, 21. but Christ the antitype having no sin, had no need to offer for himself, only for the sins of the people; see the note on ch. vii. 27.

Ver. 8. *The Holy Ghost this signifying, &c.*] This shews that the Holy Ghost existed under the Old Testament; that he is a distinct person in the God-head, a personal act being here ascribed to him; that he is truly and properly God, the God whose service the priests accomplished in the tabernacle; and by whom Moses was admonished to make all things in it according to the pattern, and by whom the high-priest was warned not to come at all times within the veil; moreover, that the Levitical ordinances were of God, and that they had a spiritual signification; that the Old-Testament saints were not without some knowledge of the spiritual meaning of them; and that the Holy Ghost was the author of that knowledge; particularly by enjoining the high-priest to enter within the veil but once a year, he gave a plain and strong intimation, *that the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing*; by which is meant, not only the first part of the tabernacle, as in ver. 2, 6. but the whole of it; and not only that, but the temple built in its room, and also the whole Levitical service is included; and the sense is, that while the tabernacle and tabernacle-worship, the temple and temple-service, were in being, *the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest*: the Vulgate Latin and all the Oriental versions render it, *the way of the saints*: of the priests who ministered in holy things, and were holy to the Lord, and of all the saints that lived before Christ; not that they did not go to heaven, but their way to it was not so manifestly known; life and immortality were not so clearly brought to light, as now by the Gospel; though rather it designs holy places, even heaven itself, which

was typified by the holy place within the veil; and may be called the holiest of all, it being the residence of the holy God, holy angels, and holy men, and is sanctified by the presence of Christ, for his people, and where perfect holiness will be the glory of it: the way to it is not by works of righteousness done by men, which being imperfect cannot justify, and so not save, though this is the way men naturally seek and take; but Christ is the only way, and he is the plain, pleasant, and safe one: now let it be observed, that heaven was not shut to the Old-Testament saints; there was a way into it for them, and they went the same way New-Testament saints do; and that way was in some measure known, but it was not fully manifested; it lay hid in obscure prophecies, types, shadows, and sacrifices; hence being more clearly revealed under the Gospel dispensation, in comparison of its former obscurity, and with respect to the manifestation of it, it is called a *new way*.

Ver. 9. *Which was a figure for the time then present, &c.*] The tabernacle in general was a figure of Christ's human nature, ch. viii. 2. and the most holy part of it was a figure of heaven itself, ver. 24. the whole service of it was typical and shadowy; but it was but a temporary figure; it was for that present time only; the things of it were suited to that dispensation, and are now abolished, and ought not to be revived, the ordinances of the Gospel being greatly preferable to them; and whilst it did continue, it was only a parable, as the word here used signifies; it was like a dark saying; it had much obscurity and darkness in it; or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, it was a *figure of the present time*: that is, of the Gospel dispensation; it was a shadow of good things to come under that; it prefigured what is now accomplished; or rather it was a *figure unto, or until the present time*; till Christ came, when all figures, types, and shadows fled away, and were of no more real use and service: *in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices*; that is, in which tabernacle, or at which then present time, or *καθ' ἣν, according to which* figure or parable, as the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, gifts and sacrifices were offered by the priests; see ch. v. 1. and viii. 3. *that could not make him that did the service perfect*: neither the priest that offered them, nor the people whom he represented, and for whom he did the service; they could not make real and perfect expiation for sin, nor justify from it, nor cleanse and sanctify; the spiritual worshippers had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; and their persons were justified by his righteousness, and they were cleansed by his blood: the particular instance in which legal sacrifices did not make perfect is, *pertaining to the conscience*; there is in every man a conscience, and when sin is charged home upon it, that is filled with a sense of divine wrath; nor can it be pacified with any thing short of what will answer the law and justice of God, and which is only done by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 10. *Which stood only in meats and drinks, &c.*] That is, along with the gifts and sacrifices offered, there only were meat-offerings and drink-offerings;

^u Zohar in Lev. fol. 43. 3. & Inure Binah in ib.

^w Arcadiae, sive l. 8. p. 531.

things which only respect the body, and can't therefore make perfect, as to the conscience; to which may be added, that while the tabernacle was standing, and the typical service was in being, there was a prohibition of certain meats, as unclean, and an allowance of others, as clean, Lev. xi. 2—31. and there were certain drinks which were unlawful to certain persons, at certain times, as to the priests and Nazarites, Lev. x. 9. Numb. vi. 3. and which, for the above reason, could make no man perfect: *and divers washings or baptisms*; the doctrine of which, the apostle would not have laid again, ch. vi. 2. these were the washings of the priests and of the Israelites, and of sacrifices, and of garments, and of vessels and other things; and which, because they were performed by immersion, they are called *baptisms*: and now since these only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, or what was outward, they could not reach the conscience, or make perfect with respect to that: *and carnal ordinances*: which belonged to the flesh, and not the spirit or soul, and therefore could not affect that; besides, these were only imposed on them until the time of reformation; they were enjoined the Jews only, though by God himself; and were put upon them as a burden, or a yoke, and which was on some accounts intolerable, but were not to continue any longer than the time of the Gospel, here called the *time of reformation, or of correction*, and emendation; in which, things that were faulty and deficient are amended and perfected, and in which burdensome rites and ceremonies are removed, and better ordinances introduced: or rather of *direction*: in which saints are directed to Christ, the sum and substance of all types, shadows, and sacrifices, and in whom alone perfection is.

Ver. 11. *But Christ being come an high-priest, &c.*] Christ is come, as appears from the cessation of civil government among the Jews, which was not to be till Shiloh came; from the destruction of the second temple, into which the Messiah was to come, and did; from the expiration of Daniel's weeks, at which he was to appear, and be cut off; from the coming of John the Baptist, his forerunner, and from the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the calling and conversion of them, and the effusion of the spirit upon them: and he is come an high-priest; he was called to be one, and was constituted as such in the council and covenant of peace; and he agreed to do the work of one; he was typified by the high-priest under the law; and he came as such into this world, and has done the work of an high-priest, by offering himself a sacrifice for sin, and by his entrance into the holiest of all, with his own blood: and he is come an high-priest of good things to come; such as peace, reconciliation, and atonement, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, eternal life and salvation, which the law was a shadow and figure of; and which under the former dispensation were to come, as to the actual impetration of them by Christ; who is called the high-priest of them, to distinguish him from the high-priests under the law, who could not bring in these good things, nor make the comers to them and to their offerings perfect; but Christ is the author and administrator of them; and these things are owing to the performance of his priestly office; and such rob Christ of his glory, as a priest, who ascribe these

good things to their own merits, or the merits of others: and the way in which he is come is, by a *greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building*; meaning the human body of Christ, which was greater than Moses's tabernacle; not in bulk and quantity, but in value, worth, and dignity; and was more perfect than that, that being only an example, figure, shadow, and type, this being the anitype, the sum and substance of that; and by it things and persons are brought to perfection, which could not be, in and by that; and this is a tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; which was reared up without the help of man: Christ was not begotten by man, but was conceived in the womb of a virgin, under the power of the Holy Ghost; he came not into the world in the way of ordinary generation, but in a supernatural manner; and so his human body is a tabernacle, not of the common building, or creation, as the word may be rendered, as other human bodies are.

Ver. 12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, &c.*] With which the high-priest entered into the holy place, within the veil, on the day of atonement, Lev. xvi. 14, 15. for Christ was not an high-priest of the order of Aaron, nor could the blood of these creatures take away sin, nor would God accept of such sacrifices any longer: *but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place*; which shews the truth of his human nature, and the virtue of its blood, as in union with his divine Person; by which he opened the way into the holiest of all, as the surety of his people, and gives them boldness and liberty to follow him there; he carried his blood not in a basin, as the high-priest carried the blood of goats and calves, but in his veins; and by it, having been shed by him, he entered not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself; and that not every year, as the high-priest, but once for all, having done his work; or as follows, *having obtained eternal redemption*; for us, from sin, Satan, the law, and death, to which his people were in bondage, and which he obtained by paying a ransom-price for them; which was not corruptible things, as silver and gold; but his precious blood: in the original text it is, *having found eternal redemption*; there seems to be an allusion to Job xxxiii. 24. This was what was sought for long ago by the Old-Testament saints, who were wishing, waiting, and longing for this salvation; it is a thing very precious and difficult to find; it is to be had nowhere but in Christ, and when found in him, is matter of great joy to sensible sinners; God found it in him, and found him to be a proper person to effect it; and Christ has found it by being the author of it: this is called an eternal redemption, because it extends to the saints in all ages, backwards and forwards; it includes eternal life and happiness; and such as are sharers in it shall never perish, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; it is so called in opposition to the carnal expiations of the high-priests, and in distinction from temporal redemptions, deliverances, and salvations. Remarkable is the paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uzziel on Gen. xlix. 18. "Jacob said, when he saw Gideon the son of Joash, and Sampson the son of Manoah, who should be redeemers; not for the redemp-

"tion of Gideon am I waiting, nor for the redemption of Sampson am I looking, for their redemption is a temporal redemption; but for thy redemption am I waiting and looking, O Lord, because thy redemption is *פְּדוּת עוֹלָמִית*, an everlasting redemption." another copy reads, for the redemption of Messiah the son of David; and to the same purpose is the Jerusalem paraphrase on the place; in Talmudic language it would be called *פְּדוּת עוֹלָמִית*.¹

Ver. 13. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, &c.*] Shed either on the day of atonement, or at any other time: the former of these, Pausanias² relates, was drank by certain priestesses among the Grecians, whereby they were tried, whether they spoke truth or no; if not, they were immediately punished; and the latter, he says³, will dissolve an adamant-stone; but neither of them can purge from sin: and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean; the apostle refers to the red heifer, Numb. xix. which being burnt, its ashes were gathered up and put into a vessel, and water poured upon them, which was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on unclean persons; the ashes and the water mixed together made the water of separation, or of sprinkling; for so it is called by the Septuagint, *ὕδωρ ἐπιχρίσεως*, the water of sprinkling, and in the Targum in a following citation: this was the purification for sin, though it only sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; the body, or only in an external and typical way, but did not really sanctify the heart, or purify and cleanse the soul from sin. The Jews say, that the waters of purification for sin were not waters of purification for sin, without the ashes⁴; and to this the Targumist, on Ezek. xxxvi. 25. and on Zech. xiii. 1. refers, paraphrasing both texts thus; "I will forgive their sins as they are cleansed with the water of sprinkling, and with the ashes of the heifer, which is a purification for sin."

Ver. 14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, &c.*] Which is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of the son of God; and the argument is from the lesser to the greater; that if the ashes of the burnt heifer, which was a type of Christ in his sufferings, mixed with water, typically sanctified to the purifying of men externally, in a ceremonial way, then much more virtue must there be in the blood of Christ, to cleanse the soul inwardly: *who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God*; Christ is a priest, and the sacrifice he has offered up is himself; not his divine nature, but his human nature, soul and body, as in union with his divine person; which gives his sacrifice the preference to all others; and is the reason of its virtue and efficacy, and is expressive of his great love to man: and this sacrifice was offered up to God, against whom his people had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, and which is of a sweet-smelling savour to him; besides, he called him to this work, and engaged him in it, and is well-pleased with this offering, as he must needs be, since it is offered up without spot; which expresses the purity of Christ's nature and sacrifice, and the perfection of it, which is such, that no fault can be found in it by the justice of God; and

hence, the saints, for whom it is offered, are unblamable and irreprovable. There is an allusion in the clause, both to the priests and to their sacrifices, which were neither of them to have any spot or blemish on them; and this unblemished sacrifice was offered unto God by Christ, *through the eternal Spirit*; not the human soul of Christ; for though that is a spirit, yet not eternal, and besides, was a part of the sacrifice; but rather the divine nature of Christ, which is a spirit, and may be so called in distinction from the flesh, or human nature, as it sometimes is, and this is eternal; it was from everlasting, as well as is to everlasting; and this supported him under all his sufferings, and carried him through them, and put virtue unto them; and Christ was a priest, in the divine, as well as human nature: though by it may be better understood the Holy Ghost: and so the Vulgate Latin version reads, and also several copies; since the divine nature rather acts by the human nature, than the human nature by the divine; and Christ is often said to do such and such things by the Holy Spirit; and as the Holy Ghost formed and filled the human nature of Christ, so he assisted and supported it under sufferings. This whole clause is inserted by way of parenthesis, shewing the efficacy of Christ's blood, and from whence it is: *to purge your conscience from dead works*; that is, from the works of sin, as the Ethiopic version renders it; which are performed by dead men, separate and alienated from the life of God, are the cause of the death of the soul, and expose to eternal death, and are like dead carcasses, nauseous and infectious; and even duties themselves, performed without faith and love, are dead works; nor can they procure life, and being depended on, issue in death; and even the works of believers themselves are sometimes performed in a very lifeless manner, and are attended with sin and pollution, and need purging: the allusion is to the pollution by the touch of dead bodies; and there may be some respect to the sacrifices of slain beasts, after the sacrifice and death of Christ, by believing Jews, who were sticklers for the ceremonies of the law, and thereby contracted guilt; but immoralities are chiefly designed, and with these the conscience of man is defiled; and nothing short of the blood of Christ can remove the pollution of sin; as that being shed procures atonement, and so purges away the guilt of sin, or makes reconciliation for it, so being sprinkled on the conscience by the spirit of God, it speaks peace and pardon, and pacifies and purges it, and removes every incumbrance from it: the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, read, *our conscience*. The end and use of such purgation is, *to serve the living God*; so called to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, and in opposition to dead works; and because he has life in himself, essentially and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others; and it is but the reasonable service of his people, to present their souls and bodies as a living sacrifice to him; and who ought to serve him in a lively manner, in faith, and with fervency, and not with a slavish, but a godly filial fear; and one that has his conscience

¹ T. Shehuot, fol. 11. 2.

² Achaica, sive l. 7. p. 450.

³ Areadica, sive l. 8. p. 485.

⁴ Misn. Temura, c. 1. sect. 5. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

purged by the blood of Christ, and is sensibly impressed with a discovery of pardoning grace, is in the best capacity for such service. The Alexandrian copy reads, *the living and true God.*

Ver. 15. *And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, &c.*] See the notes on ch. vii. 22. and viii. 6, 8. This may refer both to what goes before, and what follows after; for Christ, that he might offer himself to God, and by his blood purge the consciences of his people from dead works, that so they might serve the living God, became the Mediator of the New Testament, or covenant; and also he took upon him this character and office, *that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance*; Christ became the Mediator of the New Testament, and assumed human nature that he might die, and by dying might obtain redemption for his people; not only for those that were then in the world, or should be in it, but also for all those that had been in it. *The first testament* is the first dispensation of the covenant of grace, reaching from the first promulgation of it to Adam after the fall, to the death of Christ; *the transgressions* that were under it are the sins of the saints who lived under that dispensation, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, and takes in all their iniquities of every kind: and *the redemption* of these, or from these, by Christ, at and through his death, does not suppose that there was no remission of sins, or justification from them, under that dispensation; or that the Old-Testament saints did not go to heaven, but were detained in a prison, till redeemed by the death of Christ; or that their sins were only redeemed, not their persons; for transgressions may stand for transgressors; and so the Syriac version renders it, *that by his death he might be a redemption for them who transgressed the first testament*; so the Jews say, that the Messiah must die *לפנות את האבות*, to redeem the fathers^b: but the sense is, that though legal sacrifices could not atone for sin, nor ceremonial ablutions cleanse from them; yet the sins of Old-Testament saints were expiated, their iniquities pardoned, and they justified and saved, through the blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; whose death is a redemption from transgressions past, present, and to come; whose blood is the ransom-price for them, and was shed for the remission of them, even of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; who took the surety's word for the performance of all this, which in the fulness of time he strictly fulfilled, to the satisfaction of law and justice; see Rom. iii. 25. and the ultimate end of Christ's being a Mediator, and dying for such purposes, was, that called ones might receive the promised inheritance: by the *eternal inheritance*, is meant heaven, which is by gift and bequest, belongs to children only, and comes through the death of Christ; and is a very substantial, plentiful, and glorious one; it is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, and as here, *eternal*; it was prepared from the foundation of the world, and will continue for ever; and it may be

so called, to distinguish it from the inheritance of the land of Canaan, or any temporal one: *the promise* of this was made before the world began, and was put into the hands of Christ, the surety of the better testament, by whose death the heirs of it come to enjoy both the promise, and the thing promised; and they are such who are *called*, not merely externally, but internally and effectually; by whom were meant, not Abraham and his natural seed, nor the Old-Testament saints only, but all that are called with an holy calling, whether Jews or Gentiles, and who will enjoy both the promise of the inheritance, and that itself, in a way of *receiving*: every word shews this affair to be all of grace; it is an *inheritance*, and therefore the father's gift; it is by *promise*, and so of grace; and it is *received*, and so freely given, and not merited; and only such who are *called* by grace possess it; and yet it is through the death of Christ, that so it might be received in a way consistent with the justice of God.

Ver. 16. *For where a testament is, &c.*] The covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation, is a testament or will. The Jews have adopted the Greek word, here used, into their language, and pronounce it *וְרִיתָקִי*, and by it understand a dying man's last will and testament^d. Some of them make it to be of Hebrew derivation; as if it was said, *וְרִיתָקִי לְמִיָּקִים*, *this shall be to confirm*^e, or this shall be stable and firm; though others own it to be the same with this Greek word *διαθήκη*^f. The covenant of grace, is properly a covenant to Christ, and a testament or will to his people: it is his and their father's will, concerning giving them both grace and glory; it consists of many gifts and legacies; in it Christ is made heir of all things, and his people are made joint heirs with him; they are given to him as his portion; and they have all things pertaining to life and godliness bequeathed to them, even all spiritual blessings; the witnesses of it are Father, Son, and Spirit; and the seals of it are the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit; and this is registered in the Scriptures by holy men as notaries; and is unalterable and immutable: and this being made, *there must also of necessity be the death of the testator*; who is Christ; he has various parts in this will or testament; he is the surety and Mediator of it; and he is the executor of it; what is given in it, is first given to him, in order to be given to others; all things are put into his hands, and he has a power to give them to as many as the father has given him; and here he is called the *testator*: Christ, as God, has an equal right to dispose of the inheritance, both of grace and glory; and as Mediator, nothing is given without his consent; and whatever is given, is given with a view to his *death*, and comes through it, and by virtue of it: hence there is a *necessity* of that, and that on the account of the divine perfections; particularly for the declaration of God's righteousness, or by reason of his justice; and also because of his purposes and decrees, which have fixed it, and of his promises, which are yea and amen in Christ, and are ratified by his blood, called therefore the blood of the covenant; and likewise on account of the engagements of Christ to suffer and die; as well

^b R. Moses Haddarsan apud Galatin. l. s. c. 20.

^c T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 17. 4. & T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 152. 2.

^d T. Bab. Bava Metzta, fol. 19. 1. Maimon & Barbenora in Misn.

Mord. Katon, c. 3. sect. 3. & in Bava Metzta, c. 1. sect. 7. & in Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 6.

^f Cohen de Lara Ir David, p. 30.

as for the accomplishment of Scripture prophecies concerning it; and moreover, on account of the blessings which were to come to the saints through it, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation, adoption and eternal life.

Ver. 17. *For a testament is of force after men are dead, &c.*] The necessity of Christ's death is here urged, from the nature and force of a testament or will, among men, which does not take place, and cannot be executed, till a man is dead. *Otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth*: no claim can be made by the legatees for the part they have in it, nor can any disposition be made by the executor of it; not that hereby is suggested, that the testament or will of God was uncertain and precarious till the death of Christ, and subject to change and alteration as men's wills are till they die; nor that the inheritance could not be enjoyed by the Old-Testament saints; for 'tis certain, it was entered upon by them before the death of Christ; but the sense is, that there was a necessity of it, that the saints' right unto it, upon the foot of justice, might be evident by it.

Ver. 18. *Whereupon neither the first testament, &c.*] Or the first administration of the covenant of grace under the law: *was dedicated without blood*; or *confirmed* without it, that dispensation being a typical one; and that blood was typical of the blood of Christ, by which the new covenant or testament is ratified; see Exod xxiv. 7, 8.

Ver. 19. *For when Moses had spoken every precept, &c.*] Contained in the decalogue, in the book of the covenant, every one of the precepts in Exod. xx. xxi. xxii. xxiii. for this is to be understood of the written law, and not of the oral law the Jews talk of, which they say Moses first delivered by word of mouth to Aaron, then to his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, then to the seventy elders of Israel, and then to the whole congregation; so that Aaron heard it four times, his sons thrice, the seventy elders twice, and all Israel once*: but this is the written law which he spoke audibly, and in a known language, *to all the people according to the law*; which God gave him on the Mount: this may instruct persons concerned in the public ministry, to speak out plainly and clearly the whole counsel of God, to all to whom they are sent, according to the word of God, which is the rule of faith and practice: *he took the blood of calves, and of goats*; in the relation of this affair in Exod. xxiv. 5. which is referred to, only mention is made of oxen, bullocks, or heifers, here called calves, which were sacrificed for peace-offerings, and not of goats; though perhaps they may be intended by the burnt-offerings there spoken of, since they were sometimes used for burnt-offerings, Lev. i. 10. The Syriac version only reads, *he took the blood of an heifer*; and the Arabic version, *he took the blood of calves*; but all the copies, and other versions, read both. *With water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop*; neither of these are mentioned in Exod. xxiv. but since sprinkling is there said to be used, and blood and water mixed together, and scarlet and hyssop were used in sprinkling, as in sprinkling

the leper, and the unclean house, Lev. xiv. 5, 6, 7, 49, 50, 51. the apostle justly concludes the use of them here; the blood, with water, was typical of the blood and water which sprung from the side of Christ pierced on the cross, the one signifying justification by him, the other sanctification; the scarlet wool, which is originally white, but becomes scarlet by being dyed, may denote the native purity of Christ, and his bloody sufferings and death; the hyssop may signify his humility, and the purging virtue of his blood, and the sweet-smelling savour of his person, righteousness, and sacrifice. The apostle calls scarlet, scarlet wool; though whenever the word is used in the Jewish laws of the Old Testament, wool is not expressed, but it is always intended; for it is a rule with the Jews^h, that "the blue, which is spoken of in every place, is wool dyed of a sky colour; purple is wool dyed red, and "scarlet is wool dyed in scarlet." *And sprinkled both the book, and all the people.* In Exod. xxiv. 8. no mention is made of the sprinkling of the former, only of the latter, which the apostle either concludes from the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, upon which the book might lie, or from tradition, or from divine revelation: some think it does not necessarily follow from the text, that the book was sprinkled; and repeating the word *λαβων*, *he took*, read the words, *and he took the book: and sprinkled all the people*; but this seems not natural, but forced; and besides, all the Oriental versions are express for the sprinkling of the book: the book of the law was sprinkled, not because of any impurity in it, but to shew the imperfection of it, and its insufficiency to justify men; or rather the imperfection of man's obedience to it, and to point out what the law requires in case of disobedience, even the blood and life of men; and what it would be, was it not sprinkled with blood, or satisfied by the blood of Christ, namely, an accusing, cursing, and condemning law: the people, all of them, being sprinkled with the blood, were typical of God's peculiar people, even all the elect of God, being sprinkled with the blood of Christ, called the blood of sprinkling, by which they are redeemed, and which speaks peace and pardon to them. Some have thought only the seventy elders were sprinkled, as personating the whole congregation; and others, that the twelve pillars were only sprinkled, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel; but Moses and the apostle agree, that they were the people that were sprinkled.

Ver. 20. *Saying, this is the blood of the testament, &c.*] The first testament or covenant: this proves what the apostle had asserted in ver. 18. that it was dedicated with blood, or confirmed by it; compare with this Matt. xxvi. 28. *which God hath enjoined unto you*: the people of Israel, to observe, and which they promised to do; see Exod. xxiv. 7, 8.

Ver. 21. *Moreover, he sprinkled likewise both the tabernacle, &c.*] Not at the same time that he sprinkled the book and the people, for then there was no tabernacle; but afterwards, at the time that it was set up, when it was anointed with oil, Exod. xl. 9. and though no mention is there made of blood, yet Josephus, in agreement with the apostle, assertsⁱ, that the taber-

^h Maimon. Prefat. ad Yad Chazaka.

ⁱ lb. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 13.

^h Antiqu. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 6.

nacle, and its vessels, were not only anointed with oil, but sprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats, as well as the garments of Aaron, and his sons: the tabernacle was typical of the church, in which God dwells, being purified and cleansed by the blood of Christ; and this shews, that there is no coming into the presence of God, the place where he dwells, without blood. *And all the vessels of the ministry*; which were used in the service of the tabernacle: these may denote the vessels of grace and mercy, the elect of God, whose hearts are sprinkled by the blood of Christ from an evil conscience, and whose garments are washed in it, and made white by it.

Ver. 22. *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, &c.*] All *except a few things*, as the Arabic version renders it; for some things were cleansed by water, and others purged by fire, Numb. xxxi. 23. Some join the word *almost* with the word *purged*, as if the sense was, that all things were purged by blood, but not perfectly, only almost; but the former sense is best. *And without shedding of blood is no remission*; that is, of sin; there was no typical remission without it; and there can be no real remission but by the blood of Christ; no instance can be given of pardon without it; if it could have been otherwise, the blood of Christ had not been shed; for so it would seem to be shed in vain, and his satisfaction to be unnecessary; nor is it agreeable to the justice of God to forgive sin without satisfaction; nor is it consistent with his veracity, and faithfulness to his word, Gen. ii. 17. It is a common saying with the Jews, and often to be met with in their writings, אֵין כַּפֶּרֶת אֱלֹהֵי בָרֶם, *there is no atonement but by blood*¹; by the shedding of blood; not by the shedding of it, as it flows out of the body of the sacrifice, but as it is poured out on the altar; for the pouring of the blood at the four corners, and at the bottom of the altar, were the chief rites required in sacrifices; nor did they reckon expiation to be expiation, unless the altar was moistened by the blood of the sacrifice².

Ver. 23. *It was therefore necessary, &c.*] On account of the divine appointment, and that types and antitypes might correspond; and especially it was necessary with respect to the Messiah, the substance and body of all types. So Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the text in Exod. xl. 9. "and thou shalt take the anointing oil, and thou shalt anoint the tabernacle, and all that is in it; and thou shalt sanctify it, כְּטוֹר, because of the crown of the kingdom of the house of Judah, and the King Messiah, who shall redeem Israel in the latter days." Upon his account it was necessary, that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; that is, that all the people, and the book of the covenant, and the tabernacle, and its vessels, which were types and patterns of persons and things in Gospel churches, should be purified with blood and water, and with scarlet wool and byssop. *But the heavenly things themselves, with better sacrifices than these*: the sum and substance of the above patterns, shadows, and examples, such as heaven itself; which though not impure in itself, yet some think it

may be said to be purified, because saints are made meet for it, by being purged with the blood of Christ; others observe, that sin reaches to heaven, and provokes God that dwells there; hence atonement for it may be called a purification of heaven: but rather this may be said of it, inasmuch as by the blood of Christ an entrance and preparation is made for the saints into it. Likewise, the human nature of Christ is among these heavenly things; not that it is heavenly, as to the matter and substance of it, but may be so called, because of its wonderful formation; and which has been purified, not from any real internal pollution that was in it, but from what was imputed to it, the sin of his people. Also the whole church, triumphant and militant, may be intended by heavenly things: the Old-Testament saints went to heaven before Christ came; and though they were not impure, but were the spirits of just men made perfect, yet their iniquities were purged by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, after they were gone to heaven; see ver. 15. and Rom. iii. 25. The church militant, or believers on earth, may be said to be heavenly, since they are partakers of an heavenly birth and calling; their head is in heaven, and their conversation is there; and they have a right unto it, and are making meet for it; and they are in themselves defiled with sin, and are purified by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the offering up of his body once for all: to which may be added, that spiritual blessings are heavenly things; they are from heaven, and saints are blessed with them in heavenly places; and these come to them through the blood and sacrifice of Christ; yea, the Gospel, which is from heaven, and the doctrines of it, are sealed and confirmed by the blood of Christ: his sacrifice is expressed in the plural number; not that there has been a repetition of it, for it is but one sacrifice, and but once offered up, and will never be reiterated; but to shew the excellency of it, it being usual with the Jews to use the plural number of things the most excellent; so Christ is called Wisdoms, Prov. i. 20. besides, respect may be had to the many sacrifices under the law, which were types of it, and were answered and fulfilled by it; and to the many persons on whose account it was offered; and to the parts of it, the soul and body of Christ: and this is a better sacrifice than the legal ones, in its own nature and in its use and efficacy to take away sin, and make perfect, which they could not.

Ver. 24. *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, &c.*] The most holy place in the tabernacle of Moses, or in the temple built by Solomon, and rebuilt by Zorobabel, and repaired by Herod, which are the figures of the true; that is, the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, was a figure of heaven, the truth of that type; see ver. 9. as follows. Jeseplus^m suggests the same, when speaking of the most holy place; he says, that it was inaccessible to the priests, that it might be as heaven to God. *But into heaven itself*: not the visible heavens, the airy and stary ones, through which he passed, but the third heaven, the habitation of God, angels, and glorified saints: this shews that heaven is a place; that Christ,

¹ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 5. 1. Zebachim, fol. 6. 1. & Menachot, fol. 93. 2.

² Reland. Heb. Antiqu. par. 3. c. 2. sect. 8.

^m Antiqu. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 4. & c. 7. sect. 8.

as man, was out of it when on earth; and that at his ascension he entered into it, having done the work he came about, and that with acceptance: the end of his entrance was *now to appear in the presence of God for us*; Christ, as God, was always in his presence, from everlasting; as Mediator, he was with him in the council of peace; while he was here on earth his father was with him, he was not alone; but now in his human nature he is at his right hand, where he appears before him, as a favourite before his Prince, on the behalf of another, or as an advocate on the behalf of his client: Christ appears in the court of heaven for his elect, by representing their persons; by presenting himself, his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, before God on their account; by introducing them into the presence of God, and offering up their prayers with the incense of his mediation; by presenting them to himself, and to his father, and obtaining every blessing for them. And this he does *now*, since his entrance; not that he did not appear before God for the saints of the Old Testament, for he was the angel of God's presence then, though he did not appear then in the manner he does now, as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as if it had been slain; but it denotes the continuance and perpetuity of his appearance for his people; he is ever interceding for them.

Ver. 25. *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, &c.*] Or at all again; which shews the perfection of his sacrifice, for justice was satisfied, the law fulfilled, sin done away, and complete salvation obtained at once; which lies against the errors of the Socinians, who say he offers himself now in heaven; and of the Papists, who pretend to offer the body of Christ daily: *as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others*; not his own, nor other men's, but the blood of goats and calves; but Christ entered into heaven with his own blood, he having been altar, priest, and sacrifice: the high-priest went into the most holy place every year, but Christ has entered into heaven once for all, where he sits down and continues, having done his work effectually.

Ver. 26. *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, &c.*] For if it was necessary that he should often offer up himself now, which is the same as to suffer, since the sacrifice of himself, the same was necessary before; seeing sin was in the world from the beginning, and the saints from the foundation of the world had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; but the truth is, Christ's sufferings were but once, though the virtue of them is always, both before and after; nor can he suffer more, or again, because of his power over death and the grave, and because he has effectually obtained what he suffered for: *but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*; this is to be understood, not of his appearance in heaven, of which mention is made in ver. 24. but of his incarnation on earth, called an appearance; not as though his human nature was a mere phantom or apparition, for it was a real thing; or as if he was then manifested to be what he really was before; for before his incarnation he was not truly and actually man;

but this is said with respect to the manifestation of his invisible deity; or of him as the son of God in human nature; and in regard to the types of the old law, under which he was hid; and with respect to the prophecies of his coming; and it designs the same thing with his descent from heaven, and coming into this world, in which he appeared in fashion as a man, as a mean man, as an afflicted one; yea, he looked like a sinful man, bearing the infirmities and sins of his people; his appearance was but to a very few, and for a little time; and the time of it was, *in the end of the world*; the same with the last days; the last age of the world; the end of the Jewish economy; at the close of their civil and ecclesiastical state, according to Hab. ii. 3. so the Jews expect their Messiah לִקְץ הַיָּמִים, *at the end of days*: and this appearance was but *once*; there were many appearances of him in an human form, under the Old-Testament dispensation; and there were many after his resurrection; but this is said to be but once, in opposition to the many types and sacrifices under the law, and agrees with his one oblation, and once suffering: the end of his appearance was, *to put away sin*; the filth of it, by his blood; the guilt of it, by his atoning sacrifice; and the punishment of it, by his sufferings and death, the penalty of the law; and in consequence of all this, the dominion of it by the power of his grace, and the very being of it hereafter: and this putting it away is signified by his bearing, carrying, and taking it away; by removing it as far as the east is from the west; by finishing and making an end of it; by crucifying the old man, destroying the body of sin, and by an utter disannulling and abolishing it, as a debt, and as a law; and all this is done by the sacrifice of himself; by the offering up of his body and soul an offering for sin; as in ver. 14.

Ver. 27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, &c.*] Not a moral, or what is commonly called a spiritual death, nor an eternal one, but a corporeal one; which does not arise from the constitution of nature, but from the sin of man, and God's decree on account of it; by which it is fixed that men shall die, and how long they shall live, and when they shall die; so that they can't die sooner nor later; all things antecedent to death, which lead on to it, and issue in it, are appointed by God, and so is death itself, with all its circumstances; men's days can neither be lengthened nor shortened, either by Christ himself, or others: and this statute and appointment of God concerns men, not angels, and reaches to all men, wicked and righteous; and though there have been some exceptions, as Enoch and Elijah; and all will not sleep, or die, some will be found alive at Christ's appearing; yet such will undergo a change which is equivalent to death, as Enoch and Elijah have done: and generally speaking men die but once; it is not usual for men to die, and live again, and then die again; there have been some extraordinary instances of this kind, but they are rare; it is the statute law of heaven in common for men to die, and that but once; so Cicero^o the Heathen says, *omnibus definitam esse mortem*: Christ died once, he'll die no more; and it is the comfort of the saints, that though they die the first death, they shall not be

^a Seder Tiphilot, Ed. Amstelod. fol. 2. 1.
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^o Pro Sextio.

hurt of the second death; and the consideration of this decree should excite to diligence and industry: death is certain to God, but uncertain to us, as to the time, nor should we curiously inquire into it, but patiently wait for it, and quietly submit unto it: *but after this the judgment*; the last and general judgment, which will reach to all men, quick and dead, righteous and wicked, and in which Christ will be Judge. There is a particular judgment which is immediately after death; by virtue of which, the souls of men are adjudged to their proper state of happiness or woe; and there is an universal judgment, which will be after the resurrection of the dead, and is called eternal judgment, and to come; this is appointed by God, though the time when is unknown to men; yet nothing is more certain, and it will be a righteous one.

Ver. 28. *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, &c.*] As man dies but once, Christ was offered but once, or he suffered and died but once; and that was not on his own account, or for his own sins, but to bear the sins of many; not of angels but of men, and these not a few, but many; which is said to magnify the grace of God, to exalt the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, and to encourage souls to hope in him: hence many are brought to believe in him, and many are justified by him, have their sins forgiven them, and are glorified; though Christ bore not the sins of all men; for as all men have not faith, all are not justified, pardoned, and saved: what he bore were sins; all kind of sin, every act of sin, and all that belongs to it; its filth, guilt, and punishment, even the iniquity of all his people; which must be a prodigious weight, and than which nothing could be more nauseous: his bearing them supposes they were upon him, though not in him, imputed, though not inherent; that he did not sink under them; that he made an entire satisfaction for them, and bore them wholly away, both from the persons of his people, and from the sight of justice. The way in

which he came to bear them was this; he became a surety for all the elect; his father imputed to him all their sins, and he voluntarily took them upon himself; where justice found them, and demanded satisfaction of him for them, and he gave it; which is an instance both of his great love, and of his great strength: *and unto them that look for him*; with affection, faith, and patience: *shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation*; this is to be understood of Christ's visible and personal appearance on earth, which will be a glorious one; he will appear in his own glory, and in his father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, and in the glory of his power, to the joy of saints, and to the terror of the wicked; for every eye shall see him: and this is said to be the second time; that is, that he appears on earth, and personally; for though he often appears to his people, it is in a spiritual way; and though he appeared to Stephen and to Paul, yet not on earth, but in heaven; and this is called the second time, with reference to his first appearance in human nature at his incarnation, and after that he ascended to heaven; and as this will be the second, it will be the last: the manner in which he will appear, will be, *without sin*; without sin itself; without any thing like it: without any infirmities, which though not sinful are the effects of sin; without sin imputed to him, with which he appeared before; without being a sacrifice for sin; and without sin upon his people that come with him, or he shall meet whom he shall raise, or change, and take to himself: and the end of his appearance with respect to them, will be *unto salvation*; the end of his first appearance was to obtain salvation for his people, and he has obtained it, and there is a comfortable application of it made unto them by the spirit of God; but the full possession of it will be hereafter, and into this will Christ put them, when he shall appear: the Alexandrian copy adds, *by faith*, and also some other copies.

C H A P. X.

IN this chapter the apostle pursues his argument, shewing the weakness and imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, and the superior excellency of Christ's, which he closes with suitable exhortations to faith on Christ, as the alone high-priest, and to a constant profession of him. The imperfection of the Levitical priesthood is proved, from the law by which it was established, being only a shadow of good things to come; from the insufficiency of annual sacrifices to perfect the comers to them, or to purge the consciences of the worshippers from sin; and from the non-cessation of these sacrifices which would have been, if the above ends could have been answered by them, ver. 1, 2. but on the contrary, by the annual return of these sacrifices, sins are afresh remembered, and very good reason there is for it, since it is an impossible thing that the blood of slain beasts should take away sin, ver. 3, 4. moreover, the apostle proves the insufficiency of such sacrifices, by a divine testimony, out of Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8, by which it appears, that they are not agreeable to the will of God, and are rejected by him as useless,

ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. and this leads the apostle to discourse of the excellency of Christ's sacrifice above them; that they are taken away, and his is substituted in their room; that as they are not agreeable to the will of God, his is a fulfilment of it; that though they could not expiate sin, yet by the offering up of the body of Christ, once for all, his people are sanctified, or their sins are expiated, ver. 9, 10. and this is further illustrated by a comparison between the priests under the law, and Christ; they were many, he but one; they daily offered the same sacrifices, he offered but one sacrifice; theirs could not take away sin, by his offering he has perfectly expiated the sins of his people; they stood daily ministering, their work being never at an end; he is set down at the right hand of God, expecting his enemies to be made his footstool, having done his work to perfection, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14. and that legal sacrifices are ceased, and no more to be used, is proved by a testimony of the Holy Ghost, out of Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. relating to the covenant of grace, among the promises of which stands that of the forgiveness of

sin; from whence the apostle justly concludes, that where remission of sin is, there is, and there needs no more offering for it, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18. and from hence the apostle passes to exhortations to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, which he strongly urges from the consideration of Christ's priesthood, and the efficacy of it: and first, he presses them to the duty of prayer, to draw nigh to God to the throne of his grace. The manner in which he would have them approach to God, is in the sincerity of their hearts, in a plerophory of faith, an high and full exercise of it, and in purity of soul and body: the motives or encouragements to it are taken from their having boldness and liberty to enter by faith into heaven itself with their prayers, through the blood of Jesus; from there being a new and living way opened for them through the flesh of Christ; and from their having such an high-priest over the house of God as he is, ver. 19, 20, 21, 22. and next he exhorts them to a constant and steadfast profession of their faith, to which he animates them by the faithfulness of a promising God, who will never leave nor forsake his people, ver. 23. and then to consider one another in their church-relation, and to stir up one another to the exercise of the grace of love, and to the performance of good works, ver. 24. and also not to forsake their public assemblies, as was the custom of some, but to exhort each other to greater diligence in attending there, especially since they might observe that a time of great tribulation was at hand, ver. 25. and in order to deter from apostacy, which is expressed by a sinning wilfully, after a man has received and professed the knowledge of the truth, the apostle observes that the destruction of such is inevitable; since there never will be another propitiatory sacrifice offered up, and therefore there can be no other than a dreadful expectation of an awful judgment, and of the wrath of God, which, like a consuming fire, will destroy such adversaries of Christ, ver. 26, 27. the justice of which is argued from the less to the greater; that if the transgressors of the law of Moses had no mercy shewn them, but died when there were proper and sufficient witnesses of their crimes, then such must be deserving of a far greater punishment, who treat with the greatest rudeness the person of the Son of God, and his precious blood, and with the greatest contempt the person and grace of the Holy Spirit, ver. 28, 29. and such persons have reason to expect the vengeance of God will fall on them, since it is threatened them in the word of God, Deut. xxxii. 35, 36. and a dreadful thing it is to fall into his hands, ver. 30, 31. But in order to encourage these believing Hebrews to hold on and out unto the end, the apostle puts them in mind of their good beginning, how well they set out, and how bravely they behaved, by bearing afflictions and reproaches themselves; by being the companions of those that were afflicted and reproached; by having compassion on the apostle when in bonds; and by cheerfully suffering the loss of their goods upon this consideration, that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, ver. 32, 33, 34. wherefore it would be exceeding wrong and very unbecoming, after all this, to drop their faith and a profession of it, which

otherwise would issue in the enjoyment of the great recompense of reward, ver. 35. and as patience is necessary, it is right to exercise it under sufferings for Christ's sake, partly because it is doing the will of God, and partly because that after that is done, such shall receive the promised happiness; and what may serve the more to engage to the exercise of it is, it is but a little while and Christ will come and put an end to all the sufferings of his people, ver. 36, 37. and that faith should be in exercise, is proved from a divine testimony, Hab. ii. 4. and so must be pleasing to God, when the contrary is highly resented by him, ver. 38. and now, lest the believing Hebrews should conclude from all this that the apostle suspected them as going into apostacy, he declares his belief, that he and they were not in the number of apostates, but of believers, whose souls would be saved, ver. 39.

Ver. 1. *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, &c.*] By which is meant not the moral law, for that is not a shadow of future blessings, but a system of precepts; the things it commands are not figuratively, but really good and honest; and are not obscure, but plain and easy to be understood; nor are they fleeting and passing away, as a shadow, but lasting and durable: but the ceremonial law is intended; this was a *shadow*, a figure, a representation of something true, real, and substantial; was dark and obscure, yet had in it, and gave, some glimmering light; and was like a shadow, fleeting and transitory: and it was a *shadow of good things*: of Christ himself, who is the body, the sum and substance of it, and of the good things to come by him; as the expiation of sin, peace and reconciliation, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, and eternal life; these are said to be *to come*, as they were under the former dispensation, whilst the ceremonial law was in force, and that shadow was in being, and the substance not as yet. *And not the very image of the things*: as it had not neither the things themselves, nor Christ, the substance of them, so it did not give a clear revelation of them, as is made in the Gospel, nor exhibit a distinct delineation of them, such as an image expresses; it only gave some short and dark hints of future good things, but did not exactly describe them: and therefore *can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually*: namely, the sacrifices of bullocks and goats, which were offered on the day of atonement, year after year, in successive generations, from the first appointment of that day, to the writing of this epistle: sacrifices of such a kind, and so often repeated, could never *make the comers thereunto perfect*: either the people that came to the temple, and brought them to the priests to offer them for them, or the priests that offered them; so the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, *perfect them that offer*; and if not one, then not the other: legal sacrifices could not make perfect expiation of sin; there's no proportion between them and sin: nor did they extend to all sin, and at most only typically expiated; nor could they justify and cleanse from sin. Contrary to this, the Jews say, "when Israel was in the holy land, there was no iniquity found in them, for the sacrifices which they offered every day atoned

“ for them;” but spiritual sacrificers and worshippers were expiated, justified, and cleansed another way, even by the blood of Christ, slain from the foundation of the world in purpose, promise, and type, and to which their faith had respect in every sacrifice.

Ver. 2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered, &c.*] The Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, leave out the word *not*; and the sense requires it should be omitted, for the meaning is, that if perfection had been by the legal sacrifices, they would have ceased to have been offered; for if the former ones had made perfect, there would have been no need of others, or of the repetition of the same; but because they did not make perfect, therefore they were yearly renewed; unless the words are read with an interrogation, as they are in the Arabic version, *for then would they not have ceased to be offered?* yes, they would; they are indeed ceased now, but this is owing to Christ and his sacrifice, and not to the efficacy of these sacrifices; for yearly sacrifices were offered for former sins, as well as for fresh ones, as appears from the following verse. *Because the worshippers, once purged, would have had no more conscience of sins*; there are external and internal worshippers; the latter are such who worship God in spirit and in truth: but here ceremonial worshippers are meant, who, if they had been really purged from sin by legal sacrifices, and purifications, would have had no more conscience of sins, and so have had no need to have repeated them; as such spiritual worshippers, who are once purged from sin by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; not that they have no sin, or no sense of sin, or that their consciences are seared, or that they never accuse for sin, or that they are to make no confession and acknowledgment of sin; but that they are discharged from the guilt of sin, and are not liable to condemnation for it; and through the application of the blood of Christ to them, have peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 3. *But in those sacrifices, &c.*] The Arabic version reads, *but in it*; that is, in the law; but the Syriac version reads, and supplies, as we do, בְּרִבְחָא בְּהֵוֵן, *in those sacrifices*, which were offered every year on the day of atonement: there is a remembrance of sins made again every year; of all the sins that were committed the year past, and even of those that were expiated typically by the daily sacrifice, and others that had been offered; which proves the imperfection and insufficiency of such sacrifices: there was a remembrance of sins by God, before whom the goats were presented, their blood was sprinkled, and the people cleansed, Lev. xvi. 7, 14, 15, 30. and there was a remembrance of them by the people, who, on that day, afflicted their souls for them, ver. 29, 31. and there was a remembrance of them by the high-priest, who confessed them over, and put them upon the head of the goat, ver. 21. by which it was owned, that these sins were committed; that they deserved death, the curse of the law; that the expiation of them was undertaken by another, typified by the goat; that this was not yet alone, and therefore there was no remission, but a typical one, by these sacrifices; but that sins remained,

and required a more perfect sacrifice, which was yet to be offered up. Legal sacrifices were so far from inducing an oblivion of sins, that they themselves brought them to remembrance, and were so many acknowledgments of them. Though Philo the Jew thinks the contrary, and gives this as a reason why the heart and brain were not offered in sacrifice, because “ it would be foolish, that the sacrifices should cause, “ not a forgetfulness of sins, but a remembrance of “ them ?.”

Ver. 4. *For it is not possible, &c.*] There is a necessity of sin being taken away, otherwise it will be remembered; and there will be a conscience of it, and it must be answered for, or it will remain marked, and the curse and penalty of the law must take place: but 'tis impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins; which was shed on the day of atonement: sin is a breach of the moral law, but these sacrifices belong to the ceremonial law, which are less acceptable to God than moral duties; sin is committed against God, and has an objective infiniteness in it, and therefore can never be atoned for by the blood of such creatures; it leaves a stain on the mind and conscience, which this blood cannot reach; besides, this is not the same blood, nor of the same kind with the person that has sinned; yea, if this could take away sin, it would do more than the blood of the man himself could do; such blood shed can never answer the penalty of the law, satisfy divine justice, or secure the honour of divine holiness: but what the blood of these creatures could not do, the blood of Christ has done, and does: that takes away sin from the sight of justice, and from the consciences of the saints. Compare with this the Septuagint version of Jer. xi. 15. “ what, has the beloved committed abomination in my house? shall “ prayers, and the holy flesh take away thy wicked- “ nesses from thee, or by these shalt thou escape?”

Ver. 5. *Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, &c.*] In Psal. xl. 7, 8. This was said by David, not of himself, and his own times, for sacrifice and offering were desired and required in his times; nor was he able to do the will of God; so as to fulfil the law, and make void legal sacrifices; nor did he engage as a surety to do this; nor was it written of him in the volume of the book that he should: besides, he speaks of one that was not yet come, though ready to come, when the fulness of time should be up; and who is here spoken of as coming into the world, and who is no other than Jesus Christ; and this is to be understood, not of his coming into Judea, or the temple at Jerusalem; or out of a private, into a public life; nor of his entrance into the world to come, into heaven, into life eternal, as the Targum on Psal. xl. 7. paraphrases it, after he had done his work on earth, for the other world is never expressed by the world only; nor did Christ go into that to do the will of God, but to sit down there, after he had done it; besides, Christ's entrance into heaven was a going out of the world, and not into it. To which may be added, that this phrase always signifies coming into this terrene world, and intends men's coming into it at their birth; see John i. 9. and the note there; and must be understood

of Christ's incarnation, which was an instance of great love, condescension, and grace; and the reason of it was to do what the law, and the blood of bulls and goats, could not do. For it follows, *sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not*; or didst not desire and delight in, as the word *דָּבַר*, used in Psal. xl. 7. signifies; meaning not the sacrifices of wicked men, or such as were offered up without faith in Christ; but the ceremonial sacrifices God himself had instituted, and which were offered in the best manner; and that not merely in a comparative sense, as in Hos. vi. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 22. but the meaning is, that God would not have these continue any longer, they being only imposed for a time, and this time being come; nor would he accept of them, as terms, conditions, and causes of righteousness, pardon, peace, and reconciliation; but he willed that his son should offer himself an offering, and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling savour to him. But a *body hast thou prepared me*; or *fitted for me*; a real natural body, which stands for the whole human nature; and is carefully expressed, to shew that the human nature is not a person. This was prepared in the book of God's purposes and decrees, and in the council and covenant of grace; and was curiously formed by the Holy Ghost in time, for the second Person, the son of God, to clothe himself with, as the Syriac version renders it, *thou hast clothed me with a body*: and that he might dwell in, and in it do the will of God, and perform the work of man's redemption: in Psal. xl. 7. it is, *mine ears thou hast opened*; *digged or bored*, the ear being put for the whole body; for if he had not had a body prepared, he could not have had ears opened: besides, the phrase is expressive of Christ's assuming the form of a servant, which was done by his being found in fashion as a man, Phil. ii. 7. and of his being a voluntary servant, and of his cheerful obedience as such, the opening, or boring of the ear, was a sign, Exod. xxi. 5, 6. And thus by having a true body prepared for him, and a willing mind to offer it up, he became fit for sacrifice.

Ver. 6. *In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, &c.*] Which were the principal kinds of offerings under the law: *thou hast had no pleasure*; not only in comparison of moral duties, or spiritual sacrifices, such as those of praise and thanksgiving, Psal. lxxix. 30, 31. but so as to accept of the offerers for the sake of them, and smell a sweet savour in them; for these could not satisfy his justice, appease his anger, or expiate sin; and when they were in full force, and offered in the most agreeable manner, they were no otherwise well-pleasing to God, than as they were types of, and had respect unto the sacrifice of his son. In the Hebrew text it is, *thou didst not require, or ask for*; for them, when the time was up that Christ should come into the world.

Ver. 7. *Then said I, lo, I come, &c.*] Christ observing that legal sacrifices were not acceptable to God; that there was a body prepared for him; and that it was written of him in the book of God, that he should come; and the time being now come, with a note of attention and admiration, the matter being of great moment and concern, he cheerfully expresses his readiness to come, immediately, without any compulsion,

even he himself, and not another. *In the volume of the book it is written of me*: in the book of the law, as the Targum and Kimchi on Psal. xl. 8. interpret it; and which may design the Bible in general, the whole book of the Scriptures of the Old Testament: so *דָּבַר*, the book, is used for the whole Bible, and it is said, all the whole law, that is, all Scripture, is called *סֵפֶר*, a volume; accordingly there are things written of Christ in all the writings of the Old Testament, in the law, and in the prophets, and in the psalms. Jarchi interprets it of the law of Moses, and so it may design the pentateuch, or the five books of Moses; and there are several places therein, in which it is written of Christ, and particularly in Genesis, the first of these books, and in the head, the beginning, the frontispiece, the first part of that book; namely, ch. iii. 15. which may be principally designed. Books were formerly written in rolls of parchment, and hence called volumes; see the notes on Luke iv. 17, 20. The end of his coming is next expressed by him, *to do thy will, O God*; which, when he came, he set about with the utmost delight, diligence, and faithfulness, in preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, doing good to the bodies and souls of men, and in finishing the great work of man's redemption, which was the main part of his father's will he came to do; and which he did, by fulfilling the law in its precept and penalty; by offering himself a sacrifice to God; by suffering death, the death of the cross; by destroying all his and our enemies, and so working out everlasting salvation.

Ver. 8. *Above when he said, &c.*] In the afore-cited place, Psal. xl. 7, 8. *Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein*; this is a recapitulation of what is before said; and all kind of sacrifices are mentioned, to shew that they are all imperfect, and insufficient, and are abolished; and the abrogation of them is expressed in the strongest terms, as that God *would not have them*, and that he took *no pleasure in them*: which *are offered by the law*; according as that directs and enjoins: this clause is added, to distinguish these sacrifices from spiritual ones, under the Gospel dispensation, and which are well-pleasing to God; and to prevent an objection against the abolition of them, taken from hence, that they are according to the law; and yet, notwithstanding this, God will not have them, nor accept of them.

Ver. 9. *Then said he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God, &c.*] See the note on ver. 7. *he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second*; the sense is, either that God has taken away, and abolished the law, that he might establish the Gospel; or he has caused the first covenant to vanish away, that place might be found for the second, or new covenant; or he has changed and abrogated the priesthood of Aaron, that he might confirm the unchangeable priesthood of Christ; or rather he has taken away that which was first spoken of in the above citation, namely, sacrifice, offering, burnt-offerings, and sin-offerings; these he has removed and rejected as insignificant and useless, that he might establish what is mentioned in the second place; namely, the will of God, which is no other

* T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 73. 4.

* T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 60. 1.

than the sacrifice of Christ, offered up according to the will of God, and by which his will is done.

Ver. 10. *By the which will we are sanctified, &c.*] That is, by the sacrifice of Christ, which was willingly offered up by himself, and was according to the will of God; it was his will of purpose that Christ should be crucified and slain; and it was his will of command, that he should lay down his life for his people; and it was grateful and well-pleasing to him, that his soul should be made an offering for sin; and that for this reason, because hereby the people of God are sanctified, their sins are perfectly expiated, the full pardon of them is procured, their persons are completely justified from sin, and their consciences purged from it: even through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; this is said, not to the exclusion of his soul; it designs his whole human nature, and that as in union with his divine person; and is particularly mentioned, in allusion to the legal sacrifices, the bodies of slain beasts, which were types of him, and with a reference to his father's preparation of a body for him, for this purpose, ver. 5. Moreover, his obedience to his father's will was chiefly seen in his body; this was offered upon the cross; and his blood, which atones for sin, and cleanses from it, was shed out of it: and this oblation was once for all; which gives it the preference to Levitical sacrifices; destroys the Socinian notion of Christ's continual offering himself in heaven; and confutes the error of the Popish mass, or of the offering of Christ's body in it.

Ver. 11. *And every priest standeth daily ministering, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, the Complutensian edition, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read, *every high-priest*; who might minister daily, if he would; but since the daily sacrifice was generally offered by the common priests, these are rather designed. The apostle passes from the anniversary sacrifices offered by the high-priest on the day of atonement, having shewn the insufficiency and imperfection of them, to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were offered morning and evening, and whatsoever else might be daily offered on other accounts; and which he also shews are equally ineffectual to take away sin; almost every word he uses shews the imperfection of the priesthood of Aaron, and serves to illustrate the priesthood of Christ. When he says *every priest*, it supposes there were more than one, as indeed there were many, not only in succession to one another, but together, having different parts of service to perform; and every one of them *standeth* at the altar, shewing that his work was not done; and the present tense is used, because sacrifice in fact had not ceased at the writing of this epistle, though of right it ought to have done; and he stood *daily ministering*; every day, and sometimes often in a day, and always morning and night, Exod. xxix. 38, 39. The priest always stood to minister, Deut. xviii. 5. Hence the Jews say⁴, there is no ministration or service, אֵילָא מַעֲמֵד, *but standing*: and perhaps some reference may be had to בעמדות, the *stations*⁵, or stationary men, who were always upon the spot at Jerusalem, to offer for such as were at a distance. *And offering oftentimes the same*

sacrifices; as a lamb in the morning, and another at evening; and if it was a burnt-offering, or a sin-offering, or an offering for the purification of a woman, or for the cleansing of the leper, they were always the same: and this frequent offering, and the offering of the same things, shew that they were such *which can never take away sins*: for notwithstanding these many and repeated offerings, even the sins of Old-Testament saints remained to be atoned for by Christ; see Rom. iii. 25. Heb. ix. 15.

Ver. 12. *But this man, &c.*] Jesus Christ, for he is a man, though not a mere man; or this great high-priest, who came to do the will of God, and whose body was offered once for all: *after he had offered one sacrifice for sins*; the sacrifice of himself, body and soul, and this but once: *for ever sat down on the right hand of God*; as having done his work effectually, and that with acceptance; and therefore is placed as a token of honour at the right hand of God, where he sits enjoying rest, ease, and pleasure, and that for ever; all which is opposed to the priests under the law; they were many, he but one; they offered many sacrifices, he but one; they offered theirs often, every day, he but once; they stood ministering, he sat down; his sacrifice being effectual to take away sin, when theirs was not.

Ver. 13. *From henceforth expecting, &c.*] According to God's promise and declaration to him, Psal. cx. 1. *Till his enemies be made his footstool*. See the note on ch. i. 13.

Ver. 14. *For by one offering, &c.*] The same as before; himself, body and soul; this is a reason why he is set down, and will continue so for ever, and why he expects his enemies to be made his footstool; because by one sacrifice for sin, which he has once offered, *he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; that is, who are sanctified by God the father, Jude 1. or, who are set apart by him in eternal election, from the rest of the world, for his own use, service, and glory, to a state of grace and holiness here, and happiness hereafter; for this is not to be understood either of their being sanctified in Christ, though the Syriac version reads, *that are sanctified in him*, or by his spirit, though both are true of the same persons; these Christ, by his sacrifice, has perfected, and has perfectly fulfilled the law for them; he has perfectly expiated their sins; he has obtained the full pardon of all their sins, and complete redemption; he has perfectly justified them from all things, and that for ever; which shews the continued virtue of Christ's sacrifice, in all generations, to all the elect of God, and the fullness and duration of their salvation; and so Christ by his one sacrifice did what the law, and all its sacrifices, could not do, ver. 1.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us, &c.*] In Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. This preface to the following citation shews that the books of the Old Testament are of divine original and authority; that the penmen of them were inspired by the Holy Ghost; that he existed in the times of the Old Testament; that he is truly and properly God, the Lord, or Jehovah, that speaks in the following verses; and that he is a distinct divine Person, and the author of the co-

⁴ Jarchi in Deut. xviii. 5. Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 16.

⁵ Misa. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 9.

venant of grace; and in what he says in that covenant, he bears testimony to the truths before delivered, concerning the insufficiency and abolition of legal sacrifices, and of full and perfect remission of sin, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ: *for after that he had said before*; what is expressed in the following verse.

Ver. 16. *This is the covenant that I will make with them, &c.*] See the note on ch. viii. 10.

Ver. 17. *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*] See the note on ch. viii. 12. The words are cited to a different purpose here than there; the principal thing for which they are cited here, is to observe God's promise of non-remembrance of sin; which is no other than remission of sin, and which is not consistent with legal sacrifices, in which there is a remembrance of sin every year, ver. 3. and consequently, since this new covenant has taken place, legal sacrifices must be abolished, as the apostle argues in the next verse. In one of Beza's copies are inserted, at the beginning of this verse, these words, *then he said*, which seem necessary to answer to the last clause of ver. 15.

Ver. 18. *Now where remission of these is, &c.*] That is, of these sins; and that there is remission of them, is evident from this promise of the covenant, just now produced; from God's gracious proclamation of it; from the shedding of Christ's blood for it; from his exaltation at the father's right hand to give it; from the Gospel declaration of it; and from the several instances of persons favoured with it: *there is no more offering for sin*; there may be other offerings, as of praise and thanksgiving, but none for sin; *there is no need*, as the Syriac version; or *there is not required*, as the Arabic version; there is no need of the reiteration of Christ's sacrifice, nor will he be offered up any more, nor of the repetition of legal sacrifices, nor ought they to continue any longer. The Jews themselves say*, that "in the time to come (*i. e.* in the "times of the Messiah) all offerings shall cease, but the "sacrifice of praise." And one of their writers says², when "the King Messiah, the son of David, shall reign, "there will be no need of כפרה, *an atonement*, nor of "deliverance, or prosperity, for all these things will "be had."

Ver. 19. *Having therefore, brethren, &c.*] As they were to the apostle, in a natural and civil sense, being Hebrews, as well as in a spiritual relation, being believers in Christ; which is observed, to testify his affection to them, and to engage their regard to the duties hereafter urged, particularly brotherly love, and to signify their common and equal right to the privilege next mentioned, which is *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*: the place saints have boldness to enter into is heaven, called *the holiest*, in reference to the holy of holies, in the tabernacle; which was a type of it, for the sacredness and invisibility of it, and for what was in it, went into it, or was brought thither; as the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, which resided there; the high-priest who went into it once a year; the blood of sacrifices which was carried into it; the sweet incense; the ark of the testimony, in which was the law; and the mercy-seat; all which were

typical of Christ, his person, blood, sacrifice, righteousness, intercession, and the grace and mercy which come through him. Heaven was symbolically shut by the sin of man, when he was drove out of the garden of Eden; it was typically opened by the entrance of the high-priest into the holy of holies, on the day of atonement; Christ has in person entered into it by his blood, and opened the way for his people; and believers in him may enter now, and they do, when they exercise grace on him, who is there, and when they come and present their prayers and praises to God by him; and they have now an actual right to enter into the place itself, and will hereafter enter in person; and the manner of their present entrance is, *with boldness*; which signifies their right unto it, the liberty granted them by God, and the liberty which they sometimes have in their own souls, and great courage and intrepidity of mind; which arises from a sense of remission of sins, as may be concluded from the connexion of these words with the preceding; and is found to be true by experience; and such boldness is consistent with reverence, humility, and submission. The way of entrance is *by the blood of Jesus*; and which gives both entrance and boldness; for hereby sin is removed both from the sight of God, and the conscience of the believer; peace is made with God, and spoken to him; pardon is procured, law and justice satisfied, and neither to be feared, and the everlasting covenant confirmed.

Ver. 20. *By a new and living way, &c.*] Which is Christ, the God-man and Mediator; who is called the *new way*, not as to contrivance, revelation, or use; for it was contrived before the world was, and was revealed to our first parents, immediately after the fall, and was made use of by all the Old-Testament saints; but in distinction to the old way of life, by the covenant of works; and because newly revealed with greater clearness and evidence; see ver. 8. and because it is always new, it never will be old, nor otherwise, there never will be another way: some render it, *a new slain way*; because Jesus was but newly slain, and his blood lately shed, by which the way is, and entrance is with boldness: and Christ is a *living way*; in opposition to the dead carcasses of slain beasts, and to the dead and killing letter of the law; Christ gives life to all his people; and all that walk in him, the way, live; and none in this way ever die; it leads to eternal life, and infallibly brings them thither: *which he hath consecrated for us*; either God the father, and so it intends the designation of Christ to be the way to life and happiness, and the qualification of him for it, by preparing a body, an human nature for him, and anointing it with the Holy Spirit, and the instalment of him into his priestly office, called a consecration, ch. vii. 28. or else Christ himself, and so designs his compliance with his father's will, and his devoting of himself to this service; his preparation of himself to be the way, by the shedding of his blood, and by his entrance into heaven, and by giving a clearer discovery of this way in the Gospel, by which life and immortality are brought to light: and this is done *through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*; the human nature of Christ, through which the way to heaven is opened, renewed, and con-

* Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1.

* R. Abendana Not. in Micol' Yophi in Psal. lxxiii. 80.

secrated, is compared to the veil of the tabernacle, Exod. xxvi. 31, 32, 33. the matter of which that was made, was fine-twined linen, which the Jews⁷ say was of thread six times doubled; which may denote the holiness of Christ's human nature; the strength, courage, and steadfastness of it, under all its sorrows and sufferings; and the purity and duration of his righteousness: the colours of it were blue, purple, and scarlet, which may signify the sufferings of the human nature; the preciousness of Christ's blood, and the dignity of his person, and his royalty; purple and scarlet being wore by kings: the veil was of cunning work, which may intend the curious workmanship of Christ's human nature, and the graces of the Spirit, with which it is adorned; and it was made with *cherubim*, pointing to the ministration of angels, both to Christ, and to his people. The pillars of it may signify the deity of Christ, the support of his human nature, in which it has its personal subsistence; and being of Shittim-wood, may denote his eternity: and being covered with gold, his glory: its hooks and sockets may be symbolical of the union of the two natures in him.

Ver. 21. *And having an high-priest over the house of God.*] The church of God, over which Christ is as prophet, priest, and King, and as the son and owner of it; see the notes on ch. iii. 6. and iv. 14. In the Greek text it is, a *great priest*; so the Messiah is called by the Targum on Zach. vi. 12. כהן גדול, a *great priest*, as he is; even a great high-priest, as in ch. iv. 14. and greater than Aaron, and any of his sons.

Ver. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, &c.*] Either to the holiest of all, into which the saints have boldness to enter; or to Christ the high-priest, who is entered there; or to the house of God, over which he is an high-priest; or rather to God himself, as on a throne of grace, on the mercy-seat in heaven, the most holy place: to *draw near* to him is a sacerdotal act, common to all the saints, who are made priests to God; and includes the whole of divine worship, but more especially designs prayer; to which believers are encouraged from the liberty and boldness they may have and use, of entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; from Christ's being the new and living way into it, and from his being an high-priest over the house of God: the manner of drawing near is, *with a true heart*; not with the body only, but with the heart principally; with a renewed one, one that is right with God, and is single and sincere, is hearty in its desires, and upright in its ends. *In full assurance of faith*; in God, Father, Son, and Spirit; without faith, drawing near to God can neither be acceptable to him, nor of service to men; and a full assurance of faith, with respect to the object drawn nigh unto, and of the way into him, and of acceptance with him through Christ, and of having the petitions put up to him granted, is very comfortable to believers, greatly becomes them, and is well-pleasing to God: *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*; which is blind, inactive, partial, stupid, or guilty; and 'tis the blood of Christ, which being sprinkled on it by the spirit of God, purges it from dead works, cleanses it from all sin, and speaks peace

and pardon to it; and such may draw near with freedom and boldness, with readiness and cheerfulness, and with reverence and godly fear: *and our bodies washed with pure water*; not baptismal water, but the grace of the spirit, which is often compared to water, in Scripture: the body, as well as soul, needs washing, and renewing; internal grace influences outward actions, which adorn religion, and without which bodies cannot be presented holy to God. The allusion is to a custom of the Jews, who were obliged to wash their bodies, and make them clean, when they prayed. So Aben Ezra observes on Gen. xxxv. 2. "that every Israelite, when he went to pray at a fixed place, was obliged to have נקי גופו, *his body pure*, and his garments pure." So a priest might not enter into the court for service, though clean, until he had washed himself all over²; and it is to sacerdotal acts that the reference is here.

Ver. 23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, &c.*] Either in the grace or doctrine of faith, or in the profession of both; see the note on ch. iv. 14. *For he is faithful that promised*; that is, God; and it is true of Father, Son, and Spirit; but God the Father may be more especially designed: he is a promising God, and is known to be so by his people; he is eminently and emphatically the Promiser; and all other promisers, and the promises made by them, signify little; but the promises of God are exceeding great and precious, very ancient, free, and unconditional, irrevocable and immutable, and are admirably suited to the cases of his people, and will be fulfilled every one of them: they include in them things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; things temporal, as that his people shall not want, that their afflictions shall work for good, and that he will support them under all their troubles; things spiritual, as that he will be their God, which takes in his everlasting love to them, and his gracious presence with them, and his protection of them; and that all grace shall be wrought in them, and every blessing of grace bestowed on them: and things eternal; as everlasting glory and happiness; the promise of eternal life was in God's heart, made in the covenant, and put into Christ's hands before the world began, and is declared in the Gospel: now God is faithful to all his promises, nor can he fail, or deceive; he is all-wise and fore-knowing of every thing that comes to pass; he never changes his mind, nor forgets his word; and he is able to perform, and is the God of truth, and cannot lie; nor has he ever failed in any one of his promises, nor will he suffer his faithfulness to fail; and this is a strong argument to hold fast a profession of faith.

Ver. 24. *And let us consider one another, &c.*] Saints should consider one another as men, that they are but men, of like passions and infirmities; they should consider their different tempers, and make allowance for them, and their outward state and condition in the world: they should consider one another as saints, partakers of the same grace; as that they are all loved with the same love, all conceived and brought forth in the womb of God's eternal electing grace, interested in

⁷ Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 14. Jarchi in Exod. xxvi. 1. Kimchi in Sepher Shorash, rad. קטן.

² Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3. Vid. Philo de Victimis Offerent. p. 548.

the same covenant, redeemed by the same blood, and have the same graces and privileges, and an equal right to glory; having one and the same spirit, the same grace of faith, the same righteousness, the same fountain to wash in, the same fulness to partake of, the same throne of grace to go to, and the same inheritance to enjoy: they should consider one another as church-members, the grace and gifts of one another, their different age and standing in the church, their relation to each other as brethren; they should consider them under suffering or sorrowful circumstances, under afflictions, temptations, desertions, declensions, and as attended with infirmities and sins: and the end of such consideration should be, *to provoke unto love*; to brotherly love, to stir it up, and stir up to it, which is apt to wax cold, that so it may be rekindled, and give a most vehement flame; for this is Christ's new commandment, the bond of perfection, the evidence of regeneration, that which makes the saints' communion comfortable and delightful, and without which a profession of religion is in vain. *And to good works*; not for justification before God, and in order to procure salvation; but that God may be glorified, the Gospel adorned, the mouths of gainsayers stopped, faith evidenced to the world, and gratitude to God for his benefits shewn, and for the profit and advantage of fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians.

Ver. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, &c.*] Or the episyagogue of one another; which word is used to distinguish Christian assemblies from Jewish synagogues, and to denote the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in one church-state, and to express the saints' gathering together to Christ; see 2 Thess. ii. 1. and their act of meeting together in some one place to attend his worship, word, and ordinances. Now to *forsake* such assembling, signifies a great infrequency in attending with the saints, a rambling from place to place, and takes in an entire apostacy. It is the duty of saints to assemble together for public worship, on the account of God, who has appointed it, who approves of it, and whose glory is concerned in it; and on the account of the saints themselves, that they may be delighted, refreshed, comforted, instructed, edified, and perfected; and on account of others, that they may be convinced, converted, and brought to the knowledge and faith of Christ; and in imitation of the primitive saints. And an assembling together ought not to be forsaken; for it is a forsaking God, and their own mercies, and such are like to be forsaken of God; nor is it known what is lost hereby; and it is the first outward visible step to apostacy, and often issues in it. *As the manner of some* is; or custom; and this prevailing custom among these Jews might arise from contempt of the Gentiles, or from fear of reproach and persecution: and in our day, this evil practice arises sometimes from a vain conceit of being in no need of ordinances, and from an over-love of the world, and from a great declension in the exercise of grace; the consequence of it is very bad. The Jews * reckon among those that go down to hell, and perish, and have no part in the world to come, דפרשים מרבי צבור, who separate from the ways of the congregation; that is,

who do not do the duties thereof, attend with it, and fast when that does, and the like: *but exhorting* one another; to prayer, to attend public worship, to regard all the duties of religion, to adhere to Christ, and a profession of him, and to consider him, and walk on in him: or *comforting one another*: by meeting privately together, and conferring about experience, and the doctrines of grace; and by observing to one another the promises of God, relating to public worship; and by putting each other in mind of the bright day of the Lord, that is coming on: *and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*; either of death, or the last judgment, or rather of Jerusalem's destruction; which at the writing of this epistle was near at hand; and was an affair that greatly concerned these Hebrews; and by various symptoms might be observed by them, as approaching; and which was no inconsiderable argument to engage them to a diligent discharge of their duty; unless the day of darkness, infidelity, and blasphemy in the last days of the world, should be intended, after which will succeed the latter-day glory.

Ver. 26. *For if we sin wilfully, &c.*] Which is not to be understood of a single act of sin, but rather of a course of sinning; nor of sins of infirmity through temptation, or even of grosser acts of sin, but of voluntary ones; and not of all voluntary ones, or in which the will is engaged and concerned, but of such which are done on set purpose, resolutely and obstinately; and not of immoral practices, but of corrupt principles, and acting according to them; it intends a total apostacy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy. *After that we have received the knowledge of the truth*; either of Jesus Christ, or of the Scriptures, or of the Gospel, or of some particular doctrine, especially the principal one, salvation by Christ; of which there may be a notional knowledge, when there is no experimental knowledge; and which is received not into the heart, but into the head: and whereas the apostle speaks in the first person plural, *we*, this is used not so much with regard to himself, but others; that so what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and be more readily received by them; when they observed he entertained no hard thoughts or jealousies of them, which would greatly distress the minds of those that were truly gracious. Moreover, the apostles use this way of speaking, when they don't design themselves at all, but others, under the same visible profession of religion, and who belonged to the same community of believers; see 1 Pet. iv. 3. Tit. iii. 3. Eph. ii. 3. compared with Acts xxii. 3. and xxvi. 5. Phil. iii. 6. Besides, these words are only hypothetical, and don't prove that true believers could, or should, or do sin in this manner: to which may be added, that true believers are manifestly distinguished from these persons, ver. 38, 39. *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*; meaning, not typical sacrifice; for though the daily sacrifice ought to have ceased at the death of Christ, yet it did not in fact until the destruction of Jerusalem; but the sacrifice of Christ, which will never be repeated; Christ will die no more; his blood will not be shed again, nor his sacrifice reiterated; nor will any other sacrifice

* T. Eab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuva, c. 2. sect. 6, 11.

be offered; there will be no other Saviour; there is no salvation in any other, nor any other name whereby we must be saved. These words have been wrongly made use of to prove that persons sinning after baptism are not to be restored to communion again upon repentance; and being understood of immoral actions wilfully committed, have given great distress to consciences burdened with the guilt of sin, committed after a profession of religion; but the true sense of the whole is this, that after men have embraced and professed the truths of the Gospel, and particularly this great truth of it, that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of men by his blood and sacrifice; and yet after this, against all evidence, all the light and convictions of their own consciences, they wilfully deny this truth, and obstinately persist in the denial of it; seeing there is no more, no other sacrifice for sin, no other Saviour, nor any salvation in any other way, the case of these men must be desperate; there is no help for them, nor hope of them; for by this their sin they shut up against themselves, in principle and practice, the way of salvation, as follows.

Ver. 27. *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, &c.*] Either of some outward visible judgment in this life, which sometimes falls on such persons; or of the particular judgment which immediately follows after death; or of the universal judgment, after the resurrection, and the dreadful sentence of condemnation which will then pass, and be immediately executed; and which will be done by Christ, and according to truth, and in strict justice; it is certain, and there will be no escaping it, for it will be general. Now there is in this life an expectation in men of a future judgment, and in wicked men it is a fearful one; it is dreaded by them, and more especially in such men before described, when their consciences are awakened; it is a very dreadful one, inexpressibly so: *and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries*; which is to be understood, not of the fire of purgatory, for this is after judgment, that is pretended to be before it; this devours, that only purges, according to the Papists; this is for adversaries, that, as is supposed, is for friends: but perhaps some fiery judgment, expressive of the wrath and indignation of God, such as befell Sodom and Gomorrah, the two sons of Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the men that rose up with Korah against Moses and Aaron: or rather the fire of hell, which is not corporeal and material, but is the wrath of God let down into the conscience; which shews the vile nature of sin, the strictness of God's justice, and the intolerableness of future punishment: and this is said to *devour the adversaries*; not only open ones, but secret, under-hand enemies, as the word here signifies; as such apostates are, before described, to God, and Christ, and the Spirit; to the Gospel, its doctrine, discipline, and ordinances; and to the children of God, and to the power of godliness in them: and with the fire of God's wrath they shall be devoured; not so as to be annihilated, but shall be eternally destroyed, both soul and body; that is, everlastingly punished, or punished with everlasting destruction.

Ver. 28. *He that despised Moses's law, &c.*] By breaking it wilfully, and presumptuously, for which

there was no sacrifice; meaning the law which Moses was the minister of, not the author; and it respects the whole body of laws given by him, from God; and is instanced in for the sake of the comparison between him and Christ, and between the law and the Gospel, and for the illustration of the case in hand. Now one that transgressed that law, either in whole, or in part, by denying it entirely, or by breaking any particular precept of it presumptuously, *died without mercy*; a corporeal death; there was no atonement nor sacrifice for him, nor pity to be shewn him, Deut. xiii. 8. and xix. 13. *Under two or three witnesses*; who stood by, or were present, as the Arabic version renders it, when the transgression was committed; or that *accused him*, as the Ethiopic version; that were witnesses against him, and plainly and fully proved the fact, Deut. xvii. 6. and xix. 15.

Ver. 29. *Of how much sorer punishment, &c.*] Than a mere corporeal death, which was the punishment inflicted on the transgressors of the law of Moses. *Suppose ye*; the apostle appeals to the Hebrews themselves, and makes them judges of what punishment *shall he be thought worthy*; who is described as follows: *who hath trodden under foot the son of God*: this seems to be a stronger expression than crucifying him again, ch. vi. 6. and is to be understood, not of what was in fact committed, but in will by persons; who, could they have had their will of him, would have pulled him from his throne, and trampled upon him: it is a phrase expressive of the utmost scorn, contempt, and ill usage; and which such are guilty of, who deny his deity, and eternal sonship; who render him useless in his offices, undervalue his sacrifice, despise his righteousness, and strip him of the glory of his person, office, and grace. And this is aggravated by his being the son of God who is thus used, who became the son of man for the sake of men, is superior to men, and equal with God: *and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; or common thing*; putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at most counting it *אין רכוש*, as *that of another man*; as the Syriac version renders it; yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable, as the blood of a very wicked man: this is aggravated by its being the *blood of the covenant*; of the covenant of grace, because that is ratified and confirmed by it, and the blessings of it come through it; and from sanctification by it: either of the person, the apostate himself, who was sanctified or separated from others by a visible profession of religion; having given himself up to a church, to walk with it in the ordinances of the Gospel; and having submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord's supper, and drank of the cup, *the blood of the New Testament, or covenant*; though he did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in the ordinance, but counted the bread and wine, the symbols of them, as *common things*; or who professed himself, and was looked upon by others, to be truly sanctified by the spirit, and to be justified by the blood of Christ, though he was not really so: or rather the son of God himself is meant, who was sanctified, set apart, hallowed, and consecrated, as Aaron and his sons were sanctified by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priest's

office: so Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, by which the covenant of grace was ratified, by the same blood he was brought again from the dead, and declared to be the son of God with power; and being set down at God's right hand, he ever lives to make intercession, which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish. This clause, *wherewith he was sanctified*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy: *and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace*; by denying his being, deity, and personality; despising his powerful operations as enthusiasm; treating his extraordinary gifts as illusions; and ascribing his miracles to Satan, and representing the Gospel dictated by him as a fable, or a lie: and this is aggravated by his being *the spirit of grace*: the author, giver, and applier of all grace to the saints; and who therefore ought not to be in the least slighted, but highly esteemed and honoured; nor will such affronts go unpunished.

Ver. 30. *For we know him that hath said, &c.*] That is, God, whom the apostle and the Hebrews knew; not merely by the works of creation and providence, but by the Scriptures, which they were favoured with, and by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles, and by which they knew his being, nature, and perfections; particularly, that what he said he was able to perform, and that he was true and faithful to every word of his, and to what he has said, Deut. xxxii. 35. *vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord.* Vengeance belongs to God, not as to the affection, as if there was any such passion in him; but as to the effect, there being that produced by him, which answers to the effect of such a passion among men, namely punishment: and punishment for sin belongs to God, against whom it is committed; and not to Heathen deities, one of which goes by the name of Vengeance, Acts xxviii. 4. nor to Satan, and his spiteful angels; nor to men, to exercise it in a private and personal way; though civil magistrates, being in God's stead, are allowed to exercise it in a public way, according to the laws of God: and there is good reason to believe, that what the Lord here says, *I will recompence, or revenge sin, shall be done*; which may be concluded from his hatred of sin; from his purity, holiness, and justice; from his faithfulness to his word; from his omnipotence; from the notice he takes of sin, in his own people, in a way of chastisement, and correction; and from the vengeance he has poured on his own son, as their surety. *And again*, in Deut. xxxii. 36. *the Lord shall judge his people*: such as are truly so, his chosen and covenant people, his redeemed and called ones; these he judges by chastising them in a fatherly way, that they may not be condemned with the world; and by governing and protecting them; and by vindicating and pleading their cause, and avenging them on their enemies: or else such as are only his people by profession; on these he'll write a *Lo-ammi*; he distinguishes them from his own, and judges between them and his people, and will condemn them; nor will their profession screen them from his wrath and vengeance.

Ver. 31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*] For this is to be understood not in a good sense; so in general all mankind may be said to fall

into, or be in the hands of God, as they are the work of his hands, the care of his providence, and are subject to his sovereignty; and in especial manner, believers, whose times and persons are in God's hand, which bespeaks his great affection for them, their nearness to him, the support they have by him, and protection from him; and they choose to fall into the hands of him as a chastising father, rather than into the hands of men, and at death commend themselves into his hands: but here it is taken in a bad sense, and signifies to be arrested by justice as a criminal, and be brought to the bar of God, and receive the sentence of condemnation; when such will feel the weight of his hand, and the fierceness of his wrath; and this is a *fearful thing*: it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of men, injured and affronted, and that have power, and will shew no mercy; it is very tremendous to fall into the hands of God, in the way of his judgments in this world; the apprehensions of a future judgment are terrible before-hand; and the apparatus of the judgment, when it comes, will be very striking and surprising; but to stand before the Judge, charged with sin, naked, and without a righteousness, speechless, and no one to speak in favour of them; to hear the dreadful sentence pronounced, and feel the wrath of God to the uttermost, how horrible must this be! the aggravations of this are, that it is into the hands of God that such fall, and not into the hands of men, or mere creatures; but of God, who is omniscient, and sees through all pretences; omnipotent, and none can rescue out of his hands by force; omnipresent, and so not escaping from him; just and faithful, and not to bribed, inexorable, immutable, and unalterable: and that he is *the living God*; in opposition to the lifeless deities of the Gentiles, and to mortal men; and is expressive of his eternity, and so of the duration of the sinner's punishment, that falls into his hands.

Ver. 32. *But call to remembrance the former days, &c.*] The words may be considered either as a declaration of what they had done, and be read, *but ye do call to remembrance, &c.* or as an exhortation to remember the days of their espousals, the times of their first conversion: and the apostle's design in this is, to mitigate the terror the preceding words might strike them with; and to aggravate the disgrace of turning back, when they had behaved so bravely in former times; and to encourage their faith and trust in God: *in which after ye were illuminated*, by the spirit of God, to see their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness, and their lost and miserable state by nature; and to behold Christ and salvation by him; and to have some light into the doctrines of the Gospel; and some glimmering of the glories of another world. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it *baptized*; now such as are converted, and are brought to make a public profession of their faith, and submit to the ordinances of Christ, are, in common, immediately called to suffer reproach and persecution of one kind or another; so Christ, after his baptism, was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil: Satan is spiteful and malicious, and God suffers afflictions to befall his people to try their graces, and to inure them to troubles betimes, as follows; *ye endured*

a great fight of afflictions; meaning some violent persecution from their own countrymen, either at the death of Stephen, in which the apostle, being then unconverted, was concerned himself; or rather some other time of trouble, after the apostle was converted, to which he seems to have respect in 1 Thess. ii. 14, 15. these Hebrews, being enlisted as soldiers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation, were quickly engaged in a warfare, and were called forth to fight a fight of afflictions, and a very great one; and which they endured with patience, courage, and intrepidity.

Ver. 33. *Partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, &c.*] Brought upon the stage or theatre, and made a spectacle to the world, angels, and men, 1 Cor. iv. 9. *both by reproaches and afflictions*; suffering both in their characters and reputations, and in their persons and substance: *and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used*; they maintained their communion with them, relieved them in distress, and sympathized with them.

Ver. 34. *For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, &c.*] When he was bound at Jerusalem, by the chief captain Lysias, with two chains, Acts xxi. 33. or when he was in bonds elsewhere; which they did by sympathizing with him in their hearts; by their prayers for him, and in their letters to him; and by sending presents to him for his relief and support. The Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, *had compassion on the prisoners*; or *them that were bound*; meaning prisoners in general, remembering them that were in bonds, as bound with them; or particularly such as were prisoners for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; and it may be some of them, which the apostle himself committed to prison, in his state of unregeneracy: *and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods*; the furniture of their houses, their worldly substance, of which they were stripped by their persecutors; and this they took quietly and patiently, yea, joyfully; rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer the confiscation of their goods for the sake of Christ: the reason of which joy was, *knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance*: that which is laid up for the saints in heaven is *substance*; it is signified by an house, a city, a kingdom; and so it is rendered here in the Ethiopic version; and by riches, true, glorious, and durable; and by a treasure and an inheritance: and this is *better* than any thing in this world; as to the quality of it, it being celestial; and as to the quantity of it, it being all things; and as to the place where it is, *in heaven*; though this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and as to the company with whom it is enjoyed, saints in light; yea, God himself is the portion of his people: and this is an *enduring* substance; it cannot be wasted by the saints themselves; nor taken away from them by others; nor can it decay in its own nature; and the saints will always endure to enjoy it: and this they may be said to *have*: it is promised to them, and prepared for them; they have a right unto it, and the earnest of it; and they have it already in Christ, their head and repre-

sentative; so that it is, upon all accounts, sure unto them: and this they *know in themselves*; from what they find and feel in their own hearts; from the sealing testimony and earnest of the Spirit, and from the promise of Christ, Matt. v. 10.

Ver. 35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence, &c.*] The same word is used here, as in ver. 19. where it is translated *boldness*; and may design here, as there, an holy boldness in prayer, free from a servile and bashful spirit; and which appears in a liberty of speaking to God, and in a confidence of being heard; prayer itself should not be left off, nor should freedom, boldness, and confidence in it be slackened, or laid aside: or else a profession of faith is intended, which ought to be free and open, bold and courageous, firm and constant; and which ought by no means to be let go and dropped: or the grace of faith in its full assurance, with respect to interest in God, as a covenant God and father, and in his love; and with respect to interest in Christ, and in his grace, and a right to the glorious inheritance, the better and enduring substance: and this shield of faith is by no means to be cast away; it was reckoned infamous and scandalous in soldiers to lose or cast away their shield; with the Grecians it was a capital crime, and punished with death^b; to which the apostle may here allude. There are two sorts of believers, nominal and real; and there are two sorts of faith; an historical one, which may be in persons destitute of the grace of God, and is in devils; and a true and unfeigned one, which has salvation connected with it; the former may be cast away and lost; the latter, though it may be remiss and weak in its exercise, yet it cannot be wholly and finally lost; and this exhortation may be designed as a means of continuing it, and of perseverance in it: the reason urging it follows, *which hath great recompense of reward*; freedom and boldness in prayer has its reward, for such that ask in faith shall have; and so has a firm and constant profession of religion, for he that endures to the end shall be saved; and so has a true and strong faith in Christ; everlasting salvation is connected with it; the reward of the inheritance follows upon it; and this reward is the recompense of God's own grace: and it is a very great one; it is the fruit of great love and grace; yea, it is no other than God himself, who is the exceeding great reward of his people; it is Christ and his glory, and the riches of it; it is a reward exceeding, and beyond all deserts of men, and beyond all thought and expression.

Ver. 36. *For ye have need of patience, &c.*] Not that they were destitute of the grace of patience; for where God is the God of all grace, he is the God of patience; and such, who are called by grace, are conformed to the image of Christ, and, among other things, are like him in this; and those who are born of the spirit, have the fruits of the spirit, and this, among the rest; to whom the word of God is effectual, this fruit is produced in them, that being the word of patience; and such who are brought into the kingdom of Christ, are also in the patience of Jesus; where there is one grace, there is every grace; saints are immediately called to sufferings and trials, which require

^b Alex. ab. Alexand. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 13.

patience; and, without this, there can be no enjoyment of a man's self: but the meaning is, that they needed the continuance, exercise, and increase of it; in general, to run the race set before them; to bear afflictions from the hand of God, and reproaches and persecutions from men; to wait for God, when he hides his face, and for answers of prayer, when they are deferred; and to bear up, and not to sink under temptations; and to live in the constant expectation of heaven and happiness: and, in particular, it is necessary for the following, *that after ye have done the will of God*: there is the purposing will of God, which is done by himself; and there is his revealed will, touching the salvation of men, which is done by his son; and there is his will of precept to be done by men; and which, when done aright, is done according to the rule of his word, in faith, from love, through the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of his spirit and grace, with a view to his glory, and without any dependence on what is done: and the will of God regards suffering, as well as doing; for to that the saints are also called, to which patience is necessary: *ye might receive the promise*; that is, of eternal life; not the promise itself, which they had received already, but the thing promised; which is the sense, in which this word is often used in this book, ch. vi. 12, 17. and xi. 13, 39. which is so called, to shew that it is not of works, for promise and merit do not agree together; but that it is of grace, and will certainly be enjoyed, but must be patiently waited for.

Ver. 37. *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, &c.*] That the person spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ, is evident from the prophecy in Hab. ii. 3. here referred to, and from the character of him that is to come, Matt. xi. 3. and from parallel places, Jam. v. 7, 8, 9. and this is to be understood, not of his coming in the flesh, for he was come in the flesh already; though Habakkuk indeed refers to his first coming, yet not to that only, but including his second coming also; but of his coming in his kingdom and power to destroy Jerusalem, and take vengeance on the Jews, for their rejection of him: the kingdom of Christ was at hand, when he began to preach; upon his ascension to heaven, it began to appear more visible; but still the temple was standing, and that worship continued, which stood in the way of the glory of his kingdom; during which time the saints suffered much: but in a little while from the writing of this epistle, he, who was to come, did come, even within about ten years after this, and shewed his power and his glory, in delivering his people, and destroying his enemies; see Matt. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1. It may be applied to his coming to help his people in time of need; the afflictions of the saints are many; they are all for an appointed time, and but for a while; and Christ has promised to come, and visit them; and which he does often, and speedily, and seasonably: it may also be accommodated to Christ coming to take his people to himself by death; Christ may be said to come in this sense, and he will certainly come; and this will be in a little while; man is but of few days;

death is certain, and should be patiently expected; and it may likewise be suitably improved, with respect to Christ's coming to judgment; that he will come is certain, from prophecies, particularly from the prophecy of Enoch, from his own words, from the testimony of angels, from the institution of the Lord's supper, till he comes, and from the general expectation of the saints; and this coming of his is desirable, because it will be the marriage of the Lamb, and the redemption of the saints, and because of the grace and glory that will be brought unto them, and because they shall then be for ever with him; and this will be quickly, in a little time, in comparison of the time that went before his first coming, and of the eternity that will follow after this; and though it may seem long, yet with God it is but a little while, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and however, since it is certain that he will come, and *will not tarry*, beyond the appointed time, patience should be exercised.

Ver. 38. *Now the just shall live by faith, &c.*] The just man is one not in appearance only, but in reality; not by his obedience to the law, but by the obedience of Christ; and he is evidently so by the spirit, and by faith: and he is one, who lives soberly and righteously; and the life he lives, and shall live, at present, is not eternal life; for though he shall live that life, yet this is not intended; for it is a living by faith that is spoken of, and as antecedent to the coming of Christ; but a spiritual life is meant, a life of justification in Christ, a life of communion with Christ, and a life of holiness from Christ, with peace, joy, and comfort through him: and the manner of this just man's living is *by faith*; not upon his faith, but upon Christ, the object of it; and by *his faith*, as in Hab. ii. 4. his own, and not another's; or by the faith of Christ: the Syriac version here renders it, *by the faith of myself*; that is, by the faith of Christ, who speaks, and who is the author and object of faith: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, *my just man shall live by faith*; and this life is to be *now*, in the mean while, until Christ comes, and because he will certainly come: *but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* The Hebrew word עֲבָרָה, used in Hab. ii. 4. and which, by the Septuagint there, and by the apostle here, is translated by υποσειληται, and rendered *draw back*, according to R. David Kimchi ^c signifies pride and haughtiness of heart; and, according to R. Sol. Jarchi ^d, it signifies impudence; R. Moses Kimchi ^e takes it to be the same with עָפַל, which is used for a tower, or fortified place; and thinks it designs one who betakes himself to such a place for safety from the enemy, and seeks not to God for deliverance: so that such a person seems to be designed, who swells with pride and confidence in his own righteousness; who betakes himself to some fortress of his own for safety; who withdraws from the assembly of the saints, through fear of reproach and persecution; who withholds the truth, shuns to declare it, or maintain a profession of it; plays the hypocrite, and deals deceitfully in religious things; and, in short, it may

^c In Hab. ii. 4.

^d In ib.

^e Apud R. David Kimchi in *ibid.* & in *Sepher Shorashim*, rad. עָפַל.

intend one, who finally and totally apostatizes from the doctrine of faith, and the profession of it: and in such persons God has no pleasure, never had, nor never will have; but, on the contrary, they are abominable to him, and will lie under his sore displeasure, and feel the keen resentments of it; such stand opposed to the just man, that lives by faith, walks humbly with God, in a dependence, not on his own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Christ, in which he is safe from condemnation, and secure of the divine favour; for drawing back is not supposed of the just man, but of any man, as we, with the Ethiopic version, rightly supply; and is to be understood of any one of the external professors of religion, who forsake the assembling of the saints, ver. 25. and is denied of the truly righteous in the following words.

Ver. 39. *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, &c.*] There is a drawing back which is not unto perdition; persons may be attended with much unbelief, may be very cold and indifferent to Gospel ordinances, may fall into great sins, and may greatly backslide, and yet be recovered, as David, Peter, and others: and there is a drawing back to perdition; when Christ is rejected as the alone Saviour; when he is not held to as the head; when false doctrines and damnable heresies are given into; and when men draw back, and never return, nor are they, nor can they be returned, and their apostasy is total, and final: but

true believers do not, and cannot draw back in this sense; because they are held fast in the arms, and with the cords of everlasting love, are chosen of God unto salvation, are given unto Christ, and secured in him; they are redeemed and purchased by him; they are united to him, and built upon him; they are interested in his prayers and preparations, and are his jewels, and his portion; they are regenerated, sanctified, inhabited, and sealed by the spirit of God, and have the promises and power of God, on their side. *But of them that believe to the saving of the soul: or of faith, to the salvation of the soul:* not of faith of miracles, nor of an historical faith; but of that faith, which is the faith of God's elect, is the gift of God, and the operation of his spirit; by which a soul sees Christ, goes to him, lays holds on him, commits all to him, and expects all from him: this stands opposed to drawing back; for by faith a man lives, walks, and stands; and with this is connected the salvation of the soul, as opposed to perdition; not as though it is a cause of salvation, but as a means of God's appointing to receive the blessings of salvation, and which is entirely consistent with the grace of God; and since salvation and faith are inseparably connected together, so that he that has the one shall have the other, it follows, that true believers can never perish. The nature and excellency of this grace is largely treated of in the following chapter.

C H A P. XI.

THE apostle having, in the preceding chapter, spoken in commendation of the grace, and life of faith, and of its usefulness to preserve from apostasy, proceeds in this to give some account of the nature and actings of it; and which he illustrates by the examples of many of the Old-Testament saints: he begins with a definition of it, which consists of two parts, ver. 1. and with an account of the usefulness of it to the elders in general, who by it obtained a good report, ver. 2. and of the service it is of in understanding the creation of the worlds, the author and original of them, ver. 3. and then goes on to give particular instances and examples of faith among the elders, or ancient believers, which are reduced into several classes; and the first is of the saints before the flood, Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Abel's faith lay in offering a more excellent sacrifice, than Cain, in obtaining a testimony from God that he was righteous, and in yet speaking, though dead, ver. 4. Enoch's faith is evidenced by his translation of God, that he should not see death, and by the testimony he received from him before it, that he was acceptable to him; by which it is clear he had faith, since, without it, it is impossible to please God; nor can any come aright unto him, without believing that he is, and has a gracious respect to all that diligently seek him, ver. 5, 6. Noah's faith was seen in preparing an ark, by the order of God, for the saving of his family, and in condemning the world by so doing, and by becoming an heir of righteousness through faith, ver. 7. The next class is that of the saints from the flood, to the times

of Moses, in which are Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Abraham's faith is celebrated for his obedience to the divine call, quitting the country where he was, and going he knew not where; and for his sojourning in the promised land, as in a strange one, in which Isaac and Jacob dwelt with him in tabernacles; and for looking by faith for the heavenly city built by the Lord; and for his offering up his son at the command of God, who was the son of promise, believing God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence he received him by faith, ver. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19. Sarah's faith lay in receiving strength through it to conceive, bear, and bring forth a child when past age, which was founded upon the faithfulness of a promising God; hence from Abraham, by her, sprung a large posterity, like the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea-shore, ver. 11, 12. Now all these patriarchs, both before and after the flood, as they lived by faith, they died in it; who, though they had not received the things promised, yet by faith saw them at a distance, were very well persuaded they would come to pass, and so, in some sense, enjoyed them; hence, whilst they lived, they lived like pilgrims and strangers, shewing that they had no regard to the country they came from, and had no mind to return thither, but sought another, a better, and an heavenly one; so that God is not ashamed to be called their God, he having prepared a city for them, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. Isaac's faith is commended in blessing his two sons with respect to things future, ver. 20. and Jacob's faith is well

spoken of for blessing both the sons of Joseph in his last moments, worshipping on the top of his staff, ver. 21. and Joseph's faith is instanced in two things; in making mention of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, as a certain thing; and in giving them strict orders to carry his bones along with them, when they went from thence, ver. 22. the third class of men, famous for faith, is that of such from the times of Moses to the judges, in which are the parents of Moses, Moses himself, the Israelites in general, and the harlot Rahab. The parents of Moses shewed their faith in hiding him three months, seeing him to be a lovely child, contrary to the king's edict, ver. 23. Moses's faith lay in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; in preferring afflictions to the pleasures of sin, and the reproach of Christ to the riches of Egypt; he having, by faith, a respect to the heavenly glory, another instance of it; and by forsaking Egypt, without fear of the king's displeasure, by faith seeing a King who is invisible; and by keeping the passover, with the sprinkling of blood, that so the destroyer of the first-born of Egypt might not touch the Israelites, ver. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. The instances of the faith of the Israelites are their passage through the Red sea, as on dry land, when the Egyptians, who attempted it, were drowned; and their compassing the walls of Jericho seven days, believing they would fall, as accordingly they did, ver. 29, 30. The faith of Rahab, the harlot, is commended for two things; for peaceably receiving the spies that came to her; and for the salvation she believed she should have, and had, when the unbelieving inhabitants of Jericho perished, ver. 31. And the last class of heroes for faith, includes the times of the judges, kings, prophets, and the Maccabees; the judges, kings, and prophets, are lumped together, and only a few of their names are observed as a specimen of the rest, the apostle not having time to mention every particular one, ver. 32. and various instances of faith, without reference to particular persons to whom they belong, are recorded; some which lay in doing things greatly heroic, and even miraculous, ver. 33, 34, 35, and others in suffering things the most cruel and torturing, and death itself in divers shapes, ver. 35, 36, 37, 38. And thus, by an induction of particulars, the apostle proves both his definition of faith, ver. 1. and the usefulness of it to the elders, ver. 2. they by it obtaining a good report, though they did not receive the thing promised, ver. 39. wherefore New-Testament saints have great encouragement, and much more reason, to exercise this grace; since God has provided for them the better thing he promised to others, that the one without the other might not be perfect, ver. 40.

Ver. 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, &c.*] The *faith* here spoken of is not a mere moral virtue, which is a branch of the law; nor a bare assent to any thing revealed, declared, and affirmed in the Gospel; nor a faith of doing miracles; nor an implicit one; nor a mere profession of faith, which sometimes is but temporary; nor the word or doctrine of faith; but that which is made mention of in the preceding chapter, by which the just man lives, and which has the salvation of the soul annexed to it: and it does not

so much design any particular branch, or act of faith, but as that in general respects the various promises, and blessings of grace; and it chiefly regards the faith of Old-Testament saints, though that, as to its nature, object, and acts, is the same with the faith of New-Testament ones; and is a firm persuasion of the power, faithfulness, and love of God in Christ, and of interest therein, and in all special blessings: it is described as *the substance of things hoped for*; and which, in general, are things unseen, and as yet not enjoyed; future, and yet to come; difficult to be obtained, though possible, otherwise there would be no hope of them; and which are promised and laid up; and in particular, the things hoped for by Old-Testament saints were Christ, and eternal glory and happiness; and by New-Testament ones, more grace, perseverance in it, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Now faith is the *substance* of these things; it is the ground and foundation of them, in which there is some standing for hope; in which sense the word *υποστασις* is used by the Septuagint in Psal. lxi. 2. The word of promise is the principal ground and foundation of hope; and faith, as leaning on the word, is a less principal ground; it is a confident persuasion, expectation, and assurance of them. The Syriac version renders it, the *certainty* of them; it is the subsistence of them, and what gives them an existence, at least a mental one; so with respect to the faith and hope of the Old-Testament saints, the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand, are spoken of, as if they then were; and so are heaven, and glory, and everlasting salvation, with regard to the faith and hope of New-Testament saints: yea, faith gives a kind of possession of those things before-hand, John vi. 47. Philo the Jew^e says much the same thing of faith; "the only infallible and certain good thing" (says he) is, that faith which is faith towards God; "it is the solace of life, *αληθινον χρησιν ελπιδων, the fulness of good hopes, &c.*" It follows here, *the evidence of things not seen*; of things past, of what was done in eternity, in the council and covenant of grace and peace; of what has been in time, in creation, and providence; of the birth, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; of things present, the being, perfections, love, &c. of God; of the session of Christ at God's right hand, and his continual intercession; and of the various blessings of grace revealed in the Gospel; and of future ones, as the invisible realities of another world: faith has both certainty and evidence in it.

Ver. 2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*] By whom are meant, not merely old men, or elders in age, but such who lived in ancient times; some before the flood, and to a great age, and others who were in office, civil or ecclesiastical, and were the ancestors and predecessors of the Hebrews; who in general obtained or received a good report from God; that they were the chosen of God, and were justified and accepted with him; that they were the children and friends of God, and should be glorified; and from men, from good men, for their faith and holiness; and from evil men, for their good works: and these also believed the report

of the Gospel, and gave a good report of God, and of the good land, and adorned their profession; particularly, Abel received a good report, that he was righteous; and Enoch, that he pleased God, and walked with him; and Noah, that he was a just man, perfect in his generation, and also walked with God; and Abraham, that he was a believer, a friend of God, and one that feared and obeyed him; and Job, that he was a man that feared God, and shunned evil; and Moses, that he was a meek man, and a faithful one; and David, that he was a man after God's own heart, and fulfilled his will; and so others: and they received this report by faith, and as a fruit of it; which shews that faith is no new thing, and that the character of a believer is an old and honourable one. The apostle mentions this, to take off the Hebrews from any esteem of their traditionary elders, who had got a name, not by their faith, but by their traditions; and to engage their imitation of men of antiquity, authority, and wisdom superior to them; and to let them know, unless they had the same faith with their ancestors, it would be a vain thing to boast of descent from them.

Ver. 3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, &c.*] The celestial world, with its inhabitants, the angels; the starry and ethereal worlds, with all that is in them, the sun, moon, stars, and fowls of the air; the terrestrial world, with all upon it, men, beasts, &c. and the watery world, the sea, and all that is therein: perhaps some respect may be had to the distinction of worlds among the Jews; see the note on ch. 1, 2. though the apostle can scarce be thought to have any regard to their extravagant notions of vast numbers of worlds being created: they often speak of three hundred and ten worlds, in all which, they say, there are heavens, earth, stars, planets, &c.^f; and sometimes of eighteen thousand^g; but these notions are rightly charged by Philo^h with ignorance and folly. However, as many worlds as there are, they are made by the *Word of God*; by Christ, the essential Word of God, to whom the creation of all things is ascribed in John i. 1, 2, 3. And this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who ascribe the creation of all things to the Word of God, as do the Targumistsⁱ, and Philo the Jew^k. And these are *framed* by the Word, in a very beautiful and convenient order; the heavens before the earth; things less perfect, before those that were more so in the visible world, or terraqueous globe; and things for men, before men, for whom they were; and it is by divine revelation and faith that men form right notions of the creation, and of the author of it, and particularly of the origin of it, as follows: *so that things which are seen*: as the heaven, earth, and sea, and in which the invisible things of God, the perfections of his nature, are discerned: *were not made of things which do appear*: they were not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing, out of which the rude and indigested chaos was formed; and from that invisible mass, covered with darkness, were all visible things brought into a beau-

tiful order; and all from secret and hidden ideas in the divine minds; and this also is the faith of the Jews, that the creation of all things is *אין*, *out of nothing*^l. There seems to be an allusion to the word *אין*, used for creation, which signifies to make appear a thing unseen; and is rendered in the Septuagint version by *δικαυρι*, Numb. xvi. 30. and *καταδικαυρι*, Isa. xl. 26. and xli. 20. *to shew, or make appear*; and thus God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unseen, Gen. i. 1, 2. *and created to make*, as in Gen. ii. 3. that is, made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are.

Ver. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, &c.*] The apostle proceeds to examples of faith, and begins with Abel: it may seem strange that Adam and Eve are not mentioned; this omission is not because they were not believers; but either because of the fall and ruin of mankind by them; or because the apostle speaks only of such who had received some eminent testimony by faith, and therefore passes by many believers, and hastens to Abraham, the father of the Jews. The superior excellency of Abel's sacrifice to Cain's, lay both in the matter, and in the manner of it; the one was offered heartily to the Lord, the other only in show; the one was offered in faith, the other not; Abel looked through his sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ, not so Cain. Abel's sacrifice was a lamb, a type of Christ, the Lamb of God; a firstling, a figure of him who is the first-born of every creature; one of the fattest of his flock, expressive of the excellency of Christ; and this was offered up at the end of days, as Christ at the end of the world; and the superior excellency of the sacrifice of the one to that of the other, appears from God's regard to the one, and not to the other, Gen. iv. 3, 4, 5. from whence it may be observed, that sacrifices were of divine institution, and were very early types of Christ; and that there always were two sorts of worshippers, spiritual and carnal ones, whom God can distinguish, for he seeth not as man seeth; that the acceptance of persons is in Christ, and is previous to their offerings; that whatsoever works do not spring from faith are unacceptable to God; that no dependence is to be had on birth-privileges, or outward actions; and that electing and distinguishing grace very early took place, and appeared. *By which he obtained witness that he was righteous*; not righteous by his offering, nor by his faith, but by the righteousness of Christ, which his faith in his sacrifice looked unto; though it was by his faith that he obtained, or received a witness in his own conscience, from the spirit of God, testifying that he was a justified person; and in consequence of this, he had an outward testimony bore to him in the Scriptures, that he was a righteous person; hence he is called righteous Abel, Matt. xxiii. 35. *God testifying of his gifts*: not of his own gifts, temporal or spiritual, but of Abel's gifts, which he offered to the Lord; that is, his sacrifices; of these he testified,

^f Misn. Okeztin, c. 3. sect. 12. Targum Jon. in Exod. xxviii. 30. Kethoreth Hassanum in Targum Jon. in Gen. fol. 4. 4. Lex. Cabal. p. 60, 61.

^g T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 9. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 50. 4.

^h De Opificio, p. 39.

^l Targum Onk. in Deut. xxxiii. 27. & Ben Uzziel in Isa. xlvi. 13.

^k De Opificio, p. 4. & Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 44.

ⁱ Tzeror Haminor, fol. 1. 1. Kethoreth Hassanum in Targ. Jon in Gen. fol. 5. 1, 2.

when he shewed respect either by an audible voice, declaring his acceptance of them; or by sending down fire from heaven, upon his sacrifice, which in after-times was a symbol of acceptance. *And by it, he being dead, yet speaketh*; good men die, and some of them die a violent death, as did Abel, yet he speaks in the Scriptures, which have a voice in them, Luke xvi. 29. or by his blood, which calls for vengeance; or rather by, or because of his faith, though he is dead, he *is yet spoken of*, as the word may be rendered.

Ver. 5. *By faith Enoch was translated, &c.*] Which is to be understood, not of a spiritual translation from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of Christ, as all converted persons are translated, and doubtless Enoch was; nor of a rapture, or removal from one part of the earth to another, or from one part of a country to another, as Philip was caught away by the spirit, after the baptism of the eunuch; but of a translation from earth to heaven; and not for a while only, as Paul was caught up to the third heaven; but as Elijah was, there to continue, and as the living saints will be at the last day; and this was a translation of him, soul and body, to heaven, to eternal glory and happiness, by a change from mortality to immortality, which passed upon him; and which is a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, and a proof of the Old-Testament saints knowing, expecting, and enjoying eternal life. And with this agrees the sense of some of the Jewish writers concerning this affair. Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his paraphrase on Gen. v. 24. has these words: "and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and behold he was not with the inhabitants of the earth, אֶתְנִיךְ, *he was translated*, and ascended to the firmament (or heaven), by the Word before the Lord." And the Jerusalem Targum to the same purpose; "and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and lo, he was not, for he was translated by the Word from before the Lord;" or by the Word of the Lord, which went out from him; for this translation was of God, as our apostle afterwards asserts. R. Eleazar says^m, "the holy blessed God took Enoch, and caused him to ascend to the highest heavens, and delivered into his hands all the superior treasures, &c." He is saidⁿ to be one of the seven which entered into paradise in their life; and some of them say^o, that God took him, בְּנֹחַ וּבְשׂוּל, *body and soul*; see the Wisdom of Solomon, iv. 10. and Eccl. xlv. 16. And this translation is said to be *by faith*; not through any virtue and efficacy in that grace to procure it; nor through faith, in that particular point; but God put an honour upon the faith of Enoch, and on him as a believer, this way. *That he should not see death*; meaning not a spiritual or moral death; nor an eternal one, though some have suggested this to be the sense; and which is favoured by the character some of the Jewish writers give of Enoch, which will be hereafter taken notice of; but a corporeal death, which he died not; to which agrees the Targum of Oukelos

on Gen. v. 24. "and Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord, and he was not, for the Lord, לֹא הָרְמִית, *did not kill him*, or cause, or suffer him to die:" though an exemplar of that paraphrase is cited^p, without the negative particle, thus, "and he was not, for the Lord killed him," or inflicted death on him: and it is the sense of several of the Jewish commentators, that he did die a common death, as Jarchi, Eben Ezra, and others; who by the phrase, *God took him*, understand death, for which they cite the following places, 1 Kings xix. 4. Ezek. xxiv. 16, 18. *and was not found, because God had translated him*; that is, he was not found among men, in the land of the living; he appeared no more there, for God had removed him from earth to heaven; so Elijah, after his rapture and translation, was sought for, but could not be found, 2 Kings ii. 16, 17. *for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God*: he did those things which pleased him; he walked with God before, Gen. v. 22, 24. which the Targumists explain by worshipping in truth, and walking in the fear of the Lord, which are things well-pleasing to God; he walked with God by faith in the ways of his worship and service; and he was acceptable to him in Christ; the same phrase is used in the *Wisdom of Solomon* iv. 10. and Eccl. xlv. 16. This testimony he received from God, from men, and in his own conscience, and which now stands in the sacred Scriptures, Gen. v. 24. Some of the Jewish writers very wickedly, and without any ground and foundation, give a different character of him; some of them say that he was a hypocrite, sometimes righteous, and sometimes wicked, and that the holy blessed God removed him, while he was righteous^q; and others^r, that allow him to be a righteous and worthy man, yet represent him as fickle and inconstant; and, therefore, God, foreseeing that he would do wickedly, and to prevent it, made haste, and took him away, by death, before his time: and which is not only contrary to what the apostle here says, but to the account of Moses, concerning him; from whence it appears, that he was a walker with God; that the course of his conversation was holy and upright; and which was the reason of his being taken, or translated; and which was an high honour bestowed upon him: and upon the whole, he has obtained a better testimony than those men give him.

Ver. 6. *But without faith it is impossible to please him, &c.*] Or do things well-pleasing in his sight; or any of the duties of religion, in an acceptable way; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances, or any good works whatever; because such are without Christ, and without his spirit; and have neither right principles, nor right ends: for this is not to be understood of the persons of God's elect, as considered in Christ; in whom they are well-pleasing to him before faith; being loved by him with an everlasting love; and chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world; see the note on Rom. viii. 8. *for he that cometh to God*; to the throne of his grace, to pray unto

^m Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 3.

ⁿ Derech Eretz Zuta, c. 1. fol. 19. 1.

^o Juchasin, fol. 134. 2.

^p In Tosaphuta in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. & in not. ad triplex Targum in Gen. v. 24. Ed. Hanov.

^q Bereshit Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 21. 3.

^r Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. a. 3. Jarchi in Gen. v. 24. Wisd. c. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14.

him, to implore his grace and mercy, help and assistance; to the house of God, to worship, and serve him, and in order to enjoy his presence, and have communion with him; which coming ought to be spiritual and with the heart; and supposes spiritual life; and must be through Christ, and by faith: wherefore such a comer to God, *must believe that he is; or exists*, as the Arabic version; and he must not barely believe his existence, but that, as it is revealed in the word: he must believe in the three Persons in the Godhead; that the first Person is the Father of Christ; that the second Person is both the Son of God, and Mediator; and that the third Person is the Spirit of them both, and the applier of all grace; for God the Father is to be approached unto, through Christ the Mediator, by the guidance and assistance of the Spirit: and he must believe in the perfections of God; that he is omniscient, and knows his person and wants; is omnipotent, and can do for him, beyond his thoughts and petitions; is all-sufficient, and that his grace is sufficient for him; that he is immutable, in his purposes and covenant; that he is true and faithful to his promises; and is the God of grace, love, and mercy: and he must believe in him, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as his covenant God and father in Christ: *and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*; who are such, as are first sought out by him; and who seek him in Christ, where he is only to be found; and that with their whole hearts, and above all things else: and, of such, God is a rewarder, in a way of grace; with himself, who is their exceeding great reward; and with his Son, and all things with him; with more grace; and, at last, with eternal glory, the reward of the inheritance.

Ver. 7. *By faith Noah, being warned of God, &c.*] In the Greek text, Noah is called *Noe*, and so the Septuagint interpreters of the Old Testament call him; but Josephus calls him *Noeos*: or *having received an oracle from God*; in which he was admonished, how to make an ark, as Moses was, in like manner, how to make a tabernacle, ch. viii. 5. This oracle or warning is extant, in Gen. vi. 13—22. and it was of things not seen as yet; as the universal deluge; the building of an ark or ship, which was the first that ever was in the world; the entrance of all creatures into it; their preservation in it, and the destruction of all without it: and this divine warning, or oracle, concerning things of such a nature, delivered to Noah, and received by him, shews that he was a favourite of God; that his faith rested in the word of God; and that it agreed with the apostle's definition of faith, ver. 1. *moved with fear*; not with a fear of his own damnation; nor with a distrust of the salvation of himself and his family in the ark; but with an awful sense of the judgments of God upon the wicked; and with reverence of God, from whom he received the oracle; and with a religious fear, with which he worshipped God, and which he discovered by a regard to his word and ordinances; and which fear does not arise from nature, but from grace; and is increased by the discoveries of divine love; and is consistent with faith, goes along with it, and is a fruit of it: hence he *prepared an ark for the saving of his house*. Immediately, and without delay, he set about the building of the ark, and made

it exactly according to the pattern which was given him; and his end in it was to secure his family, himself and his wife, his three sons and their wives, from the flood, which he believed would shortly come upon the world, according to the word of God; and in this his faith was seen: and from hence it may be observed, that, though God can save without means, yet, generally speaking, it is his will to save by them; and that as God saved Noah and his family in the waters, so he can, and does, save his people in afflictions; and also, that true faith is attended with obedience: *by the which he condemned the world*: the inhabitants of the world, the world of the ungodly: as a preacher, he declared they would be condemned, in case of impenitence and unbelief; and his words heard, and his actions seen by them, were aggravations of their condemnation; for by his works, as well as by his words, he reprov'd, and condemned them; by building the ark, as he declared his own faith, so he condemned their unbelief; see the note on Matt. xii. 41. *and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*; not of the law, but of the righteousness of Christ, and of eternal life through that; for he was not only heir of this world, as Abraham, but of that which is to come; and not through works of righteousness done by him, but through the righteousness of Christ received by faith, or through faith in Christ, the antitype of the ark.

Ver. 8. *By faith, Abraham, when he was called, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, *by faith he who was called Abraham*: but this call is not to be understood of his name; for though his first name Abram might be given him, in the faith of his being a great man, and his second name Abraham, when he himself was a believer; yet this change was made some years after the call referred to; which is that in Gen. xii. 1. when he was called out of his own country, kindred, and father's house; which was an emblem of the call of God's people out from among the men of the world, and from their friends, relations, and acquaintance, and even out of themselves; and, as Abraham was called from *Ur* of the Chaldees, so they from darkness, bondage, idolatry, and communion with wicked men; that, as he, they might not perish with idolaters, being chosen vessels, and for whom God has peculiar blessings in store: and so the grace of God is seen in calling them, without any respect to their deserts, as in calling Abraham: and the care and goodness of God may be observed, in raising up fit instruments to propagate his cause and interest. Now Abraham, being called to *go out into a place*; from *Ur* of the Chaldees, to the land of Canaan; *which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance*: not in his own person, but in his seed and posterity, unless after the resurrection, in the New Jerusalem church-state, and which inheritance was typical of heaven; *obeyed the divine call*; and which was a fruit and evidence of his faith, and may be called the obedience of faith: *and he went out, not knowing whither he went*: for though he went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came, Gen. xii. 5. yet, when God called him to go forth, and he prepared to obey his call, he knew not what land he was to go into; for it is only said, Gen. xii. 1. *unto a land that I will shew thee*: upon which words a Jewish commen-

tator' has this note; "he (God) did not immediately "make known the land unto him, that so it might be "lovely in his eyes;" and it is, elsewhere, said by the Jews¹, that Abraham "came from Aspamia (*i. e.* Mesopotamia), and its companions, לָמָּא דִּידָּע דִּיכִן, "and he knew not where he was, as a man that is in the "dark;" all which agrees with our apostle: and, from hence, it may be observed, that God sometimes leads his people in ways they have not known, though they are known to him, and are always right; and that it is the property of faith to follow God, when it cannot see its way; and a great mercy it is to have God for a guide. This also shews, that Abraham's faith agrees with the apostle's definition of it, ver. 1.

Ver. 9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, &c.*] The land of Canaan, so called, because it was promised to Abraham and his seed; and is typical of heaven, which is not by the works of the law, but by the free promise and grace of God: here Abraham sojourned for a while, *as in a strange country*; which was not his native place, and not his own, but another's; see Acts vii. 5. and an idolatrous one; here he sojourned by faith, believing that as it was promised, it would be given to him, and his seed: so all God's people are sojourners in this world, strangers and pilgrims in it; this is not their dwelling-place; they do not belong to it, but to another; their stay in it is but for a while; and, whilst they are in it, don't look upon themselves at home, but are looking out for another, and better country; they are unknown to the men of the world, and the men of the world are strangers to them; though they have a civil conversation with them, they separate from them, both as to profaneness and superstition, and live by faith, in the expectation of the heavenly country, as Abraham also did: *dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise*; the same promised land, the same promised blessings, and the same promised seed, the Messiah; see Gen. xii. 3. and xxvi. 3. 4. and xxviii. 13, 14. with these Abraham dwelt, for he lived until Isaac was seventy-five years of age, and Jacob fifteen; he was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, Gen. xxi. 5. and he lived one hundred and seventy-five years, Gen. xxv. 7. and Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born, Gen. xxv. 26. and Abraham dwelt with them in tabernacles, or tents, which they pitched at pleasure, and moved from place to place. So true believers, as they are Abraham's seed, they are heirs with him, according to the promise; and are heirs together of the grace of life; and dwell in earthly tabernacles, in houses of clay, which are erected for a while, and then taken down.

Ver. 10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, &c.*] Not the city of Jerusalem, nor the Gospel church-state; but either the city of the new Jerusalem, said to have twelve foundations, Rev. xxii. 14. and in which glorious state, Abraham, with the rest of the saints, being raised from the dead, will in person possess the promised land; or else the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, where God dwells, and keeps his palace; and which will be the dwelling-place of the saints, and will have in it many habitations; and

which will be both peaceable and safe, and full of glory, riches, joy, and pleasure; and into which none but holy and righteous persons will enter; the foundations of which are the everlasting love of God, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the promise and preparation of it by God, from the foundation of the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood and righteousness; which shew the immovableness of it, it being opposed to the tabernacles Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt in, and to the transitory enjoyments of th's world: and for this sure, immovable, and comfortable state of things, Abraham was *looking* by faith; he looked through, and above temporal things, to spiritual things; he went through difficulties with cheerfulness, did not greedily covet earthly things, but looked with disdain upon them, and to heaven with faith, affection, and earnest desire; and this proves his faith to be, as that is defined, ver. 1. *whose builder and maker is God*: God the father has prepared this glory from the foundation of the world, and has promised it before the world began, and has chosen his people to it; the Spirit of God makes it known, and prepares them for it; and the Lord Jesus Christ is the forerunner entered, who is gone to get it ready for them, and will put them into the possession of it: this shews the superior excellency of this city, or glorious state; and that God has the sole right to dispose of it.

Ver. 11. *Through faith also Sarah herself, &c.*] Some copies add *being barren*; and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; which is a circumstance which makes her faith appear the greater: but it is a question whether the apostle speaks of the faith of Sarah, or of Abraham; some think he speaks of Abraham's faith; and that it was through his faith that Sarah conceived; and observe, that the last clause may be rendered, *because he judged him faithful, &c.* and the rather, because the apostle, both before and after, is speaking of Abraham's faith, ver. 8, 9, 10, 17. and in ver. 12. mention is made only of one, even of Abraham; and in Rom. iv. 17. only notice is taken of Abraham's faith, respecting this matter; nor is Sarah's faith observed in the history of it, but her diffidence: but why may not Sarah be joined with Abraham, in this commendation, as well as Isaac and Jacob? and though, at first, she distrusted, yet she afterwards feared, and believed: other women are mentioned in this catalogue of believers; and they share in the same grace and privileges as men: and Sarah, being a believer, as well as Abraham, *received strength to conceive seed*: sometimes *strength* itself signifies *seed*, as in Prov. xxxi. 3. and so to receive strength is to receive seed; which the female does from the male; hence that saying of the Jews¹, the male does not receive strength from another, but the female תְּקַבֵּל כֹּחַ, *receiveth strength* from another; but here it is to be understood of receiving power from God to retain seed, received from men, and conceive by it; which Sarah, in her circumstances, without the interposition of the almighty power, could never have done. The nymph Anobret is so called, in imitation of this conception of Sarah's; or as she is called in the Phœnician language, זֶן עֵבֶרֶת, which signifies *conceiving by grace*:

¹ Jarchi in Gen. xii. 1.

² Bercshit Rabba, sect. 60. fol. 52. 2.

¹ Captutor, fol. 21. 2.

as this conception must be entirely ascribed to the power and grace of God: *and was delivered of a child when she was past age*; of bearing and bringing forth children, being ninety years of age, Gen. xvii. 17. Now though the conception, bearing, and bringing forth of children are things natural, ordinary, and common, yet here was a particular promise respecting this matter; and there were great difficulties in nature attending it, and such as to reason were insuperable; but these were got over, through the power and grace of God, and which is ascribed to faith in the faithfulness of a promising God: *because she judged him faithful who had promised*; that she should have a son at the time of life; see the note on ch. x. 23.

Ver. 12. *Therefore sprang there even of one, &c.*] That is, Abraham: the Arabic version has here a strange interpolation; "this faith Isaac and Rebecca conceived in mind, and so there were born of one, Esau and Jacob." *And him as good as dead*; being an hundred years of age; see the note on Rom. iv. 19. The Ethiopic version reads, *the bodies of both were like a dead carcass*; both of Abraham and Sarah: so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable; as was promised to Abraham, Gen. xv. 5. and xxii. 17. which has been fulfilled, Isa. x. 22. and will still have a further fulfilment, Hos. i. 10.

Ver. 13. *These all died in faith, &c.*] Not all the seed of Abraham, but all the believers in the preceding verses, excepting Enoch, particularly the three patriarchs, with Sarah; these died a corporeal death, which is common to all, to the righteous, and to the wicked; and yet saints die not as other men; they die in faith, having the grace itself, which being once implanted, can never be lost; and sometimes in the exercise of it, as these believers did: they died in the faith of their posterity inheriting the land of Canaan, and in the faith of the promised Messiah, and in the believing views of the heavenly glory; and so to die is comfortable to themselves, and a confirmation of the truth of religion to others, and is very precious, desirable, and gainful. It may be rendered, *according to faith*: they died according to the life of faith they lived, and the doctrine of faith they professed, being the Lord's both living and dying. *Not having received the promises*; the things promised, the land of Canaan, the Messiah, and the blessings of the Gospel dispensation; they had the promises of these things, and though they were not fulfilled in their days, they believed they would be fulfilled, and died in the faith of them: *having seen them afar off*; the things themselves in the promise; as Abraham saw the going forth of his posterity out of Egypt, after they had been afflicted four hundred years, and saw the day of Christ at a greater distance still, Gen. xv. 13, 14. John viii. 56. *And were persuaded of them, and embraced them*; they had a full assurance of faith, that what was promised would be fulfilled; and they took a kind of possession of them before-hand, as Abraham did of the land of Canaan, by sojourning in it; as did also Isaac and Jacob; and all of them by faith embraced the Messiah, and dealt with, and laid hold upon his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and grace, by which they were saved, as New-Testament saints are. *And confessed that they*

were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; for they sojourned in the land of Canaan, as in a strange land, as the saints do in this world; see ver. 9. And they were pilgrims, travelling through this world to the heavenly country, and they confessed themselves to be such, Gen. xvii. 9. nor are believers ashamed to own and confess their mean estate in this world; for it is only with respect to earth, and earthly things, that they are strangers and pilgrims, and only whilst they are on earth; and it is therefore but for a little time that they are so, ere long they'll be at home, and know as they are known.

Ver. 14. *For they that say such things, &c.*] That they are strangers and pilgrims on earth: *declare plainly that they seek a country*; heaven, so called, for the largeness of it; it is a good land, a land of uprightness; a pleasant land, a land of rest, though a land afar off; here the Father of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his people dwell: the Syriac version renders it, *their own city*; the place of their nativity, of which they were citizens: the act of *seeking* it supposes some things, with respect to the place where they were, as that they were in a strange land, had no settlement there, nor satisfaction in it, and that they sat loose to the world, and the things of it; and some things respecting the country sought after, as that they were not in it; that it was at a distance from them; that they had some knowledge of it, and of the way to it; that their desires were after it, and that they had a strong affection and value for it: the right way to this country is not mere civility and morality, nor legal righteousness, nor birth-privileges, nor submission to outward ordinances, nor a mere profession of religion, but the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the true way to eternal life; it is his righteousness which gives a title to it, and on account of which believers expect it, though not without holiness, nor without trouble. The right manner of seeking it is, in the first place, above all things else, with the whole heart, by faith, and by patient continuance in well-doing. Many are the reasons which may induce believers to seek it; it is their own, and their father's country; it is a better one than that in which they are; and because of the company they shall there enjoy, and the work they shall be employed in; and because of the happiness they will be possessed of; and because their inheritance, riches, and treasures, lie here.

Ver. 15. *And truly if they had been mindful of that country, &c.*] Chaldea, which was Abraham's country: *from whence they came out*; as Abraham and Sarah did, in person, and their posterity in them: *they might have had opportunity to have returned*: for the way from Canaan or Egypt, where they sojourned, was short and easy: and though Abraham sent his servant thither to take a wife for his son Isaac, yet he would not go thither himself, nor suffer his son; nay, made his servant swear that he would not bring him thither, if even the woman should refuse to come; so unmindful was he of that country; so little did he regard it; yea, so much did he despise it: so when men are called by grace, and converted, they come out of a country, this world, which is a land of sin and iniquity, of great folly and ignorance, of darkness, and of the shadow of death; a desert, a mere wilderness;

a country where Satan reigns, full of wicked and ungodly men; and which is the land of their nativity, as to their first birth: and they may be said to come out of it, not in a natural and civil sense, but in a spiritual one; and it is the character of a converted man, or one that is come out of the world, and is separated from it, to be unmiudful of it; not so as not to consider from whence he came out, as owing to rich grace; nor so as not to lament the iniquities of it; nor so as not to pray for the conversion of the inhabitants of it; but he is unmiudful of it, so as to be desirous of the company of the men of it, or to have the affections set upon it, and the heart tickled with the pleasures of it, or so as to desire to return to it, for which there is a great deal of reason: for this country is not worth minding; and there is much in it to set a gracious mind against it; a good man has better things to mind; and it is below, and unworthy of a Christian, to mind the world; and besides, worldly-mindedness is attended with bad consequences. Moreover, though the saints have opportunities of returning, yet they do not; they are near it, and the country they are seeking is afar off: many things in it are alluring and ensnaring; a corrupt and deceitful heart often lingers after them, and Satan is not wanting to tempt unto, and by them. And yet they do not return; some that bear the name of Christians, but are not truly such, may wholly return, and never come back more; and true believers may strangely go back again in some instances; but they shall not return finally and totally: for they are held and drawn with the cords of love; they are in the hands of Christ, and are secured in the covenant of grace; they are returned to Christ, in effectual vocation, who will keep them; they are of the household of God, and shall be no more foreigners; should they return in such sense, they would be condemned with the world, which cannot be.

Ver. 16. *But now they desire a better country, &c.* Which is not to be understood of the then present time, in which the apostle wrote; for the patriarchs, of whom he speaks, were not then on earth, nor in any third place between heaven and earth; they were then in heaven; and though there are indeed in heaven desires after perfect happiness, in soul and body; yet this intends the desires of these saints when on earth, and which are common to all believers in the present state of things; who, as the patriarchs desired a better country than Chaldea, or even Canaan itself, so they desire a better country than this world; and such is heaven: it is on high; here are no noxious and pestilential vapours, no mists or fogs beclouding, no storms and tempests, but it is full of light and glory; having the delightful breezes of divine love, and the comfortable gales of the blessed Spirit; here's no heat of persecution, nor coldness, nor chills of affection; here is plenty of most delicious fruits, no hunger nor thirst; and here are riches, which are solid, satisfying, durable, safe and sure: many are the liberties and privileges here enjoyed; here's a freedom from a body subject to diseases and death, from a body of sin and death, from Satan's temptations, from all doubts, fears, and un-

belief, and from all sorrows and afflictions; the inhabitants of it are the spirits of just men made perfect, angels, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and Christ in human nature; upon all which accounts it is abundantly the better country, and as it is explained, *that is, an heavenly*; an inheritance in heaven, an house eternal in the heavens, the kingdom of heaven; and it is no wonder that it should be desired by such who know it, and the nature of it: the word denotes a vehement desire; and it is such, that the saints desire to depart from this world, and go unto it; which shews that they are weaned from this, and have seen something glorious in another. Remarkable is the saying of Anaxagoras^u, who, when one said to him, hast thou no regard to thy country? answered, I have, and that the greatest, pointing with his fingers towards heaven; and, says Philo the Jew^w, the soul of every wise man has heaven for his country, and the earth as a strange place: *wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God*; their covenant God and father; see the note on ch. viii. 10. even though he is the God of the whole earth; *for he hath prepared for them a city*; in his council and covenant, and by his son; see the note on ver. 10. This proves that he is not ashamed of the relation he stands in to them, since he has made a provision for them to dwell with him to all eternity.

Ver. 17. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, &c.* Or tempted; that is, by God, Gen. xxii. 1. This temptation or trial respects the command given by God to Abraham, to offer up his son Isaac; which lays no foundation for a charge against God, either of sin or cruelty; for God's will is the rule of justice and goodness, and whatever he requires is just and good; and though his creatures are bound by the laws he prescribes them, he himself is not: besides, he is the Lord of life, the giver and preserver of it; and he has a right to dispose of it, and to take it away, when, and by what means, and instruments, he thinks fit; to which may be added, that the secret will of God was not that Isaac should die, but a command was given to Abraham to offer him up, for the trial of his faith and love; this was a temptation of probation, not of seduction, or to sin, as are the temptations of Satan; for God tempts no man with sin. The Jews speak^x of ten temptations, with which Abraham was tried, and in all which he stood; and say, that this of the binding of Isaac was the tenth and last. *Offered up Isaac*: he shewed great readiness to do it; as soon as he had the command given him, he travelled three days' journey in order to it; took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on his son; took fire, and a knife in his hand, with the one to burn the wood, with the other to slay his son; he built an altar, laid the wood in order on it; and bound his son, and laid him on that; and took the knife, and stretched forth his hand to slay him, and fully intended to do it, had he not been prevented: and all this he did by faith; he believed the equity, justice, and wisdom of the divine command; he was fully assured of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, however contrary this might seem thereunto; and he was strongly persuaded

^u Laert. in Vit. Anaxag. p. 99.

^w De Agricultura, p. 196. Vid. ib. de Confus. Ling. p. 331.

^x Targum in Cant. vii. 9. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. & c. 31. Maimon. Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Abot, c. 5. sect. 3.

of the power of accomplishing them in some way or another. This was great faith, and it was greatly tried, as follows: *and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son*; he had a promise made him that he should have a son, and that a numerous issue should spring from him, which should inherit the land of Canaan; yea, that the Messiah himself should be of his seed: and he had received these promises; given credit to them, and firmly believed them, and fully expected the performance of them; as he had reason to do, since the first was fulfilled, the son was born; and yet now he is called to offer him up, on whom his expectation was placed; every thing was trying; it was an human creature he was called to offer, whose blood is not to be shed by man; a child of his own, a part of himself; a son, an own son; an only-begotten son; a son whom he loved; an Isaac, a son of joy; a son of promise; and his heir, the son of his old age, and who was now a grown-up person. The Jews are divided about the age of Isaac at his binding: Josephus ⁷ says he was twenty-five years of age; others say twenty-six ⁸; some say ⁹ thirty-six: but the more prevailing opinion is ¹⁰, that he was thirty-seven years of age; only Aben Ezra makes him to be about thirteen; rejecting the more commonly received account, as well as that he was but five years old, that being an age unfit to carry wood. Some Christian writers have thought he might be about three-and-thirty years of age, the age of Christ when he suffered, of whom he was a type.

Ver. 18. *Of whom it is said, &c.*] That is, of Isaac, Abraham's own son, whom he offered up; or rather, to whom it was said, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; that is, to Abraham, for to him was this said, Gen. xxi. 12. *that in Isaac shall thy seed be called*: that numerous natural seed of his, which should inherit the land of Canaan; and his special famous seed, the Messiah, to whom the promises were made; see the note on Rom. ix. 7.

Ver. 19. *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, &c.*] Abraham did not go about this affair without thought; and yet he did not consult with flesh and blood; his reasoning was the reasoning of faith; and the conclusion of it was, not that he believed that God would raise his son from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at first, as it were, from the dead; he sprung from his own dead body, and out of Sarah's dead womb; and though his faith did not prescribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raise his son from the dead, rather than that his promise should fail; and this conclusion proceeded upon the power and faithfulness of God: *from whence also he received him in a figure*; or for an example of faith and obedience; or for a parable or proverb, that such a proverbial expression might be made use of, for the comfort and encouragement of saints in distressed and difficult circumstances, as is in Gen. xxii.

14. or as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, whose type he was in other things, as well as in this; as in his birth, and the circumstances of it; he was long promised and expected, as Christ was; his birth was beyond the ordinary course of nature, and attended with great joy; he was circumcised the eighth day; at his weaning a great feast was made, typical of the Gospel feast; and as he was persecuted by Ishmael, so was Christ by Herod, in his infancy: and he was a figure of him in his oblation; they were both sons of Abraham; both only-begotten and beloved sons; both heirs; both carried the wood on which they were offered; both were offered on a Mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were spared; and both by the command of God, and alone, none were with them: and Isaac prefigured him in his deliverance; Abraham stretched out his hand, but was restrained, and not a bone of Christ must be broken: not Isaac, but the ram was slain, not the divine, but the human nature suffered; both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death; and both returned to their father's house. Moreover, Abraham received his son in the similitude of a resurrection; it was as life from the dead; it was like the return of the prodigal, Luke xv. 32. Abraham looked upon him as dead to him, and Isaac thought himself a dead man; so that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. The Jews speak of this matter agreeably to the apostle; they say, a man has two breaths or souls, one in this world, and another in the world to come; and of Isaac they say ¹¹, that "in the time that he was offered upon the altar, his soul (or breath), which he had in this world, went out; and when it was said to Abraham (or by him) blessed be he that quickeneth the dead, his soul (or breath), which he had in the world to come, returned to him—for אַתְּדוֹשׁ כַּבֵּת, he was accounted as dead." They speak of him as if he was just dead; they say ¹², "when he saw the sword over his neck, his breath fled from him, and came to the place of the soul, כְּאִילוֹ דוּדָה, as if he was at the point of giving up the ghost." So that a Jew can't find fault with the apostle for expressing himself in this manner.

Ver. 20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, &c.*] The history of this is in Gen. xxvii. 33—39. The former of these was a good man, and, though the youngest son, he is set before, and was blessed before the eldest; and the latter was a wicked man, and yet had a blessing; for temporal blessings are enjoyed in common: and this blessing was prophetic, it was concerning things to come. Jacob's blessing was plenty of temporal things, and under which may be signified the dews of divine grace, the fatness of God's house, the bread of life, and wine of divine love, which true Israelites partake of; also dominion over his brother, and government over nations, which had their accomplishment in his posterity; and may be expressive of the spiritual reign of the saints, and their dominion, by

⁷ Antiqu. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 2.

⁸ Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 1.

⁹ Targum Jon. in Gen. xxii. 1.

¹⁰ Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 2. & 74. 4. & 76. 2. Targ. Hieros. in Ex. xii. 42. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Juchasin, fol. 9. 1. Prefat. Echa

Rabbati, fol. 40. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3. Shalshelet Hakkabala, fol. 3. 1.

¹¹ In Gen. xxii. 4.

¹² Tosaphtha in Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 21.

¹³ Tzeror Hammor, fol. 52. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31.

grace; and of the kingdom that shall hereafter be put into their hands; and of the extensiveness of Christ's kingdom in the latter day, who was to spring from him. Esau's blessings were merely temporal ones, and respected things future, which were fulfilled in his posterity; and these several blessings Isaac pronounced upon them by faith, believing they would be bestowed on them; and so his faith answered to the account of faith in ver. 1. It may be asked, how Isaac can be said to have blessed Jacob by faith, when he was deceived by him? It is certain he took him to be Esau, when he blessed him, wherefore it was not the design of Isaac, though it was the will of God that he should bless him, Gen. xxvii. 18—30. but yet notwithstanding this, Isaac might do it in faith, believing that the person he blessed would be blessed, though he was mistaken in him; and which he confirmed when he did know him, ver. 33, 37. to which the apostle may have respect; and besides, he blessed him after this, Gen. xxviii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, &c.*] Which was the usual time of blessing with the patriarchs; and the reason of it was, that what was said might be more attended to and regarded, and more strongly impressed upon the mind; and this is a proof that it was done in faith by Jacob, when there was no appearance of the fulfilment of these things, and it was not likely that he should see them; and this shews the truth of what the apostle says in ver. 1, 18. *blessed both the sons of Joseph*; whose names were Ephraim and Manasseh; the form of blessing them is recorded in Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. and which was done in faith, and under the direction and inspiration of the spirit of God, as appears by his setting Ephraim before Manasseh, ver. 13, 14, 17, 18, 19. and when he delivered the blessing he firmly believed it would be fulfilled, though they were then in a strange land: *and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff*; not that he worshipped the top of his staff, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, either his own, or Joseph's, or any little image upon the top of it; which would be an instance of idolatry, and not faith, contrary to the scope of the apostle; nor is there any need to interpret this of civil worship and respect paid to Joseph, as a fulfilment of his dream, and with a peculiar regard to Christ, of whom Joseph was a type; whereas, on the contrary, Joseph at this time bowed to his father, as was most natural and proper, Gen. xlviii. 12. nor is there any necessity of supposing a different punctuation of Gen. xlvii. 31. and that the true reading is not *mittah*, a bed, but *matteh*, a staff, contrary to all the 'Targums^f, and the Talmud^g, which read *mittah*, a bed, seeing it is not that place the apostle cites or refers to; for that was before the blessing of the sons of Joseph, but this was at the same time; and the apostle relates what is nowhere recorded in Genesis, but what he had either from tradition, or immediate revelation; or else he concludes it from the general account in Gen. xlviii. and the sense is, that Jacob, having blessed the two sons of Joseph, being sat upon his bed, and weak, he leaned upon the top of his staff, and worshipped God,

and gave praise and glory to him, that he had lived to see not only his son Joseph, but his seed also, see Gen. xlviii. 2, 11, 20.

Ver. 22. *By faith Joseph, when he died, &c.*] The riches and honours of Joseph, as they could not secure him from death, so they did not make him unmindful of it; nor was he afraid of dying, or uneasy about it; nor did his prosperity make him proud, or above speaking to his brethren, nor revengeful to them, nor unthoughtful of their future afflictions; nor did his affluence of temporal things take off his regards to divine promises, nor weaken his faith in them, which is here commended in the following instances; as that at the time of his death, he *made mention of the departing of the children of Israel*: that is, out of the land of Egypt: he remembered it himself, and put his brethren in mind of it, by speaking of it to their comfort, with great assurance; he knew they were well situated in the land of Egypt, and yet speaks of their departure out of it; he foresaw, and firmly believed they would be greatly afflicted in it, and that God would look upon them, and visit them, and bring them out of it, into the land of Canaan; all which shews the strength of his faith, and that it was about things not seen. *And gave commandment concerning his bones*; and the command was a very strict one when he gave it; he took an oath of his brethren to fulfil it; it was concerning his bones, not his body, which shews that he believed their departure out of Egypt was at a great distance, when his flesh would be consumed, and only his bones left, as it was about two hundred years after his death; it respects the carrying them out of Egypt with them, and burying them in the land of Canaan, when they came there; and this is an instance of his humility, in choosing to lie with his fathers, rather than with the kings, and great men in Egypt, and of his care to prevent idolatry, which he might observe the Egyptians would be prone unto; and this command was a great instance of Joseph's faith, that the children of Israel would return to Canaan, and which might serve greatly to confirm their faith in it; it also shews his belief of the resurrection of the dead, and of his enjoying the heavenly inheritance, signified by the land of Canaan; see Gen. i. 24, 25. the Papists, from hence, plead for the relics of saints; but it should be observed, that it was at the request, and by the command of Joseph, that his bones were preserved, which is not the case of the saints, whose relics are pleaded for; besides, these were the true and real bones of Joseph, whereas the relics of the saints are only pretended; to which may be added, that the bones of Joseph were ordered to be buried, not to be shewed for a sight, much less worshipped, as Popish relics are. Joseph's coffin, the Jews say^h, was put into the river Nile; and so says Patricidesⁱ, an Arabic writer: others say it was in the burying-place of the kings, until it was taken up and removed by Moses.

Ver. 23. *By faith Moses, when he was born, &c.*] Which is to be understood, not of the faith of Moses, but of the faith of his parents, at the time of his birth; which was when Pharaoh had published an edict, or-

^f Onkelos, Jonathan, & Jerusalem in Gen. xlviii. 31.

^g T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 16. 2.

^h T. Bab. Suta, fol. 13. 1.

ⁱ Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 379.

dering every male child to be cast into the river; but instead of obeying this order, *Moses was hid three months of his parents*: that is, in his father's house, as it is said in Acts vii. 20, and is here expressed in the Ethiopic version. According to the Targumist^k, his mother went with him but six months, at the end of which he was born, and that she hid him three months, which made up the nine, the time in which a woman usually goes with-child; and after that she could conceal him no longer: the hiding of him is here ascribed to both his parents, though in Exod. ii. 2. it is represented as the act of his mother; which, no doubt, was done, with the knowledge, advice, and consent of his father; and the Septuagint there renders it, *ἐκρύβοντες, they hid him*: though the order of the history makes it necessary that it should be read in the singular. Parents ought to take care of their children; and persons may lawfully hide themselves, or others, from the cruelty of tyrants, and that as long as they can, for their safety; and this was so far from being wrong in the parents of Moses, that it is commended, as an instance of faith: they believed the promise in general, that God would deliver the people of Israel; they believed this to be about the time of their deliverance, and had some intimation, that this child in particular would be the deliverer, *because they saw* he was a proper child: not only of a goodly and beautiful countenance, but that he was peculiarly grateful and acceptable to God; they perceived something remarkable in him, which to them was a token that he would be the deliverer of God's people, and therefore they hid him; see the note on Acts vii. 20. *And they were not afraid of the king's commandment*: nor did they observe it, for it was contrary to nature, and to the laws of God, and to the promise of God's multiplying of that people, and to their hopes of deliverance: there is a great deal of courage and boldness in faith; and though faith may be weakened, it cannot be lost; and a weak faith is taken notice of, as here; for though they feared not at first, they seem to be afraid afterwards; but when God designs to work deliverance, nothing shall prevent.

Ver. 24. *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, &c.] Or was great*; a nobleman in Pharaoh's court; or when he was arrived to great knowledge, being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; or rather when he was well advanced in years, being full forty years of age, Acts vii. 22, 23. *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*; by whom Moses was taken up out of the water; by whom he was named, and provided for; she reckoned him as her own son, and designed him for Pharaoh's successor, as Josephus reports^l: he refused all this honour, both in words, and by facts; he denied that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, as the words will bear to be rendered; for to be called, often signifies only to be; and by taking part with the Israelites, and against the Egyptians, he plainly declared that his descent was from the former, and not the latter: and this discovered great faith; and shewed that he preferred being called an Israelite to any earthly adoption, and the care of the church, and people of God, to his own worldly honour and interest; and that he believed the promises of God, be-

fore the flatteries of a court; and esteemed afflictions and reproaches, with the people of God, and for his sake, better than sinful pleasures, and earthly riches, as in the following words. Of Pharaoh's daughter, see the note on Acts vii. 21.

Ver. 25. *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, &c.]* The Israelites, who were God's chosen and peculiar people, and were the true worshippers of him; Moses chose to be with those: the company and conversation of such is most eligible to every good man, because God is with them; his word and ordinances are with them; there are large provisions of grace in the midst of them; so that it is profitable, delightful, and honourable, to be among them, and is attended with comfort, peace, and satisfaction: but then those are a poor, and an afflicted people; affliction is with them, for the sake of God, and Christ, and the truths which they profess, and the worship and service they are engaged in; and their afflictions are many and grievous: and now Moses chose to suffer these with them, to suffer the same afflictions they did, and to sympathize with them: and this was more eligible to him, *than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*: meaning, either the pleasures, honours, and riches in Pharaoh's court, attended with sin; as indulging himself in the luxury of a court, when his brethren were in distress; approving Pharaoh's cruelty and persecution, at least conniving at it, and not opposing it, which could not be without sin; carrying himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, when he was an Hebrew; and preferring his own ease to the deliverance of his people; and now these, had he continued at court, would have been but for a short season: or else sinful lusts in general are intended, in which men promise themselves much pleasure, when it is only imaginary, and lasts but for a while neither; and both may be intended, and are what the Jews call *רננות רגעית, pleasures for a moment, or momentary ones*. And the reasons which might induce Moses, and so every good man, to such a choice, may be taken partly from the nature of afflictions themselves, which are such that God has chosen for them, and appointed them unto, and which he gives them to suffer for his name, and which are an honour to them, and issue in their good, and in the glory of God; and partly from the nature of sinful pleasures; there is no solidity, nor satisfaction, in the best of worldly enjoyments; there can be no true pleasure in sin; there is always bitterness in the end, and it issues in death, if grace prevent not: now it was by faith Moses made this choice, for it is manifestly contrary to flesh and blood: it shewed him to be a man thoroughly acquainted with the nature of sin; and that he looked beyond the things of sense and time, to those of eternity.

Ver. 26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ, &c.]* That is, either Christ personal; meaning not any reproach that lay upon Christ, as the immediate object of it; nor upon the people of Israel for the delay of his coming; but rather for the sake of Christ: Christ was made known to the Old-Testament saints, and they believed in him; he was typified by sacrifices which they offered; and they were reproached for his sake, for the sacrifices

^k Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. ii. 2.

^l Antiqu. 1. 2. c. 9. sect. 7.

^m Aben Ezra in Psal. xxxiii. 4.

they offered, and for the worship they performed, for their faith in the Messiah, and their expectation of him: or this may be understood of Christ mystical, the church; called Christ, because of the union, communion, sympathy, and likeness there is between them, insomuch that what is done to the one, is done to the other: when the saints are reproached, Christ himself is reproached; and therefore all reproaches of this nature should be bore willingly, cheerfully, courageously, patiently, and constantly: and such Moses reckoned *greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*; he counted reproach itself riches; that is, he esteemed that riches for which he was reproached, as Christ, his word, and ordinances, and communion with the saints in them; all which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, are more valuable and desirable than thousands of gold and silver, or than the treasures in Egypt, which were very large; money, cattle, and lands coming into the hands of the king, through the seven-years' famine in it, Gen. xlvii. 14, 17, 20. and for which immense treasure, treasure-cities were built, Exod. i. 11. which would have become Moses's, had he been Pharaoh's successor, to which he bid fair, before he discovered himself. *For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward*; by which is meant, either the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage, which he judged a sufficient recompense for all his afflictions and reproaches he endured, as the Apostle Paul did for the elect's sake, for the sake of Christ's body the church, Col. i. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 10. or the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, promised for an inheritance to the seed of Abraham; or the enjoyment of God's presence among his people, who is their shield, and exceeding great reward; or rather eternal glory, which is the reward of the inheritance, and is a reward of grace, and not of debt; this he had respect unto, looked for, and believed he should enjoy; so that his faith was of things unseen; and this caused him to prefer even afflictions with the saints, and reproaches for Christ, to all worldly riches and grandeur.

Ver. 27. *By faith he forsook Egypt, &c.*] Either when he fled to Midian; this was before the eating of the passover, and so it stands in its proper order; whereas, his going out of Egypt with the children of Israel was after it, and mentioned in ver. 29. The word *forsook* implies fleeing; and then it was when Pharaoh's wrath was kindled against him: but it may be said, that Moses seemed then to be afraid of it, seeing he fled: to which it may be answered, that he shewed great courage and intrepidity in slaying the Egyptian; and he took no methods to gain the king's favour, when the thing was known; his fleeing was consistent with courage, and was a point of prudence, and in obedience to the will of God: his departure shews, that he would not desist from the work he was called unto; but that he waited God's time, when he should be again employed; wherefore he endured affliction and meanness in Midian, and waited, patiently, till God should call him again to service: or this is to be understood of the time when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt; when he had many difficulties on the part of that people: they were seated and settled in the land of Egypt; they knew nothing of Canaan, nor of the way to it; and, besides, that

was in the possession of others; they were a very morose, impatient, stiff-necked, and an ungovernable people, whom he led into a wilderness, without food or arms; and their number was very large; and he had many difficulties, on the part of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Israelites were in the midst of them; he brought them out from among them, with the spoil of them in their hands; he knew the changeableness and fury of Pharaoh's mind, and yet he led them out, and left Egypt, *not fearing the wrath of the king*; of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; though it was as the roaring of a lion: so such as are called by grace, from a state of darkness and bondage, and out of a strange land, forsake this world, and leave their situation in it, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the company of wicked men, and every thing that is near and dear, when it is in competition with Christ; not fearing the wrath of any temporal king or prince; nor of Satan, the prince of this world: *for he endured*; afflictions, reproach, and menaces, with patience and courage; his mind was not broken with them, nor overborne by them; he expected divine help, and persevered; and so do such, who are called by the grace of God: *as seeing him who is invisible*; that is God, as the Syriac version expresses it; who is not to be seen corporeally, though intellectually; not in his essence, though in his works of creation and providence; not immediately, though mediately in and through Christ; not perfectly now, though face to face hereafter. Moses saw him visionally, and symbolically in the bush; he saw him by faith, and with the eyes of his understanding; and so believing in his power, faithfulness, &c. did what he did.

Ver. 28. *Through faith he kept the passover, &c.*] Which Moses made, or appointed by divine direction; he kept it, with all its rites and ceremonies, and caused the people of Israel to observe it; and which he did, in faith of the speedy deliverance of the children of Israel, from the house of bondage; and in the faith of the Messiah, of whom the passover was a type; see the note on 1 Cor. v. 7. The Syriac version reads, *through faith they kept the passover*; that is, the Israelites: *and the sprinkling of blood*; of the paschal lamb; which was received into a basin, and was sprinkled upon the lintel, and two side-posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites dwelt; which was done with a bunch of hyssop dipped into it: *lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them*; for the Lord, seeing the blood sprinkled, as above, when he smote the first-born of Egypt, passed by the houses of the Israelites, so distinguished; and they were all safe within, and not one of them touched: this was typical of the blood of Christ being sprinkled upon the hearts and consciences of his people; whereby they are purified through faith; which blood is looked upon by Jehovah, so that justice passes by them; and they are all safe and secure, and will be, when others are destroyed; nor can they be hurt by the second death.

Ver. 29. *By faith they passed through the Red sea, as by dry land, &c.*] Not through a river, but through the sea, the Red sea, the sea of Suph, or weeds; see the note on Acts vii. 36. Some say they came out on the same side they went in; but it should seem rather, by the phrase here used, that they passed through it,

from one side to the other; and that all one as if it had been on dry ground; even Moses, and all the children of Israel: and this they did by faith, believing, that God would make a passage quite through it for them, and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, who were closely pursuing them: *which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.* These were Pharaoh, and his numerous army; who, observing the Israelites march on through the sea, as on dry land, thought they could do the same; and so made an attempt, but were every one of them drowned; in just retaliation for the cruel edict for drowning the male infants of the Israelites, as soon as born.

Ver. 30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, &c.]* Of themselves, not from any natural cause: the Jews say^a they sunk right down into the ground, and were swallowed up; even the whole wall fell round about, as the Septuagint version in Josh. vi. 20. expresses it: or, it may be, only that which was over-against the camp of Israel, as Kimchi observes; since Rahab's house was built upon the wall, and yet fell not. And this was by the faith of Joshua, and the Israelites, who believed the walls would fall, at the sound of the rams' horns, as God said they should: *after they were compassed about seven days*; which was a trial of their faith and patience: the Jews say^b it was on the sabbath-day that they fell: this was a preternatural act, and can't be ascribed to any second cause; nothing is impossible with God; no defences, ever so strong, are any thing against him; unlikely means are sometimes made use of by him; faith sticks at nothing, when it has the word of God to rest upon; and what God does, he does in his own time, and in his own way. This may be an emblem of the fall of the walls of the hearts of unregenerate men; of their unbelief, hardness, enmity, and vain confidence; and of the conversion and subjection of them unto Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel; which, in the eyes of men, is as mean and despicable, and as unlikely to bring about such an event, as the sounding of the rams' horns might be to the inhabitants of Jericho: and it may be also an emblem of the fall of Babylon, and other antichristian cities, Rev. xvi. 19.

Ver. 31. *By faith the harlot Rahab, &c.]* The Targum on Josh. ii. 1. calls her אֲחֵת פּוֹנֵדֵקִית, *a woman, that kept a victualling-house*: this paraphrase is taken notice of by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place, who interpret it, *a seller of food*: and even the Hebrew word וְיָרָה, is so explained by a considerable Jewish writer^c; and this may rather seem to be the sense of the word, and to be her proper business, from the spies going to her house, as being an house of entertainment; and from Salmon's marrying her, which might be thought strange that a prince of Israel would, had she been a person of ill fame; to which may be added, the encomiums of her. for her faith and works, both by our apostle, and by James: but yet, the constant use of the word, in this form, the testimonies of two apostles, and her making no mention of her husband and chil-

dren, when she agreed with the spies, confirm the generally received character of her, that she was an harlot. Some Jewish writers say^d that she was ten years of age when the Israelites came out of Egypt; and that all the forty years they were in the wilderness, זִנְיָה, *she played the harlot*; and was one-and-fifty years of age when she was proselyted. She is called an harlot; not with respect to her present, but past life. In the Greek text, she is here called Raab, as also in Jam. ii. 25. and so in the Septuagint in Josh. ii. 1. and i. 5. *Rachab*, which exactly answers to the Hebrew word רַחַב, Josh. ii. 1. and by Josephus' *Rachabe*. This woman was a wonderful and singular instance of the free, sovereign, distinguishing, powerful, and efficacious grace of God; being one that sprung from Canaan, and was of the nations that were abhorred; but, being called by grace, became an eminent believer: she believed that the God of the Israelites was God in heaven and on earth; that he had given the land of Canaan to them; she received the spies, and hid them through that faith; she caused them to swear by the Lord, that they would shew mercy to her, and her family; and gave credit to them; and observed their instructions: and so she *perished not with them that believed not*; the inhabitants of Jericho, who were unbelievers, and disobeyed, and all perished by the sword: but Rahab perished not, neither temporally, nor eternally; her temporal salvation was an emblem and type of her spiritual salvation; her receiving the spies was an emblem of a soul's receiving the Gospel, and the ministers of it; the scarlet thread, that was hung out, was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which sins, though as scarlet, are made white as wool; and the saving of her whole family is an emblem of the complete salvation of all the elect, soul and body, by Christ: *when she had received the spies with peace*; and had hid them, for some time, in her house, and then let them down by the wall; and who, at the taking of the city, saved her, and hers, according to their promise and oath: the number of these spies were two, according to Josh. ii. 1. The Jews^e say one of them was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the high-priest; and others^f of them say they were Phinehas and Caleb.

Ver. 32. *And what shall I more say, &c.]* Intimating he had said enough to prove the definition of faith he had given; and that the elders, by it, had obtained a good report; and yet he had not said all he could; and that he had so much to say, that he could not say all: *for the time would fail me*; either the time of life, and so it is an hyperbolical expression; or the time convenient for the writing this epistle; to enumerate all the instances of faith, and enlarge upon them, would take up too much of his time, and make the epistle prolix and tedious: this form of speech is often used by Philo the Jew^g, and by Julian the emperor^h. It may be observed, that many, who are not mentioned by name, do not stand excluded from being believers; and that the number of believers, under the Old Tes-

^a Targum Jon. Jarchi & Kimchi in Josh. vi. 5.

^b Jarchi & Kimchi in ver. 15.

^c R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 24. 1.

^d T. Bab. Zebachin, fol. 116. 2. Shalsbalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

^e Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 2.

^f Laniado in Josh. ii. 1.

^g Tanchuma apud Masum in ib.

^h De Creat. Princip. p. 735. Merced. Meret. p. 863. De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1037. De Somniis, p. 1116.

ⁱ Orat. l. p. 50, 62, 75.

tainment, was very large: *to tell of Gideon*; so Gideon is called in the Septuagint version of Judg. vi. 11. and other places; and by Josephus², and Philo⁷ the Jew, as here: he was a man, but of a mean extract, and had his infirmities; and even in the exercise of that particular grace, for which he is mentioned; but was, no doubt, a good man, and is commended for his faith; which appeared in ascribing former mercies and present afflictions to the Lord; in destroying the altar of Baal; in crediting the word of the Lord, that Israel should be saved by him; which he shewed by the preparation he made, and in marching against a numerous army, with only three hundred men, and they but weak: all which may be seen in the book of Judges, chapters vi. vii. and viii. and of Barak; who was before Gideon, as Jephtha was before Samson, and Samuel before David; for the apostle does not observe strict order, reciting these in haste. Barak, when the word of the Lord came to him, shewed some diffidence, yet acted in obedience to it, under the sole direction and counsel of a woman; he engaged Sisera's vast army with a small number, and gave the glory of the victory to the Lord, Judg. iv. and v. *and of Samson*; who was a child of promise, and devoted to the Lord; he was famous for his great strength; he had his infirmities, but was, without doubt, a good man: the last act of his life seems to be a great instance of faith; he did it with calling upon the Lord; he was strengthened for it by the Lord; he acted, not as a private person, but as the judge of Israel; nor did he act from private revenge, but from zeal for God, and love to his country; and his intention was not to destroy himself, but his enemies; in which he acted as a type of Christ: *and of Jephtha*: the Syriac version calls him *Nepthe*, and the Arabic version *Naph-tah*; he was base-born; and, for a time, joined himself to vain men, but became a believer; and is remarked for his faith, in ascribing the conquests of Israel in the wilderness to the Lord; in fighting with the Ammonites, whom he conquered; and in his conscientiousness, in observing his vow, Judg. xi. *of David also*: a man after God's own heart, raised up to fulfil his will; whose faith appeared in his dependence on God, when he fought with Goliath; in encouraging himself in the Lord his God, when in exile and distress; and in believing his interest in the covenant of grace, when his house and family were in a disagreeable situation, and he just going out of the world: *and Samuel*; a child of prayer, and early devoted to the Lord, who ministered to him, when a child; was always ready to hearken to his voice; was used very familiarly by him, and behaved with great uprightness, all his days; and had a good report of God and man: *and of the prophets*; from Samuel to John the Baptist, who were famous for their trust in God, their faith in the Messiah, and for their honourable walk and conversation.

Ver. 33. *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, &c.*] As David did particularly; who subdued Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom, and the Philistines, 2 Sam. viii. 12, 14. War, in some cases, is lawful; and kingdoms may be subdued; and faith makes use of means

to do it: these kingdoms, though subdued by faith, yet not without fighting. Believers have no reason to be afraid of kings, or kingdoms; and this should encourage the saints, in their combats with the powers of darkness. *Wrought righteousness*; exercised vindictive justice, in taking vengeance on the enemies of God, and his people; civil righteousness, in the discharge of their offices; and moral righteousness, in their conversation before God and men; which, being imperfect, was not justifying: wherefore they stood in need of another, and better righteousness, which is perfect and durable; and, in consequence of which being known, embraced, and received, men work righteousness: it may be observed, that to do works of righteousness in faith, and by it, is something very considerable; it is reckoned here among actions of the greatest fame; and that true faith is an operative grace, it works by love, and is always attended with works of righteousness; and that righteousness is a fruit and evidence of faith; and that faith is not the believer's righteousness; and that the righteousness of faith is not that which faith works, but which it receives. *Obtained promises*; the promise of the land of Canaan; particular promises of victory over their enemies; promises concerning the Messiah, and of everlasting life and happiness: their faith was not the cause of promises being made, nor of their being fulfilled; but was the grace by which these believers received them, believed them, and waited for the accomplishment of them; and, in some sense, enjoyed the things promised before-hand; their faith realizing things future and invisible to them: to obtain a promise from God is a great and marvellous thing; it is an instance of rich grace; and there is never a promise, but what is great in itself, and precious to the saints: all God's promises are obtained; they are sure, and are certainly fulfilled; and it is the work and business of faith to receive, and enjoy them. *Stopped the mouths of lions*: a lion was slain by Samson, and another by David; but the most remarkable instance of stopping the mouths of lions, was in the den, into which Daniel was cast; and this may encourage the faith of God's people, when they are in the midst of men, comparable to lions; and may animate them not to fear the devouring lion, Satan.

Ver. 34. *Quenched the violence of fire, &c.*] Which may be said to be done, when a believer, or a righteous man, is delivered out of it, as Lot from Sodom, when God rained fire and brimstone on it; when, by prayer, it is stopped, as by Moses, at Taberah, Numb. xi. 1, 2. when persons are not hurt by it, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when cast into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace; and many of the martyrs have triumphed in the flames: so believers are delivered out of the fire of afflictions, and are not consumed thereby; and quench the fiery darts of Satan, thrown at them; and are untouched by the fire of God's wrath, in every state and case; and shall not be hurt of the second death, which is a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. *Escaped the edge of the sword*; and were not destroyed by it; as Lot, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, David, Elijah, Elisha, and others.

² Antiqu. Jud. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 2. &c.

⁷ De Confusione Ling. p. 339.

Out of weakness were made strong; being recovered from bodily diseases, as David, Hezekiah, &c. by an increase of bodily strength, as Samson; by being filled with courage, and strength of mind, when before timorous, as Barak, &c. so believers, when they have been weak in the exercise of grace, have been made strong: *waxed valiant in fight*; as Barak, Gideon, David, &c. so believers, in the spiritual fight of faith, have waxed valiant; being engaged in a good cause, and under a good Captain; being well provided with armour, and assured of victory, and a crown. *Turned to fight the armies of the aliens*; such as the Canaanites, the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and others; who were put to flight by Joshua, the Judges, David, and others.

Ver. 35. *Women received their dead raised to life again, &c.*] As the widow of Sarepta, and the Shunamite, 1 Kings xvii. 22. 2 Kings iv. 34, 35. Their sons were really dead, and they received them alive again, from the hands of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, in the way of a resurrection, and by faith; by the faith of the prophets: *and others were tortured*; racked, or tymanized; referring to the sufferings of seven brethren, and their mother, in the times of Antiochus, recorded in 2 Maccab. vii. as appears from the kind of torment endured by them; from the offer of deliverance rejected by them; and from their hope of the resurrection: for it follows, *not accepting deliverance*; when offered them by the king, 2 Maccab. vii. 24, 25. *that they might obtain a better resurrection*: which they died in the faith of, 2 Maccab. vii. 9, 11, 14. The resurrection of the saints, which is unto everlasting life, is a better resurrection than mere metaphorical, and figurative ones, as deliverances from great afflictions, which are called deaths; or real ones, which were only to a mortal state, and in order to die again, as those under the Old Testament, and under the New, before the resurrection of Christ; or than the resurrection of the wicked: for the resurrection the saints will obtain will be first, at the beginning of the thousand years; the wicked will not live till after they are ended; it will be by virtue of union to Christ, whereas the wicked will be raised merely by virtue of his power; the saints will rise with bodies glorious, powerful, and spiritual, the wicked with base, vile, and ignoble ones; the righteous will come forth to the resurrection of life, the wicked to the resurrection of damnation. The consideration of the better resurrection is of great use to strengthen faith, under sufferings, for righteousness-sake, and this is obtained by suffering; not that suffering is the meritorious cause of it, but saints in this way come to it; it is promised to such, and it will be attained unto, and enjoyed by such; for all that live godly, do, and must suffer persecution in one way or another.

Ver. 36. *And others had trial of cruel mockings, &c.*]

As Samson by the Philistines; Elisha by the children, whom the bears devoured; Jeremiah by Pashur, and others; the Jews by Sanballat and Tobiah, when rebuilding the temple; the prophets, whom God sent to the Jews, as his messengers, Judg. xvi. 25—28, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. Jer. xx. 7, 8. Nehem. iv. 1—6, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. and *scourgings*; or smittings, as Jeremiah and Micajah, Jer. xx. 2. 2 Chron. xviii. 23, 24. *yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment*; as Joseph, Samson, and Jeremy, Gen. xxxix. 20. Judg. xvi. 21. Jer. xx. 2. and xxxvii. 15. Now of these things they had trial, or experience; their graces were tried by them, and they patiently endured them.

Ver. 37. *They were stoned, &c.*] As Naboth, by the order of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 13—19. Zachariah in the court of the Lord's house; 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. and the character of Jerusalem is, that she stoned the prophets that were sent unto her, Matt. xxiii. 37. *They were sawn asunder*; to which there seems to be an allusion in Matt. xxiv. 51. There is no instance of any good men being so used in Scripture: perhaps reference is had to some that suffered thus in the time of Antiochus. The Jews have a tradition, that the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the times of Manasseh, and by his order; which some think the apostle refers unto; though it seems to be all fictitious, and ill put together. The tradition is in both Talmuds: in the one, the account is this: "that Manasseh sought to kill Isaiah, and he fled from him, and fled to a cedar, and the cedar swallowed him up, all but the fringe of his garment; they came and told him (Manasseh), he said unto them, go and saw the cedar, and they sawed the cedar, and blood was seen to come out." And in the other² thus, "says R. Simeon ben Azzai, I found a book of genealogies in Jerusalem, and in it was written that Manasseh slew Isaiah." And after relating the occasion of it, being some passages in Isaiah Manasseh was displeased with and objected to; and the prophet not thinking it worth his while to return an answer, or attempt to reconcile them with other passages, objected, knowing that the king would use him contemptuously; he is made to say, "I will swallow (or put myself into) a cedar, they brought the cedar, and sawed it asunder, and when it (the saw) came to his mouth, he expired." Another Jewish writer³ out of the Midrash, reports it thus; "Manasseh sought to slay him, and Isaiah fled, and the Lord remembered him, and he was swallowed up in the middle of a tree; but there remained without the tree the fringe of his garment; and then Manasseh ordered the tree to be cut down, and Isaiah died." And it is become a generally received opinion of the ancient Christian writers, that Isaiah was sawn asunder; as of Justin Martyr⁴, Origen⁵, Tertullian⁶, Lactantius⁷, Athanasius⁸, Hilary⁹, Cyril of Jerusalem¹, Gregory Nyssene², Jerom³, Isidorus

¹ T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 3.

² T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2.

³ Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 12. 2.

⁴ Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 249.

⁵ In Jer. Homil. 19. p. 197. in Isa. Homil. 1. fol. 101. & in Matt. Homil. 26. fol. 51.

⁶ De Patientia, c. 14. Scorpicee, c. 8.

⁷ De vera sapientia, l. 4. c. 11.

⁸ Vol. I. de Incarnat. p. 55, 65. Vol. II. dicta & Interpret. Parah. p. 325, 353.

⁹ Contr. Constant. p. 199. & enarrat. in Psal. cxviii. p. 465.

¹ Cateches. 2. sect. 9. p. 99. & Cateches. 13. sect. 3. p. 169.

² Vol. II. de Castigat. p. 749.

³ In Isa. lviii. 2.

Pelusiota^m, Gregentius^s, Procopius Gazæus^o, and others; but more persons seem to be designed: *were tempted*; either by God, as Abraham, and Job; or by the devil, as all the saints are; or rather by cruel tyrants, to deny the faith, and renounce the worship of God, as Eleazar, and the seven brethren with their mother; at least some of them were, Maccab. vi. and vii. Some think the true reading is *ερωδιστας, were burned*; as one of the seven brethren were, 2 Maccab. vii. 5. and as Zedekiah and Ahab were roasted in the fire, by the king of Babylon, Jer. xxix. 22. though they were lying prophets, and cannot be referred to here; see Dan. xi. 33. This clause is wanting in the Syriac version: *were slain with the sword*; as the priests at Nob, by the order of Saul; 1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19. The prophets of the Lord by Jezabel, 1 Kings xviii. 23. and xix. 10. and many in the times of the Maccabees; Dan. xi. 33. 2 Maccab. v. 14. *they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins*; with the wool or hair upon them; and with such Elijah and Elisha might be arrayed; since the former is said to be a hairy man, or covered with a hairy garment, as John the Baptist was, who came in his spirit and power, and also in his form; and the latter wore the mantle of the other; 2 Kings i. 8. and ii. 8. 14. and to these reference may be had, who were obliged to wander about, because of those who sought their lives; and was the case of others who were forced, by reason of persecution, to quit their habitations, and wander abroad; and some clothed themselves in this manner, to shew their contempt of the world, and their contentment with mean apparel; and others, because they could get no other raiment: being *desitute*; of bodily food, as Elijah, who was fed by ravens, and by the widow of Sarepta; 1 Kings xvii. 6—15. *afflicted*; pressed, drove to the greatest straits, despairing of life, and weary of it, as the same prophet, 1 Kings xix. 4—10. *tormented*; or evilly treated, reproached, vilified, persecuted, and made the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things.

Ver. 38. *Of whom the world was not worthy, &c.*] These words are inserted in a parenthesis, to remove or prevent such objections as these; that they were restless and unquiet persons, that made disturbance in the world, and so unfit to live in it; and that they were deservedly punished for crimes they were guilty of; and to shew the great worth and inestimable value of the people of God, which exceeds that of the whole world; and to intimate the removal of them out of the world, or from dwelling among the men of it, is by way of punishment to it: *they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth*; as Elijah did; 1 Kings xviii. 4. and xix. 9, 10. and many in the times of the Maccabees; 2 Maccab. x. 6.

Ver. 39. *And these all having obtained a good report through faith, &c.*] This may either be limited to the sufferers in the preceding verses, who were martyred, or suffered martyrdom for the faith, as the words may be rendered; and who are called martyrs or witnesses, in ch. xii. 1. and so the Ethiopic version renders the clause, *and all these were witnesses concerning the faith*:

or it may be extended to all the instances of faith throughout the chapter; and so the apostle re-asserts what he had said, ver. 2. having proved it by a variety of examples; see the note there: *received not the promise*; not that they did not receive the promise of the land of Canaan, for so did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, &c. nor that they did not receive the promise of deliverance and victory, for so did Joshua, the Judges, and others; or that they did not receive the promise of eternal life, for that they all did; but the promise of the Messiah, that is, the Messiah promised: for they had the promise, but not the thing; who is called *the Promise*, emphatically, because he is the first and grand promise; and because in him all the promises centre, and are yea, and amen: him the Old-Testament saints received not; they greatly desired to see him in the flesh; they saw him by faith; they believed in him, and rejoiced in the expectation of his coming; but he was not exhibited to them incarnate. Now since these saints so strongly believed, and so cheerfully suffered before Christ came; the apostle's argument is, that much more should the saints now, since Christ is come, and the promises received, go on believing in him, and readily suffering for his sake; see ch. xii. 1—4.

Ver. 40. *God having provided some better thing for us, &c.*] Not a better state of the church, in such respect, as to be free from suffering reproach and persecutions; for this is the case of saints under the New Testament as under the Old; nor the felicity of the soul after death; nor any greater degree of happiness in the other world; nor the perfection of blessedness in soul and body; things common to all believers; but Christ, as now exhibited in the flesh: Jesus Christ was the same in the yesterday of the Old Testament, as he is in the present day of the Gospel dispensation; he was slain from the foundation of the world; and the saints then were saved as now, by his grace and righteousness: only with this difference between them and us; they had Christ in the promise, we have him himself that was promised; they had him in type and shadow, we have him in reality and truth; they believed in, and were saved by Christ, who was to come; we believe in him, and are saved by him, as being come. Hence our case is, with respect to these circumstances, better than theirs; we have a better covenant, or a better administration of the covenant of grace; we have a better priesthood, and a better sacrifice; the Gospel is dispensed in a better manner, more clearly and fully: our condition is better than theirs; they were as children under tutors and governors, and were under a spirit of bondage; but we are redeemed from under the law, and are clear of its burdensome rites, as well as of its curse and condemnation; and have the spirit of liberty and adoption. And this God has *provided* for us in his council and covenant: for this denotes God's determination, designation, and appointment of Christ, to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; and has respect to the nature and circumstances of his death, which were fixed in the purposes of God; as well as the time

^m L. A. Ep. 205.

^s Disputat. cum Hebræo Judæo, p. 19.

^o In Reg. l. 4. c. 21. 16.

of his coming into the world, and the season of his death; and in all this God has shewn his great goodness, his amazing love, and the riches of his grace: and his end herein is, *that they without us should not be made perfect*; the Old-Testament saints are perfectly justified, perfectly sanctified, and perfectly glorified; but their perfection was not by the law, which made nothing perfect, but by Christ, and through his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; and so were not made perfect without us; since their sins and ours are ex-

piated together by the same sacrifice; their persons and ours justified together by the same righteousness; they and we make up but one church, and general assembly; and as yet all the elect of God among the Jews are not called, and so are not perfect in themselves, or without us. Jews and Gentiles will incorporate together in the latter day; and besides, they and we shall be glorified together, in soul and body, to all eternity.

C H A P. XII.

IN this chapter the apostle presses to a constant exercise of faith and patience, amidst the various afflictions the saints are exercised with; delivers out several exhortations useful in the Christian life; and shews the difference between the legal and Gospel dispensations. Having in the preceding chapter given many illustrious instances and examples of faith, he makes use of this cloud of witnesses, as he calls them, to engage the Hebrews to drop their unbelief, and run with faith and patience the race set before them, ver. 1. and which he further urges from the example of Christ; from his concern in faith, being the author and finisher of it; from what he suffered when here on earth, both the contradiction of sinners, and the death of the cross, for the joy of having his people with him in heaven; and from his glorious state, being set down at the right hand of God. Whereas, as yet, they had not been called to shed their blood in their warfare against sin, ver. 2, 3, 4. And that they must expect chastisement, and should bear it patiently, he cites a passage of Scripture out of Prov. iii. 11, 12. which suggests, that those who are the children of God, and are loved and received by him, are chastened and scourged, ver. 5, 6. Wherefore this was no other than dealing with them as children; and should they not be thus dealt with, it would be an argument that they were bastards, and not sons, ver. 7, 8. And next the apostle argues from the right of parents to chastise their children, and the subjection that is yielded to them; that if the corrections of them, who were the fathers of their bodies, were quietly submitted to; then much more should those of the father of their souls; and the rather, since the chastenings of the former are only for temporal good, and according to their fallible judgments; whereas the latter are for spiritual profit, and an increase of holiness, ver. 9, 10. And though it must be allowed, that no chastening, for the present time, is matter of joy, but of grief; yet the effects of them are the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised by them, ver. 11. Wherefore the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews to encourage themselves and others under afflictions; and to behave in such manner, and carry it so evenly, that they might not be an occasion of stumbling to weak believers, ver. 12, 13. He exhorts them in general to follow peace with all men, and particularly holiness; which is absolutely necessary to the beatific vision of God, ver. 14. and to take care that no heresy or immorality spring up among them, and be connived at, and che-

rished by them, to the troubling of some, and defiling of others, ver. 15. and particularly, lest the sin of uncleanness, or any sort of profaneness, should be found among them; of which Esau, the brother of Jacob, from whence they sprung, was guilty; whose profaneness lay in selling his birthright for a morsel of meat, and whose punishment was, that he should be deprived of the blessing; which decree was irrevocable, notwithstanding his tears, ver. 16, 17. and to enforce these exhortations, the apostle observes to these believers, that they were not now under the law, but in a Gospel church-state. The terror of the legal dispensation they were delivered from is described by the place where the law was given, a mount burning with fire; by circumstances attending it, blackness, darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet; by the matter of it, a voice of words, which they that heard, entreated they might hear no more; and by the effect the whole had upon Moses-himself, who quaked and trembled at what he saw and heard, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. The happiness of the Gospel dispensation, or of the Gospel church-state, is expressed by the names of it, called Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the new Jerusalem; and by the company the saints have there, and their fellowship with them; angels innumerable; elect men, whose names are written in heaven, and whose spirits are made perfectly just; God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; whose blood being sprinkled on their consciences, spoke peace and pardon to them; such as neither Abel's blood nor sacrifice could speak, ver. 22, 23, 24. From whence the apostle argues, that care should be taken not to neglect and despise the voice of Christ, who is now in heaven, and speaks from thence in his Gospel and ordinances; seeing they escaped not who rejected him that spake on earth, at Mount Sinai, which was shaken by his voice; and the rather, since it appears from a prophecy in Hagg. ii. 6, 7. that under the Gospel dispensation, not only the earth but the heavens would be shaken, ver. 25, 26. which is an emblem of the shaking and removing the ordinances of the ceremonial law, that Gospel ordinances might take place, and remain for ever, ver. 27. Upon the whole, the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews, that seeing they had received the immovable kingdom of grace, and were admitted into the Gospel dispensation, or church-state; that they would hold fast the Gospel of the grace of God, and serve the Lord, according to his revealed will, with reverence and

godly fear, which would be acceptable to him; or otherwise he would be a consuming fire; as he is to all the despisers and neglecters of his Gospel and ordinances, ver. 28, 29.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about, &c.*] As the Israelites were encompassed with the pillar of cloud, or with the clouds of glory in the wilderness, as the Jews say; see the note on 1 Cor. x. 1. to which there may be an allusion here, since it follows, *with so great a cloud of witnesses; or martyrs*, as the Old-Testament saints, the instances of whose faith and patience are produced in the preceding chapter: these, some of them, were martyrs in the sense in which that word is commonly used; they suffered in the cause, and for the sake of true religion; and they all bore a noble testimony of God, and for him; and they received a testimony from him; and will be hereafter witnesses for, or against us, to whom they are examples of the above graces: and these may be compared to a *cloud*, for the comfortable and reviving doctrines which they dropped; and for their refreshing examples in the heat of persecution; and for their guidance and direction in the ways of God; and more especially for their number, being like a thick cloud, and so many, that they compass about on every side, and are instructive every way. Hence the following things are inferred and urged, *let us lay aside every weight; or burden; every sin, which is a weight and burden to a sensible sinner, and is an hindrance in running the Christian race; not only in-dwelling sin, but every actual transgression, and therefore to be laid aside; as a burden, it should be laid on Christ; as a sin, it should be abstained from, and put off, with respect to the former conversation: also worldly cares, riches, and honours, when immoderately pursued, are a weight depressing the mind to the earth, and a great hindrance in the work and service of God, and therefore to be laid aside; not that they are to be entirely rejected, and not cared for and used, but the heart should not be set upon them, or be over-anxious about them: likewise the rites and ceremonies of Moses's law were a weight and burden, a yoke of bondage, and an intolerable one, and with which many believing Jews were entangled and pressed, and which were a great hindrance in the performance of evangelical worship; wherefore the exhortation to these Hebrews, to lay them aside, was very proper and pertinent, since they were useless and incommodious, and there had been a disannulling of them by Christ, because of their weakness and unprofitableness. Some observe, that the word here used signifies a tumour or swelling; and so may design the tumour of pride and vain glory, in outward privileges, and in a man's own righteousness, to which the Hebrews were much inclined; and which appears in an unwillingness to stoop to the cross, and bear afflictions for the sake of the Gospel; all which is a great enemy to powerful godliness, and therefore should be brought down, and laid aside. The Arabic version renders it, *every weight of luxury*; all luxurious living being prejudicial to real religion: *and the sin which doth so easily beset us*; the Arabic version renders it, *easy to be committed*; meaning either the corruption of nature in general, which is always present, and puts upon doing evil, and hinders*

all the good it can; or rather some particular sin, as what is commonly called a man's constitution-sin, or what he is most inclined to, and is most easily drawn into the commission of; or it may be the sin of unbelief is intended, that being opposite to the grace of faith, the apostle had been commending, in the preceding chapter, and he here exhorts to; and is a sin which easily insinuates itself, and prevails, and that sometimes under the notion of a virtue, as if it would be immodest, or presumptuous to believe; the arguments for it are apt to be readily and quickly embraced; but as every weight, so every sin may be designed: some reference may be had to Lam. i. 14. where the church says, that her transgressions were *wreathed*, ישרתה, *wreathed themselves*, or wrapped themselves about her. The allusion seems to be to runners in a race, who throw off every thing that encumbers, drop whatsoever is ponderous and weighty, run in light garments, and lay aside long ones, which entangle and hinder in running, as appears from the next clause, or inference. *And let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* The stadium, or race-plot, in which the Christian race is run, is this world; the prize run for is the heavenly glory; the mark to direct in it, is Christ; many are the runners, yet none but the overcomers have the prize; which being held by Christ, is given to them: this race is *set before* the saints; that is, by God; the way in which they are to run is marked out by him in his word; the troubles they shall meet with in it are appointed for them by him, in his counsels and purposes; the mark to direct them is set before them in the Gospel, even Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, whom they are to look unto; the length of their race is fixed for them, or how far, and how long they shall run; and the prize is determined for them, and will be given them, and which is held out for their encouragement, to have respect unto: and it becomes all the saints, and belongs to each, and every one of them, to *run* this race; which includes both doing and suffering for Christ; it is a motion forward, a pressing towards the mark for the prize, a going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; and to it swiftness and agility are necessary; and when it is performed aright, it is with readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness: it requires strength and courage, and a removal of all impediments, and should be done *with patience*; which is very necessary, because of the many exercises in the way; and because of the length of the race; and on account of the prize to be enjoyed, which is very desirable: the examples of the saints, and especially of Christ, the forerunner, should move and animate unto it.

Ver. 2. *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, &c.*] Not with bodily eyes, for at present he is not to be looked upon in this manner, but with the eye of the understanding, or with the eye of faith; for faith is a seeing of the son; it is a spiritual sight of Christ, which is at first but glimmering, afterwards it increases, and is of a soul-humbling nature; it is marvellous and surprising; it transforms into the image of Christ, and fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: a believer should be always looking to Christ, and off of every object else, as the word here used signifies. Christ is to be looked unto

as *Jesus*, a Saviour, who being appointed and sent by God to be a Saviour, came, and is become the author of eternal salvation; and to him only should we look for it: he is able and willing to save; he is a suitable, complete, and only Saviour; and whoever look to him by faith shall be saved; and he is to be considered, and looked unto, as *the author and finisher of faith*: he is the author or efficient cause of it; all men are by nature without it; it is not in the power of man to believe of himself; it is a work of omnipotence; it is an instance of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; and it is the operation of Christ, by his spirit; and the increase of it is from him, Luke xvii. 5. and he is the finisher of it; he gives himself, and the blessings of his grace, to his people, to maintain and strengthen it; he prays for it, that it fail not; he carries on the work of faith, and will perform it with power; and brings to, and gives that which is the end of it, eternal life, or the salvation of the soul. *Who for the joy that was set before him*; the word *אין*, rendered *for*, sometimes signifies, *in the room, or stead of*, as in Matt. ii. 22. and xx. 28. and is so rendered here in the Syriac and Arabic versions; and then the sense is, that Christ, instead of being in the bosom of the father, came into this world; instead of being in the form of God, he appeared in the form of a servant; instead of the glory which he had with his father from eternity, he suffered shame and disgrace; instead of living a joyful and comfortable life on earth, he suffered a shameful and an accursed death; and instead of the temporal joy and glory the Jews proposed to him, he endured the shame and pain of the cross: sometimes it signifies the end for which a thing is, as in Eph. v. 31. and may intend that, for the sake of which Christ underwent so much disgrace, and such sufferings; namely, for the sake of having a spiritual seed, a numerous offspring with him in heaven, who are his joy, and crown of rejoicing; for the sake of the salvation of all the elect, on which his heart was set; and for the glorifying of the divine perfections, which was no small delight and pleasure to him. And to this agrees the Chaldee paraphrase of Psal. xxi. 1. "O Lord, in thy power shall the King Messiah ירוי, rejoice, and "in thy redemption how greatly will he exult!" And also because of his own glory as Mediator, which was to follow his sufferings, and which includes his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the right hand of God, and the whole honour and glory Christ has in his human nature; see Psal. xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. and with a view to all this, he *endured the cross*; which is to be taken not properly for that frame of wood, on which he was crucified; but, improperly, for all his sufferings, from his cradle to his cross; and particularly the tortures of the cross, being extended on it, and nailed unto it; and especially the death of the cross, which kind of death he endured to verify the predictions of it, Psal. xxii. 16. Zech. xii. 10. and to shew that he was made a curse for his people; and this being a Roman punishment, shews that the sceptre was taken from Judah, and therefore the Messiah must be come; and that Christ suffered for the Gentiles, as well as Jews: and this death he *endured with great courage and intrepidity*, with much patience and constancy, and in obedience to the will of his father: *despising the shame*;

of the cross; for it was an ignominious death, as well as a painful one; and as he endured the pain of it with patience, he treated the shame of it with contempt; throughout the whole of his life, he despised the shame and reproach that was cast upon him; and so he did at the time of his apprehension, and when upon his trial, and at his death, under all the ignominious circumstances that attended it; which should teach us not to be ashamed of the reproach of Christ, but count it an honour to be worthy to suffer shame for his name. *And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*; which is in heaven; and is expressive of the majesty and glory of God; and of the honour done to Christ in human nature, which is not granted to any of the angels: here Christ sits as God's fellow, as equal to him, as God, and as having done his work as man, and Mediator; and this may assure us, that when we have run out our race, we shall sit down too, with Christ upon his throne, and be at rest.

Ver. 3. *For consider him, &c.*] In the greatness of his person, as God, the son of God, the heir of all things; and in his offices of prophet, priest, and King, as the Saviour of lost sinners, the Leader and Commander of the people, as the apostle and high-priest of our profession: consider him in his human nature, his conversation on earth, and what he did and suffered for men; how that in his nature he was pure and holy, in his conversation harmless and innocent, in his deportment meek and lowly; who went about doing good to the souls of men, and at last suffered and died, and is now glorified: consider the analogy between him and us, and how great is the disproportion; and therefore if he was ill treated, no wonder we should: consider him under all his reproaches and sufferings: *that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself*: against his person, they denying his deity, and speaking against his sonship, and against his offices; mocking him as a King, deriding him as a prophet, and treating him with the utmost contempt as a priest and Saviour; and against his actions, his works of mercy to the bodies of men, when done on the sabbath-day; his conversing with sinners for the good of their souls, as if he was an encourager of them in sin, and a partner with them; his miracles, as if they were done by the help of the devil; and against the whole series of his life, as if it was criminal. Now we should analogize this contradiction, and see what proportion there is between this, and what is endured by us: we should consider the aggravations of it, that it was *against himself*: sometimes it was against his disciples, and him through them, as it is now against his members, and him in them; but here it was immediately and directly against himself: and this he endured *from sinners*: some more secret, as the Scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees; some more open, as the common people; some of them the vilest of sinners, the most abandoned of creatures, as the Roman soldiers, and Herod's men of war: and this should be considered, that we can't be contradicted by viler or meaner persons; and it is worthy of notice, with what courage and bravery of mind, with what patience and invincible constancy he endured it: this should be recollected for imitation and encouragement, *lest ye be*

wearied, and faint in your minds; contradiction is apt to make persons weary and faint, as Rebekah was, because of the daughters of Heth, and as Jeremiah was, because of the derision of the Jews, Gen. xxvii. 46. Jer. xx. 8, 9, but a consideration of Jesus, and of what he has endured, tends to relieve the saints in such a condition; see Matt. x. 25. Luke xxiii. 31.

Ver. 4. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, &c.* They had resisted sin, and Satan, and the world, the men of it, and the lusts of it, and its frowns and flatteries, and also false teachers, even every adversary of Christ, and their souls; but they had not, as yet, resisted unto blood, or to the shedding of their blood, as some of the Old-Testament saints had done; as some in the times of the Maccabees, and as James the apostle of Christ, and as Christ himself: wherefore the apostle suggests, that they ought to consider, that they had been indulged; and what they had been engaged in, were only some light skirmishes; and that they must expect to suffer as long as they were in the world, and had blood in them; and that their blood, when called for, should be spilled for the sake of Christ: *striving against sin*; which is the principal antagonist the believer has, and is here particularly pointed out: sin is here, by some, thought to be put for sinful men; or it may design the sin of those men, who solicited the saints to a defection from the truth; or the sin of apostasy itself; or that of unbelief; or rather in-dwelling sin, and the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul. Now this is said, to sharpen and increase the saints' resentment and indignation against it, as being their antagonist, with whom they strive and combat, and which is the cause of all the evils in the world, exposes to wrath to come, and separates from communion with God; and to encourage them to bear their sufferings patiently, since they are not without sin, as Christ was; and since their afflictions and sufferings are for the subduing of sin, and the increase of holiness.

Ver. 5. *And ye have forgotten the exhortation, &c.* Or consolation, the consolatory word or doctrine, in Prov. iii. 11. This, by their conduct, the apostle feared they had forgotten, and therefore puts them in mind of it; or it may be read by way of question, *and have ye forgotten, &c.?* don't ye remember? it would be right to call it to mind: *which speaketh unto you as unto children*; not as the children of Solomon, but as the children of God, or of Christ, the wisdom of God: here, by a prosopopeia, the word of exhortation is introduced as a person speaking, *my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord*; by which is meant, not vindictive punishment; this would not be speaking to them, nor dealing with them as children, and would be contrary to the love of God towards them; besides, chastisement in this sense has been upon Christ for them, and it would be unjust to lay it on them again; but a fatherly correction is designed, and which is given in love by God, as a father, and for the instruction of his children, as the word used signifies: and it is called not the chastening of men, but of the Lord; every chastening, or afflictive providence, is appointed by God, and is looked upon by believers,

when grace is in exercise, as coming from him; and it is directed, and governed, and limited by him, and is overruled by him for his own glory, and their good: and this is not to be despised, as something nauseous and loathsome, or as unuseful and unprofitable, or as insignificant and unworthy of notice, but should be esteemed for the good ends, which are sometimes answered by it: *nor faint when thou art rebuked of him*; God has various ways of rebuking, reproofing, and convincing, sometimes by his spirit, sometimes by his word and ministers, and sometimes by afflictive providences; by these he rebukes his people for their sins, convinces them of them, and brings them to acknowledgment and confession; he makes them hereby sensible of their duty, in which they have been remiss, and brings them to a more constant and fervent discharge of it; he reproves them for, and convinces of their folly in trusting in the creature, or loving it too much, and of every wrong way they have been walking in; and these rebukes are not in a way of wrath, but love, and therefore saints should not faint at them: there are two extremes they are apt to run into, under such a dispensation; either to take no notice, and make light of an affliction, or else to be overwhelmed by it, and sink under it; both are guarded against in this exhortation.

Ver. 6. *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, &c.* All men are not the objects of God's love, only a special people, whom he has chosen in Christ; for whom he has given his son, when they were sinners and enemies; whom he quickens and calls by his grace, justifies, pardons, and accepts in Christ; and whom he causes to love him; these he loves with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and in a free and sovereign way, without any regard to any motive or condition in them. Now these are chastened by him, and loved while they are chastened; their chastening is in love, as appears from the nature of God's love to them, which changes not; from the nature of chastening itself, which is that of a father; from the divine supports granted under it; from the ends of it, which are, among others, that they might be more and more partakers of holiness, and not be condemned with the world; and from the issue of it, which is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So the Jews^p often speak of אהבה של אבותיה, *chastisements of love*, in distinction from evil chastisements, or vindictive ones: *and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*; by whom are meant, not any of the angels, nor all the sons of men, but such whom God has predestinated to the adoption of children, and in the covenant of his grace has declared himself a father to; for whom Christ has a special regard, as children, and therefore partook of human nature, and died to gather them together, and redeemed them, that they might receive the adoption of children; and who appear to be the children of God by faith in Christ; and who have the spirit of adoption, witnessing their sonship to them; this is a valuable blessing of grace, and springs from love: and such are *received* by God into his heart's love and affection, with complacency and delight; and into the covenant of his grace, to share

^p Zohar in Gen. fol. 39. 3. & 102. 4. & in Exod. fol. 90. 2. & 102. 2. & in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

all the blessings and promises of it; and into his family, to enjoy all the privileges of his house, and into communion with himself; and they will be hereafter received by him into glory: now these he scourges; he suffers them-sometimes to be scourged by men, and to be buffeted by Satan; and sometimes he scourges them himself with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but always in love.

Ver. 7. *If ye endure chastening, &c.*] In faith, with patience, with courage and constancy, with humility and reverence: there are many things which may encourage and animate the saints to endure it in such a manner; as that it is but a chastening, and the chastening of a father; it should be considered from whence it comes, and for what ends; that it comes from the Lord, and is for his glory, and their good; the example of Christ, and of other saints, should excite unto it. The Jews have a saying⁹, that "the doctrine of chastisements is silence;" that is, they are to be patiently bore, and not murmured at. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read the words as an exhortation; the former of these renders it, *persevere in discipline*; the Syriac version, *endure correction*; the Arabic version, *be ye patient in chastisement*; and the Ethiopic version, *endure your chastening*; but then the word, *for*, should be supplied in the next clause, as it is in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, making that to be a reason enforcing this, *for God dealeth with you as with sons*: chastening is owing of them for his children, and it discovers them to be so, and shews that they continue such; he does not chasten them but when it is necessary; and whenever he does, it is in love and mercy, and for good, and in the best time, seasonably, and in measure: *for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?* no one can be named, not the son of God himself; he had the chastisement of our peace upon him; nor the more eminent among the children of God, as Abraham, David, and others; nor any in any catalogue, or list of them, such as in the preceding chapter; not one in any age or period of time whatever, in any bodies, societies, or communities of them, either under the Old or New Testament.

Ver. 8. *But if ye be without chastisement, &c.*] Or have no affliction: *whereof all are partakers*; that is, all the children of God; they are all alike children; they are all in a state of imperfection, and prone to sin; God has an impartial respect unto them: and though they are not all alike chastened, nor chastened at all times, yet none are exempted from chastisement, but have it in some way or another, and at some time or another. *Then are ye bastards, and not sons*; all are not sons that are under a profession of religion; all that are under a profession of religion are not chastised; but then those are not the children of God, but the children of the world, of Satan, and of the antichristian harlot; for though all that are chastised are not children, yet all that are children are chastised: hence we learn, that outward peace and prosperity is not a note of a true church; and that such have reason to distrust their state, who know not what it is to have the chastising

rod of God upon them; and that afflictions are rather arguments for than against sonship.

Ver. 9. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, &c.*] Earthly parents; who are so called, because they are the immediate causes and instruments of the generation of their children, and of their fleshly bodies, and worldly beings; and to distinguish them from the Father of spirits: and this shews, that they have not the spirit or soul from them, only the flesh or body, and which is frail and corrupt; and therefore goes by this name. *Which corrected us*; betimes, and at proper seasons, in love, and for instruction, and to prevent ruin, and death: *and we gave them reverence*; by submitting to their correction, and hearkening to it; by taking shame to themselves, and acknowledging the offence committed; by retaining the same affection for them; and by a carefulness not to offend for the future. *Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?* that is, to God, who is so called; not because he is the Creator of angels, who are spirits; but because he is the Creator of the souls of men; the soul is the more noble and excellent part of man: it bears a resemblance to God; it is the life of man, and is immortal; it is exceeding precious, and the redemption of it; this was at first immediately created by God; and he still continues to create souls, which he preserves in their being, and has the power of saving and destroying them. Besides, God may be so called, because he is the author and donor of all spiritual gifts, and particularly of regenerating grace; it is he who renews a right spirit in men, and puts a new spirit into them: now such ought to be in subjection to him; not only as creatures to a Creator, and as subjects to their prince: but as children to a father, and particularly to him, as and when correcting; they should bow to his sovereignty, resign to his will, be humble under his mighty hand, be still and quiet, and bear all patiently; the advantage arising from such a subjection is life: *and live; or that ye may live; or and ye shall live*; more comfortably, and more to the glory of God, in communion and fellowship with him here, and in heaven to all eternity.

Ver. 10. *For they verily for a few days chastened us, &c.*] Which respects not the minority of children, during which time they are under the correction of parents, and which is but a few days; nor the short life of parents; but rather the end which parents have in chastening their children, which is their temporal good, and which lasts but for a few days; which sense the opposition in the latter part of the text requires: and this they do *after their own pleasure*; not to please and delight themselves in the pains and cries of their children, which would be brutish and inhuman; though corrections are too often given to gratify the passions; nor merely in an arbitrary way, and when they please; but the sense is, they correct as seems good unto them; in the best way and manner; to the best of their judgments, which are fallible: *but he for our profit*; saints are no losers by afflictions; they lose nothing but their dross and tin; they don't lose the love of God; nor their interest in the covenant

of grace; nor the presence of God; nor grace in their own hearts; nor spiritual peace and comfort: on the contrary, they are real gainers by them; their graces gain by them fresh lustre and glory; they obtain a greater degree of spiritual knowledge, and a larger stock of experience; and are hereby restored to their former state, duty, and zeal; and become more conformable to Christ; yea, their afflictions conduce to their future glory; many are the profits arising from them. The Alexandrian copy reads in the plural number, *profits*: particularly God's end in chastening of his children is, *that we might be partakers of his holiness*; not the essential holiness of God, which is incommunicable; but a communicative holiness of his, which it is his determining will his people should have: it comes from him, from whom every good and perfect gift does; it is in Christ for them, and is received out of his fulness; and is wrought in them by the Spirit; and it bears a resemblance to the divine nature: now men are naturally destitute of this holiness; they have it not by nature, but by participation; as God's gift; and they first partake of it in regeneration; and here an increase of it is designed, a gradual participation of it; and it may include perfect holiness in heaven: afflictions are designed as means to bring persons to this end; to bring them to a sense of sin, an acknowledgment of it, an aversion to it, and to a view of pardon of it; to purge it away; to wean the saints from this world; to increase their grace, and lead them on to a perfect state of glory, where there will be no more sin, and no more sorrow.

Ver. 11. *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, &c.*] These words anticipate an objection, taken from the grief and sorrow that comes by afflictions; and therefore how should they be for profit and advantage? The apostle answers, by granting that no affliction *seemeth* to be joyous, in outward appearance to flesh and blood, and according to the judgment of carnal sense and reason; in this view of afflictions, it must be owned, they don't appear to be matter, cause, or occasion of joy; though they really are, when viewed by faith, and judged of by sanctified reason; for they are tokens of the love of God and Christ; are evidences of sonship; and work together either for the temporal, or spiritual, or eternal good of the saints: and so likewise indeed for the present time, either whilst under them, or in the present state of things, they seem so; but hereafter, either now when they are over; or however in the world to come, when the grace, goodness, wisdom, and power of God in them, in supporting under them, bringing out of them, and the blessed effects, and fruits of them, will be discerned, they will be looked upon with pleasure: but for the present, and when carnal sense and reason prevail, it must be allowed, that they are not matter of joy, but *grievous*; or matter, cause, and occasion of grief; they cause pain and grief to the afflicted, and to their friends and relations about them; and especially, they are very grieving, and occasion heaviness, and are grievous to be borne, when soul-troubles attend them; when God hides his face, and the soul is filled with a sense of wrath, looking upon the chastening, as being in wrath and hot displeasure; when Satan is let loose, and casts his fiery

darts thick and fast; and when the soul has lost its views of interest in the love of God, and in the grace of Christ, and in eternal glory and happiness. *Nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby*: who are used unto afflictions; trained up and instructed in the school of afflictions, as the word may signify; in which many useful lessons of faith and hope, patience and experience, humility, self-denial, and resignation of will, are learned: and to such afflictions yield *the fruit of peace*; external peace and prosperity sometimes follow upon them; and oftentimes internal peace is enjoyed in them; and they always issue to such in eternal peace and everlasting happiness; and this peace arises from the *righteousness* of Christ, laid hold upon by faith, which produces a true conscience-peace, and entitles to that everlasting joy and rest which remains for the people of God. Moreover, the fruit of holiness may be designed, which saints by afflictions are made partakers of, and the peace enjoyed in that; for there is a peace, which though it does not spring from, yet is found in the ways of righteousness; and though this peace may not be had for the present, or while the affliction lasts, yet it is experienced *afterwards*; either after the affliction is over, in the present life, or however in eternity, when the saints enter into peace; for the end of such dispensations, and of the persons exercised by them, is peace.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, &c.*] These words may be considered as spoken to the Hebrews, with respect to themselves; accordingly, the Syriac version reads, *your hands, and your knees*; who were sluggish, and inactive in prayer, in hearing the word, in attendance on ordinances, in holding fast their profession, and in the performance of those things which adorn it; they were weary and fatigued with weights and burdens of sins and afflictions; and were faint, fearful, and timorous, through distrust of the promised good, because of their persecutions, being in present distress, and in a view of approaching danger, with which they might be surprised, as well as affected with their present afflictions; and then the exhortation to *lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*, is to be active in every duty; to be courageous against every enemy: to bear patiently every burden; to take heart, and be of good cheer under every afflictive providence: or else they may be considered as an exhortation to them with respect to others, which seems to be most agreeable to Isa. xxxv. 3. from whence they are taken; and then what is signified in them is done by sympathizing with persons in distress; by speaking comfortably to them, and by bearing their burdens.

Ver. 13. *And make straight paths for your feet, &c.*] By *feet* are meant the walk and conversation of the saints, both in the church, and in the world, Cant. vii. 1. and there are *paths* made ready for these feet to walk in; as the good old paths of truth, of the word and worship of God, of faith and holiness: and to make these paths *straight*, is to make the word of God the rule of walking; to avoid carefully joining any thing with it as a rule; to attend constantly on the ordinances of Christ; to go on evenly in a way of believing on him; to walk in some measure worthy of

the vocation [wherewith we are called, and by way of example to others. *Let that which is lame be turned out of the way*; a lame member, as the Syriac version, a lame member of the body of Christ, the church; or a lame person, as the Arabic version, a weak believer; one that is ready to halt, either through the corruption of nature, or through the weakness of grace, or through want of light and judgment, and through instability and inconstancy; lest such an one should, through the irregular walk and conversation of others, be stumbled and offended, and go out of the way, and leave the paths of righteousness and truth. God takes care of, and has a regard to such, and he would have others also, Mic. iv. 6. Zeph. iii. 19. The Ethiopic version reads, *that your halting may be healed, and not offended*; that you yourselves may not halt and stumble. *But let it rather be healed*; the fallen believer be restored, the weak brother be confirmed, the halting professor be strengthened, and every one be built up and established upon the most holy faith, and in the pure ways of the Gospel.

Ver. 14. *Follow peace with all men, &c.*] That are in a natural and domestic relation to one another, being of the same family; and that are in a civil and political one, being of the same nation, city, or society; and that are in a spiritual one, being members of the same church; or, if not, yet being saints, and though in some things different in judgment; yea, even peace is to be followed with enemies, as much as in us lies: and perhaps by *all men*, the Gentiles may be more especially designed, whose peace the Hebrews thought they were not to seek, Deut. xxiii. 6. mistaking the sense of the text, by applying it to the Gentiles in general: to *follow peace*, signifies an eager pursuit after it, in the use of proper means; exerting the utmost of a man's power to attain it, in all things possible: many things serve to enforce this upon the saints; this is most agreeable to all the three divine Persons; to God, who is the God of peace; to Christ, the Prince of peace; and to the Spirit, one of whose fruits is peace; and to the characters of the saints, who are sons of peace, and who are called to peace, and who make a profession of the Gospel of peace; and to the privileges they enjoy, being interested in the covenant of peace, partaking of spiritual peace now, and being entitled to eternal peace hereafter: and this agrees with the sayings and counsels of the ancient Jews. It was a saying of Hillel[†], who lived about the times of Christ; "be thou one of the disciples of Aaron, who loved peace, ורדף שלום, and followed peace." This is said of Aaron in the Talmud[†], that "he loved peace, and followed peace, and made peace between a man and his neighbour, as is said, Mal. ii. 6." They recommend peace on many accounts, and say, Great is peace, and among the rest, because it is one of the names of God[†]: and holiness; this being added to peace, shews that peace is no further to be followed than is consistent with holiness; and holiness here does not design any particular branch of holiness, as chastity of the body and mind, but the whole of holiness, inward and outward; and intends true holiness, in op-

position to ceremonial holiness, which the Hebrews were fond of, and pursued after: it means even perfect holiness; for though holiness is not perfect in this life, yet it will be in heaven; and there is a perfection of it in Christ; and it is to be followed after, by going to Christ for more grace, and exercising faith upon him, as our sanctification; and by eager desires that the spirit of God would sanctify us more and more, and enable us, by his grace and strength, to walk in the way of holiness, till we get safe to heaven: *without which no man shall see the Lord*; or God, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, with the beatific vision in heaven: or the Lord Jesus Christ, *our Lord*, as the Syriac version reads; even in this life, so as to have communion with him; and hereafter, so as to behold his glory, both intellectually and corporeally: to such a sight holiness is necessary; for God is holy, and Christ is holy, and so is heaven, and so are the angels, and the souls of men in it.

Ver. 15. *Looking diligently, &c.*] Acting the part of bishops, or overseers, as the word signifies; and so this exhortation either respects officers of the church of the Hebrews, whose business it was more especially to inspect into the principles and practices of the members of it, and take care that they did not imbibe false doctrines, or live immoral lives; or rather the several members of the church, whose business it is to watch over one another, since this epistle seems to be written to the whole church. *Let any man fail of the grace of God*; not the free favour and love of God in Christ, which is everlasting, unchangeable, and from whence there is no separation; nor the grace of God implanted in the heart in regeneration, which is incorruptible, never-failing, but always remains, as do faith, hope, and love; but either the whole doctrine of the Gospel, which is a declaration of the grace of God; or particularly the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which men may receive in vain, and fall from, 2 Cor. vi. 1. Gal. v. 4. to which these Hebrews might be prone: and such *fail of it*, who either come short of it, don't come up to it, receive and embrace it; or who having professed it, drop it and deny it: now such should be looked after, and such a case should be diligently looked into; because the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the good of souls, and the well-being, and even the continuance of the church-state are concerned: *lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled*; the Alexandrian copy reads *οι πολλοι*, the many, the common people, the private members of the church; though it may intend either things or persons: it may design things; and these either the corruption of nature in general, which is a root that lies hidden in a man's heart; and is a root or gall of bitterness; and is apt to spring up, and bring forth bitter fruit, and gives trouble both to a man's self and others; and is of a defiling nature, in particular sins; such as malice, strife, and contention, covetousness, lust, pride, oppression, idleness, &c. which make bitter work, and occasion great trouble in churches, oftentimes: or errors and heresies, which sometimes, like roots, lie under ground, secret

[†] Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 12.

[†] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 6. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2

[†] Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1, 2.

and undiscovered; and are bitter ones in their effects, bringing ruin and swift destruction on the souls of men; and these sometimes spring up in churches, whilst ministers and members are asleep, or not so diligent and watchful as they should be; and occasion great trouble, and are very infectious, and defiling: moreover, persons may be designed; which agrees well with Deut. xxix. 18. from whence this phrase is taken; and with the instance in the following verse, such as all immoral persons, and false teachers, particularly self-justiciaries, †that preach up the doctrine of justification by the works of the law: this was the capital mistake, and rooted error of the Jewish nation; and a bitter one it was; it produced many bitter fruits of pride and vain glory; and this sprung up in the church, and troubled and defiled many there and elsewhere, being spread by the abettors of it; see Acts xv. 24. Gal. i. 6. and v. 9, 10. Now, care should be taken, that no such person be in churches, holding such an error; because of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the comfort of souls; the peace of the church, and the growth and increase of it, which must be hurt by such men and doctrines; so εἰς ἀμαρτανῶσι, a *sinful root*, is used for a wicked man, in 1 Maccab. i. 11. and שורש הרִי, a *root of bitterness*, signifies, in Jewish writings^a, an error, or heresy, in opposition to a *root of faith*, or a fundamental doctrine.

Ver. 16. *Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, &c.*] The first of these is guilty of a sin against the second table of the law, as well as against his own body; and which is opposed to the holiness the apostle had before exhorted to; such who are guilty of it, are not to be continued in the communion of the church; and it is a sin, which, lived in unrepented of, excludes from the kingdom of heaven: the latter is one who is a transgressor of the first table of the law; who is an idolater, a swearer, a despiser of public worship and ordinances, and who behaves irreverently in divine service, and mocks at the future state, as Esau; to whom both these characters seem to belong: and this agrees with what the Jews say concerning him: they have a tradition^b, that he committed five transgressions on the day he came out of the field weary. “He committed idolatry: he shed innocent blood; and lay with a virgin betrothed; and denied the life of the world to come (or a future state); and despised his birthright.” It is elsewhere^c a little differently expressed. “Esau, the wicked, committed five transgressions on that day: he lay with a virgin betrothed; and killed a person; and denied the resurrection of the dead; and denied the root, or foundation, (i. e. that there is a God,) and despised his birthright; and besides, he desired his father’s death, and sought to slay his brother.” It is common for them to say of him, that he was an ungodly man; and particularly, that he was a murderer, a robber, וְנֹאֵף, and an adulterer^d; and that he has no part in the world to come^e: who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright; the account of which is in Gen. xxv. 29—34. this includes all the privileges which he had a right unto by

being the first-born; as a peculiar blessing from his father; a double portion of goods; and dominion over his brethren: and it is commonly said by the Jews, that the priesthood belonged to the first-born, before the Levitical dispensation; and that for this reason, Jacob coveted the birthright^f, Esau being a wicked man, and unfit for it. The birthright was reckoned sacred; it was typical of the primogeniture of Christ; of the adoption of saints, and of the heavenly inheritance belonging thereunto; all which were despised by Esau: and so the Jewish paraphrases^g interpret the contempt of his birthright, a despising of his part in the world to come, and a denial of the resurrection of the dead: and his contempt of it was shewn in his selling it; and this was aggravated by his selling it for one morsel of meat; which was bread, and pottage of lentiles, Gen. xxv. 34. The Jewish writers speak of this bargain and sale much in the same language as the apostle here does; they say^h of him, this is the man that sold his birthright כָּנַח לְהוֹם, בעַר כָּנַח לְהוֹם, for a morsel of bread; and apply to him the passage in Prov. xxviii. 21. for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

Ver. 17. *For ye know how that afterwards, &c.*] After he had had his pottage; after he had sold his birthright for it, and the blessing with it; after his father had blessed Jacob: this the apostle relates to the Hebrews, as a thing well known to them; they having read the books of Moses, and being conversant with them, in which the whole history of this affair is recorded: how that when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; by his father, who refused to give him the blessing, but confirmed what he had given to Jacob; and also by God, he being the object of his hatred; concerning whom he had said, even before his birth, the elder shall serve the younger, Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13. for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, Gen. xxvii. 34, 38. though he was very solicitous for the blessing, and shed many tears to obtain it, yet he had no true repentance for his sin in selling the birthright. Tears are not an infallible sign of repentance: men may be more concerned for the loss and mischief that come by sin, than for the evil that is in it; and such repentance is not sincere; it does not spring from love to God, or a concern for his glory; nor does it bring forth proper fruits: or rather, the sense of the words is, that notwithstanding all his solicitude, importunity, and tears, he found no place of repentance in his father Isaac; he could not prevail upon him to change his mind; to revoke the blessing he had bestowed on Jacob, and confer it on him, Gen. xxvii. 33. for he plainly saw it was the mind of God, that the blessing should be where it was; whose counsel shall stand, and he’ll do all his pleasure. This latter seems to be the better interpretation of the words, though the former agrees with the Targum on Job xv. 20. “all the days of Esau the ungodly, they expected that he would have repented, but he repented not.”

Ver. 18. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, &c.*] The design of the apostle in

^a Corsi, Orat. 1. fol. 35. 1.

^b Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. xxv. 29.

^c Shenot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 89. 3. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2.

^d Tzeror Hammor, fol. 27. 1.

^e Tzeror Hammor, fol. 26. 3.

^f Bereshit Rabba, sect. 62. fol. 56. 2.

^g Targum Hieros. & Jon. in Gen. 25. 34. Bereshit Rabba, ib.

^h Tzeror Hammor, fol. 26. 4. & 27. 1.

the following words is, in general, to engage the Hebrews to adhere closely to the Gospel, from the consideration of the superior excellency of it to the law; and in particular, to enforce his former exhortations to cheerfulness under afflictions; to an upright walk in the ways of God; to follow peace with all men, even with the Gentiles, and holiness both of heart and life; and to value the doctrine of the Gospel; and to take heed that none fail of it, or act unbecoming it: and here the apostle observes, what the believing Hebrews were not come to, being delivered from it, namely, the legal dispensation, which was their privilege; the happiness of which is expressed by a detail of particular circumstances, which attended the giving of the law to the Jews: it was given on a *mount which might be touched*; that is, by God, who descended on it, and by touching it caused it to smoke, quake, and move, Exod. xix. 18. Compare with this, Psal. lxxviii. 8. and civ. 32. and cxliv. 5. for it was not to be touched by the Israelites, nor by their cattle, Exod. xix. 12, 13. that is, at the time that the law was given, and Jehovah was upon it, otherwise it might be touched; and the meaning is, that it was an earthly mountain, that might be approached to, and be seen and felt, and not of a spiritual nature, as Zion, or the church of God; and so may be expressive of the carnality of the law, and also of the movableness of it: *and that burned with fire*; as Mount Sinai did, Exod. xix. 18. Deut. iv. 11. and v. 23. which set forth the majesty of God, when upon it, at whose feet went forth burning coals; and also the wrath of God, as an avenging lawgiver and Judge; and the terror of that law, which strikes the minds of the transgressors of it with an expectation of fiery indignation; and so points out the end of such transgressors, which is, to be burnt: *nor unto blackness and darkness*: which covered the mount when God was upon it, Exod. xix. 16, 18. Deut. iv. 11. and which also may express the majesty of God, round about whom are clouds and darkness; and also the horror of the legal dispensation, and the obscurity of it; little being known by the Jews of the spirituality of the law, of the strict justice of God, and of the righteousness which the law requires, and of the end and use of it; and especially of the way of salvation by Christ; and so dark were they at last, as to prefer their own traditions before this law: 'tis added, *and tempest*: there being thunderings and lightnings, which were very terrible, Exod. xix. 16. and xx. 18. and though there is no express mention made of a tempest by Moses, yet Josephus^d speaks not only of very terrible thunderings and lightnings, but of violent storms of wind, which produced exceeding great rains: and the Septuagint on Deut. iv. 11. and v. 22. use the same words as the apostle does here, *blackness, darkness, and tempest*. This also may denote the majesty of God, who was then present; the terror of that dispensation; the horrible curses of the law; and the great confusion and disquietude raised by it in the conscience of a sinner.

Ver. 19. *And the sound of a trumpet, &c.*] Exod. xix. 16, 19. and xx. 18. which made it still more awful, as the sound of the trumpet will at the last day: *and the voice of words*; of the ten words, or decalogue;

which was as an articulate voice, formed by angels; and, therefore, the law is called the word spoken by angels, Heb. ii. 2. and is represented as the voice of God himself, Exod. xx. 1. who made use of the ministry of angels to deliver the law to Moses; *which voice is called קול דברים*, the voice of words, in Deut. iv. 12. and this voice, *they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more*; fearing that they should die; wherefore they desired Moses to be their mediator, and draw nigh to God, and hear his words, and speak them to them, from him, Exod. xx. 19. Deut. v. 24—27.

Ver. 20. *For they could not endure that which was commanded, &c.*] In the law; not that they disliked and despised the law, as unregenerate men do; but they could not endure it, or bear it, as a yoke, it being a yoke of bondage; nor as a covenant of works, it requiring perfect obedience, but giving no strength to perform; and as it shewed them their sins, but did not direct them to a Saviour; as it was an accusing, cursing, and condemning law; and, as a fiery one, revealing wrath, and filling the conscience with it; unless this should have any respect to the following edict, more particularly: *and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart*; and, if a beast, much more a man: and how easily, through inadvertence, might this be done? and how terrible was the punishment? nothing less than death, by stoning, or being shot: and this they could not bear to hear, or think of: the last clause, *or thrust through with a dart*, is wanting in the Alexandrian and Beza's Claromontane copies, in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and yet is necessary to be retained, being in the original text, in Exod. xix. 12, 13.

Ver. 21. *And so terrible was the sight, &c.*] Of the smoke, fire, and lightnings; or of God himself, who descended on the mount; with which agrees the Arabic version, which renders the words, *and so terrible was he who vouchsafed himself to be seen*: not in the bush burning with fire; at which time Moses was afraid to look upon God, Exod. iii. 6. but on Mount Sinai, when the law was given: that *Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake*: perhaps he might say this, when he spake, and God answered him, Exod. xix. 19. These words are nowhere recorded in Scripture; wherefore the apostle had them either by divine revelation, or from tradition, confirmed by the former: for the Jews have a notion that Moses did quake and tremble, and when upon the mount; and that he expressed his fear and dread. They have such a tradition as this: "when Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the world, what has this man, born of a woman, to do among us? he said unto them, to receive the law he is come; they replied before him, that desirable treasure, which is treasured up with thee, nine hundred, and seventy, and four generations, before the world was created, dost thou seek to give to flesh and blood? What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? who hast set thy glory above the heavens! The holy blessed God said to Moses, return them an answer; he said, before

^d Antiqu. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 2.

^e T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2. Yalkut, 2. par. 2. fol. 92.

“ him, Lord of the world, כַּתִּירָא אֲנִי, *I am afraid*, “ lest they should burn (or consume) me, with the “ breath of their mouth.” Compare this last clause with 2 Thess. ii. 8. and elsewhere^f, those words being cited, *he called unto Moses*, Exod. xxiv. 16. it is observed: “ this Scripture comes not, but לֵאמֹר עָלָיו, “ to terrify him; that so the law might be given with “ fear, fervour, and trembling; as it is said, Psal. ii. “ 11.” Once more^g, “ at the time that the holy “ blessed God said to Moses, go, get thee down, for “ thy people have corrupted themselves, Exod. xxxii. 7. “ אֲדַעַע כִּשָׁה, *Moses trembled*; and he could not “ speak, &c.” And again, it is said^h; that when Moses was on Mount Sinai, supplicating for the people of Israel, five destroying angels appeared, and immediately כַּתִּירָא כִּשָׁה, *Moses was afraid*. Now this circumstance is mentioned by the apostle, to aggravate the terror of that dispensation; that Moses, a great and good man; and who had much familiarity with God; the general of the people of Israel; their leader and commander; a man of great courage and presence of mind; and was their mediator between God and them; and yet feared, and quaked: the best of men are not without sin; and the most holy man on earth can't stand before a holy God, and his holy law, upon the foot of his own righteousness, without trembling: it is an awful thing to draw nigh to God; and there is no such thing as doing it without a Mediator; and that Mediator must be more than a creature: and it is our happiness that we have such a Mediator, who never feared, nor quaked; who failed not, nor was he discouraged.

Ver. 22. *But ye are come unto Mount Zion, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy reads, as in ver. 18. for *ye are not come*; which may seem to favour that interpretation of this passage, which refers it to the heavenly state; to which saints, in this present life, are not, as yet, come: but, by *Mount Zion*, and the other names here given, is meant the church of God, under the Gospel dispensation, to which the believing Hebrews were come; in distinction from the legal dispensation, signified by Mount Sinai, from which they were delivered: and this is called Mount Zion, because, like that, it is beloved of God; chosen by him; and is the place of his habitation; here his worship is, and his word and ordinances are administered; here he communes with his people, and distributes his blessings: and this, as Mount Zion, is a perfection of beauty; the joy of the whole earth; is strongly fortified by divine power, and is immovable; and is comparable to that mountain, for its height and holiness: and to come to Zion is to become a member of a Gospel church, and partake of the ordinances, enjoy the privileges, and perform the duties belonging to it: *and unto the city of the living God*; the Gospel church is a city, built on Christ, the foundation; and is full of inhabitants, true believers, at least it will be, in the latter day; it is pleasantly situated by the river of God's love, and by the still waters of Gospel ordinances; it is governed by wholesome laws, of Christ's enacting, and is under proper officers, of his ap-

pointing; and is well guarded by watchmen, which he has set upon the walls of it; and it is endowed with many privileges, as access to God, freedom from the arrests of justice, and from condemnation, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance: and this may be called the *city of God*, because it is of his building, and here he dwells, and protects, and defends it; and who is styled *the living God*, to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, which are lifeless and inanimate, no other than stocks and stones. *The heavenly Jerusalem*: the church of God goes by the name of Jerusalem often, both in the Old and in the New Testament; with which it agrees in its name, which signifies the vision of peace, or they shall see peace: Christ, the King of it, is the Prince of peace; the members of it are sons of peace, who enjoy a spiritual peace now, and an everlasting one hereafter: like that, it is compact together, consisting of saints, cemented together in love, in the order and fellowship of the Gospel; and is well fortified, God himself, and his power, being all around it, and having salvation, for walls and bulwarks, and being encamped about by angels; and it is a free city, being made so by Christ, and, through him, enjoying the liberty of grace now, and having a title to the liberty of glory in the world to come; as Jerusalem was, it is the object of God's choice, the palace of the great King, and the place of divine worship: it is called *heavenly*, to distinguish it from the earthly Jerusalem; and to express the excellency of it, as well as to point out its original: the members of it are from heaven, being born from above; their conversation is now in heaven; and they are designed for that place; and its doctrines and ordinances are all from thence. *And to an innumerable company of angels*; which are created spirits, immaterial and immortal; very knowing, and very powerful; and swift to do the will of God; they are holy, and immutably so, being the elect of God, and confirmed by Christ: and saints now are brought into a state of friendship with them, and into the same family; and are social worshippers with them; and they have access into heaven, where angels are; and with whom they shall dwell for ever: and, in the present state of things, they share the benefit and advantages of their kind offices; who have, sometimes, provided food for their bodies; healed their diseases; directed and preserved them on journeys; prevented outward calamities; delivered them out of them, when in danger; restrained things hurtful, and cut off their enemies: and, with regard to things spiritual, they have, sometimes, made known the mind and will of God unto the saints; have comforted them under their distresses; helped them against Satan's temptations; are present at their death, and carry their souls to glory; and will gather the saints together, at the last day: and, as to the number of them, they are innumerable; they are the armies of heaven; and there is a multitude of the heavenly host; there are more than twelve legions of angels; their number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: and this makes both for the glory and majesty of God, whose attend-

^f T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 4. 2.

^g Zohar in Exod. fol. 54. 4.

^h Midrash Kohelet, fol. 69. 4.

ants they are; and for the comfort and safety of saints, to whom they minister, and about whom they encamp: a like phrase is used in 2 Esdras vi. 3.

Ver. 23. *To the general assembly, &c.*] A *panegyris*, the word here used, was a public and solemn assembly of the Greeks, either at their games, or feasts, or fairs, or on religious accounts; and signifies a large collection and convention of men; and sometimes the place where they met together; and is here used, by the apostle, for the church of God, consisting of all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles, and the meeting of them together: they met together, in the infinite mind of God, from all eternity; and in Christ, their head and representative, both then and in time; and at the last day, when they are all gathered in, they'll meet together personally; and a joyful meeting it will be; and a very general one, more so than the assembly of the Jews, at any of their solemn feasts, to which the apostle may have some respect; since this will consist of some of all nations, that have lived in all places, and in all ages of time: *and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*: by the *church*, is not meant any particular, or congregational church, nor any national one; but the church catholic, or universal, which consists only of God's elect, and of all of them, in all times and places; and reaches even to the saints in heaven: this church is invisible at present, and will never fail; of which Christ is the head, and for which he has given himself: now the persons, that belong to this church, are styled *the first-born*; who are not the apostles only, who received the first-fruits of the spirit; nor the first converts among the Jews, who first trusted in Christ; but also the chosen of God, who are equally the sons of God, and born of him; are equally loved by him, and equally united to Christ, and interested in him: they have the same privileges, honours, and dignity, and shall enjoy the same inheritance; they are all first-born, and are so called, with respect to the angels, the sons of God, as Christ is with respect to the saints, the many brethren of his: and these are said to be *written in heaven*; not in the earth, Jer. xvii. 13. such writing abides not; nor in the book of the Scriptures, for the names of all are not written there; nor in the general book of God's decrees, which relate to all mankind; but in the Lamb's book of life, kept in heaven; and is no other than their election of God: and this way of speaking, concerning it, shews it to be personal and particular; that it is firm, sure, and constant; that it is out of the reach of men and devils to erase it; it denotes the exact knowledge God has of them, and expresses their right to heaven, and the certainty of their coming there: now all such, who are truly come to Sion, are openly come to this assembly and church, and appear to be a part thereof, and are among the first-born, and have their names written in heaven: *and to God the Judge of all*: the Ethiopic version reads, *the Judge of righteousness*, or the righteous Judge: some think that Christ is here meant; who is truly and properly God, and is the Judge: all judgment is committed to him; he is Judge of all; he is ordained Judge of quick and dead; for which he would not have been fit, had he not been God: true believers come to him by faith, and that, as their Judge,

King, and Governor; and it is their privilege, that Christ is, and will be the Judge of all at the last day; and hence is his coming to judgment desirable to them. But since Christ is spoken of, in the next verse, as a distinct person, to whom the saints come, God the father seems rather to be designed here: and it is one of the privileges of the saints, in the present life, that they have access to God: all men are at a distance from him, in a state of nature; and they naturally run further and further from him, and have no desire after him; and, when they are made sensible of sin, they are afraid and ashamed to come to him; nor is there any coming to God, but through Christ; and this is a fruit of God's everlasting love, what follows upon electing grace, is an effect of Christ's death, and is owing to the quickening grace of the Spirit; it is performed in a spiritual way, and is by faith; it is a coming to the throne of God, even to his seat, to communion with him, and to a participation of his grace: and it is their privilege that they have access to him as the Judge of all; not only as a Father, and as the God of all grace, but as a Judge, and a righteous one, to whom they can come without terror; for though he is just, yet he is a Saviour, and the justifier of his people, on account of the righteousness of his son; whose sins he pardons in a way of justice, through the blood of Christ; and is their patron, protector, and defender, who will right their wrongs, and avenge their cause: *and to the spirits of just men made perfect*; which may be understood of the saints on earth, who are *just men*; not naturally, for so no man is, but the reverse; nor in opinion only, or merely externally, as the Scribes and Pharisees were; nor by the deeds of the law; nor by obedience to the Gospel; nor by faith, either as wrought in them, or done by them, though by the object of it; nor by an infusion of righteousness into them; but by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto them: and these are *made perfect*; not as to sanctification, unless in Christ, or in a comparative sense, and with respect to the parts of the new man, but not as to degrees; for no man is without sin, and the best stand in need of fresh supplies of grace; but as to justification, Christ has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and has perfectly expiated their sins, and perfectly redeemed them from all sin, and has procured a full pardon of them; and they are completely righteous through his righteousness; and the *spirits*, or souls of these are only mentioned, because the communion of saints in a Gospel church-state lies chiefly in the souls and spirits of each other, or in spiritual things relating to their souls; and their souls are greatly affected, and knit to each other: though the saints in heaven may be here intended, at least included; whose spirits or souls are separate from their bodies; and they are the souls of just men, for none but such enter into the kingdom of heaven; where they are made perfect in knowledge and holiness, in peace, and joy; though they have not their bodies, nor as yet all the saints with them. Now, believers, in the present state of things, may be said to be come to them, being come to the church below, which is a part of that above; as also in hope, ex-

¹ Vid. Philostrate. Vita Apollon. l. 8. c. 7.

pectation, and desire. The apostle seems to have respect to some distinctions among the Jews: they divide mankind into three sorts; some are perfectly wicked; and some are perfectly righteous; and there are others that are between both^k: they often speak of צדיקים נמורים, *just men perfect*¹; and distinguish between a just man perfect, and a just man that is not perfect^m; as they do also between penitents and just men perfect; see the note on Luke xv. 7.

Ver. 24. And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, &c.] Of the new covenant, and of Christ's being the Mediator of it, see the notes on ch. viii. 6, 8. Coming to Christ is by faith; and is different from a corporeal coming to him in the days of his flesh; and from an outward attendance on ordinances; it is a coming to him under a sense of want, and upon a sight of fulness; and is the produce of God's efficacious grace; and souls must come to Christ as naked sinners; and without a Mediator, without any thing of their own to ingratiate them; and it is free to all sensible sinners to come to him, and is the great privilege of saints: it is the blessing of blessings; such are safe, and settled, and at peace, who are come to Jesus; they can want no good thing, for all are theirs; they have free access to God through him, and a right to all privileges: *and to the blood of sprinkling*: that is, the blood of Christ; so called, either in allusion to the blood of the passover, which was received in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop was sprinkled upon the lintel and two side-posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites weré; which being looked upon by Jehovah, he passed over them, and all were safe within, so that the destroyer did not touch them, when the first-born in Egypt were destroyed, Exod. xii. which is the case of all such as are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus: or else to the blood of the covenant, sprinkled by Moses on the book, and on all the people, Exod. xxiv. 8. or to the several sprinklings of blood in the legal sacrifices: and the phrase may denote the application of Christ's blood to his people, for justification, pardon, and cleansing, which is their great mercy and privilege: *that speaketh better things than that of Abel*; either *than Abel*, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it, who being dead, yet speaks; and who was a type of Christ in his death, and the punishment of it; for as he was slain by his own brother, who was punished for it, so Christ was put to death by his own nation and people, the Jews, for which wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: but the efficacy of Christ's blood for the procuring pardon, peace, reconciliation, and the redemption and purchase of his church and people, shews him to be greater than Abel; and it speaks better things than he did, or does: or else, *than the blood of Abel*, as the Arabic version renders it; Abel's blood cried for vengeance; Christ's blood cries for peace and pardon, both in the court of heaven, where it is pleaded by Christ, and in the court of conscience, where it is sprinkled by his spirit: or than the sprinkling of the blood of Abel's sacrifice, or than Abel's sacrifice; which

was the first blood that was sprinkled in that way; and the first sacrifice mentioned that was offered up by faith, and was typical of Christ's; but then Christ's sacrifice itself is better than that; and the sprinkling of his blood, to which believers may continually apply for their justification, remission, and purgation, and by which they have entrance into the holiest of all, is of greater efficacy than the sprinkling of blood in Abel's sacrifice; and calls for and procures better things than that did; which sense may the rather be chosen, since the apostle's view, in this epistle, is to shew the superior excellency of Christ's sacrifice to all others, even to the more excellent of them, as Abel's was, ch. xi. 4.

Ver. 25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, &c.] Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, whose blood speaks better things than Abel, or than his blood and sacrifice: he was the speaker in the council and covenant of grace, that spoke for the elect; in the creation of all things out of nothing, that said, and it was done; in giving the law to the Israelites, in the wilderness, for he is the angel which spake to Moses in Mount Sinai, he spoke to God for the Old-Testament saints, and was the angel of God's presence to them; he spoke in his own person, as the prophet of the church, in the days of his flesh; and he now speaks in heaven, by appearing in the presence of God for his people, and by presenting his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; he speaks by his spirit, in and to the hearts of his saints; and by his ministers in the Gospel, and the ordinances of it: nor should he be refused, as he is, when his Gospel is made light of, and neglected; when men excuse themselves from an attendance on it; when they will not hear it; or, when they do, and contradict and blaspheme, despise and reproach it, or leave off hearing it. Care should be taken that Christ is not refused in the ministry of the word; which may be enforced from the greatness and excellency of the person speaking, who is God, and not a mere man; from the excellency of the matter spoken, the great salvation: and the rather diligent heed should be had unto him, since there is a backwardness to every thing that is spiritual and heavenly; and since Satan is vigilant and industrious to put off persons from hearing the Gospel, or to steal the word from them: *for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth*; the Ethiopic version renders it, *who appeared to them on the mount*; that is, on Mount Sinai; meaning either God himself, who descended on the mount, and spoke the ten commandments to the children of Israel; or Christ, the Angel that spake to Moses in it; or rather Moses himself, who was on the earth, and of the earth, earthly; who spake from God to the people, being their mediator; him the Jews refused, would not obey him, but thrust him away, Acts vii. 39. though they promised to hear and do all that was said to them; wherefore they did not escape divine vengeance and punishment; their carcasses fell in the wilderness at several times, in great numbers, and were not suffered to enter into Canaan's land: *much more*

^k T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 57. 1. & T. Bab. Eoshhashanah, fol. 16. 2. Derech Eretz, fol. 19. 4.

¹ Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1. & 39. 3. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 18. 2. & Roshhashanah, fol. 4. 1. Pesachim, fol. 8. 1. 2.

^m T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 2. & Avoda Zora, fol. 4. 1.

shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; that is, Christ, who came from heaven originally; is the Lord from heaven; whose doctrine is from heaven; and who, having done his work, is gone to heaven; where he now is, and from whence he speaks; and from hence he'll come a second time, as Judge of all. There have been, and are some, that turn away from him; from a profession of him, and his Gospel and ordinances, and draw back unto perdition; such shall not escape divine wrath and vengeance; the sorest punishment shall be inflicted on them; see ch. x. 29.

Ver. 26. *Whose voice then shook the earth, &c.*] That is, at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai: Christ was then present; his voice was then heard; which was either the voice of thunder, or the voice of the trumpet, or rather the voice of words: this shook the earth, Sinai, and the land about it, and the people on it; which made them quake and tremble, even Moses himself; see Exod. xix. 18. Psal. lxxviii. 8. *but now he hath promised, saying in Hagg. ii. 6. yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven;* not only the land of Judea, and particularly Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, who were all shaken, and moved, and troubled at the news of the birth of the Messiah, the desire of all nations, the prophet Haggai speaks of, Matt. ii. 2, 3. but the heaven also; by prodigies in it, as the appearance of a wonderful star, which guided the wise men from the east; and by the motions of the heavenly inhabitants, the angels, who descended in great numbers, and made the heavens resound with their songs of praise, on account of Christ's incarnation, Matt. ii. 2. Luke ii. 10, 13, 14. How the apostle explains and applies this, may be seen in the next verse.

Ver. 27. *And this word yet once more, &c.*] Or as it is in Hagg. ii. 6. *yet once it is a little while;* which suggests, that as something had been done already, so in a very little time, and at once, something very marvellous and surprising would be effected: and it signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made; which some understand of what will be done at Christ's coming to judgment; as the passing away of the heavens and the earth, which are things that are made, or created, by the power of God; when there will be a shaking of them, so as that they shall be removed, and pass away with a great noise; and so they interpret the next clause, of the permanency of the new heavens and the new earth, and of the immovable kingdom of glory, and the never-fading inheritance of the saints; and of their fixed, unalterable, and unshaken state: but rather this is to be understood of Christ's coming to the destruction of Jerusalem; when there was an entire removal of the Jewish state, both political and ecclesiastical; and of the whole Mosaic economy; and of things appertaining to divine worship, which were made with hands, as the temple, and the things in it; and which were made to be removed; for they were to continue no longer than the time of reformation: and this removing of them designs the abolition of them, and entire putting an end to them; at which time, not only their civil government was wholly put down, but their ecclesiastic state also; for the place of their worship was destroyed, the daily sacrifice ceased, and the

old covenant, and the manner of administering it, vanished away; and all the legal institutions and ordinances, which were abolished by the death of Christ, were no more performed in Jerusalem; the temple and temple-service perishing together: *that those things which cannot be shaken may remain:* the kingdom and priesthood of Christ, which are everlasting; and the good things which come by him, as remission of sins, justification, adoption, sanctification, and the heavenly inheritance; as also the Gospel, and the doctrines and ordinances of it, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and the mode of Gospel worship; all which are to continue until Christ's second coming.

Ver. 28. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, &c.*] Not the kingdom of glory; eternal glory is a kingdom, and it is an immovable one; and is a free gift of God, and may be said to be now received; God's people are called unto it, and are made meet for it, and have a right unto it, and have it in faith and hope, and in Christ their head and representative: but the kingdom of grace, under the Gospel dispensation, is meant: there are several things in this dispensation which are called a kingdom; as a Gospel church, the Gospel itself, and the privileges and blessings of grace bestowed, especially spiritual and internal ones, Matt. xxv. 1. Luke xvi. 16. Rom. xiv. 17. and the whole dispensation is called the kingdom of heaven, Matt. iii. 2. and iv. 17. Christ he is King, believers are his subjects, the Gospel is his sceptre, and the ordinances are his laws and appointments, and all are immovable; and a man may be said to receive this kingdom, when he is delivered from the power of darkness, is regenerated, and has the blessings of grace actually bestowed on him, and is brought to Zion: *let us have grace;* by which is meant, not thankfulness for so great a blessing, though this is highly requisite and necessary; nor the favour of God, though, as the reception of the kingdom springs from hence, a sense of it ought to abide; nor the habit or principle of grace in the heart, unless particularly the grace of faith, and the exercise of it, should be designed; but rather the doctrine of grace, the Gospel, is intended; and the sense is, *exhort, let us hold it,* as the Ethiopic version renders it; let us hold the Gospel fast, and a profession of it: the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, *we have grace;* this goes along with the immovable kingdom; all that have truly received the one, have the other: *whereby we may serve God;* God is to be served, and not a creature, nor the clements of this world, the ceremonial law, and its rites: nor is he to be served in any form, only in a spiritual way; and without holding to the Gospel, there is no serving him in an evangelic manner; the true and right way of serving him is as follows: *acceptably;* in Christ, in the Gospel of his son, and by faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God: *with reverence;* of the majesty of God, with shame for sin, and with a sense of unworthiness: *and godly fear;* which has God for its author and object, and which springs from his grace, and is increased by discoveries of his goodness; and which is consistent with faith, and spiritual joy; see Psal. ii. 11. and v. 7.

Ver. 29. *For our God is a consuming fire.*] Either God personally considered, God in the person of Christ; so the Shechinah, with the Jews, is called a consuming

fire^a. Christ is truly God, and he is our God and Lord; and though he is full of grace and mercy, yet he will appear in great wrath to his enemies, who will not have him to reign over them: or rather God essentially considered; whose God he is, and in what sense, and how he comes to be so, see the note on ch. viii. 10. what is here said of him, that he is *a consuming fire*, may be understood of his jealousy in matters of worship, Deut. iv. 23, 24. and so carries in it a reason why he is to be served acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. God, and he only, is to be worshipped; and he is to be worshipped in a way suitable to himself; and he has the sole right of fixing the manner of worship, both as to the external and internal parts of it: under the legal dispensation, he was worshipped in a way he then pitched upon, and suitable to it; and under the Gospel dispensation he is to be worshipped in an evangelical way; and he is to have all the glory in every part of worship; and the ordinances of Gospel worship

are immovable; nor are they to be altered, or others put in their room, without incurring his displeasure. Moreover, this phrase may be expressive of the preservation of his people, and of the destruction of their enemies, Deut. ix. 1, 2, 3. We commonly say, that God out of Christ is a consuming fire; meaning, that God, as an absolute God, is full of wrath and vengeance; and it is a truth, but not the truth of this text; for here it is *our God*, our covenant God, our God in Christ; not that he is so to the saints, or to them that are in Christ: he is indeed as a wall of fire in his providences, to protect and defend them, and as fire in his word to enlighten and warm them, to guide and direct them, but not a consuming fire to them; this he is to their enemies, who are as thorns, and briars, and stubble before him: and so the Jews interpret Deut. iv. 24. of a fire consuming fire^o; and observe, that Moses says, *thy God*, and not *our God*^p; but the apostle here uses the latter phrase.

C H A P. XIII.

THE apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, closes it with practical exhortations to these Hebrews, puts up prayers for them, and sends salutations to them. The exhortations are to brotherly love, and the continuance of it, ver. 1. to hospitality, by which some have entertained angels unawares, ver. 2. to sympathy with those that are in bonds, and in afflictions, ver. 3. to purity and chastity in the honourable state of marriage, urged by the judgment of God on unclean persons, ver. 4. to avoid covetousness, and to be content with present things, enforced by the promises of God, which give boldness and strength to faith, ver. 5, 6. to remember their spiritual guides and governors, the preachers of the Gospel to them; and to follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation, which is Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and for ever, ver. 7, 8. And then he cautions them from being carried about with the doctrines of men, which are divers and strange; which he urges from the profitable effect of the Gospel to establish the heart, and from the unprofitableness of meats to legal worshippers, and from the Christians having an altar, which is Christ, which those who are seeking life by the service of the law have nothing to do with, ver. 9, 10. And this he illustrates in the type of burnt-offerings, which were burnt without the camp, and there was nothing left for the priests to eat of, ver. 11. In like manner Christ, the antitype, suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, for the sanctification of his people, by his blood; and who only, and not those who seek for righteousness by the law, have an interest in, ver. 12. However, it becomes the saints to quit every thing, and all dependence on themselves, and fellowship with others, and go forth to Jesus, believing in him, whatsoever reproach they suffer on his account; for here is nothing permanent and durable in this world; but there is a state of happiness to come, which will last for

ever, ver. 13, 14. And since Christ has offered himself for his people, they ought to offer up the sacrifices of praise to God by him, and to do acts of beneficence and goodness, which are sacrifices well-pleasing to God through him, ver. 15, 16. And to these exhortations the apostle adds others; as to obey their spiritual rulers and governors, and submit unto them; since they watch for their souls, and must give an account, which to do with joy, and not with grief, is best and profitable, ver. 17. and to pray for the apostle, and other ministers, since they had a good conscience, and were willing to live honestly; and the rather, that he might be restored to them the sooner, ver. 18, 19. and to engage them to this their duty, he sets them an example, by putting up prayers for them, ver. 20, 21. and desires them to take in good part the letter he had wrote unto them, ver. 22. and acquaints them that Timothy was set at liberty, with whom he hoped to see them in a short time, ver. 23. and then closes the epistle with his own, and the salutations of others, and with his usual benediction, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *Let brotherly love continue.*] The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions add, *in you*; or among you, as a church and society of Christians; for this is not to be understood of love to all mankind, or to those of the same nation, or who are in a strict natural relation brethren, though they are all in a sense brethren, and to be loved; but of love to those who are in the same spiritual relation to God, as their Father, to Christ, as the first-born among many brethren; and are in the same church-state, at least partakers of the same grace: and which love ought to be universal, and reach to all the saints, and be fervent and unfeigned, and as Christ hath loved us; and when it is genuine, it is active and laborious; and shews itself in praying with and for one another; in bearing one another's burdens; in forbearing and forgiving one another; in admonishing

^a Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 4.

^o Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3. & 51. 1. & in Exod. fol. 91. 1. & in Lev. fol. 11. 1.

^p Lexic. Cabalist. p. 111.

one another in love; in building up each other in the most holy faith; and in stirring up one another to the several duties of religion: and without this excellent and useful grace, a profession of religion is in vain; this is an evidence of regeneration; it is the bond of perfectness, and what renders the saints' communion delightful and edifying: many are the arguments moving to the exercise of it; as the love of God, and Christ; the new commandment of Christ; the relation saints stand in to one another; the comfort and joy of Gospel ministers, and our own peace and edification: and this should continue; for the love of God and Christ continues; the relation between the saints continues; and without this, churches can't continue long: the apostle means, not the grace itself, the internal principle, for that, where it once is, always continues, and can never be lost; but the exercise and increase of it, an abounding in it yet more and more. One of the Jewish prayers is to this purpose; "he that dwells in this house, let him plant among you *אֶחָוָה וְאֶחָוָה*, brotherhood and love, (or brotherly love,) peace and friendship."

Ver. 2. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, &c.* By whom are meant, not unconverted men, who are strangers to God and Christ, and the covenants of promise; nor saints, who are as pilgrims and strangers in this world; but such as are of another country, and are unknown; and even though wicked men, they are not excluded; though such as are obliged to quit their own country for righteousness-sake are chiefly designed; all strangers in distress are meant, and hospitality is to be exercised towards them; which lies negatively in doing nothing to distress them, and positively in providing food, raiment, lodging, &c. for them, and in comforting, counselling, and directing them in all matters in which they may stand in need thereof: and that this is a duty, appears from the light of nature, and practices of the Heathens, Acts xxviii. 2, 7, from the express law of God, Deut. x. 19, and many others made in favour of strangers, binding on the Jews; from the sundry exhortations to it in the New Testament, Rom. xii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 9. and from the exhortation here not to forget it; and from the great regard which Christ will shew to such as mind it, and his disregard to others at the last day: the persons who are to exercise it are not only the ministers of the Gospel, who should be given to hospitality; but all the saints, even the meauer sort are not exempted, but should use it according to their ability; though it is chiefly binding on those that are rich. And this should not be forgot, but pursued and followed after; it should be frequently performed; men should be given, and used to it; it should be done without grudging, and in a friendly and loving manner: *for thereby some have entertained angels unawares*; as Abraham, Gen. xviii. 1—8. he knew them not to be angels at first; they appeared as men, and he treated them as such; but they were angels, yea, one of them was Jehovah himself; and hereby he received many favours, ver. 10, 17, 23, 33. and Lot, Gen. xix. 1, 2, 3. who knew not that they were angels he took into his house; but they were, and he was delivered by them from the burning of Sodom;

yea, some have unawares, this way, entertained Christ himself, Luke xxiv. 15—31. and indeed, entertaining of his members is entertaining him, Matt. xxv. 38, 40. It is an observation of a Jewish writer upon the first of these instances; "from hence we learn (says he) how great is the strength (or virtue) of the reception of travellers (or hospitality), as the Rabbins of blessed memory say, greater is *הַכֹּנֶסֶת אֶחָוָה*, hospitality, than the reception of the face of the Shechinah." And this is said to be one of the six things which a man enjoys the fruit of in this world, and for which there remains a reward in the world to come.

Ver. 3. *Remember them that are in bonds, &c.* Not for criminal actions, or for debt, though such should be remembered, and pity shewed them, especially the latter; but such as are in bonds for the sake of Christ, and the Gospel. This has been often the lot of God's people, who should be remembered, by praying for them, sending comfortable letters to them, personally visiting them, and relieving them under their distresses: *as bound with them*; as if it were so, as if in the same condition, and circumstances; by sympathizing with them; by considering themselves liable to the same bonds; by dealing with them as it would be desirable to be dealt with in the same case: and *them which suffer adversity*; outward afflictions of body, distress for want of temporal mercies, food and raiment, and persecution by enemies; or spiritual adversity, as the prevailings of corruptions, and particularly unbelief, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan. *As being yourselves also in the body*; as if in their bodies, enduring the same things; or as being afflicted in the body with diseases, necessities, and persecutions; or as being in the body, the church, of which these afflicted ones are a part, and therefore should have a fellow-feeling with them; or rather as being in this world, in the flesh, or in a body and state subject to the like adversities, temporal and spiritual.

Ver. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, &c.* Some read these words as an exhortation, *let it be so*; others as an assertion, it is so. *Marriage* is the conjunction of one man and one woman in wedlock, whereby they become one flesh; it is a joining together of male and female in this relation, and of two only, and of such as are not within the degrees of blood forbid by the law, Lev. xvi. 6—18. and of such as are fit for marriage: and this is *honourable*, as it was instituted by God, and has been honoured with the presence of Christ, Gen. ii. 23, 24. John ii. 1—11. And it is so in the ends of it, being to procreate children, multiply the earth, build up families, preserve a legitimate offspring, and prevent fornication and all uncleanness; and it is so, when the duties of the relation are performed on both sides: and it is honourable *in all*; in all things, in all respects, upon all accounts; *every way*, as the Arabic version renders it; or as the Ethiopic version, *everywhere*: it has been honourably esteemed of among all nations; it becomes persons of all ranks and degrees, quality, and order; and it is honourable in all that are lawfully married, and do not violate the marriage-contract, or defile the marriage-bed: hereby are con-

^a T. Hieron. Beracot, fol. 3. 3.
^b Abraham Sebu in Tzevor Hammor, fol. 18. 4.

^a T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1.

denned such who despise marriage, that they may give a loose to their wandering and insatiable lusts; and such who, under a pretence of greater sanctity and perfection, reject it as unlawful; and the Papists, who deny it to men employed in sacred work: *and the bed undefiled*: the Arabic version reads, *his bed*: and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, *their bed*: the bed of such whose marriage is honourable; which is not polluted by admitting others into it, or by acts of fornication and adultery: *but, or for*, as the Alexandrian copy reads, *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*: the former of these may be rendered *fornicators*, as it is by the Vulgate Latin version: fornication is a sin committed by single persons, unmarried ones; and though it was reckoned among the Gentiles a thing indifferent, yet is contrary to the law of God, and is a work of the flesh, and makes unfit for the kingdom of God, and brings down the judgments of God both here and hereafter. And this is in opposition to marriage, which is appointed to prevent it. The sin *adulterers* are guilty of, is a sin committed by persons, who are either one or both in a married state, and so is directly a pollution of the marriage-bed: this was punishable with death by the law of God, and light of nature; and though men may make light of it, God will judge and punish such as commit it, both in this life, with diseases, poverty, and disgrace, and in the world to come, at the great day of account; for however secretly it may be committed, God, who is omniscient, sees it, and will bring it into judgment; nor shall any be able to escape the righteous judgment of God, for he is omnipotent, as well as omniscient. The Jews say, "whoever lies "with another man's wife, shall not escape *דינה*, the "judgment, or damnation of hell."

Ver. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness, &c.] Which is an immoderate desire of riches, an over-anxious care for worldly things, attended with dissatisfaction, and discontent with their present state: it discovers itself many ways; in preferring the world to religion; in laying up treasure for a man's own self, without being any ways useful to others; in withholding from himself the necessaries of life, and in making no use of his substance for the glory of God, and the interest of religion: this is a very great evil; it is called idolatry, and is said to be the root of all evil; and is very pernicious to true religion: a believer's conversation should be without it; in his family, for whom he should provide things convenient and honest; and in the world, where he should deal uprightly, and not defraud and over-reach; and in the church, where he should be liberal, and generously communicate, upon all occasions; and such a conversation is becoming the Gospel, which is a declaration of things freely given to us of God. The reason of the apostle's mentioning this sin of covetousness is, because the Jews were prone to it, and these believing Hebrews might be inclined to it, and be dissatisfied with their present condition, in which they suffered the spoiling of their goods; and besides, unless this was avoided, the above-mentioned duties could not be performed aright, as brotherly love, hospitality, remembering and re-

lieving persons in bonds, and adversity. And be content with such things as ye have; or with present things; with present riches, or with present poverty; with present losses and crosses; with present reproaches and afflictions; and contentment with these things shews itself by thankfulness for every mercy, and by submission to the will and providence of God in every state of life: and there are many things which may move and engage unto it; as the consideration of the state and condition men are in, when they come into the world, and will be when they go out of it; the will of God, and the disposition of his providence according to it, which is unalterable; a sense of their own unworthiness; a view of interest in God and Christ; and an eye to the recompense of reward; as well as the many promises of God to support and supply his: and among the rest, what follows, *for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*: which is a promise made to Joshua, and belongs to all believers, Josh. i. 5. which may regard things temporal, as that God will not leave his people in the hands of their enemies, nor forsake them in distress, nor withhold any good thing from them needful for them, but will supply them with the necessaries of life, with which they should be content: and this passage is very pertinently cited for this purpose, and could be easily understood in this sense by the Hebrews; for the Jews explain such places as speak of God's not forsaking men, of the sustenance of them, as Psal. xxxvii. 25. and observe that the word *עִיבָרָה*, *forsaking*, is never used but with respect to *פְּרִיָסָה*, *sustenance*"; though the words may also relate to things spiritual, as that God will not leave them to themselves, to their own corruptions, which would overpower them; nor to their own strength, which is but weakness; nor to their own wisdom, which is folly; nor to Satan, and his temptations, who is an over-match for them; nor to the world, the frowns and flatteries of it, by which they might be drawn aside; nor will he leave them destitute of his presence; for though he sometimes hides his face, and withdraws himself, yet not wholly, nor finally; nor will he forsake the work of his own hands, in them, but will perform it until the day of Christ; he'll not leave or forsake them, so as that they shall perish; he'll not forsake them in life, nor at death, nor at judgment.

Ver. 6. So that we may boldly say, &c.] Or confidently assert; for nothing is more true than this, *the Lord is my helper*: he is able to help, and does help, when none else can; he has promised to be the helper of his people; he has laid help for them on Christ, who is mighty; and he has helped him as man, that he might help them; he has set up a throne of grace for them to come to, where they may find help; and experience confirms the truth of this assertion; every believer can set up an *Ebenzer*, and say, hitherto hath the Lord helped me: the people of God are of themselves helpless ones; there is no help for them in man; their help is only in the Lord; who helps them out of the pit of sin and misery; out of the hands of all their enemies; out of all their afflictions, and out of all the dangers they are exposed unto by Satan and his temp-

T. Bab. Sota. fol. 4. 2.

^a Bereshit Rabba, sect. 69. fol. 61. 4. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 35. fol. 175. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 103. 2.

tations, by reason of a body of sin and death, and no account of the world, and the men of it: he helps them in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; in bearing the cross; in fighting the Lord's battles; and in their journeying through the wilderness: he helps them to temporal blessings, and spiritual ones; to spiritual food and raiment, and to all needful supplies of grace, and, at last, to eternal glory and happiness: and the help he now affords is quick and present, suitable and reasonable, and is what is sufficient; and is sometimes with, and sometimes without means. *And I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* There is a becoming fear and reverence which is due to men that are our superiors, whether in civil or religious affairs; but men are not to be feared, when opposed to God; not a single man only is not to be feared, but even all men; and not they only, but all that they can do; the utmost of which is to kill the body; the ground of this fearlessness in believers are the infinite power, grace, and goodness of God. The words seem to be taken out of Psal. liv. 4. and lvi. 4. and cxviii. 6.

Ver. 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you, &c.*] Christ's church is a kingdom, and he is King in it; pastors of churches are subordinate governors; who rule well when they rule not in an arbitrary way, according to their own wills, but according to the laws of Christ, with all faithfulness, prudence, and diligence. The word may be rendered *guides* or *leaders*; for such point out the way of peace, life, and salvation to men, and direct them to Christ; and guide them into the understanding of the Scriptures, and the truths of the Gospel; and lead them in the paths of faith and holiness, and are examples to them. The Greek word, here used, is what the Jews call Christian bishops by; and *ἐπίσκοπος* is, by Maimonides*, said to be the same as *בִּשְׁפִּיטָה*, a *bishopric*: to remember them is to know, own, acknowledge, and respect them as their governors; to obey them, and submit to them; to treasure up in memory their doctrines and exhortations; to be mindful of them at the throne of grace, to pray for them; and to take care of their maintenance and outward supply of life: *who have spoken unto you the word of God*; of which God is the author, being agreeably to the Scriptures, given by inspiration of God; the subject of which is the love and grace of God in Christ; and which God makes useful for conversion and comfort; and which, when spoken aright, is spoken freely, boldly, and faithfully: *whose faith follow*; or *imitate*; meaning either their faithfulness, by owning the truths and ordinances of the Gospel before men; by reproving fellow-Christians in love; by discharging the several duties of their place in the church; and by performing the private duties of life: or the grace of faith, their strong exercise of it, together with its fruits and effects, love, and good works; also the profession of their faith, which they hold fast unto the end; and the doctrine of faith, by embracing the same, as it appears agreeably to the word; by abiding by it, standing fast in it, striving for it, and persevering in it to the end. *Considering the end of their conversation*; which may intend the whole of their conduct in the discharge of

the several duties of their office; the end of which designs either the manner of it, as De Dieu explains it, agreeably to the sense of the Hebrew word, *תְּרַחֲמֵם*, in Psal. lxxviii. 20. or the drift and scope of it, which was Christ, his honour and glory, as in connexion with the following verse; or the event of it in life, being for the glory of God, and the good of men; or rather the issue of it in death, or what a comfortable end they made; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *considering their last manner of living, in their exit out of the world*; and this is to be considered for imitation and encouragement.

Ver. 8. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*] Who is the substance of the word spoken by the above-mentioned rulers, the author and object of their faith, and the end in which their conversation terminated. These words may be expressive of the duration of Christ: he was *yesterday*, which does not design the day immediately foregoing, nor some little time past, but ancient times, formerly, of old; and though it does not extend to eternity, which is true of Christ, yet may be carried further than to the days of his flesh here on earth, even to the whole Old-Testament dispensation; yea, to the beginning of the world, when he existed not only as the eternal Word, the everlasting *I am*, but as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; during which dispensation he frequently appeared in an human form, and was the sum of all promises and prophecies, and the substance of all types and shadows, and the spiritual food of his people: and he is *to-day* under the Gospel dispensation; in his person as God-man, and in his offices as prophet, priest, and King: and will be so *for ever*: he will never die more; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his priesthood an unchangeable one. Moreover, these words may regard the immutability of Christ; who is unchangeable in his person, perfections, and essence, as God; and in his love to his people; and in the fulness of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, and in the virtue of his sacrifice and righteousness: it may be observed, that *ὁ αὐτός*, translated *the same*, answers to *וְהוּא*, *he*, a name of God, Psal. cii. 27. Isa. xlviii. 12. and which is used in Jewish writings* for a name of God; and so it is among the Turks†: and it is expressive of his eternity, immutability, and independence; and well agrees with Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever.

Ver. 9. *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, &c.*] The word *divers* may denote the variety and multitude of other doctrines; referring either to the various rites and ceremonies of the law, or to the traditions of the elders, or to the several doctrines of men, whether Jews or Gentiles; whereas the doctrine of the Scriptures, of Christ, and his apostles, is but one; it is uniform, and all of a piece; and so may likewise denote the disagreement of other doctrines with the perfections of God, the person and offices of Christ, the Scriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, and even with themselves: and *strange* doctrines may design such as were never taught by God, nor are agreeable to the voice of Christ, nor to be found in the

* In Misn. Gittin, c. 1. sect. 1.

† Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 1. & 4. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 6. 2. & 7. 1. Ed.

Amstelod. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. Maimonides in Misn. Surca, c. 4. sect. 5.

† Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 40.

word of God; and which are new, and unheard-of, by the apostles and churches of Christ; and appear in a foreign dress and habit: wherefore the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews not to be *carried about with them*; as light clouds and meteors in the air, by every wind: for so to be, is to be like children; and discovers great ignorance, credulity, levity, inconstancy, uncertainty, fluctuation, and inconsistency: *for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace*; with the doctrine of grace, which is food for faith, and does not leave men at uncertainties about things; but establishes the heart, with respect to the love and favour of God, and builds souls upon the foundation, Christ; so that they are not at a loss about the expiation of sin, justification, and salvation; but firmly look for, and expect, eternal happiness by Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God: *not with meats*; referring to the distinction of meats among the Jews; or the sacrifices ate both by the priests and by the people; or the whole ceremonial law, which stood in divers meats and drinks: *which have not profited them that have been occupied therein*; they were only profitable to the body; and could be of no other use to the soul, when they were in force, than as they led to Christ, and were regarded by believers; for they were of no advantage to hypocrites and carnal men; they could not sanctify, nor justify, nor cheer the spirits, nor establish the heart; and are of no manner of service at all, since the death of Christ, whereby the whole ceremonial law is abolished.

Ver. 10. *We have an altar, &c.*] By which is meant, not the cross of Christ, on which he was crucified; nor the Lord's table, where his flesh and blood are presented to faith, as food, though not offered; but Christ himself, who is altar, sacrifice, and priest: he was typified by the altar of the burnt-offering, and the sacrifice that was offered upon it; the altar was made of Shittim-wood, and covered with brass, denoting the incorruptibility, duration, and strength of Christ: the horns of it, at the four corners, were for refuge; whoever fled to it, and laid hold on them, were safe; so Christ is a refuge to his people, that come from the four corners of the earth; and who believe in him, and lay hold on him, are preserved and protected by his power and grace: the use of it was for sacrifice to be offered upon it; which being a male, without blemish, and wholly burnt with fire, was a sweet savour to God; and which was typical of Christ's human nature, offered on the altar of his divine nature; which was pure and holy, suffered the fire of divine wrath, and was for a sweet-smelling savour to God: this altar was but one, and most holy, and sanctified what was put upon it; all which is true of Christ: now this altar the saints have, and have a right to eat of it; even all Christ's friends and beloved ones; all that are made priests unto God by him; all that know him, believe in him, have a spiritual discerning of him, and hunger and thirst after him: *whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle*: there is something of this altar, or that was offered up upon this altar, that is to be eaten, even the flesh and blood of Christ; and to eat of it, is to believe that Christ is come in the flesh, and is become an offering for sin, and for us that eat; it is to receive, embrace, and possess the blessings procured by it; which is done by faith, with spiritual joy and

gladness, and with sincerity and singleness of heart: now those, who served the tabernacle, or adhered to the service of the ceremonial law, they had no right to eat of this altar: the allusion is to the priests' eating of the sacrifices, and to some sacrifices, of which they might not eat, Lev. ii. 10. and vi. 16, 18, 26, 29. and vii. 9. and xvi. 27. and this is not to be understood of believers, before the coming of Christ, who did attend tabernacle-service; for they ate the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual drink, as believers do now; but of such, who obstinately persisted in the ceremonies of the law, when they were abolished; and so cut off themselves from all right to the substance of these shadows. See Gal. v. 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 11. *For the bodies of those beasts, &c.*] Not the red heifer, Numb. xix. nor the sin-offering in general, Lev. vi. 30. nor those for the priest and people, Lev. iv. 11, 12. and xxi. 6, 7, 18. but the bullock and goat, on the day of atonement, Lev. xvi. 11—18, 27. which were typical of Christ, in the bringing of their blood into the most holy place, by the high-priest, for sin; and in the burning of them without the camp: these beasts were slain, their blood was shed, and was brought into the most holy place, by the high-priest; and was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, and the horns of the altar of incense; and, by it, atonement was made for the priest, his house, and all Israel; which was a type of the death of Christ; the shedding of his blood; the carrying of it into heaven; the sprinkling it upon the throne of grace and mercy; by which reconciliation is made for the sins of all God's people: *whose blood is brought into the sanctuary*; that is, into the holy of holies, as the Ethiopic version renders it: *by the high-priest for sin*; to make atonement for it, for his own, and for the sins of his family, and of all Israel: *are burnt without the camp*, Lev. xvi. 27. even their skins, flesh, and dung; and the men that burnt them were unclean, though, upon being washed, were received: which was typical of the dolorous sufferings of Christ, without Jerusalem, as the next verse shews; and points out the extent of his sufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, and even to his soul; and expresses not only the pains, but the shame and reproach he endured, signified by the burning of the dung; and hints at the pardon of the wicked Jews, who were concerned in his sufferings; which was applied unto them upon their repentance.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore Jesus also, &c.*] In order to answer the type of him; *that he might sanctify the people with his own blood*: by the people are meant the people who are the objects of divine love and favour; a chosen and covenant people; a distinct and peculiar people; Christ's own special people, by the gift of his father to him: and the sanctification of them does not design the internal sanctification of them, though this is from Christ, and in consequence of his blood; nor does it so much regard the cleansing of the filth of sin, though Christ's blood sanctifies, in this sense; but rather the expiation of the guilt of sin, which Christ has fully took away; complete pardon being procured, and a perfect righteousness brought in: and this by his own blood; the priests sanctified, to the purifying of the flesh, with the blood of others, with the blood of bulls and goats; but Christ with his own blood, which

he was, really, a partaker of; and his human nature, being in union with his divine person, as the son of God, it had a virtue in it, to sanctify and cleanse from all sin, and to make full expiation of it; in shedding of which, and sanctifying with it, he has shewn great love to his people: and, that he might do this agreeably to the types of him on the day of atonement, he *suffered without the gate*: that is, of Jerusalem: the Syriac version reads, *without the city*; meaning Jerusalem; which answered to the camp of Israel, in the wilderness; without which, the bodies of beasts were burnt, on the day of atonement: for so say ² the Jews; “as *was the camp in the wilderness, so was the camp in Jerusalem; from Jerusalem to the mountain of the house, was the camp of Israel; from the mountain of the house to the gate of Nicanor, was the camp of the Levites; and from thence forward, the camp of the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty:*” and so Josephus ² renders the phrase, *without the camp*, in Lev. xvi. 27. by *εν τοις προαστοιαις; in the suburbs; that is, of Jerusalem, where Christ suffered.*

Ver. 13. *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, &c.*] Either of legal ceremonies, which are to be quitted; or of this world, which may be compared to a *camp*, for its instability, a camp not being always in one place; and for its hostility, the world being full of enemies to Christ and his people; and for the noise and fatigue of it, it being a troublesome and wearisome place to the saints, abounding with sins and wickedness; as also camps usually do; and for multitude, the men of the world being very numerous: and a man may be said to *go forth* from hence, when he professes not to belong to the world; when his affections are weaned from it; when the allurements of it don't draw him aside; when he forsakes, and suffers the loss of all, for Christ; when he withdraws from the conversation of the men of it, and breathes after another world; and to *go forth*, from hence, *unto him*, unto Christ, shews, that Christ is not to be found in the camp, in the world: he is above, in heaven, at the right hand of God; and that going out of the camp externally, or leaving the world only in a way of profession, is of no avail, without going to Christ: yet there must be a quitting of the world, in some sense, or there is no true coming to Christ, and enjoyment of him; and Christ is a full recompense for what of the world may be lost by coming to him; wherefore there is great encouragement to quit the world, and follow Christ: now to *go forth* to him is to believe in him; to hope in him; to love him; to make a profession of him, and follow him: *bearing his reproach*; or reproach for his sake: the reproach, which saints meet with, for the sake of Christ, and a profession of him, is called *his*, because of the union there is between them, and the sympathy and fellow-feeling he has with them in it; he reckons what is said and done to them as said and done to himself; and besides, there is a likeness between the reproach which Christ personally bore, and that which is cast upon his followers; and this is to be bore by them willingly, cheerfully, courageously, and patiently.

Ver. 14. *For here have we no continuing city, &c.*] Neither for religious worship, the city of Jerusalem being quickly to be destroyed, nor for civil life to dwell in; and so may have a peculiar regard to the Hebrews, whose temple and city would, in a short time, become desolate; though it was the general case of the saints, in those times, to be obliged to flee from one city to another, having no certain dwelling-place: and it may respect the common instability of this world, and of the state of the saints in it: this world, and all things in it, are unstable and transitory, the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it, and the persons in it, and even the world itself; the fashion of it passes away: the saints have no settlement and abiding here; they are not of it, though in it; and though they are in it, it is but for a time; and, when they have done the will of God, they are taken out of it; another place is prepared for them: they are but sojourners, and strangers, and pilgrims; and this they are sensible of, and own, and acknowledge: and it is their mercy, that they are not to continue here; since, whilst in it, they are exposed to a great many sorrows and afflictions, both of soul and body; are often disturbed with Satan's temptations; and are liable to the snares, insults, and reproaches of the world; and, seeing they have no continuance here, they'll be the sooner at home: and they have that to support them, under the instability of worldly things, which others have not; they are interested in an unchangeable God, and in his love; and in an unchangeable Saviour; and in an unchangeable covenant; and have a right to eternal glory and happiness, a city which has foundations, as follows: *but we seek one to come*; heaven, which is compared to a city; is future, yet to come; though certain, being built and prepared by God; and is continuing, will abide, being well founded: hence the saints seek for it; see the note on ch. xi. 10.

Ver. 15. *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise, &c.*] For temporal and spiritual mercies; particularly for sanctification, or expiation of sin, by the blood of Christ; and for heaven, the continuing city, that is to come: this sacrifice is not a proper, nor a propitiatory one, but spiritual and evangelical; it is enjoined by God, is well-pleasing to him, and glorifies him; and is our reasonable service, that believe in Christ; for being made priests by him to God, and having faith in him, such are capable of offering it aright; to do which, they are under the greatest obligations: and it is to be offered up by Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and who has suffered without the gate, that he might sanctify the people by his blood; it is to be done in imitation of him, and by his assistance; and for him, and blessings in him; and on him, as the altar, which sanctifies the gift; and through him, as the high-priest and Mediator; for, as there is no coming to God but by Christ, and all our mercies come to us through him, and our thanksgivings are only acceptable to God on his account, it must be right to offer them up by him: and that, *to God continually*; as the Creator and Preserver of us, in our beings; as the Father of mercies;

² T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 128. 3. 4. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 11.

² Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 3.

as the Father of Christ; and as our covenant God and Father in him; since he is always bestowing mercies on us, of one kind or another; and, therefore, should be continually praised, even in times of adversity, affliction, and temptation; in the midst of reproach and persecution; even when unsettled in mind, body, and estate; since there is a continuing city to come; nor can a believer be in any state of life but he has something to be thankful for: *that is, the fruit of our lips*: the sacrifice of praise is so called, in allusion to the offering of the first-fruits under the law; and to distinguish it from legal sacrifices; and to shew in what way and manner we are to praise God, namely, with our lips: in Hos. xiv. 3. which is thought to be referred to here, it is, *the calves of our lips*: sacrifices of praise being instead of calves: and the apostle interprets it in great agreement with the Jewish writers; the Chaldee paraphrase explains it by כְּלֵי סִפּוּתָא, *the words of their lips*: and so Jarchi, דְּבַרֵי שְׁפָתַי, *the words of our lips*; and Kimchi, וִירַי שְׁפָתַי, *the confession of our lips*: and it may be observed, that there is a great nearness in פְּרִים, *calves*, and פְּרִי, *fruit*; though perhaps rather the phrase is borrowed from Isa. lvii. 19. where it is expressly had; the Septuagint indeed have it in Hos. xiv. 3. the apostle adds, for further explanation, *giving thanks to his name*; to the name of God; to the glory of his name; to the honour of his divine perfections; for mercies of every kind: the word signifies *a speaking together*; and may design not only the conjunction of the heart and tongue together in praise, but a social giving thanks to God by the saints, as a body together: the phrase *δουρα ανωσων, the sacrifice of praise*, is used by the Septuagint in 2 Chron. xxix. 31. and xxxiii. 16. The apostle having shewn that legal sacrifices were all superseded and abolished by the sacrifice of Christ, which is the design of this epistle, points out what sacrifice believers should offer up to God, under the Gospel dispensation; and the Jews themselves say, that "in future time (*i. e.* in the days of the Messiah) "all sacrifices shall cease, but תְּרוּמָה, *the sacrifice of praise shall not cease*."

Ver. 16. *But to do good and to communicate forget not, &c.*] Which is to be understood, not of doing good works in general, but of acts of beneficence, or communicating to the poor, as the Syriac version renders it: the apostle proceeds to take notice of another sort of sacrifice, which continues under the Gospel dispensation; and that is, alms; which should be attended to: alms should be given, or beneficence be exercised to all men in need, even to our enemies, as well as to our friends and relations; and especially to poor saints, and ministers of the Gospel: and this believers should not forget; which shews that it is a duty of importance; and that men are too apt to neglect it, and should be stirred up unto it: *for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased*; not that they are meritorious of the favour of God and of eternal life; for what a man gives in a way of charity is but what God has given him, and cannot be profitable to God, though it is to a fellow-creature; nor is there any proportion between what is given, and grace and glory which the saints receive; yet doing good in this way,

when it is done in faith, springs from love, and is directed to the glory of God, is well-pleasing to him; yea, these sacrifices are preferred by him to legal ones, Hos. vi. 6. and the Jews also say, that "greater is he who does alms than (if he offered) all sacrifices:"

Ver. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, &c.*] Not the ecclesiastical rulers among the Jews, for to these they were no longer obliged, they being no longer under such tutors and governors; nor civil magistrates, though it was their duty to obey them, even Heathen ones; for as for Christian magistrates, as yet there were none; but their spiritual guides and governors, the same that are mentioned ver. 7. these the apostle exhorts them to obey; by constantly attending upon the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, as it appears agreeable to the Scriptures; for a contrary behaviour is pernicious to souls, and highly resented by God; and by being present at, and joining with them in the ordinances of Christ, as administered by them; and by regarding their admonitions, counsels, and advice: *and submit yourselves*; to the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them; and to their censures and reproofs, as delivered by the authority of the church; for they are spiritual fathers, and children should obey their parents, and submit to them; they are the ambassadors of Christ, stand in his stead, and represent him, wherefore their authority is great; and they are pastors or shepherds of the flock, whom the sheep should follow: *for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account*; they watch not for themselves, for their worldly gain and advantage, and for the estates of men; but for the souls of men, to do them good, to comfort and edify them, to feed them with knowledge and understanding, and for the salvation of them; as such that must give an account to their own consciences, that they discharge their work aright, or they can't be satisfied; and to the church, to whom they minister, to whom they are accountable, if they are dilatory and negligent; and especially as such as must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and give an account to him of their ministry, of their use of talents committed to them, and of souls that are put under their care and charge; how they have discharged their duty to the souls of men, and how these have behaved towards them under the ministry of the word: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, *for they watch, as those that must give an account for your souls*: the sense is much the same: *that they may do it with joy, and not with grief*; either do their work with joy, cheerfully; which they do, when they are obeyed and submitted to; when men attend upon the word and ordinances administered by them, and receive advantage, and grow in grace and spiritual knowledge; when they abide by the Gospel, and walk worthy of it; otherwise they do their work heavily, and with sorrow: or else give up their account with joy, and not with grief; either at the throne of grace, where they either rejoice or complain; or at the great day, when they will be witnesses, either for or against those that have been committed to them: *for that is unprofitable unto you*; for whose souls

^b Vajikra Rabbah, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1. & sect. 27. fol. 168. 4.
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^c T Bab. Succa, fol. 49. 2.

they watch; that is, the latter would be so, either to do their work sorrowing, or to give up their account by way of complaint; either of them must be to the disadvantage of such persons that occasion grief and sorrow.

Ver. 18. *Pray for us, &c.*] Who are in the ministry; your guides and governors; since the work is of so much moment, and so arduous and awful, and you have such a concern in it; see the note on 2 Thess. iii. 1. *for we trust we have a good conscience*; there is a conscience in every man, but it is naturally evil: a good conscience is a conscience sanctified by the spirit of God, and sprinkled by the blood of Jesus; here it chiefly respects the upright discharge of it in the ministerial work: this the apostle often asserts, and appeals to, and which he here expresses with modesty, and yet with confidence; and which he uses as an argument for prayer for them: *in all things willing to live honestly*; not only as men, but as ministers; faithfully dispensing the word of truth, without any regard to the favour or frowns of men, as good stewards of the mysteries of God; which contains in it another reason for prayer: the phrase, *in all things*, is so placed, that it may be read in connexion with either clause; and the sense is either that they exercised a good conscience in all things, in which they were concerned with God, or man, and among all persons, Jews and Gentiles; or that they were willing to live honestly in every respect, as men, Christians, and ministers.

Ver. 19. *But I beseech you the rather to do this, &c.*] To pray earnestly; to strive together in their prayers for them, Rom. xv. 30, 31, 32. *that I may be restored to you the sooner*; Christ's ministers are sometimes hindered from being with their people, through Satan, or his emissaries, creating troubles, or casting them into prison; which might be the apostle's case now; but God can make their way through all; and for this he should be prayed unto.

Ver. 20. *Now the God of peace, &c.*] This is the concluding part of the epistle, which is ended with a prayer, made up of very suitable petitions for the Hebrews; and as the apostle desires them to pray for him and other ministers, he, in turn, and by way of example, prays for them: and he addresses God, as *the God of peace*: who is so called, because of his concern in the peace and reconciliation of his people; because he is the giver of conscience-peace to them; because he is the author of all felicity and prosperity, temporal and spiritual; the promoter of peace and concord among saints, and at last brings them to eternal peace; see the note on Rom. xv. 33. a consideration of this gives boldness at the throne of grace; furnishes out a reason why blessings asked for may be expected; has a tendency to promote peace among brethren; may bear up saints under a sense of infirmity and imperfection, in prayer and other duties; and be an encouragement to them under Satan's temptations, and all afflictions. The Arabic version makes the God of peace to be Christ himself; whereas Christ is manifestly distinguished from him in the next verse; and even in that version, reading the words thus, *now the God of peace raised from the dead Jesus the Shepherd of the sheep, magnified by the blood of the everlasting covenant; Jesus, I say, our Lord confirm you, &c.*

through Jesus Christ; for which version there is no foundation in the original text. The God of peace is manifestly God the Father, who is distinguished from Christ his Son: *that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus*; who died for the sins of his people; was buried, and lay under the power of death for some time; but was raised from the dead by his Father, though not exclusive of himself, and the Spirit of holiness; in the same body in which he suffered and died; as the first-fruits of his people, and as their Lord and Saviour, head and surety, for their justification, and as a pledge of their resurrection. The apostle addresses the God and father of Christ in prayer, under this consideration, to observe his power and ability to help in the greatest distress, and in the most difficult and desperate case; to encourage faith and hope in him, when things are at the worst, and most discouraging; to comfort the saints under afflictions, in a view of their resurrection; to engage them to regard a risen Christ, and things above, and to expect life and immortality by him: *that great Shepherd of the sheep*; the people of God, whom the father has chosen, and given to Christ; for whom he has laid down his life; and whom the spirit calls by his grace, and sanctifies; to whom Christ has a right, by his father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of grace: these being partakers of his grace, are called *sheep*, because they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and yet are exposed to danger; but meek and patient under sufferings; are weak and timorous of themselves; are clean, being washed in the blood of Christ; are sociable in their communion with one another; are profitable, though not to God, yet to men; are apt to go astray, and are liable to diseases: they are also called sheep, and are Christ's sheep before conversion; see John x. 16. and Christ, he is the Shepherd of them, who in all respects discharges the office of a shepherd to them, diligently and faithfully; see the note on John x. 11. here he is called, *that great Shepherd*; being the man, God's fellow, equal to him, the great God and our Saviour; and having a flock which, though comparatively is a little one, is a flock of souls, of immortal souls, and is such a flock, as no other shepherd has; hence he is called the Shepherd and Bishop of souls: and his abilities to feed them are exceeding great; he has a perfect knowledge of them; all power to protect and defend them; a fulness of grace to supply them; and he takes a diligent care of them: and this great Person so described was raised from the dead, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*: for the sense is not, that God is the God of peace, through that blood, though it is true that peace is made by it; nor that Christ becomes the Shepherd of the sheep by it, though he has with it purchased the flock of God; nor that the chosen people become his sheep through it, though they are redeemed by it, and are delivered out of a pit wherein is no water, by the blood of this covenant; but that Christ was brought again from the dead through it; and it denotes the particular influence that it had upon his resurrection, and the continued virtue of it since. The *covenant* spoken of is not the covenant of works made with Adam, as the federal head of his natural seed; there was no mediator or shepherd of the sheep that had any

concern therein; there was no blood in that covenant; nor was it an everlasting one: nor the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham; though possibly there may be some reference to it; or this may be opposed to that, since the blood of circumcision is often called by the Jews *דם ברית*, *the blood of the covenant*⁴: nor the covenant on Mount Sinai, though there may be an allusion to it; since the blood which was then shed, and sprinkled on the people, is called the blood of the covenant, Exod. xxiv. 8. but that was not an everlasting covenant, that has waxed old, and vanished away; but the covenant of grace is meant, before called the new and better covenant, of which Christ is the surety and Mediator; see ch. vii. 22. and viii. 6. This is an *everlasting* one; it commenced from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, which is the rise and foundation of it; from the counsels of God of old, which issued in it; from Christ's being set up from everlasting, as the Mediator of it; from the promises of it which were made before the world began; and from the spiritual blessings of grace in it, which were given to God's elect in Christ before the foundation of it: moreover, it will endure for ever; nor will it be succeeded by any other covenant: and the blood of Christ may be called the blood of it, because the shedding of it is a principal article in it; by it the covenant is ratified and confirmed; and all the blessings of it come through it, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, and even admission into heaven itself; and Christ, through it, was brought again from the dead, because by it he fulfilled his covenant-engagements, satisfied divine justice, and abolished sin, yea, death itself.

Ver. 21. *Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy reads, *in every good work and word*: as in 2 Thess. ii. 17. every good work is to be done: a good work is what is done in obedience to the command of God, and in faith, and from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; and every such work should be diligently attended to; such as concern God, and are of a moral nature, or of positive institution; and such as concern each other, whether as men or Christians: and the will of God is the rule of every good work, both as to matter and manner; whatever is not agreeable to the revealed will of God, let it have ever such a shew of religion and holiness in it, it is not a good work: continuance in the performance of good works, and the perfection of them, are things to be desired of God; it requires grace to perform good works, and more grace to abound in them, and to keep men from being weary of well-doing; and though the best of works are imperfect, yet perfection in them is desirable, and it is God alone that can make the saints perfect in any sense; see 1 Pet. v. 10. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, *strengthen you, or confirm you*; saints need to be strengthened with spiritual strength, to perform good works; for they are weak and feeble, and unable of themselves to do any thing spiritually good; without Christ they can do nothing, but through him strengthening them, they can do all things; and they have need to be confirmed

in them, that they are the will of God, and that it is their duty to regard them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *fit you*: men are naturally unfit for good works; in order to do them aright, it is necessary that they should have knowledge of the will of God; that they be regenerated and created in Christ; that they be sanctified and cleansed, and so meet for the master's use; that they have the spirit of God, and strength from Christ; and that they be believers in him: nor is there always a fitness in saints themselves, or a readiness to good works, only when God gives both will and power to do them; wherefore such a petition as this is very proper and pertinent; another follows, or the same carried on, and more largely expressed; though it rather seems to be a distinct one, and that in order to the former: *working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ*; the good work of grace being necessary to the performance of good works; nor can any man do a good work well, unless he has the good work of grace wrought in him: grace is a work not of man, but of God; it is an internal work, something in a man's heart, and not any thing without him, or done by him; and it is a gradual and progressive work; it is carried on by degrees, and is not yet perfect, though it will be. God is continually working in his people, carrying on his work, and will at length perform it; see the note on Phil. i. 6. and this is *well-pleasing in his sight*; it is in his sight; it is obvious to his view, when it is not to others, nor to themselves, being the hidden man of the heart; and it is very agreeable to him; it makes men like unto him; hereby they become a suitable habitation for him, and are put into a capacity of serving him; to such he gives more grace, and on that grace he entails glory: and all this is *through Jesus Christ*; all the grace necessary for the beginning and carrying on, and finishing of the good work of grace, and for the performance of every good work, comes through the hands of Christ, in whom all fulness of it dwells; and through the blood and intercession of Christ, by virtue of which it is communicated; and all become acceptable to God through him, as the persons of the Lord's people, so the grace that is wrought in them, and the works that are done by them: *to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen*; either to God the father of Christ, and the father of mercies, and God of salvation; and as he is the God of peace, and the bringer of Christ from the dead; the appointer, provider, and giver of the great Shepherd; the author and finisher of all good in his people: or to Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through whom all grace and good things come; to him does this doxology of right belong; he has a glory both as God, and as Mediator; and the glory of both is to be given to him: the glory of his deity, by asserting it; by attributing all divine perfections and works unto him; by worshipping of him, and by ascribing the efficacy of his mediatorial actions to it: and the glory of salvation and redemption is to be given to him, who alone has obtained it; by discarding all other Saviours; by trusting alone in him; by looking to him alone for peace, pardon, justification, sanctification, and eternal life: and this glory should

⁴ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 135. 1. & T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 1.

be ascribed continually, for ever and ever, as it will be by angels and saints to all eternity. The word *Amen* is added, to shew that the apostle assented to it, and wished it might be, and that he firmly believed it, and so asserted that it would be; for it is expressive of assent, asseveration, and prayer.

Ver. 22. *And I beseech you, brethren, &c.*] The apostle closes his epistle to the Hebrews in a very tender and affectionate manner, calling them *brethren*, as he often does; and speaking to them, not in an authoritative way, nor by way of advice, but by entreaty: the reason may be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and because the Jews were not so well pleased with him, on account of his preaching down the ceremonies of the law; though such language is used by him in other epistles; he became all things to all, that he might gain some. The subject-matter of his entreaty is, that they would *suffer the word of exhortation*; either from one another, as to prayer, to attendance on the word and ordinances, to a regard to their lives and conversations, and to a close adherence to the Gospel, and the profession of it; or from their ministers, their guides, and governors, whose business it was to exhort them to the several duties of religion; or rather from himself; and it designs either the particular exhortation in ch. xii. 5. or the continued exhortation to various duties in this chapter; or any, and every one throughout the epistle: and this shews that the children of God are sometimes heavy and sluggish, and need stirring up; and that there are some things often in exhortations and reproofs which are not so agreeable to the flesh, and yet ought to be taken kindly, and patiently endured: the word may be rendered *consolation*, or *solace*, as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and may refer to the whole of this epistle, which is of a consolatory nature: this may suggest that these Hebrews were under afflictions, and needed comfort; and yet through unbelief might be tempted to refuse the comfort administered to them; which is too often the case with God's people: *for I have written a letter unto you in few words*; or, *I have sent, or, wrote to you in brief*; meaning either the exhortatory part of the epistle, which lay in few words, and chiefly in this chapter; or the whole of the epistle, which was but short in comparison of the length he might have carried it, and as the subject-matter of it might seem to require; it treating on the great doctrines of the Gospel, and mysteries of grace; things of the greatest moment and importance, and which might have been largely insisted on; but he had contracted things, and had wrote much in a little; and this he makes a reason why they should suffer or bear with the exhortation given, since it was not pressed with a multitude of words, tiring out their patience.

Ver. 23. *Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, &c.*] This is the same person to whom the Apostle Paul wrote two epistles, and whom he often calls his son, though sometimes his brother, as here, Col. i. 1. 1 Thess. iii. 2. of him he says, that he was

set at liberty, or dismissed; either by the apostle, by whom he was sent into some parts, upon some business; or rather was loosed from his bonds, having been a prisoner for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and, it may be, a fellow-prisoner with the apostle, at Rome, as Aristarchus and others were; and this very great and useful person being known, very likely, to the Hebrews, since his mother was a Jewess, and he himself was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, Acts xvi. 1, 2. it was a piece of good news to them to hear of his release: *with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you*; by which it seems that Timothy was now absent from the apostle, but that he expected him to come in a short time; when, if he should, they would both come together, and visit the Hebrews; which looks as if the apostle was at liberty himself, or at least had some hopes of his deliverance from prison; but whether he ever had his liberty after this, and saw the Hebrews any more, cannot be said; the contrary seems most probable.

Ver. 24. *Salute all them that have the rule over you, &c.*] The pastors and officers of the church of the Hebrews, the same with those in ver. 7, 17. and *all the saints*; the several members of the church, who were set apart to holiness by God; whose sins were expiated by Christ; to whom Christ was made sanctification; and who were internally sanctified by the spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations; to these the apostle wished all prosperity, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal; and he uses the word *all* in both clauses; and, including every officer and member, expresses his universal love to them, whether high or low, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers: *they of Italy salute you*; that is, the *brethren*, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; the Italian brethren; such as were at Puteoli, and other places, in that country; see Acts xxviii. 13, 14. Italy is a famous and well-known country in Europe; a very fruitful and delightful one; of which Rome, where the apostle very likely now was, is the chief city: it has been called by different names, as Saturnia from Saturn; and Ausonia, Ænotria, and Hesperia Magna; and it had its name Italy, some say, from Italus, the son of Penelope and Telegonus; others, from Italus, a king of the Arcadians, or, as some say, the Sicilians; but, according to Timæus and Varro^e, it was so called from the multitude of oxen in it, which in the old Greek language were called *ιταλοι*, *Italoi*, to which comes near in sound the Latin word *vituli*, used for *calves*; and Italy is frequently, by Jewish writers^f, called *אִשְׁלֵי יוֹן שָׁל*, *Italy of Greece*; and formerly it was inhabited by Greeks, and was called Great Greece^g: it is bounded on the east with the Adriatic sea; and on the west by the river Var, with the Alps, which separate France from Italy; and on the south with the Tyrrhene, or Tuscan sea, called the lower, and on the north, partly with the Alps, which are on the borders of Germany, and partly with the Adriatic sea, called the higher. There were Christians in this country before the Apostle Paul came to Rome, both at Rome, and

^a Apud Anl. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 11. c. 1. Vid. Apollodor. de Orig. Deorum, l. 2. p. 101.

^f Bereshit Rabba, sect. 67. fol. 69. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. R. Sol. Jarchi in Gen. xxvii. 39.

^g Isidor. Hispal. Origin. l. 14. c. 4.

other places, as before observed. It is said ^a, that Barnabas was first at Rome, and planted the church there; that he went round Lombardy, and lived at Milan; that in the *first* century, Apollinaris preached at Ravenna, and Hermagoras at Àquileia; and there were Christian churches in the *second* century, not only at Rome, but in many other cities and places; and so likewise in the *third* century, as at Verona, Spoletum, Beneventum, &c. and in the *fourth* century, there were great numbers of churches in this country; as at Verona, and Capua, in Calabria, Campania, and Apulia; and which might be traced in following centuries.

Ver. 25. *Grace be with you all, Amen.*] Which is the apostle's usual salutation in all his epistles, 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18. in which he wishes renewed discoveries

of the love and favour of God; fresh communications of grace from Christ; an abundant supply of the spirit of grace; an increase of internal grace and external gifts; and a continuance of the Gospel of the grace of God. Of *Amen*, see the note on ver. 21.

The subscription of this epistle is, *written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy*; in the Alexandrian copy it is, *written to the Hebrews from Rome*; which is very probable, since the Italian brethren send their salutations in it; and the words, *by Timothy*, are left out; nor is it likely that it should, since it is clear, from ver. 23. that he was absent from the apostle; and if he had sent it by him, what need was there to inform them that he was set at liberty?

THE GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

JAMES.

THIS epistle is called *general*, because not written to any particular person, as the epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are; nor to any particular churches, as the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, &c. but to the believing Jews in general, wherever they were. The author of it is James; and whereas there were two of this name, who were the apostles of Christ; some have thought it was written by one, and some by another: some think it was written by James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, which is favoured by the Syriac version, which to this epistle, and the following, premises these words; "the three epistles of the three apostles, before whose eyes our Lord transfigured himself, that is, James, and Peter, and John." Now, that James, who was present at the transfiguration of Christ, was James the son of Zebedee: but neither the time, nor occasion, nor matter of this epistle, seem to agree with him, for he was put to death by Herod, about the year 44, Acts xii. 1, 2. whereas this epistle was written, as some think, about the year 60, or as others, 63; and it seems pretty manifest that it must be written after the Gospel had been spread in the Gentile world, and was received by the Jews, who were scattered abroad in it; and after many hypocrites had crept into the churches, and many false teachers, and vain boasters, and bad livers, had arisen among them: it seems therefore more agreeable to ascribe this epistle to James, the son of Alphaeus,

sometimes called the brother of our Lord, and who was present at the assembly at Jerusalem, when the necessity of the Gentiles' circumcision was debated, Acts xv. and is the same whom Eusebius ^a calls James the just, and Oblias; and who seems to have resided at Jerusalem, and to have been the bishop, or overseer of the church there; and therefore in character writes this epistle to the Jews, in the several parts of the world: nor need there be any doubt of the authenticity of it. Eusebius indeed says ^b, that it had been accounted spurious by some, and that not many of the ancient writers had made mention of it: but he himself says, that it was publicly read in most churches; and certain it is, that some very early writers have respect unto it. Irenæus ^c manifestly refers to it, and so does Tertullian ^d; and it is expressly mentioned by Origen ^e among the canonical books of Scripture. The objections against it are of no weight, which are taken from the seeming disagreement between the Apostle Paul, and the writer of this epistle, concerning the doctrine of justification; and from his calling the law the perfect law of liberty, and insisting so much on the doctrine of works; all which will be seen to be agreeable to the other parts of Scripture, and easily reconciled with them; nor is there any thing in it unworthy of an apostle and an inspired writer. The occasion of it seems to be partly the troubles and persecutions which attended the saints for the sake of

^a Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 1. l. 2. c. 2. p. 17. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 3. p. 4. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6.

^b Eccles. Hist. 1. 2. c. 23.

^c Ib. & l. 3. c. 25.

^d Adv. Hæres. 1. 5. c. 1.

^e Adv. Judæos; c. 2.

^f Homil. 7. in Josuam, fol. 156. E.

Christ and the Gospel; and the design of it is to encourage them to patience under them, and to wait and hope for the speedy coming of Christ; and partly the evil practices of some that boasted of their faith and knowledge, though they lived very dissolute lives:

and the view of the apostle is to shew, that faith, without the fruits of righteousness, is not genuine; and he very largely in it exhorts to several duties very becoming Christians, and inveighs against several vices, which were scandalous to them.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle instructs the saints he writes to, how to behave under afflictions, and in every state of life; teaches them not to impute their sins to God, but to themselves; directs them in hearing the word, and cautions against self-deception in religion. The inscription and salutation are in ver. 1. in which the author of the epistle is described by his name and office; and the persons it is written to, by the tribes of Israel they belonged to, and by the condition in which they were scattered about in the world, to whom the apostle wishes all grace. And as they were in an afflicted state, he begins with an exhortation to rejoice in their afflictions; because hereby faith was tried, and that produced patience, and patience being perfect, is the way to be complete, and want nothing, ver. 2, 3, 4. but if any wanted wisdom, how to behave under such exercises, he advises to apply to God for it, from whom it may be expected, since he is the giver of it, and gives it to all, and that liberally, and does not upbraid with the former conduct, ver. 5. but then such should ask in faith, or otherwise it can't be thought they should receive, and besides would justly deserve the characters of fluctuating and unstable persons, ver. 6, 7, 8. And the exhortations the apostle had given, he observes, suited all sorts of persons, poor and rich; the one who is exalted amidst his poverty, and the other who is mean, and frail, and mortal, amidst all his riches; which is illustrated by the flower of the grass falling off and perishing, ver. 9, 10, 11. And upon the whole, he concludes the blessedness of the man that endures affliction patiently, since a crown of life is promised him, and he will receive it, ver. 12. and from external temptations or afflictions, the apostle proceeds to internal ones, temptations to sin; and denies them to be of God, and imputes them to the lusts of men, and gives a very accurate account of the beginning, progress, and finishing of sin by man; and observes, that to place sin to the account of God, and not man, is a very great error, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. which he proves from the pure and holy nature of God; and from the good and perfect gifts, which all, and only, come from him; and instances in regeneration, which is of his will, and by his word, and is the beginning and spring of all good in man, ver. 17, 18. And having mentioned the word, as a means of that grace, he gives some rules about hearing it; that it should be heard with eagerness, and received with meekness; and whatsoever is contrary thereunto should be avoided; as a forwardness to be teachers of it; wrath and anger at the doctrines of it, which do not work the righteousness of God; and all impurity

and naughtiness of the mind, which must render it inattentive to it; and the rather all this should be regarded, since the word is the ingrafted word, and able to save the souls of men, ver. 19, 20, 21. and particular care should be had, that what is heard is put in practice, or otherwise it will be a self-deception; and such will be like a man that beholds his face in a glass, goes away, and forgets what sort of a man he is; whereas, if a man looks into the glass of the Gospel, hears the word attentively, remembers what he hears, and continues in it, he finds many blessed advantages in so doing, ver. 22, 23, 24, 25. and then the apostle distinguishes between a vain religion, and a pure one; a vain religion is only a seeming one, and may be known to be so by a man's having no guard upon his tongue; wherefore if he thinks himself religious, he is mistaken, and his heart deceived, ver. 26. but pure and undefiled religion, which is so in the sight of God, shews itself in a holy life and conversation in general, and particularly in visiting and assisting widows and orphans in distress, ver. 27.

Ver. 1. *James, a servant of God, &c.*] That is, of God the Father; not by creation only, as every man is; nor merely by calling grace, as is every regenerate person; but by office, as a preacher of the Gospel, being one that served God in the Gospel of his Son, and was an apostle of Christ; nor is this any sufficient objection to his being one, since others of the apostles so style themselves: *and of the Lord Jesus Christ*; the Ethiopic version reads this in connexion with the former clause, without the copulative *and*, *James, the servant of God, our Lord Jesus Christ*: and so some consider the copulative as explanative of who is meant by God, even the Lord Jesus Christ: but it seems best to understand them as distinct; and that this apostle was not only the servant of God the Father, but of his Son Jesus Christ, and that in the same sense, referring to his office as an apostle of Christ, and minister of the word: *to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*; by whom are meant believing Jews, who were of the several tribes of Israel, and which were in number *twelve*, according to the number and names of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; and these were not the Christian Jews, who were scattered abroad upon the persecution raised at the death of Stephen, Acts viii. 1, 4. and xi. 19. but they were the posterity of those who had been dispersed in former captivities, by the Assyrians and others, and who remained in the several countries whither they were carried, and never returned. The Jews say, that the ten tribes will never return, and that they will have no part nor portion in the world to come; but these the Gospel met

with in their dispersion, and by it they were effectually called and converted, and are the same that Peter writes to, 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. and 2 Pet. i. 1. and iii. 1. And thus we read of an hundred and forty and four thousand sealed of all the tribes of Israel, Rev. vii. 4. and to these the apostle here sends *greeting*; that is, his Christian salutation, wishing them all happiness and prosperity, in soul and body, for time and eternity; and it includes all that grace, mercy, and peace, mentioned in the usual forms of salutation by the other apostles. The same form is used in Acts xv. 23. and since it was James that gave the advice there, which the rest of the apostles and elders came into, it is highly probable that the epistles sent to the Gentiles were dictated by him; and the likeness of the form of salutation may confirm his being the writer of this epistle.

Ver. 2. *My brethren, &c.*] Not only according to the flesh, he being a Jew as they were; but in a spiritual sense, they being born again of the same grace, belonging to the same family and household of faith, and having the same father, and being all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus: *count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; not the temptations of Satan, or temptations to sin; for these cannot be matter of joy, but grief; these are fiery darts, and give a great deal of uneasiness and trouble; but afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, which are so called here and elsewhere, because they are trials of the faith of God's people, and of other graces of the spirit of God. God by these tempts his people, as he did Abraham, when he called him to sacrifice his son; he thereby tried his faith, fear, love, and obedience; so by afflictions, God tries the graces of his people; not that he might know them, for he is not ignorant of them, but that they might be made manifest to others; and these are *divers*: many are the afflictions of the righteous; through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom; it is a great fight of afflictions which they endure, as these believers did; their trials came from different quarters; they were persecuted by their countrymen the Jews, and were distressed by the Gentiles, among whom they lived; and their indignities and reproaches were many; and their sufferings of different sorts, as confiscation of goods, imprisonment of body, banishment, scourgings, and death in various shapes: and these they *fall* into; not by chance, nor altogether at an unawares, or unexpectedly; but they fell into them through the wickedness and malice of their enemies, and did not bring them upon themselves through any crime or enormity they were guilty of: and when this was their case, the apostle exhorts them to count it *all joy*, or matter of joy, of exceeding great joy, even of the greatest joy; not that these afflictions were joyous in themselves, but in their circumstances, effects, and consequences; as they tried, and exercised, and improved the graces of the spirit, and worked for their good, spiritual and eternal, and produced in them the peaceable fruit of righteousness; and as they were attended with the presence and spirit of God, and of glory; and as they made for, and issued in the glory of God; and because of that great reward in heaven which would follow

them; see Matt. v. 11, 12. 1 Pet. iv. 14. The Jews have a saying^s, "whoever rejoices in afflictions that come upon him, brings salvation to the world."

Ver. 3. *Knowing this, &c.*] By experience; as every one that is trained up in the school of affliction does: the apostle appeals to the saints, to whom he writes, for the truth of what he was about to say; and which he gives as a reason why they should rejoice in afflictions, because it is a known fact, *that the trying of your faith worketh patience*: two things afflictions do when sanctified; one is, they try faith, the truth of it, and make it appear to be true, genuine, and precious, like gold tried in the fire; see 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. and the other is, that they produce patience: saints being inured to afflictions, become by degrees more patient under them; whence it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth: this phrase may be understood, both of faith, which being tried by afflictions, produces patience; for where the one is in exercise, the other is also, and both are necessary under afflictive providences; and also of afflictions, which try faith, and being sanctified by the spirit of God, work patience, which is a fruit of the spirit; for otherwise the effect of them is impatience; and this agrees with the Apostle Paul in Rom. v. 3, 4.

Ver. 4. *But let patience have her perfect work, &c.*] Or effect; or be brought unto perfection; which may denote both the sincerity and continuance of it unto the end, with constancy: patience may be said to be perfect, when it appears to be real and sincere, and not dissembled; for as there may be a feigned faith, a dissembled love, and an hypocritical hope, so likewise a mere shew of patience: and certain it is, that as there is a patience which is commendable, there is one that is not, 1 Pet. ii. 20. And this phrase may also design the constant exercise of this grace to the end; for he that endures, or is patient, and continues so unto the end, shall be saved, and enjoy that perfection of glory and happiness expressed in the next clause: *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*: which cannot be understood of the saints in this present life; only as they are in Christ, and in a comparative sense; or as perfection may denote sincerity, and uprightness; or of a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; for the saints are very imperfect in themselves, and are very far from being complete in soul, body, and spirit; and want many things, and are wanting in many things, both in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; but when patience has had its perfect work, and has been tried to the uttermost, and is found right, and has held out to the end; then shall the saints be perfect in holiness and happiness, and be entire, whole, and complete; as they will be in the resurrection-morn, both in soul and body, and will want no good thing, and will be free from every sorrow, nor will they be deficient in any service; and to this sense agrees ver. 12.

Ver. 5. *If any of you lack wisdom, &c.*] This shews that the perfection before spoken of is not to be understood as in this life, since the apostle immediately supposes lack of wisdom in them; for this is not said in a form of doubting, whether they wanted it or not, but

rather as supposing, and taking it for granted that they did; and in the first, and primary sense of the words, it intends wisdom to behave aright under temptations or afflictions. Saints often want wisdom to consider God as the author of them, and not look upon them as matters of chance, or impute them merely to second causes; but to regard them as coming from the hand of God, and as his hand upon them, as Job did; who does not ascribe his calamities to the thieving Chaldeans and Sabeans, to the boisterous wind, and to the malice of Satan, but to God: they want wisdom to observe the sovereignty of God in them, and bow unto it, and be still, and know that he is God, who does all things well and wisely; and likewise to see and know that all are in love, and in very faithfulness, and for good; as well as to see his name, to hear his rod, and him that has appointed it, his voice in it, his mind and meaning, and what he designs by it; as likewise to learn the useful lessons under it, and particularly to take the cross well, to bear it patiently, and even to count it all joy, and reckon it to be right, necessary, and useful: it requires much wisdom to learn all this, and act up to it. Moreover, this may be applied to all other cases, in which wisdom is wanted; men want wisdom to conduct them in the common affairs of life, and especially the people of God; for the children of the world are wiser in their generation, for themselves and posterity, and in the management of worldly affairs, than the children of light; and also to observe the providences of God, and the footsteps of Providence, and to follow them; and likewise to make a right use of providences, and behave suitably under them, and not be lifted up too much in prosperity, nor be cast down, and too much distressed in adversity; but to consider, that the one is set against the other, and both work together for good. Saints have need of wisdom in things spiritual; they want more grace, which is the truest wisdom, and a larger knowledge of the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God, the hidden wisdom of God; and they lack wisdom to know how to walk towards them that are without, and towards them that are within, so as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and as this is more or less the case of every one, *let him ask of God wisdom; of God the Father, who is the only wise God, who has abounded in creation, in providence, and, above all, in redemption and grace, in all wisdom and prudence; and of his Son Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him; and of the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and all divine things: that giveth to all men liberally; God is the giver of all good things, in nature, providence, and grace; every good and perfect gift comes from him, and therefore he, and he only, should be applied unto: and he gives to all men the bounties of his providence; and to all that ask, and call upon him in sincerity, the riches of his grace; even to Jews and Gentiles, high and low, rich and poor, greater or lesser sinners; all which he gives liberally, readily, and at once, freely and cheerfully, and largely and abundantly; not grudgingly, sparingly, and with a strait hand, but with an open one, and in a very extensive manner. And upbraideth not; with former sins and transgressions, with former mis-carriages and misconduct; or with former kindnesses,*

suggesting that he had given largely already, and his favours had been despised or abused; or he had been treated with ingratitude and neglect; in which manner sometimes men put off those that apply unto them, but so does not God; wherefore every word here used is encouraging to go to God for wisdom: yea, it follows, *and it shall be given him*; God has said it, Christ has promised it, and the apostle might, with certainty, say it after them, and all experience confirms the truths of it; see Matt. vii. 7, 8. John xiv. 13, 14. and 16, 23.

Ver. 6. *But let him ask in faith, &c.*] Not only in the faith of the divine Being that God is; but in the faith of the promises he has made; and in the faith of his power and faithfulness to perform them; and in the faith of this, that whatever is asked, according to the will of God, and is for his glory, and his people's good, shall be given. *Nothing wavering*; about the thing asked for, whether it is right or no to ask for it; for that should be settled before it is asked for; nor about the power of God to do it; nor about his will, in things he has declared he will do; nor about his faithfulness to his promises; nor at all questioning but what is proper, suitable, and convenient, will be given in God's own time and way. *For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed*; he is troubled, restless, unquiet, and impatient; and he is fickle, inconstant, unstable, and unsettled; and is easily carried away with every wind of doctrine, temptation, and lust.

Ver. 7. *For let not that man think, &c.*] Imagine, conclude, or please himself with such thoughts, *that he shall receive any thing from the Lord*; wisdom, or any thing else, he is seeking after; for wanting faith, he has nothing to receive with; faith is the grace, which receives the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and all grace from him; which receives a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, adoption of children, and even the everlasting inheritance, at least, the right unto it; wherefore those who have not faith, as the wavering man, cannot receive any thing.

Ver. 8. *A double-minded man, &c.*] A man of two souls, or of a double heart, that speaks and asks with an heart, and an heart, as in Psal. xii. 2. who halts between two opinions, and is at an uncertainty what to do or say, and is undetermined what to ask for; or who is not sincere and upright in his requests, who asks for one thing, and means another, and asks amiss, and with an ill design; does not call upon God in truth, and in the sincerity of his soul; draws nigh to him with his mouth, and honours him with his lips, but his heart is far from him. Such an one is *unstable in all his ways*; he is confused in his mind; restless in his thoughts, unsettled in his designs and intentions; inconstant in his petitions; uncertain in his notions and opinion of things; and very variable in his actions, and especially in matters of religion; he is always changing, and never at a point, but at a continual uncertainty, both in a way of thinking and doing: he never continues long either in an opinion, or in a practice, but is ever shifting and moving.

Ver. 9. *Let the brother of low degree, &c.*] By the *brother* is meant, not one in a natural, but in a spiritual relation; one of Christ's brethren, and who is of that family that is named of him; of 'the household of faith,

and is in church-communion: and whereas he is said to be of *low degree*, or *humble*, this regards not the affection of his mind, or his conduct and deportment, he being meek and lowly, and clothed with humility, as every brother is, or ought to be; but his outward state and condition, being, as to the things of this world, poor, and mean in his outward circumstances, and so humbled and afflicted. This appears from the rich man, who, in the next verse, is opposed unto him, and distinguished from him; see Psal. lxxii. 9. such an one is advised to *rejoice in that he is exalted*; or to *glory in his exaltation*: in that high estate, to which he is advanced;—for a person may be very low and mean, as to his worldly circumstances, and yet be very high, and greatly exalted in a spiritual sense: and this height of honour and grandeur, of which he may boast and glory, amidst his outward poverty, lies in his high birth and descent, being born from above, and of God, and belonging to his family; in being an adopted son of God, and so an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, and of the heavenly inheritance and kingdom; in the present riches of grace he is possessed of, as justifying, pardoning, and sanctifying grace; and in the high titles he bears, as besides the new name, the name better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentate, even that of a son of the Lord God Almighty, his being a King, and a priest unto God, and for whom a kingdom, crown, and throne are prepared; and also in the company he daily keeps, and is admitted to, as of God, and Christ, and the holy angels: and this height of honour have all the saints, be they ever so poor in this world, who can vie with the greatest of princes for sublimity and grandeur.

Ver. 10. *But the rich, in that he is made low, &c.*] That is, the rich brother; for there were rich men in the churches in those times, and which James often takes notice of in this epistle. Such an one should rejoice or glory in his lowness, or low estate; in the consideration of the low estate, out of which he was raised, by the good providence of God, and was not owing to any merit of his; and in the low estate into which he may be at present reduced, through the violence of persecution being stripped of all his riches for Christ's sake, of which he might make his boast, and count it his greatest glory; or in that low estate he may quickly expect he shall be brought into, either in the above manner, or by some calamity or another, and at least by death, which will put him upon a level with others: or this may have respect to the temper of his mind, which he has, through the grace of God, and the station he is in, in the church of God, being a brother, and no more than a brother, and upon an equal foot with the meanest member in it; and which yet is matter of rejoicing, that he is one, and that he is so blessed with the grace of humility, as not to lift up himself above others, not to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate; and such a deportment the apostle exhorts rich saints unto, from the consideration of the instability and inconsistency of worldly riches. *Because, as the flower of the grass he shall pass away*; shortly, and suddenly; either he himself by death, or his riches at death, or before, and therefore are not to be gloried in; nor

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should the possessors of them be proud and haughty, and elate themselves with them, but should behave humbly and modestly to their fellow-creatures and Christians, as knowing that in a short time they will all be upon a par, or in an equal state; see Job. xiv. 2. Psal. xc. 5, 6. and cii. 11. and ciii. 15, 16. The metaphor here used is enlarged upon in the following verse, for the further illustration of the fickleness, perishing, and transitory nature of earthly enjoyments.

Ver. 11. *For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, &c.*] As it is about the middle of the day, when it shines in its full strength, and its heat is very great and scorching, especially in the summer season, and in hot climates: *but it withereth the grass*; strikes it with heat, causes it to shrivel, and dries it up; *and the flower thereof falleth*; drops off from it to the ground: *and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth*; its form and colour, its glory and beauty, which were pleasant to the eye, are lost, and no more to be recovered. This shews, that earthly riches, like the flower of the field, have an outward shew and glory in them, which attract the mind, and fix an attention to them for a while; they are gay and glittering, and look lovely, are pleasant to behold, and desirable to enjoy; but when the sun of persecution, or any other outward calamity arises, they are quickly destroyed, and are no more. *So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways*; riches are uncertain things now, they often make themselves wings and flee away; they are things that are not, that are not solid and substantial: they are a vain shew; they sometimes fade away in a man's life-time, before he dies; and he fades away, and comes to decay, amidst all the ways and means, designs and schemes, he forms and pursues, and all the actions and business he does; and if not, when he fades away, and dies amidst all his riches, his glory does not descend after him, but falls off from him, as the flower of the field before the heat of the sun.

Ver. 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, &c.*] Or affliction, which is designed by temptation, as in ver. 2. and the man that endures it is he that so bears it, and bears up under it, as not to be offended at it, and stumble in the ways of Christ, and fall away from the truth, and a profession of it, as temporary believers in a time of temptation do; but manfully and bravely stands up under it, and does not sink under the weight of it, or faint on account of it; and endures afflictions in such manner as not to murmur and repine at them, but is quiet and still, and bears them patiently and constantly, and so endures to the end. Such expect afflictions, and when they come, they are not moved by them, but, notwithstanding them, continue in the ways and work of the Lord; and such are happy persons; they are happy now, and shall be hereafter. Saints are happy under afflictions, and even on account of them, for they are tokens of God's love to them, and evidences of their sonship; and especially they are happy under them, when they enjoy the presence of God in them, when they are instructive to them, and are sanctified, when they learn from them the useful lessons of faith, patience, humility, and resignation to the will of God, and are made more partakers of his holiness; and they will be happy

hereafter, as follows. The Jews have a saying ^h much like this, "blessed is the man, בְּרוּךְ הוֹנֵךְ כִּסְיִי, who stands in his temptation, for there is no creature whom the holy blessed God does not tempt." For when he is tried; by the fire of afflictions, as gold is tried in the fire; when God hereby has tried what is in his heart, and the truth of grace in him, as faith, love, patience, &c. and has purged away his dross and tin, and has refined and purified him, as gold and silver are refined and purified in the furnace, or fining-pot: and when being thus tried and proved, and found genuine, and comes forth as gold, after this state of temptation and affliction is over, he shall receive the crown of life, eternal happiness, called a crown, because of the glory of it, which will be both upon the bodies and souls of believers to all eternity; and as suitable to their character, they being kings, and having a kingdom and thrones prepared for them; and in allusion to the crown that was given to the conquerors in the Olympic games: and it is called a crown of life, because it is for life, which an earthly crown is not always; and because it lies in eternal life, and is an everlasting crown; it is a crown of glory that fadeth not away, an incorruptible one; and differs from the corruptible crown given to the victors in the above-mentioned games, which were made of fading herbs, and leaves of trees: and now the man that bears up under afflictions, and holds out unto the end, shall have this crown put upon him, and he shall receive it; not as merited by him, by his works or sufferings, for neither of them are worthy to be compared or mentioned with this crown of life and glory; but as the free gift of God, as it will be given him by the righteous Judge, as a reward of grace, and not of debt: which the Lord hath promised to them that love him; either the Lord Jesus Christ, as in Matt. v. 10, 12. and x. 22. or else God the father; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, God; and the Alexandrian copy leaves out the word Lord, which may be supplied by the word God; see ch. ii. 5. and this promise he made before the world was, who cannot lie, nor deceive, and who is able to perform, and is faithful, and will never suffer his faithfulness to fail; so that this happiness is certain, and may be depended upon: besides, the promise of this crown of life is in Christ, where all the promises are yea and amen; yea, the crown itself is in his hands, where it lies safe and secure for them that love him; either the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, his people, his truths, and ordinances, and his glorious appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. or God the father; not that their love is the cause of this crown of life, or eternal life, for then it would not be the free gift of God, as it is said to be; nor of the promise of it, for that was made before the world was, and when they had no love unto him; but this phrase is descriptive of the persons to-whom God manifests his love now, admits to near communion and fellowship with himself, makes all things, even their afflictions, to work for their good, and whom he will cause to inherit substance, and will fill their treasures.

Ver. 13. *Let no man say when he is tempted, &c.]* Here the apostle uses the word *tempted*, in another sense than he did before. Before he speaks of tem-

tations, as matter of joy and boasting, here of temptations, which are criminal, and issue in shame and death; the temptations he before makes mention of, being patiently endured, denominated men happy, but here such are designed, which are to be deprecated, and watched against; before he treats of temptations, which were the means of trying and exercising grace, and of purging away the dross of sin and corruption, but here of temptations to sin, and which are in themselves sinful; before he discourses of temptations in which God was concerned; but here of temptations which he removes from him, and denies of him, as being unworthy of him: wherefore, when any man is tempted to sin, whether when under adversity, or in prosperity, let him not say, *I am tempted of God*: for God is holy, and without iniquity, nor does he delight in sin, but hates and abhors it; nor can he commit it, it being contrary to his nature, and the perfections of it; whereas no one can tempt another to sin, unless he is sinful himself, and delights in sin, and in those that commit it, nor without committing it himself; and yet sinful men are apt to charge God with their sins, and temptations to them, in imitation of their first parent, Adam, when fallen, Gen. iii. 12. who, to excuse himself, lays the blame upon the woman, and ultimately upon God, who gave her to him; and suggests, that if it had not been for the woman, he should not have ate of the forbidden fruit, nor should he have had any temptation to it, had not God given him the woman to be with him, and therefore it was his fault; and in this sad manner do his sons and daughters reason, who, when, through affliction, they murmur against God, distrust his providence, or forsake his ways, say, if he had not laid his hand upon them, or suffered such afflictions to befall them, they had not been guilty of such sin: he himself is the occasion of them; but let no man talk at this wicked rate, *for God cannot be tempted with evil; or evils*, He was tempted by the Israelites at Massah and Meribah, from which those places had their names, who by their murmuring, distrust and unbelief, proved and tried his patience and his power; and so he may be, and has been tempted by others in a like way; he may be tempted by evil men, and with evil things, but he can't be tempted to evil, as the Ethiopic version renders it; he is proof against all such temptations: he cannot be tempted by any thing in himself, who is pure and holy, or by any creature or thing without him, to do any sinful action: *neither tempteth he any man*; that is, to sin; he tempted Abraham, to try his faith, love, and obedience to him; he tempted the Israelites in the wilderness, to try them and humble them, and prove what was in their hearts; and he tempted Job, and tried his faith and patience; and so he tempts and tries all his righteous ones, by afflictions, more or less: but he never tempts or solicits them to sin; temptations to sin come from another quarter, as follows.

Ver. 14. *But every man is tempted, &c.]* To sin, and he falls in with the temptation, and by it, *when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed*; the metaphor is taken either from fishes, who are enticed by

^h Shemot Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 133 B.

the bait, and drawn out by the hook; or from a lascivious woman, who meeting with a young man, entices him, and draws him away after her to commit iniquity with her: by *lust* is meant the principle of corrupt nature, which has its residence in the heart of man; is natural and hereditary to him, and therefore is called his own; he is conceived and shapen in it; he brings it into the world with him, and it continues in him, and is called his own heart's lust, Rom. i. 24. Now this meeting with some bait, which entices and draws it out, or with some external object, which promises pleasure or profit, a man is allured, and ensnared, and drawn away by it, and so the temptation begins: thus, for instance, covetousness was the predominant lust in Judas; this meeting with an external object, or objects, which promised him profit, he is at once enticed and drawn away to betray his Lord and master for the sake of it: so sin often promises pleasure, though it is but an imaginary, and a short-lived one; which takes with a man's own lust, and corruption within him, and so he is allured and drawn aside; and to this, and not to God, should he attribute temptation to sin.

Ver. 15. *Then when lust hath conceived, &c.*] A proposal of pleasure or profit being made, agreeable to lust, or the principle of corrupt nature, sinful man is pleased with it; and instead of resisting and rejecting the motion made, he admits of it, and receives it, and cherishes it in his mind; he dallies and plays with it; he dwells upon it in his thoughts, and hides it under his tongue, and in his heart, as a sweet morsel, and forsakes it not, but contrives ways and means how to bring it about; and this is lust's conceiving. The figure is used in Psal. vii. 14. on which Kimchi, a Jewish commentator, has this note; "he (the psalmist) compares the thoughts of the heart לריון, to a *conception*, and when they go out in word, this is *travail*, and in work or act, this is *bringing forth*." And so it follows here, *it bringeth forth sin*; into act, not only by consenting to it, but by performing it: *and sin, when it is finished*; being solicited, is agreed to, and actually committed: *bringeth forth death*; as the first sin of man brought death into the world, brought a spiritual death, or moral death upon man, subjected him to a corporeal death, and made him liable to an eternal one; so every sin is deserving of death, death is the just wages of it; yea, even the motions of sin work in men to bring forth fruit unto death. Something like these several gradual steps, in which sin proceeds, is observed by the Jews, and expressed in much the like language, in allegorizing the case of Lot, and his two daughters¹; "the concupiscent soul (or *lust*) stirs up the evil figment, and imagines by it, and it cleaves to every evil imagination, שמתעברת, until it conceives a little, and produces in the heart of man the evil thought, and cleaves to it; and as yet it is in his heart, and is not finished to do it, until this desire or lust stirs up the strength of the body, first to cleave to the evil figment, and then השלום הרעה, *sin is finished*; as it is said, Gen. xix. 36."

Ver. 16. *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*] For to

make God the author of sin, or to charge him with being concerned in temptation to sin, is a very great error, a fundamental one, which strikes at the nature and being of God, and at the perfection of his holiness: it is a denying of him, and is one of those damnable errors and heresies, which bring upon men swift destruction; and therefore to be guarded against, rejected, and abhorred by all that profess any regard unto him, his name and glory.

Ver. 17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift, &c.*] Whether of nature, providence, or grace, and especially the latter; spiritual gifts given along with Christ, or spiritual blessings in him; every such gift is, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, the *best gift*; better than those which only relate to the present life: and is *perfect*; such as the gifts of righteousness, remission of sins, adoption, regeneration, and eternal life. The Jews say^k, that the good things of this world are not truly good, in comparison of the good things of the world to come, and are not טוב, a *perfect good*. And every such an one is *from above*; is not from a man's self, from the creature, or from below, but from heaven, and from God who dwells there: *and cometh down from the Father of lights*; or author of lights; of all corporeal light, as the sun, moon, and stars; of all natural, rational, and moral light, in angels and men; of all spiritual light, or the light of grace in regenerate persons; and of eternal light, the light of glory in the spirits of just men made perfect: *with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning*; as there is in that great luminary, the sun in the firmament, which has its parallaxes, eclipses, and turnings, and casts its shadow; it rises and sets, appears and disappears every day; and it comes out of one tropic, and enters into another at certain seasons of the year: but with God, who is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all, there is no change, nor any thing like it; he is unchangeable in his nature, perfections, purposes, promises, and gifts; wherefore he being holy, cannot turn to that which is evil; nor can he, who is the fountain of light, be the cause of darkness, or admit of any in him; and since every good and perfect gift comes from him, evil cannot proceed from him, nor can he tempt any to it.

Ver. 18. *Of his own will begat he us, &c.*] The apostle instances in one of those good and perfect gifts, regeneration; and he pitches upon a very proper and pertinent one, since this is the first gift of grace God bestows upon his people openly, and in their own persons; and is what involves other gifts, and prepares and makes meet for the gift of eternal life; and therefore may well be reckoned a *good one*; and it is also a *perfect one*; it is done at once; there are no degrees in it, as in sanctification; a man is born again, at once, and is born a perfect new man in all his parts; no one is more regenerated than another, or the same person more regenerated at one time than at another: and this comes from above; it is called a *being born from above*, in John iii. 3. as the words there may be rendered; and it comes from God the father, even the father of our Lord Jesus, as well as of all lights, 1 Pet. i. 3. and who in it produces light, in

¹ Midrash Ha reclam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 4.

^k Tzerer Hammer, fol. 25. 2. 2.

darkness, and whose gifts of grace bestowed along with it are without repentance. And since this comes from him, he cannot be the author of evil, or tempt unto it. This is a settled and certain point, that all the good that is in men, and is done by them, comes from God; and all the evil that is in them, and done by them, is of themselves. This act of begetting here ascribed to God, is what is elsewhere called a begetting again, that is, regeneration; it is an implantation of new principles of light and life, grace and holiness, in men; a quickening of them, when dead in trespasses and sins; a forming of Christ in their souls; and a making them partakers of the divine nature; and this is God's act, and not man's. Earthly parents cannot beget in this sense; nor ministers of the word, not causally, but only instrumentally, as they are instruments and means, which God makes use of; neither the ministry of the word, nor the ordinance of baptism, can of themselves regenerate any; nor can a man beget himself, as not in nature, so not in grace: the nature of the thing shews it, and the impotent case of men proves it: this is God's act, and his only; see John i. 13. and the impulsive or moving cause of it is *his own will*. God does not regenerate, or beget men by necessity of nature, but of his own free choice; Christ, the son of God, is begotten of him by necessity of nature, and not as the effect of his will; he is the brightness of his glory necessarily, as the beams and rays of light are necessarily emitted by the sun; but so it is not in regeneration: nor does God regenerate men through any consideration of their will, works, and merits: nor have these any influence at all upon it: but he begets of his own free grace and favour, and of his rich and abundant mercy, and of his sovereign will and pleasure, according to his counsels and purposes of old. And the means he makes use of, or with which he does it, is *with the word of truth*: not Christ, who is the Word, and truth itself; though regeneration is sometimes ascribed to him; and this act of begetting is done by the father, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead; but the Gospel, which is the word of truth, and truth itself, and contains nothing but truth; and by this souls are begotten and born again; see Eph. i. 13. 1 Pet. i. 23. and hence ministers of it are accounted spiritual fathers. Faith, and every other grace in regeneration, and even the Spirit himself, the Regenerator, come this way: and the end is, *that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures*: either of his new creatures, and so it has respect to such, as James, and others; who received the first-fruits of the spirit, who first hoped and trusted in Christ, and were openly in him, and converted to him before others; or of his creatures, of mankind in general, who, with the Jews, are usually called creatures; see the note on Mark xvi. 15. and designs those who are redeemed from among men, and are the first-fruits to God, and to the Lamb, as their regeneration makes appear: and this shews that such as are begotten again, or regenerated, are separated and distinguished from others, as the first-fruits be; and that they are preferred unto, and are

more excellent than the rest of mankind, being made so by the grace of God; and that they are by regenerating grace devoted to the service of God, and are formed for his praise and glory.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, &c.*] Since the Gospel, the word of truth, is the means and instrument which God makes use of in regeneration, and in forming people for himself: *let every man be swift to hear*; not any thing; not idle and unprofitable talk, or filthy and corrupt communication; but wholesome advice, good instructions, and the gracious experiences of the saints, and, above all, the word of God; to the hearing of which men should fly, as doves to their windows; should make haste, and be early in their attendance on it, as well as constant; and receive it with all readiness, and with a sort of greediness of mind, that their souls may be profited, and God may be glorified: the phrase is Jewish; things easy and smooth, a man is מוֹרִיר לְשׁוֹנֵן, *swift to hear them*: *slow to speak*; against what is heard, without thoroughly weighing and considering what is said; and this may regard silence under hearing the word, and is also a rule to be observed in private conversation: or the sense may be, be content to be hearers of the word, and not forward to be preachers of it; and if called to that work, think before you speak, meditate on the word, and study to be approved to God and men. Silence is not only highly commended by the Pythagoreans, among whom it was enjoined their disciples five years¹; but also by the Jews: they say, nothing is better for the body than silence; that if a word is worth one shekel, silence is worth two, or worth a precious stone; that it is the spice of speech, and the chief of all spices; that it is the hedge of wisdom; hence it is the advice of Shammai; *say little, and do much*²; and they cry up, as a very excellent precept, *be silent, and hear*; and as containing more than persons are aware of³: *slow to wrath*: in hearing; when admonitions and reproofs are given, sin is exposed, and vice corrected, and the distinguishing doctrines of grace are preached; which are apt to fill natural men with wrath, and which must greatly hinder the usefulness of the word; see Luke iv. 28. This is omitted in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 20. *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*] This is so far from engaging persons to do that which is right and acceptable in the sight of God, that it puts them upon doing that which is evil. The Alexandrian copy reads, *with the wrath of men do not work the righteousness of God*: do not attend upon the word and ordinances of God with a wrathful spirit. Compare, with this, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Ver. 21. *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, &c.*] All manner of filthiness, both of flesh and spirit; all pride, vanity, wrath, malice, and evil-speaking, under hearing the word: the allusion seems to be to a boiling pot, which casts up scum and filth, which must be taken off: and such is the spirit of wrathful men; it throws up the filth of haughtiness and pride, of anger, wrath, and wickedness, which must be taken off, and laid aside; or the word will not be heard to any profit

¹ Gloss. in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 21. 1.

² Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 95.

³ Picke Abot, c. 1. sect. 15. 17. & 2. 13. T. Bab. Megilla. fol. 14. 1. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 158. 3. Midrash Koholot, fol. 71. 1.

⁴ Philo Zus. Her. Divin. Harer. p. 482. Vid. T. Bab. Saahedim, fol. 7. 1.

or advantage: and *superfluity of naughtiness, or malice*: the abundance and overflow of it, which arises from such an evil heart, where wrath prevails, and governs: see 1 Pet. ii. 1. There seems to be an allusion to the removing of the superfluous foreskin of the flesh, in circumcision, typical of the *foreskin of the heart*, spoken of in Jer. iv. 4. which the Targum, in that place, calls רשע לבבון, *the wickedness, or naughtiness of your hearts* to be removed: and receive with meekness the ingrafted word; which becomes so when it is received; when it is put into the heart by the spirit of God, and is mixed with faith by them that hear it; so that it is, as it were, incorporated into them, and becomes natural to them, which before was not; and taking deep root in them, brings forth much fruit: and where it comes with power, it reduces every high thought into the obedience of Christ, and makes men meek and humble; and only such receive the truth in the love of it; and to such is the Gospel preached, Isa. lxi. 1. and none but such hear it with profit and edification: *which is able to save your souls*; even your whole persons, both soul and body: but the soul is only mentioned, as being the more excellent part of man: this must not be understood of the word, as if it was the author or cause of salvation, but as an instrument; it being a declaration of salvation by Christ, or what shews unto men the way of salvation by him; and is the power of God unto salvation to them, when it is attended with the energy of the spirit, and the efficacy of divine grace. See 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Ver. 22. *But be ye doers of the word, &c.*] And they are such, who spiritually understand it; gladly receive it; and from the heart obey it, and make a sincere and ingenuous profession of it; and who submit to the ordinances it directs to, and keep them as they have been delivered; and live, and walk, becoming their profession of it. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, *be ye doers of the law*; and so one of Stephens's copies, as in Rom. ii. 13. *and not hearers only*; though the word should be heard swiftly and readily, and received with meekness; yet it should not be barely heard, and assented to; but what is heard should be put in practice; and especially men should not depend upon their hearing, as if that would save them; this is *deceiving your own selves*; such as rest upon the outward hearing of the word will be sadly deceived, and will find themselves miserably mistaken, another day; see Luke xiii. 25, 26. Arguments taken from hence are like the sophisms, paralogisms, and false reasonings of sophisters, which carry a fair shew, and ensnare and deceive.

Ver. 23. *But if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, &c.*] The Arabic version here again reads, *a hearer of the law*, and so some copies; not hearing, but practice, is the main thing; not theory, but action: hence, says R. Simeon, not the word, or the searching into it, and the explanation of it, is the root, or principal thing, אלא דמעשה, *but the work*: and if a man is only a preacher, or a hearer, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; or, the face of his generation; the face with which he was born; his true, genuine, native face; in

distinction from any counterfeit one, or from the face of his mind: it means his own corporeal face. The Ethiopic version renders it, *the lineaments of his face*.

Ver. 24. *For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, &c.*] He takes a slight glance of himself, and departs: and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was; he forgets either his spots, blemishes, and imperfections; or his comeliness and beauty; the features of his face, be they comely or not: so a bare hearer of the word, who is not concerned to practise what he hears, whilst he is hearing, he observes some things amiss in himself, and some excellencies in Christ; but, when the discourse is over, he goes his way, and thinks no more of either.

Ver. 25. *But whose looketh into the perfect law of liberty, &c.*] By which is meant, not the moral law, but the Gospel; for only of that is the apostle speaking in the context: this is no other than the word of truth, with which God begets men of his own will; and is the ingrafted word which is able to save, and of which men should be doers, as well as hearers, ver. 18, 21, 22. and this is compared to a glass by the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 18. and the word here used for looking into it is the same word the Apostle Peter uses of the angels, who desired to look into the mysteries of the Gospel, 1 Pet. i. 12. all which serve to strengthen this sense; now the Gospel is called a law; not that it is a law, strictly speaking, consisting of precepts, and established and enforced by sanctions and penalties; for it is a declaration of righteousness and salvation by Christ; a publication of peace and pardon by him; and a free promise of eternal life, through him; but as it is an instruction, or doctrine: the law with the Jews is called תורה, because it is teaching and instructive; and every thing that is so is by them called by this name: hence we find the doctrine of the Messiah, which is no other than the Gospel, is in the Old Testament called the law of the Lord, and his law, Isa. ii. 2. and xlii. 4. and in the New Testament it is called the law, or doctrine of faith, Rom. iii. 27. and this doctrine is *perfect*, as in Psal. xix. 7. it being a perfect plan of truths, containing in it all truth, as it is in Jesus, even all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and because it is a revelation of things perfect; of the perfect righteousness of Christ, and of perfect justification by it, and of free and full pardon of sins through him, and of complete salvation by him; and because it directs to Christ, in whom perfection is: and it is a law or doctrine of liberty; τὸν τὴν ἐλευθερίας, *that which is of liberty*; which has liberty for its subject, which treats of it, even of the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free: the Gospel proclaims this liberty to captive souls; and is the word of truth, which makes them free, or is the means of freeing them from the slavery of sin, from the captivity of Satan, and from the bondage of the law; and is what gives souls freedom and boldness at the throne of grace; and is that which leads them into the liberty of grace here, and gives them a view and hope of the glorious liberty of the children of God hereafter. This doctrine is as a glass to look into; in which is beheld the glory of Christ's

person and office, and grace; and though by the law is the knowledge of sin, yet a man never so fully and clearly discovers the sin that dwells in him, and the swarms of corruption which are in his heart, as when the light of the glorious Gospel shines into him, and when in it he beholds the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ; see Isa. vi. 5. and looking into this glass, or into this doctrine, is by faith, and with the eyes of the understanding, opened and enlightened by the spirit of God; and the word here used signifies a looking wistly and intently, with great care and thought, and not in a slight and superficial manner; and such a looking is designed, as is attended with effect; such an one as transforms into the same image that is beheld, from glory to glory; and happy is the man that so looks into it. *And continueth therein*; is not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, nor carried about with divers and strange doctrines; but is established in the faith, stands fast in it, and abides by it; or continues looking into this glass, and to Christ, the author and finisher of faith, who is beheld in it; and keeps his eye upon it, and the object held forth in it; and constantly attends the ministration of it: *he being not a forgetful hearer*; but takes heed to the things he hears and sees, lest he should let them slip; and being conscious of the weakness of his memory, implores the divine Spirit to be his remembrancer, and bring to his mind, with fresh power and light, what he has heard: *but a doer of the work*; of the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, and of every work and ordinance the Gospel ministry points unto; doing and being subject to all in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God and Christ. *This man shall be blessed in his deed*; or *doing*, and whilst he is doing; not that he is blessed *for* what he does, but *in* what he does; see Psal. xix. 11. he having, in hearing the word, and looking into it, and in submitting to every ordinance of the Gospel, the presence of God, the discoveries of his love, communion with Christ, and communication of grace from him by the spirit; so that Wisdom's ways become ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; see Psal. lxxv. 4. and lxxxiv. 4, 5. moreover, in all such a man does, he is prosperous and successful; in all he does he prospers: and so he is blessed in his deed, by God, whose blessing makes rich, both in spirituals and temporals: there seems to be an allusion to the blessed man in Psal. i. 1, 3.

Ver. 26. *If any man among you seem to be religious, &c.*] By his preaching, or praying, and hearing, and other external duties of religion, he is constant in the

observance of; and who, upon the account of these things, *thinks himself to be a religious man*, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; or is thought to be so by others: *and bridleth not his tongue*; but boasts of his works, and speaks ill of his brethren; backbites them, and hurts their names and characters, by private insinuations, and public charges without any foundation; who takes no care of what he says, but gives his tongue a liberty of speaking any thing, to the injury of others, and the dishonour of God, and his ways: there seems to be an allusion to Psal. xxxix. 1. *But deceiveth his own heart*; with his shew of religion, and external performances; on which he builds his hopes of salvation; of which he is confident; and so gives himself to a loose way of talking what he pleases: *this man's religion is vain*; useless, and unprofitable to himself and others; all his preaching, praying, hearing, and attendance on the ordinances will be of no avail to him; and he, notwithstanding these, by his evil tongue, brings a scandal and reproach upon the ways of God, and doctrines of Christ.

Ver. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled, &c.*] That which is sincere and genuine, and free from adulteration and hypocrisy: *before God and the father*; or in the sight of God the father of Christ, and all his people; that which is approved of by him, who is the searcher of hearts, and the trier of the reins of men, *is this*: not that the apostle is giving a full definition of true religion; only he mentions some of the effects of it, by which it is known, and without which it cannot be true and genuine; and they are these: *to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*; and not only to see them, and speak a word of comfort to them, but to communicate to them, and supply their wants, as they may require, and according to the ability God has given: where there is true religion in the heart, there is love to God; and where there is love to God, there is love to the saints; and this will shew itself to them, in times of affliction and distress; and where this is wanting, religion itself is not pure and undefiled: *and to keep himself unspotted from the world*; from the men of the world, who defile by their evil communications; and *from the vices of the world*, as the Arabic version renders it, which are of a defiling nature; and, where religion is in its power and purity, and the Gospel of the grace of God comes with efficacy, it teaches to separate from the rest of the world, and to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

CH A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle dissuades from a respect of persons, on account of outward circumstances; shews that the law is to be fulfilled, and that mercy is to be exercised, as well as justice done; and exposes the folly of such who boast of faith without works: he dissuades the saints from all partiality to the rich and poor, from their relation to one another, as brethren, and from their common faith, of which Christ,

the Lord of glory, is the object, ver. 1. and supposes an instance of it, either in a court of judicature, or a religious assembly, ver. 2, 3. and then makes an appeal unto them, and expostulates with them about it, ver. 4. and makes use of an argument against it, taken from the divine conduct, and an instance of his grace in the choice of persons to eternal life, ver. 5. a conduct very different from some persons here blamed,

ver. 6. and other arguments follow, dissuading from a respect of persons, taken from the characters of rich men, as oppressors of the poor, litigious and quarrelsome with their neighbours, and blasphemers of the name of God, ver. 7. and from the law of God, which requires the love of the neighbour, and which to fulfil is to do well, ver. 8. and from the breach of it, by having respect to persons, whereby its penalty is incurred, ver. 9. for which a reason is given; because whoever offends in one point of the law, is guilty of the whole, ver. 10. as is a clear case, since the same lawgiver that forbids one sin, forbids another; so that he that is guilty of either of them is a transgressor of the law, ver. 11. wherefore it is right both to speak and act according to it, since men will be judged by it, ver. 12. and he will have no mercy shewn him that has shewn none to the poor, but merciful ones will escape damnation, ver. 13. and then the apostle argues from the unprofitableness of faith itself without works, ver. 14. and which he exemplifies in the case of a poor brother or sister who are wished well, but nothing given them; which good words, without deeds, are of no profit, ver. 15, 16. so in like manner, faith without works is a dead faith, ver. 17. nor indeed can it be made out that a man has faith, if he has not works, ver. 18. at least such a faith as has justification and salvation connected with it; his faith, at most, is no better than that of the devils, who are damned, ver. 19. and that such a faith is a dead faith, ver. 20. and that true faith is attended with, and evidenced by works, the apostle proves by two instances; the one is that of Abraham, whose faith appeared to be genuine, and he to be a justified person, by the works he did; particularly by offering up his son Isaac; in which way his faith operated, and shewed itself to be sincere and hearty; and the Scripture was fulfilled that Abraham was a believer; and had righteousness imputed to him, and was a friend of God, and a justified person, ver. 21, 23, 24. and the other instance is that of Rahab, whose faith was also shewn by her works, and so a justified person, by receiving the spies with peace, and dismissing them with safety, ver. 25. and then the apostle explains what he means, by saying more than once, that faith without works is dead; which he illustrates by the simile of a man's body being dead, without the spirit or soul in it, ver. 26.

Ver. 1. *My brethren, &c.*] As the apostle is about to dissuade from the evil of having respect to persons, this is a very fit introduction to it, and carries in it an argument why it should not obtain; since the saints are all brethren, they are children of the same father, belong to the same family, and are all one in Christ Jesus, whether high or low, rich or poor: *have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons*; that is, such as have, and hold, and profess the faith of Christ, ought not along with it to use respect of persons, or to make such a distinction among the saints, as to prefer the rich, to the contempt of the poor; and in this exhortation many things are contained, which are so many arguments why such a practice should not be encouraged; for faith, whether as a doctrine

or as a grace, is alike precious, and common to all; and is the faith of Christ, which, as a doctrine, is delivered by him to all the saints, and as a grace, he is both the author and object of it; and is the faith of their common Lord and Saviour, and who is the Lord of glory, or the glorious Lord; and the poor as well as the rich are espoused by him, as their Lord and husband; and are redeemed by him, and are equally under his government and protection, and members of his body: the Syriac version reads, *have not the faith of the glory of our Lord Jesus, &c.* meaning either the glory which Christ is possessed of, whether as the son of God, in the perfections of his nature, or as man and Mediator, being now crowned with glory and honour, and which is seen and known by faith; or else that glory which Christ has in his hands, to bestow upon his people, and to which they are called, and will appear in, when he shall appear, and about which their faith is now employed: and 'since this glory equally belongs to them all, no difference should be made on account of outward circumstances, so as to treat any believer with neglect and contempt.

Ver. 2. *For if there come unto your assembly, &c.*] The place of religious worship where saints are assembled together for that purpose; though some think a civil court of judicature is intended, and to which the context seems to incline; see ver. 6. *a man with a gold ring*; on his finger, which shews him to be a man of dignity and wealth; so those of the senatorian and equestrian orders among the Romans were distinguished from the common people by wearing gold rings; though in time the use of them became promiscuous; the ancients used to wear but one*, as here but one is mentioned; and only freemen, not servants, might wear it: however, by this circumstance, the apostle describes a rich man, adding, *in goodly apparel*; gay clothing, bright shining garments, glistening with gold and silver, very rich and costly, as well as whole, neat, and clean: *and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment*; mean and despicable, filthy and ragged: in the courts of judicature with the Jews, two men, who were at law with one another, might not have different apparel on whilst they were in court, and their cause was trying: their law runs thus: "two adversaries (at law with each other), if one of them is clothed with *precious garments*, (בגדים יקרים, *goodly apparel*), and the other "is clothed with בגדים בוזין, *vile raiment*, (the judge) "says to the honourable person, either clothe him as thou art, whilst thou contemdest with him, or be clothed "as he is, that ye may be alike," or on an equal foot.

Ver. 3. *And ye have respect to him that wears the gay clothing, &c.*] Take notice of him, and shew favour to him, to the neglect and contempt of the other. This is an instance of respect of persons condemned and dissuaded from: *and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place*; the best place; whether it be in a religious assembly, or in a civil court of judicature: *and say to the poor, stand thou there*; or in a lower and meaner place: *or sit thou here under my footstool*; this also was contrary to the Jewish canons; that one should sit,

* Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 29.

† Isidor. Hispal. Originum, l. 19. c. 32. p. 171.

* Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 21. sect. 2.

† Maimon. ib. sect. 3. vid. T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 30. 1.

and another stand, whilst their cause was trying; the law runs thus: "one shall not sit, and another stand, but both shall stand; but if the sanhedrim, or court, please to let them sit, they sit; but one does not sit above, and the other below; but one by the side of the other."

Ver. 4. *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, &c.*] That is, guilty of such partiality as must appear to yourselves, and your own consciences must accuse you of; or don't ye distinguish, or make a difference among yourselves, by such a conduct, towards the rich and the poor: *and are become judges of evil thoughts; or are distinguishers by evil thoughts;* that is, make a distinction between the rich and the poor, by an evil way of thinking, that one is better than the other, and to be preferred before him.

Ver. 5. *Hearken, my beloved brethren, &c.*] As to a matter of importance, and worthy of attention and regard; being an instance of the divine conduct towards the poor, and carries in it a strong argument against respect of persons: *hath not God chosen the poor of this world?* this interrogative is equal to a strong affirmative; and the sense is, that God has chosen the poor of this world; and which is to be understood, not of the choice of them to an office, either in church or state; though sometimes this has been the case, as the instances of David, and the apostles of Christ, shew; nor merely to the Gospel, and the outward means of grace, though the poor have the Gospel preached unto them; nor of effectual vocation, though this is true; but of eternal election, which is the act of God the father, and passed before the foundation of the world; and is an act of sovereign grace, and is irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works; and is the source of all grace, and remains immutable and irrevocable: now the objects of this are, *the poor of this world;* that is, who are poor with respect to the things of this world, but not with respect to the things of another world; for they are chosen to be heirs of a kingdom, and shall enjoy it; though these are not all chosen by God, nor are they the only persons that are chosen; there are some poor men that are not chosen, and are miserable here and hereafter; and there are some rich men that are chosen; but for the most part, or generally speaking, they are not many mighty, nor noble, but the poorer sort, which God has made choice of to partake both of grace and glory. It may be the apostle has some peculiar respect to the poor among the Gentiles, whom God had chosen; it was usual with the Jews to call the Gentiles the world, and they were Jews the apostle now writes to, and who were scattered abroad among the Gentiles; and therefore he might very aptly call them *this world*, among whom they lived; and suggest to them, that God had chosen some of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, and even some of the poorer sort of them; and it was usual with the Jews to distinguish between עניי ישראל, *the poor of Israel*, and עניי אומות העולם, *the poor of the world*, or עניי אומות העולם, *the poor of the nations of the world*: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, leave out the word *this*, and so the Syriac and Arabic versions, which makes the phrase more agreeable to the Jewish way of speaking. The Gentiles, in common, were despicable with

the Jews, and especially the poor of them; and yet God chose these: *rich in faith;* not that they were so, or were considered as such, when chosen, and so were chosen because of their faith; for then also they were, or were considered as heirs of the kingdom, which would be monstrously absurd; and yet there is as much reason, from the text, for the one, as for the other; but the sense is, that they were chosen *to be rich in faith;* and so the Syriac version supplies in the next clause, *that they might be heirs;* which if it had been placed before this clause also, would have been right; election to grace is signified in the one, and election to glory in the other: men are chosen, not because they do believe, or shall believe, but that they might believe; and which faith they have in consequence of election; and which when they have, they are rich: faith is a rich precious grace itself; it is a part of the riches of grace, and is more worth than thousands of gold and silver; and it is the means of receiving and enjoying much riches, as Christ the pearl of great price himself, and all spiritual blessings along with him; such as the rich robe of his righteousness, full pardon of sin, which is according to the riches of his grace, and adoption, which makes men heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and even the eternal inheritance itself, both the promise of it, and a right unto it; all which are said to be received by faith; and therefore believers, how poor soever they may be, as to this world's goods, are truly rich men: *and heirs of the kingdom;* of glory, which is prepared for all the chosen ones, from the foundation of the world; and is freely given to them by their father, and to which they are called in effectual vocation; and hence they are made kings and priests unto God, and have crowns and thrones provided for them: the Alexandrian copy reads, *heirs of the promise which he hath promised to them that love him;* that is, which God has promised them, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read; not that their love to God is the cause of this kingdom, or of their choice to it, or of the promise of it to them; all which flow from the love of God to them; but this is descriptive of the persons who shall enjoy it, and may expect to enjoy it, as in ch. i. 12.

Ver. 6. *But ye have despised the poor, &c.*] *Or dishonoured*, and reproached them, by shewing respect of persons, in preferring the rich to them, and in distinguishing them in such a manner as was to their contempt and injury; which is a reproaching not only of them, but their Maker; and is in effect saying, that God has done either a weak or a wrong thing, in choosing them to be rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, it being directly contrary to his conduct: *do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?* which may be understood either of rich men that were unbelievers; and these either the Heathen magistrates, who ruled over them in a tyrannical way, and with rigour, and often summoned them before them, and persecuted them with violence; or their own countrymen, the Jews, who stirred up the chief men of the Gentiles against them, and drew them to their judgment-seats, as they drew Paul to the judgment-seat of Gallio, Acts xiii. 50. and xviii. 12. or else

* T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 30. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 2.

of rich professors of religion, who assumed a despotic power over the poor brethren of the church, and loved to have the pre-eminence over them, as Diotrophes did, and set up tribunals in the churches, and tried and condemned them in an arbitrary way; or else upon civil accounts had them before Heathen magistrates, and went to law with them in their courts, before unbelievers, which is a practice condemned in 1 Cor. vi. 1. and seeing now rich men used them so ill, the apostle mentions this as an argument to dissuade them from respect of persons; seeing they had but little reason to shew so much regard unto them, who had treated them in so evil a manner: this is not to be understood of all rich men; nor is the apostle's design to destroy that natural and civil order there is among men, by reason of their different stations, offices, and circumstances; it being highly proper that honour should be given to whom honour is due, but not to the dishonour of another.

Ver. 7. *Do they not blaspheme that worthy name, &c.*] Of Christ, or Christians; by the which ye are called? and which, as before, may design either unbelieving rich men, whether among Jews, or Gentiles, who blasphemed and cursed the name of Christ, and compelled others to do so likewise; or such who professed the Christian religion, who by their supercilious and disdainful treatment of their poor brethren, and by their dragging of them to the tribunals of the Heathens, and distressing them with vexatious law-suits there, caused the name of Christ, after which they were called Christians, to be blasphemed and evil-spoken of, among the Gentiles.

Ver. 8. *If ye fulfil the royal law, &c.*] Which is the law of love to men, without distinction of rich and poor, high and low, bond and free; and is so called, because it is the law of the King of kings; hence the Syriac version renders it, *the law of God*, it is the law of Christ, who is King of saints; and because it is a principal law, the chief of laws; as love to God is the sum of the first and great commandment in the law, and may be called the king of laws; so love to the neighbour is the second and next unto it, and may very well bear the name of the queen of laws, and so has royalty in it; and indeed this last is said to be the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. Gal. v. 14. and it is also submitted to, and obeyed by such who are made kings and priests to God; and that in a royal manner, with a princely spirit, willingly, and with all readiness: the same word, in the Hebrew language, נָדִיבִים, signifies princes, and to be willing. The Jews frequently ascribe royalty to the law, and often speak of כִּתְרֵי תוֹרָה, *the crown of the law**: and they suppose the Israelites had crowns upon their heads, when the law was given them on Mount Sinai, in which were engraven the name of God, and which they were stripped of when they made the golden calf*: now this royal law is fulfilled, when it is regarded without respect of persons, according to the Scripture, in Lev. xix. 18. *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; and which

is to be understood of every nation, without distinction of Jews and Gentiles, and of persons of every state and condition, rich and poor, without any difference: and when this law is so observed, it is commendable: *ye do well*; that which is right, and which is a man's duty to do; this, when done from right principles, and to a right end, is a good work, and is doing a good work well.

Ver. 9. *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, &c.*] This is not doing well, but is a transgression of the law, as every sin is; hence it follows, *and are convinced of the law as transgressors*: which carries on a formal process against such persons; it accuses them of sin, and charges them with it; it proves it upon them, and convicts them of it; it pronounces them guilty, and curses them for it; and passes the sentence of condemnation and death upon them; wherefore care should be taken not to commit this sin, and so fall under the convictions and reproofs of the law.

Ver. 10. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, &c.*] Or the greatest part of it, excepting only in one point, as follows: Adam, in a state of innocence, was able to keep the whole law, but by sin he lost that power, nor can any of his posterity now keep it perfectly: they are all transgressors of it, and liable to its penalty; unregenerate men are unsubjected to it, and have an aversion to it, and despise it, and cast it behind their backs; regenerate persons, who love it, and delight in it, after the inner man, do not keep it perfectly; the several parts of the law may be indeed kept by a believer, and that sincerely, but not to a perfect degree, for in many things they all offend; Christ only has perfectly kept it, and is the fulfilling end of it for righteousness; men of a pharisaical disposition may fancy they have kept it wholly, as the young man in the Gospel, and Saul, before his conversion; but this is but a fancy, and a sad mistake: the case in the text is only a supposed one, and, as it is here put, implies imperfection; for it follows, *and yet offend in one point*; sin, which is a transgression of the law, is an offence, to God the father, who is of purer eyes than to behold it; to Jesus Christ, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and to the blessed Spirit, who is grieved and vexed by it; and to the justice of God, which being injured by it, demands satisfaction; and to the law of God, which accuses, convinces, reproves, and condemns for it. The word used signifies to *fall*, and designs more than stumbling, even an open breach and violation of the law; and which being made, by any, in a single instance, *he is guilty of all*: this seems to agree with some common sayings of the Jews, that he that is suspected in one thing, is suspected in the whole law; and he that keeps this or the other command, keeps the whole law; and he that breaks this, or the other command, breaks the whole law; as whether it respects the sabbath, or adultery, or that command, *Thou shalt not covet*, or any other*: and this must be understood, not of every particular command in the law, as if he that is guilty of murder is in that instance also guilty

* Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 13. & Abot R. Nathan, c. 41. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 26. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 132. 2. & sect. 14. fol. 215. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 73. 4. Targum Jon in Euct. xxxiv. 5.

* Vid. Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xxxii. 25. & xxxiii. 4.

* T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 69. 1.

* Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 192. 3. Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 2. & 37. 1. & in Lev. fol. 32. 3. Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 109. 3. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 39. 2. & Menachot, fol. 43. 2. & Abkath Rochel, par. 1. p. 3.

of adultery; or he that is guilty of adultery is in that instance guilty of murder; but the sense is, that he is guilty of the breach of the whole law, though not of the whole of the law; as he that breaks any one condition of a covenant, which may consist of many, though he does not violate every condition, yet breaks the whole covenant; so he that transgresses in any one point of the law, breaks the whole, commits sin, and is deserving of death, and is treated by the law as a transgressor of it, let it be in what instance it will. But it does not follow from hence, that all sins are equal, as the Stoics say^s, for there are greater and lesser sins, John xix. 11. though not some venial, and others mortal, for the wages of every sin is death; nor that the punishment of sin will be alike, as all sins were punishable alike by Draco's laws, but not by the law of God, Matt. xi. 22, 24. but this may be fairly concluded from hence, that there can be no justification in the sight of God, by an imperfect obedience to the law, or by a partial righteousness: the law requires perfect obedience, and in failure of that, though but in one point, curses and condemns; and likewise it may be inferred from hence, that a man is not at liberty to obey and neglect what commandments of the law he pleases, but should have respect to them all; which seems greatly the design of the apostle, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 11. *For he that said, Do not commit adultery, &c.*] That same lawgiver, who is but one, and is God, that gave out the seventh command, and forbids adultery, said also, *Do not kill*; delivered the sixth command, which forbids murder. *Now if thou commit no adultery*; do not break the seventh command; *yet if thou kill*, break the sixth command, *thou art become a transgressor of the law*; not of that particular precept of the law, the seventh command, for the contrary is supposed before, but of the sixth only; and yet by so doing, a man becomes a violator of the whole law; for the law is but one, though it consists of various precepts; and the breach of one precept, as well as of another, is the breach of the law: and besides, there is but one lawgiver, who has enjoined one command, as well as another, and whose legislative power and authority is despised and trampled upon by the violation of one command, as of another. This is the apostle's argument, and way of reasoning, proving the above assertion, that he that breaks the law in one particular instance, is guilty of the breach of the whole law.

Ver. 12. *So speak ye, and so do, &c.*] Both words and actions should be taken care of; it becomes men to observe what they say, and what they do; for both sinful words and works are transgressions of the law, and will be brought to judgment; every idle word, as well as every evil work, both open and secret, men must give an account of in the day of judgment: wherefore it is incumbent on them so to behave, as *they that shall be judged by the law of liberty*: see the note on ch. i. 25. with which compare Rom. ii. 12, 16. Heathens will be judged by the law of nature, Jews by the law of Moses, and those who live under the Gospel dispensation, according to the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 13. *For he shall have judgment without mercy, &c.*] Strict justice, and no mercy shewn him: *that hath shewed no mercy*; to the poor brethren, and distressed members of Christ, but has shewn respect of persons to the hurt of the poor, and has despised and oppressed them, instead of relieving and comforting them; so the rich man, that neglected Lazarus at his gates, is refused a drop of water to cool his tongue; and the servant that cruelly insisted on his fellow-servant's paying him all he owed, justly incurred the displeasure of his Lord, and was by him delivered to the tormentors; and that servant that beats his fellow-servants will be cut asunder, and have his portion with hypocrites; and such who have seen any of the brethren of Christ hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison, and have shewed no regard for them, will hear, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire: and mercy rejoiceth against judgment*; that is, merciful men, who have shewn mercy to the poor saints, will not be afraid of the awful judgment, but rather rejoice or glory, as the word signifies, in the view of it, since they will obtain mercy at that day, and hear, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, &c.* Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36. so the Ethiopic version renders it, *he only shall glory in the day of judgment, who hath shewed mercy*; the Alexandrian copy reads in the imperative, *let mercy glory, &c.* and the Syriac version, *be ye exalted by mercy over judgment.*

Ver. 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, &c.*] The apostle having finished his discourse on respect of persons, and the arguments he used to dissuade from it, by an easy transition passes to treat upon faith and works, shewing that faith without works, particularly without works of mercy, is of no profit and advantage: *though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?* it is clear that the apostle is not speaking of true faith, for that, in persons capable of performing them, is not without works; it is an operative grace; it works by love and kindness, both to Christ, and to his members; but of a profession of faith, a mere historical one, by which a man, at most, assents to the truth of things, as even devils do, ver. 19. and only says he has faith, but has it not; as Simon Magus, who said he believed, but did not. *Can faith save him?* such a faith as this, a faith without works, an historical one, a mere profession of faith, which lies only in words, and has no deeds, to shew the truth and genuineness of it. True faith indeed has no causal influence on salvation, or has any virtue and efficacy in itself to save; Christ, the object of faith, is the only cause and author of salvation; faith is only that grace which receives a justifying righteousness, the pardon of sin, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; but it does not justify, nor pardon, nor adopt, nor give the right to the inheritance, but lays hold on, and claims these, by virtue of the gift of grace; and it has spiritual and eternal salvation inseparably connected with it; but as for the other faith, a man may have it, and be in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; he may have all faith in that sense, and be nothing; it is no other than the devils themselves have; and so he may have it, and be damned.

Ver. 15. *If a brother or sister, &c.*] A Christian

man or woman, a fellow-member of a church of Christ; for this relation is to be understood in a spiritual sense, though it does not exclude such who are in this relation in a natural sense: *be naked*; or clothed in rags, or in very mean and sordid apparel, such as will neither keep them warm, nor clean and decent; for they must not be supposed to be entirely naked, but to be in a very uncomfortable and indecent garb: *and destitute of daily food*: have not food sufficient for the day; or ought to support nature with, and yield them proper refreshment and nourishment.

Ver. 16. *And one of you say unto them, &c.*] That is, one of the same faith, and in the same communion and church-fellowship. *Depart in peace*: wishing them all prosperity and happiness, inward and outward: *be ye warmed and filled*: clothed and fed; signifying, that they wished them all the accommodations of life: *notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body*: neither clothes to wear, nor food to eat; nothing to warm their bodies, or fill their bellies: *what doth it profit?* the Ethiopic version reads, *what doth it profit them?* either the poor brother, or sister, to whom these good words are given, and nothing else; for these will neither warm them, nor fill them; or the persons themselves, that say these things to them: and the apostle, by this instance, shews, that as that charity which lies only in words, and in tongue, and not in deed, and in truth, is unprofitable, and good for nothing, even to them that profess it; so that faith, which a man says he has, and yet is without works, is alike unprofitable unto him.

Ver. 17. *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*] It is like a lifeless carcass, a body without a soul, ver. 26. for as works, without faith, are dead works, so faith, without works, is a dead faith, and not like the lively hope and faith of regenerated persons: and indeed, such who have no other faith than this are dead in trespasses and sins; not that works are the life of faith, or that the life of faith lies in, and flows from works; but, as Dr. Ames observes^b, good works are second acts, necessarily flowing from the life of faith; to which may be added, and by these faith appears to be living, lively and active, or such who perform them appear to be true and living believers.

Ver. 18. *Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works, &c.*] That is, a true believer in Christ may very justly call upon a vain boaster of his faith, who has no works, to give proof and evidence of it, and address him after this manner; you say you have faith, be it so that you have; I have works, you see I have, I say nothing about my faith: at present; now, *shew me thy faith without thy works*, if thou canst; see what ways, means, and methods thou canst make use of, to make it appear to me, or any other, that you have the faith you talk of: the words are a sort of sarcasm and jeer upon the man, and yet very just, calling upon him to do that which is impossible to be done, and thereby exposing his vain boast; for faith is an inward principle in the heart; an hidden thing, and can't be seen and known but by external acts; and where it is right, it is operative, and shews itself by works,

which is not practicable in those who have none: *and I will shew thee my faith by my works*; there may be indeed an appearance of good works, where there is no faith, as in the Heathens, in the Scribes and Pharisees, and in the Papists, and others; and on the other hand, there may be the principle of faith implanted, where there is not an opportunity of shewing it by a series of good works, or a course of godly living, as in elect infants dying in infancy, and in those who are converted in their last moments, as the thief upon the cross; wherefore works are not infallible proofs and evidences of faith, yet they are the best we are capable of giving of it to men, or they of receiving. In short, though works may deceive, and do not infallibly prove the truth of faith, yet it is certain, that where they are not, but persons live in a continued course of sinning, there cannot be true faith.

Ver. 19. *Thou believest that there is one God, &c.*] These words are a continuation of the address of the man that has works, to him that boasts of his faith without them, observing to him, that one, and a main article of his faith, is, that there is one God; which is to be understood in the Christian sense, since both the person speaking, and the person spoken to, were such as professed themselves Christians; so that to believe there is one God, is not merely to give into this article, in opposition to the polytheism of the Gentiles, or barely to confess the God of Israel, as believed on by the Jews, but to believe that there are three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and that these three are the one God; wherefore this article of faith includes every thing relating to God; as to God the Father, his being and perfections, so to Christ, as God, and the Son of God, and the Messiah, &c. and to the Holy Spirit; and to believe all this is right: *thou doest well*; for that there is but one God, is to be proved by the light of nature, and from the works of creation and providence, and has been owned by the wisest of the Heathens themselves; and is established, by divine revelation, in the books both of the Old and of the New Testament; what has been received by the Jews, and is well known by Christians, to whom it is set in the clearest light, and who are assured of the truth of it: but then *the devils also believe*; the Arabic version reads, *the devils likewise so believe*; they believe the same truth; they know and believe there is but one God, and not many; and they know that the God of Israel is he; and that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one God; they know and believe him to be the most high God, whose servants the ministers of the Gospel are; and they know and believe that Jesus is the holy One of God, the Son of God, and the Messiah, Acts xvi. 17. and xix. 15. Luke iv. 34. 41. *And tremble*; at the wrath of God, which they now feel, and at the thought of future torments, which they expect, Mark v. 7. Matt. viii. 29. and which is more than some men do; and yet these shall not be saved, their damnation is certain and inevitable, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6. wherefore it follows, that a bare historical faith will not profit, and cannot save any; a man may have all faith of this kind, and be damned; and therefore it is not to be boasted of, nor trusted to.

Ver. 20. *But wilt thou know, O vain man, &c.*] These

^b Medulla Theolog. l. 2. c. 7. sect. 35.

are the words of the apostle reassuming the argument, that faith without works is dead, useless, and unprofitable; and the man that boasts of his faith, and has no works to shew it, he calls a *vain man*, an empty one, sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal; empty vessels make the greatest sound; such are proud boasters, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind; but are empty of the true knowledge of God, and of the faith of Christ, and of the grace of the Spirit: the Syriac version renders it, *O weak, or feeble man*, as he must needs be, whose faith is dead, and boasts of such a lifeless thing; and the Ethiopic version renders it, *O foolish man*, for such an one betrays his ignorance in spiritual things, whatever conceit he has of his knowledge and understanding: the character seems levelled against the Gnostics, who were swelled with a vain opinion of their knowledge, to whom the apostle addresses himself thus. The phrase, *vain man*, is a proper interpretation of the word ריקן, *Raca*, or *Reka*, used in Matt. v. 22. see the note there; which though not to be said to a man in an angry way, yet may be applied to men of such a character as here described; who were empty of solid good, and yet boasted of their knowledge. *Wilt thou know? dost thou require proofs, that faith, without works, is dead?* as in ver. 17. and that true faith has always works accompanying it, and is shewn and known by it? then take the following instances.

Ver. 21. *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, &c.*] Not as the causes of his justification, that is denied, Rom. iv. 2. but as effects of it, shewing the truth of his faith, and the reality of his justification: he had both faith and works, and the former were known by the latter; and even the faith which he had expressed years ago was manifested, demonstrated, and confirmed to be true and genuine, by the instance of his obedience to God, here produced; by which it appeared he was a true believer, a justified person, approved of God, and loved by him. Now if this was the case of Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, yea, the father of the faithful, of all that believe, he is, and must be a vain man, that talks of faith without works; and his faith must be a dead one, and he be very unlike the father of them that believe: the good work instanced in is the offering up of Isaac; *when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar*: for when he was bid to take his son, his only and beloved son, Isaac, and offer him up on one of the mountains, that should be shewn him, he made haste to do it; he provided every thing for it; he clave the wood, and carried it with him, and fire in his hand; he built an altar, laid the wood on it, bound his son, laid the wood on the altar, and his son on the wood, and stretched out his hand, with his knife in it, to slay him; so that it was all one, with respect to his intention and will, as if he had actually offered him, and was a full trial and proof of his obedience to God. This was not the only act of obedience, or good work, which he performed; but this being a very eminent one, the apostle instances in it, as a very considerable evidence of his faith in God, and love to him; and which shewed him to be a justified person, as he was long before he performed this action, even before

Isaac was born; see Gen. xv. 6. and therefore it can never be the apostle's meaning, that he was justified before God by this, or any other good work or works, as cause or causes of it; but only that he was declared to be so; or, in other words, that his faith was attended with good works, and evidenced by them.

Ver. 22. *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, &c.*] Not to justify him before God; for neither faith nor works are ever said in Scripture to justify any man; but his faith being of the right kind, a faith which works by love, it put him upon doing this work, and many others; for this was done in faith, Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19. as all good works are, which are properly such; and where there is true faith, it will influence and engage a man to do good works, as it did Abraham. *And by works was faith made perfect?* not with an absolute perfection; for though Abraham's faith was very great, yet there were things lacking in it, and he had his fits and times of unbelief; and had he lived till now, his faith, in this sense, would not have been perfect; and he would have had reason to have used the apostle's petition, Luke xvii. 5. much less would it have been made thus perfect by works; but the sense is, that hereby his faith was declared to be sincere, unfeigned, true, and genuine; just as love is said to be perfected, 1 John iv. 17.

Ver. 23. *And the Scripture was fulfilled, &c.*] Gen. xv. 6. which speaks of Abraham's faith, and the imputation of to him for righteousness; for the above action of Abraham, in offering up his son, was a clear proof of the truth of his faith, there commended: by this it was made known what a strong faith he had in God, and what reason there was to believe that he was a justified person. *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness*; see the note on Rom. iv. 3. which shews both that Abraham was justified before he wrought this work, and therefore that could not be the cause or matter of his justification, but only an effect and evidence of it; and that his justification was by faith, or that object which his faith regarded, and had to do with, was his justifying righteousness: *and he was called the friend of God*, 2 Chron. xx. 7. Isa. xli. 8. he was loved by God with an everlasting love, who shewed acts of friendship to him; called him by his grace, and blessed him with spiritual blessings, and increased him with the increase of God; favoured him with near communion with him, honoured him with high characters, and distinguished him by peculiar marks of his favour, and reckoned his enemies and friends as his own, Gen. xii. 3. and Abraham, on the other hand, loved God, and shewed himself friendly to him; trusted in him, and believed every word of his; readily complied with his will, and not only yielded a cheerful obedience to his commands, but enjoined his children after him to observe them: this was a name which Abraham was well known by among the eastern nations; hence he is called by the Mahometans, خليل الله, *Khalil Allah*, the friend of God; and Mahomet says himself, "God took Abraham for his friend."

Ver. 24. *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, &c.*] Not as causes procuring his justification,

but as effects declaring it; for the best works are imperfect, and cannot be a righteousness justifying in the sight of God, and are unprofitable in this respect; for when they are performed in the best manner, they are no other than what it is a man's duty to perform, and therefore can't justify from sin he has committed: and besides, justification in this sense would frustrate the grace of God, make void the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men. Good works don't go before justification as causes or conditions, but follow it as fruits and effects: *and not by faith only*; or as without works, or a mere historical faith, which being without works is dead, of which the apostle is speaking; and therefore can bear no testimony to a man's justification; hence it appears, that the Apostle James does not contradict the Apostle Paul in Rom. iii. 28. since they speak not of the same sort of faith; the one speaks of a mere profession of faith, a dead and lifeless one; the other of a true faith, which has Christ, and his righteousness, for its object, and works by love, and produces peace, joy, and comfort in the soul. Moreover, the Apostle Paul speaks of justification before God; and James speaks of it as it is known by its fruits unto men; the one speaks of a justification of their persons, in the sight of God; the other of the justification and approbation of their cause, their conduct, and their faith before men, and the vindication of them from all charges and calumnies of hypocrisy, and the like; the one speaks of good works as causes, which he denies to have any place as such in justification; and the other speaks of them as effects flowing from faith, and shewing the truth of it, and so of justification by it; the one had to do with legalists and self-justiciaries, who sought righteousness not by faith, but by the works of the law, whom

he opposed; and the other had to do with libertines, who cried up faith and knowledge, but had no regard to a religious life and conversation; and these things considered will tend to reconcile the two apostles about this business.

Ver. 25. *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot, &c.*] See the note on Heb. xi. 31. *justified by works*; this woman was an instance of the grace of God in calling the chief of sinners, and was a true believer; and what she did, she did in faith, Heb. xi. 31. and her faith was shewn by her works to be true and genuine; and it was manifest that she was a justified person. This instance is produced with the other, to shew, that wherever there is true faith, whether in Jew or Gentile, in man or woman, in greater or lesser believers, or in such who have been greater or lesser sinners, there will be good works; and therefore that person is a vain man that talks and boasts of his faith, and depends upon it, and slights and rejects good works as unnecessary to be done. *When she had received the messengers*: the spies that Joshua sent, into her house, with peace and safety: *and had sent them out another way*; than they came in, even through the window upon the town-wall, Josh. ii. 1, 15.

Ver. 26. *For as the body without the spirit is dead, &c.*] This simile is made use of to illustrate what the apostle had asserted in ver. 17, 20. that as a body; when the spirit or soul is departed from it, or the breath is gone out of it, is dead, and without motion, and useless; which the Jews^d express in like manner, פֶּנֶר נֹף בְּלֵא רוּחַ, *the body without the spirit, or breath, is a carcass*. So faith without works is dead also; a vain thing, useless and unprofitable, can neither justify, nor save, nor prove that a man is justified, or will be saved.

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle cautions against censoriousness, and reproving others with a magisterial air; advises to bridle the tongue, and guard against the vices of it; and shews what true wisdom is, and from whence it comes. He advises the saints not to arrogate too much to themselves, and take upon them to be the censorious reprovers of others; which he dissuades from, by the consideration of the greater damnation such shall receive, and by the frailty of all men, and a common proneness to offend by words; for he must be a very singular man indeed that does not offend by words, ver. 1, 2. wherefore he exhorts them to watch over their words, and bridle their tongues; which he illustrates by the methods used with horses to keep them in subjection, and with ships, to turn them as occasion serves, and the master pleases, ver. 3, 4. and though the tongue is a little member, and not comparable to a horse, or ship, for its bulk; yet it boasts of great things, has a world of iniquity in it, and much mischief is done by it, being influenced by the powers of hell; therefore care, and all possible means, should be used to restrain it, ver.

5, 6. though it is not tameable by man, only by the Lord, when all sorts of creatures are, even the most fierce and savage, and therefore are worse than they, being an unruly evil, and full of deadly poison, ver. 7, 8. And what is the most monstrous and shocking, blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth, are pronounced by the same tongue, which is used in blessing God, and cursing men made after his image, which by no means ought to be done, ver. 9, 10. and which is not to be paralleled in nature; no instance like it can be given, no fountain sending forth, in the same place, water sweet and bitter, salt and fresh, or any fig-tree bearing olives, or vine figs, ver. 11, 12. And because all this evil springs from a vain opinion men have of their own wisdom, the apostle proceeds to give an account of true wisdom; and observes, that that shews itself in good works, in a holy conversation, attended with meekness and humility, and not in envying, strife, and lies, ver. 13, 14. Such sort of wisdom is not from heaven, but of the earth; it is not rational; it is no better than that of brutes; yea, no other than that of devils, since where the above

^d Obel. Moed, fol. 15. 1.

sins prevail, it is a hell on earth, there is nothing but confusion, and every thing that is vile and wicked, ver. 15, 16. but, on the other hand, true wisdom is of an heavenly original, of a pure, peaceable, gentle, and tractable nature, and is full of good fruits or works in its effects, particularly mercy, and is clear of partiality and hypocrisy, ver. 17. and as one of its fruits is righteousness, that is sown in peace by the peacemaker, and produces it, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *My brethren, be not many masters, &c.*] The apostle having dispatched the subject of faith and good works, which constitute the pure and undefiled religion mentioned in ch. i. 27. which gave rise to this discourse, he proceeds to consider the evidence of a religious man, suggested in ver. 26. who is one that bridle the tongue; and enters into an account of the use and abuse of the tongue: and which is introduced by this exhortation; and which seems to be opposed to an affectation among the Jews, to whom James writes, of being called *Rabbi, Rabbi*, or *Mori, Mori*, master, master, condemned by Christ, Matt. xxiii. 8, 10. The words may be rendered, *be not many teachers*; or be not fond, and forward, and ambitious of being preachers of the word, but rather choose to be hearers of it, agreeably to the advice in ch. i. 19. *be swift to hear, slow to speak*; not but that the office of a teacher is a good work, and a very desirable one; and spiritual gifts, qualifying for it, are to be coveted with a view to the glory of God, and the good of souls; and to have many teachers is a blessing to the churches of Christ, and a large number of them is often not only proper, but absolutely necessary: but then this office should not be entered upon without suitable gifts, a divine mission, and a regular call by a church; and when entered into, should not be performed in a magisterial way, as lords over God's heritage, and as claiming a dominion over the faith of men, but as helpers of their joy, peace, and comfort; nor according to the commandments of men, but according to the oracles of God. Or it may be, this exhortation may have respect to censorious persons, rigid and severe reprovers of others, who take upon them, in a haughty manner, to charge and rebuke others for their faults; reproof for sin ought to be given; sin should not be suffered upon the brethren; to reprove is not blame-worthy, but commendable, when it is done in a right manner, with a good spirit, and to a good end: in case of private offences, it should be privately given, and for public ones, men should be rebuked before all; but then this ought to be done in a gentle manner, and in a spirit of meekness; and when it is a clear case, and plain matter of fact, and which ought not to be exaggerated and aggravated; mole-hills are not to be made mountains of, or a man be made an offender for a word, or a matter of human frailty; and reproof should be given by persons not guilty of the same, or worse crimes, themselves, and always with a good end; not to screen and cover their own vices, or to be thought more holy and religious than others, or to satisfy a revengeful spirit, but for the glory of God, and the restoring of the person that has sinned. *Knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation*; should men enter into the office of teaching others without a call, or perform it negligently, or live not according

to the doctrine they teach others, such would be judged out of their own mouths, and by their own words, and their condemnation would be aggravated; and should men judge rash judgment, they themselves will be judged at a higher tribunal; and should they be too censorious, and bear too hard on others, they will have judgment without mercy.

Ver. 2. *For in many things we offend all, &c.*] Or *we all offend*, slip and fall; no man lives without sin; in many, in most, if not in all things, a good man himself does, he sins; and this extends to the most solemn services, and best works of a good man; there is sin in his holy things, imperfections in all his performances; his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; hence no man can be justified by his works before God, nor is any man perfect in this life, so as to be without sin in himself: the apostle includes himself in this account, and that not out of modesty merely, or in a complaisant way, but as matter of fact, and what he found in himself, and observed in the conduct of his life: and now this is given as a reason why persons should not be over-forward of teaching others, since in many instances, in common speech and conversation, men are apt to offend, and much more in a work which requires a multitude of words; or why men should be careful how they charge, censure, and reprove others, in a rash, furious, and unchristian manner; since they themselves are in the body, and may be tempted, and are attended with many infirmities, slips, and falls in common life. *If any man offend not in word*; from slips and falls in general, the apostle proceeds to the slips of the tongue, and to the use and abuse of that member; and his sense is, that if a man has so much guard upon himself, and such a command over his tongue, and so much wisdom to use it, as to give no offence by it, to his fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians: *the same is a perfect man*; not that he is perfect in himself, and without sin, that is denied before; unless this is considered as a mere hypothesis, and by way of concession; that could there be found out a man that never, for instance, offends in word in any one part of life, that man may be allowed, and be set down to be a perfect man; but no such man is to be found, and therefore none perfect: but rather the sense is, that he who in common is so careful of his speech, as not to offend his brethren, may be looked upon as a sincere and truly religious man; see ch. i. 26. or he may be accounted a wise and prudent man, such an one as in ver. 13. he is not a babe in understanding, a child in conduct, but a grown man; at full age; a perfect man; in which sense the word is used in 1 Cor. ii. 6. Heb. v. 14. *And able also to bridle the whole body*; either to govern the whole body, the church, to teach a society of Christians, and to feed them with knowledge, and with understanding; or rather, as he appears to be able to bridle that member of the body, the tongue, so likewise to be able, through the grace of God, to keep under the whole body, that sin shall not reign, in it, or the lusts of it be in common obeyed.

Ver. 3. *Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, &c.*] By this, and the following simile, the apostle not only expresses the smallness of that member of the body, which is like the bit in the horse's mouth, and the helm of a ship, but the good use of it, and the great

influence it has over the whole body. Horses are without understanding, and need direction in what path to go, and are strong, and would be unruly and ungovernable unless bits and bridles were put into their mouths: *that they may obey us*; and go in the way we would have them: *and we turn about the whole body* of the horse, this way, and that way, as is thought best, by the help of the bit and bridle; and of such use is the tongue to the natural body, that being bridled itself, bridles, directs, and governs the whole body; and its influence on bodies, and societies of men, and Christians, is like that of the bit in the horse's mouth; who, like horses, would be unruly and ungovernable, were it not for the force of language, the power of words, and strength of argument.

Ver. 4. *Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, &c.* Of so large a bulk, of such a prodigious size, and are such unwieldy vessels: *and are driven of fierce winds*; with great vehemence, rapidity, and swiftness: *yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth*; the helm, or tiller of a ship, is a beam or piece of timber fastened into the rudder, and so coming forward into the steerage, where he that stands at helm steers the ship^c, who is here called the governor; or *he that directs*, as the word may be rendered; that is, that steers; the word for *helm* is translated *rudder* in Acts xxvii. 40. and the helm or tiller is sometimes, though improperly, called the rudder itself^f; and this is very small, in comparison of the bulk of the ship that is guided by it. ^e Aristotle calls it *πρωταλιον μικρον*, a *small helm*, as the apostle here does, and accounts for it how large ships should be moved and steered by it. And so, though the tongue is to the rest of the body as a small helm to a large ship, yet, like that, it has great influence over the whole body, to check it when it is carrying away with the force of its appetites and passions; and so churches, societies, and bodies of Christians, which are large and numerous, and are like ships upon the ocean, tossed to and fro with tempests, driven by Satan's temptations and the world's persecution, and ready to be carried away with the wind of false doctrine, yet are influenced and directed aright by those that are at the helm, the faithful ministers of the word, who say to them, this is the way, walk in it.

Ver. 5. *Even so the tongue is a little member, &c.* Like the bit in the horse's mouth, or like the helm of a ship. *And boasteth great things*; and does them; for this word may be taken in a good sense: a bridled and sanctified tongue, that is influenced by the grace of God, and directed by the spirit of God, as it speaks great and good things, it has great power, weight, and influence: the tongue of the just is as choice silver, and the lips of the righteous feed many, Prov. x. 20, 21. the Gospel, as preached by Christ's faithful ministers, who are the church's tongue, when it comes not in word only, but in power, is the power of God unto salvation: faith comes by hearing it, and hearing by this word; by it souls are convinced, converted, and comforted, enlightened, quickened, and sanctified. *Be-*

hold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth; what vast quantities of wood, large forests, stately buildings, and populous towns and cities, are at once seized on by a little fire, a few sparks, and in a short time burnt down, and utterly destroyed. One of the proverbs of Ben Syra is, "burning fire kindles great heaps;" suggesting, that an evil tongue does great mischief, as did the tongue of Doeg the Edomite, as the gloss upon it observes: from hence the apostle passes to consider the abuse or vices of the tongue.

Ver. 6. *And the tongue is a fire, &c.* It is like to fire, very useful in its place, to warm and comfort; so is the tongue in Christian conversation, and in the ministry of the word; the hearts of God's children burn within them, whilst they are talking together, and whilst the Scriptures of truth are opening to them; but as fire should be carefully watched, and kept, so should men take heed to their ways, that they sin not with their tongue, and keep their tongue from evil, and their lips from speaking guile; for as fire kindles and rises up into a flame, so unchaste, angry, and passionate words, stir up the flame of lust, anger, envy, and revenge; and as fire is of a spreading nature, so are lies, scandal, and evil reports vented by the tongue; and as fire devours all that comes in its way, such are the words of an evil tongue; and therefore are called devouring words, Psal. lii. 4. they devour the good names of men, and corrupt their good manners, and destroy those who make use of them; and what wood is to fire, and coals to burning coals, that are whisperers, tale-bearers, backbiters, and contentious persons to strife, Prov. xxvi. 20, 21. *a world of iniquity*; that is, as the world is full of things, and full of sin, for it lies in wickedness, so is the tongue full of iniquity; there's a world of it in it; it abounds with it; it can't well be said how much sin is in it, and done, or occasioned by it; as blasphemy against God, Father, Son, and Spirit; cursing of men, imprecations on themselves, their souls, and bodies, and on others, with a multitude of profane and dreadful oaths; obscene, filthy, and unchaste words; angry, wrathful, and passionate ones; lies, flatteries, reproaches, backbitings, whisperings, tale-bearings, &c. And the Jews say, that he that uses an evil tongue multiplies transgression, and that it is equal to idolatry, adultery, and murder^b, and the cause of all sin; and which they express by way of fable, in this manner¹: "when Adam sinned, God laid hold on him, and slit his tongue into two parts, and said unto him, the wickedness which is, or shall be in the world, thou hast begun with an evil tongue; wherefore I'll make all that come into the world know that thy tongue is the cause of all this." The Syriac version renders this clause thus, *and the world of iniquity is as wood*; or the branch of a tree; the tongue is fire, and a wicked world is fuel to it. *So is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body*: the body politic, a whole nation, filling it with contention, strife, division, and confusion; and the ecclesiastical body, the church, by sowing discord, fomenting animosities,

^c Chambers's Cyclopedia, in the word *Helm*.

^f Ib. in the word *Rudder*.

^e Quæst. Mechanic. c. 5

^b T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 100. 1.

¹ Otior R. Aquiba in Ketoreth Hassammuin in Gen. fol. 12. 4.

making parties, and spreading errors and heresies, whereby the temple of God is defiled; and the natural body, and the several members of it, even the whole person of a man, soul and body, bringing upon him a blot of infamy and reproach never to be wiped off; as for instance, the vice of the tongue, lying, does; and oftentimes through the tongue, the actions done in the body, which seem good, are quite spoiled: *and setteth on fire the course of nature, or wheel of nature*: the natural body, as before, in which there is a continual rotation or circulation of the blood, by which it is supported; this is the wheel broken at the cistern at death, in Eccl. xii. 6. or the course of a man's life and actions, yea, of all generations, and the vicissitudes and changes which have happened in them, on which the tongue has a great influence; and so the Syriac version renders it, *and sets on fire the series of our genealogies, or of our generations, which run like wheels*: or it may intend the frame of nature, the whole fabric of the universe, and the general conflagration of it, which will be owing to the tongue; or because men's tongues are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory, because of the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Christ and his people, of which they will be convinced by flames of fire about them: *and it is set on fire of hell*; that is, by the devil; for as heaven sometimes is put for God, who dwells in heaven, Matt. xxi. 25. Luke xv. 18. so hell is put for the devil, whose habitation it is; see Matt. xvi. 18. and the sense is, that the tongue is influenced, instigated, and stirred up by Satan, to speak many evil things, and it will be hereafter set on fire in hell, as the tongue of the rich man in Luke xvi. 24. To which purpose are those words of the Talmud^k; "whoever uses an evil tongue, the holy blessed God says to hell, I concerning him above, and thou concerning him below, will judge him, as it is said, Psal. cxx. 3, 4. *what shall be done to thee, thou false tongue? sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper*. there is no arrow but the tongue, according to Jer. ix. 8. and there's no mighty one but God, Isa. xlii. 13. *coals of juniper, רדני רדני, these are hell*." Ver. 7. *For every kind of beasts, and of birds, &c.* Or the nature of them, as it is in the Greek text; however fierce, as beasts of prey are, or shy, as the fowls of the air be: *and of serpents and things in the sea*: the fishes there: *is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind, or by human nature*: by the wit and industry of man; by the various ways, means, and methods devised by man. So Pliny^l relates, that elephants, lions, and tigers among beasts, and the eagle among birds, and crocodiles, asps, and other serpents, and fishes of the sea, have been tamed: though some think this is only to be understood of their being mastered and subdued, by one means or another; or of their being spoiled of their power, or of their poison: and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, *subjected to human nature*.

Ver. 8. *But the tongue can no man tame, &c.* Either his own, or others; not his own, for the man that has the greatest guard upon himself, his words and actions;

yet, what through pride or passion, or one lust or another in his heart, at one time or another, bolts out vain, idle, angry, and sinful words: and he that does not may be set down for a perfect man indeed: nor can he tame or restrain the tongues of others from detraction, calumnies, backbitings, and whisperings; who say, their lips are their own, and who is Lord over us? no man can, by his own power and strength, tame or subdue his tongue, or restrain it from evils it is habituated to, be it lying, cursing, swearing, or what else: God, by his spirit, power, and grace, can, and often does, change the note of the curser, swearer, liar, and blasphemer; but no man can do this, though he can tame beasts, birds, serpents, and fishes; which shews the tongue to be worse than any thing to be found in the whole compass of nature: it is an *unruly evil*: an evil it is, for it is a world of iniquity; and an unruly one, being more so than the horse and mule, which are without understanding, who are kept in and governed, and turned any way by the bit and bridle: but though in nature the tongue is fenced by a double fence of the lips and teeth, this is not sufficient to restrain it; it breaks all bounds, and is not to be kept in by nature, art, or argument: nothing but the grace of God can in any measure govern it, or lay an embargo on it: *full of deadly poison*. which, privately, secretly, and gradually, destroys the characters, credit, and reputation of men; and is of fatal consequence in families, neighbourhoods, churches, and states.

Ver. 9. *Therewith bless we God, even the father, &c.* Of Jesus Christ, and of spirits, and of mercies: this is the instrument that is used in blessing God daily for every meal that is eaten; and in joining with the saints, though only verbally and outwardly, in blessing God for all spiritual blessings in Christ, both in prayer, and in singing psalms: *and therewith curse we men*: make imprecations, and wish evils upon them: *which are made after the similitude of God* as man was originally, Gen. i. 26, 27. and though sin has greatly defaced it, yet there are still some remains of it: and now, what an absurd and monstrous thing is this, that one and the same instrument should be used in blessing God, the Father of all creatures, and in cursing his children, his offspring, as all men are by creation, and bear some resemblance to him.

Ver. 10. *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing, &c.* Which is not only a contradiction, but unnatural, as well as wicked and sinful: *my brethren, these things ought not so to be*: in any, and much less in professors of religion: such things are unbecoming men, are a scandal upon human nature, and exceeding unworthy of the Christian name; see Psal. i. 16, 19, 20.

Ver. 11. *Doth a fountain send forth at the same place, &c.* Or *hole*: for at divers places, and at different times, as Pliny^m observes, it may send forth *sweet water and bitter*: and it is reportedⁿ, there is a lake with the Trogloditæ, a people in Ethiopia, which becomes thrice a day bitter, and then as often sweet; but then it does not yield sweet water and bitter at the same time: this simile is used to shew how unnatural

^k T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 127. 2.

^l Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 9. 16, 17. & 10. 5, 4.

^m Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 103.

ⁿ Isidor. Hispal. Originum, l. 13. c. 13. p. 115.

it is that blessing and cursing should proceed out of the same mouth.

Ver. 12. *Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? &c.*] Every tree bears fruit, according to its kind; a fig-tree produces figs, and an olive-tree olive-berries; a fig-tree does not produce olive-berries, or an olive-tree figs; and neither of them both: *either a vine, figs? or fig-trees, grapes; or either of them, figs and grapes: so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.* The Alexandrian copy reads, *neither can the salt water yield sweet water*; that is, the sea can't yield sweet or fresh water: the Syriac version renders it, *neither can salt water be made sweet*: but naturalists say, it may be made sweet, by being strained through sand: the design of these similes is to observe how absurd a thing it is that a man should both bless and curse with his tongue.

Ver. 13. *Who is a wise man.*] Meaning, not in things natural and civil, or merely moral, but in things spiritual: and he is a wise man, who is both wise to do good, and wise unto salvation; who has learned to know his own ignorance, folly, and stupidity; for the first lesson in the school of spiritual wisdom is for a man to know that he is a fool: and he is a wise man who considers his latter end, thinks of a future state, and what will become of him in another world; and who builds his faith and hope of eternal salvation on the sure and only foundation, the rock Christ Jesus; and who takes up a profession of religion upon principles of grace, and with views to the glory of God, and, upon mature deliberation, reckoning the cost, and what he must expect to meet with; and which he holds fast, without wavering, and yet does not depend upon it; and who walks circumspectly, and with wisdom, towards them that are without; and who observes both providences and promises, for the encouragement of his faith; and keeps looking to the mark for the prize, preferring heavenly things to earthly ones. *And endued with knowledge amongst you?* as he is, who is endued with the knowledge of himself; of the impurity of his nature, and the plague of his heart; and of his impotency and inability to do any thing that is spiritually good of himself; and of the imperfection and insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God; and of his lost state and condition by nature, how deserving of the wrath of God, and obnoxious to the curses of the law; and how miserable he must be without the grace of God and righteousness of Christ: and who is also endued with the knowledge of Christ, so as to see a fulness, suitableness, and ability in him as a Saviour; so as to love him, approve of him, as such, and trust in him; which knowledge is always practical and soul-humbling; and the least degree of it saving; and though it is imperfect, it is growing, and will at last come to perfection: now such a man is a Gnostic, in the best sense; for this question is put with a view to the Gnostics of those times, who valued themselves upon their knowledge, and despised practical religion and godliness: hence it follows, *let him shew out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom*: such an one ought to perform good works, and he will perform them; and it is right in him to shew them forth, that they may

be a means of others glorifying God upon the sight of them; and that they may be evidences of the truth of faith in themselves to others; and that they may be for the imitation of others; and that they may put to silence, and stop the mouths of false accusers, and adorn the Gospel, and recommend religion: and these should be shewn forth *out of a good conversation*; not in a single act or two, but in a series and course of living; which may be said to be *good*, when it is ordered aright, according to the word of God, and is honest among the Gentiles, and upright and holy; and is as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and is worthy of the vocation of God to grace and glory; and when it is influenced by the grace of God: and the works shewn out of it, and in it, are done in faith, from love, in the strength of Christ, and are directed to the glory of God: and all this should be *with meekness of wisdom*; in a wise and humble manner, without trusting to, and depending upon, such works for justification and salvation; and without glorying in them, and boasting of them; acknowledging the deficiency and imperfection of them, and his own weakness in the performance of them; and ascribing them to the power and grace of God, by the assistance of which they are performed.

Ver. 14. *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, &c.*] Though these may not be expressed by words, or actions: envy at the happiness of others, whether at the external blessings of Providence, as riches and honours, or at the internal endowments of their minds, as their wisdom and knowledge, their parts and abilities, is a root of bitterness in the heart, which bears wormwood and gall, and produces bitter effects in the persons in whom it is; it embitters their minds against their neighbours and friends; it is rottenness in their bones, and slays and destroys those who are so silly as to be governed by it; and also in the persons the objects of it; for who can stand before it? and strife in the mind, or an intention to strive and quarrel with others, who are the objects of envy, is very sinful, and of pernicious consequence: and if these be fomented and cherished in the minds and breasts of men, though they may not outwardly shew themselves, yet *glory not*; let not such boast of their being Gnostics, wise men, and endued with knowledge; they are far from deserving such a character; and such boasting is contrary to truth, yea, is lying against it, as follows: *and lie not against the truth*; for, for a man to assert himself to be a wise and knowing man, and yet cherishes bitterness in his heart, and quarrelling and contention in his mind, arising from envy, at the equal or superior knowledge of others, he lies both against the truth of God's word and his own conscience, which condemn such things as ignorance, folly, and madness.

Ver. 15. *This wisdom descendeth not from above, &c.*] If it must be called wisdom, as it ought not; an envious, quarrelsome, and contentious spirit, does not deserve such a name; yet if any will call it so, or can think that a man of such a disposition is a man possessed of wisdom; it is such wisdom as does not come from above, from heaven, from the Father of lights, from Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wis-

dom and knowledge, and from the spirit of wisdom and revelation: what the Jews say ° of the wisdom of Egypt, may be said of this, that it is חכמה תחתונה, *wisdom from below*, or inferior wisdom, as it follows: *but is earthly, sensual, and devilish*; it is *earthly*, or of the earth, and springs from thence; and it is only conversant about earthly things, and is only suitable to earthly minds: it is *sensual, or natural*; what a natural man, one destitute of the spirit of God, and without the knowledge of the things of the spirit, may have; it is what is acquired by the mere strength of nature, and only relates to natural things; and is only agreeable to corrupt nature, or to a natural and unregenerate man: yea, it is *devilish*, or such as the devil himself has; and which comes from him, and being used, serves only his kingdom and interest.

Ver. 16. *For where envying and strife is, &c.]* Where these are cherished in the heart, and especially where they break out into action, in families, neighbourhoods, states, or churches: *there is confusion and every evil work*; these occasion disturbances, raise uneasiness, make disquietude, and cause tumults whenever they appear; and put persons upon doing every thing that is wicked, to gratify such insatiable lusts.

Ver. 17. *But the wisdom that is from above, &c.]* Which has God for its author; which is infused into the soul by the spirit of God; and leads into the knowledge of things that are above, of heavenly things; and which only is true wisdom and knowledge; and those who are possessed of it are the only true Gnostics; for which, see the note on ver. 13. namely, the grace of God: *this wisdom is first pure*; it is pure in itself, it is free from every thing that is earthly, carnal, or sensual, or devilish; it produces purity of heart, of life, and conversation; and is the means of keeping persons pure and chaste, and free from impure lusts, lusts of uncleanness, pride, envy, wrath, &c. which prevail in carnal and unregenerate men: *and then peaceable*; it inclines and engages those who have it to live in peace with the saints, and even with all men; with those of their own household, with their neighbours, yea, with their enemies: it is also *gentle*; or makes men gentle, moderate, and humane, so as that they bear, and forbear; they bear with the infirmities of the weak; readily forgive injuries done them; do

not rigidly exact what is their due, but recede from their just right for the sake of peace and love; and do not bear hard upon others for their failings, but cover them with the mantle of love: and it is *easy to be entreated*; or those who have it readily yield to the superior judgments and stronger reasonings of others; and are easily induced to hope and believe all things, and entertain a good opinion of men, and their conduct; and are far from being proud, arrogant, obstinate, and overbearing: *full of mercy and good fruits*; of compassion and beneficence to the poor; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the widows and fatherless in their affliction; and doing all other good works and duties, both with respect to God and man, as fruits of grace, and of the spirit: *without partiality*: to one another; or making a difference between them; shewing no respect to persons; bestowing upon the poor and indigent, without any distinction: and *without hypocrisy*; either with respect to God or man; not making shew of that which they have not, or do not intend.

Ver 18. *And the fruit of righteousness, &c.]* Which is either eternal life, which is the fruit of Christ's righteousness, and shall be enjoyed by all those who are justified by it; and who, in consequence of it, through the grace of God, live soberly, righteously, and godly; see Rom. vi. 22. or else what is enjoyed in this life, as the fruit and effect of a righteous and holy conversation, which is peace of conscience; and may be truly called the peaceable fruit of righteousness; see Isa. xxxii. 17. *is sown in peace of them that make peace*; that is, either such as are possessed of that wisdom which is peaceable, and makes them so; that peace which they make, pursue after, exercise, and maintain, is a seed, which, being sown by them, will, in the issue, be followed with eternal happiness and felicity; see Matt. v. 9. or such who live a godly life and conversation, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness, and, among the rest, with this of making and preserving peace among men, shall enjoy, as what will spring up from such good seed sown, much conscience-peace and spiritual pleasure of mind: righteousness and peace promise a large and comfortable harvest both here and hereafter.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter the apostle gives the true cause of contentions and strifes; and cautions against intemperance, covetousness, pride, detraction, and vain confidence. Having, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, inveighed against strife and contention, he here shews from whence they spring, from a covetous desire of riches and honour; and which yet are not obtained, because they did not ask these things of God with submission to his will; or they asked with a wrong view, namely, to gratify their lusts, ver. 1, 2, 3. and he

dissuades from such unlawful desires, partly because they were no other than adultery; and partly because indulging them was declaring themselves enemies of God, ver. 4. and he deters from pride, under the name of envy, proud men being generally envious; from the sense of the Scripture, which says, not in vain, that the spirit lusts unto it; and from the consequence of it, such as are proud being resisted by the Lord, when he gives more grace to humble ones, ver. 5, 6. hence follow several exhortations, and various duties relating to

humility; as to submit to God, and resist the devil, encouraged thereunto by this motive, he will flee, ver. 7. to draw nigh to God in a way of religious worship, who will draw nigh in a way of grace to his people; to purity of action, and of heart, or to that which is outward and inward, ver. 8. to be humbled, mourn, and weep, instead of joy and laughter, ver. 9. to lie low before the Lord, who will raise such up, ver. 10. and not to speak evil of any one, since this is judging a brother; nay, a speaking evil of the law, and a judging of that; which is to invade the prerogative of God, the law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy; and therefore one man should not take upon him to judge another, ver. 11, 12. and as another instance of great neglect of God, and his providence, and disrespect unto it, the apostle takes notice of a common practice among men, and even professors of religion, who resolve to go to such a place, and continue so long, and there make merchandise, and promise themselves success; not considering what frail short-lived creatures they are, and how much all depends upon the will of God; and which they should consider, submit to, and be determined by, ver. 13, 14, 15. and he reproves them for their boastings and joy in them, as evil, ver. 16. and observes, that it is not enough to know what is right and good, unless it is done; and that such knowledge is but an aggravation of the evil of sin committed, ver. 17.

Ver. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? &c.*] Which are to be understood, not of public and national wars, such as might be between the Jews and other nations at this time; for the apostle is not writing to the Jews in Judea, as a nation, or body politic, but to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, and to such of them as were Christians; nor were Christians in general as yet increased, and become such large bodies, or were whole nations become Christians, and much less at war one against another, which has been the case since; and which, when it is, generally speaking arises from a lust after an increase of power; from the pride and ambitious views of men, and their envy at the happiness of other princes and states: nor do these design theological debates and disputes, or contentions about religious principles; but rather law-suits, commenced before Heathen magistrates, by the rich, to the oppression of the poor; see ch. ii. 6. though it seems best of all to interpret them of those stirrings and bustlings, strifes, contentions, and quarrels, about honours and riches; endeavouring to get them by unlawful methods, at least at the expense of their own peace, and that of others: come they *not hence*, even of *your lusts that war in your members?* as pride, envy, covetousness, ambition, &c. which, like so many soldiers, are stationed and quartered in the members of the body, and war against the soul; for in the believer, or converted man, however, there is as it were two armies; a law in the members, warring against the law of the mind; the flesh against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and from this inward war arise external ones; or at least from the corruption of nature, which militates against all that is good, all quarrels and contentions, whether public or private, of a greater or lesser nature, and consequence, spring.

Ver. 2. *Ye lust, and have not, &c.*] The apostle pro-

ceeds to shew the unsuccessfulness of many in their desires and pursuits after worldly things; some might be like the sluggard, whose soul desireth all good things, and yet he has nothing, Prov. xiii. 4. because he does not make use of any means, even of such as are proper and necessary, and ought to be used: *ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain*; some, instead of *kill*, which seems not so agreeable, read *envy*; and then the sense is, they envy at the good and happiness of others, and covet after another's property, but can't enjoy it; all such envy and covetousness are fruitless, as well as sinful: *ye fight and war, yet ye have not*; go to law one with another about each other's property; or rather, make a great stir and bustle to get the things of the world; rise early, and sit up late; strive who should get most, and quarrel about what is gotten, and seek to get all advantages of one another; and yet still have not, what at least is desired and strove for: *because ye ask not*; of God, whose blessing only makes rich: instead of all this worldly stir and bustle, and these strivings and quarrellings with one another, it would be much more advisable, and in the issue, be found to turn to more account, to pray to God for a blessing on your endeavours; and to ask of him the good and necessary things of life, in submission to his will, and with thankfulness for what he has bestowed.

Ver. 3. *Ye ask, and receive not, &c.*] Some there were that did ask of God the blessings of his goodness and providence, and yet these were not bestowed on them; the reason was, *because ye ask amiss*; not in the faith of a divine promise; nor with thankfulness for past mercies; nor with submission to the will of God; nor with a right end, to do good to others, and to make use of what might be bestowed, for the honour of God, and the interest of Christ: but that *ye may consume it upon your lusts*; indulge to intemperance and luxury; as the man that had much goods laid up for many years did, to the neglect of his own soul, Luke xii. 19. or the rich man, who spent all upon his back and his belly, and took no notice of Lazarus at his gate, Luke xvi. 19.

Ver. 4. *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, &c.*] Not who were literally such, but in a figurative and metaphorical sense: as he is an adulterer that removes his affections from his own wife, and sets them upon another woman; and she is an adulteress that loves not her husband, but places her love upon another man; so such men and women are adulterers and adulteresses, who, instead of loving God, whom they ought to love with all their hearts and souls, set their affections upon the world, and the things of it: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word *adulteresses*: these the apostle addresses in the following manner; *know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?* that an immoderate love for the good things of the world, and a prevailing desire after the evil things of it, and a delight in the company and conversation of the men of the world, and a conformity to, and compliance with, the sinful manners and customs of the world, are so many declarations of war with God, and acts of hostility upon him; and shew the enmity of the mind against him, and must be highly displeasing to him, and resented by him: *whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*; whoever is in league with the one must be an enemy to

the other; God and mammon cannot be loved and served by the same persons, at the same time; the one will be loved, and the other hated; the one will be attended to, and the other neglected: this may be known both from reason and from Scripture, particularly from Matt. vi. 24.

Ver. 5. *Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain? &c.*] Some think that the apostle refers to a particular passage of Scripture in the Old Testament, and that he took it from Gen. vi. 3. as some; or from Exod. xx. 5. as others; or from Deut. vii. 2, 5. or from Job v. 2. or from Prov. xxi. 10. others think he had in view some text in the New Testament; either Rom. xii. 2. or Gal. v. 17. and some have imagined that he refers to a passage in the apocryphal book of Wisdom, ch. i. 4. and others have been of opinion that it is taken out of some book of Scripture then extant, but now lost, which by no means can be allowed of: the generality of interpreters, who suppose a particular text of Scripture is referred to, fetch it from Numb. xi. 29. but it seems best of all to conclude that the apostle has no regard to any one particular passage of Scripture, in which the following words are expressly had, since no such passage appears; but that his meaning is, the sense of the Scripture everywhere, where it speaks of this matter, is to this purpose: nor does it say this, or any thing else in vain; whatever is written there is to answer some end, as for learning, edification, and comfort, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; neither with respect to what is before suggested, that what is asked in a right manner, and for a right end, shall be given; and that the love of the world, and the love of God, are things incompatible; nor with respect to what follows: *the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?* that is, the depraved spirit of man, the spirit of an unregenerate man; that as it is prone to every lust, and prompts to every sin, the imagination of the thought of man's heart being evil, and that continually, so it instigates to envy the happiness of others; see Gen. vi. 5. and viii. 21. or this may be put as a distinct question from the other, *does the spirit that dwelleth in us lust to envy?* that is, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the hearts of his people, as in his temple: the Ethiopic version reads, *the Holy Spirit*; and then the sense is, does he lust to envy? no; he lusts against the flesh, and the works of it, and envy among the rest; see Gal. v. 17, 21. but he does not lust to it, or provoke to it, or put persons upon it; nor does he, as the Arabic version renders it, *desire that we should envy*: he is a spirit of grace; he bestows grace and favours upon men; and is so far from envying, or putting others upon envying any benefit enjoyed by men, that he increases them, adds to them, and enlarges them, as follows.

Ver. 6. *But he giveth more grace, &c.*] The Arabic version adds, *to us*; the Ethiopic version, *to you*; and the Syriac version reads the whole thus; *but our Lord gives more grace to us*; or *greater grace*: than the world can give, whose friendship is courted by men; the least measure of grace, of faith, and hope, and love, and of a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and interest in him, and of peace, joy, and comfort, is more worth than all the world, and every thing in it: or greater grace, more favours than the saints are able to ask or

think; so Solomon had more favours given him than he could think of asking for: or greater grace, and larger measures of it, even of spiritual light and knowledge, under the Gospel dispensation, than under the former dispensation; or where God bestows gifts qualifying for service and usefulness, and these are made use of and employed for such purposes, he gives more: or this may refer to internal grace wrought by the spirit of God, in the hearts of his people; more of which he may be said to give, when he causes it to abound, as to its acts and exercises; when faith grows exceedingly, hope revives, and is lively, and abounds through his power and influence, and love to God and Christ, and one another, abounds yet more and more; when there is a growth in every grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, so that this grace becomes a well of living waters, springing up into eternal life, which at last will have its perfection in glory: *wherefore he saith*; either the spirit that gives more grace, or the Scripture, or God in the Scripture, in Prov. iii. 34. *God resisteth the proud*; or scorns the scorners; he rejects them that trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others; that say, Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou; that are proud of themselves, their enjoyments, their gifts, their external righteousness, and holiness, and are full, and rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; these he opposes, he sets himself against, he thrusts them away from him, he sends them away empty, and scatters them in the imagination of their own hearts; and in the things in which they deal proudly, he is above them; he sits in the heavens and laughs at them, and frustrates all their schemes: *but he giveth grace unto the humble*; who are sensible of their own vileness and meanness, and acknowledge it; who think the meanest of themselves, and the best of others; and don't envy the gifts and graces of God bestowed upon others, but rejoice at them; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God; and ingenuously confess the deficiency of their duties, and the insufficiency of their righteousness to justify them before God; and that when they have done all they can, or are assisted to do, they are but unprofitable servants: now to these God gives grace; he not only gives grace at first, to make them humble, but he gives them more grace, or increases what he gives: grace is God's gift; he gives all the grace that is in Christ, and all the blessings of grace that are in the covenant, and all the grace that is in the hearts of his people; as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, patience, self-denial, resignation to his will, and every degree of spiritual knowledge; and grace is only his gift; men can't give it to themselves, nor can the best of men give it to others; not godly parents to their children; nor ministers to those to whom they preach; no, nor the angels in heaven; nor is it to be obtained by the works of men: it is a free gift; it is given of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, to whom, and when, and in what measure he pleases; to which he is not induced by any motives in men, for they have nothing in them to move him to it; and it is given by him absolutely, without conditions, not suspending it till the performance of them; and he gives it cheerfully and not grudgingly, largely, bountifully, and in great abundance.

Ver. 7. *Submit yourselves therefore to God, &c.*] To the will of God, with respect to worldly things, and be content with such things as are enjoyed, and be satisfied with the portion that is allotted; it is right and best for the people of God to leave themselves with him, to choose their inheritance for them, since by all their anxious cares, their striving and struggling, their impatient desires, wars and fightings, as they cannot add one cubit to their stature, so nothing to their worldly substance; and it becomes them to submit to God in all afflictive dispensations of his providence, and be still and know that he is God; as well as to submit to his way and method of salvation by Christ, and particularly to the righteousness of Christ, for justification; and to depend upon him for supplies of grace in the discharge of every duty, and the exercise of every grace: *resist the devil, and he will flee from you*: Satan is to be looked upon as an enemy, and to be opposed as such, and to be watched and guarded against; the whole armour of God should be taken and made use of, particularly the weapon of prayer, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and the shield of faith; and also the grace of humility, than which nothing is more opposite to him: he is a proud spirit, and he endeavours to swell men with pride of themselves; and when he has worked them up to such a pitch, he is then master of them, and can manage them as he pleases; but a poor humble believer, with whom God dwells, to whom he gives more grace, and who comes forth not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord God, as David against Goliath, and who owns his vileness and sinfulness, and flies to the grace of God, and blood of Christ, Satan knows not what to do with him, he is puzzled, baffled, and confounded; such he leaves, from such he flees; he don't like the power of prayer, nor the strength of faith, nor the sharpness of the two-edged sword, the word of God, nor the humble believer's staff, bag, scrip, and sling.

Ver. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you, &c.*] This must be understood consistently with the perfection of God's immensity and omnipresence: the saints draw nigh to God when they present their bodies in his sanctuary; when they tread in his courts, and attend his ordinances; where they always find it good for them to draw nigh unto him; and blessed is the man that approaches to him in faith and fear: they draw nigh to him when they come to the throne of his grace, for grace and mercy to help them; when they draw near to him in prayer with true hearts, and lift them up with their hands to God; when in the exercise of faith and hope they enter within the veil, and come up even to his seat; and lay hold on him as their covenant God and father; and he draws nigh to them by granting them his gracious presence, by communicating his love to them, by applying the blessings of his grace, by helping them in times of need and distress, and by protecting them from their enemies; the contrary to which is expressed by standing afar off from them. Now this is not to be understood as if men could first draw nigh to God, before he draws nigh to them; for as God first loves, so he first moves; he takes the first step, and, in conversion, turns and draws men to himself; though this does not respect first conversion, but after-acts in consequence of it; nor is it

to be considered as a condition of the grace and favour of God, in drawing nigh to his people, but is expressive of what is their duty, and an encouragement to it: *cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded*; the persons addressed are not the profane men of the world, but sinners in Zion, formal professors, hypocritical persons; who speak with a double tongue to men, and who draw nigh to God with their mouths, but not with their hearts; who halt between two opinions, and are unstable in all their ways: cleansing of their hands and hearts denotes the purity of outward conversation, and of the inward affections; and supposes impurity both of flesh and spirit, that the body and all its members, the soul and all its powers and faculties, are unclean; and yet not that men have a power to cleanse themselves, either from the filth of an external conversation, or from inward pollution of the heart; though a man attempts the one, he fails in it; and who can say he has done the other? Job ix. 30, 31. Prov. xx. 9. This is not to be done by ceremonial ablutions, moral services, or evangelical ordinances; this is God's work only, as appears from his promises to cleanse his people from their sins, by sprinkling clean water upon them; from the end of Christ's shedding his blood, and the efficacy of it; and from the prayers of the saints, that God would wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin, and create clean hearts in them: and yet such exhortations are not in vain, since they may be useful to convince men of their pollution, who are pure in their own eyes, as these hypocritical, nominal professors, might be; and to bring them to a sense of their inability to cleanse themselves, and of the necessity of being cleansed elsewhere; and to lead them to inquire after the proper means of cleansing, and so to the fountain of Christ's blood, which only cleanses from all sin.

Ver. 9. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, &c.*] Not in a bare external way; not by afflicting the body with fastings and scourgings, by renting of garments, and clothing with sackcloth, and putting ashes on the head, and other such outward methods of humiliation; but afflicting the soul is meant, an inward mourning and weeping over the plague of the heart, the impurity of nature, and the various sins of life; after a godly sort, and because contrary to a God of infinite love and grace; in an evangetic way, looking to Jesus, and being affected with the pardoning grace and love of God in Christ. *Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness*; meaning their carnal joy, on account of their friendship with the world, and their enjoyment of the things of it, since they consumed them on their lusts, and which betrayed enmity to God.

Ver. 10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, &c.*] Which is done, when men, before the Lord, and from their hearts, and in the sincerity of their souls, acknowledge their meanness and unworthiness, their vileness, sinfulness, and wretchedness, and implore the grace and mercy of God in Christ, as did Abraham, Jacob, Job, Isaiah, Paul, and the publican; and when they walk humbly with God, acknowledging they can do nothing without him; owning their dependence on his grace, and ascribing all they have, and are, unto it:

and he shall lift you up; this is God's usual way to lift up the meek, and exalt those that humble themselves; he lifts them from the dunghill, to set them among princes; he gives them a place, and a name in his house, better than sons and daughters; he adorns them with his grace; he clothes them with the righteousness of his son, he grants them nearness to himself; and at last will introduce them into his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 11. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren, &c.*] The apostle here returns to his former subject, concerning the vices of the tongue, he had been upon in the preceding chapter, ver. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. and here mentions one, which professors of religion were too much guilty of, and that is, speaking evil one of another; which is done either by raising false reports, and bringing false charges; or by aggravating failings and infirmities; or by lessening and depreciating characters, and endeavouring to bring others into discredit and disesteem among men: this is a very great evil, and what the men of the world do, and from them it is expected; but for the saints to speak evil one of another, to sit and speak against a brother, and slander an own mother's son, is barbarous and unnatural. *He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law;* he that tale-bears and backbites his brother, his fellow-member, and detracts from his good name and character, and takes upon him to judge his heart, and his state, as well as to condemn his actions, he speaks evil of the law; and judges and condemns that, as if that forbid a thing that was lawful, even tale-bearing and detraction, Lev. xix. 16. or by speaking evil of him for a good thing he does, he blames and condemns the law, as though it commanded a thing that was evil; and by passing sentence upon his brother, he takes upon him the province of the law, which is to accuse, charge, convince, pronounce guilty, and condemn: *but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law;* as is a duty, and would best become: *but a judge;* and so such a person not only infringes the right of the law, but assumes the place of the Judge and lawgiver himself; whereas, as follows,

Ver. 12. *There is one lawgiver, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions, add, *and judge.* Who is the one only Lord God, Isa. xxxiii. 22. This is a character that may be applied to God the Father, who gave the law to the people of Israel, both the judicial and ceremonial law, and also the moral law; from his right hand went a fiery law, and to him belongs the giving of it; and also to the son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of saints, and lawgiver in his house; who has given out commandments to be observed, and laws of discipline for the right ordering of his house, and kingdom, to be regarded; and particularly the new commandment of love, which is eminently called the law of Christ; and which is most apparently broke, by detraction and speaking evil one of another: now there may be inferior and subordinate lawgivers, as Judah is said to be God's lawgiver, and Moses is said to command the Jews a law; yet there is but one supreme, universal, and perfect lawgiver, who is God; and though there may be many lawgivers in things political, whose legislative power is to be obeyed, both

for the Lord's sake, and for conscience-sake; yet in things religious, and relating to conscience, God is the only lawgiver, who is to be hearkened unto: *who is able to save, and to destroy;* this is true of God the Father, who is able to save, and does save by his Son Jesus Christ, and even persons that have broken the law he has given, and are liable to the curse and condemnation of it; and he is able to save them according to that law, in perfect consistence with it, and with his justice and holiness, since Christ, by whom he saves, was made under it, and has fulfilled it; and that Christ is mighty to save, able to save to the uttermost, is certain from the Scripture, and all experience; and God, the lawgiver, is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, for the transgressions of his law; and even Christ the Lamb is also the lion of the tribe of Judah, who will break his enemies in pieces, as a potter's vessel, and punish the contemners of his Gospel with everlasting destruction, from his presence and glory: in a word, God, the lawgiver, is sovereign, and can destroy, or save, whom he pleases; he is able to save the brother that is spoken against, and to destroy him that speaks against him: *who art thou that judgest another?* another man's servant, as in Rom. xiv. 4. or *thy neighbour,* as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or *the neighbour,* as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; that is, any brother, friend, or neighbour, in the manner as before observed in the preceding verse.

Ver. 13. *Go to now, ye that say, &c.*] The apostle passes from exposing the sin of detraction, and rash judgment, to inveigh against those of presumption and self-confidence; and the phrase, *go to now,* is a note of transition, as well as of attention, and contains the form of a solemn and grave address to persons, who either think within themselves, or vocally express, the following words, or the like unto them: *to-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city;* in such a country, a place of great trade and merchandise; as Tyre then was in Phœnicia, Thessalonica in Macedonia, Ephesus in Asia, and others: some render this as an imperative, or as an exhortation, *let us go,* which does not alter the sense. *And continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain;* as is customary for merchants to do; nor does the apostle design by this to condemn merchandise, and the lawful practice of buying and selling, and getting gain; but that men should not resolve upon those things without consulting God, and attending to his will, and subjecting themselves to it; and without considering the uncertainty and frailty of human life; as well as should not promise and assure themselves of success, of getting gain and riches, as if those things were in their own power, and had no dependence upon the providence and blessing of God.

Ver. 14. *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow, &c.*] Whether there would be a morrow for them or no, whether they should live till to-morrow; and if they should, they knew not what a morrow would bring forth, or what things would happen, which might prevent their intended journey and success: no man can secure a day, an hour, a moment, and much less a year of continuance in this life; nor can he foresee what will befall him to-day or to-morrow; therefore it is great stupidity to determine on this, and the other,

without the leave of God, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being; and by whose providence all events are governed and directed; see Prov. xxvii. 1. *for what is your life?* of what kind and nature is it? what assurance can be had of the continuance of it? by what may it be expressed? or to what may it be compared? *it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away:* which rises out of the earth, or water, and expires almost as soon as it exists; at least, continues but a very short time, and is very weak and fleeting, and carried about here and there, and soon returns from whence it came: the allusion is to the breath of man, which is in his nostrils, and who is not to be accounted of, or depended on.

Ver. 15. *For that ye ought to say, &c.*] Instead of saying we will go to such and such a place, and do this, and that, and the other thing, it should be said, *if the Lord will, and we shall live, and do this and that:* the last *and* is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and the passage rendered thus, *if the Lord will, and we shall live, we will do this:* so that here are two conditions of doing any thing; the one is, if it should be agreeable to the determining will and purpose of God, by which every thing in the world comes to pass, and into which the wills of men should be resolved, and resigned; and the other is, if we should live, since life is so very uncertain and precarious: and the sense is, not that this exact form of words should be always used, but what is equivalent to them, or, at least, that there should be always a sense of these things upon the mind; and there should be a view to them in all resolutions, designs, and engagements: and since the words are so short and comprehensive, it might be proper for Christians to use themselves to such a way of speaking, upon all occasions; we find it used by the Apostle Paul frequently, as in Acts xviii. 2. 1 Cor. iv. 19. Rom. i. 10. Heb. vi. 3. and even by Jews, Heathens, and Turks. It is a saying of Ben Syra, the Jew^p, “let a man never say “he will do any thing, before he says נורר השם אר, “if God will.” So Cyrus, king of Persia, when, under pretence of hunting, he designed an expedition into Armenia, upon which an hare started, and was caught by an eagle, said to his friends, this will be a

good or prosperous hunting to us, *ν θεος βελων, if God will*^q. And very remarkable are the words of Socrates to Alcibiades, inquiring of him how he ought to speak; says Socrates, *εω θεος εβλων, if God will*^r; and says he, in another place^s, “but I will do this, and come unto “thee to-morrow, *if God will.*” And it is reported of the ‘Turks’, that they submit every thing to the divine will; as the success of war, or a journey, or any thing, even of the least moment, they desire to be done; and never promise themselves, or others, any thing, but under this condition, *In Shallah, if God will.*

Ver. 16. *But now ye rejoice in your boastings, &c.*] Of to-morrow, and of the continuance of life, and of going to such a place, and abiding there for such a time, and of trading and trafficking with great success, to the obtaining of much gain and riches; see Prov. xxvii. 1. *all such rejoicing is evil;* wicked and atheistical, as expressing a neglect of and independence on Providence; arrogating and ascribing too much to themselves, their power and will, as if they had their lives and fortunes in their own hands, and at their own dispose, when all depend upon the will of God. The Syriac version renders it, *all such rejoicing is from evil;* from an evil heart, and from the evil one, Satan.

Ver. 17. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, &c.*] This may regard not only the last particular of referring all things to the will of God, the sovereign disposer of life, and all events, which some might have the knowledge of in theory, though they did not practise according to it; but all the good things the apostle had exhorted to, and the contrary to which he had dehorted from, in this epistle; and suggests, that a Gnostic, or one that knows the will of God, in the several branches of it, revealed in his word, *and doth it not, to him it is sin:* it is a greater sin; it is an aggravated one; it is criminal in him that is ignorant of what is good, and does that which is evil, nor shall he escape punishment; but it is much more wicked in a man that knows what is right and good, and ought to be done, and does it not, but that which is evil, and his condemnation will be greater; see Luke xii. 47, 48. The omission of a known duty, as well as the commission of a known sin, is criminal.

C H A P. V.

IN this chapter the apostle reproves the vices of rich men, and denounces the judgments of God upon them; exhorts the saints to patience under sufferings; dehorts them from vain and profane swearing, and presses to various duties and branches of religious worship, private and public, and to the performance of several good offices of love to one another. He represents the miseries of wicked rich men as just at hand, ver. 1. because they made no use of their riches, either for themselves, or others, and because of the trust they put in them, heaping them up against a time to come, ver.

2, 3. and because of their injustice in detaining the hire of labourers from them, ver. 4. and because of their wantonness and luxury, ver. 5. and because of their cruelty to the innocent, ver. 6. and such who suffer at their hands are exhorted to exercise patience, from the instance of the husbandman waiting patiently for the fruit of the earth, and the rain to produce it; and from the consideration of the coming of Christ, the Judge, being near at hand, ver 7, 8, 9. and from the example of the prophets of the Lord, who suffered much, and were patient, and so happy; and par-

^p Sentent. 11.^q Xenophon. Cyropad. l. 2. c. 25.^r Plato in Alcibiade, p. 135.^s Plato in Laches.^t Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 74.

ticularly from the instance of Job, his patience, the end of the Lord in his afflictions, and his pity and compassion towards him, ver. 10, 11. But of all things the apostle entreats them, that they would take care of profane swearing, and all vain oaths, since these bring into condemnation, ver. 12. and from hence he passes to various exercises of religion; the afflicted he advises to prayer; and those in comfortable circumstances of body and mind to singing of psalms, ver. 13. and such that are sick, to send for the elders of the church to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, whereby not only the sick man would be delivered from his sickness, the Lord raising him up, but even his sins would be declared to be forgiven, ver. 14, 15. And not only it became the elders to pray for sick persons, but also the saints in general, one for another, and to acknowledge their faults to each other, since the fervent prayer of every righteous man is of great avail with God, ver. 16. of which an instance is given in Elias, whose prayer, though a man subject to like passions as other men, against, and for rain, was very successful, ver. 17, 18. And Christians should not only be concerned for the health of each other's bodies, but also for the good of their souls; wherefore, whenever it is observed that any are straying from the path of truth, methods should be taken to restore them, and turn them from the error of their ways; and whoever is the happy instrument of such a restoration is the means of saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *Go to now, ye rich men, &c.*] All rich men are not here designed; there are some rich men who are good men, and make a good use of their riches, and do not abuse them, as these here are represented; and yet wicked rich men, or those that were the openly profane, are not here intended neither; for the apostle only writes to such who were within the church, and not without, who were professors of religion; and such rich men are addressed here, who, notwithstanding their profession, were not rich towards God, but laid up treasure for themselves, and trusted in their riches, and boasted of the multitude of their wealth; and did not trust in God, and make use of their substance to his glory, and the good of his interest, as they should have done: *weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you*; meaning, not temporal calamities that should come upon them at the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the rich greatly suffered by the robbers among themselves, as well as by the Roman soldiers; for the apostle is not writing to the Jews in Judea, and at Jerusalem; but to the Christians of the twelve tribes scattered in the several parts of the world, and who were not distressed by that calamity; but eternal miseries, or the torments of hell are intended, which, unless they repented of their sins, would shortly, suddenly, and unavoidably come upon them, when their present joy and laughter would be turned into howling and weeping.

Ver. 2. *Your riches are corrupted, &c.*] Either through disuse of them; and so the phrase is expressive of their tenaciousness, withholding that from themselves and others which is meet, and which is keeping riches for the owners thereof, to their hurt; or these are corrupted, and are corruptible things, fading and

perishing, and will stand in no stead in the day of wrath, and therefore it is great weakness to put any trust and confidence in them: *and your garments are moth-eaten*; being neither wore by themselves, nor put upon the backs of others, as they should, but laid up in wardrobes, or in chests and coffers, and so became the repast of moths, and now good for nothing.

Ver. 3. *Your gold and silver is cankered, &c.*] Or grown rusty like iron, by lying long without use; this is not easily and quickly done, but in length of time gold and silver will change, and contract a rustiness; and so this conveys the same idea of hoarding up riches and laying up money, without making use of it in trade, for the support of the poor, and without distributing it to their necessities: *and the rust of them shall be a witness against you*; at the day of judgment; which will be a proof that they have not been employed to such services, and for such usefulness, for which they were designed and given. *And shall eat your flesh as it were fire*; that is, a remembrance of this, a sense of it impressed upon them, shall be like fire in their bones; shall distress their minds, gnaw their consciences, and be in them the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched: *ye have heaped treasure together for the last days*; either for many years, as the fool in the Gospel, for the times of old age, the last days of men, for fear they should then want; or for the last days of the world, or of time, as if they thought they should live for ever: the Vulgate Latin version reads, *ye have treasured up wrath for yourselves in the last days*; instead of riches, as they imagined; and that by their covetousness and wickedness, by a wicked disuse of their riches, and an unrighteous detention of them; but this supplement seems to be taken from Rom. ii. 5. though the sense is confirmed by some copies which connect the phrase, *as it were fire*, in the preceding clause, with this, *ye have treasured up as it were fire*; and the Syriac version renders it, *ye have treasured up fire*; the fire of divine wrath; this is the fruit of treasuring up riches in an ill way, and without making a proper use of them.

Ver. 4. *Behold the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, &c.*] The wages agreed for by the day, with the labourers in their fields, particularly their reapers; which one instance serves for many others; and is the rather mentioned, because reaping is a laborious work, and those who are employed in it have nothing to live upon but their hand-labour; and especially because they are made use of in cutting down the corn when it is fully ripe, and in great plenty; wherefore, to detain their just wages from them argues great inhumanity and wickedness; and yet this was what was done by rich men: *which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth*; unto God for vengeance, as the blood of Abel did; and shews that such an evil, however privately and fraudulently it may be done, will be made public, and is a crying one: *and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth*: that is, the Lord of hosts; of angels, and of men; of the host of heaven, and of the inhabitants of the earth; of Jews and Gentiles, and of rich and poor; and who has power to vindicate the cause of the latter against their rich oppressors, and will do it; his ears are open to their cries, he takes

notice of them, and regards them, and will take vengeance on those that injure them. The reference is to Deut. xxiv. 15.

Ver. 5. *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, &c.*] This is said of other rich men; for all that is here said is not to be understood of the same individuals, but some things of one, and some of another; some made no use of their riches, either for themselves, or others; some did make use of them, and employed the poor, and then would not give them their wages; and others lived a voluptuous and luxurious life, indulged themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures, and gratified the senses by eating, drinking, gaming, &c. and so were dead whilst they lived. The phrase suggests, that their pleasures were but short-lived, but for a season, even whilst they were on earth; and that hereafter they would not live in pleasure: *and been wanton*; through the abundance and plenty of good things, their delicious way of living, and the swing of pleasures which they took; the allusion is to fatted beasts, which being in good pastures, grow fat and wanton: *ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter*. when beasts were slain for some extraordinary entertainment, or for the solemn festivals and sacrifices of the Jews, when they lived more deliciously than at other times; and then the sense is, that these rich men fared sumptuously every day; every day was a festival with them; they indulged themselves in intemperance; they ate and drank, not merely what was necessary, and satisfying, and cheering to nature, but to excess, and gorged, and filled themselves in an extravagant manner: the Syriac version, instead of *hearts*, reads *bodies* and one copy reads, *your flesh*: and the last phrase may be rendered, as it is in the same version, *as unto*, or *for the day of slaughter*: and so the Arabic version, *ye have nourished your hearts, as fattened for the day of slaughter*: like beasts that are fattened in order to be killed, so were they preparing and fitting up by their sins for destruction.

Ver. 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just, &c.*] Meaning not Christ, the just One, as some have thought; whom the Jewish sanhedrim condemned as guilty of death, and got the sentence passed upon him, and him to be crucified by Pontius Pilate, on the day of slaughter, at the time of the passover, as some connect the last clause of the preceding verse with this; since the apostle is not writing to the Jerusalem Jews, nor to unbelievers, but to professors of religion; though he might say they did it, because their nation did it: but rather this is to be understood of the poor saints, who were just, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them, and lived soberly, righteously, and godly, and were harmless and inoffensive in their conversation: who were evil-spoken of, censured, and judged, and condemned in a rash and uncharitable manner by their brethren; or were drawn to the judgment-seats by the rich, who obtained a judicial process against them, and procured a sentence of condemnation to pass upon them unrighteously; and who killed them, by taking away their good

names from them, and by withholding from them their supplies of life, the fruit of their own labour, whereby their lives were embittered and made miserable: and *he doth not resist you*; it being neither in his power, nor in his inclination; but takes it patiently, quietly submits, and makes no opposition: or God does not resist you, as yet; he will do it shortly.

Ver. 7. *Be patient therefore, brethren, &c.*] The apostle here addresses himself to the poor who were oppressed by the rich men, and these he calls *brethren*, of whom he was not ashamed; when he does not bestow this title upon the rich, though professors of the same religion: these poor brethren he advises to be patient under their sufferings, to bear them with patience, *unto the coming of the Lord*; not to destroy Jerusalem, but either at death, or at the last judgment; when he will take vengeance on their oppressors, and deliver them from all their troubles, and put them into the possession of that kingdom, and glory, to which they are called; wherefore, in the mean while, he would have them be quiet and easy, not murmur against God, nor seek to take vengeance on men, but leave it to God, to whom it belongs, who will judge his people: *behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth*: ripe fruit, which arises from the seed he sows in the earth; and which may be called *precious*, because useful both to man and beast; see Deut. xxxiii. 14, 15, 16. and between this, and the sowing of the seed, is a considerable time, during which the husbandman waits; and this may be an instruction in the present case: *and hath patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain*; the Jews had seldom rains any more than twice a year; the early, or former rain, was quickly after the feast of tabernacles*, in the month Marchesvan, or October, when the seed was sown in the earth; and if it did not rain, they prayed for it, on the third or seventh day of the month †; and the latter rain was in Nisan, or March ‡, just before harvest; and to this distinction the passage refers.

Ver. 8. *Be ye also patient, &c.*] As well as the husbandman, and like him; and wait for the rains and dews of divine grace to fall, and make fruitful, and for the ripe fruit of eternal life; and in the mean while cheerfully and patiently bear all injuries, and oppressions: *stablish your hearts*; though the state of the saints is stable, they being fixed in the everlasting love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the hands of Christ, and on the rock of ages; yet their hearts are very unstable, and so are their frames, and the exercise of grace in them, and need stablishing, which is God's work; which is often done by the means of the word and ordinances; and these the saints should make use of, for the stablishing of their hearts: the sense may be, take heart, be of good cheer, don't be dismayed, or faint, or sink under your pressures, but be of good courage, pluck up your spirits, lift up your heads: *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*; when he will render tribulation to them that trouble them, free them from all their sorrows and afflictions, and

* Bartenora in Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 2.

† T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 1. & 10. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 1. Haimon. Tephilla, c. 2. sect. 10.

‡ Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, & Miclo Jophi in Joel ii. 23. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 175. 2.

enter them into the joy of their Lord; which will be either at death, which was not very far off, or at the last day, which was drawing nearer and nearer, and which with God was near; with whom a thousand years are as one day.

Ver. 9. *Grudge not one against another, brethren, &c.*] On account of any happiness, temporal or spiritual, which another enjoys; don't inwardly repine at it; or secretly sigh and groan in an envious manner at it, though nothing may be said, as the word used signifies; much less complain of, accuse, and condemn one another, or meditate and seek revenge: *lest ye be condemned*; hereafter, at the bar of Christ, by the Judge of the whole earth, who is privy to the secret murmurings and grumbings, and the envious sighs and groans of men; see Matt. vii. 1. *Behold the judge standeth before the door*; there is another that judgeth, who is the Lord, and he is at hand; he is just at the door; a little while and he will come, and not tarry; which may refer not to Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, but to his second coming to judgment, which will be quickly; for the Gospel times are the last times; there will be no other age; at the end of this, Christ will come.

Ver. 10. *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, &c.*] Men who have been highly honoured of God, with a gift of prophesying, or foretelling things to come; to whom God revealed his secrets, doing nothing without acquainting them with it; and who were sent forth by him, and prophesied in his name what were made known unto them; and yet, though these were his favourites, they suffered much; as cruel mockings, scourgings, imprisonment, famine, nakedness, and death in various shapes; some being stoned, others sawn asunder, and others killed by the sword; all which they endured with incredible patience. And therefore the apostle proposes them to be taken, *for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience*; their afflictions were many and great, and yet they were very patient under them; and through faith and patience they went through them, and now inherit the promises; and so are a very proper example and pattern for New-Testament saints to follow and copy after.

Ver. 11. *Behold, we count them happy which endure, &c.*] Affliction, with courage, constancy, and patience, and hold out to the end; for such shall be saved; theirs is the kingdom of heaven; they are happy now, and will be so hereafter: the spirit of God, and of glory, now rests upon them; and it is an honour done them that they are counted worthy to suffer for Christ; and they'll be glorified with him to all eternity; the consideration of which may serve to encourage and increase patience. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job*; from the account which is given of him, and his patience, in the book that bears his name; how he behaved under every trial, which came one upon the back of another; as the plundering of his substance, the loss of his children, and of the health of his body; and yet in all this Job sinned not, nor murmured against God, nor charged him foolishly, and was a mirror of patience; and though he afterwards let fall

some expressions of impatience, yet he was humbled for them, and brought to repentance: this shews, that as the Apostle James, so the Jews, to whom he writes, believed that there had been really such a man as Job; and that the book which bears his name is an authentic piece of holy Scripture, and contains a narrative of matters of fact; or otherwise this reference to him would have been impertinent. How long Job endured the chastenings of the Lord cannot be said. The Jews say they continued on him twelve months, which they gather from Job vii. 3. *And have seen the end of the Lord*: that is, the happy end, or exitus, out of all his troubles; which the Lord gave to him, as the Oriental versions add; for he gave him twice as much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning, Job xlii. 10, 12. Some understand this of the Lord Jesus Christ, both of his great patience in sufferings, in which he is an example to his people, and they would do well to look to, and consider him; and of the end of his sufferings, his glorious resurrection from the dead, and session at the right hand of God, where he is crowned with glory and honour; but the former sense is best: *that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*; as to Job, so to all his people; his paternal relation to them engages his pity towards them; nor does he willingly afflict them; and when he does, he sympathizes with them; he is afflicted with them, and in his pity redeems them; his bowels move towards them, and he earnestly remembers them, and works deliverance for them in his own time and way; and therefore it becomes them to be patient.

Ver. 12. *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, &c.*] As impatience should not shew itself in secret sighs, groans, murmurings, and repinings, so more especially it should not break forth in rash oaths, or in profane swearing; for of such sort of swearing, and of such oaths, is the apostle to be understood; otherwise an oath is very lawful, when taken in the fear and name of God, and made by the living God, and is used for the confirmation of any thing of moment, and in order to put an end to strife; God himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and angels, and good men, are in Scripture sometimes represented as swearing; and that the apostle is so to be understood, appears from the form of swearing prohibited, *neither by the heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath*; of the like kind; such as are forbidden, and cautioned, and reasoned against by our Lord, in Matt. v. 34, 35, 36, to which the apostle manifestly refers; see the note there. *But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay*; that is, whenever there is an occasion for affirming, or denying any thing, let it be done nakedly, simply, and absolutely, without any form of oath annexed to it; for whatever addition of that kind is made comes from evil, and tends to it, and is evil: *lest ye fall into condemnation*; by the Lord; for either false, or rash, or profane swearing; for he will not suffer it to go unpunished; see Exod. xx. 7. Some copies read, *lest ye fall into hypocrisy*; or dissimulation, and get into a habit and custom of lying and deceiving, as common swearers do; and so reads the Arabic version.

Ver. 13. *Is any among you afflicted? &c.*] As the

people of God generally are; they are commonly a poor, and an afflicted people; at least there are many among them that are so, and many are their afflictions: those whom Christ loves, as he did Lazarus, are not free from sicknesses and diseases; and these are rather signs of love than arguments against it; and when this is the case of any of the saints, what is to be done? *let him pray*; to God that can save him; in the name of Christ; under the influence of the spirit; believing in the word of promise. Times of afflictions are proper times for prayer; there is then more—especially need of it; and God sometimes lays his afflicting hand upon his people, when they have been negligent of their duty, and he has not heard of them for some time, in order to bring them near to him, to seek his face, pay him a visit, and pour out a prayer before him; see Psal. l. 15. *Is any merry* ? in good heart and spirit, in a good frame of mind, as well as in prosperous circumstances, in soul, body and estate: *let him sing psalms*; let him not only be inwardly joyful, as he should be in prosperity, and be thankful to God for his many mercies, temporal and spiritual, he enjoys; but let him express it vocally, and melodiously, by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs: not that these are the only persons that are to sing psalms, or this the only time, any more than that afflicted persons are the only ones that are to pray, or the time of affliction the only time of prayer; but as affliction more especially calls for prayer, so spiritual joy, and rejoicing in prosperous seasons, for singing of psalms: weeping, and singing of psalms, were thought, by the Jews, inconsistent. Kimchi, on the title of the third psalm, observes, that their Rabbins say, that when David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, he wept; and if he wept, why is this called a psalm? and if a psalm, למה בכה, *why did he weep*?

Ver. 14. *Is any sick among you* ? &c.] Which is often the case; the bodies of the saints, as well as others, are liable to a variety of diseases; they are sick, and sometimes nigh unto death, as Epaphroditus was: and then, *let him call for the elders of the church*; in allusion to the elders of the congregation of Israel, Lev. iv. 15. By these may be meant, either the elder members of the church, men of gravity and soundness in the faith, persons of long standing and experience; who have the gift and grace of prayer, and are not only capable of performing that duty, but of giving a word of counsel and advice to the sick. It was a kind of proverbial saying of Aristophanes the grammarian; “the works “of young men, the counsels of middle-aged persons, “and *אנשי זקנות, the prayers of ancient men*.” or rather officers of churches are meant, particularly pastors, who are so called in Scripture; these should be sent for in times of sickness, as well as physicians; and rather than they, since their prayers may be the means of healing both soul and body: so in former times, the prophets of God were sent to in times of sickness, for advice and assistance. It is a saying of R. Phinehas ben Chama, that “whoever has a sick “person in his house, let him go to a wise man, and “he will seek mercy for him.” And it follows here, *and let them pray over him*; or for him, for the recovery

of his health: *anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord*; which some think was only done in a common medicinal way, oil being used much in the eastern countries for most disorders; and so these elders used ordinary medicine, as well as prayer: or rather this refers to an extraordinary gift, which some elders had of healing diseases, as sometimes by touching, and by laying on of hands, or by expressing some words, and so by anointing with oil; see Mark vi. 13. which extraordinary gifts being now ceased, the rite or ceremony of anointing with oil ceases in course: however, this passage gives no countenance to the extreme unction of the Papists; that of theirs being attended with many customs and ceremonies, which are not here made mention of; that being used, as is pretended, for the healing of the souls of men, whereas this was used for corporeal healing; that is only performed when life is despaired of, and persons are just going out of the world; whereas this was made use of to restore men to health, and that they might continue longer in it, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, &c.*] That is, the prayer of the elders, being put up in faith by them, and in which the sick person joins by faith; such a prayer is a means of bringing down from God a blessing on the sick man, and of restoring him to his former health: *and the Lord shall raise him up*; from his bed of sickness, on which he is laid, and bring him forth to praise his name, and to fear and glorify him. *And if he have committed sins*; not that it is a question whether he has or no, for no man lives without sin, nor the commission of it; but the sense is, if he has been guilty of any sins, which God in particular has taken notice of, and on account of which he has laid his chastising hand upon him, in order to bring him to a sense of them, and to acknowledge them; which is sometimes the case, though not always, at the same time that his bodily health is restored: *they shall be forgiven him*; he shall have a discovery, and an application of pardoning grace to him: and indeed the removing of the sickness or disease may be called the forgiveness of his sins, which is sometimes the sense of this phrase in Scripture, as in 1 Kings viii. 34, 36, 50.

Ver. 16. *Confess your faults one to another, &c.*] Which must be understood of sins committed against one another; which should be acknowledged, and repentance for them declared, in order to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation; and this is necessary at all times, and especially on beds of affliction, and when death and eternity seem near approaching: wherefore this makes nothing for auricular confession, used by the Papists; which is of all sins, whereas this is only of such by which men offend one another; that is made to priests, but this is made by the saints to one another, by the offending party to him that is offended, for reconciliation, whereby a good end is answered; whereas there is none by the other, and very often bad consequences follow. *And pray for one another, that ye may be healed*; both corporeally and spiritually: *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. Not any man's prayer; not the prayer of a profane sinner, for God heareth not sinners; nor of hypocrites

* Apud Harporcratian. Lex. p. 195.

* T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 116. 1.

and formal professors: but of the righteous man, who is justified by the righteousness of Christ, and has the truth of grace in him, and lives soberly and righteously; for a righteous man often designs a good man, a gracious man, one that is sincere and upright, as Job, Joseph of Arimathea, and others; though not without sin, as the person instanced in the following verse shews; Elias, who was a man of like passions, but a just man, and his prayer was prevalent: and not any prayer of a righteous man is of avail, but that which is *effectual, fervent*; that has power, and energy, and life in it; which is with the spirit, and with the understanding, with the heart, even with a true heart, and in faith; and which is put up with fervency, and not in a cold, lukewarm, lifeless, formal, and customary way: it is but one word in the original text; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *daily*; that prayer which is constant and continual, and without ceasing, and is importunate; this prevails and succeeds, as the parable of the widow and the unjust judge shews. Some translate the word *inspired*: the spirit of God breathes into men the breath of spiritual life, and they live, and being quickened by him, they breathe; and prayer is the breath of the spiritual man, and is no other than the reverberation of the spirit of God in him; and such prayer cannot fail of success: it may be rendered *inwrought*; true prayer is not what is written in a book, but what is wrought in the heart, by the spirit of God; who is the enditer of prayer, who impresses the minds of his people with a sense of their wants, and fills their mouths with arguments, and puts strength into them to plead with God, and makes intercession for them according to the will of God; and such prayer is always heard, and regarded by him: this has great power with God; whatever is asked, believing, is received; God can deny nothing prayed for in this manner; it has great power with Christ, as Jacob had over the angel, when he wrestled with him; and as the woman of Canaan, when she importuned him, on account of her daughter, and would have no denial: such prayer has often been of much avail against Satan, who has been dispossessed by it; even the most stubborn kind of devils have been dislodged by fasting and prayer: it has often been the means of preserving kingdoms and nations, when invaded by enemies, as the instances of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah shew; and of removing judgments from a people, as was often done, through the prayers of Moses, as when fire and fiery serpents were sent among them; and of bringing down blessings, as rain from heaven by Elijah; and of delivering particular persons from trouble, as Peter was delivered from prison, through the incessant prayer of the church for him: and this power, and efficacy, and prevalence of prayer, does not arise from any intrinsic worth and merit in it, but from the grace of the spirit, who influences and endites it, directs to it, and assists in it; and from the powerful mediation, precious blood, and efficacious sacrifice of Christ; and from the promise of God and Christ, who have engaged, that whatever is asked according to the will of God, and in the

name of Christ, shall be done. The Jews have had formerly a great notion of prayer: the power of prayer, they say ^b, is strong; and extol it above all other services: they say ^c, it is better than good works, or than offerings and sacrifices; and particularly, the prayer of righteous men: says R. Eliezer ^d, "to what is תפלתן של צדיקים, *the prayer of righteous men* like? "it is like a shovel: the sense is, that as the shovel "turns the corn on the floor, from one place to another, so prayer turns the holy blessed God from "wrath to mercy."

Ver. 17. *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, &c.*] The apostle gives an instance of earnest and fervent prayer, and of the efficacy of it in Elias; who is the same with the prophet Elijah, or Elijah the Tishbite; who, by the Septuagint in Mal. iv. 5. is called Elias, as here, and elsewhere, in the New Testament: of him James says, that he was a *man*, contrary to the notion of some of the Jewish writers, who affirm, that Elijah was not born of a father and mother, but was an angel, who was clothed with the four elements of the world ^e; but he was not only born, but born in sin, as others are, and was by nature no better than others; and he himself confesses that he was no better than his fathers, 1 Kings xix. 4. And the apostle further observes, concerning him, that he was *subject to like passions as we are*: both in body and soul; he was subject to hunger and weariness, and was fed by ravens, and by the widow of Sarepta, and by an angel; and he was subject to reproach, affliction, and persecution, being charged by Ahab as a troubler of Israel, and persecuted by Jezabel, who sought his life; he was a mortal man, and liable to death, and requested to die, and must have died, had it not been for the wonderful power of God, which translated him, that he should not see death; and he was not free from sinful passions, as impatience, fear, and unbelief, 1 Kings xvii. 20. and xix. 3, 4, 10, 18. *And he prayed earnestly; or prayed in prayer*; an Hebraism: it is said ^f of one, that צליה צליתיה, *he prayed his prayer*; and of others, that צליתן צלותן, *they prayed prayers*; though the phrase here seems to design something more than bare praying; a praying, not merely externally, or formally, and with the lip only, but with the spirit, and with the understanding, and with the heart engaged in it, with inwrought prayer. The prophet prayed with much earnestness, with great vehemence and intenseness of spirit, as this Hebraism denotes; his prayer was fervent, and it was constant, and importunate, and was continued till he had an answer: he may be thought to have prayed each of the seven times he sent his servant to look out for a sign of rain, 1 Kings xviii. 43. he first prayed, *that it might not rain*; this is not recorded in express words, but may be gathered from 1 Kings xvii. 1. where he says, *as the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew, nor rain, these years, but according to my word*; so the passage is understood by the Jewish interpreters: the phrase, *before whom I stand*, is paraphrased by one of them ^g thus; before whom I am used to stand, בתפילה,

^b Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1.

^c T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 3.

^d T. Bab. Succa, fol. 14. 1. & Yebamot, fol. 64. 1.

^e Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. & Imre Binah in 10.

^f Ib. in Exod. fol. 4. 9. & in Numb. fol. 79. 2.

^g R. David Kimchi in loc.

in prayer; and it is a common saying with the Jews, there is no standing ever mentioned, but prayer is intended; see the note on Matt. vi. 5. And the other phrase, according to my word, is, by another ^b, interpreted to this sense, that the rain should not descend naturally, according to the custom of the world, but it should descend when Elijah *יתפלל עלי*, *prayed for it* and so it was: *and it rained not on the earth*: on the land of Israel, which is only meant; it rained in other parts of the world, for the drought in those times was not universal: and this was, *by the space of three years and six months*; which exactly agrees with the words of Christ, Luke iv. 25. and this was in judgment upon the land of Israel, for the idolatry it was filled with in the times of Ahab: and this instance of prayer is mentioned, not with a view that it should be imitated; for we are not to pray for judgments, unless we have a divine order for it, as Elijah had; but to shew the efficacy of prayer made according to the will of God.

Ver. 18. *And he prayed again, &c.*] 1 Kings xviii. 42, 43. Here also is no express mention of his prayer, but it may be concluded from his gestures; and so the Jewish interpreters understand these words, *Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, לרדת, to pray, and he cast himself down upon the earth, לרדת על הרשמים, to pray for rain; and he put his face between his knees, ורמתל, and prayed, and said to his servant, go up now, look toward the sea*; and this he said while he was *בתפלות, in his prayer*¹; and the effect of this his prayer was, *and the heaven gave rain*; see 1 Kings xviii. 45. *And the earth brought forth her fruit*: which for the years past it had not; hence there was a sore famine in the land, 1 Kings xviii. 2. Now the apostle chose to intance in such a case, because it was a common thing for the Jews to ask for rain: we often read of such a doctor, that he prayed for rain, and it came; and of another, that he asked for the rains, and they descended²: and his view is to observe, that the weakness and infirmities of the saints ought not to discourage them from prayer; and that they should be earnest and fervent in it, as was Elias, a man of like passions with themselves.

Ver. 19. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, &c.*] Either from Christ, who is the truth, by departing from him, forsaking his ways, worship, and ordinances; or from the Scriptures of truth, not speaking according to them, and embracing notions that are contrary unto them; or from the Gospel, the word of truth, from the doctrine of faith, and from uprightness of life and conversation, after having made a profession of Christianity; for this is to be understood of one who has embraced the Christian religion, become a member of a church, and has walked in the path of truth and holiness, but now fallen into error, either in principle, or in practice, or both: *and one convert him*; or turn him from his error, to truth again; for this designs not first conversion, or the turning of a sinner from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and from the evil of a man's heart and ways, and from a dependence on his own righteousness, to the Lord Jesus Christ, to look to him for righteousness,

life, and salvation, which is wholly and entirely God's work, and not man's; but conversion after backslidings; for a restoration from a fallen condition is sometimes so called, Feal. li. 12, 13. Luke xxii. 32. and which one brother may be an instrument of to another, by shewing him, and setting before him, the evil of his errors, whether in principle or practice; and by instructing him in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in the duties of religion; and by reproving him in meekness, and according to the rules of Christ; which means are sometimes blessed for the gaining of such; and which may be called conversion: and also, this is sometimes done by praying for him; and which seems chiefly to be intended here; for from praying for the healing of the diseases of the body, the apostle proceeds to encourage the saints to pray for one another, for the healing of the diseases of the mind; and suggests, that if prayer avails to the one, it may to the other; and which is the most desirable, and the greatest blessing, as follows.

Ver. 20. *Let him know, &c.*] And observe it for his encouragement: *that he which coverieth a sinner from the error of his way*; who is the instrument of restoring a backsliding professor, for such an one is meant by a sinner, and not a profane person; or of turning a poor bewildered believer, who is got out of the way of truth and holiness, into the right way again; or of convincing him of the error of his way, whether it be in point of doctrine, or of duty; and so of bringing him to the fold of Christ again, from whence he has strayed: *shall save a soul from death*; not efficiently, but instrumentally, as in 1 Tim. iv. 16. for otherwise Christ is the only Saviour; and he will be the means of saving a soul, which is of more worth than a world; and that from death, the second death, which lies in the separation of the soul from God, and in a sense of his wrath; which apostasy threatens with, and leads unto, if grace prevents not. The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, *his soul*; but the common reading is more emphatical; the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *his own soul*; and the Ethiopic version, *himself*, as respecting him that is the instrument of the conversion of the other, and not the person converted: *and shall hide a multitude of sins*; either *his own*, as the same versions read; and then the sense is, he shall be blessed with a discovery and application of the forgiveness of all his sins, though they have been many and great; or rather the sins of the person converted. Sin is only covered by the blood and righteousness of Christ; and thereby it is so covered, as not to be seen by the eye of vindictive justice, and in such manner, as that the persons of those who are covered therewith are all fair, without fault, and unproveable in the sight of God; and though their sins are many, even a multitude, they are blotted out as a thick cloud, and are abundantly pardoned; yea, all their sins are covered, be they ever so many, for God forgives all trespasses, for Christ's sake; and the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, and his righteousness justifies from all: and whoever is an instrument of bringing a backslider to a sense of the evil of his ways,

^a Vid. Laniado in loc.

¹ Jarchi, Kimchi, Rablag, & Laniado in loc.

² T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. & Taanith, fol. 12. 1. ³ 1. 24. 2. 25. 2. & Yoma, fol. 53. 2.

and to true repentance for the same; as he, upon such repentance, has his iniquities caused to pass from him, or, in other words, to be covered, as from the sight of

God, so from his own; he may be said to be the instrument of this also.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

PETER.

THAT Simon, called Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was the writer of this epistle, is not questioned by any; nor was the genuineness and authentickness of it ever made a doubt of. Eusebius says^a, that it had been confessed by all, and received without controversy; and that the ancients, without any scruple, had made use of it in their writings. It is called his *general*, or *catholic* epistle, because it was not written to any particular person, or to any particular church, but in general, to a number of Christians dispersed in several places. The time when this epistle was written is not certain; some place it in the year of Christ 44 or 45, and so make it to be the most ancient of all the epistles, and which is the more commonly received opinion; but Dr. Lightfoot^b places it in the year 65, because in it the apostle speaks of the end of all things being at hand, and of the fiery trial just coming on them, and of judgment beginning at the house of God, ch. iv. 7, 12, 17. all which he applies to the destruction of Jerusalem; though others fix it to 61, in the seventh year of Nero^c. The place from whence it seems to be written was Babylon, ch. v. 13. which is to be understood not figuratively, either of Rome or Jerusalem, but properly of Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldea, or Assyria. The persons to whom it is written were Jews, at least chiefly; for there might be some Gentiles among them, who may be taken notice of in some parts of the epistle; but the principal part were Jews, as appears from their being called the strangers of the dispersion, or, as James calls them, *the twelve tribes scattered abroad*; from the mention of the tradition of their fathers; from their having their conversation honest among the Gentiles, and their past life among them; from urging subjection to the civil magistrates among the Heathens, and the right use of their Christian liberty as to the ceremonies of the law; and from the near destruction of Jerusalem, which

could only affect them; and from the use made of the writings of the Old Testament, and the authority of the prophets; see ch. i. 1, 18. and ii. 12. and iv. 3. and ii. 13, 16. and iv. 7, 12, 17. as well as from the second epistle, which was written to the same; see ch. i. 19. and ii. 1. and iii. 1, 2, 15. in which he seems to refer to the epistle to the Hebrews, written by Paul, as to these. And besides, Peter was the minister of the circumcision, or of the circumcised Jews, as Paul was of the Gentiles; and even those passages in this epistle, which seem most likely to concern the Gentiles, may be understood of the Jews, as which speak of their ignorance, idolatry, and having not been a people, ch. i. 14. and iv. 3. and ii. 10. which were true of them before conversion, and as living among Gentiles. The occasion of writing it was this; Peter meeting with Sylvanus, a faithful brother, and who had been a companion of the Apostle Paul, he takes this opportunity of sending a letter by him to the converted Jews, dispersed among the Gentile countries, where he, with Paul, and others, travelled: the design of which is to testify of the true doctrine of grace, in which they were agreed; see ch. v. 12. And accordingly in it he does treat of the doctrine of electing grace, of redeeming grace, of regenerating and sanctifying grace, and of persevering grace; and exhorts believers to the exercise of grace, of faith, hope, and love, and to the discharge of such duties becoming their several stations, whereby they might evidence to others the truth of grace in themselves, and adorn the doctrine of the grace of God, and recommend it to others: and particularly he exhorts them patiently to bear all afflictions and persecutions they should meet with, for their profession of the true grace of God, in which he encourages them to stand steadfast: and this is the general scope and design of the epistle.

^a Ecl. Hist. l. 3. c. 3.

^b Harmony, &c. Vol. I. p. 335.

^c Fabricii Bibliothec. Græc. l. 4. c. 5. sect. 10. p. 164.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle gives thanks to God for various blessings of grace bestowed, or to be bestowed upon the persons he writes to; and then, with the best of arguments and motives, urges them to the performance of several duties of religion. In the inscription, the person who is the writer of the epistle is described, both by his name, and by his office; and also the persons to whom it is sent, by their outward condition, strangers dispersed through several countries particularly mentioned, and by their spiritual estate, elect men; the source and spring of which election is the foreknowledge of God the Father; the means, the sanctification of the Spirit; and the end, obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ; and to these the apostle wishes a multiplication of grace and peace, ver. 1, 2. and then he gives thanks to God for the regeneration of them; the efficient cause of which is God the Father; the moving cause, his abundant mercy; the means, the resurrection of Christ from the dead; the end, a lively hope of a glorious inheritance, ver. 3, 4. and next follows a description of regenerate ones; they are such who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation; who rejoice in hope of that salvation, though now for a little while are sorrowful, by reason of afflictions, which are for the trial of their faith; they are believers in Christ, lovers of him, and rejoice in him, and shall at last receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. the excellency of which salvation is set forth from the concern the prophets had in it, the scrutiny they made into it, and the revelation of it made to them; from the concern the apostles had in it, and their report of it, and from the desire of angels to look into it, ver. 10, 11, 12. upon which the apostle exhorts to the exercise of various graces and duties, to attention of mind, to sobriety, to a constant hope of eternal glory, and to holiness of life and conversation, ver. 13, 14. the arguments engaging to which are taken from the nature of God, who had called them by his grace, ver. 15, 16. from their concern with him, as a father and a judge; from their state and condition, as sojourners in this world, and from their redemption by the blood of Christ from a vain conversation, ver. 17, 18, 19. and of Christ, the Redeemer of them, many things are said, as that he was ordained before the foundation of the world to be the Redeemer; was manifested in human nature in these last days, for the sake of such that believe; was raised from the dead, and glorified, that there might be a sufficient foundation for the exercise of faith and hope in God, ver. 20, 21. and next the apostle exhorts to brotherly love, in purity, and with fervency; from the consideration of the internal purification of them by the spirit, through obedience to the truth; and from their regeneration, the cause of which was not corruptible, but incorruptible seed; and the means, the living and abiding word of God, ver. 22, 23. which is illustrated by a passage out of Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8. setting forth

the frailty and mortality of men, and the transitoriness of all outward enjoyments; to which is opposed the duration of the everlasting Gospel, the means of regeneration, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*] The writer of this epistle describes himself first by his name, Peter, the same with Cephas, which signifies a rock, or stone; a name given him by Christ at his first conversion, and which respected his after firmness, solidity, resolution, and constancy; for his former name was Simeon, or Simon, as sometimes called; see Matt. iv. 18. John i. 42. and he further describes himself by his office, as *an apostle of Jesus Christ*; being one of the twelve apostles, and the first of that number; who saw Christ in the flesh, was conversant with him, had his call and commission immediately from him, and was qualified by him to preach the Gospel; and was sent out first into Judea, and then into all the world to publish it, with a power of working miracles to confirm it; and this his character he makes mention of, in order to give the greater weight and authority to his epistle; and it is to be observed, that he does not style himself, as his pretended successor does, the head of the church, and Christ's vicar on earth; nor does he call himself the prince of the apostles, but only an apostle, as he was upon an equal foot with the rest. The persons he writes to are *the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*; these Jews here intended are called *strangers*; not in a metaphorical sense, either because they were, as the wicked are, estranged from the womb, and alienated from the life of God, as all unconverted men are, and as they were before conversion; for now they were no more strangers in this sense: or because of their unsettled state and condition in this life; having no continuing city, and seeking one to come, an heavenly country; and living as pilgrims and strangers, in which respect they are indeed so styled, ch. ii. 11. but in a civil sense, and not as the Gentiles were, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, for these were Jews; but on account of their not being in their own land, and in a foreign country, and therefore said to be *scattered, or the strangers of the dispersion*; either on account of the persecution at the death of Stephen, when multitudes of the converted Jews were scattered abroad, not only throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, but as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch; see Acts viii. 1, 4. and xi. 19. and so it may be afterwards throughout the places here mentioned; or else these were some remains of the ten tribes carried captive by Salmanasser, and of the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar; or rather the dispersion of the Greeks, mentioned in John vii. 35. under the Macedonians, by Ptolemy Lagus: however, there were Jews of Pontus, who inhabited that place, and of such we read in Acts ii. 9. who came to worship at the feast of Pentecost, some of which were converted to the Christian faith,

and being mentioned first, has occasioned this epistle to be called, both by Tertullian^a, and Cyprian^b, *the epistle to the Pontians*. Perhaps these Jews converted on the day of Pentecost, on their return hither, laid the first foundation of a Gospel church-state in this country: it is a tradition of the ancients, mentioned by Eusebius^c, that Peter himself preached here, and so, very likely, formed the Christians he found, and those that were converted by him, into Gospel churches; and it appears by a letter of Dionysius, bishop of Corinth^d, that there were churches in Pontus in the *second* century, particularly at Amastris, the bishop of which was one Palma, whom he commends, and Focas is said to be bishop of Syncope, in the same age; and in the *third* century, Gregory and Athenodorus, disciples of Origen, were bishops in this country^e; the former was a very famous man, called Gregory Thaumaturgus, the wonder-worker, and was bishop of Neocesarea: in the *fourth* century there was a church in the same place, of which Longinus was bishop, as appears from the Nicene council, at which he and other bishops in Pontus were present; and in this age, in the times of Dioclesian, many in this country endured most shocking sufferings, related by Eusebius^f; and in the same century Helladius is said to govern the churches of Pontus; and in the *fifth* century we read of churches in Pontus, reformed by Chrysostom; in this age Theodorus was bishop of Heraclia, and Themistius of Amastris, both in this province, and both these bishops were in the Chalcedon council; and in the *sixth* century there were churches in Pontus, whose bishops were in the fifth synod held at Rome and Constantinople; and so there were in the *seventh* and *eighth* centuries^g. *Galatia*, next mentioned, is that part of the lesser Asia, called Gallo Græcia, in which were several churches, to whom the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle, called the epistle to the Galatians; see the notes on Acts xvi. 6. and on Gal. i. 2. *Cappadocia*, according to Ptolomy^h, was bounded on the west by Galatia, on the south by Cilicia, on the east by Armenia the great, on the north by part of the Euxine Pontus; it had many famous cities in it, as Solinusⁱ says; as Archelais, Neocesarea, Melita, and Mazaca. The Jews oftentimes talk^k of going from Cappadocia to Lud, or Lydda; so that, according to them, it seems to be near to that place, or, at least, that there was a place near Lydda so called; of this see more in the note on Acts ii. 9. From this country also there were Jews at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, some of whom were converted; and here likewise the Apostle Peter is said to preach, as before observed of Pontus, and who probably founded a church or churches here in the *first* century; and in the *second* century, according to Tertullian^l, there were believers in Christ dwelling in this country; and in the *third* century, Eusebius^m

makes mention of Neon, bishop of Larandis, and Celsus, bishop of Iconium, both in Cappadocia; there was also Phedimus of Amasea, in the same country, in this age, and at Casarea, in Cappadocia, several martyrs suffered under Decius; and in this century, Stephen, bishop of Rome, threatened to excommunicate some bishops in Cappadocia, because they had rebaptized some that had been heretics: in the *fourth* century there were churches in Cappadocia, of one of which, namely, at Sasimi, the famous Gregory Nazianzen was first bishop, and afterwards of Nazianzum, as was also the famous Basil of Casarea, in the same country; hither the persecution under Dioclesian reached, and many had their thighs broken, as Eusebius relatesⁿ; from hence were sent several bishops, who assisted at the council of Nice, under Constantine, and at another held at Jerusalem: in the *fifth* century there were churches in Cappadocia, in several places, the names of whose bishops are on record; as Firmus, Thalassius, Theodosius, Daniel, Aristomachus, Patricius, and others: in the *sixth* century there were many famous churches in this country, whose bishops were in the fifth synod held at Rome and Constantinople; and in the *seventh* century there were several of them in the sixth synod of Constantinople; and in the *eighth* century mention is made of bishops of several churches in Cappadocia, in the second Nicene synod; and even in the *ninth* century there were Christians in these parts^o. *Asia* here intends neither the lesser nor the greater Asia, but Asia, properly so called; and which, according to Solinus^p, Lycia and Phrygia bounded on the east, the Ægean shores on the west, the Egyptian sea on the south, and Paphlagonia on the north; the chief city in it was Ephesus, and so it is distinguished from Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Bithynia, in Acts xvi. 6, 7. as here from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, and from Pontus and Cappadocia, in Acts ii. 9. though they were all in lesser Asia. Here also were Jews converted on the day of Pentecost; and here likewise Peter is said to preach; and by him, and by the Apostle John, who also lived and died in this country, churches were planted; and churches there were here, even in the *seventh* century, as distinct from the other Asia, greater or less; for out of it bishops were sent to, and were present at, the sixth council at Constantinople, whose names are recorded; yea, in the *eighth* century there were churches and bishops, one of which persuaded Leo to remove images from places of worship; and another was in the Nicene synod^q. The last place mentioned is Bithynia, of which see the note on Acts xvi. 7. And though the Apostle Paul, and his companions, were not suffered at a certain time to go into Bithynia, and preach the Gospel there, yet it is certain that it was afterwards carried thither; and as Peter is said to preach in Pontus, Asia, and Cappado-

^a Scorpiace, c. 12.

^b Testimon. ad Quirin. l. 3. c. 36, 37, 39.

^c Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 1.

^d Apud Euseb. ib. l. 4. c. 23.

^e Ib. l. 7. c. 11. Hieron. Script. Eccles. Catalog. sect. 75.

^f Ib. l. 8. c. 12.

^g Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 289. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 602. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5.

^h Geograph. l. 5. c. 6.

ⁱ Polyhist. c. 57.

^k Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3. & in Exod. fol. 33. 2. & 35. 4.

^l Adv. Judæos, c. 7. ad Scapulam, c. 3.

^m Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 19.

ⁿ Ib. l. 8. 12.

^o Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. c. 3. p. 11. c. 7. p. 117. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 4. c. 9. p. 350, 390. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 605, 606. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3.

^p C. 53.

^q Ib. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5.

cia, so likewise in Bithynia; here, according to the Roman martyrology, Luke, the evangelist, died; and, according to tradition, Prochorus, one of the seven deacons in Acts vi. 5. was bishop of Nicomedia, in this country; and Tychicus, of whom the Apostle Paul makes frequent mention, was bishop of Chalcedon, another city in it; and who are both said to be of the seventy disciples; see the note on Luke x. 1. and it is certain, from the testimony of Pliny*, an Heathen writer, in a letter of his to Trajan the emperor, written about the year 104, that there were then great numbers of Christians in Bithynia; not only the cities, but the towns and villages were full of them; and in the *third* century, the persecution under Dioclesian raged, particularly at Nicomedia, where Anthimus, the pastor of the church in that place, had his head cut off, as Eusebius* relates: in the beginning of the *fourth* century, Nice, in Bithynia, became famous for the council held there under Constantine, against Arius; and in this century, bishops from Bithynia assisted at a synod held at Tyre, in Phœnicia; and in the *fifth* century was held a synod at Chalcedon, a city in this country, against the Nestorian heresy; and the names of several bishops of Chalcedon, Nicomedia, and Nice, who lived in this age, are on record; and in the *sixth* century there were bishops from these several places, and others, who were present in the *fifth* synod at Constantinople; as there were also in the *seventh* century, at the sixth synod held at the same place, whose names are particularly mentioned; and in the *eighth* century bishops from hence were in the Nicene synod; and even in the *ninth* century there were some that bore the Christian name in Bithynia*. In these places however, it seems, dwelt many Jews, who were converted to Christ, to whom the apostle inscribes this epistle, and whom he further describes in the following verse.

Ver. 2. *Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the father, &c.*] Not to any office, as to that of bishops or presbyters; for though the apostle writes to some of them under this character, ch. v. 1. yet not all; nor were they so called, as a nation, for they were persons scattered about in several countries; nor as a church, for they are not wrote to as such; nor does this character merely design their effectual vocation; though as that is a fruit and evidence of election, it is sometimes so styled, and the saints called by grace are said to be chosen; see John xv. 19. 1 Cor. i. 26. but it intends the eternal election of those persons both to grace and glory; which the apostle knew of, not by divine revelation, or any particular discovery made to him; but he concluded it in a judgment of charity, they being all under a profession of faith in Christ, and he having reason to believe that the greater part of them were truly partakers of that faith which demonstrated them to be the elect of God: the cause, spring, and source of their election was, *the fore-knowledge of God the father*: to whom election is commonly ascribed, agreeably to the order of the divine Persons in the Trinity, and their distinct parts in the economy of salvation, though not to the exclusion of

the Son and Spirit: and by this his *foreknowledge* is meant, not his eternal, universal, and infallible knowledge, and which is infinite, and reaches to all things and persons, present, future, or possible, for this has for its objects persons whom God never predestinated and chose: though certain it is that he knows and foreknows all whom he does predestinate and choose; nor does it intend the mere decree of election, or God's eternal purpose and resolution to choose, but the spring and source of that act of his; and much less does it mean a bare prescience of men, and choice of them, upon a foresight of faith, holiness, good works, and perseverance therein; for these are all, when genuine, the fruits and effects of election, which are included in it, and secured and brought about by it; but the sovereign grace, good will, and pleasure of God, or the everlasting love of God the father, which is the cause of, and has given birth to the act of election, is meant by *foreknowledge*, joined with affection, delight, and approbation; knowledge, and foreknowledge, as ascribed to the divine Being, often signify such things; see Psal. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Rom. viii. 29, 30. and xi. 1, 2. and such a knowledge God the father had of the persons of the elect from all eternity; and which is the ground and foundation of his choosing them to grace and glory, and not any thing in them, or done by them, or any thing out of himself; no other reason can be given of it than his own grace, his pure love, and sovereign good will and pleasure: the means follow, through which they were chosen, *through sanctification of the spirit*; as in 2 Thess. ii. 13. see the note there. The ends to which the saints are chosen are, *unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*; by *obedience* is meant either the obedience of elect men to Christ, which lies in obeying the truth of the Gospel, called the obedience of faith; and so is the same with the *belief of the truth*, which goes along in election with the sanctification of the spirit, in 2 Thess. ii. 13. and in submission to Gospel ordinances, and doing all good works in the name, faith, and strength of Christ; and which also are fruits and effects, and so not causes of divine predestination; see Eph. ii. 10. and also follow upon the sanctification of the spirit; or else the obedience of Christ is intended; and so the Arabic version renders it, *unto the obedience of Jesus Christ*; which lay in his performing the precepts of the law, and bearing the penalty of it, death; and by which the chosen seed are justified, or made righteous in the sight of God, and have a title to eternal life and glory, and are safe from wrath to come; and to the enjoyment of this grace, they are chosen of God the father; and between these two, predestination and justification, there is a close and inseparable connexion; so that they that are interested in the one, are in the other; see Rom. viii. 30. the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*; does not denote a small quantity of it, for it was shed and poured out in great abundance; but is said in allusion to the sprinkling of the blood of the passover-lamb. Exod. xii. 22, 23. or to the sprinkling of the blood on the book of the covenant, and on the people at

* Epist. l. 10. ep. 97.

* Eccl. Hist. l. 8. c. 5, 6.

* Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 9. p. 390. cent. 5. c. 2.

p. 4. c. 10. p. 601, 602. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 264. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3.

Mount Sinai, Exod. xxiv. 8. or to other sprinklings of blood in their legal sacrifices: the application of the blood of Christ to the heart, by the spirit of God, for cleansing, pardon, and justification, is meant; which affords true, solid, conscience-peace and joy now, and entitles to eternal happiness and glory; all which are secured by electing grace. The salutation of these persons follows: *grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied*; which is much the same that is used by the Apostle Paul in all his epistles; see the note on Rom. i. 7. only Peter adds the word *multiplied*; which makes it more express, and the sense more clear: he means an enlarged view of interest in the love of God, an increase of grace out of the fulness of it in Christ, and of Gospel light, and of the several gifts of the spirit; and also of all prosperity outward and inward, of a conscience-peace through the blood of Christ, which passeth all understanding, and a more established and well-grounded hope of enjoying eternal peace hereafter. The phrase is Jewish, and is used in their salutations in this form, שלמכון יסני, *let your peace be multiplied*.*

Ver. 3. *Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*] The epistle begins here with thanksgiving to God, or an ascription of blessing, praise, and glory to him; for this does not mean an invoking or conferring a blessing on him; neither of which can be, for there is not a greater than he to be invoked, nor can any thing be added to his blessedness: but God may be blessed by his creatures when they speak well of him, and his wonderful works of creation, providence, and grace; when they ascribe all their mercies, spiritual and temporal, to him; give him the glory of them, and express their thanks for them in heart, lip, and life; and such a blessing of God for a special and spiritual favour, the grace of regeneration, is intended here: by *God* is meant, not God essentially, but personally considered, even God the father, as is clearly expressed: the words are rendered in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions without the copulative *and*, thus, *blessed be God the father*; and if that is retained, they may be rendered thus, *blessed be God, even the father*; as in 2 Cor. i. 3. and so the latter be exegetical of the former; though both are true of Christ, in different senses; God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; and he is the father of Christ, as Christ is God; for, as man, he had no father, nor is he a son by office, but by nature; see the note on Eph. i. 3. which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again; regeneration is the blessing thanks are given for; and if we are to be thankful to God, and bless his name, because he hath made us creatures, and hath given us a natural being; much more should we praise him for making us new creatures, and giving us a spiritual being. To be *begotten again*, and so to be born again, is opposed unto, and distinguished from our first birth, when we were conceived, and shapen in sin; and designs a birth, spiritual, holy, and heavenly; it is signified by a being quickened, or made alive; so as in a spiritual sense, to see, and hear, and breathe after divine things, and to live a life of faith and holiness; by Christ being formed in the

heart; by a partaking of the divine nature, and by being made new men, or new creatures: God, and not man, is the efficient cause of this, which is sometimes ascribed to the Spirit, and sometimes to the Son, and here to the Father; and it is not men's works, but his own good will and pleasure, his great love and free favour, his rich grace and abundant mercy, are the impulsive, or moving cause of it; and abundance of grace and mercy indeed is displayed in the regeneration and conversion of sinners: what they are regenerated to is, *unto a lively hope*; meaning either the grace of hope, which is implanted in regeneration, and not before; for then, and then only, is a good hope through grace given; and it may be said to be *lively*, or *living*, inasmuch as it is fixed, not on dead works, but on a living Christ, on his person, blood, and righteousness; and is not the hope of a dead sinner, of a lifeless hypocrite, and formal professor, that has a name to live, and is dead, but of a living believer, one made truly alive by the spirit of life, from Christ; and is what is sometimes, at least, in lively exercise, and makes the heart of a believer cheerful, brisk, and lively; and is what is lasting and durable, and will never be lost, but will be held fast unto the end: or else the thing hoped for is intended, the hope laid up in heaven; the blessed hope regenerate ones are born unto, and are looking for, even eternal life and happiness; and the Syriac version renders it, *unto hope of life*: that is, of eternal life; and so reads one of Stephens's copies. Saints are both begotten again to the grace of hope, and to the glory which that grace is waiting for: the means is, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*; which may be connected either with the act of begetting again; for Christ's resurrection is the virtual cause of regeneration, or regeneration is in virtue of Christ's resurrection; had he not risen from the dead, none would have been quickened, or made to live, or have been raised to newness of life: his resurrection is the exemplar of regeneration; there is a likeness between them; as his resurrection was a declaration of his sonship, so regeneration is a manifestation of adoption; and as Christ's resurrection was his first step to glory, so is regeneration to eternal life; and both are wrought by the same almighty power: or the clause may be connected with the foregoing, *unto a lively hope*; for the resurrection of Christ is what is the means of, and lays a solid foundation of hope, both of the saints' resurrection from the dead, of which Christ is the meritorious cause, pledge, and pattern, and of eternal glory and happiness, since he rose for our justification, with which glorification is inseparably connected.

Ver. 4. *To an inheritance incorruptible, &c.*] This is a further explanation of the *lively hope*, or hope laid up in heaven, which regenerate ones are begotten to: 'tis an *inheritance*; a large estate, and rich possession, they are born heirs-apparent to; what is not to be got by industry, or obtained by the works of the law; for they that are of the law are not heirs; but what is the pure bequest and free gift of God, as a father to his children; for an inheritance is proper and

* T. Hieros. Maaser Sheni, fol. 56. 2. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 2.

peculiar to children, nor does it belong to any but them; and it comes to them through the death of the testator, Christ, and of it the Holy Spirit is the pledge and earnest: and here it is said to be *incorruptible*; it is free from corruption in itself; nor can it be corrupted by others, by moth, or rust, or other things, as gold, silver, and garments may, which are a part of earthly inheritances; nor can it be enjoyed by corrupt persons, either corrupted with sin, or clothed with frailty and mortality; wherefore, in order to inherit it, corruption must put on incorruption, in every sense; other epithets and commendations of it follow: *and undefiled*; it is in its own nature pure and holy, and free from any defilement of sin; nor are there any of those impurities in it which Jews and Mahometans dream of in their vainly-expected earthly paradise; nor will it be possessed by any but undefiled persons, such as are made so through the blood and righteousness of Christ: *and that fadeth not away*; as do this world, and the glory of it, and all inheritances and possessions in it; here is no continuing city, but there is one to come; in this inheritance are durable riches, everlasting habitations, an house eternal in the heavens, glories in it that will never wither and die, and pleasures which will never end, and which will be enjoyed without decrease or loathing: *reserved in heaven for you*; the Alexandrian copy reads, *for us*; and the Ethiopic version renders it, *for us and you*; for all the saints; for all who are the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and who are begotten again to a lively hope; for these this inheritance is prepared, laid up, and secured in the hands of Christ their feoffee, who has it in trust for them, and with whom they are co-heirs; and it is safe for them *in heaven*; out of the reach of men and devils: this serves both to commend the inheritance, to set forth the excellency of it, lying in such a place as heaven; for the situation of an inheritance adds oftentimes to the valuableness of it; and also the safety and security of it; it is safe, being in heaven, and more so as it is in Christ's hands there. The Jews are wont to call the future state an inheritance of the land of the living: they say, "this is called נְחִלָּה, an inheritance; and add, but in this world a man has no inheritance, nor continuance;" so they interpret that phrase, *by the God of thy father*, in Gen. xlix. 25: thus; "this is אֲחִיכֶנָּה, the inheritance of the superior place, which is called heaven;" and sometimes they style it אֲחִיכֶנָּה עֲלֵיָהּ, the superior inheritance, or the inheritance above*; all which agrees with Peter's language.

Ver. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God, &c.*] This is a description of the persons for whom the inheritance is reserved in heaven; they are not only chosen to salvation, and begotten again to an inheritance, but they are preserved unto it; their happiness is very great; their inheritance is safe in heaven for them, and they are kept below, amidst a thousand snares and difficulties, till they safely arrive to the possession of that: they are kept, not in and by themselves, the way of man is not in himself; nor in the hands of angels, for no such trust does God put in them; but in the hands of Jesus Christ, where they are safe, and out of which

none can pluck them; on him, as a foundation, and in him, as a strong hold; they are kept in the love of God, and on his heart, from whence they can never be separated, and in the covenant of grace, out of which they'll never be put; and in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; and in the family of God, for, being sons, they are no more servants; and in a state of grace and holiness, in the fear of God, and faith of Christ, and love to both; and in the path of truth, from whence they can never finally and totally fall: for though they are not kept from the being of sin, and the workings of it, and slips and falls into it, yet from being destroyed by it; and though not from Satan, and his temptations, yet from being overcome by them; and though not entirely from unbelief, doubts, and fears, yet from final unbelief; for Christ prays for them, that their faith fail not; and from a final and total falling away from grace into sin: and they are kept thus, not by their own power and might, or that of any mere creature, but *by the power of God*; meaning, not the Gospel, nor the spirit of God, but the perfection of his power; by which they are kept, as with a guard, or in a garrison, as the word here used signifies; not only angels encamp about them, and salvation is for walls and bulwarks, all around them; but God himself, in the perfection of his power, is a wall of fire to them; he is round about them from henceforth and for ever; their place of defence is the munition of rocks; his name is a strong tower, where they run and are safe: 'tis added, *through faith*: some versions read it, *and by faith*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic; by that faith which is of the operation of God, of which Christ is the author and finisher, and shall never fail, it being supported by the same power the saints are kept; through faith in the power and faithfulness of God; through faith looking to Christ, leaning on him, and living upon him; by faith getting the victory over the world, and every other enemy, and being more than conquerors, through Christ. That to which the saints are kept is, *unto salvation*; salvation is already obtained for them, by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and is applied to them in conversion, by the spirit of Christ; but the full enjoyment of it, which is here intended, is reserved for them in heaven; and to this they are kept, being heirs of it, and shall certainly possess it: and which is *ready to be revealed in the last time*; it is ready, being a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and a salvation obtained by the blood of Christ, and a mansion of glory made fit for them, through the presence and intercession of their Redeemer: and it is ready to be revealed; in a short time it will be made manifest; at present it is much out of sight; eye has not seen, nor ear heard the full glories of it; saints themselves as yet don't know what they shall be, and have: but *in the last time*, when Christ shall come a second time to judge the world, he'll raise the dead bodies of his saints; and then this salvation shall be fully manifested to them; and they shall enjoy it both in soul and body to all eternity.

Ver. 6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, &c.*] The Vulgate

* Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 3.

* Zohar in Gen. fol. 331. 2.

* Zohar in Exod. fol. 34. 3.

Latin version reads, *in which ye shall rejoice*; and so the Syriac version, adding, *for ever*; and refer these words to the *last time*; or times spoken of in the preceding verse; when the saints will greatly rejoice, being in full possession of eternal salvation; in distinction from the present time, in which they are in heaviness; but it is better to read the words in the present tense, and as expressive of the saints in this life, who are blessed with that fruit of the spirit, joy, and have always reason to rejoice, and greatly rejoice. The connexion is with the whole that goes before; and the sense is this, that regenerated persons rejoice, in that they are the elect of God, according to his everlasting love towards them, and free grace, and good will; in their regeneration, which is an evidence of their election of God; in the abundant mercy of God displayed in their regeneration; and in that lively hope of eternal life which is the effect of it; and in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which secures their justification of life, and their resurrection from the dead; and in the inheritance they are born heirs unto; and in their preservation to it by the power of God through faith; and in that complete salvation which is ready for them, and in a short time will be revealed, to which they are kept: *though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations.* This seems to be a contrast, but is no real contradiction; for the character of the saints in this world is, that they are *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. rejoicing even in their tribulations and temptations; yea, for them, and on account of them, in some respects, which in others make them sorrowful, and heavy, or *heavy* with sorrow: the cause of this heaviness is not only in-dwelling corruptions, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan, but afflictions and persecutions, which are here meant by *manifold temptations*; for not the temptations of Satan, or to sin, are here intended, but the temptations with which God tempts and tries his people: so he sometimes does, by calling them to hard service, to do things difficult and disagreeable to flesh and blood, in which way he tempted Abraham; and by laying afflictions, or suffering afflictions to come upon them, by which he tried Job; and by permitting wicked men to reproach and persecute them, and to injure them in their characters, persons, and properties; and which was the case of the primitive Christians, and has been more or less the case of the saints ever since: now such exercises are called, from the quality of them, *temptations*, or trials; because they try the hearts, principles, and graces of them that believe, and particularly their faith hereafter mentioned; and from the quantity of them, they are said to be *various*: they are of different sorts; as reproach, imprisonment, loss of goods, and death itself in divers shapes; and are more or less at different times and ages; and are exercised on various persons: and are sometimes very heavy, and grievous to be borne, and cause great heaviness and sorrow of heart; and yet there are things, and circumstances, and which are here hinted at, that greatly mitigate the heaviness occasioned by them; as, that these afflictions, and the heaviness that comes by them, are but *little*, and light, in comparison of the eternal weight

of glory; though they are great tribulations in themselves, through and out of which the people of God come to the kingdom; and so the Syriac version renders it, *though at this time קליל, ye are a little made sorrowful*: and then it is only *now*, for the present time, and but for a short time; for a little season, even for a moment, comparatively speaking; and also, *if need be*, which the Syriac version omits, though by all means to be retained: afflictive dispensations, in whatsoever form, are necessary, by the will of God, who has appointed them, and therefore must be, and ought to be, quietly submitted to, and patiently borne, on that consideration; and are also necessary, on account of Christ the head, to whom there must be a conformity of his members; and likewise on their own account; for the humbling of their souls; for the weaning of them from the things of this world; for the restraining, subduing, and keeping under the corruptions of their nature; and for the trial of grace: and 'tis only *if*, and when there is a necessity for them, that they are in heaviness by them; otherwise God does not delight to afflict and grieve the children of men, and much less his own; see Lam. iii. 33. so the Jews say, that דוּרַךְ, *there was a necessity of God's tempting Abraham as he did, to humble and purify him.*

Ver. 7. *That the trial of your faith, &c.*] This is the principal end which God has in afflictive providences, to try the faith of his people; so the faith of Abraham, Job, Habakkuk, and others, have been tried: *being much more precious than of gold that perisheth*; the grace of faith is much more precious than gold; since that perisheth by using, but faith does not; and since it is so valuable as not to be obtained by it; and since those that have it, though poor in this world, are rich, and heirs of a kingdom: but the trying of it is abundantly more precious than gold; for not only as gold being tried in the fire is purged from its dross, and is proved to be genuine and shines the brighter, so faith, being tried in the fire of afflictions, is purged from unbelief; and the believer is purged from his dross and tin, and his iniquity is purged, and the fruit of all is to take away sin; and he is tried and proved to be a true believer, and his faith shines the more illustriously, as in the above instances; yea, the very trying of it has an influence on other graces, for great usefulness; for the trying of faith works patience, and that, experience, and that, hope: *though it be tried with fire*: either though gold be tried with fire, and so is greatly refined, yet it is more precious than that; or though faith be tried with the fire of afflictions, yet it is precious, and more precious than gold: and it is tried for this purpose, that *it might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*; who is now in the highest heavens, and out of sight, but will appear a second time without sin unto salvation, and every eye shall see him; and when the believer will be found in him, and his faith be found unto praise by him, he'll have praise of him himself; it will be said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; his faith will be praised for its steadiness and constancy, notwithstanding all persecutions and tribulations; and his good works, the fruits of faith, will be taken notice of by him with commendation; he'll

be honoured, by being placed on the right hand of Christ, and by being set down with him in his throne, and having a crown of righteousness given to him; and he'll be glorified both in soul and body; his body will be made like to Christ's glorious body, and his soul will have a glory revealed in it; and in his whole person he shall appear, when Christ does, with him in glory.

Ver. 8. *Whom having not seen, ye love, &c.*] That is, Jesus Christ, whom they had never seen with their bodily eyes, being Jews, who dwelt not in Judea, when Christ was upon earth, but were scattered about in several parts of the Gentile world; and yet Christ being made known to them, through the preaching of the Gospel, they received and embraced him, and their affections were strongly set upon him: they loved him because of his excellencies and perfections, because of the loveliness of his person, and because he first loved them; they loved him because of the fulness of grace that was in him, because of what he had done for them, and was unto them, and because of the offices he sustained on their account, and the relations he stood in to them; they loved him above all creatures and things, and all of him, and that belong unto him, his people, truths, ordinances, ways, and worship; they loved him with all their hearts, and in the sincerity of their souls, though they had never seen his face in the flesh; whereas sight often begets and increases love: their love was not carnal, but spiritual; it was a fruit of the spirit of God in their souls; was accompanied with faith in Christ, and proceeded upon the report the Gospel made of him: *in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing;* the Arabic version adds, *in him*: that is, in Christ, who was then received up into heaven, and must be retained there until the time of the restitution of all things; and therefore not now to be beheld with corporeal sight: and yet these regenerate ones, and lovers of Christ, believed in him; see John xx. 29. not with a notional, historical, and temporary faith, believing not merely what he said, or did, or does, or will do; but looking on him, and to him, for life and salvation; going out of themselves to him, embracing him, leaning upon him as their Saviour and Redeemer; venturing their souls upon him, committing their all unto him, expecting all from him, both grace and glory: and so *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*; with a joy in believing on him, which is better experienced than expressed; a joy that not only strangers intermeddle not with, know nothing of, which entirely passes their understanding, but is such as saints themselves can't speak out, or give a full and distinct account of; they want words to express it, and convey proper ideas of it, to others: and it is a joy that is glorious; there is a rejoicing that is evil and scandalous; but this is honourable, and of which none need be ashamed; it is solid and substantial, and the matter of it always abiding, when the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment; it is a joy on account of the glory of God, which the believer lives in the hope and faith of; and it is a beginning, a presage and pledge of it; it is a glory begun here; it is the first-fruits, and a part also of it; and by it saints may know a little what heaven itself will be.

Ver. 9. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.*] Which is a just and sufficient ground of joy and rejoicing. *Salvation* intends spiritual and eternal salvation; that which God appointed his people to from all eternity, which is obtained by Christ, applied by the Spirit, and will be fully enjoyed in heaven: this is the *salvation of souls*; which are of more worth than a world; and the redemption of which is precious, and requires a great price, and for which a great price is paid, as in ver. 18, 19. It is rightly supplied in our version by *your*, as in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; though the Vulgate Latin version only reads, *the salvation of souls*; and which is to be understood, not to the exclusion of bodies, for God has designed the salvation of them; and Christ has procured the redemption of them; and these will be preserved unto the coming of Christ, being united to him; and will be raised by him, and with their souls enjoy everlasting happiness with him; though, in the present state of things, salvation rather takes place in the soul than in the body, which is exposed to various labours, afflictions, and diseases; but the chief design of the phrase is, to distinguish this salvation from a corporeal and temporal one: and so the Jews use the phrase *תשועת הנפש*, *the salvation of the soul*, in opposition to, and distinction from, a mere bodily one; and it intends a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, and its curses; from hell, the second death, and wrath to come, and every spiritual enemy: which is the *end of faith*; or, as the Syriac version renders it, *פריענא*, *the reward of faith*; not that faith is the cause of salvation, or meritorious of it; for that itself is the gift of God, and is rather a part of salvation, and, at most, but the means of perceiving an interest in it, and of enjoying the comfort of it; and is what will issue in it, and in the full enjoyment of it; when faith will both have its end and scope, and be at an end, being exchanged for fruition; just as a reward is given at the end of a man's labours: hence 'tis called *אחרית*, *the end*, Prov. xxiii. 18. and even now salvation is the end of faith, in like sense as Christ is the end of the law: as the law has its full accomplishment, and all its ends answered in Christ, so faith has its end, and all it looks for, desires, and wants, in salvation by Christ: and which is now *receiving*; for the saints not only shall receive, and enjoy the full possession of it hereafter, but they have it now; it is not only appointed to them, and wrought out for them, but is brought near, set before them, and applied to them, and put into the hands of faith by the spirit of God; they have it in faith and hope, by which they are already saved; and in Christ their head and representative, in whom they are set down in heavenly places; and besides, they have the beginning, first-fruits, earnest, and pledge of it in their own hearts, as well as a right unto, and a meetness for the perfect possession of it hereafter; all which is matter of joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Ver. 10. *Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, &c.*] They greatly desired the coming of the Saviour, and to see him; they longed after the salvation to be accomplished by him, and expressed their

wishes for him, and that; and inquired into the nature of it, and gave an account thereof, according to the measure of light and knowledge communicated to them; they pointed out Christ as a Redeemer of his people, and his salvation as spiritual and eternal: *and searched diligently*; in the use of means; by prayer and supplication; by reading the prophecies that went before; by observing the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the law; and by waiting upon the Lord for the inspiration of his spirit. This last clause is omitted in the Syriac version, but rightly retained in all others: *who prophesied of the grace*; that should come *unto you*; Jews, and also the Gentiles. They prophesied both of Christ, who is the unspeakable gift of God's free grace, who is full of grace, and by whom it comes; and also of the several blessings of grace through Christ, as of redeeming grace from sin, Satan, death, and the grave; of justifying grace, through his righteousness, he being the Lord our righteousness, in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and glory; for though his righteousness is revealed without the law, yet it is witnessed to by law and prophets; of pardoning grace, as with God, and as a blessing of the new covenant, and as received through faith in Christ, to which give all the prophets witness; of adopting grace, both to Jews and Gentiles, signifying, that where they were not called the people of God, they should be called the sons of God; of regenerating and sanctifying grace, in giving a new heart and spirit, in sprinkling with clean water, in writing the laws of God in the inward parts, and pouring out the spirit in a plenteous manner on all sorts of men; of persevering grace, intimating that they that fear the Lord shall not depart from him, and that his loving kindness shall never depart from them; and of eternal life and glory, as God's free gift, which is that everlasting salvation, they say, Israel shall be saved in the Lord with.

Ver. 11. *Searching what, or what manner of time, &c.*] The prophets made a very diligent inquiry into the exact time when Christ should come to work out the salvation of his people; to whom it was made known that his coming should be before the sceptre, or tribe of Judah, and all civil government in it, ceased; and before the second temple was destroyed, into which the Messiah, the messenger of the covenant, was to come, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and that it should be seventy weeks, or 490 years, from a date given in Dan. ix. 24, 25, 26. as it was revealed to the Prophet Daniel; who particularly inquired, and diligently searched into this matter, and was eminently a *man of desires* this way, as he is styled, Dan. ix. 23. and they not only searched into the exact time, but into the manner and quality of the time when the Saviour should come; and foretold that it would be, with respect to the nations of the world, a time of profound peace; with respect to the Jews, that it would be a time of great blindness, ignorance, unbelief, and hardness of heart; that such would be that generation, or age, for wickedness and barbarity, as could not be declared and expressed; and that few would believe the report of the Gospel; and that the Messiah would be rejected of men, and be wounded, bruised, and put to

death; and with respect to the Gentiles, that the Gospel would be preached to them, and that they should seek to Christ, be gathered to him, and hope and trust in him; and that the followers of the Messiah should be persecuted, and greatly distressed, and yet comforted and sustained; and this should be the face of the times, and the state of things, when the salvation should be revealed: and all this, and much more, *the spirit of Christ in them did signify*; or *make manifest*: from whence it appears, that Christ then existed, as he did before there were any prophets, and even from everlasting, being the eternal God; and that the Spirit is from him, as well as from the Father; and as here, so he is often by the Jews^a called *רוחא כנשיחא*, *the spirit of the Messiah, or Christ*; and that the Spirit is truly God, since he could declare beforehand the exact time of Christ's coming, and the quality of the age in which he came, as well as bear a previous testimony to his sufferings and glory; as also, that he was in the prophets, and they were inspired by him, and spake as he moved and directed them: *when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*. The sufferings of Christ are what the Jews call *חבלי כנשיחא*, *the sorrows of the Messiah*. These are particularly testified of in Psal. xxii. and lxi. Isa. liii. and Dan. ix. 26. and Zech. xii. 10. The glory, or *glories*, as it may be rendered, design his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, his session at the right hand of God, and having all power, authority, and judgment committed to him; and which are eminently and distinctly prophesied of in Psal. xvi. 10. and lxxviii. 18. and ex. 1. and Dan. vii. 13, 14.

Ver. 12. *Unto whom it was revealed, &c.*] The salvation they searched and inquired into, and the grace of it; the time of its being wrought out, and what sort of times they would be when Christ should come, both to the church, and to the world, among Jews and Gentiles; as also what cruel sufferings the Messiah should undergo, and what great glory should be put upon him afterwards: *that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister*. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read *unto you*; and so do some copies. Not that they were ignorant of the things they searched into, and were revealed unto them, and they prophesied of; as the Jews sometimes say^c of them, "that they prophesied, and knew not what they prophesied of;" though it is not to be supposed that they had such clear and distinct ideas of things as saints have now under the Gospel dispensation; yet they knew much of the grace of the Gospel, and had the comfort of it, and a view of interest in the great salvation, and saw the day of Christ afar off with pleasure: nor that they did not minister, and were not useful to the saints of the age in which they lived; for their prophecies concerning Christ, and salvation by him, were particularly calculated for their spiritual refreshment and comfort, and the support of their faith and hope under afflictive circumstances; but then they were not to have their accomplishment in their times; for though they sometimes speak of them, because of the certainty of them, as if they

^a Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 3. & passim.

^b T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. & passim.

^c T. Bab. Bava Batlra, fol. 119. 2.

were already done, yet they knew they were not to be brought about until the last days; and therefore what was written by them, was written for our learning and instruction chiefly and principally, on whom the ends of the world are come; and though they were both profitable to themselves, and others that lived with them, yet they are more so to the saints under the Gospel dispensation, who are able to compare prophecies and facts together: even *the things which are now reported unto you*: as accomplished facts; such as relate to the person and offices of Christ, and salvation wrought out by him; to his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; of all which there is a true and faithful report made in the Gospel: *by them that have preached the Gospel unto you*; meaning himself, and the rest of the apostles, who had been called, and qualified, and sent out by Christ to preach glad tidings, and publish peace, which they had done in the several parts of the world, both to Jew and Gentile: *with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*; by Christ from the father, particularly at the day of Pentecost, when the apostles had an extraordinary and plentiful effusion of the spirit, qualifying them to preach the Gospel to which they were called and sent: and thus, as the great salvation is commended, from the concern that the prophets of old had in it, so from the preaching of it by the apostles, who were influenced and guided by the same spirit of Christ as they were, and in a far greater manner; and this salvation is still more commended from the great regard the blessed angels have unto it: *which things the angels desire to look into*. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *into whom*: either into the Holy Spirit, and the things of the Spirit, which he testified in the prophets, and published by the apostles; or rather into Christ, his person, offices, and grace, the allusion being to the *cherubim* on the mercy-seat, a type of Christ, which looked to one another, and to the mercy-seat, Exod. xxv. 20. and was true of them in the days of Christ's flesh, when they ascended and descended on the son of man, John i. 51. and when he rose from the dead, and went to heaven; for then was he seen and gazed on by angels, as he now is, 1 Tim. iii. 16. or *into which things*: so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; namely, the sufferings of Christ, and the glories following; the great mystery of redemption and salvation by Christ; the several doctrines of the Gospel, in which the glory of the grace, wisdom, righteousness, truth, and power of God is displayed; things they are highly delighted with, take pleasure in the contemplation of, and desire to have a greater knowledge of, and acquaintance with: they sung glory to God in the highest at the incarnation of Christ; they rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; and disdain not to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; and learn of the church the manifold wisdom of God; which may serve greatly to commend the excellency of Gospel truths, and engage us in the study of them.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, &c.*] With the girdle of truth; see Eph. vi. 14. since angels desire to look into the mysteries of grace, do you apply your minds, and diligently attend unto them, in opposition to all loose and vagrant thoughts of the

mind, about other things: give yourselves up wholly to them, meditate upon them, employ yourselves in them, and about them; seeing they are the study and inquiry of angels, and what the prophets have prophesied of, and searched into and ministered, and the apostles of Christ have preached; and besides, are things which relate to the person, office, sufferings, and glory of Christ, and the salvation of immortal souls. Though the phrase is sometimes used to denote preparation and readiness, and to be in a fit position to do any thing, as the Israelites were at the eating of the first passover, to march at the least notice out of Egypt; and so to go a journey, to run a race, to serve another, to wait on him, and for him, and also be prepared for battle; and is a metaphor taken from the custom of the eastern nations, who used to wear long garments, which they gathered up close to them, and girt about them, when they were about any of the above things, that they might be no hindrance to them, and that they might perform them with more expedition and dispatch; and so may be expressive of the readiness of believers, as pilgrims and travellers, for their journey towards the heavenly country, and to run the race set before them, and also to do every good work, according to the station they are placed in, to serve their Lord and master Jesus Christ in whatsoever he calls them to, and to wait for his coming; see Luke xii. 35, 36, 37. and also to fight his battles, to quit themselves like men, and be strong in defence of his Gospel, and against every enemy of his and theirs. *Be sober*: which is not only opposed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which greatly disqualifies for the above readiness and attention, but also to a being inebriated with the cares of this life, which choke the word, and make it unfruitful, and lead men into temptation, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, and from the faith of Christ; and likewise to a being intoxicated with errors, and false doctrine, which lull men asleep, and render them incapable of serving Christ, and his church; and turn their heads from faith to fables, and are contrary to the words of truth and soberness; so that to be sober, is not only to be moderate in eating and drinking; but to be disengaged from the anxious cares of the world, and to be disentangled, recovered, or awaked from the error of the wicked: *and hope to the end*: or *perfectly*, as the Greek word may be rendered, and as it is in the Syriac version, which joins it with the other phrase, and renders it, *be ye perfectly awaked*. The Arabic version renders it, *trusting with a perfect confidence*; so that it designs either the nature of that lively hope, to which they were begotten again, and are here exhorted to exercise, it being perfect, sincere, and without hypocrisy; not like the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish, and stand him in no stead, but an undissembled one; for as there is faith unfeigned, and love without dissimulation, so hope without hypocrisy; and also the full assurance of it, for as there is a plerophory of faith and love, and of understanding, so of hope; see Heb. vi. 11. or it intends the duration of this grace, and the exercise of it: it is a grace that does, and will remain, and it ought to be continually exercised, and the rejoicing of it to be kept firm, *to the end*; to the end of life, and until the

saints come to the enjoyment of what they are hoping for; even for the *grace that is to be brought unto you as the revelation of Jesus Christ*; and which may be rendered for the grace that is brought unto you, in or by the revelation of Jesus Christ: and the sense may be, that there is grace that is now brought to light by the Gospel, and that is brought home to the souls of God's people through it; as electing grace, redeeming grace, justifying grace, pardoning grace, adopting grace; and, in short, salvation, as all of grace; which Gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ: it is a revelation that is made by him; and it is a revelation that is made of him; it is a revelation of the glory of his person and offices; herein is his righteousness revealed from faith to faith; and here the riches of his grace are made manifest, and laid to open view; life and immortality are brought to light by Christ in it; and the way to eternal life, glory, and salvation, 'as being by Christ, is pointed out by it; and all this grace that is brought, and set before the saints in the Gospel, they ought to hope for, and comfortably believe their interest in; and continue thus hoping, believing, and trusting to the end of their days: or if our version, and which is that of others also, be retained, the meaning is, that eternal glory and happiness, which is called *grace*, because it is the free gift of God through Christ, to his children and flock, and is the finishing of the grace that is bestowed on them, and wrought in them, and is future, *is to be brought*; is a glory that shall be revealed in them, and a salvation ready to be revealed to them; and which will be done when Christ shall be revealed from heaven, when he shall appear a second time, and in glory; and is, and ought to be, the object of their hope, for it is laid up, and reserved for them; and they have the earnest of it in them, as well as the promise of it to them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions, instead of *grace*, read *joy*; and is the same with eternal glory, the joy of the Lord prepared for them, and which they shall enter into.

Ver. 14. *As obedient children, &c.*] Or *children of obedience*. This may be connected either with what goes before, that seeing they were children of God, by adopting grace, and in regeneration brought to the obedience of faith, to whom the inheritance belonged, therefore they ought to continue hoping for it; or with what follows, that since they were manifestly the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, being begotten again to a lively hope, they ought to be followers of him, and imitate him in holiness and righteousness, and shew themselves to be obedient ones to his Gospel and ordinances, as children ought to honour, and obey, and imitate their parents: *not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts in your ignorance*. The phrase is much the same with that in Rom. xii. 2. *be not conformed to this world*; for to be conformed, or fashioned to the world, is to be fashioned to the lusts of it; and to be fashioned to the lusts of it is to indulge them, to make provision for them, to obey them, to live and walk in them; which should not be done by the children of God, and who profess themselves to be obedient ones to the Gospel, which teaches otherwise; and that because they are *lusts*, foolish, hurtful, and deceitful ones, ungodly ones; the lusts of the devil, as well as of

the world, and of the flesh, and which war against the soul; and because they are *former ones*, which they served in a time of unregeneracy, and were now convinced and ashamed of, and therefore should no longer live to them; the time past of life being sufficient to have walked in them: and because they were lusts *in ignorance*, which they had indulged in a state of ignorance; not of Gentilism, though this might be the case of some, but of Judaism; when they knew not God, especially in Christ, and were ignorant of his righteousness, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as committed against a law that was holy and spiritual; nor did they know Christ, and the way of salvation by him, but thought they ought to do many things contrary to his name; nor the work of the spirit in regeneration, saying with Nicodemus, how can these things be? nor the true sense of the Scriptures, the sacred oracles, that were committed to them; much less the Gospel, which was hidden from them, and they were enemies to: but now it was otherwise with them; they were made light in the Lord, and had knowledge of all these things; and therefore, as their light increased, and the grace of God, bringing salvation, appeared unto them, and shone out on them, it became them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and not to walk as they had done before, since they had not so learned Christ.

Ver. 15. *But as he which hath called you is holy, &c.*] Which is a periphrasis of God the father, who had called them, not merely in an external way, by the outward ministry of the word; but internally, powerfully, and efficaciously, by his spirit and grace; and who had called them to holiness of life and conversation, as well as in calling had implanted principles of holiness in them, and therefore is said to call them with an holy calling; and who himself is holy, naturally, perfectly, and originally, and in such sense as no creature is, angels or men; and is glorious in holiness, and is the source and fountain of holiness in others: therefore *so be ye holy in all manner of conversation*: which respects not internal holiness, but supposes it; for that is God's work, and not the creature's act; 'tis the sanctification of the spirit, of which he is the author; this they were chosen unto from the beginning, and made partakers of in regeneration; but external holiness, holiness of life and conversation, in all the parts and branches of it, both with respect to God and men, in matters both of religion and civil life: and to be holy in this sense is an imitating of God, a copying after him, though he is far from being equalled by a sinful creature, or even by an angel in heaven; however, the arguments to it, taken from the nature of God, and of his effectual calling to grace and holiness, are very strong and powerful; for it is walking worthy of him, who has called us to his kingdom and glory; and walking worthy of that vocation wherein we are called; and a following of God, as dear and obedient children; and what is according to his will, and what he directs unto, and requires, as appears from what follows.

Ver. 16. *Because it is written, &c.*] In Lev. xi. 44. and xix. 2. and xx. 7. *be ye holy, for I am holy*; an argument the apostle knew must have weight with these persons, who were chiefly Jews, scattered abroad

among the Gentiles, and had a value for the Scriptures of truth; and therefore, as the argument for holiness of life, from the nature and perfections of God, is strong, it must receive additional strength from this being the declared will of God, even their sanctification on this account; and though holiness, equal to God, is never to be attained to by a creature, yet so far as it is capable of it, it is desirable, because agreeable both to the nature and will of God, by all such who are truly his children, who love his name, adore his perfections, give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, fear his goodness, and obey his will.

Ver. 17. *And if ye call on the father, &c.* Of Christ, and of all the saints; or *seeing ye do.* This is a fresh argument, engaging to holiness of life and conversation. Invocation of God includes the whole worship of him, the performance of every outward duty, and the exercise of every inward grace, particularly it designs prayer; and whoever are concerned in one, or the other, God will be sanctified by all them that draw nigh unto him: or the phrase may here intend an asserting God to be their father, under the influence of the spirit of adoption; and all such that do claim so near a relation to God ought to honour and obey him, and to be followers of him: whoever call God their father, and themselves his children, ought to be careful that they do not blaspheme, or cause to be blasphemed, that worthy name by which they are called: *who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work.* This is another reason why men should be holy, taken from the general judgment; for this God that is a father, is also a judge. There is a judgment after death, which is sure and certain, and reaches to all persons and things; and though the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, yet he'll judge every one by that man Christ, whom he has ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead: before his judgment-seat all must stand, where they will be impartially, and without respect of persons, tried; no account will be had of what nation and place they are, whether Jews or Gentiles, or of this, or the other country, unless to aggravate or lessen their condemnation; for it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for such who have been favoured with a Gospel revelation, and believe it not; nor from what parents they have descended, for the soul that sins, that shall die; nor of what age and sex they are, small and great shall stand before him; nor of what state and condition, rich or poor, high or low, bond or free; or of what religious sect and denomination, or whether they have conformed to some external things or not; no regard will be had to any outward appearance or profession. The Judge will not judge according to the sight of the eyes, and outward view of things; for he looks on the heart, and knows the secret springs of all actions; and according thereunto will be judge and pass the sentence; and therefore what manner of persons ought men to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? Hence it follows, *pass the time of your sojourning here in fear*; the people of God in this world are *sojourners*, as all their fathers were; they are not

natives of the place in which they are; though they are in the world, they are not of it; they were natives of it by their first birth, but by their second they are born again from above, and so belong to another place; they are of another country, even an heavenly one; they are citizens of another city, a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, their citizenship is in heaven; and there is their father's house, which is not made with hands, and is eternal; and there lies their estate, their inheritance; and though they dwell here below, neither their settlement nor their satisfaction are here; they reckon themselves not at home whilst they are on earth, and are strangers in it, to the men of the world, and they to them; with whom they have not, or at least ought not to have, any fellowship. It is indeed but for a *time*, that they are sojourners, not an eternity; which time is fixed, and is very short, and will be quickly gone; it is but a little while, and Christ will come and take his home to his father's house, where they shall be for ever with him; for 'tis only here on earth that they are pilgrims and strangers: and whilst they are so they should spend their time *in fear*; not of men, nor of devils, nor of death and judgment, hell and eternal damnation; for such a fear is not consistent with the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and is the effect of the law, and not encouraged by the Gospel; is in natural men, yea, in devils themselves; but in the fear of God, and which springs from the grace of God, and is increased by it; is consistent with the strongest acts of faith, and with the greatest expressions of spiritual joy; is opposite to pride and self-confidence, and includes the whole worship of God, external and internal, and a religious conversation, in humility and lowliness of mind.

Ver. 18. *Forasmuch as ye know, &c.* From the Scriptures of truth, by the testimony of the spirit, by his work upon the soul, and by the application of the benefits of redemption, such as justification, pardon, adoption, and sanctification; see Job xix. 25. Gal. ii. 20. *that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.* The redemption of a soul, which is of more worth than a world, requires a greater price than gold and silver; and those who have the largest share thereof, can neither redeem their own souls with it, nor the souls of others. The soul is immortal and incorruptible, but these are corruptible things, which may be cankered, or wear away, and perish by using; and therefore, seeing redemption is not obtained by any thing corruptible, nothing corrupt in principle or practice should be indulged. The allusion is to the redemption of the people of Israel, and of the first-born, by shekels, Exod. xxx. 12. 13. Numb. iii. 46, 47, 48. Gold and silver do not mean pieces of gold and silver, but gold and silver coined; for only by such could redemption of any thing be obtained; but these are insufficient for the redemption of the soul; which is a deliverance from the slavery of sin, the bondage, curse, and condemnation of the law, the captivity of Satan, and from a state of poverty, having been deep in debt, and sold under sin. It here follows, *from your vain conversa-*

tion received by tradition from your fathers; meaning not the corruption of nature, which is propagated from father to son by natural generation, and lies in the vanity of the mind, and is the spring and source of an evil conversation; though the saints, as they are redeemed from all sin, so from this, that it shall not be their condemnation; nor Gentilism, which lay in vain philosophy, in idolatry and superstition, and in an evil and wicked conversation, encouraged by the example of their ancestors; but Judaism, and either regards the ceremonial law, which was delivered by Moses to the Jewish fathers, and by them handed down to their posterity; and which was vain, as used and abused by them, and was unprofitable to obtain righteousness, life, and salvation by, and therefore was disannulled by Christ, who has redeemed and delivered his people from this yoke of bondage; or rather the traditions of the elders, which our Lord inveighs against, Matt. xv. 3, &c. and the Apostle Paul was brought up in, and zealous of, before conversion, Gal. i. 14. as the Pharisees were. These were the inventions and decrees of them they called אבות, fathers, to whose dogmas and decisions they paid the utmost respect. These made up their oral law, which the Jews say Moses received from Sinai, and delivered to Joshua; and Joshua to the elders; and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue, the last of which was Simeon the just; and from him it was delivered to another; and so from one to another to the times of Christ and his apostles and afterwards; and which consisted of many vain, useless, and unprofitable things; to walk according to which must be a vain conversation; and the saints now being redeemed by a greater price than that of silver and gold, and which is after mentioned, they ought not therefore to be the servants of men, no, not of these fathers, but of God and Christ.

Ver. 19. *But with the precious blood of Christ, &c.*] Christ was prophesied of as a Redeemer under the Old Testament, Isa. lix. 20. and the Jews frequently ascribe redemption to the word of the Lord God¹; and which the apostle here attributes to the blood of Christ; whose blood is the same with ours, only not tainted with sin; the blood of an innocent person, and of one who is God, as well as man, and was freely shed in the room and stead of his people, and so a sufficient price for their redemption: and it may truly be said to be precious; as it is to God, to whom it is a sweet-smelling sacrifice, and with which he is well-pleased; not that he takes delight in the mere effusion of his blood, but as this is the ransom-price, and the atonement of his chosen ones; and so it is to all them that believe, since by it they are justified; through it they have the forgiveness of their sins; their peace and reconciliation with God is made by it; and by it they are sanctified, and have boldness to enter into the holiest of all: and this blood of Christ, by which they are redeemed, is as of a lamb without spot and blemish; Christ is comparable to any lamb, for the innocence of his nature, the meekness of his disposition and deportment, and for his patience under sufferings and in death; and to

the lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were typical of the continual and constant virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice to take away sin; and particularly to the paschal lamb, he being the true passover sacrificed for us; and which, as also the lambs of the daily sacrifice, and all others, were to be without spot and blemish: and in which they prefigured Christ, who is without the stain of original, and the spot and blemish of actual sin; and so was a very fit person to be a sacrifice for sin, and a Redeemer of his people. The Jews have a notion, that the redemption of the Israelites out of Egypt, when a lamb without blemish was taken, and sacrificed and eaten, had a respect to the future redemption by the Messiah; and which, they say², was to be in the same time of the year; that as they were redeemed in Nisan, the month in which the passover was kept, so they were to be redeemed in the same month: and indeed at that time, and in that month, was redemption obtained by the blood of Christ. Of the former, the Targumist in Hos. iii. 2. says, "I have redeemed them by my word," on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan, and have "given silver shekels, the atonement of their souls." It is observable that the Hebrew word דם signifies both blood and money, or price; whether some reference may not be had to this here, since both are included here, may be considered.

Ver. 20. *Who verily was fore-ordained, &c.*] Or fore-known; that is, by God; and which intends, not barely his prescience of Christ, of what he should be, do, and suffer; but such a previous knowledge of him, which is joined with love and affection to him; not merely as his own son, and the express image of his person, but as Mediator; and whom he loved before the world was, and with a love of complacency and delight, and which will last for ever. It includes the choice of him as the head of the election, and the pre-ordination of his human nature, to the grace of union to his divine Person, and the pre-appointment of him to various things. The Syriac version adds, *to this*; that is, to be the lamb for a sacrifice, to be a propitiation for the sins of his people, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them by his precious blood. The allusion is to the taking of the passover-lamb from the sheep, or from the goats, and keeping it separate, from the tenth to the fourteenth day of the month, before it was slain; so Christ, as man, was chosen out from among the people; and as Joseph's antitype was separated from his brethren, and that before the foundation of the world; for all God's decrees and appointments, relating either to Christ, or his people, are eternal; no new thoughts, counsels, and resolutions, are taken up by him in time. The affair of redemption by Christ is no new thing; the scheme of it was drawn in eternity; the persons to be redeemed were fixed on; the Redeemer was appointed in the council and covenant of peace; and even the very Gospel which proclaims it was ordained before the world, for our glory. A Saviour was provided before sin was committed, and the method of man's recovery was settled before his ruin took place; and which was done

¹ Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, &c.

² Targum in Hos. i. 7. & iii. 2. & in Joel ii. 17.

³ Zohar in Numb. fol. 102. 3.

without any regard to the works and merits of men, but is wholly owing to the free and sovereign grace of God, and to his everlasting love, both to the Redeemer and the redeemed. The Jews^h reckon the name of the Messiah among the seven things that were created before the world was; in proof of which they mention, Psal. lxxii. 17. *but was manifest in these last times for you*; he was before, he existed from everlasting; he lay in the bosom of his father from all eternity: and was veiled and hid under the shadows of the ceremonial law, during the legal dispensation; but in the fulness of time was manifest in the flesh, and more clearly revealed in the Gospel, and to the souls of men; his manifestation in human nature is principally intended, and which was in the last times of the legal dispensation, at the end of the Jewish world or state, when a new world, or the world to come, took place. 'Tis a rule with the Jews^l, that whenever the last days or times are mentioned, the times of the Messiah are designed: and this manifestation of Christ was for the sake of some particular persons, even for all God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, and who are described in the following verse. The Alexandrian copy reads, *for us*; and the Ethiopic version, *for him*.

Ver. 21. *Who by him do believe in God, &c.*] Christ, as God, is the object of faith; as Mediator, he is the way to the father, by which men come to him, believe in him and lay hold upon him, as their covenant God and father; and is also the author of that faith by which they believe in him; and all their encouragement to believe is taken from him; and such who do come to God by Christ, and stay themselves upon him, trusting in him, may know, and comfortably conclude, that Christ, who was fore-ordained from all eternity to be the Redeemer of his people, was manifest in the flesh for their sakes, and to obtain eternal redemption for them, which he was sent to do, by him that raised him up from the dead; mention being made of his blood, as the price of redemption, ver. 19. supposes that he died; and lest it should be thought that he was held by the pains of death, and under the power of it, which it was impossible he should, considering the dignity of his person, as the son of God, and the fulfilment of his engagements, as the surety of his people; his resurrection from the dead is asserted, which was not only foretold by himself, but predicted by the prophets, and was punctually accomplished; and which, as here, is usually ascribed to God the father, though not to the exclusion of Christ himself, who had power to lay down his life, and take it up again; and which is a very great encouragement to faith in God, both with respect to justification in his sight, and acceptance with him, since Christ rose again for our justification, and with regard to a future resurrection: *and gave him glory*: by raising him from the dead, when his body became a glorious one, being raised, spiritual, powerful, and incorruptible; and by his ascension to heaven, being received up in a cloud, attended by thousands of angels, and triumphing over the powers of darkness; and by placing him at his own right hand, which is an honour

never bestowed on any mere creature; and by possessing him with the gifts of the spirit for men, and giving him all power in heaven and in earth, and authority to exercise judgment on all, and a name above every name in this, or the world to come: *that your faith and hope might be in God*; which are graces that go together, and much resemble and assist each other; they are both the gifts of God, and have him for their object, and meet in the same persons; and are greatly encouraged by the resurrection of Christ, and the glory he now enjoys, since because he lives, those that believe in him shall live also, and appear with him in glory.

Ver. 22. *Seeing ye have purified your souls, &c.*] The apostle passes to another exhortation, namely, to brotherly love; the ground of which he makes to be, the purification of their souls; and which supposes that they had been impure; and indeed, their whole persons, souls and bodies, were so by nature; even all the members of their bodies, and all the powers and faculties of their souls: it is internal purity, purity of the heart, that is here particularly respected; though not to the exclusion of outward purity, for where there is the former, there will be the latter; but there may be an external purity, where there is not the inward one: this the apostle ascribes to the saints themselves, but not without the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the operations of his Spirit; as appears by a following clause; but they are said to purify themselves, inasmuch as having the grace of faith bestowed on them, they were enabled, under the influences of the spirit of God, to exercise it on the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin: *in obeying the truth*; of the Gospel, by receiving, believing, and embracing it in the love of it; which teaches outward purity, and is a means in the hand of the spirit of inward purity, and of directing to the purifying blood of Jesus, who sanctifies and cleanses by the word: *through the spirit*; this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, but is in the Arabic version, and ought to be retained; for, as Christ died to purify to himself a peculiar people, the spirit of Christ does from him purify the heart by faith in his blood; by sprinkling that on the conscience, and by leading the faith of God's people to the fountain of it, to wash in for sin, and for uncleanness; even both their consciences and their conversation-garments, whereby they obtain inward and outward purity: *unto unfeigned love of the brethren*; which is the end of sanctification, and an evidence of it; when the saints are loved as brethren, and because such; and with a love without dissimulation, not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: this being the case, the exhortation follows: see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: this is Christ's new commandment, and the evidence of regeneration; a distinguishing badge of Christianity, and without which all profession of religion is a vain and empty thing; this should be mutual and cordial; should proceed from the heart, and from an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience; and should be with warmth and fer-

T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 59. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 29. 2.

^l Kimchi in Isa. ii. 9.

veny, and not with coldness and indifference; though the word here used, *extensivus*, may not only design the intenseness of it, but the extensiveness of it also; as that it should reach to all the saints, the poor as well as the rich, and the lesser as well as the greater and more knowing believers; and likewise may denote the continuance of it; it ought to be continually exercised, and to last always; and so the Arabic version renders it, *with a perpetual love*.

Ver. 23. *Being born again, &c.*] As they were of God, according to his abundant mercy, by the resurrection of Christ, to a lively hope of a glorious inheritance; as in ver. 3. and therefore seeing they were brethren in a spiritual relation, they ought to love as brethren; being children of the same father, belonging to the same family and household, having the same spirit, and the same nature and disposition, and being members one of another, and heirs of the same grace and glory; and not only so, but were taught of God their father, in regeneration, to love one another: it became them highly, therefore, to exercise that grace, and particularly since they were born, *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible*; referring not to seed cast into the earth, which first corrupts and dies, and then is quickened, and rises, and brings forth fruit; but to human seed, and which the Jews call *נִפְסָה טְרוּפָה*, *the filthy drop*^k; which is in itself corrupt, and is corrupted, and whereby the corruption of human nature is propagated; for whatsoever is born of the flesh is carnal and corrupt; and so the apostle has reference to the first birth, or natural generation of men, in which they are polluted and depraved, and confirms what the evangelist says, John i. 13. that regenerate persons are not *born of blood*; or become new creatures, and holy men, by their natural descent, or first birth, be it from whom it will; for all men are of one blood originally, and that is tainted with sin; nor by the will of fallen creatures, of corruptible men, themselves or others; but of water, and of the spirit, of the grace of the spirit of God, which is seed pure and incorruptible, having no mixture or taint of sin, nor any degree of pollution in it, and which remains so; nor can it be corrupted by all the wickedness there is in man's heart; nor by all the pollutions of the world, or temptations of Satan; and this seed is conveyed into the heart by the spirit of God, in regeneration, and it contains all grace in it: *by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*; for the incorruptible seed, and the ever-living and abiding word, are two distinct things; though interpreters generally confound them: and by the word of God is either meant the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; who is concerned in regeneration as well as the Father and the Spirit; by whose resurrection, and in consequence of it, the elect of God are begotten again; and who, as the Word, is able to build up all the sanctified ones, and give them the inheritance they are born heirs unto: or the Gospel, the word of truth, which is made use of as a means of begetting souls again; and the rather, since it seems to be so interpreted, ver. 25. the phrases, *which liveth and abideth for ever*, may be either read in con-

nexion only with *God*, and as descriptive of him, who is the living God, is from everlasting to everlasting, in distinction from idols; and here added, to shew that he can give power and efficacy to his word, to regenerate and quicken, and will continue to preserve it, and make it useful to all his saving purposes; so Jarchi explains the passage in Isa. xl. 8. after referred to, *the word of our God shall stand for ever*; "because he lives and abides, and it is in his power to confirm it; therefore it follows, *O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain*; for because he lives for ever, this promise is published." Or else with the word of God, and is true both of Christ, and of the Gospel. Christ is the Word which lives; in him, as such, is life; he has life in himself as God, as man, and as Mediator; and is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and abides for ever in his person, without any change; and in his offices and grace, and righteousness; he abides a priest continually, has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession, and of his kingdom there is no end: the same is said of the *Memra*, or Word of God, in the Chaldee paraphrase on Hos. xi. 9. *I am God*, מֵימַר, *my word abideth for ever*; compare John xii. 34. The Gospel also may be said to live, in opposition to the law, which is the killing letter; and because it points out the way of life and salvation to sinners; and is a means of quickening dead sinners, and of ingenerating that faith by which men live on Christ; and of revealing to them that righteousness which is unto justification of life; and of supporting and maintaining spiritual life in them; and of reviving drooping saints; the Syriac version renders it, *the living Word of God*: and it remains, and will abide; all its promises, blessings, doctrines, and ordinances, are lasting; it will continue in the world until all the elect of God are gathered in, until the second coming of Christ, and to the end of the world; notwithstanding all the persecutions of men, and cunning craft of false teachers, and all the ridicule and contempt it is treated with by mockers and scoffers; and will abide in the effects of it, in the hearts of the saints, to all eternity.

Ver. 24. *For all flesh is as grass, &c.*] All men, as born of corruptible seed, are frail, mortal, and perishing; they spring up like grass, and look beautiful for a while, but are very weak and tender, and in a little time they are cut down by death, and wither away; and whilst they live, are, in a good measure, nothing but grass in another form; the substance of their life is greatly by it; what is the flesh they eat, but grass turned into it? and this mortality is not only the case of wicked men, as the Jews^l interpret the word, but of good men; even of the prophets, and preachers of the Gospel; and yet the word of God spoken by them continues for ever: the passage referred to is in Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8. *and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass*; all outward things which are in esteem with men, and render them glorious to one another, as riches, honour, wisdom, strength, external righteousness, holiness, and goodness; all which are fading and transitory,

^k Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 1. & Bartenora in ib. Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. l. & 78. 2.

^l Targum, Jarchi, & Kimchi, in Isa. xl. 6.

like the flower of the field; but the Gospel continues, and reveals durable riches, and honour with Christ; and true wisdom and strength with him, and spiritual knowledge, in comparison of which, all things are dross and dung; and an everlasting righteousness, and true holiness in him: some have thought respect may be had to the legal dispensation, and to all the glory and stateliness and goodness of the worship and ordinances of it, which were to endure but for a time, and are now removed; and the Gospel dispensation has taken place of them, which will continue to the end of the world: *the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; and so fading are all the above things.*

Ver. 25. *But the word of the Lord endureth for ever, &c.*] Though men die, and ministers of the word

too, and every thing in the world is uncertain, unstable, fleeting, and passing away, and whatever change has been in the ordinances of divine service; yet the word of the Lord, the Gospel of Christ, is settled for ever, and will never pass away: *and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you; this is the apostle's application of the passage in Isaiah, shewing that the word of the Lord there is the same with the Gospel preached by him, and the other apostles, at that present time; and is no other than that good tidings Zion is said to bring; see Isa. xl. 9. the self-same Gospel the Prophet Isaiah preached the apostles did, though with greater clearness, and more success; see Rom. x. 8, 16.*

C H A P. II.

THIS chapter consists of exhortations, in general, to a holy life; and, in particular, to obedience to superiors. It begins with an exhortation to lay aside various vices, which were unbecoming regenerate persons, ver. 1. and, agreeably to their character, as new-born babes, to express a desire after the Gospel, which is commended from its nature, being comparable to milk; and from its quality, being reasonable, sincere, and unmix'd; and from the end and usefulness of it, a spiritual growth; and the argument engaging to such a desire is the experience they had of the grace of Christ in it, ver. 2, 3. whose excellency is declared, under the metaphor of a stone, said to be living, to be chosen of God, and precious to him, though rejected by men; to whom the saints are encouraged to come, as lively stones built up, a spiritual house, for the exercise of the holy office of the priesthood, by offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ, ver. 4, 5. and that Christ is such a precious stone, is proved from Isa. xxviii. 16. and not only to God, but to all them that believe; though to them that believe not, he is the stone of rejection, stumbling, and offence; to stumble at which, and the doctrine of it, through disobedience, they were of old appointed by God, ver. 6, 7, 8. but the character of the persons the apostle writes to was very different, quite the reverse, being chosen and called, and manifestly the people of God, and sharing in his grace and mercy, ver. 9, 10. and these he exhorts, suitable to their state and condition, to abstain from sin, as an enemy to their souls, and to live an honest life and conversation among the Gentiles, that they, instead of speaking evil of them, might, by beholding their good works, glorify God, ver. 11, 12. And particularly he exhorts them to obedience to civil magistrates, both superior and inferior; partly from the author of them, they being of the Lord; and partly from the usefulness of them to punish wicked men, and to encourage good men; and also from its being the will of God, by such obedience, to silence the cavils of foolish men, ver. 13, 14, 15. And whereas it might be objected, that they were made free by Christ, and therefore should not be the servants of men; it is granted, that they were free; but then it is denied, that they should

use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness: and besides, it should be observed, that they were the servants of God, and therefore ought to do what he enjoined them; and, among other things, yield obedience to civil magistrates, ver. 16. And to this purpose are various exhortations in ver. 17. and another particular one is added, which is to servants, to be subject to their masters, and fear them, whether they be good or bad, ver. 18. and then he comforts such that had had masters, and encourages them to bear the injuries they received from them patiently; because so to do was grateful to God, and acceptable in his sight; and because they were called unto it by him; and because of the example Christ had left them in suffering for them, ver. 19, 20, 21. And this is further urged from the character of Christ, who was without sin, and yet suffered, and from his conduct, who, when reviled, made no return, but left his cause with God, ver. 22, 23. which leads on the apostle to take notice of the nature of Christ's sufferings in his body on the cross, and the ends of them, which were expiation of sin, healing diseases, and holiness of life, as a consequent thereof, ver. 24. previous to which is conversion, which is illustrated by the former state and condition men are in, being as sheep going astray; and by their present one, being returned to Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, ver. 25.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore, laying aside all malice, &c.*] Since the persons the apostle writes to were born again, and therefore ought to love one another, he exhorts them to the disuse of such vices as were disagreeable to their character as regenerate men, and contrary to brotherly love; he dissuades them from them, and advises to *lay them aside*, either as weights and burdens, which it was not fit for new-born babes to carry; see Heb. xii. 1. or rather as old worn-out clothes, as filthy rags, which should be put off, laid by, and never used more, being what were very unsuitable to their character and profession to wear: the metaphor is the same as in Eph. iv. 22. and Col. iii. 8, 9. and the first he mentions is *malice*; to live in which is a mark of an unregenerate man, and very unbecoming such who are born again; and is not consistent with the relation of brethren, and character of children, or new-born

babes, who are without malice, and do not bear and retain it: *all* of this is to be laid aside, towards all persons whatever, and in every shape, and in every instance of it: *and also all guile*; fraud, or deceit, in words or actions; and which should not be found, and appear in any form, in Israelites indeed, in brethren, in the children of God; who ought not to lie one to another, or defraud each other, nor express that with their lips which they have not in their hearts; which babes are free from, and so should babes in Christ: *and hypocrisies*; both to God and men: hypocrisy to God is, when persons profess that which they have not, as love to God, faith in Christ, zeal for religion, fervent devotion, and sincerity in the worship of God; and do all they do to be seen of men, and appear outwardly righteous, and yet are full of all manner of iniquity: hypocrisy to men is, pretence of friendship, loving in word and tongue only, speaking peaceably with the mouth, but in heart laying wait; a sin to be abhorred and detested by one that is born from above; and is contrary to that integrity, simplicity, and sincerity of heart, which become regenerate persons, the children of God, and brethren one of another: *and envies*; at each other's happiness and prosperity, riches, honours, gifts temporal or spiritual; for such are works of the flesh, shew men to be carnal, are unbecoming regenerated persons, and contrary to the exercise of Christian charity, or love, which envieth not the welfare of others, either respecting body, soul, or estate: *and all evil speakings*; backbitings, whisperings, detractions, hurting one another's characters by innuendos, false charges, and evil surmises; which is not acting like men that are made new creatures, and are partakers of the divine nature, nor like brethren, or as Christ's little ones, and who are of God, begotten again to be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

Ver. 2. *As new-born babes, &c.*] The Syriac version renders it, *be ye simple as infants*; and as if it was a distinct exhortation of itself, and from that which follows; though it seems rather to be descriptive of the persons spoken to, and a character of them, under which the apostle addresses them; which carries in it a reason strengthening the exhortation after given: he takes it for granted that they were begotten again, according to the abundant mercy of God, and born of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, and that they were just, or lately born; and which is to be understood of them all in general, and not of younger converts among them, who might be called little children with respect to others who were young men or fathers; but that, comparatively speaking, those that had been of the longest standing were but as it were newly born, it being at most but a few years since they were called by grace: and they were as *babes*, not on account of their want of knowledge, or unskilfulness in the word of righteousness; or of non-proficiency in the learning of divine truths, and their great dulness, backwardness, and imperfection; or because of their incapacity in taking in, and digesting the strong meat and sublimer doctrines of the Gospel;

or for their instability and simplicity, being easily deceived and beguiled; nor for their weakness in faith, not being able to walk alone, and their insufficiency to defend, or provide for themselves; but because of their harmlessness and innocence, meekness and humility; and for the sincerity of their faith and love, obedience and profession. The proselytes to the Jews' religion are often said ^{to be} *בְּקִמּוֹן שְׂנוּרֵר דְּמִי*, as *an infant just born*, or a new-born babe; to which the allusion may here be made: *desire the sincere milk of the word*; this is not a declaration that these new-born souls did do so, though that might be true, but an exhortation to them so to do, as it became them: by the *sincere milk of the word* is meant the Gospel, even the whole of it, and not, as elsewhere, the more plain and easy truths of it; which is compared to milk for its purity in itself, for every word of God is pure; and for its purifying nature, as used by the spirit of God; and for its sweetness and agreeable taste to a regenerate man; and because easy of digestion to a spiritual one; and because it is nutritive to him, by it he is nourished up unto eternal life; and because, as milk is of a cooling nature, so the Gospel is a means, in the hand of the spirit of God, of assuaging those inflammations, and of allaying that wrath and fiery indignation, raised in the conscience of a sinner by the law; and because as milk, medicinally used, is a restorative in consumptive disorders, so the Gospel is not only the means of helping a declining person, and who is wasted and consumed by sin, but even of quickening such as are dead in sin; it is the savour of life unto life. The Jewish writers speak of *חלב של תורה*, *the milk of the law*, of which they generally interpret ^{the passage in} Isa. lv. 1. but it is much better applied to the Gospel, which is the milk of the word, or *rational milk*; not that the Gospel is a scheme according to the carnal reason of men; it is contrary to that, and above sound reason, though not repugnant to it; but it is what is calculated for faith, the spiritual reason of men, and for such who have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between good and evil; it is a spiritual drink, and is made up of spiritual things, and suited to the spiritual man; it is milk, not in a natural, but in a mystic and spiritual sense: the Syriac version renders it, *the word which is as milk, pure and spiritual*: and it is *sincere*; without mixture, unadulterated with the inventions and doctrines of men, Jews or heretics: or *without deceit*; being neither deceitfully handled by the faithful ministers of it, nor causing deceit, or deceiving those that cordially receive it. Now, this it becomes regenerate persons to *desire*; and vehemently long after, as a new-born babe does after its mother's milk; for the Gospel is that to one that is born again, as the breast is to a babe: desire after it supposes knowledge of it; and where there is an experimental knowledge, there will be a value and esteem for it, even above necessary food, and, at times, an hungering and thirsting after it, an impatient longing for, and desire of it; when such souls will labour after it, and diligently observe and attend every opportunity of enjoying it, and think long ere

^m T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 48. 2. & 62. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. sect. 2.

ⁿ Jarchi in Cant. 5. 12.

^o Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Kimchi, in Isa. lv. 1. Abarbincl, Mashmia Jeshu, fol. 26. 1.

the seasons of meeting with it return; for it is suitable food for them, savoury food, such as their souls love, and which indeed they cannot live without: now the end of this exhortation, and of such a desire, and of feeding on the words of faith and sound doctrine, is, *that ye may grow thereby*; regenerate persons are not at their full growth at once; they are first children, then young men, and then fathers in Christ; the Gospel is appointed as a means of their spiritual growth, and by the blessing of God becomes so, and which they find to be so by good experience; and therefore this milk of the word is desirable on this account, for the increase of faith, and the furtherance of the joy of it; for their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in an experience of spiritual strength from him, and unto him, as their head in all things; not merely in the leaves of a profession, but in the fruits of grace, righteousness, and holiness. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, *unto salvation*: that is, until they come to a perfect knowledge of Christ, and to be perfect men with him, being arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and in the possession of that salvation he has obtained for them.

Ver. 3. *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*] Reference is had to Peal. xxxiv. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good*: and the Syriac version here adds, *if ye have seen*: by the Lord is meant, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the following words shew, who is gracious and amiable, and lovely in his person; who has a fulness of grace in him for his people; has displayed his grace towards them, in engaging for them as a surety, in assuming their nature, obeying, suffering, and dying in their stead; he is gracious in his word and promises, truths and ordinances, and in all his offices and relations; and regenerate persons have tasted that he is so: an unregenerate man has no spiritual taste; his taste is vitiated by sin, and not being changed, sin is a sweet morsel in his mouth, and he disrelishes every thing that is spiritual; but one that is born again savours the things of the spirit of God; sin is exceeding sinful to him, and Christ exceeding precious; he, and his fruit, his promises, and blessings of grace, his word and ordinances, are sweet unto his taste: and the taste he has is not a mere superficial one, such as hypocrites may have of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; but such a taste of Christ, and of his grace, as, by a true faith, to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and so have everlasting life; such have a saving and experimental knowledge of Christ, an application of him, and his saving benefits to them, a revelation of him in them, so that they find and feel that he dwells in them, and they in him; such receive out of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace, and live by faith upon him, and receive nourishment from him; and of this the apostle made no doubt concerning these persons, but took it for granted that they had such tastes of Christ, and therefore could not but desire the Gospel, which is a revelation of Christ, and sets forth the glory of his person, and the riches of his grace: and whereas, such as have truly tasted of his grace cannot but desire to have more, and fresh tastes of it; where should

they have them, but in his word and ordinances? and therefore, would they grow in grace, and know more of Christ, and taste more of his goodness, it is their interest, as it is their spiritual nature, to desire the Gospel, in the purity and sincerity of it.

Ver. 4. *To whom coming*, as unto a living stone, &c.] Christ here, as often elsewhere, is compared to a stone; and Peter, by the use of this metaphor, shews that he is not the rock, but Christ is the rock on which the church is built, and he is the foundation-stone on which every believer is laid; and 'tis chiefly with respect to the usefulness of a stone in building, that Christ is compared to one, who is the foundation and corner-stone, as well as for strength and duration; and he is called a living one, because he has life in himself, as God, as Mediator, and as man; and communicates life to others, as natural life to all creatures, and spiritual and eternal life to his people, whose great privilege it is to come to him: and by coming to him is meant believing in him; and it does not design the first act of faith on Christ, or a soul's first coming to Christ, but an after and continued exercise of faith on him; and it supposes Christ to be come at, notwithstanding he is in heaven, and saints on earth, for their faith and hope can enter into, and reach him within the vail, and notwithstanding their many transgressions and backslidings; it supposes life in them, or they could not come; and a sense of their need of him, of his righteousness to justify them, of his blood for pardoning and cleansing, of his fulness to supply their want of food, rest, peace, comfort, and salvation in him; and a persuasion of his ability and willingness to relieve them: and they are encouraged to come to him under the above considerations, as a stone, a foundation-stone; believing that he is laid as a foundation, and that he is the only foundation, and therefore they lay the whole stress of their salvation, and build all their hopes of happiness on him; and as a living stone, deriving grace, life, and strength from him; exercising faith on him for all the mercies, blessings, and comforts of a spiritual life, and looking to his mercy for eternal life. *Disallowed indeed of men*; by the Jewish builders, high-priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and the body and bulk of that nation; who rejected him as the Messiah, and stone of Israel, refused him as a foundation-stone, and left him out of the building; and layed another foundation, even their own works of righteousness, on which sandy foundation they built themselves, and directed others to do so likewise; and set him at nought, as a living stone, would not come to him for life, but sought it in the law, the killing letter, and among their dead works; but though Christ was thus disallowed and disesteemed of men, yet was he highly valued and esteemed by God: *but chosen of God, and precious*; his human nature was chosen from among, and above all other individuals of mankind; to be united to the son of God; as God-man and Mediator, he was chosen to that high office, to be the head of the church, and the Saviour of the body; to be the foundation in the spiritual building, and to be the author and giver of spiritual and eternal life to as many as were given him. Moreover, this phrase denotes the super-excellency of Christ to angels and men in

the account of God; being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the son of his love, in whom he was always well-pleased, and in whom he took infinite delight, considered both as his son, and the surety of his people; and to whom he was *precious*, and by him highly honoured, made higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves, being set down at God's right hand, and a name given him above every name in this world, or that to come; and who is precious to the saints too, more so than rubies, or any precious stones, or any thing or creature whatever; his person is precious, and so are his name, his blood, his righteousness, his truths, his ordinances, and his people.

Ver. 5. *Ye also, as lively stones, &c.*] Saints likewise are compared to stones; they lie in the same quarry, and are the same by nature as the rest of mankind, till dug out and separated from thence by the powerful and efficacious grace of God, when they are hewn, and made fit for the spiritual building; where both for their ornament, beauty, and strength, which they receive from Christ, they are compared to stones, and are lasting and durable, and will never perish, nor be removed out of the building; and because of that life which they derive from him, and have in him, they are called *lively*, or *living stones*; the spirit of life having entered into them, a principle of life being implanted in them, and coming to Christ, the living stone, they live upon him, and he lives in them; and his grace in them is a well of living water, springing up into eternal life. It was usual with poets and philosophers to call stones, as they lie in the quarry before they are taken out of it, *living ones*: so Virgil¹, describing the seats of the nymphs, says, *intus aquæ dulces vivoque sedilia saxo, nympharum domus*, &c. but here the apostle calls such living stones, who were taken out from among the rest: the stones which Deucalion and Pyrrha cast over their heads after the flood are called ² *ζωοποιῦντες λίθοι*, *quickeners stones*, they becoming men, as the fable says. *Are built up a spiritual house*; these living stones being laid, and cemented together, in a Gospel church-state, become the house of God in a spiritual sense, in distinction from the material house of the tabernacle, and temple of old, to which the allusion is; and which is built up an habitation for God, by the spirit, and is made up of spiritual men; such as have the spirit of God, and savour the things of the spirit, and worship God in spirit and in truth; among whom spiritual services are performed, as prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and administering ordinances. Some read these words in the imperative, as an exhortation, *be ye built up as lively stones; and be ye spiritual temples and holy priests*, as the Syriac version. A synagogue with the Jews is called *בית רוחני*, *a spiritual house*³; and so is the third temple, which the Jews expect in the times of the Messiah; of which one of their writers⁴ thus says: "it is known from the ancient wise men, that the future redemption, with which shall be the third *רוחני*, *spiritual* sanctuary, is the work of God,

and will not be as the former redemptions: *I will fill this house with glory*; this is *רוחני*, *a spiritual one*, for even the walls shall be *רוחניים*, *spiritual*—for even all this house shall be *spiritual*; for that which was then built, which is the second, shall be turned into another, a *spiritual one*:" and which has been already done, and is what the apostle means here, the church, under the Gospel dispensation, or the Gospel church-state, in opposition to the worldly sanctuary, and carnal worship of the Jews. *An holy priesthood*; in allusion to the priests under the law, who were set apart, and sanctified for that office; but now, under the Gospel, all the saints are priests unto God, and are all appointed and directed to *offer up spiritual sacrifices*; their whole selves, souls, and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice; their prayers and praises, and all good works done in faith, and from love, and to the glory of God; particularly acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints; these are called *spiritual*, in distinction from legal sacrifices, and because offered in a spiritual manner, under the influence, and by the assistance of the spirit of God, and with their spirits. So the Jews speak of spiritual sacrifices, as distinct from material ones: "the intellectual sacrifice (they say) is before the material sacrifices, both in time and excellency.—Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the earth, and behold the intellectual attention did not agree with it, which is *קרבו הרוחני*, *the spiritual sacrifice*." Now such are *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*; through whom they are offered up; for 'tis through him the saints have access to God, present themselves to him, and their services; and both persons and services are only accepted in Christ, and for his sake, and in virtue of his sacrifice, which is always of a sweet-smelling savour to God.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, &c.*] Isa. xxviii. 16. This is produced as a proof of the excellency of Christ, as compared to a stone; and of his usefulness in the spiritual building; and of his being chosen of God, and precious, though rejected by men; and of the happiness, comfort, and safety of those that believe in him. That this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, is the sense of some of the Jewish writers: the Targum on it applies it to a mighty king; it does not mention the King Messiah, as Galatinus⁵ cites it; but Jarchi expressly names him, and interprets it of him: *behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious*; Christ is here called a *chief corner-stone*, as in Eph. ii. 20. because he not only adorns and strengthens the building, but unites the parts, and keeps them together, even all the saints, Jews or Gentiles, in all ages and places, whether in heaven or earth; and he, as such, is chosen of God for that purpose, and is precious both to God and man, on that account; and is a stone, not of men's laying, but of God's laying in his council, covenant, promises, and prophecies, in the mission of him into this world, and in the Gospel ministry; the place where he is laid is in Sion, the Gospel church, of which he is both the foundation and corner-stone: and

¹ Æneid. l. 1.

² Eustathius in Homer. Iliad. 1.

³ Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 14. 1.

⁴ R. Alshech. in Hagg. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

⁵ Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 88. 2. Vid. Raziel. fol. 32. 1.

⁶ De Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 21.

this account is introduced with a *behold*, it being something very wonderful, and worthy of attention: to which is added, *he that believeth on him shall not be confounded; or ashamed*; of the foundation and cornerstone Christ, nor of his faith in him; and he shall not be confounded by men or devils, neither in this world, nor in that to come; he shall have confidence before Christ, and not be ashamed at his coming; he shall be safe now, being laid on this stone; nor shall he be removed from it, or intimidated by any enemy, so as to flee from it; nor shall he *make haste*, as it is in Isa. xxviii. 16. to lay another foundation; and he shall be found upon this hereafter; so that his person and state will be safe, though many of his works may be burnt up.

Ver. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe, &c.*] And such are not all they that can say their creed, or give their assent to the articles of it; nor all that believe a divine revelation, and that the Scriptures are the word of God, and give credit to all that is contained in the sacred oracles; or who believe the whole Gospel, and all the truths of it; as that there is one God; that there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; that Christ is the son of God, and truly God; that he is the Mediator between God and man; that he is the Messiah, is become incarnate, has obeyed, suffered, and died for men, and is the Saviour of them: that he rose again, ascended to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, intercedes for his people, and will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness; together with all other truths which arise from, depend upon, and are connected with these; nor all that say they believe, or profess to do so; but such who have seen themselves lost and undone by sin, their need of a Saviour, and Christ as the only one; who have seen the son, the beauty of his person, the fulness of his grace, and the necessity and suitableness of salvation by him; who have beheld him as able to save them, as every way proper for them, and desirable by them, for faith is a sight of Christ; who also come to him under the drawings of efficacious grace, as perishing sinners, encouraged by his invitations and declarations, and venture on him; who likewise lay hold upon him, as their Saviour, and will have no other; give up themselves to him, and commit their all into his hands; who rely and stay themselves upon him, trust him with all they have, and for all they want, expecting grace and glory from him; who live upon him, and walk on in him, go on believing in him, till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Now to these, in proof of what is asserted in the above passage out of Isaiah, Christ is *precious*; he is so in all his names and titles, as Immanuel, God with us, and that cluster of them in Isa. ix. 6. and particularly his name Jesus, a Saviour, which is as ointment poured forth, and draws the love of believers to him; and so he is in both his natures, divine and human; the perfections of deity in him, his being in the form of God, and equal to him, the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person, render him very amiable in the view of believers; who rightly conclude from hence, that all he has done, and does,

must answer the purposes for which they are designed; and his having a perfect human nature, like to theirs, excepting sin, in which he wrought salvation for them on earth, and is now glorified in heaven, makes him a delightful object to them: he is also precious to them in all his offices; in his priestly office, his blood is precious, as it must needs be, since by it they are purchased and redeemed; they are justified and sanctified by it; through it they have the forgiveness of sin, and boldness to enter into the holiest of all: his righteousness is precious to them, it being the best robe, the wedding-garment, fine linen, clean and white, every way suitable to them, and answerable to the demands of the law; is pure, perfect, and everlasting; that by which they are justified from all things, and which will answer for them in a time to come, and entitles them to eternal life. His sacrifice is precious, of a sweet-smelling savour to them, as well as to God; by which their sins are fully expiated, put, and taken away; full satisfaction being made for them, and they themselves thereby perfected for ever. And so he is in his prophetic office. His word is precious, and all the truths of the Gospel, which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; the promises of it are exceeding great and precious, being suited to the cases of all believers: and he is also precious in his kingly office; his commands are not grievous; his yoke is easy, and burden light; believers love his commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold, and esteem his precepts concerning all things to be right, and delight in his ways and ordinances: moreover, he is precious to them in all his relations, as he is the head of eminence and influence, their kind and loving husband, their everlasting father, their affectionate brother, and faithful friend; his whole person, in every view, is precious to them that believe; the church of Christ, the members of his body, the sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, in these is all the delight of saints; every thing that is in Christ, that is of him, or belongs to him, is precious to such souls: some read the words, *to you therefore that believe, he is honour*; as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and so the word is rendered in Rom. xiii. 7. he is both an honour to them, that they are related to him; and he is honoured by them, by believing in him, and obeying him; and he is the cause of all their true honour, both in this and the other world. The Syriac version renders it, *to you therefore is this honour given*; namely, that such a stone is laid, and that they were built upon it, and should not be confounded, or ashamed, either here or hereafter; connecting the words with the preceding. The Septuagint use the word the apostle here does, in Isa. xi. 10. where it is prophesied of the Messiah, that his *rest shall be glorious*; they render it *τιμην, honour, or precious*. The Jewish writers have adopted the word *קִיָּוִי* into their language, and use it for profit and gain*; in which sense it is applicable to Christ, who is gain to believers, both in life and in death; they being blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and he being all in all to them: and also they use it, as denoting the intrinsic price and value of any thing^z, and which is a

* Targum in Esther iii. 8. & v. 13. & vii. 4.

z Targum Hierosol. in Gen. xxi. 23. Targum Jon. in Gen. xxii. 15.

Targum in Prov. xxxi. 10. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 2. 3. & sect. 11. fol. 9. 3.

right sense of the word ; and to believers the price of wisdom, or Christ, is far above rubies, and all the things that can be desired ; to them he is precious as a stone, as a foundation and corner-stone, and more precious than the most precious stones or things in nature ; this he is to them that believe : next follows, in this and the other verse, the account of what he is to them that believe not : *but unto them which be disobedient ;* who are unpersuadable, unbelieving, and are children of disobedience ; who neither obey God and his righteous law, nor Christ and his Gospel : *the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner ;* reference is manifestly had to Psal. cxviii. 22. which is a passage that clearly belongs to the Messiah, and which is suggested by Christ himself, in Matt. xxi. 42. see the note there ; and is by our apostle, in Acts iv. 11, 12. applied unto him : by the *builders* are meant the rulers of the Jews, both civil and ecclesiastical, and especially the latter, the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests ; who set up for builders of the church of God, but were miserable ones ; they built themselves, and taught others to build, on the observance of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders ; on their carnal privileges, and moral righteousness ; and these disallowed of Christ in the building, rejected him as the Messiah, refused him as the Saviour and Redeemer, and set him at nought, had him in the utmost derision, and reckoned him as a worm, and no man ; but, to their great mortification, he is not only laid and retained as the foundation and corner-stone, but made the head of the building, and is exalted at God's right hand above angels and men ; he is the head of the body, the church ; he is higher than the kings of the earth, and angels are subject to him.

Ver. 8. *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, &c.*] The apostle alludes to Isa. viii. 14. and which is a prophecy of the Messiah ; see the note on Rom. ix. 33. and had its accomplishment in the unbelieving and disobedient Jews ; who stumbled at his birth and parentage ; at the manner of his birth, being born of a virgin ; at the meanness of his parents, his supposed father being a carpenter, and his mother, Mary, a poor woman, when they expected the Messiah would have sprung from some rich and noble family ; and at the place of his birth, which they imagined was Galilee, from his education and conversation there ; they stumbled also at his education, and could not conceive how he should know letters, and from whence he should have his wisdom, having never been trained up in any of their schools and academies, or at the feet of any of their doctors and Rabbins ; but, on the other hand, was brought up and employed in the trade of a carpenter ; they stumbled at his outward meanness and poverty, when they expected the Messiah would be a rich, powerful, and glorious monarch ; and so at the obscurity of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation, when they dreamt of an earthly and temporal one, which should be set up in great splendour and glory ; and they stumbled likewise at the company he kept, and the audience that attended him, being the poorer sort of the people, and the more illiterate, and also such who had been very profane and wicked, as publicans and harlots ; moreover, they stumbled at his ministry,

at the doctrine he preached, particularly at the doctrine of his divinity, and of spiritual communion with him, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, and at the doctrines of distinguishing grace ; and so at his miracles, by which he confirmed his mission and ministry, some of these being wrought on the sabbath-day, and others they imputed to diabolical influence and assistance, in a word, they stumbled at his death, having imbibed a notion that Christ abideth for ever, and especially at the manner of it, the death of the cross ; wherefore the preaching of Christ crucified always was, and still is, a stumbling-block unto them : *even to them which stumble at the word ;* either the essential Word, Christ Jesus, as before ; or rather at the doctrine of the Gospel, at that part of it which respects a trinity of persons in the Godhead ; because their carnal reason could not comprehend it, and they refused to submit to revelation, and to receive the witness of God, which is greater than that of men ; and at that part of it which regards the deity of Christ, and that for this reason, because he was a man, and in order to enervate the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and fearing too much honour should be given to him ; and also at that part of the word which concerns the distinguishing grace of God, as eternal personal election, particular redemption, and efficacious grace in conversion ; against which the carnal mind of man is continually cavilling and replying, and, in so doing, against God himself, charging him with cruelty, injustice, and insincerity ; and particularly at that part of the word which holds forth the doctrine of free justification, by the righteousness of Christ ; this was the grand stumbling-block of the Jews, who sought for righteousness, not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and of the spirituality of the law, and of themselves, and their own righteousness, of which they had an overweening opinion : *being disobedient ;* to the Gospel revelation, and unwilling to submit their carnal reason to it ; this is the source and cause of their stumbling at Christ and his Gospel : it is worth while to compare this with the Chaldee paraphrase of Isa. viii. 14. which passage is here referred to ; and the paraphrase of it runs thus ; “ *if ye obey not, his word shall be among you for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and for a rock of offence to both houses of the princes of Israel, and for destruction and offence to those who are divided upon the house of Judah, &c.*” *whereunto also they were appointed ;* both to stumble at the word of the Gospel, and at Christ, the sum and substance of it, he being set in the counsel and purpose of God, as for the rising of some, so for the stumbling and falling of others ; and also to that disobedience and infidelity which was the cause of their stumbling ; for as there are some whom God has appointed and fore-ordained to believe in Christ, and on whom he has determined to bestow true faith in him, and who have it as a pure gift, in consequence of such appointment ; so there are others, whom he has determined to leave in that disobedience and infidelity into which the fall brought and concluded them, through which they stumble at Christ, and his word, and, in consequence thereof, justly perish ; but this is not the case of all ; there are some who are the objects

of distinguishing grace and favour, and who are described in the following verse.

Ver. 9. *But ye are a chosen generation, &c.*] Or *kindred*; the phrase is to be seen in the Septuagint, on Isa. xliii. 20. to which, and the following verse, the apostle refers here, and in another part of this text. The allusion is throughout to the people of Israel in general, who, in an external way, were all that is here said; but was only true in a spiritual sense of such as were chosen and called among the Jews: and who were a *generation or kindred*; being regenerate, or through abundant mercy begotten, and of an incorruptible seed born again; and were akin to God, he being their father, and they his children by adopting grace, and which was made manifest by their new birth; and also akin to Christ, he being their head, husband, father, and brother, and they his members, spouse, children, and brethren; and to the saints, being of the same household and family in heaven and in earth; having the same father, Lord, spirit, faith, baptism, and they all brethren: and they were a *chosen generation or kindred*; being famous, and in high esteem with God, and accounted by him for a generation; he having chosen them above all kindreds, tongues, people, and nations, and that from all eternity; and of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, and not on account of their faith, holiness, and good works; and to special benefits, to the relation and kindred they are in, to grace here, and glory hereafter; to regeneration and sanctification, and to salvation and eternal life; just as Israel, as a nation, were chosen above all others, because of the love of God to them, and for no other reason, to many external privileges and favours, which others did not enjoy: now the apostle mentions this character first, because God's eternal election is the source and spring of all spiritual blessings, which provides and secures them, and according to which they are bestowed, and with which they are inseparably connected: a *royal priesthood*; referring to Exod. xix. 6. where the Israelites are called a *kingdom of priests*; which the Chaldec paraphrase renders, kings, priests; see Rev. i. 6. a character which one of the Jewish commentators says *shall return to the Jews לעתיד לבוא*, *in time to come*; and well agrees with all the people of Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are all of them *kings*, through their relation to Christ; and at the present time have a kingdom which cannot be moved, or taken away from them; being not only brought into the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, and having a right to all the privileges and immunities of it, but have also the kingdom of grace set up within them, or grace, as a reigning principle, implanted in them; which lies not in any thing external, but in righteousness and true holiness, in inward peace, and spiritual joy; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world; and the riches of kings, being possessed of the riches of grace now, and entitled to the riches of glory in another world; they live like kings, they wear royal apparel, the robe of Christ's righteousness; they sit at the king's table, and feed on royal dainties; and are attended on as kings, angels being their life-guards, and

ministering spirits to them; and hereafter they shall reign with Christ on earth, and that for the space of a thousand years, and, after that, for ever; being raised up from a low estate, to inherit the crown of glory, to wear the crown of life and righteousness, and possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, of which they are now heirs: and they are *priests*, as well as kings; being made so by Christ, and through his priestly office; are anointed with the Holy Ghost, and sanctified by his grace, and allowed to draw near to God, and offer up by Christ their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and are enabled and assisted to offer up the sacrifice of a broken heart, and their bodies also, and even their lives when called to it; the allusion is to the kingdom and priesthood being formerly together, and which met in Christ, Zech. vi. 13. and in his people. The Jews were wont to call the priestly dignity and office *כתר כהונה*, *the crown of the priesthood*: an *holy nation*; referring to the same place in Exod. xix. 6. where the Israelites are so called, being separated by God from other nations, and legally and externally sanctified by him; as all the true Israel of God are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father, in eternal election, to real and perfect holiness; and are sanctified or cleansed from sin, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and are internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; have principles of holiness wrought in them, from whence they live holy lives and conversations: a *peculiar people*; as the Israelites are called a *peculiar treasure*, Exod. xix. 5. to which the reference is: God's elect are a peculiar people, to whom he bears a peculiar love; they are chosen by him to be a special people above all others, and have peculiar blessings bestowed on them, and peculiar care is taken of them; they are the Lord's, *סגולה*, his treasure, his jewels, his portion and inheritance, and therefore he will preserve and save them; they are a people for acquisition, purchase, and possession, as the words may be rendered; whom God has obtained, procured, and purchased for himself, with the precious blood of his son; hence the Syriac version renders them, *כבנשא פריקא*, *a redeemed company*; the same with the church God has purchased with his blood, Acts xx. 28. and the purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. and which are redeemed and purified to be, and appear to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. the end of all which grace being bestowed upon them in election, redemption, and regeneration, is, *that ye should shew forth the praises of him*; that is, God, who has chosen them into a spiritual kindred and relation, made them kings and priests, sanctified them by his spirit, and redeemed them by his son, as a peculiar people; all which laid them under obligation to shew forth with their lips, and in their lives and conversations, his *virtues*; we read, *praises*; and so the Syriac version; that is, the power, wisdom, goodness, love, grace, and mercy of God, and the commendations of them, displayed in the above instances: the apostle seems to use his eye on Isa. xliii. 21. where the Septuagint use the same word for *praise*, as here: next follows a periphrasis of God, and in it an argument, or reason for speaking of his virtues, and shewing forth his praise: *who hath*

¹ Baul Hatturim in loc.

² Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 13. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 78. 3.

called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which is to be understood, not of an external call by the ministry of the word only; for many are called in this sense, who are not chosen, redeemed, and sanctified; but of an internal, special, powerful, holy, and heavenly calling, by the spirit and grace of God: and this is, *out of darkness*: out of the darkness of the law, under the former dispensation, which was as night, in comparison of the Gospel day; and out of that darkness which the Jews were particularly in, in and about the coming of Christ, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and the spirituality of the law; having lost all right notions of the Messiah, and the true sense of the Scriptures, and were carried away with the traditions of the elders, and led by blind guides, the Scribes and Pharisees; out of this darkness, as well as what is common to men, in a state of unregeneracy, having no sight of themselves, their sin, and misery, nor knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, and of salvation by him, and of the work of the spirit upon the heart, they were called, *into his marvellous light*; by which they saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness, their need of Christ, and salvation by him; and astonishing it was to them, that they who were born blind, and were brought up in darkness, and were darkness itself, should be made light in the Lord; and the objects they saw were amazing to them; every thing in a spiritual way was marvellous in their eyes; especially the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and also the wonderful things out of the law, or doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the surprising love and grace of God, in the whole, and in the several parts of their salvation: it was with them, as if a child, from the moment of its birth, was shut up in a dungeon, where there was not the least crevice to let in the least degree of light, and should continue here till at years of maturity, and then be brought out at once, at noon-day, the sun shining in its full strength and glory, when that particularly, and all objects about him, must strike him with wonder and surprise. The Syriac version renders it, *his most excellent light*; the apostle seems to refer to the form of praise and thanksgiving used by the Jews, at the time of the passover; who say^a, "we are bound to confess, to praise, to glorify, &c. him who hath done for our fathers, and for us, all these wonders; he hath brought us out of bondage to liberty; from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day, וּמִאֲפֵלִיָּה לְאוֹר נְרוֹל, *and out of darkness into great light*; and from subjection unto redemption." This was also part of their morning-prayer^b; "I confess before thee, O my God, and the God of my fathers, that thou hast brought me out of darkness into light." And it is to be observed, that the third *Sephira*, or number, in the Jewish Cabalistic tree, which answers to the third Person in the Trinity, among other names, is called, *marvellous light*^c.

Ver. 10. *Which in time were not a people, &c.*] A *Lo-ammi* being put upon them; see Hos. i. 9, 10. and ii. 23. to which the apostle here refers: God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, were, from eternity,

his chosen people, and his covenant-people; and, as such, were given to Christ, and they became his people, and his care and charge; and he saved them by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and redeemed them to himself, a peculiar people: but then, before conversion, they are not a people formed by God for himself, and his praise; nor Christ's willing people, either to be saved by him, or to serve him; nor are they, nor can they be truly known by themselves, or others, to be the people of God: the Syriac version gives the true sense of the phrase, by rendering it *these who before were not reckoned or accounted a people*; that is, by others: *but are now the people of God*; being regenerated, called, and sanctified, they are avouched by God to be his people; they have the witness of the spirit to their spirits, that they are the people of God; they can then claim their relation to God, and are known, acknowledged, and called the people of God, by others: *which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*; being called formerly, *Lo-ruhamah*, Hos. i. 6. and ii. 23. which passages the apostle has in view: before conversion there is mercy in God's heart towards his elect, and so there is in the covenant of grace, and which was shewn in the provision of his son, as a Saviour, in the mission of him, and redemption by him; but this is not manifested to them, until they are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, and then they obtain mercy; having in their regeneration an evident display of the mercy of God towards them, and an application of his pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of his son, unto them.

Ver. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you, &c.*] The apostle, from characters of the saints, and which express their blessings and privileges, with great beauty, propriety, and pertinency, passes to exhortations to duties; he addresses the saints under this affectionate appellation, *dearly beloved*, to express his great love to them, and to shew that what he was about to exhort them to sprung from sincere and hearty affection for them, and was with a view to their real good; nor does he in an authoritative way command, as he might have done, as an apostle, but, as a friend, he entreats and beseeches them: *as strangers and pilgrims*; not in a literal sense, though they were in a foreign country, in a strange land, and sojourners there, but in a spiritual and mystical sense; they were *strangers*, not to God and Christ, and to the Spirit, to themselves, to the saints, and to all that is good, as they had formerly been, but to the world, the men of it, and the things in it; and therefore it became them to separate from it, and not conform to it; to abstain from all appearance of evil, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and they were *pilgrims*; whose habit is Christ and his righteousness; whose food is Christ and his fulness; whose staff is Christ and the promises; whose guide is the blessed Spirit; the place for which they are bound is heaven, the better country, where is their father's house, their friends, and their inheritance; this world not being their country, nor their resting-place, it became them to have their

^a Misr. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 5. Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 23. Maimon. Hilchot Chametz Umctzah, c. 8. sect. 5.

^b T. Hieros. Beracot, c. 4. fol. 7. 1.

^c Cabala Deaudata, par. 9. p. 8.

conversation in heaven, and to *abstain from fleshly lusts*; which spring from the flesh, and are concerned about fleshly things, and are exercised in and by the members of the flesh, or body; hence, in the Syriac version, they are called, *the lusts of the body*: these are to be abstained from; not that the apostle thought that they could be without them; for whilst the saints are in the body, flesh, or corrupt nature will be in them, and the lusts thereof; but then these are not to be indulged, or provision to be made for them, to fulfil them; they are not to be obeyed and served, or lived unto, but to be denied and crucified, being unsuitable to the character of strangers and pilgrims, and also because of their hurtful and pernicious nature: *which war against the soul*; see Rom. vii. 23. James iv. 1. Cant. vi. 13. these are enemies to the spiritual peace, comfort, and welfare of the soul; and being of a man's household, and in his heart, are the worst enemies he has; and are to be treated as such, to be shunned and avoided, watched and guarded against; for though they cannot destroy the souls of true believers, they may bring much leanness upon them, and greatly distress them, and spoil them of their inward joy, and spiritual pleasure.

Ver. 12. *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, &c.*] To have the conversation honest, is to provide things honest in the sight of men; to live and walk honestly before all; to do those things which are right and honest in the sight of God, and among men; to order the conversation aright, according to the law of God, which is a rule of walk and conversation, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and which was the more, and rather to be attended to, because these converted Jews were among the *Gentiles*, that knew not God; idolaters, and unbelievers, profane sinners, who were watching for their halting, and that they might take an advantage against them, and the Gospel, and the religion they professed, from their conversations: *that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers*: charging them with the grossest immoralities, as the Heathens did the Christians in the first ages; which appears evidently from the apologies of Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and others; though it seems that the Jewish converts are here intended, who were accused by the Gentiles of seditious principles and practices, and of acting contrary to the laws of civil government, refusing to yield subjection to Gentile magistrates, and obedience to Heathen masters; and hence the apostle, in some following verses, enlarges on those duties, and which he exhorts them to attend unto, that they might put to silence the ignorance of such foolish accusers: *and that they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation; or trial, or examination*, as the Syriac version renders it; which may be understood either of human or divine visitation; if of the former, then the sense is, let the saints attend to all the duties of civil life, that when Heathen magistrates come to visit their several districts, and inquire and examine into the conduct of men, and seeing and finding that the Christians behave well and orderly, instead of persecuting them, they will bless God that they are such good subjects; if of divine visitation, which seems most likely, this must either design a

visitaton by way of judgment, or of mercy; for as the Jews say⁴, there is *בְּרִיפָה*, a *visitation*, for good, and a visitation for evil: God sometimes visits in a way of punishment for sin, and sometimes in a way of grace, for the good and welfare of men; and then the sense is, that when wicked men take notice of and observe the good works of the saints, their civil, honest, and orderly conversation, they shall glorify God on that account, who has enabled them to perform them; and acknowledge the goodness of them, and the wrong judgment they have passed upon them, and the ill measure they have measured out to them; and this will be, either when God visits them in a way of wrath, as at the day of judgment, or at the time of some temporal calamity before, or when he visits them in a way of mercy, calls them by his grace, and effectually works upon them by his spirit: the same argument for the performance of good works is used by Christ, in Matt. v. 16.

Ver. 13. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, &c.*] Or, *to every human creation, or creature*; not to all the sons of men, as the Syriac version renders it; or to all the individuals of mankind; for there are some that are in such stations and circumstances, that they are not to be submitted to, but to be ruled over, and governed: so kings are not to submit to their subjects, nor are parents to be subject to their children, nor husbands to their wives, nor masters to their servants, which would be preposterous; but submission is limited and restrained to persons in such a place and situation: *the human creature, or creation*, here designs the Gentiles, who are elsewhere called the creature, the whole creation, every creature, and every creature under heaven, Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22. Mark xvi. 15. Col. i. 23. and particularly Heathen magistrates, styled *creation, or creature*; not as men, for all men, as such, are creatures; but as magistrates, being created, constituted, and appointed such, and installed into, and invested with such an office: and *human*; not only because they were men, and were taken out from among men that bore the office of magistrates, and governed over men, and were for the good and advantage of mankind, but because they were created and placed in such a station by men; though government itself is of God, is a divine institution, yet this and that particular form of government is of man; and especially the forms of government among the Gentiles were human; and are here so called, in distinction from the form of government among the Jews, which was a theocracy, and was divine; wherefore the Jews, and so these converted ones, scrupled yielding obedience to Heathen magistrates; on which account they were spoken against, as evil-doers; hence the apostle, in the first place, and as a principal part of their honest conversation among the Gentiles, exhorts them to submission to civil magistrates, though they were creatures of men; and to every one of them, though a Gentile, an unbeliever, and a wicked man: and this he urges, *for the Lord's sake*: for the sake of Christ Jesus the Lord, because of his command, who ordered to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and in imitation of him, who paid tribute to whom tribute was due; and for the sake of his honour and glory, who was ill thought and spoken

⁴ Zohar in Gen. fol. 93. 3.

of by the Gentiles, because of the disregard of the converted Jews to their magistrates; and which served to prejudice them against Christ and his Gospel: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *for God's sake*; because civil government is of God; magistracy is of divine appointment; the powers that be are ordained of God, though this or the other form is of man's prescription: it is the command of God that magistrates should be obeyed; and it makes for his glory, as well as for the good of men, when they are submitted to in things that do not contradict the revealed will of God; for otherwise, not man, but God, is to be obeyed: *whether it be to the king*; to Cæsar, the Roman emperor; and the then reigning one seems to be Nero, who, though a wicked man, was to be submitted to in things civil and lawful; and it holds good of any other king that has the supreme government of a nation: the Syriac version reads it in the plural number, *to kings*; and though the name of king was odious to the Romans, from the times of Tarquin, nor did they call their chief governor, or governors, by this name, yet other nations did; see John xix. 15. and subjection was to be yielded to him, *as supreme*; for the sake, and in consideration of his being in so high and exalted a station, having the supreme power and government of the people in his hands. The Syriac version renders it, *because of their power*; and the Arabic version, *because of his power*; and the Ethiopic version, *because all things are his*; the Roman emperors were absolute monarchs; see Rom. xiii. 1.

Ver. 14. *Or unto governors, &c.*] Inferior magistrates, such as were under the Roman emperor; as proconsuls, procurators, &c. such as Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus, who had under the emperor the government of particular nations, provinces, and cities: *as unto them that are sent by him*; either by the king, the Roman emperor, by whom they were sent, from whom they received their commission, and derived their authority, under whom they acted, and to whom they were accountable; or by God, by whom they are ordained, and whose ministers they are, and for the ends hereafter mentioned; so that this contains an argument or reason why they should be submitted to: *for the punishment of evil-doers*; the breakers of the laws of God and men, on whom punishment is to be inflicted, by the civil magistrates, for the breach of them, by fines, scourgings, imprisonment, and death itself, according as the crimes are: *and for the praise of them that do well*; who behave according to the laws of God and nations, and are obedient to magistrates, and subject to every ordinance; these have praise of men, of magistrates, and are rewarded by them; by protecting their persons, defending their properties, and preserving them in the peaceable enjoyment of their estates and possessions; see Rom. xiii. 3.

Ver. 15. *For so is the will of God, &c.*] Which refers not so much to what goes before; though it is a truth, that it is the will of God that men should be subject to magistrates, and that magistrates should encourage virtue, and discourage vice, reward the obedient, and punish delinquents; but to what follows: *that with well-doing*; by doing good works, and those well; by

living soberly, righteously, and godly; by having the conversation honest among the Gentiles, agreeably to the law of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; particularly, by living according to the laws of civil society, so far as is consistent with, and not contrary to the commands of God; and by being subject to every civil magistrate, and ordinance of man: *ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*: or, as the Syriac version renders it, *that ye may stop the mouths of those foolish men who know not God*: or, as the Ethiopic version has it, *who know not these things*; who are ignorant of God, of his righteousness, of his law, his Gospel, and ordinances. The Gentiles were very ignorant of these things, and very foolish in their imaginations about religious affairs; and from this their ignorance and folly arose calumnies, reflections, and censures upon the people of God; they neither knew God, nor them, nor true religion, and reproached what they understood not, and for want of knowing it now the apostle signified, that it was the declared will of God that his people should so behave in civil life, that their enemies should be entirely confounded, and silenced, and have nothing to say against them; the word signifies to be muzzled, to have the mouth shut up, as with a bit or bridle; it is used in Matt. xxii. 12. 1 Cor. ix. 9.

Ver. 16. *As free, &c.*] These converted Jews might value themselves on their freedom, partly as the descendants of Abraham, and so free-born, and not to be brought into bondage to other people; and chiefly because of their liberty which they had in and by Christ Jesus. The apostle allows that they were freemen, that they were Christ's freemen, were free from sin, its damning and domineering power, and from the curses and condemnation of the law, and had freedom of access to God, and a right to all the privileges and immunities of the house of God; but then they were not free to sin, and to live in the contempt of the laws of God and men, to despise government, speak evil of dignities, and break in upon the rules of civil society: *and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness*; under a pretence of Christian liberty, to hurt the persons, properties, and estates of men, without looking upon themselves accountable for their conduct to their superiors: some think the apostle alludes to the ancient custom of servants, who, when they were made free, walked with a cap, or covering on their heads, in token of it: it follows, *but as the servants of God*; for they that are free are the servants of God and Christ, and shew themselves to be so by submitting to and obeying those that are under them, and ordained by them; and which is no ways inconsistent with, and contrary to their Christian liberty, which never was designed to thwart and subvert the principles of natural religion, laws of a moral nature, or the rules of civil government; some instances of which are next mentioned.

Ver. 17. *Honour all men, &c.*] To whom honour is due, according to the place, station, and circumstances in which they are, the gifts of providence and grace bestowed on them, and the usefulness they are of, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, believers or unbelievers: it is a saying of Ben Zoma ^e, "who is to be honoured, or is wor-

^e Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 1.

“thy of honour? כִּבְדוֹת אֵת הַבְּרִיּוֹת, *he that honour-eth creatures;*” meaning men in general, or the Gentiles particularly, who were sometimes so called by the Jews; see the note on Mark xvi. 15. and may be meant by *all men here: love the brotherhood; or your brethren*, as the Syriac version renders it: the whole company of the brethren in Christ, who are born of God, are members of Christ, and of the same body, and have the same spirit, belong to the same family, and are of the household of faith, let them be of whatsoever nation, or in whatsoever circumstances of life. The Jews had not that good opinion of, nor that affection for the Gentiles, but were ready to treat them with indifference, neglect, and contempt; and not only those that knew not God, but even believing Gentiles themselves; and which is the reason of these exhortations, that they should despise no man, but honour all; and especially should express their love, both by words and deeds, to those that were in the same spiritual relation with them, and that without any difference, on account of their being of another nation: *fear God*: not with a servile, but a filial fear, the new-covenant grace of fear; which springs from the goodness of God, has that for its object, and is increased by the fresh instances and discoveries of it; and which shews itself in a reverential affection for God, a strict regard to his worship and ordinances, and a carefulness of offending him. This is placed between what goes before, and follows after, to shew the influence it has on each of them; for where the fear of God is, there will be due respect shewn to all men, more or less, and an hearty and affectionate love to all the saints, as brethren, and a proper regard to those that are set in high places of dignity and power: *honour the king*; Cæsar, the Roman emperor, though a wicked, persecuting Nero, and so any other king or governor; who, so far as he acts the part of a civil magistrate, preserves the peace, the property, and liberty of his subjects, is a terror to evil works, and an encourager of good ones, and rules according to the laws of God, and civil society, is deserving of great honour and esteem from men; and which is to be shewn by speaking well of him; by a cheerful subjection to him; by an observance of the laws, and by payment of tribute, and doing every thing to make him easy, and honourable in his government: advice much like this is given by Isocrates^f; “fear God, honour parents, revere friends, and obey the laws.”

Ver. 18. *Servants, be subject to your masters, &c.* This was another notion of the Jews, that because they were the seed of Abraham, they ought not to be the servants of any; and particularly such as were believers in Christ thought they ought not to serve unbelieving masters, nor indeed believing ones, because they were equally brethren in Christ with them; hence the Apostle Peter, here, as the Apostle Paul frequently elsewhere, inculcates this duty of servants to their masters; see 1 Cor. vii. 20, 21. Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Tit. ii. 9. the manner in which they are to be subject to them is, *with all fear*: with reverence to their persons, strict regard to their commands, faithfulness in any trust reposed in them, diligence in the discharge of their duty, and carefulness of offending

them: and all this, *not only to the good and gentle*; those that are good-natured, kind, beneficent, and merciful; that don't use them with rigour and severity; are moderate in their demands of service; require no more to be done than what is reasonable; allow them sufficient diet, give them good wages, and pay them duly: *but also to the froward*; the ill-natured, morose, and rigorous; who exact more labour than is requisite; give hard words, and harder blows; withhold sufficiency of food from them, and keep back the hire of their labours.

Ver. 19. *For this is thankworthy, &c.* Or *grace*; this is a fruit and effect of grace, an instance of it, in which it shews itself: the Syriac version adds, *with God*; and so it is read in one of Beza's copies, and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others; that is, this is grateful to God, and acceptable with him; as in ver. 20. *if a man for conscience towards God*; or, *for a good conscience*, as the Syriac version reads it; for acting according to his conscience, in matters of religion, in the things of God; *for the knowledge of God*, as the Arabic version renders it; for the knowledge of God in Christ; for the Gospel of Christ, and a profession of it: or, *for God*, as the Ethiopic version; for the cause of God and truth, and for the sake of things appertaining to God, and that make for his glory: *endure grief*; what occasions grief, as severe words, bitter reproaches, hard censures, and heavy blows; and that with patience, and without murmuring, and with resignation to the will of God: *suffering wrongfully*; there being no just cause for an ill look, word, or blow, to be given.

Ver. 20. *For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, &c.* Which ye have committed, and are guilty of, and are truly such: *ye shall take it patiently?* to be silent, and not murmur when beaten, within measure, for real faults, is no great honour, nor does it deserve any praise; it is the least that can be done: *but if, when ye do well*; either in their master's service, or rather in the business of religion, and the things of God; as when what they do is according to the will of God, and from love to him, and in faith, and in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God; without all which there is no well-doing: *and suffer for it*; reproach and persecution, by words or blows, in person or property: *ye take it patiently*; without grieving and repining, or answering again, and making any returns: *this is acceptable with God*; is agreeable to his will, and grateful in his sight; what he is well-pleased with, is reckoned grace with him; and though it is his own grace, and of his own bestowing, he will reward it with glory.

Ver. 21. *For even hèreunto were ye called, &c.* Both to well-doing, of which none but those who are called with an holy and effectual calling are capable; and which they are fitted for, and are under obligation to perform, and to suffer for so doing, which they must always expect, and to patience in suffering for it, which highly becomes them. This being then one end of the saints' effectual vocation, is made use of as an argument to engage them to the exercise of the grace of patience in suffering for well-doing; and another follows: *because Christ also suffered for us*; in our room and stead,

^f PARÆN. ad DEMON. ORAT. 1.

to fulfil the law, satisfy the justice of God, and make reconciliation for sin; and not only for our good, or merely as a martyr, to confirm the truth of his doctrine, or barely as an example to us, though this also is true: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, *for you*: for you servants, as well as others, and therefore should cheerfully and patiently suffer for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; and the rather, because he suffered, *leaving us*, or *you*, as the same copies, and the Vulgate Latin version read, *an example that ye should follow his steps*: Christ is an example to his people in the exercise of grace, as of faith, love, zeal, meekness, and humility; and in the discharge of duty, in his regard to the commands of the moral law, and positive institutions of religion; in his constancy in prayer; in frequent attendance on public worship; in his submission to the ordinance of baptism, and his celebration of the supper; and likewise in his sufferings; and in his meekness, patience, courage, and resignation to the will of God, which is what is here intended, and in which his people are to follow and imitate him.

Ver. 22. *Who did no sin, &c.*] He was in the likeness of sinful flesh; he looked like a sinful man, being born of a sinful woman, and keeping company with sinful men, being himself a man of sorrows, greatly afflicted, and at last put to death. He was traduced as a sinner by his enemies, and had all the sins of his people on him, which he bore, and made satisfaction for, and were the reason of his sufferings; but he had no sin in his nature, nor did he commit any in his life: *neither was guile found in his mouth*; though it was diligently sought for, by the Scribes and Pharisees; there was no deceit in his lips, no falsehood in his doctrine, any more than there was immorality in his conversation; he was an Israelite indeed on all accounts, and in the fullest sense of that phrase; reference is had to Isa. liii. 9. and this is observed, partly to shew that Christ suffered not for himself, or for any sins of his own, but for the sins of others, for which he was very fit, since he had none of his own; and partly as an argument for patience in suffering; for since Christ suffered, who had no sin, nor did any, nor could any be found in him, charged upon him, and proved against him; and which sufferings of his he bore with patience; then how much must it become sinful men to bear their sufferings patiently, though they may not be criminal with respect to the things for which they suffer, but yet are so in other things, whereas Christ was not criminal, nor blameworthy in any thing?

Ver. 23. *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, &c.*] When he was reproached as a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, all the reply he made was, that Wisdom is justified of her children; and when he was charged with casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he defended himself, not with bad language, but with strong reasonings; and when he was said to be a Samaritan, and had a devil, his only answer was, that he had not, that he honoured his father, and they dishonoured him; and when he was reviled on the cross, by those that passed by, by the chief priests, and Scribes, and the thieves that were crucified with him, he made no return, he opened not his mouth, and much less in a recriminating way. *When he suffered he threatened not*; when he en-

ured buffetings, and scourgings in his body, when the officers in the palace of the high-priests spit in his face, buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands, and bid him prophesy who smote him, all which were very provoking; yet he said not one word to them, much less threatened them with what he would do to them for such usage another day, when he would let them know, with vengeance, who it was that smote him; no, he took all patiently from them, and from Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, when scourged by them; he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and when he suffered crucifixion, and was put to such distressing pains and agonies, he did not threaten his crucifiers with a future judgment, when he would take vengeance, and execute his wrath upon them, but prays to his father for the forgiveness of their sins: and, as it follows, *but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*; he commended his spirit, or soul, to God his father, and committed his cause to him, to vindicate it in what way he should think fit, who he knew was the Judge of all the earth, that would do right; and so the Syriac version supplies it with *דין*, his judgment; which he left with God, the righteous Judge, to whom vengeance belongs; and which is an example, and an instruction to the saints to do so likewise; not to render railing for railing, or to seek revenge, but to leave their cause with their God, who will, in his own time, avenge the wrongs and injuries done them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, contrary to all the Greek copies, and other versions, *but delivered himself to him that judgeth unjustly*; the sense of which is, that Christ delivered himself into the hands of Pilate, who unjustly condemned him to death; but is neither the reading, nor sense of the text.

Ver. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins, &c.*] As was typified by the high-priest bearing the sins of the holy things of the people of Israel, when he went into the most holy place, and by the scape-goat bearing the iniquities of all the people unto a land not inhabited, and as was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah. The apostle here explains the nature and end of Christ's sufferings, which were to make atonement for sins, and which was done by bearing them. What Christ bore were *sins*, even all sorts of sin, original and actual, and every act of sin of his people; and all that is in sin, all that belongs to it, arises from it, and is the demerit of it, as both filth, guilt, and punishment; and a multitude of sins did he bear, even all the iniquities of all the elect; and a prodigious load and weight it was; and than which nothing could be more nauseous and disagreeable to him, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and these sins he bore were not his own, nor the sins of angels, but of men; and not of all men, yet of many, even as many as were ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ gave his life a ransom, whom he justifies and brings to glory; our sins, not the sins of the Jews only, for Peter was a Jew, and so were those to whom he writes, but of the Gentiles also, even the sins of all his people, for them he saves from their sins, being stricken for them. His *bearing* them was in this manner: he becoming the surety and substitute of his people, their sins were laid upon him by his father, that is, they were imputed to him, they were reckoned as his, and

placed to his account; and Christ voluntarily took them upon himself; he took them to himself, as one may take the debt of another, and make himself answerable for it; or as a man takes up a burden, and lays it on his shoulders; so Christ took up our sins, and carried them up, as the word here used signifies, alluding to the priests carrying up the sacrifice to the altar, and referring to the lifting up of Christ upon the cross; whither he carried the sins of his people, and bore them, and did not sink under the weight of them, being the mighty God, and the man of God's right hand, made stroug for himself; and so made entire satisfaction for them, by enduring the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and all that punishment which was due unto them; and thereby bore them away, both from his people, and out of the sight of God, and his vindictive justice; and removed them as far as the east is from the west, and made a full end of them; and this he himself did, and not another, nor by another, or with the help of another; not by the means of a goat, as the high-priest, but by himself; though he was assisted in bearing his cross, yet he had no help in bearing our sins; angels could not help him; his father stood at a distance from him; there was none to help; his own arm brought salvation to him; but his own self, who knew no sin, nor did any, he by himself purged away our sins, and made reconciliation for them, by bearing them: and which he did in his own body, and not another's; in that body which his father prepared for him, and which he took of the virgin, and was free from sin; though not to the exclusion of his soul, which also was made an offering for sin, and in which he endured great pains and sorrows for sin: and all this on the tree; the accursed tree, the cross; which is expressive both of the shame and pain of his sufferings and death. The end of which was, that we being dead to sin; to our sins, as the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version read; as all the elect are, through bearing their sins, and suffering death for them, so as that sin shall not be imputed to them; it is as though it never was; it is dead to them, and they to that, as to its damning power and influence; so as that they are entirely discharged from it, and can never come into condemnation on account of it, and can never be hurt, so as to be destroyed by it; nor by death, either corporeal or eternal, since the sting of death, which is sin, is taken away, and the strength of sin, which is the law, is dead to them, and they to that: in short, through the death of Christ they are so dead to sin, that it is not only finished, made an end of, and put away, but the body of it is destroyed, that it should not be served; which is an end subordinate to the former, and expressed in the next clause: *should live unto righteousness*: live, and not die the second death, and live by faith on the righteousness of Christ, for justification of life, and soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ in bearing sin constrains to, and the redemption by his precious blood lays under an obligation to do; for those whose sins Christ has bore are

not their own, but being bought with the price of his blood, they are bound to live to him who has a property in them, and a right to claim all obedience from them: *by whose stripes ye were healed*; the passage referred to is in Isa. liii. 5. which is a prophecy of the Messiah, as is acknowledged by the Jews¹, who say², "this is the King Messiah, who was in the generation of the ungodly, as it is said, Isa. liii. 5. and with his stripes we are healed; and for this cause God saved him, that he might save Israel, and rejoice with them in the resurrection of the dead." Sin is a disease, a natural and hereditary one, an epidemical distemper, that reaches to all men, and to all the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and which is nauseous and loathsome, and in itself mortal and incurable; nor can it be healed by any creature, or any thing that a creature can do. Christ is the only physician, and his blood the balm and sovereign medicine; this cleanses from all sin; through it is the remission of sin, which is meant by healing; for healing of diseases, and forgiving iniquities, is one and the same thing; see Psal. ciii. 3. Isa. xxxiii. 24. Psal. xli. 4. on which latter text a learned Jew³ has this note, "this interpreters explain לישן סליחה, as expressive of forgiveness;" and the Jews say, there is no healing of diseases but it signifies forgiveness⁴: it is an uncommon way of healing by the stripes of another. Some think the apostle alludes to the stripes which servants receive from their masters, to whom he was now speaking; and in order to encourage them to bear them patiently, observes, that Christ himself suffered stripes, and that they had healing for their diseases and wounds, by means of his stripes, or through his being wounded and bruised for them.

Ver. 25. *For ye were as sheep going astray, &c.*] This is a proof of their being healed, namely, their conversion; in which an application of the blood of Christ, and pardon, and so healing by it, was made to their souls. The apostle has still in view the prophecy of Isaiah, ch. liii. 6. God's elect are sheep before conversion; not that they have the agreeable properties of sheep, as to be meek, harmless, innocent, clean, and profitable, for they are the reverse of all this; nor can some things be said of them before conversion, as may be after, as that they hear Christ's voice, and follow him; nor are they so called, because unprejudiced against, and predisposed unto the Gospel, for the contrary is true of them; but they are so in electing grace, and were so considered in the father's gift of them to Christ, and when made his care and charge, and hence they are called the sheep of his hand; and when Christ laid down his life, and rose again, which he did for the sheep, and as the great Shepherd of them; and when called by grace, for their being sheep, and Christ's own sheep by the father's gift, and his own purpose, is the reason why he looks them up, calls them by name, and returns them: but then they are not yet of his fold; they are lost sheep, lost in Adam, and by his fall, and by their own actual transgressions; they are as sheep going astray from the shepherd, and from the flock,

¹ Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2 fol 53. 3 & 90. 1.

² R. Moses Hadarsan apud Galatin. de Arcanis Cathol. Verit. l. 6. c. 2.

³ R. Sol. Urbin Ohel Moed, fol. 64. 1.

⁴ Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 43. 1.

going out of the right way, and in their own ways; and are, like sheep, stupid and insensible of their danger; and as they never return of themselves, until they are sought for, and brought back: hence it follows, *but are now returned*: not returned themselves, but were returned by powerful and efficacious grace: saints are passive, and not active in first conversion; they are turned, not by the power of their own free will, but by the power of God's free grace; they are returned under the illuminations and quickenings of the blessed Spirit, and through the efficacious drawings of the father's love, unto Christ: *unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*: by whom Christ is meant, who bears the office of a *Shepherd*, and fully performs it by feeding his sheep, providing a good fold and pasture for them; by gathering the lambs in his arms, and gently leading those that are with young; by healing their diseases, and preserving

them from beasts of prey; hence he is called the good, the great, and chief Shepherd: and he is the *Bishop* or *Overseer* of the souls of his people, though not to the exclusion of their bodies: he has took the oversight of them willingly, and looks well to his flock, inspects into their cases, and often visits them, and never forsakes them; nor will he leave them till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, which he has undertook and effected by his obedience, sufferings, and death. Philo the Jew¹ observes, that "to be a shepherd is so good a work, that it is not only a title given to kings and wise men, and souls perfectly purified, but to God the governor of all—who, as a Shepherd and King, leads according to justice and law, setting over them his right Logos, the first-begotten son, who has taken the care of this holy flock, as does the deputy of a great king."

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle instructs wives how to behave towards their husbands, and husbands how to behave towards their wives; and then exhorts to various things common to all Christians, and particularly to suffer patiently for righteousness-sake; to which he encourages them from the sufferings of Christ, and the benefits resulting from them, on which he enlarges to the end of the chapter. He begins with the duty of wives to their husbands, even unbelieving ones, which is subjection to them, urged from the profitable effect of it; since hereby they might be won over to the Christian religion, without the use of the word, as a means, by their conversation, which is explained of chastity and fear, ver. 1, 2. And he proceeds to give some advice about their apparel, that they should have a greater regard to internal ornaments, particularly meekness and quietness of spirit, which is highly esteemed of by God, rather than to outward adorning; and which he enforces by the examples of godly women in former times, who were so adorned, and were subject to their husbands, particularly Sarah, the wife of Abraham, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. And next the apostle directs husbands how to conduct towards their wives, to dwell with them, and honour them, because vessels, and weaker vessels, and also heirs of the same grace of life; and besides, to use them ill would be an hinderance of their praying together, ver. 7. And then follow various exhortations to unity of judgment, compassion, brotherly love, pity, courteousness, and patience under the reproaches and revilings of men, which is the way to inherit a blessing they are called unto, ver. 8, 9. and that these are incumbent on the saints, and that they shall be blessed, who are helped to regard them, is proved by some passages out of Psal. xxxiv. 12—16. which passages are cited, ver. 10, 11, 12. And in order to encourage to the exercise of the above things, the apostle suggests, that they that so behaved should not be hurt by any; and if they did suffer for righteousness-sake from wicked men, yet still they would be happy; nor should this deter them from making a public con-

fession of their faith; to which should be added a good conscience and conversation, to the shame and confusion of them that spoke evil of them, and accused them, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. And though they were distressed and injured by men, they should not be cast down, nor murmur, since it was the will of God it should be so; and since it was better to suffer for doing well than for doing ill; and especially the example of Christ should animate to patience, since he, an innocent person, suffered for the sins of unjust men, to reconcile them to God; and he is now glorified and happy, and so will his people be, ver. 17, 18. And having made mention of his being quickened by the spirit, the apostle takes occasion from hence of observing, that by the same spirit Christ preached in the times of Noah to disobedient persons, whose spirits were now in hell; and he takes notice of the long-suffering of God in that dispensation towards them, and of the goodness of God in saving Noah, and his family, in the ark, which was a figure of baptism; of which some account is given what it is, and is not, and which saves by the resurrection of Christ, ver. 19, 20, 21. who is described by his ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, and dominion over angels, authorities, and powers, ver. 22.

Ver. 1. *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, &c.*] As well as subjects to princes, and servants to masters; though not with the same sort of subjection, but what is suitable to the relation they stand in to their husbands; see the notes on Eph. v. 22. Col. iii. 18. *that if any obey not the word*: any husband who is an unbeliever, has no love for the Gospel, and gives no credit to it, but despises, disbelieves, and rejects it, the word of truth, of faith, of righteousness, reconciliation, and salvation. The apostle, though he includes all wives, and exhorts them in general to subjection to their own husbands, yet has a particular regard to such as had unbelieving husbands, and who, on that account, were scrupulous of living with them, and of being in subjection to them; and therefore, as the

¹ De Agricultura, p. 194, 195.

Apostle Paul also did, he advises them to abide with them, and behave well to them, using much the same argument as he does in 1 Cor. vii. 10, 13, 16. *they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives*; for though the ordinary way and means of conversion is the word, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word; yet it may be sometimes done without it; or however by the agreeable conversation of professors, and so of religious wives, the hearts of such as were averse to Christianity, and the Gospel, as unbelieving husbands, may be so softened, and wrought upon, as to entertain a better opinion of it, and in process of time be inclined to hear and attend it; the consequence of which may prove their conversion, which is a gaining, or winning of souls; and which, as it is for their good, is for the glory of Christ; for as every soul that is delivered from the power of darkness, and is translated into the kingdom of Christ, is a loss to Satan, 'tis a gain to Christ, and to his church. The Syriac version, instead of *without the word*, reads, *without labour*; as if the winning of unbelieving husbands was easily obtained by the conversation of their wives.

Ver. 2. *While they behold your chaste conversation, &c.*] Cheerful subjection, strong affection, and inviolable attachment to them, and strict regard to the honour of the marriage-state, and to the preserving of the bed undefiled with lusts and adulteries: coupled with fear; with reverence of their husbands, giving them due honour, and shewing all proper respect; or with the fear of God, which being before their eyes, and upon their hearts, engages them to such an agreeable conversation.

Ver. 3. *Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, &c.*] Or that only and principally; let not that be solely or chiefly attended to, nor anxiously sought after, nor ever in order to allure and ensnare others, or to fill with pride and vanity; nor should it be indecent and luxurious, immodest and immoderate, and unsuitable to the age, character, and station of persons; otherwise clothing is both convenient and necessary; and a decent garb, neat and modest apparel, and what is suitable to the years, rank, and quality of persons, is very commendable: nor are we to suppose that the apostle forbids the use of what follows, but only when used in a luxurious and extravagant manner, and to feed pride and vanity, and encourage lasciviousness and wantonness: of *plaiting the hair*: folding it up in curls, tying it up in knots, and putting it into the form of horns and towers, made by their crimping pins, with their cauls and round tires, like the moon, as was the custom of those times, and still is. There were women among the Jews, whose business it was to plait women's hair; Mary Magdalene is thought to have her name from thence, and that to be her business. The Jews often speak of one Miriam or Mary, by whom they seem to mean the mother of our Lord, who, they say^m, was *מגדלית שיער נשיית*, a *plaiter of women's hair*; see the note on Matt. xxvii. 56. *And of wearing of gold*: or *golden things*: golden ornaments, as bracelets, chains, and rings, or pieces of

gold stuck in the plaitings and folds of the hair. The Jewish women used to wear a crown of gold on their head, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, called a golden cityⁿ, and which they wore, after its destruction, in memory of it; but with those they might not go out on a sabbath-day. R. Akibah, it is said^o, made a golden city for his wife, and the wife of Rabban Gamaliel envied her, for it seems this was reckoned a grand dress. Not that the sense is, that every thing of this kind is forbidden, but when used to excess and extravagance; otherwise the daughters of Abraham and Sarah were decked with ear-rings, bracelets, and jewels of gold; see Gen. xxiv. 22, 30, 47, 53. or of *putting on of apparel*; that is *excellent*, or precious, as the Syriac version adds; or of *great price*, as the Ethiopic; that is beyond a person's ability or rank; the apostle means such apparel as is unbecoming and unsuitable, for he cannot be thought to forbid the putting on of any apparel; but his sense is, that women should not so much regard, and be so intent upon the outward adorning of their bodies, with any sort of clothing, and especially such as does not become them, as the inward adorning of their minds, next mentioned.

Ver. 4. *But let it be the hidden man of the heart, &c.*] By which is meant internal grace; which gives a beauty and ornament to the soul, far preferable to that which plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or any costly apparel, can give to the body: and this is called a *man*, as it is elsewhere the *new man*, Eph. iv. 24. because it has that which answers to what is in man, to his soul, and the powers and faculties of it: this man, or new creature, has a new heart and spirit; it has a will to that which is spiritually good, and an understanding of divine things, and affections for Christ, for his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and people, and for things above: it has what answers to all the five senses; there is in it a seeing of the son of God in the glories of his person and the fulness of his grace, and of the invisible things of another world; an hearing of the word, of the voice of Christ, so as to understand it, and live, and to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; a smelling a sweet savour in the things of God, and of his spirit, and in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; a tasting that the Lord is gracious, his fruits pleasant, and his word sweeter than the honey, or the honey-comb; and a feeling of the burden of sin, an handling of the word of life, a laying hold on Christ, and retaining him: and it has what answers to the parts and members of the body; it has eyes to see with, ears to hear with, hands to receive from Christ, and work with, to his glory, and feet to walk with: it has, in short, all the parts of a man, though these are not yet grown up to perfection; and so that is not yet a perfect man, or arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; but a man it is: and a *man of the heart*; it has its seat there; it is an inward principle in the soul; hence it is called the *inner* and *inward man*; and nothing outward is it, as external humiliation for sin, abstinence from it, reformation of life and manners, a profession of religion, and conformity to Gospel ordinances; but it is something inward, as appears

^m T. Tab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. Chagigs, fol. 4. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1.

ⁿ Mien. Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 1.

^o T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 7. 4.

from its names, both here and elsewhere; it is called spirit, seed, the root of the matter, and oil in the vessels; and from the seat and subject of it, the heart, the spirit, the understanding and will, the mind, conscience, and affections: and it is the *hidden man*; 'tis wisdom in the hidden part; it is hidden from the men of the world; they don't know what it is, nor what it means, nor how it is, or can be; the life of it is hidden from them, and the food it lives upon is hidden manna to them, and so are both its joys and sorrows: it is sometimes hidden from the saints themselves; when they walk in darkness, and see no light, they are at a loss to know whether this principle is in them or no; and it is hidden from other believers, till they give an account of it to them, when by comparing it with the word of God, and their own experience, they perceive it is the grace of God in them; and it is hidden from Satan, it is out of his reach, he cannot touch it; though he can touch the old man, and stir up the corruptions of it, yet he can't touch the new man, that which is born of God, nor hurt or destroy it; but it is not hidden from God; he sees it where men cannot, being covered with a variety of infirmities and sins, and knows it is not where men sometimes think it is. The nature of this hidden man is further expressed by what follows, *in that which is not corruptible*: it is opposed to corruptible things, as the outward adorning consists of, such as plaited hair, silver and gold, golden chains, rings, &c. and costly apparel; nor is it corrupt in itself; the old man is corrupt according to its deceitful lusts, but this new man, the hidden man of the heart, has no corruption in it, nor cleaving to it: 'tis the workmanship of God, and is created in righteousness and holiness; though it is as yet imperfect, there is nothing impure in it; nor can it ever perish, or be lost; it is an incorruptible seed, and will always remain when gold will perish, and the best of garments be moth-eaten, and decay: even the ornament of a *meek and quiet spirit*: this is one, and a principal part of the inward adorning, or hidden man of the heart; and those that are possessed of such a spirit are not easily provoked to anger; patiently bear, and put up with injuries; carry themselves affably and courteously unto all; entertain the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; don't envy the gifts and graces of others, and are willing to be instructed and admonished by the meanest saint; quietly submit to the will of God, in all adverse dispensations of Providence; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God, and reckon that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants. This grace of meekness, humility, and quietness, is a fruit of the spirit, and so a part of the hidden man, and is what is very ornamental to a believer; 'tis his clothing, his inward adorning, and what makes him lovely in the sight of God, and of his people; see 1 Pet. v. 5. and it is very useful to him in hearing the word, in giving a reason of the hope that is in him, in restoring others, and in shewing forth a good conversation; and particularly it greatly becomes, and exceedingly beautifies women professing godliness; who ought to bear much with their husbands, and be in silence, which is what the

apostle has a principal regard unto: and to encourage the more to the exercise of it, adds, *which is in the sight of God of great price*; which may refer to the whole adorning, to the hidden man of the heart, which is incorruptible, in opposition to the outward adorning, which may be esteemed by men, and be precious in their sight; and particularly to the ornament of meekness and quietness of spirit; for God has a great regard to the meek, humble, and quiet souls; he lifts them up, when cast down; he causes glad tidings to be preached to them; he increases their joy in the Lord; he feeds them, when hungry, to their satisfaction; he guides them in judgment, and teaches them his ways; he'll rise up in judgment for them, and reprove with equity for their sake; he gives more grace unto them, and beautifies them with salvation, and will cause them to inherit the earth.

Ver. 5. *For after this manner in the old time, &c.*] In ages past, the years of many generations, since the time that God created man upon earth; in the times before the flood, and after it; in the times of the patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets of Israel, under the Old-Testament dispensation. The apostle exhorts and encourages to this inward dress and ornament, from the antiquity of it: for in this way, and after this fashion, *the holy women also*; who were sanctified by the spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations, such as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Ruth, Hannah, and others: *who trusted in God*: that he would send the Messiah, and make good all his promises, judging and believing him to be faithful to his word, and able to fulfil whatever he had promised, as Sarah, Heb. xi. 11. Such holy and believing women as these are worthy of imitation in their adorning and dress, and who, in the manner before described by the apostle, *adorned themselves*; or this was the adorning which they sought after, valued, and chiefly regarded; not what was external, but internal: and which lay in meekness and humility, and in a quiet deportment, and in *being in subjection unto their own husbands*; according to their original make, and natural relation, and the laws of God, and of creation; which is more becoming and adorning than plaiting of hair, wearing of gold, or costly raiment, and recommends them more, both in the sight of God and men; nothing being a more indecent and uncomely sight than a woman not in subjection to her husband.

Ver. 6. *Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, &c.*] Going along with him wherever he went, as from Chaldea to Canaan, and into Egypt, and the land of the Philistines, saying the words he put into her mouth, Gen. xii. 5, 11, 13. and doing the things he bid her do, Gen. xviii. 6. *calling him lord*; or *my lord*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and as it appears she did from Gen. xviii. 12. The Jews use this instance to the same purpose the apostle does, saying ^p, "the wife ought to take care of the family, to educate her children, to serve and minister to her husband in all things, *calling him her own lord*; which is what we learn from the example of Sarah, who called Abraham her lord, saying, *my lord is old*." *Whose daughters ye are*; meaning not by natural descent,

though they were, these being Jews the apostle writes to, but by grace, and in a spiritual sense; just as those are the children of Abraham, who walk in the steps of his faith, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; so such are the daughters of Sarah, the children of the free woman, who imitate her in faith and obedience; that is, they appear, and are declared to be so: *as long as ye do well*: do acts of beneficence and hospitality to strangers, and proper objects, as Sarah did, and all and every good work, according to the will of God, from love, and in faith, and with a view to his glory; and particularly obey and live in subjection to their husbands, as she did: *and are not afraid with any amazement*: are not deterred from doing well, nor scared by the terrors and menaces of wicked men, either their own husbands, or others; or who with fortitude and intrepidity of mind continue in the discharge of their duty to God and men, and particularly to their husbands, following them, and obeying their lawful commands, as Sarah did in Egypt, and in Gerar, though she exposed herself to great danger: this is said, because women are timorous, and apt to be frightened at every thing, from the performance of their duty.

Ver. 7. *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them, &c.*]

With your wives, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; which not only included dwelling together in the same house, and bedding together in the same bed, but the whole of conjugal conversation, and all the offices and duties incumbent on men in a married state: *according to knowledge*; of themselves, and their wives, and the duties belonging to the conjugal state, and the laws of God and man respecting it; and according to their knowledge of the Gospel, and the Christian dispensation, which no ways breaks in upon, but strengthens and encourages to the observance of things belonging to natural religion, and civil life; and according to that superior knowledge of things, which, generally speaking, men have to women; as also wisely, prudently, becoming their characters as men and Christians: particularly *giving honour to the wife*; by speaking well of her, and respectfully to her, and by deeds as well as words; not only by clothing her in a decent and becoming manner, suitable to her station; but by providing every thing honest and comely for her, food and raiment, a suitable maintenance, all the necessaries, conveniences, and delights of life, that are laudable and proper; in which sense the word *honour* is used in 1 Tim. v. 3, 17, and this was agreeably to the doctrine of the Jews[†], who say, "let a man always take care ברכו אשתו, of the glory of his wife; for there is no blessing found in a man's house, but for the sake of his wife, as it is said, Gen. xii. 16. and he entreated Abraham well for her sake; and Rabba used to say to the citizens, אקירי לנשיבתי, honour your wives, that ye may be rich." And indeed this is what they promised in their marriage-contract, which runs thus: "be thou unto me for a wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel, and I, by the word of heaven, or God, will worship, אקירי, and honour, and nourish, and take care of thee, according to the custom of the Jews, who

"worship, and honour, and nourish, and take care of their wives." As unto the weaker vessel; so the wife is called a vessel in 1 Thess. iv. 4. see the note there, and here the weaker; being so for the most part, both as to strength of body, and endowments of mind; and therefore to be used gently and tenderly, and not be treated with neglect and contempt, or with inhumanity and severity; but as, in every state and condition, the strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak; so a man should bear with, and accommodate himself to the infirmities of his wife, and hide them as much as he can, and not expose them, nor despise her, on account of them. It is a saying of the Jews[‡], "if thy wife be short of stature, bow thyself, and whisper to her." The meaning of the proverb is, that he ought to suit himself to her capacity and weakness: and as being heirs together of the grace of life; not of a natural life, and the good things of it; though husbands and wives partake of the same kind of life, and have a right unto, and share in the same necessaries of life; so Adam and Eve were partakers of the same life, and sharers of the same benefits; and which is a reason indeed why they ought to live lovingly together: but something more is intended; not the external gifts of the spirit, which, unless in some few instances, are bestowed on men, and not on women; nor the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are the means of grace and life; though men and women, called by grace, have an equal right to them, and enjoy them; see Gal. iii. 28. but grace here; and glory hereafter, are here meant. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, heirs together of the manifold grace of life; God's own people, without any difference as to sex, as men and women, equally share in grace, as it signifies the love and favour of God; which is the same to all the objects, as to the date of it, which is from everlasting, one not being loved before another; and as to the quality of it, which is free, sovereign, special, discriminating and unchangeable, one being loved not with one sort of love, another with another; and as to the quantity of it, not admitting of more or less; and as to the duration, which is for ever: and so they are heirs of it, as it denotes the blessings of grace; being equally heirs of, and sharers in electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace: and as it may intend the internal graces of the spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which as to their principles are the same in all the saints, though different as to the degree of the exercise of them: and which may be called the grace of life; or living grace, as some copies and the Complutensian edition read, and so the Arabic version, because by it men and women, who were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened; and in distinction to counterfeit grace, which differs as much from true grace, as the picture of a man from a living man; and because it lives for ever, and never dies, and gives a meetness for eternal life, which it springs up to, issues in, and is inseparably connected with. Moreover, by it may be meant eternal life and salvation, of which the saints, without any difference as to sex, are heirs of: so some copies read, heirs of manifold grace, and life;

[†] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1. & Sepher Musar apud Drusium in 4to.

[‡] Apud. Buxtorf. Chald. Gram. p. 389.

[•] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1.

by the former, meaning grace here, and by the latter, glory hereafter; which is a life of vision of God, and uninterrupted communion with him; of perfection and pleasure, and which will last for ever; and may be called the *grace of life*, because it is the free gift of God's grace: and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, *the gift of eternal life*; and the Ethiopic version, *glorious life*: and this is represented as an inheritance, being what belongs only to the children; and which they have not by their own works, as an acquisition of theirs, but by the free grace of their heavenly Father, and as his gift and bequest unto them. Now all the saints, of whatever state, condition, or sex, are equally heirs of this inheritance; for there is but one inheritance, one kingdom, one crown of glory, which all shall enjoy; and whatever disparity there may be, particularly between husband and wife, in their natural relation, there is none in the things of grace, and with regard to the kingdom of glory; and which is an argument why husbands should dwell peaceably and comfortably with their wives, and give all due honour to them, since they are upon a par in spiritual things, there being neither male nor female in Christ Jesus, and because they are now joint-heirs of, and shall equally share in eternal life and happiness. *That your prayers be not hindered*: as they would be were they not to dwell together; or should not the husband give honour to his wife, and take care of her as he ought to do: hence would arise strifes and quarrels, when they could not cordially, and to edification, join together in prayer; nor would such prayers, put up in wrath, be acceptable unto God, who requires that men should lift up holy hands everywhere, whether in public, or in private, in God's house, or in their own houses, without wrath and doubting. From hence we may observe, that family-prayer is a duty incumbent on professors of religion, and great care should be taken that it be not neglected and hindered.

Ver. 8. *Finally, be ye all of one mind, &c.*] Not that the apostle was about to conclude his epistle; but having finished his exhortations respecting the obedience of subjects to magistrates, and of servants to their masters, and the duties incumbent on husbands and wives, he proceeds to sum up what he had further to say, in general rules; which regarded all sorts of Christians, magistrates and subjects, masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children, old and young, rich and poor, of whatsoever state, age, sex, or condition; and so the Arabic version renders it, *the sum of the commandment is*; and the Ethiopic version, *the sum of all is this*; namely, what follows; *be ye all of one mind*; whatever difference there might be in their natural and civil relation and character; and which is to be understood not of the sameness of affection to one another, or of an humble and condescending spirit, disposition, and carriage to each other, for these are expressed in some following exhortations; but of sameness of judgment with respect to the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, in which saints should be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; for as the church is but one body, of which Christ is the head, there should be but one mind in it; even as there is but one spirit of God, who convinces, enlightens, and leads into truth; and

but one heart and way, given to fear the Lord; and there is but one hope of our calling, or to which we are called; and one way to it, and therefore ought to agree in every thing respecting the way, the truth, and the life; though in things which do not, should bear with one another; and there is but one Lord, who gives the same laws and ordinances to one as to another, and which are to be kept alike by all; and there is but one faith, one doctrine of faith, which is uniform and all of a piece, and but one rule and standard of faith, the sacred Scriptures, and but one baptism, to be administered in the same way, and upon the same sort of subjects, and in the same name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and but one God and Father of all; all belong to the same family, and therefore should preserve an unity of spirit and mind, and speak the same things; which is necessary to carry on the worship of God, honourably and regularly, to the glorifying of him, and for the peace, comfort, and safety of the churches of Christ: *having compassion one of another*; or sympathizing with each other, both in prosperity and adversity, whether in temporal or spiritual things; rejoicing with them that rejoice in Christ, make their boast of him, and have communion with him, and who are also blessed with health of body, and a competency of the good things of this life; and weeping with them that weep for the loss of goods, relations, &c. and being in bonds and afflictions; or because of sin, the absence of Christ, and the temptations of Satan; and being concerned also for such who are fallen into immorality, or error, and heresy; endeavouring to restore them out of the one or the other, in a spirit of meekness and tenderness: to all which they should be engaged by the example of Christ, the sympathizing high-priest; by the consideration of the divine compassion to them, both in a providential way, and in a way of grace; and on account of their union and relation to each other, as members of the same body: *love as brethren*; not in a natural and civil, but in a spiritual relation, being children of God, and brethren of Christ, and in a Gospel church-state; and whose love to each other ought to be universal, fervent, without dissimulation, and as Christ has loved them; and which should shew itself in praying for each other, in bearing one another's burdens, in forgiving each other, in admonishing in love, and building up one another on their most holy faith, and communicating to each other both in temporals and spirituals: and of a very excellent nature is it; it is the bond of perfectness, and evidence of regeneration; the glory and ornament of a profession, and without which it is nothing; and what renders the communion of the saints with each other pleasant and profitable, comfortable to themselves, and honourable in the eyes of others; and to which they should be induced from the consideration of the love of God and Christ unto them, and from their relation to each other, as brethren: *be pitiful*; to those that are in distress; put on bowels of mercy, and relieve and succour them, distributing cheerfully to their necessities: *be courteous*; gentle and affable, carrying it friendly to one another, seeking those things which may be most agreeable to each other, shunning all moroseness, stiffness, and incivility. The Vulgate Latin version renders it by two words,

modest, humble: not proud, haughty, and overbearing, but condescending to each other, and to men of low estates; and so the Syriac version renders it, *kind and meek*.

Ver. 9. *Not rendering evil for evil, &c.*] Doing an ill thing in return to one that has done ill to you, and in a way of revenge for it; which is contrary to what is before advised to, and which is taking God's prerogative and work out of his hands, whose vengeance is, and which is to be overcome of evil: or railing for railing; returning ill language to such as have given it, but rather should imitate Christ, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, ch. ii. 23. and whose advice is, instead of returning injuries, blows, or words, to turn to him that smites on the right cheek the other also, and to bless them that curse, do good to them that hate, and pray for them that persecute, Matt. v. 39, 44. and which is here directed to: *but contrariwise blessing*: praying for a blessing on them; for if we are to do so for our enemies, for them that hate us, despitefully use and persecute us, as did Christ, Stephen the protomartyr, and the apostles, then much more our fellow-Christians, who may do us an injury, or speak evil of us, or to us: who seem to be chiefly intended: the argument to persuade to it follows, *knowing that ye are thereunto called*; referring either to what goes before, being called by grace to the discharge of all the above duties exhorted to, and particularly to suffer patiently all injuries and affronts; and instead of making returns in the same way, to bless and pray for those that have hurt us, either by words or deeds; see ch. ii. 20, 21. or to what follows, *that ye should inherit a blessing*; temporal blessing or blessings; for godliness has the promise of this life, and godly persons shall not want any good thing; and even whilst the blessings of others are cursed, they have their outward mercies with a blessing, and they are blessings indeed to them; wherefore, the little they may have is better than the large affluence of others: and also spiritual blessing, or blessings; such as peace of conscience, the pardon of all their sins, a justifying righteousness, adopting grace, all supplies of grace from Christ, his presence, and communion with him: and also an eternal one, even life for evermore; called so, because it springs from the free favour, good will, and blessing of God, and which its being an inheritance also shews; and because such that enjoy it are eternally and unspeakably happy.

Ver. 10. *For he that will love life, &c.*] This, with what follows here, and in the two next verses, are taken out of Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. and are produced as a proof of what is before said; that it is a good man's duty not to do or speak evil in return for what is done or said to him; but on the contrary, it becomes him to avoid evil, do good, and seek peace as much as possible, and leave it with a righteous God to vindicate him and his cause, who will not fail to do it; and that such shall inherit the blessing both here and hereafter; in the psalm; these words are put by way of question, *what man is he that desireth life?* that wills it with pleasure, that loves it with a love of complacency and delight? and which is to be understood, not of natural life; for what man is there that don't love

that? love of a natural life is natural to men; it is a first principle in nature to desire life, and a preservation of it, and to a great length; a man will give all that he has for it, as Satan said, Job ii. 4. but both of a spiritual life, a life of faith on Christ, communion with him, and holiness from him; the life of God, or to live soberly, righteously, and godly, which carnal men are alienated from, and enemies to, and cannot desire, only spiritual men; and of an eternal one; and so some of the Jewish interpreters understand by life and good days, in the psalm, such as are both in this world, and in that which is to come: *and see good days*; not the days of this life, which are evil, even the days of a good man, Gen. xlvii. 9. and the more so, the longer he lives; for the days of old age are evil days, in which there is no pleasure, Eccl. xii. 1. unless such days are meant, in which much good is done to the honour and glory of God, and in which gracious souls enjoy much of God, and see and taste of his grace and goodness in the land of the living; though, rather, the good days of eternity, even length of days for ever and ever, which holy men of God shall see, and enjoy in the other world, when they shall be possessed of fulness of joy, and of pleasure for evermore: in the psalm it is, *and length many days, that he may see good*; desires a blessed eternity of good things: *let him refrain his tongue from evil*; bridle that unruly member, which has a world of iniquity in it; let him keep it as with a bit, from the vices incident to it; from all obscene words, filthy and corrupt communication, whatever is unsavoury and unedifying; from lying, cursing, swearing, and particularly from railing and evil-speaking, in return for such language, which is chiefly meant; as well as from belching out blasphemies against God, and damnable heresies among men; for whoever would be thought a religious man, and lays no restraint on his tongue, his religion is a vain thing, Jam. i. 26. *and his lips that they speak no guile*; as flatterers do, who speak that with their mouth which does not agree with their heart, and so beguile and deceive persons; and as false teachers, who use dishonest arts, walk in craftiness, handle the word of God deceitfully, use ambiguous phrases, and words of double meaning, and with their good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple; but such things don't become persons that seek for glory, honour, and immortality; that profess to be Israelites indeed; in these guile should not be found in their lips, nor in their lives.

Ver. 11. *Let him eschew evil, &c.*] Avoid all kind of evil, hate it, abstain from the appearance of it, and have no fellowship with it; and particularly should avoid rendering evil for evil, or taking revenge on persons for doing him ill: *and do good*: every thing that is good, all good works, according to the will of God, in the exercise of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; and without trusting to them, and depending upon them for life and salvation; and particularly do good for evil; do good to all men, acts of kindness and beneficence, even to enemies, and especially to them that are of the household of faith. The Jewish interpreters on the psalm

* Kimchi in Psal. xxxiv. 17.

* Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Psal. xxxiv. 14.

from whence these words are taken observe, that in the first of these clauses are contained all the negative precepts, whose number with them is three hundred, sixty, and five; and in the latter of them, all the affirmative precepts, which amount to two hundred and forty-eight: *let him seek peace and ensue it; or pursue it; let him seek after it, in the world, and with all men, as much as possible, yea, with his very enemies; and live a peaceable and quiet life, in the kingdom, city, town, and neighbourhood where he is; and particularly in the church of God, and with the saints; which he should seek with all diligence and eagerness, and pursue with all vigour to the utmost of his power; and endeavour to cultivate all he can, and follow the things which make for it.* The note of one of the Jewish commentators * on this passage is, *seek peace, in thine own place; and pursue it, in another place.*

Ver. 12. *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, &c.]* Who are so not merely in the sight of men, but of God; nor in their own account, and by their own works, but in the esteem of God, through the imputation of the righteousness of his son unto them: and because he loves this righteousness, and is well-pleased with it, seeing by it his law is magnified and made honourable, therefore his countenance beholds with pleasure and delight those righteous ones who are clothed with it; his eyes of omniscience, love, care, and protection, are always upon them, watching over them, delighting in them, running to and fro in the earth on behalf of them; he sees every injury done them, and in his own time and way will do them justice; which is a reason why they should not take vengeance themselves, but leave it with him, whose it is: *and his ears are open to their prayers: or prayer; in the Hebrew text, to their cry: he is a God hearing prayer, and his righteous ones have his ear; he hears them whilst they are speaking, and will sooner or later answer, and avenge his elect, who cry unto him day and night; for as he has an ear to hear their cries, which is not heavy, he has an arm to save them, which is not shortened; and this is another reason why they should behave as before directed, and which is still strengthened by what follows; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil; it is added in the psalm, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth: by the face of the Lord is meant, as the Jewish writers † interpret it, the anger of the Lord; it intends, not his kind, pleasant, and loving countenance, but his angry one; with the former he beholds the upright, and with it he looks upon his righteous ones; but the latter is upon and against the wicked, and is dreadful and intolerable, and the consequence of it is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

Ver. 13. *And who is he that will harm you, &c.]* Or *can harm you.* God will not; for his eyes are upon the righteous, to protect and defend them, and his ears are open to their cries, to avenge them; he is on their side, and he is the only lawgiver that is able to save, and to destroy. Christ will not; for when he came the first time, it was not to condemn, but to save; and when he comes a second time, though he'll rule the wicked

with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel; yet his people, who are his jewels, he will spare, as a man spares his only son. Good angels will not; these rejoice at the conversion, and in the salvation of sinful men, encamp about the saints, and are ministering spirits to them: nor the devil; though he would devour, he cannot; for greater is he that is in the saints, than he that is in the world: nor can sin; for though it wars against them, it shall not have the dominion over them; and though it often breaks in upon their peace and comfort, it cannot damn and destroy their souls: nor the law; for though it pronounces guilty, and curses those that are under it, and are of the works of it, yet since Christ has fulfilled it for his people, by obeying its precepts, and bearing its penalty, the curse, it lies not against them, nor can it inflict any punishment on them: nor the men of the world; who hate and persecute the saints; these can do them no real harm; they cannot hurt their grace, which shines the brighter, being tried and proved in the furnace of affliction; they cannot destroy their peace and comfort by all the trouble they give them; all the harm they can do them is to their bodies; they can do none to their souls; and even all the evil things they do to their bodies work together for their good; and they must be very wicked men that will do harm in any respect to such as behave well in states, cities, towns, or neighbourhoods: *if ye be followers of that which is good; of God, who is essentially, originally, and infinitely good, and does good to all his creatures, by imitating him in holiness and righteousness, in kindness, mercy, and beneficence; and of Christ, the good Shepherd, following him in the exercise of grace, as of humility, love, patience, &c. and in the discharge of duty; and of good men, the apostles of Christ, the first churches, faithful ministers, and all such who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, and that both in doctrine and practice; and of all good things, whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, particularly righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, zealots, or zealous of good: of good works, as in Tit. ii. 14. and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.*

Ver. 14. *But and if ye suffer for righteousness-sake, &c.]* For the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which was the great stumbling-block to the Jews, and on account of which they persecuted the Christians; it being not after man, nor according to the carnal reason of men, and was contrary to the method they had fixed on, and what excluded boasting in them, and was thought to be a licentious doctrine; and for a righteous cause, for professing Christ and his Gospel; for vindicating both which, whoever did must expect to suffer persecution; and also for living soberly, righteously, and godly; for by a religious life and conversation the saints are separated from the world, and are distinguished from them, which in effect sets a mark of infamy and reproach upon them; and saints, by an agreeable life, reprove others, and condemn them; all which irritate and provoke them to hate and persecute them: now these works prevent an

* Jarchi.

† Jarchi & Menachem apud ib. & Aben Ezra in loc.

objection that might be made to what is before said ; that none can, or will harm such as are followers of good ; whereas it is a clear case, that saints for righteousness-sake are hurt, and do suffer in their persons, characters, and estate ; they are reproached and reviled, and often suffer confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and even death itself ; to which the apostle answers, by granting it, and supposing that this should be the case, as it sometimes is ; yet no hurt is done them, they are still happy persons : *happy* are ye ; since suffering on such an account is a gift of God, even as believing in Christ itself is, and is a real honour done to a person, and to be so accounted ; moreover, such generally enjoy much of the presence of God, and the comforts of his spirit ; the spirit of God and of glory rests upon them ; hereby the graces of the spirit of God in them are exercised, tried, and proved, and shine out the brighter ; the faith and hope of other Christians are strengthened, and God is glorified ; and besides, the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life, and eternal glory, with which their sufferings are not to be compared, are theirs, and which they shall certainly enjoy : *and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled* ; referring to a passage in Isa. viii. 12. and the meaning is either, be not afraid with the same sort of fear as wicked men are ; with a worldly slavish fear of men, and of the loss of worldly things, and of life itself : or, *afraid of them*, as the Syriac version renders it ; who inject fear into you ; don't be afraid of their revilings and reproaches, of their threatenings and menaces, and even of death itself by them, which is the utmost they can do ; don't be troubled at any thing they say or do to you ; since nothing can harm you, since God is on your side, Christ has delivered you from this present evil world, and saved you out of the hands of every enemy ; and since the love of God, which casteth out fear, is shed abroad in your hearts, and you are encompassed with it, and nothing can separate you from it.

Ver. 15. *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, &c.*] Still referring to Isa. viii. 13. not by making him holy, which need not, nor cannot be, he being essentially, infinitely, and perfectly holy ; but by declaring and proclaiming his holiness, as the seraphim in Isaiah's prophecy, and the four living creatures in the Revelation did ; and by glorifying of him, praising and applauding all his perfections, and among the rest, this of his holiness, and giving thanks at the remembrance of it ; which he has so much displayed in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace ; hence the Arabic version renders it, *bless the Lord God in your hearts* : the Lord God is sanctified by his people externally, when they regard his commands, attend his ordinances, and call upon his name, and praise him ; but here an internal sanctification of him, a sanctification of him in their hearts, is intended, and what is opposed to the fear of men, and unbelief, and lies in the exercise of the grace of fear upon him ; see Isa. viii. 13. and which has for its object his goodness, and is a fruit of the covenant of his grace, and is a child-like and godly fear ; and in the exercise of faith upon him, upon his covenant and promises, his faithfulness, and power to help, assist, and preserve : whereby glory is given to him, a witness borne to his truth, and he is sanctified : some copies, as the Alexandrian, and one of Stephens's,

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read, *sanctify the Lord Christ* ; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions ; and certain it is that he is intended in Isa. viii. 13. as appears from ver. 14. compared with Rom. ix. 33. 1 Pet. ii. 8. *and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear* ; by the hope that is in the saints, is not designed the grace of hope itself, which is given to them, and implanted in them in regeneration ; the reason, ground, and foundation of which are, the love, grace, and mercy of God, through Christ, and his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and redemption ; but the Gospel, the whole Christian doctrine, the doctrine of faith, and which the Syriac version here calls *the hope of faith* ; and the profession of Christianity, called in Heb. x. 23. *the profession of hope* ; in which persons profess their hope of eternal life and happiness through Christ, as the doctrine of the Gospel directs them to. Now, a reason of this is to be given ; not that they are to account for the Gospel, upon the foot of carnal reason ; for that is not of men, nor according to the carnal reason of men ; nor is it to be thought that every Christian should be capable of defending the Gospel, either in whole, or in part, by arguments and reasons, in a disputatious way, or to give a reason and argument for every particular truth ; but that he should be well acquainted with the ground and foundation of the Christian religion ; at least, with the first principles of the oracles of God, and be conversant with the Scriptures, and be able to point out that in them, which is the reason of his holding this and the other truth, though he is not able to give a gainsayer satisfaction, or to stop his mouth : and this is to be done *with meekness and fear* : with *meekness*, before men ; in an humble modest way ; not with an haughty air, and in a morose and surly manner, which serves only to irritate and provoke : and *with fear* : either of God, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *with the fear of the Lord* ; considering the subject of the argument, and the importance of it, and how much the honour of God is concerned in it ; and taking care lest the answer should be delivered in a light, trifling, and negligent manner, and that no part of truth be dropped or concealed, in order to please men, and be screened from their resentments ; or with all due reverence of, and respect to men, to superiors, to the civil magistrates, who may ask the reason ; for they are to be treated with honour and esteem, and to be answered in an handsome and becoming manner, suitable to the dignity of their persons and office ; as the sanhedrim was by Stephen ; and as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, by the Apostle Paul : and this answer, or reason, is to be given *to every man* ; that has authority to ask, and that asks in a modest manner, and with a reverence suitable to the subject ; for the phrases, *with meekness and fear*, may respect him that asks the reason, as well as him that gives the answer ; for that which is holy is not to be given to dogs, to impudent persons, mockers and scoffers, nor are pearls to be cast before swine, filthy and irreverent persons ; see Matt. vii. 6. the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, *but with meekness and fear* ; for if it is not asked in such a way, there is no obligation to give an answer : and this is to be given *always* ; whenever it

is asked in such a manner, and by proper persons; when there is a necessity of it, and as opportunity offers: and saints should be always ready to give it; and therefore it becomes them daily and diligently to search the Scriptures, meditate on them, and get all the help and assistance they can, to lead them into an acquaintance with them, that they may be so; for though the apostles had extraordinary assistance promised them, and therefore were bid not to consider beforehand what they should say, when brought before kings and princes; yet this is not to be expected by ordinary persons, nor in ordinary cases. Agreeably to this is the advice of R. Eleazar²; “he diligent to learn the law, and know what thou shouldst answer to an Epicure,” or heretic: says R. Jochanan³, “in every place where the Sadducees object, תשובתו בצדק, *their answer is at their side,*” or ready; that is, in the same Scriptures on which they form their objections.

Ver. 16. *Having a good conscience, &c.*] Meaning not the faculty of the conscience itself, which is naturally evil, and defiled with sin, and is only made good by the sanctification of the spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the heart is sprinkled from it, and that itself purged from dead works; but a life and conversation according to the dictates of such a conscience, in the uprightness and sincerity of it, and by the grace of God, and according to the Gospel, and whereby the doctrines of it are adorned; for, as besides internal sanctification of God, or a fearing of him, and believing in him with the heart, there must be a profession of him with the mouth, and a reason of faith and hope given verbally, when there is an occasion for it; so to both must be added a conscientious discharge of duty, both to God and men, which is one way of defending and recommending the doctrines of the Gospel: *that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers*; as vain, proud, haughty, and arrogant persons, as seditious men, enemies to order and civil magistracy; as such that speak evil of dignities, and despise government; when they shall see your modest and humble deportment in the world, and before them, and with what reverence and esteem you treat them: *they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ*; which was in consequence of their being in Christ, and made new creatures by him, and was as became his Gospel, and by and under the influence of his grace and spirit.

Ver. 17. *For it is better, if the will of God be so, &c.*] For all things are ordered by the will of God, even all the sufferings and afflictions of the saints; and which is a reason why they ought to be patiently submitted to, and bore: and better it is, more honourable and profitable, that ye suffer for well-doing; for believing in Christ, professing him and his Gospel, giving a free and open reason for so doing, and for exercising a good conscience, and living godly in Christ Jesus: *than for evil-doing*; as a murderer, a thief, an evil-doer, or a busy-body in other men's matters, ch. iv. 15, 16.

Ver. 18. *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, &c.*] Not his own, for he committed none, but for the sins of his people; in order to obtain the remission

of them, to make reconciliation for them, and to take and put them away, and finish and make an end of them; which sufferings of his, on account of them, were many and great: he suffered much by bearing the griefs, and carrying the sorrows of his people, whereby he became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, from his cradle to his cross; and from the temptations of Satan, being in all points tempted, as his members are, though without sin; and from the contradiction of sinners against him, in his name, credit, and character, abusing him as the worst of men; and he suffered in his soul, from the wrath of God, and curses of the law, which lay upon him; and in his body, by many buffetings, scourges, wounds, and death itself, even the death of the cross; and which being the finishing part of his sufferings, is chiefly here meant. The Alexandrian copy reads, *died for you*; and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, *died for our sins*; and this he did once, and but once; he died once, and will die no more; he was offered up once, and will be offered up no more; there is no more offering, or sacrifice for sin; the reason is, because his one offering is sufficient to take away sin, which the legal sacrifices were not, and therefore were often offered; and the reason why this his one offering, or once suffering and dying, is sufficient, is, because of his divine nature, or eternal spirit, by which he offered himself, and gave infinite virtue to his sacrifice and satisfaction: now, this is an argument for suffering patiently; since Christ, the head, has also suffered, and therefore, why not the members? and since he has suffered for their sins, therefore they should not grudge to suffer for his sake; and seeing also their sufferings are but once, in this life only, and as it were but for a moment, and not to be compared with his sufferings for them; and especially when it is considered what follows: *the just for the unjust*; Christ, the holy and just one, who is holy in his nature, and righteous in his life and actions, which were entirely conformable to the righteous law of God, and upright and faithful in the discharge of his office, and therefore called God's righteous servant; he suffered, and that not only by unjust men, by the Jews, by Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, but for and in the room and stead of unjust men, sinners, and ungodly, who were destitute of righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness; and since he did, it need not be thought hard, or strange, that sinful men should suffer at the hands of others; and still it should be borne with the greater patience, since Christ not only suffered for them, but since an end is answered by it, as is here suggested: *that he might bring us to God*; nigh to God, who, with respect to communion, were afar off from him; and in peace and reconciliation with him, who were enemies to him by wicked works; and that they might have freedom of access, with boldness, unto God, through his precious blood, and the veil of his flesh; and that he might offer them unto God, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; as a sacrifice acceptable unto God, presenting them to him unblamable and unprovable in his sight; that he might bring them into his grace and presence here, and, as the great Captain of their

² Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 14.

³ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2.

salvation, bring them to him in glory hereafter: *being put to death in the flesh*; in the human nature: flesh includes the whole of human nature, both body and soul; for though the body only dies, yet death is the dissolution of the union between them both; and such was Christ's death; for though the union between the two natures continued, yet his body and soul were disunited; his body was left on the cross, and his soul, or spirit, was commended to God, when his life was taken from the earth, and he was put to death in a violent manner by men: *but quickened by the spirit*; raised from the dead by his divine nature, the spirit of holiness, the eternal Spirit, by which he offered up himself, and by virtue of which, as he had power to lay down his life, so he had power to take it up again; when he was also justified in the spirit, and all the elect in him. Now, as the enemies of Christ could do no more than put him to death in the flesh, so the enemies of his people can do no more than kill the body, and cannot reach the soul; and as Christ is quickened and raised from the dead, so all his elect are quickened together, and raised with him, representatively, and shall, by virtue of his resurrection, be raised personally, and live also; which is no inconsiderable argument to suffer afflictions patiently, and which is the design of this instance and example of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Ver. 19. *By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*] Various are the senses given of this passage: some say, that Christ, upon his death, went in his human soul to hell; either, as some, to preach to the devils and damned spirits, that they might be saved, if they would; and, as others, to let them know that he was come, and to fill them with dread and terror; but though hell may be meant by the prison, yet the text does not say that he went unto it, or preached in it; only that the spirits were in it, to whom he sometimes went, and preached; nor is his human soul, but his divine nature meant, by the spirit, by which he went, and preached to them: and as for the ends proposed, the former is impracticable and impossible; for after death follows judgment, which is an eternal one; nor is there any salvation, or hope of salvation afterwards; and the latter is absurd, vain, and needless. Others, as the Papists, imagine the sense to be, that Christ, at his death, went in his human soul, into a place they call *Limbus Patrum*, which they suppose is meant by the prison here, and delivered the souls of the Old-Testament saints and patriarchs from thence, and carried them with him to heaven; but this sense is also false, because, as before observed, not the human soul of Christ, but his divine nature, is designed by the spirit; nor is there any such place as here feigned, in which the souls of Old-Testament saints were, before the death of Christ; for they were in peace and rest, in the kingdom of heaven, in Abraham's bosom, inheriting the promises, and not in a prison; besides, the text says not one word of the delivering of these spirits out of prison, only of Christ's preaching to them: add to all this, and which Beza, with others, observes, the apostle speaks of such as had been disobedient, and unbelievers; a character which will not agree with righteous men, and prophets, and patriarchs, under the former dispensation: others think

the words are to be understood of Christ's going to preach, by his apostles, to the Gentiles, as in Eph. ii. 17. who were in a most miserable condition, strangers to the covenants of promise, and destitute of the hope of salvation, and sat in darkness, and the shadow of death, and, as it were, at the gates of hell; were in the bonds of iniquity, and dead in sin, and had been for a long time past foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, to which they were in bondage. This is, indeed, a more tolerable sense than the former; but it will be difficult to shew, that men, in the present state of life, are called *spirits*, which seems to be a word that relates to the souls of men, in a separate state from their bodies; and especially that carnal and unconverted men are ever so called; and besides, the apostle is speaking of such who were disobedient in the times of Noah; and therefore not of the Gentiles, in the times of the apostles: add to which, that the transition from the times of the apostles, according to this sense, to the days of Noah, is very unaccountable; this sense does not agree with the connexion of the words: others are of opinion, that this is meant of the souls of the Old-Testament saints, who were *in a watch*, as they think the phrase may be rendered, instead of *in prison*; and said to be in such a situation, because they were intent upon the hope of promised salvation, and were looking out for the Messiah, and anxiously desiring his coming, and which he, by some gracious manifestation, made known unto them: but though the word may sometimes signify a watch, yet more commonly a prison, and which sense best suits here; nor is that anxiety and uneasiness, which represents them as in a prison, so applicable to souls in a state of happiness; nor such a gracious manifestation so properly called preaching; and besides, not believers, but unbelievers, disobedient ones, are here spoken of; and though it is only said they were sometimes so, yet to what purpose should this former character be once mentioned of souls now in glory? but it would be tedious to reckon up the several different senses of this place; some referring it to such in Noah's time, to whom the Gospel was preached, and who repented; and though they suffered in their bodies, in the general deluge, yet their souls were saved; whereas the apostle calls them all, *the world of the ungodly*, 2 Pet. ii. 5. and others, to the eight souls that were shut up in the ark, as in a prison, and were saved; though these are manifestly distinguished in the text from the disobedient spirits. The plain and easy sense of the words is, that Christ, by his spirit, by which he was quickened, went in the ministry of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, and preached both by words and deeds, by the personal ministry of Noah, and by the building of the ark, to that generation who was then in being; and who being disobedient, and continuing so, a flood was brought upon them which destroyed them all; and whose spirits, or separate souls, were then in the prison of hell, so the Syriac version renders it, *בשׂוּל, in hell*, see Rev. xx. 7. when the Apostle Peter wrote this epistle; so that Christ neither went into this prison, nor preached in it, nor to spirits that were then in it when he preached, but to persons alive in the days of Noah, and who being disobedient, when they died, their se-

parate souls were put into prison, and there they were when the apostle wrote : from whence we learn, that Christ was, that he existed in his divine nature before he was incarnate, he was before Abraham, he was in the days of Noah ; and that Christ also, under the Old Testament, acted the part of a Mediator, in his divine nature, and by his spirit discharged that branch of it, his prophetic office, before he appeared in human nature ; and that the Gospel was preached in those early times, as unto Abraham, so before him.

Ver. 20. *Which sometime were disobedient, &c.* To all the instructions and warnings which God gave them, to all the strivings of his spirit, and to the ministry of Christ, by Noah ; they continued in their profaneness and impiety, and to corrupt their ways, and fill the earth with violence and wickedness ; not believing what they were threatened with, or that ever a flood would come upon them, and destroy them : and this *sometime* refers to the time of their being upon earth, who were now in hell ; to the days of Noah ; hereafter mentioned ; and which the Syriac version connects with this clause, reading it thus, *who of old were disobedient in the days of Noah* ; at which time it was, that Christ, by his spirit in Noah, went and preached to them : *when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah* : that is, when God, who is long-suffering and patient, waited on these disobedient ones, in Noah's time, for the space of an hundred and twenty years : *while the ark was preparing* ; by Noah, according to the directions which God gave him, Gen. vi. 14—22. and which, as R. Tanchuma says^b, was fifty-two years a building ; others say^c an hundred years ; but Jarchi says^d it was an hundred and twenty ; and which seems most likely, that being the term of time in which God's long-suffering waited on them ; during which time Noah was preaching to them, and building the ark : *wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water* ; the eight persons were, Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their three wives. It is a common tradition with the Jews^e, that besides these, Og, king of Bashan, escaped the flood ; and who, they say, is the same that escaped, and told Abraham of Lot's being carried captive by the kings^f ; the manner of his escape at the flood they relate thus^g : "Og came, who was delivered from the men that died at the flood ; and he rode upon the ark, and he had a covering upon his head, and was fed with the food of Noah ; but not for his worthiness was he delivered, but that the inhabitants of the world might see the power of the Lord ;" and elsewhere^h, after this manner, citing those words, *and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark*, Gen. vii. 23. they add, "except Og, king of Bashan, who sat on a certain piece of wood which belonged to the scaffolding of the ark, and he swore to Noah, and his sons, that he would be their servant for ever. What did Noah do ? he bored an hole in the ark, and every day reached out food to him, and he remained alive,

"according to what is said, Deut. iii. 11. *only Og, king of Bashan, &c.*" But this is all a mere fiction ; and equally fabulous is the account the Arabians give, who sayⁱ that eighty persons, together with Noah, were taken into the ark, among whom was Jorham, their father ; for there were no more than eight persons saved ; and this is the apostle's sense ; and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, *and eight souls בלודו, only entered into it, and were saved by water* ; and we are told by some of the eastern writers^k, that when these eight went out of the ark, they built a city, which they called Themanin, which, in the Arabic language, signifies *eight*, according to their number. The ark was a type of Christ, into whom whoever enters by faith, or in whom whoever believes, shall be saved ; but as they that entered into the ark were but few, so are those that enter in at the strait gate, or believe in Christ ; and they that went into the ark were saved by the water bearing up the ark, even by that by which others were destroyed ; as the very same thing, for different reasons, is the cause or means of destruction and salvation ; so Christ is set, for the fall and rising of many, is a stumbling-block to some, and the power and wisdom of God to others ; and the Gospel, and the ministers of it, are the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others. This instance of the dispensation of the providence of God to the old world is very appositely, though by way of digression, introduced by the apostle ; shewing, that in times past, as then, God's usual method has been to afford the outward means to ungodly men, and to bear with them long, and then bring down his vengeance upon them, and save his own people ; and this suffering saints might depend upon would be their case, and therefore should bear their afflictions patiently.

Ver. 21. *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, &c.* The ark, and deliverance by it, as it was a type of Christ, and salvation by him, so it was a figure of baptism, and baptism was the antitype of that ; or there is something in these which correspond, and answer to, and bear a resemblance to each other : as the ark was God's ordinance, and not man's invention, so is baptism, it is of heaven, and not of men ; and as the ark, while it was preparing, was the scorn and derision of men, so is this ordinance of the Gospel ; it was rejected with disdain by the Scribes and Pharisees, as it still is by many ; and as the ark, when Noah and his family were shut up in it by God, represented a burial, and they seemed, as it were, to be buried in it, it was a lively emblem of baptism, which is expressed by a burial, Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12. and as they in the ark had the great deep broke up under them, and the windows of heaven opened over them, pouring out waters upon them, they were, as it were, immersed in, and were covered with water, this fitly figured baptism by immersion ; nor were there any but adult persons that entered into the ark, nor should any be baptized but believers ; to which may be added,

^b In Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

^c Elmacin. Hist. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. l. 1. c. 8. p. 249.

^d In Gen. vi. 15.

^e Targum Jon. in Deut. iii. 11. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 1.

^f Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 2. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in Gen. xiv. 13.

^g Targum Jon. in Gen. xiv. 13.

^h Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

ⁱ Pocock. Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 39.

^k Eutychiei Annal. p. 43. Elmacin. Hist. l. 1. c. 1. p. 19. Patricides, p. 10. Apud Hottinger, Smegma Orient. l. 1. c. 8. p. 251, 252.

that as the one saved by water, so does the other ; for it is water-baptism which is here designed, which John practised, Christ gave a commission for, and his disciples administered : it saves not as a cause, for it has no causal influence on, nor is it essential to salvation. Christ only is the cause and author of eternal salvation ; and as those only that were in the ark were saved by water, so those only that are in Christ, and that are baptized into Christ, and into his death, are saved by baptism ; not every one that is baptized, but he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, Mark xvi. 16. for baptism is *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh* ; the design of it is not to take off the sordid flesh, as circumcision did ; or in a ceremonious way, outwardly, to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, as the Jewish baptisms did ; see Heb. ix. 10, 13, or to take away either original or actual sin ; this only the blood of Christ can do ; and it is not a mere external cleansing of the body : *but the answer of a good conscience towards God* ; the Vulgate Latin renders it, *the interrogation of a good conscience* ; referring, it may be, to the interrogations that used to be put to those who desired baptism ; as, dost thou renounce Satan ? dost thou believe in Christ ? see Acts viii. 36, 37. others render it, *the stipulation of a good conscience* ; alluding also to the ancient custom of obliging those that were baptized to covenant and agree to live an holy life and conversation, to renounce the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of this world ; and baptism does certainly lay an obligation on men to walk in newness of life ; see Rom. vi. 4, 5. the Ethiopic version renders it, *confession of God* ; and to this the Syriac version agrees, rendering it, *confessing God with a pure conscience* ; for, to baptism, profession of faith in Christ, and of the doctrine of Christ in a pure conscience, is requisite ; and in baptism persons make a public confession of God, and openly put on Christ before men : the sense seems plainly this ; that then is baptism rightly performed, and its end answered, when a person, conscious to himself of its being an ordinance of Christ, and of his duty to submit to it, does do so upon profession of his faith in Christ, in obedience to his command, and *with a view to his glory* ; in doing which he discharges a good conscience towards God : and being thus performed, it saves, *by the resurrection of*

Jesus Christ ; being a means of leading the faith of the baptized person, as to the blood of Christ, for pardon and cleansing, so to the resurrection of Christ, for justification ; see Acts ii. 38. and xxii. 16. Rom. iv. 25. moreover, the sense of the passage may be this, that baptism is a like figure as the ark of Noah was ; that as the entrance of Noah and his family into the ark was an emblem of a burial, so their coming out of it was a figure of the resurrection ; and just such a figure is baptism, performed by immersion, both of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and of the resurrection of saints to walk in newness of life. The Arabic version renders the whole verse thus ; *of which thing baptism is now a type saving us, not by removing the filth of the flesh only, but by exhilarating a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Ver. 22. *Who is gone into heaven, &c.*] After he had been risen forty days, where he is received, and will remain, until the restitution of all things ; and where he appears in the presence of God for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them ; and is entered as their forerunner, and is preparing mansions of glory for them ; and will come again, and take them to himself, to be for ever with him, and from hence they expect him : *and is on the right hand of God* ; where Stephen saw him ; and which is an honour never conferred on any angel, or man ; and shews that Christ had done his work, and that in a way acceptable to God ; the Vulgate Latin version here adds, *swallowing up death, that we might be made heirs of eternal life* ; but is not supported by any copy or version : *angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him* ; by *angels* may be meant angels both good and bad, who are all in subjection to Christ ; and by *authorities and powers*, the kings, princes, and governors of this world, who hold their dominions from and under the Lord Jesus Christ ; and which is an argument why believers should patiently bear all their sufferings and afflictions, since Christ has the government in his hands, and he rules and overrules all things for good ; and when he pleases, he can put a stop to the rage and persecutions of men ; and so the apostle returns to his former argument, in the following chapter.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter the apostle goes on to exhort to an holy life and conversation, and to the several duties of religion, and to suffer cheerfully for the sake of Christ. From the consideration of Christ's sufferings, he exhorts the saints to arm themselves with the same mind, and cease from sin, and live no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God, ver. 1, 2. the reason, or argument engaging to it, is taken from the past time of life, in which they walked in all manner of sin, and which ought to suffice, though they should be spoken evil of by wicked men, for not continuing therein, ver. 3, 4. and to fortify their minds against such abuses, the apostle takes notice of the general judgment, when

such persons must give an account for their evil speaking to the Judge of quick and dead ; and that though those to whom the Gospel is preached, and embrace it, suffer death for it, being judged of men in their bodies, yet they live to God in their souls, ver. 5, 6. and seeing the end of all things is near, he exhorts to various things, as to sobriety, watchfulness unto prayer, and especially to fervent charity, since that covers a multitude of sins, ver. 7, 8. and to hospitality, without grudging, and to a communication of all good things, as faithful stewards of them, ver. 9, 10. and particularly to the dispensation of the Gospel, according to the word of God ; and to a ministration to the poor,

according to a man's ability, with a view to the glory of God, by Christ, ver. 11. and next, the apostle proceeds to comfort the saints under reproaches and persecutions, and to instruct them how to behave under such circumstances; as that they should not think such things strange, though grievous, since they were for the trial of their graces, ver. 12. but should rather rejoice, since they were partakers of the sufferings of Christ now, and should share in his glory when revealed, which would make them exceeding glad, ver. 13. yea, inasmuch as it was for the name of Christ they suffered reproach, they ought to reckon themselves happy persons; since the glorious Spirit of God rested on them, and since the issue of it was, the glorifying of God by them, though he was evil-spoken of by those that reproached them, ver. 14. indeed, they ought not to suffer as persons guilty of capital crimes; should they, they would have reason to be ashamed, but not since they suffered as Christians; but, on the contrary, should give glory to God for it, who had done them so much honour as to call them to it, ver. 15, 16. and to reconcile their minds to sufferings, he observes, that the time was come, that afflictions should begin with the people of God, on account of which, the righteous are scarcely saved, though certainly; and that, therefore, sad must be the state of the disobedient and ungodly, even of their wicked persecutors, ver. 17, 18. wherefore, upon the whole, seeing it was the will of God they should suffer, they ought to suffer patiently, and, in well-doing, commit the care of their souls to their faithful Creator, ver. 19.

Ver. 1. *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, &c.*] The apostle having finished his digression concerning Christ's preaching in the ministry of Noah, to men whose spirits were now in prison, and concerning the salvation of Noah's family in the ark, by water, and concerning its antitype, baptism, its nature and effect, returns to the sufferings of Christ he had before made mention of; and argues from thence to holiness of life, and patience in sufferings, after this manner; seeing then Christ, the eternal son of God, the Lord of glory, the holy and just One, suffered such indignities, reproaches, and persecutions from men, the wrath of God, the curses of the law, and death itself; and that not for himself, nor for angels, but for men, and those not all men, otherwise his death, with respect to some, must be in vain; but for a particular number of men, in distinction from others, described in the beginning of this epistle, as elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God; and these sufferings he endured in the room and stead of those persons, in the days of his flesh, whilst here on earth, and in his human nature, both soul and body, and was crucified through the weakness of his flesh, and for the sins of our flesh, and which he bore in his own: *arm yourselves likewise with the same mind*; that was in Christ; as he suffered for you, do ye likewise suffer for him, in his cause, for righteousness-sake, for the sake of him and his Gospel; and bear all reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions on his account, willingly and cheerfully, with meekness and patience, as he did, and with the same view; not indeed to make satisfaction for sin, which was his principal design, but that being dead unto sin, you might live unto righteousness. The

apostle speaks to the saints, in this exhortation, as to soldiers, and who had many enemies to engage with, and therefore should put on their armour, and be in a readiness to meet any attack upon them: *for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*; meaning either Christ, who having suffered in human nature for the sins of his people, whereby he has made satisfaction for them, is now clear of them; the sins that were imputed to him being took and bore away, finished and made an end of, and he justified from them, and freed from all the effects of them, and punishment for them, as from all the infirmities of human nature, from mortality and death: or the person that has suffered in and with Christ, his head and representative, which is all one as if he had suffered himself, in person; by virtue of which his sin ceases, and he ceases from being chargeable with it, as if he had never sinned; which is the case of every criminal, when he has suffered the penalty of the law for his crime: or else the person that is dead to sin, by virtue of the death of Christ, and, in imitation of it, who has been baptized into Christ's death, and planted in the likeness of it; whose old man is crucified with Christ, and he is dead with him; who has crucified the affections with the lusts, and through the spirit has mortified the deeds of the body; which way the generality of interpreters go: such a man has ceased from sin; not from the being and in-dwelling of it in him; nor from the burden of it on him; nor from a continual war with it in him; nor from slips and falls by it, and into it; no, nor from it in the most solemn and religious services; but as from the guilt of it, and obligation to punishment by it, through the death of Christ, so from the servitude and dominion of it, through the power of divine grace, in consequence of Christ's death: or rather, the believer that suffers death in his body, for the sake of Christ, such an one immediately ceases from the very being of sin, and all commission of it; he becomes at once perfectly pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and a noble argument this is to meet death without fear, and to suffer it cheerfully and willingly, since the consequence of this will be an entire freedom from sin, than which nothing can be more desirable by a believer: to this agrees the Syriac version, which renders the words thus: *for whoever is dead in his body hath ceased from all sins*; but the Arabic version more fully confirms this sense, and is the best version of the text, and is this; *be ye armed with this (same) thought, that (not for) he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*; that is, fortify your minds against all the fears of sufferings, and of death, for the sake of Christ, with this single thought; that he that has suffered martyrdom for Christ, in his body, or has suffered death for his sake, or dies in the Lord, is free from sin, and so from sorrow, and is the most happy person imaginable; so that this last clause is not a reason of the former, but points out, and is explanative of what that same mind or thought is Christians should arm themselves with, against the fears of death; and it is the best piece of armour for this service, a saint can make use of.

Ver. 2. *That he no longer should live, &c.*] The Arabic version reads, *that ye no longer should live*. This expresses the end of being armed with the above

thought, that a suffering saint after death is clear of sin; and the use that is to be made of it in the present time of life, and the remainder of it, that such a person who so thinks, and is thus guarded and fortified against the fears of death, should no more, or any longer live, *the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God*: the phrase, *his time in the flesh*, means the present time of life, in the body, and is the same with those phrases, in the days of his flesh, to abide in the flesh, and be at home in the body; and the words of the text suppose the former part of this time to have been spent in sinful lusts and pleasures, as the former part of the time of God's elect, even that before conversion, is; and that the remaining part of it, be it longer or shorter, ought to be spent otherwise: not to the lusts of men; of wicked and unregenerate men, unconverted Gentiles; which they are addicted to, immersed in, and serve; and which they are desirous others should live in; and which are sometimes called divers worldly and fleshly lusts; and are foolish, and hurtful, and deceitful, and drown men in perdition, and therefore not to be lived unto: *but to the will of God*; revealed in his word, and which is good, acceptable, and perfect; one part of which is sanctification, holiness of heart, life, and conversation, as also patient suffering all reproach, injury, and persecution, for the sake of the Gospel; to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to study to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men, and to suffer patiently for his name's sake, is to live to the will of God; and nothing more strongly should engage to this than the consideration of a sinless life after death; see 2 Pet. iii. 11, 13, 14. The lusts of men, and the will of God, being opposed to each other, shews that the nature of man is sadly corrupted, and is opposite to God; and that the will of man is depraved, and that the desires of it are not to that which is good, but are contrary to the will of God.

Ver. 3. *For the time past of our life may suffice us, &c.*] The word *our* is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions. The Arabic version reads, *the time of your past life*; and to the same purpose the Ethiopic version; and which seems to be the more agreeable reading, since it can hardly be thought that the apostle would put himself among the Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, who had walked with them in their unregeneracy, in all the sins hereafter mentioned, and best agrees with the following verse: *to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*; or *when ye wrought*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; *when we walked, or were walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries*. These converted persons, in the past time of their life, before conversion, *walked* in sin; which denotes a series and course of sinning, a persisting and progress in it, with delight and pleasure, promising themselves security and impunity: the particular sins they walked in are reducible to these three heads, unchastity, intemperance, and idolatry: *in lasciviousness, lusts*; which belong to the head of uncleanness, and take in all kinds of it; as fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts: *excess of wine, revellings, banquetings*; which refer to intemperance of every sort, by

eating or drinking: as gluttony, drunkenness, surfeittings, and all luxurious feasts and entertainments, attended with riotings, revellings, and obscene songs; and which are here mentioned in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and which lead to lasciviousness, and every unclean lust: *and abominable idolatries*; which some understand of worshipping of angels; but they seem rather to intend the idolatries the Jews were led into by the feasts of the Gentiles, either at their own houses, or in the idol's temple; by which means they were gradually brought to idolatry, and to all the wickedness and abominations committed by them at such times: and it is easy to observe, that the two former, uncleanness and intemperance, often lead men into idolatry; see Exod. xxxii. 6. Numb. xxv. 1, 2. Now when they walked in these things, they *wrought the will of the Gentiles*; they did the things which the sinners of the Gentiles, the worst of men, that knew not God, took pleasure in, and what they would have others do; and therefore, since the past time of their life had been spent in such a way, it was sufficient, and more than sufficient; see Ezek. xlv. 6. for no time is allowable for sin; and therefore it became them for the future, and in the remaining part of life, to behave in another manner; not to do the will of the Gentiles, but the will of God; to which that grace of God obliged them, that had made a difference between what they were themselves formerly, and themselves now, and between themselves and others.

Ver. 4. *Wherein they think it strange, &c.*] Here the apostle points out what the saints must expect from the men of the world, by living a different life; and he chooses to mention it, to prevent discouragements, and that they might not be uneasy and distressed when they observed it; as that they would wonder at the change in their conversations, and look on it as something unusual, new, and unheard-of, and treat them as strangers, yea, as enemies, on account of it: *that you run not with them into the same excess of riot*; to their luxurious entertainments, their Bacchanalian feasts, and that profusion of lasciviousness, luxury, intemperance, and wickedness of all sorts, which, with so much eagerness of mind, and bodily haste, they rushed into; being amazed that they should not have the same taste for these things as before, and as themselves now had; and wondering how it was possible for them to abstain from them, and what that should be that should give them a different cast of mind, and turn of action: *speaking evil of you*; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions supply *you* as we do; but in the Greek text 'tis only, *speaking evil of, or blaspheming*: God, Christ, religion, the Gospel, and the truths of it, and all good men; hating them because different from them, and because their lives reprove and condemn them; charging them with incivility, unsociableness, preciseness, and hypocrisy.

Ver. 5. *Who shall give account to him, &c.*] *To God himself*, as the Syriac version reads; of all their blasphemies, and hard speeches spoken by them against God, Christ, the Gospel, and good men, and receive their just punishment. This the apostle says, to calm the minds of God's people, and make them to sit easy under all censures, reproaches, and calumnies, and not think of avenging themselves, but commit them-

selves to him that will judge righteously; even to him, *that is ready to judge the quick and the dead*; that is, all men, such as will be found alive when he comes, and those that have died before, who will then be raised from the dead, to receive their judgment; and by whom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all judgment is committed; and who is ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead, and will judge both at his appearing and kingdom; yea, the day is appointed when this judgment will proceed by him, and he is at the door; so that he may be truly said to be ready for it, as he is every way equal to it, and will finish it with righteousness.

Ver. 6. *For, for this cause was the Gospel preached also, &c.*] Not for what goes before, because Christ was ready to judge quick and dead; and because wicked men must give an account to him, and therefore the Gospel is preached to them also, that they may be left without excuse; but for what follows, and which does not so much design the reason of the preaching of it, as the event consequential upon it. By the Gospel is meant the good news of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, and salvation by him: and includes all the doctrines of grace, as of pardon, righteousness, and eternal life; and by its being *preached* is meant the publishing of it openly, freely, and boldly, with faithfulness and consistence: the persons to whom it was preached are *to them that are dead*; not in a figurative sense, dead in trespasses and sins; though this is the case of all mankind, and of God's elect, in a state of nature, whether Jews or Gentiles; and the Gospel is preached to such, as it is ordered to be preached to all nations, to every creature, and is the means of quickening dead sinners; and this follows upon it, that such as receive it are judged and condemned by men, and live spiritually here, according to the will of God, and an eternal life hereafter; but the word *dead* is used in the same sense as in the preceding verse, where it manifestly signifies such who had been alive, but were now dead in a natural sense, whom Christ would judge as well as those that will be found alive when he comes; wherefore the Gospel has been preached also to them that are already dead, as well as to those who are now alive. And by these are meant, not the dead, whose souls are in hell, for to them, there, the Gospel never was, nor never will be preached, nor they saved, as Origen, and his followers, have vainly thought: nor the deceased patriarchs, before the coming of Christ, whose souls, by the Papists, are said to be in *Limbus*, whither Christ, they say, went upon his death, and preached to them, and delivered them; but these never were in any such place, but in peace and rest; nor did Christ, in his human soul, descend thither, but went to paradise: nor the dead in general, before the apostle's writing of this epistle; for though the Gospel had been preached from the beginning, from the fall of Adam, to certain persons, and at certain periods of time, yet not to all the individuals of mankind who were then dead, especially in the Gentile world; nor the Old-Testament saints in general, who were now dead, though they had the Gospel preached to them in types and figures, in promises and prophecies; nor the men in the times of Noah, to whom the

Gospel was preached by him, and who, some of them, as supposed, though they were judged and punished in their bodies in the view of men, being drowned in the waters of the flood, yet repenting and believing, upon Noah's preaching to them, they live in their spirits in eternal life, according to the free mercy and grace of God; but though the Gospel was preached to them, yet they remained disobedient to it, even all of them, but Noah's family, for any thing that appears; and are styled the world of the ungodly, and are now spirits in the prison of hell, and therefore can't be said to live according to God in the spirit: but such are intended, to whom the Gospel had been preached, and to whom it had been effectual unto salvation; who had received it in the love of it, had sincerely professed it, and had suffered for it even death itself; such are designed who had suffered in the flesh, or were dead in their bodies, ver. 1. who either were dead in the Lord, or especially had suffered death for his sake, as Stephen and others: and this, with what follows, is mentioned with a general view to encourage the saints to patient suffering for Christ; to fortify them against the ill opinion and judgment the world have formed of them; and to assure them, that Christ will judge his people, both quick and dead, and avenge their cause, since the Gospel has been preached to one as well as to another, and attended with the same power: the effect and consequence of which is, *that they might be judged according to men in the flesh*; meaning, either that such persons that receive and profess the Gospel, and suffer for it, are judged according to the judgment of men that are in the flesh, in an unregenerate estate, that is, carnal men, to be a strange and unaccountable sort of people, as in ver. 4. to receive such a strange set of notions, so strenuously to contend for them, and so constantly to abide by them, and to debar themselves of so many pleasures of life, and expose themselves to so much reproach and shame, to such dangers, and even to death itself: one while they are judged to be by these men enthusiasts, madmen, and fools; and at other times to be knaves and villains, hypocrites and deceivers; and this is the common effect of the Gospel being preached and coming with power to any; see 1 Cor. iv. 3. or the sense is, that such persons, according to men, or in their apprehensions, are judged of God, or have the judgments of God inflicted on them in their flesh, in their bodies, for some sins of theirs; and therefore they suffer what they do in the flesh, vengeance pursuing them; being ignorant that when they are judged, as they reckon it, they are only chastened by the Lord in a fatherly way, that they might not be eternally condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 32. or else to complete the sense, for all may be taken into it, these persons, who were formerly alive, but now dead, and had embraced and professed the Gospel preached to them, were judged and condemned, and put to death in the flesh, according to the will of wicked men, and which was all that they were capable of; but though this was their case, though they were thus judged, censured, and condemned, yet *live according to God in the spirit*; whilst they were here on earth, the Gospel preached to them had such an effect upon them, as to cause them to live spiritually, to live by faith on Christ, to live a life of

holiness from him, and communion with him, and to live according to the will of God, in righteousness and true holiness; and now, though dead in their bodies, they live in their spirits or souls an eternal life of comfort, peace, pleasure, and happiness with God, according to his eternal purpose, unchangeable covenant, promise, grace, and love.

Ver. 7. *But the end of all things is at hand, &c.*] With respect to particular persons, the end of life, and which is the end of all things in this world to a man, is near at hand; which is but as an hand's breadth, passes away like a tale that is told, and is but as a vapour which appears for a while, and then vanishes away. Or this may be said with regard to the Jews, the end of their church and civil state was near at hand, of their sacrifices, temple, city, and nation; or with respect to the whole universe, to the scheme and fashion of this world, which will soon be gone, though the substance will abide; when the heavens shall pass away, and the earth and all therein will be burnt up; when there will be an end of all the purposes and promises of God respecting the present state of things concerning his church and people, and of the judgments of God upon his enemies here; when the man of sin will be destroyed, and the wickedness of the wicked will be come to an end, and the sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions of the saints, will be no more; and when will be an end put to the present dispensation of things; there will be an end of the ministry of the word, and of the administration of ordinances; time will be no more, and the final state of both good and bad men will take place: this may be said to be at hand in the apostle's time, though so long ago, because that was the last time, and the last dispensation of things; and whereas they knew not the exact time when it would be, they frequently spoke of it as near, in order to stir up the saints to the more diligent discharge of duty, and fervent exercise of grace, as here: *be ye therefore sober, or temperate*, as the Arabic version renders it; and so is opposed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which is an abuse of the creatures of God; and unfits a man for the duties of religion; when Satan easily gets an advantage, and is often the cause of other sins, and is frequently dissuaded from, for the same reason as here; see 1 Cor. vii. 31. Luke xxi. 34, 35. or *chaste*, as the Syriac version; and so is opposed to immodesty in words, actions, or apparel, in which sense sobriety is used in 1 Tim. ii. 9. or *prudent*, as the Vulgate Latin version; and is opposed to all self-conceit and vanity of mind, and imprudence in conduct and conversation; see Rom. xii. 3. and to all immoderate care of the world, which has the same effect upon the soul as surfeiting and drunkenness on the body: it hinders the soul in the service of God, chokes the word, and makes it unprofitable, and runs men into many sins, snares, and temptations; and the consideration of the end of all things being at hand should draw off from it. It may also signify soundness of mind and judgment in the doctrines of faith, which are words of truth and soberness; and the rather this may be exhorted to, since towards the close of time there will be little of the doctrine of faith in the

earth, and men will not be able to endure sound doctrine: it follows, *and watch unto prayer*; watch all opportunities of praying, or of attendance on that ordinance, both in private and in public; watch and observe both your present wants, and present mercies, that ye may know what to pray for, and what to return thanks for; and that you have a due reverence of the divine Majesty, in whose presence you are entering. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, *watch, or be awake in prayers*; be careful that you lift up your hearts with your hands to God; that you pray for such things as are agreeable to the revealed will of God; that you pray in faith, and lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting; and watch for the spirit of God to enlarge your hearts in prayer, and to assist you both as to the matter and manner of praying. And persons should also watch after prayer for a return of it; and that they do not depend upon the duty performed; and that they are not negligent to return thanks for the mercy prayed for, when received. Very rightly does the apostle join the above exhortation with this, since a man that is not sober is neither fit to watch nor pray; and a drunken man, according to the Jewish canons, might not pray¹: "one that is a "drinker, or in drink, let him not pray, or if he prays, "his prayer is deprecations; a drunken man, let him "not pray, and if he prays, his prayer is blasphemies." Or, as it is elsewhere^m expressed, "let not a drunken "man pray, because he has no intention; and if he "prays, his prayer is an abomination, therefore let "him return and pray when he is clear of his drunken- "ness: let no one in drink pray, and if he prays, his "prayer is prayer (unless the word תפלל should "rather be rendered *folly*, as it may); who is a "drunken man? he that can't speak before a king; "a man in drink can speak before a king, and not be "confounded; even though he drinks but a fourth "part, or a quarter of wine, let him not pray until his "wine is departed from him."

Ver. 8. *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, &c.*] Not but that charity, or love, is to be exercised towards all men, even towards enemies, but more especially towards the saints, and that under such a consideration in which it cannot be exercised towards others; namely, as their brethren in Christ, and as belonging to him, as the children of God, as redeemed by Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit; and these not only such as are of the same nation, and belong to the same particular church and community, or of the same denomination, but all the saints everywhere, whether Jews or Gentiles, or of whatsoever name, and in whatsoever state and condition: and this love ought to be mutual and reciprocal, and to be warm and fervent, and not lukewarm and indifferent, as it too often is; and should be constant, *continued, and perpetual*, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions here read: and this the apostle exhorts to above all things else; since outward sobriety, and watchings, and prayer, and all other duties, are nothing without this; this is the sum and substance of the law, and the fulfilling of it; and without this a mere knowledge of the Gospel, and a profession of it,

¹ T. Hieros. Terumot, fol. 4. 4.
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^m Maimon. Hileh Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 17.
4 D

are in vain, and therefore in the first place to be attended to. And especially for the following reason, *for charity shall cover the multitude of sins*; referring to Prov. x. 12. not a man's own sins, but the sins of others; and not from the sight of God, for from that only the blood and righteousness of Christ cover sins, even all the sins, the whole multitude of the sins of God's elect; but from the sight of men, both of those against whom they are committed, and others; since charity, or true love, thinks no ill, but puts the best constructions upon the words and actions of fellow-Christians, and does not take them up, and improve and exaggerate them, but lets them lie buried in oblivion: it takes no notice of injuries, offences, and affronts, but overlooks them, bears with them, and forgives them, so that they are never raked up, and seen any more; which prevents much scandal, strife, and trouble. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *covereth*, as in Prov. x. 12.

Ver. 9. *Use hospitality, &c.*] *Or, be lovers of strangers*, as the phrase may be rendered, and as it is in the Syriac version; that is, such as are of a distant country, or come from afar, and are unknown by face, especially good men, that are obliged to remove from their native country for the sake of religion, or by one providence or another; and these are to be loved: and love is to be shewn them, both negatively, by not vexing them, and making them uneasy in body or mind; by not oppressing them by violence and injustice, and making any exorbitant demands upon them; or by not perverting judgment with respect to them; and positively, by directing, counselling, and advising them, and if need be, by giving them food, and raiment, and lodging: and it is what men have been led to by the very light of nature, as in the instances of Jethro the Midianite towards Moses, and the inhabitants of Melita with Publius, the chief man of the island, towards the Apostle Paul and his company; and is what God enjoined the Israelites by divers laws, since they had been strangers in the land of Egypt; and various are the exhortations to it in the New Testament; and some, by the practice of it, have entertained angels unawares, as Abraham and Lot; and even Christ himself, as the two disciples travelling to Emmaus; and is what is highly regarded and commended by Christ, and the contrary is resented by him; and therefore it ought to be used and practised frequently; saints should inure themselves to it, be given to it, pursue and follow hard after it; see the notes on Rom. xii. 13. Heb. xiii. 2. The apostle adds here, *one to another*; which clause is left out in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; the reason of which may be, because the authors of these versions might think this not so consistent with the duty exhorted to, since the objects of it are strangers; but it should be observed, that so were these persons the apostle writes to; see ch. i. 1. they were scattered about, and lived in different countries, and were strangers to one another, and therefore the clause is pertinent enough; and the sense is, that as they were in foreign countries, and at a distance one from another, whenever by any providence they were brought where each other were, that they would be hospitable to one another: and

that *without grudging*; food, raiment, and lodging, or what they want, whether direction or advice, thinking it no trouble to give them either; or *without murmurings*, as it may be rendered, as if they were burdensome, and they were too chargeable to them, and their stay too long; and without complaints of them, finding fault, and picking quarrels with them, and laying charges against them, in order to get rid of them. This is one branch of charity before recommended.

Ver. 10. *As every man hath received the gift, &c.*]

That is, *from God*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add. This is a general rule laid down by the apostle, according to which, distribution of every kind, whether in things temporal or spiritual, is to be made, even according to the nature, quality, and quantity of the gift received: the greatest gift God bestows on men, next to himself, Son, and Spirit, and received by them in this life, is special grace; which God gives of his sovereign will and pleasure, liberally, abundantly, without the deserts of men, or conditions to be performed by them; of this kind are faith, repentance, hope, and love: the next to this is the ministerial gift, or what qualifies men for the work of the ministry; which is not any thing in nature, or what is acquired by art and industry, but is a gift of grace, which is bestowed on some in a higher, on others in a lower degree: and besides these, there are the gifts of nature and providence, as human wisdom, and the knowledge of things natural and civil, riches and wealth, and the various good things of life; for there is nothing a man has in nature and in grace but what is a gift to him, and what he has received: and according to the measure of the gift received, be it what it will, the exhortation is, even so *minister the same one to another*; or to, and among yourselves; to your neighbours or companions, as the Syriac version renders it; if the gift be special grace, though that itself cannot be imparted from one to another, yet the knowledge of it may; and it becomes such who have an experience of the grace of God upon their hearts to make it known, both to particular friends in private conversation, and to the church of God in public, for the use and edification of others, and the glory of God's grace: if the gift be a ministerial one, whether it be greater or less, for it is not in all alike, it is not to be wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth, or to lie neglected, but to be stirred up, and used for the benefit of the souls of men: and if it is a temporal one, the good things of this life, according to the measure of them, that a man has, he is to minister to the supply of the poor; and as God has prospered him, he is to distribute to the necessities of others; as men freely receive, be it what it will, they should freely minister it, according to the nature and measure of it: *as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*; for they are but stewards of whatsoever gifts they have; and therefore, if they would approve themselves good stewards, they should minister the same in proportion to their reception of them. Manifold and various are the graces of the spirit of God, and the rich experiences communicated to men, which are not only for themselves, but for the good of others also: gifts for public usefulness are different one from another; one man has one gift, and another has another; or the same gift is not alike in all, in some

greater, and in others less; and all are but stewards: they are accountable for them, and the use of them, to their great Lord and master: and various are the doctrines of the grace of God; of the grace of the Father in election, in the everlasting covenant, in the mission of his Son, in the free justification of sinners by his righteousness, in the free and full pardon of all their sins, in the adoption of any into his family, and in the gift of eternal life; and of the Son of God, in engaging as the surety of his people from everlasting, in assuming their nature in time, in obeying, suffering, and dying in their room and stead; and of the Spirit of God in regeneration and sanctification; and of all these mysteries of grace the ministers of the Gospel are stewards; and it is required of them that they be faithful. Temporal good things are given to men, not for their own use only, but for others; and they are but stewards of them; the original proprietor is God, and to him they must give an account of their stewardship, and how they have used and disposed of the manifold gifts which God of his goodness has put into their hands; so that this last clause contains a reason or argument enforcing the above rule.

Ver. 11. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God, &c.*] This is an application of the above general rule to a particular case, the public ministry of the word, for that is here meant: *if any man speak*; not in any manner, or on any subject; not in a private way, or about things natural and civil; but in public, and concerning divine things: *let him speak*; this is rightly supplied in our translation; and in which it is supported and confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic versions, who both supply the same way: *as the oracles of God*; by which are meant the writings of the Old Testament, the sacred Scriptures; see Rom. iii. 2. so called, because they come from God, are breathed and spoken by him, and contain his mind and will, and are authoritative and infallible; and according to these he is to speak who speaks in public on divine subjects, both as to the matter and manner of his speech: the matter of it must be agreeably to the divinely-inspired word of God, must be fetched out of it, and confirmed by it; and he is to speak every thing that is in it, and keep back nothing, but declare the whole counsel of God, and only what is in it, without mixing his own chaff, or the doctrines of men with it; and it should be spoken in a manner agreeably to it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words of the Holy Ghost; and with all boldness, for so the Gospel ought to be spoken; and with all certainty and assurance, constantly affirming the things of it, for nothing is more sure than they are; and with all openness, plainness, and freedom, making truth manifest, laying it plain and open before men, as it ought to be; and that with all reverence and godly fear, which becomes both speaker and hearer. The apostle next proceeds to mention another case, to which the above rule is applicable; *if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth*; that is, if any man minister in temporal things to the supply of the poor; if a private man, and in a private way, let him do it in proportion to his ability, as God has prospered him in the world; or if an officer of the church, a deacon; and

which seems to be the sense, for so the word used signifies, *δυνασει*, if any man perform the office, or act the part of a deacon, let him do it according to what God, in his providence, has put into his hands; that is, of the church's stock, which he should minister with simplicity and cheerfulness. A like division of church-offices into public preaching of the word, and ministering to the wants of the poor, is here made, as in Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. The end of all this is, *that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ*; or *by all means*, as the Arabic version renders it; by all ways and methods proper; for the glory of God should be the principal view in every action of life: hence the Syriac version adds to the phrase, *in all things*, for the sake of explanation, *which ye do*; by sobriety, by prayer, by watching unto it; by exercising fervent charity, and using hospitality one to another; by ministering the gift as it is received; by the public ministrations of the word; and by supplying the wants of the poor, whether in a personal or in a church way: or in all gifts, whether private or public, temporal or spiritual; since they all come from God, and men are accountable to him for them; and therefore should be used so as to glorify him by them, and give him the glory of them; and not glory in them, as if not received from him: or in all the members of the church, whether officers, as pastors and deacons, or private Christians; all should so behave in their respective stations, as God may have glory: *through Jesus Christ*; through whom all grace is communicated, by whom all gifts are bestowed, and by virtue of grace and strength received from him every good work is performed to the glory of God: *to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever*; meaning either to God the father, from whom every good gift comes; who is the God of all grace, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things; and therefore the praise and glory of all belongs to him; and who has the dominion over all creatures and things, and has the disposal of all in nature, providence, and grace: or to Jesus Christ, out of whose fulness manifold grace, grace for grace, is received; and who having ascended on high, has received gifts for men, and gives them to them, and so is worthy of all praise; and who, as God, has the kingdom of nature and providence equally with the Father, and, as Mediator, the kingdom of grace, the government of the church; and whose dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and of whose kingdom there will be no end. *Amen*; so let it be, so shall it be.

Ver. 12. *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, &c.*] By which may be meant either the destruction of Jerusalem, which was at hand, and of which the apostle may be thought to give the Jews he writes to notice of before-hand; that they might be prepared for it, and not be overwhelmed with consternation and amazement when they should hear of it; who, though in other countries, must be affected with it, and would be a trying dispensation to them: or else the afflictions and persecutions which daily come upon them, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; signified by *fire* or *burning*, because grievous to the flesh, and gave great uneasiness, distress, and pain to it; and because of the fury of men, and the violence and

fierceness of their rage, expressed thereby; as also because the people of God under them are sometimes ready to conceive that the wrath of God is poured out, like fire, upon them. But the apostle would not have these saints entertain any such thoughts, and therefore he calls them *beloved*; that is, of God, as they were notwithstanding all the fiery trials and afflictions which were brought upon them; or he means, that they were beloved by him, and dear unto him, and other saints, though they were ill-treated and reproached by the world: the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *my beloved*; and the Ethiopic version, *our brethren*: and the apostle exhorts them not to look upon their afflictions that either did or should attend them as strange and uncommon things; since afflictions, of whatsoever kind, are not things of chance, and do not rise up out of the dust, but are by the appointment, and according to the will of God; and are also the common lot of the people of God in all ages, from the beginning of the world, the same afflictions are accomplished in others; yea, Christ himself endured the same hatred, reproach, and contradiction of sinners, against himself; and they are what he has given his people reason to expect, having told them of them before-hand, that they might not be offended at them; and as they lay in his way to glory, it need not seem strange that the saints also should, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom. Moreover, this fiery dispensation, be it what it will, was not to destroy them, but to try them, and that for their good, profit, and advantage; just as gold and silver are tried in the fire, and lose their dross, and become purer and brighter: *which is to try you*: afflictions try the graces of the saints; as their faith in Christ, which becomes thereby much more precious than of gold that perisheth; and their love to him, by which it appears that no tribulation can separate them from it, nor many waters and floods of afflictions drown it; and their hope of eternal life, which grows more lively and strong, and is as an anchor, sure and steadfast, amidst the greatest storms. These try a man's profession of religion, whether it is took up on good principles, and without sinister views; since, if it is not, when persecution, because of the word, comes, he is offended and gone; and likewise what a man's principles are, whether worth suffering for or no; and whether they will bear him up, and he abide by them, when called to suffer for them; and therefore, since such ends are answered by fiery trials, they should not be looked upon as strange and unusual things: *as though some strange thing happened unto you*; which was never known and heard of before; and as if useless, and of no service, and as foreign to the characters, cases, and circumstances of the saints in this world. The apostle in this verse returns to his former argument, to animate and encourage the saints in suffering afflictions patiently for righteousness-sake.

Ver. 13. *But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, &c.*] Not of his personal sufferings; though they were partakers of the benefits and blessings which come through them, and result from them, such as justification, peace, and pardon, and which are matter and ground of rejoicing; but of the sufferings of his body, the church, which is mystically

himself; and are called his, because of the union between him and his people, and the sympathy he bears to them, and because they are endured for the sake of him and his Gospel, and conform the saints, and make them like unto him; and therefore suffering saints should rejoice in this, that their sufferings are accounted by Christ as his own, who in all their afflictions is afflicted; and that they are honoured to suffer for his name's sake, and are hereby made like unto him: *that when his glory shall be revealed*; the glory of his divine nature, as the only-begotten son of God, in which he'll come and appear at the last day; and which, though incommunicable, will be more manifest to all men, and especially to the saints, who will know more of him, as the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person; and when the glory of his office, as Mediator, will be more conspicuous, and shall be beheld by all that the father has given to him; and also the glory of his human nature, which is now crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God; and likewise the glory which he has in his hands for his people, even eternal glory and happiness: this is now, in a great measure, unseen, but it will then be revealed, both to the saints and in them; they'll appear with Christ in glory, and have a glory both upon their souls and bodies. As they suffer with him, and for his sake, they'll be glorified with him, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his father's glory, and in the glory of his holy angels: the consideration of which, as it must greatly encourage to suffer for his sake, so must be matter of great joy, as follows: *ye may be glad also with exceeding joy*, a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, being made partakers of the glory of Christ, either in beholding, or in possessing it.

Ver. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, &c.*] For being called by his name; for bearing the name of Christians; for believing in him, and professing him; and for the sake of his Gospel, which is sometimes called his name, Acts ix. 15. not that the apostle makes any doubt of this, for nothing is more certain than that the saints shall be reproached, and all manner of evil spoken of them falsely for Christ's name sake; but he supposes it, and takes it for granted, that they are, and will be reproached, and yet pronounces them blessed persons: *happy are ye*; some supply it, *shall ye be*, as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, in the other world, because the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life and glory, belongs to such persons; they'll be happy at death, in judgment, and to all eternity: others, with our translators, supply, *are ye*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; for such are happy now in themselves, being both comfortable in their frames, and honourable in their persons and characters, however uncomfortable, miserable, and dishonourable they may appear to the men of the world: *for the spirit of glory, and of God, resteth upon you*; alluding to Isa. xi. 2. that is, *the glorious spirit of God*, as the Syriac version renders it; who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his nature, being possessed of the same glorious divine essence with the Father and Son; and in his works both of nature, being equally concerned with the other Persons in the Godhead in the works of creation and providence, and also of grace,

especially the latter; and in all his gifts and graces with which he adorns the saints, and makes them glorious: and his resting on them denotes his inhabitation in them, and his abiding with them, and remaining in them; and which appears by the comfort they enjoy in their souls amidst all the reproaches and revilings of men, and by the strength which they have to bear up under and endure shame and persecution for the sake of Christ; and which casts an honour upon them, and makes them both glorious and cheerful. The Jews have a sayingⁿ, that the Holy Ghost does not dwell on any, but on him that has a cheerful heart: *on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified*: on the part of the revilers, the person, office, work, and grace, the operations and influences of the spirit are blasphemed and ridiculed; the power of the spirit, with which the saints speak, the experiences of grace they express, the comforts of the spirit they declare that they enjoy under suffering circumstances, as well as their courage, patience, and cheerfulness he gives them, are generally bantered by persecutors; and indeed all the reproaches they cast upon the people of God fall upon the spirit of God, by whom they are animated and influenced: but on the part of the sufferers he is glorified; inasmuch as they continue to bear a testimony to his grace, depend upon his strength, and ascribe all their comfort and gracious experience unto him. This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, but is in all Beza's Greek copies, excepting one; and is also in the Arabic version.

Ver. 15. *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, &c.*] The punishment for murder was death by the law of God, Gen. ix. 6. *or as a thief*: whose fine or mulct, according to the Jewish law, was a fivefold or fourfold restitution, according to the nature of the thing that was stolen, Exod. xxii. 1. *or as an evil-doer*: a breaker of any of the laws of God or men, which are of a moral nature, and for the good of civil society: *or as a busy-body in other men's matters*; or *as a bishop in another man's diocese*; that concerns himself in things he has nothing to do with, and neglects his own affairs, and lives in idleness, and upon the spoil of others; or takes upon him to manage, direct, order, and command other men's servants, or persons that don't belong to him, to do his business, or whatsoever he pleases. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *a desirer of other's goods*; and the Ethiopic version, *a covetous desirer of other's things*; and so is led on by an insatiable thirst for them, to obtain them in an evil way, either by secret fraud, or open violence and oppression. To suffer in any such cases is scandalous and dishonourable, and unbecoming the character of a Christian. This last clause is left out in the Syriac version.

Ver. 16. *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, &c.*] Because he is one, and professes himself to be one. This name was first given to the disciples at Antioch, either by themselves, or by the Gentiles; however, it being agreeable to them, was retained; it is only mentioned here, and in Acts xi. 26. and xxvi. 28. *let him not be ashamed*; neither of Christ, and his Gospel, for which he suffers, nor of the name he bears, nor of the punish-

ment he endures, however ignominious and shameful it may be among men; but let him, as his Lord and master did, endure the cross, and despise the shame, Heb. xii. 2. *but let him glorify God on this behalf*: that he bestows this gift upon him to suffer for Christ, as well as to believe in him; and that he does him so much honour to call him to such service, and to strengthen him in it, so as to take it joyfully, and endure it patiently and cheerfully. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of *in this behalf*, read *in this name*; that is, of a Christian.

Ver. 17. *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, &c.*] *By the house of God* is either meant the temple at Jerusalem, which is often so called, because it was built for God, and where were the symbol of his presence, and his worship; and now the time was come, or at hand, that God would begin at his sanctuary, and leave this house desolate, and not one stone should be left upon another, as Christ had foretold: or else the church of God, which is frequently called the house of God, because it is of his building, where he dwells, and grants his gracious presence, and which he beautifies, fills, repairs, and defends; and so may design believers in Christ, those that are of the household and family of God: and by *judgment* is meant, not punishment for sin, strictly speaking, because Christ has endured this in the room and stead of his church and people, and therefore in justice can't be inflicted on them; but afflictions and persecutions, and which are fatherly chastisements, and different from God's judgment on the world, and condemnation with it; see 1 Cor. xi. 32. and these may be said to *begin* with them, because it is only in this life the saints have their afflictions; and which are in love to them, and therefore are betimes brought upon them to try them, and purge them, and make them partakers of his holiness: besides, wicked men are often made use of as instruments, by which God chastises his people; upon which account they are reserved till last, to be the objects of his vengeance, when they have filled up the measure of their sins; and then what is begun in love at the house of God, will end in wrath and severe punishment on them: and whereas it is said, *the time is come*, or at hand, it may be observed, that as God has his set time to favour his Zion, so likewise to chastise her; all his people's times are in his hand, as of comfort, so of temptation, affliction, and persecution. The first times of Christianity, or of the preaching of the Gospel, were times of trouble and distress; for as it was necessary the Gospel should be confirmed by signs and wonders, so that it should be tried and proved by the sufferings of the saints for it: and the phrase also suggests, that these sufferings and afflictions were but for a time, and even as it were for a moment, for a little while; and is a reason why the saints should glorify God, as these words imply, being introduced with the causal particle, *for*: that they have their sufferings now, and not with the wicked in the world to come, which will have no end: *and if it first begin at us*; either us Jews, for Peter, and those he writes to, were such; or us Christians, who believe in Christ,

have embraced his Gospel, and profess his name: *what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?* of which God is the author, and which contains things relating to him; as the grace of God, the righteousness of God, peace with him, pardon from him, justification before him, and acceptance with him; and which he commits to men, and qualifies them for preaching it, and succeeds the ministry of it; and it being his Gospel, as it makes it the more valuable in itself, so it is to be had in the greatest reverence and esteem; and the greater is the sin of such who despise and reject it, as did the unbelieving Jews, who seem chiefly designed here; it was first preached to them, but they disbelieved the doctrines of it, and submitted not to its ordinances, and rejected Christ, the Saviour, the sum and substance of it; and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: and what shall the end of such be? in this world wrath came upon them to the uttermost, ruin upon their nation, city, and temple; and in the world to come everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and eternal vengeance in flames of fire. The Jews have various phrases, and frequent expressions in their writings, which resemble these, and serve to illustrate them. When Noah told the old world of the flood, and called upon them to repent, they are represented as saying to him, "where does *punishment begin*? בְּנֵן בֵּיתוֹהָ, *at the house of that man does it begin*? when Methuselah "died, they said unto him, does not punishment begin "at the house of that man?" and elsewhere^p, says R. Jonathan, "punishment does not come into the world, "but in the time that the wicked are in the world; "and it does not begin (*i. e.* at them) אֵלֶּא מִן הַדַּיְמִיִּים, "אלא מן הַדַּיְמִיִּים, *but it begins at the righteous*;" and again^q, "when God executes judgment on the righteous, he "is praised; for if he executes this on them, how "much more on the ungodly?" see Isa. x. 11, 12. Jer. xxv. 29. and xlix. 12. Ezek. xix. 6.

Ver. 18. *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, &c.*] Reference is had to Prov. xi. 31. where in the Septuagint version are the same words as here: the *righteous* are such, not who are so in their own opinion, or merely in the esteem of others, nor on account of their civility, morality, and external righteousness before men, or by the deeds of the law; but who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: and such are *scarcely saved*; not as if they were but in part saved, for they are completely saved; Christ has wrought out and finished a complete salvation for them; and they are saved from all enemies, and every thing that might hurt them; from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death; and they are completely justified, and have all their sins pardoned, and shall be perfectly saved: nor as if their salvation was doubtful; for though they are scarcely, yet certainly saved; for they are chosen to salvation, and Christ has obtained it for them, and they have the application of it already made to them by the blessed Spirit; and being justified, or made righteous persons, nothing is more certain than that they shall be glorified: but they are said to be *scarcely saved*, because of the difficulty of it, both

with respect to Christ, who met with difficulties in working out their salvation; by reason of the strictness of divine justice, and the demands of the righteous law, which would make no abatement; the sins of his people he had to bear, and make atonement for; the many enemies he had to grapple with, and the accursed death of the cross, he had to undergo; though they were such he was able to surmount, and did: and especially with respect to the saints themselves; for though their salvation is certain and complete, being finished by Christ, yet their enjoyment of it is attended with many difficulties; by reason of the corruptions of nature, a law in their members warring against the law of their minds; the frequent temptations of Satan, who seeks to devour them, and their wrestlings with principalities and powers, which are above their match; and also by reason of various afflictions and persecutions, and many tribulations, which make their way to eternal life a strait way, and through which they must enter into the kingdom of heaven: and if this be their case, as it is, *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* the profane sinner, the Christless, impenitent, unbelieving, and unregenerate man; otherwise all men are sinners, in themselves; but here it means such as are destitute of the sanctifying grace of the spirit, and the justifying righteousness of Christ, and that live and die in their sins: where shall such appear? not in the congregation of the righteous; nor at the right hand of Christ; nor in heaven, into which no defiled sinner shall enter; nor even on earth, among and under the rocks and mountains, which will not be able to hide them from the face of the Judge, and his wrath, when he shall come; but at Christ's left hand, and in hell, and among the devils and damned there.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, &c.*] This is the conclusion made from the foregoing premises; that seeing the state and condition of the saints in this world, at worst, and which is but for a time, is infinitely preferable to the dreadful state and condition of disobedient persons, ungodly men, and sinners, and which will endure to all eternity; they should not think strange of their sufferings, or complain of them, but patiently endure them; and especially when they consider that these are not the effects of chance, or merely owing to the malice and wickedness of men, or to any second cause only; but they are the will of God, are by his appointment, under his direction, and by his order, and for their good, and his own glory; and therefore it becomes them to *commit the keeping of their souls to him, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator*; and which is not only their duty, but their privilege: and the sense is, that when they are called to suffer for Christ, they should commit their cause to God, who, as he is the Creator, is the Governor of the universe, and will judge righteously; and when they are even called to lay down their lives for his sake, they shall not lose them; though their bodies are killed, they may and should commit their souls, when departing from their bodies, into the hands of God; as

^o Midrash Kohelet, fol. 79. 4.

^p T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 60. 1. Caphtor, fol. 70. 2.

^q Jarchi in Numb. 179. apud Grotium in loc.

Stephen, the first martyr, committed his into the hands of Christ, in imitation of him; where he that made them, as he is able to keep them, will faithfully preserve them in happiness and glory, till the resurrection-morn, when their bodies shall be raised and reunited to them: and this is to be performed, *in*

well-doing; for which they suffer, and in which they should continue to the last; not rendering evil for evil, but blessing; and in imitation of Christ, and his servant Stephen, pray for their worst enemies, and wish them all the good, and do them all the acts of kindness that lie in their power.

C H A P. V.

IN this chapter the apostle first exhorts pastors and members of churches to their respective duties as such; and then to those which were common to them all, as Christians; and closes the epistle with prayers for them, salutations of them, and with his apostolic benediction. He begins with the pastors or elders, and describes himself as a fellow-elder, an eye-witness of Christ's sufferings, and a partaker of his glory, ver. 1. and these he exhorts to feed the flock of God, where they were; to take the charge and oversight of them, freely, readily, and willingly, and not through force or covetousness; and not to exercise a tyrannical dominion over them, but to be examples to them, ver. 2, 3. and the argument made use of to encourage them to all this is, that at the appearance of Christ, the chief Shepherd, they should receive a never-fading crown of glory, ver. 4. and next, the members of the churches are exhorted to submit to the rule and government of their pastors, being according to the word of God; and to be subject to one another; and particularly to put on humility, as a garment very ornamental to them; and the rather, since God opposes himself to men that are proud, but gives more grace to the humble, ver. 5. and especially he exhorts them to be humble under the hand of God, since that is a mighty one, and this is the way to be exalted in due time; and also to cast their care upon him, seeing he cared for them, ver. 6, 7. and then the apostle proceeds to the common duties of Christians, and to exhort them to sobriety and watchfulness, since Satan their adversary was a cruel and indefatigable one, and ever seeking the ruin of men; and to resist him in the steadfast exercise of faith, and patiently bear all afflictions, seeing the same were accomplished in their brethren in the world, ver. 8, 9. and then he puts up some petitions for them, that they might be perfected, stablished, strengthened, and settled, ver. 10. and ascribes glory and dominion for ever to the God of grace, to whom he prays, ver. 11. after which he names the person by whom he sends this epistle, giving a summary of it; that it was an exhortation and a testimony to the true doctrine of grace wherein they stood, ver. 12. and next follow the salutations of the church at Babylon, and of his son Marcus, to them, ver. 13. and lastly, he desires they would salute one another with a kiss of love, and gives them his benedictory wish, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *The elders which are among you I exhort, &c.*] The apostle returns to particular exhortations, after having finished his general ones, and which chiefly concern patient suffering for Christ; and having particularly exhorted subjects to behave aright to civil magistrates, servants to their masters, and

husbands and wives mutually to each other, here proceeds to exhort *elders* to the discharge of their office and duty; by whom are meant, not the elder in age, or the more ancient brethren in the churches, though they are distinguished from the *younger*, in ver. 5. but men in office, whose business it was to feed the flock, as in ver. 2. and though these might be generally the elder men, and whose office required, at least, senile gravity and prudence, yet they were not always so; sometimes young men, as Timothy, and others, were chosen into this office, which is the same with that of pastors, bishops, or overseers; for these are synonymous names, and belong to persons in the same office: and these are said to be *among* them, being members of the churches, and called out from among them to the pastoral office, and who were set over them in the Lord, and had their residence in the midst of them; for where should elders or pastors be, but with and among their flocks? they were fixed among them; and in this an elder differs from an apostle; an elder was tied down to a particular church, whereas an apostle was at large, and had authority in all the churches; and these the Apostle Peter does not command in an authoritative way, though he might lawfully have used his apostolic power; but he chose rather to exhort, entreat, and beseech, and that under the same character they bore: *who also am an elder*; or, *who am a fellow-elder*; and so the Syriac version renders it; and which expresses his office, and not his age, and is entirely consistent with his being an apostle; for though that is an higher office than a pastor, or elder, yet it involves that, and in some things agrees with it; as in preaching the word, and administering ordinances; and is mentioned to shew the propriety and pertinency of his exhortation to the elders; for being an elder himself, it was acting in character to exhort them; nor could it be objected to as impertinent and unbecoming; and since he was still in an higher office, on which account he could have commanded, it shews great humility in him to put himself upon a level with them, and only entreat and beseech them; he does not call himself the prince of the apostles and pastors, and the vicar of Christ, as his pretended successor does, but a fellow-elder: *and a witness of the sufferings of Christ*; as he was even an eye-witness of many of them; of his exceeding great sorrow in his soul, of his agony and bloody sweat in the garden, and of his apprehension, and binding by the officers and soldiers there; and of the contumelious usage he met with in the high-priest's hall, where he was mocked, blindfolded, buffeted, and smote upon the face; if not of his sufferings on the cross; since it is certain John was then present; and quickly after

we read of Peter and he being together, John xix. 26. and xx. 2. and therefore a very fit person to exhort these elders to feed the churches under their care with the preaching of a crucified Christ; since he, from his certain knowledge, could affirm his sufferings and his death: moreover, he was a witness, that is, a minister, and preacher of the sufferings of Christ, and of the doctrines of peace, pardon, justification, and salvation through them; as appears from all his sermons recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and from these his epistles: and besides, he was a partaker of the sufferings of Christ; he bore witness to him, by suffering for him; and as the Apostle Paul did, filled up the afflictions of Christ in his flesh; he, with other apostles, were put into the common prison by the Jewish sanhedrim, for preaching Christ, as he afterwards was by Herod; and had, doubtless, by this time, gone through a variety of sufferings for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, as he afterwards glorified God by dying that death, which his Lord and master signified to him before-hand; and therefore a very proper person to exhort these elders to discharge their work and office, and persevere in it, whatever they were called to suffer for it: *and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed*; which some think has reference to the transfiguration of Christ upon the mount, where Peter was present, and saw the glory of Christ, and of those that were with him, Moses and Elias, and enjoyed their company, and heard their conversation with so much pleasure and delight, that he was for continuing there; and which was an emblem and pledge of the glory of Christ, that was afterwards to be revealed, and still is to be revealed, and so the Syriac version renders it, *a partaker of his glory*: of the glory of Christ, see ch. iv. 13. or it regards the eternal glory and happiness of the saints, which is at present hid, and unseen, but shall be revealed at the last time, at the coming of Christ, when he shall appear in his glory, both to the saints, in them, and upon them; a glory which shall be both upon body and soul; and this the apostle calls himself a partaker of, as in Christ, his head and representative, and because of his interest in it, his assurance of right unto it, and meetness for it, and the certainty of enjoying it; nothing being more sure than this, that those that suffer with Christ, and for his sake, shall be glorified with him. Now, the exhortation of a person in such an office, as before expressed, and of one that was an eye-witness of Christ's sufferings, and had endured so much for Christ, and had had so large an experience of his grace, and such full assurance of glory, must carry great weight and influence in it, and is as follows.

Ver. 2. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, &c.*] Some read, *as much as in you is*: that is, to the utmost of your power, according to your abilities, referring to the manner of feeding the flock, doing it in the best way they are capable of; but the phrase is rather descriptive of the flock to be fed, which points it out, and distinguishes it from all others, and for which they should have a particular regard; it being the flock, as the Syriac version renders it, *which*

is delivered unto you; which was committed to their care, and they were made overseers of, and stood in a special relation to; wherefore it was incumbent on them to regard them, so as they did not, and were not obliged to regard, any other distinct flock: *by the flock of God*; or, *of Christ*, as some copies read, is meant, not the whole world, which Philo the Jew^r calls the greatest and most perfect, *τὸ οὐτὸς Θεοῦ ποιμαίνῃ, flock of the true God*; but the church of God, over which they were elders or pastors, consisting of Christ's sheep and lambs, he ordered Peter to feed, as he now does his fellow-elders; and because they are the flock of God, which he has chosen, distinguished, and separated from the rest of the world, and has made the care and charge of Christ; put them into his hands, whence they are called the sheep of his hand; which he has purchased with his blood, and effectually called by his grace, and returned them to himself, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who before were as sheep going astray, and folded them together in a Gospel church-state; all this is a reason, and a strong one, why they should be fed; not with every wind of doctrine, which blows up the pride of human nature, and swells men with vain conceits of themselves; nor with the chaff of human doctrines; nor with trifling and speculative notions; but with knowledge and understanding of divine and evangelical truths, with the words of faith and sound doctrine, with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; with the Gospel of the grace of God, which contains milk for babes, and meat for strong men; and with a crucified Christ himself, who is the bread of life, and whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; by directing them to his person, blood, and righteousness, to live by faith on; by preaching the doctrines of peace and pardon by his blood, atonement and satisfaction by his sacrifice, and justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation by his obedience and death: in short, feeding includes the whole of the pastor's work, the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, and the rule and government of the church, in the several branches of it; for the same word signifies to rule as to feed; and which work is further expressed by *taking the oversight* thereof; that is, of the flock; or *take the care of it*, as the Syriac version renders it, and adds, *spiritually*; in a spiritual manner; which is an interpretation of the phrase: an acting the part of a bishop or overseer of it, as the word signifies; looking diligently to it, inspecting into the various cases of the members of the church; using diligence to know the state of the flock, and performing all the offices of a careful shepherd; as feeding the flock, and not themselves; strengthening the diseased; healing the sick; binding up that which was broken; bringing again that which was driven away, and seeking that which was lost; watching over them that they go not astray; and restoring of them in the spirit of meekness, when they are gone out of the way; and overlooking both their practices and their principles; admonishing, reproving them for sin, as the case requires; and preserving them, as much as in them lies, from wolves, and beasts of prey; from false teachers, and from all

errors and heresies: all which is to be done, *not by constraint*; or with force, in a rigorous and severe manner; for this may be understood actively of pastors not forcing their flock, over-driving them, or ruling them with force and cruelty, complained of in Ezek. xxxiv. 4. or passively, of their being forced to feed the flock, and superintend it; as such may be said to be, who enter into the ministry, and continue in it, because obliged to it for want of a livelihood, and not knowing how to get one any other way; or through the pressing instances of relations, acquaintance, and friends; this ought not to be a matter of necessity, but of choice; they should be induced to it by no other necessity than what Christ has laid upon them, by calling them to the work, and furnishing them for it with the gifts of his spirit; and should engage and continue in it by no other constraint than that of his love; wherefore it follows, *but willingly*. The Vulgate Latin version adds, *according to God*, and so some copies; according to the will of God, and agreeably to his word; and the Ethiopic version renders it, *with equity for God*; with all uprightness and integrity, for the sake of the honour and glory of God; this should be done with all a man's heart and soul, and should spring from pure love to Christ; for no man is fit to feed Christ's lambs and sheep but those who sincerely love him; see John xxi. 15, 16, 17. and from a cordial and affectionate concern for the good of souls; and from an hearty desire unto, and delight in, the work itself; otherwise all he does will be as a task and burden; he will do it grudgingly, and with negligence, and will murmur under it, at least secretly. The Arabic version renders it, *watching, not forced watches, but willing ones*. This contrast of phrases seems to be Jewish, or Rabbinical; it is a tradition of the Rabbans; "blood which is defiled, and they sprinkle it ignorantly, 'tis accepted; presumptuously, not accepted; of what things are these said? of a private person; but of a congregation, whether ignorantly or presumptuously, 'tis accepted; and of a stranger, whether ignorantly or presumptuously, בֵּין בְּאוֹנֵם בֵּין בְּרָצוֹן, *whether by constraint or willingly*, it is not accepted:" it follows here, *not for filthy lucre*; not from a covetous disposition, which is a filthy one; and for the sake of gaining money, and amassing wealth and riches, as the false prophets in Isaiah's time, who were never satisfied; and the false teachers in the apostle's time, who, through covetousness, made merchandise of men, and supposed that gain was godliness; whereas there is no such thing as serving God and mammon; and as the work of the ministry should not be entered upon, and continued in, with any such sordid view; so neither for the sake of gaining glory and applause, a presidency, and chief place in the churches, and a name among the ministers of the Gospel, and credit and esteem among men: *but of a ready mind*; or, *from the whole heart*, as the Syriac version renders it; and in a cheerful view of reproaches and persecutions, of the loss of credit and reputation, of worldly substance, and of life itself; and with a sincere concern for the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls; being ready to do every thing with

cheerfulness, that may contribute to either of these. The Ethiopic version renders it, *in the fulness of your heart with joy*.

Ver. 3. *Neither as being lords over God's heritage, &c.*] Or *clergy*; meaning not ecclesiastical persons, as presbyters, and deacons, who are supposed to be under the government of bishops, though not to be governed with tyranny, and in a haughty, imperious, and arrogant manner; to which sense the Arabic version inclines, rendering the words thus; *not as those who domineer over such that are appointed in the dignities of the priesthood*; but such cannot be designed, because they are presbyters, or elders, which are here exhorted not to use such tyrannical power and authority; wherefore the flock, or church of God, the people of Christ, and members of churches, in common, are here intended: the Ethiopic version renders it, *his own people*; who are the lot, portion, and inheritance of God, and Christ; and moreover, the several churches are the parts, portions, and heritages, for the word is in the plural number, which are assigned to the care of their respective pastors, and elders, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was distributed by lot: the word *clergy* is common to all the saints, and not to be appropriated to a particular order of men, or to officers of churches; and these are not to be lorded over by their elders, in a domineering and arbitrary way; for though they are set over them in the Lord, and have the rule over them, and should be submitted to, and obeyed in their right and lawful ministrations of the word and ordinances, and are worthy of double honour when they rule well; yet they are not to take upon them an absolute authority over the consciences of men; they are not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men; nor to have the dominion over the faith of men, but to be helpers of their joy; and are not to coin new articles of faith, or enact new laws, and impose them on the churches; but are to teach the doctrines of Christ, and rule according to the laws he has given: *but being ensamples to the flock*. The Ethiopic version reads, *to his own flock*; that is, the flock of God; and the Vulgate Latin version adds, *heartily*; the meaning is, that they should go before the flock, and set an example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; and be patterns of good works to them, and recommend the doctrines they preach, and the duties they urge, by their own lives and conversations; and particularly should be ensamples to the saints, in liberality and beneficence, in lenity and gentleness, in meekness and humility, in opposition to the vices before warned against.

Ver. 4. *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, &c.*] This is the encouraging motive and argument to engage the elders and pastors of churches to discharge their office faithfully, cheerfully, and in an humble manner: *by the chief Shepherd* is meant Christ, who may well be called so, since he is God's fellow, and in all respects equal with him, and is the Shepherd and Bishop of the souls of men; all other bishops, pastors, and elders, are under him; they receive their commissions from him to feed his lambs and sheep; are

* T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 25. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 34. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Issure Mizbeach, c. 4. sect. 5, 6.

made pastors and overseers by him; and have their gifts, qualifying them for such offices, from him; and have their several flocks assigned unto them by him; and from him have they all the food with which they feed them, and are accountable to him for them, and the discharge of their office; so that Christ is the chief Shepherd, in the dignity of his person, he being God over all, blessed for ever; in his qualifications for his office, having all power, grace, and wisdom in him, to protect his flock, supply their wants, guide and direct them; and in the nature and number of his flock, being rational creatures, the souls of men, even elect men; and though they are, when compared with others, but a little flock, yet, considered by themselves, are a great number; and especially the general assembly will be, in comparison of the little bodies and societies of saints under pastors and teachers, of Christ's setting over them, with respect to whom, principally, he is called the chief Shepherd: the allusion is to the principal shepherd, whose own the sheep were, or, however, had the principal charge of them; who used to have others under him, to do the several things relating to the flocks he directed, and were called *little shepherds*: so Aben Ezra says¹, it was customary for the shepherd to have under him רועים קטנים, *little shepherds*: the same perhaps with the hirelings, whose own the sheep are not, John x. 12. who are retained, or removed, according to their behaviour; these, in the Talmudic language, are called ברול², or כרול; though, according to Guido³, the word, pronounced in the latter way, signifies a *chief shepherd*, who takes cattle of men, and has other shepherds, servants under him; and such an one used to be called הרועה הגדול, *the great, or chief shepherd*; so Maimonides⁴ says, it was the custom of shepherds to have servants under them, to whom they committed the flocks to keep; so that when הרועה הגדול, *the chief shepherd*, delivered to other shepherds what was under his care, these came in his room; and if there was any loss, the second shepherd, who was under the *chief shepherd*, was obliged to make good the loss, and not the first shepherd, who was the *chief shepherd*; and to the same purpose says another of their commentators⁵; it is the custom of הרועה הגדול, *the chief shepherd*, to deliver (the flock) to the *little shepherd* that is under him; wherefore the shepherd that is under him is obliged to make good any loss: now, such a shepherd is Christ; he has others under him, whom he employs in feeding his sheep, and who are accountable to him, and must give up their account when he appears: at present he is out of the bodily sight of men, being received up to heaven, where he will be retained till the time of the restitution of all things; and then he will appear a second time in great glory, in his own, and in his father's, and in the glory of his holy angels: and when he thus appears, *ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away*; in distinction from those crowns which were given to the conqueror, in the Olympic games; which were made of divers flowers, of the olive, wild olive, pine-tree, and of parsley, and in-

serted in a branch of the wild olive-tree⁷, and which quickly faded away; or in allusion to crowns made of amaranthus⁸, the plant *everlasting*, so called, from the nature of it, because it never fades: the eternal glory and happiness, which is here meant by a crown of glory, or a glorious crown, never fades away, but ever shines in its full lustre; and this faithful ministers shall receive at the hands of the chief Shepherd, as a gift of his, as a reward of grace; when they have finished their work, they will enter into the joy of their Lord, and shine as the stars for ever and ever; they shall reign with Christ, as kings, on a throne of glory, wearing a crown of glory, and enjoying a kingdom and glory unto all eternity.

Ver. 5. *Likewise ye younger, &c.*] Not in office, as if inferior officers to bishops were here intended, who ought to be subject to them; for elders and pastors are the same with them, nor is there any other office but that of deacons; nor younger pastors and overseers, such an one as Timothy was; not but that a deference is to be paid, and proper respect had to such who are of greater age, and longer standing and experience, by younger brethren in the ministry; nor such as are only younger in years, who ought to rise up unto, and honour hoary hairs, which may be done where subjection is not required, as here; nor such as are young in grace and experience, since there are little children, young men, and fathers in the church; but all the members of churches in common are here intended, as distinguished from their officers; for as pastors and overseers were, for the most part, chosen from among those that were senior in age, so the members generally consisted of the younger sort; and besides, as it was usual to call chief men and rulers, whether in church or state, fathers, so those that were subjects, the younger; see Luke xxii. 26. These the apostle exhorts as follows, *submit yourselves unto the elder*; not merely in age, but in office, as before; for as he had exhorted the elders to a discharge of their work and office, he proceeds, in the next place, and which is signified by the word *likewise*, to stir up the members of the churches to their duty to their elders, or pastors, who had the oversight of them; and that is to *submit* themselves to them, as in Heb. xiii. 17. which is done by attending constantly on the word preached by them, and receiving it, so far as it agrees with the Scriptures of truth; and by joining with them in all the ordinances of Christ, and their administrations of them; by being subject to the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them; by taking their counsel and advice, regarding and hearkening to their admonitions and reproofs, and taking them in good part, looking upon them, and behaving towards them, as their spiritual guides and governors. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *to your elders*; such as were particularly set over them in the Lord, and had taken the care of them, for to no others are they obliged to submit themselves. *Yea, all of you be subject one to another*; that is, all the members of the churches should not only submit themselves to their

¹ Comment. in Zech. xi. 8.

² T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 56. 2.

³ Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 102.

⁴ In Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 2.

⁵ Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 2.

⁷ Vide Paschalium de Coronis, l. 6. c. 1. p. 339. c. 16. p. 391. c. 18. p. 399. c. 19. p. 413.

⁸ Ib. l. 3. c. 11. p. 178.

pastors, but to their fellow-members, as in Eph. v. 21. they should submit to the superior judgments of one another, esteeming each other better than themselves, and not be tenacious of their own way of thinking and judging of things; yea, condescend to men of low estates and weaker minds, bear the infirmities of the weak, and take all admonitions and reproofs given in a friendly manner kindly; and cheerfully perform all offices of love, and by it serve one another in things temporal and spiritual; doing the meanest services for the good of each other, such as washing the feet of one another, in imitation of their Lord and master. *And be clothed with humility*; without which there will be no subjection, either to the elders, or one another. This is a grace which shews itself in a man's thinking and speaking the best of others, and the worst of himself; in not affecting places and titles of eminence; in being content with the lowest place, and patiently bearing the greatest contempt; in not aspiring to things too high for him, always acknowledging his own meanness, baseness, and unworthiness, ascribing all he is, and has, to the grace and goodness of God, whether it be gifts of nature, providence, or grace: and this is a believer's clothing, not the robe of his justifying righteousness before God, but is a considerable part of his inward garment of sanctification, which is in the sight of God of great price; and makes a large shew in his outward conversation-garments before men, and renders him lovely and amiable: it is an ornament to him, which is precious with God, and recommends him to the esteem of men, and the religion and Gospel he professes, and his profession of it. Some think there is a metaphor in the words, taken from knots of ribands, and such-like things, wore by women on their heads, or breasts, for ornament; and that the apostle's advice to the saints is, that their breast-knot, or ornament, should be humility. Others think it is taken from a sort of badge which servants wore over their garments, by which they were distinguished; and so saints are directed to put on this badge, by which they may be known to be the servants of Christ: the former seems more agreeable: but as the word signifies to bind, or fasten any thing, by tying of knots, it may denote the retaining of this grace in constant exercise, so as never to be without it; and to be clothed or covered with it, is always to have it on, and in exercise, in every action of life, in all our deportment before God and men, in all public and religious worship, and throughout the whole of our conversation, in the family, in the world, or in the church. The phrase seems to be Jewish, and is to be met with in the writings of the Jews. It is said^a, "he that has *fear, ונתלבש בענוה, and is clothed with humility*; *humility is the most excellent, and is comprehended in all, as it is said, Prov. xxii. 4. He who has the fear of God is worthy of humility, and every one that hath humility is worthy of kindness or holiness.*" And it is a saying of R. Meir^b, "he that loves God loves men; he that makes God glad makes men glad; and it (the law) *ענהו מלבשרו ענהו, clothes him with humility and fear.*" *For he resisteth the proud; or scorneth the scornors, as it is in Prov. iii.*

34. from whence these words are taken: the Lord treats them as they treat others; as they despise all other men and things, he despises them; he is above them, in that they have dealt proudly, and has them in derision; he eludes all their artifices, and frustrates their schemes, and disappoints their ambitious views, and scatters them in the imagination of their hearts, and brings their counsels to confusion, and opposes himself to them, and as their adversary; and a dreadful thing it is for persons to have God stand up against them, and resist them. This is a reason dissuading from pride, and exciting to humility, as is also what follows: *and giveth grace to the humble*; that is, more grace; see James iv. 6. The first grace cannot be intended, for no man is truly humble before he has received the grace of God, 'tis that which makes him so; or it may design larger gifts of grace, which God bestows on those who acknowledge him to be the author and giver of what they have, and who make a proper use of them to his glory; when he takes away from the vain and ostentatious that which to themselves and others they seemed to have. Moreover, God grants his gracious presence to such as are of an humble, and of a contrite spirit; and at last he gives them glory, which is a free-grace gift, and the perfection of grace; the poor in spirit, or humble souls, have both a right and meetness for, and shall enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 6. *Humble yourselves therefore, &c.*] Or *be ye humbled* before God, and in his sight; quietly submit to his will; patiently bear every affliction without murmuring, repining, or replying against him; be still under the rod, and despise not the chastening of the Lord; mourn over sin as the cause, acknowledge your vileness and unworthiness, and stand in awe of his majesty, considering yourselves as *under the mighty hand of God*; a phrase expressive of his omnipotence, which can't be stayed, and it would be madness to oppose it; and which is able to cast down the proud, and dash them to pieces, as well as to exalt the humble. This hand, upon men, in a way of chastisement, presses sore, and, in a way of punishment, presses down, and crushes to pieces; but to be under it in an humble manner is safe and profitable; such are hid as in the hollow of his hand, and are safe as in a pavilion, and comfortable under the shadow of his wings; and such humiliation and submission to him, and putting themselves under his mighty hand and care, is the way to exaltation: *that he may exalt you in due time*; the Arabic version reads, *in the time of exaltation*; when his time to exalt is come, either in this world, or more especially at the appearance of Christ and his kingdom. The Vulgate Latin version, and two copies of Beza's, one of Stephens's, and the Alexandrian, read, *in the time of visitation*; and so the Ethiopic version, *when he shall have visited you*; which seems to be taken out of ch. ii. 12. sooner or later such who are humbled shall be exalted; it is the usual way and method which God takes to abase the proud, and exalt the humble; for humble souls honour him, and therefore such as honour him he will honour; and this he does in his own time, in a time that makes most for his glory,

^a Zohar in Numb. fol. 60. 3.

^b Pirke Abot, c. 6. sect. 1.

and their good ; oftentimes he does it in this life, and always in that which is to come.

Ver. 7. *Casting all your care upon him, &c.] Upon God ; as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read. The words are taken out of, or at least refer to Psal. lv. 22. where, instead of cast thy burden upon the Lord, the Septuagint have it, cast thy care upon the Lord ; the care of the body, and of all the affairs of life, concerning which saints should not be anxiously thoughtful, but depend upon the providence of God, though in the diligent use of means, which is not forbidden, nor discouraged by this, or any such-like exhortation ; as also the care of the soul, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of it, which should be committed into the hands of Christ, on whom help is laid, and who is become the author of eternal salvation ; nor should this slacken and make persons negligent in the use of means, for the good, comfort, and advantage of their souls : for he careth for you ; for the bodies of his people, and their outward concerns of life, for food and raiment for them, and for the preservation of them, who will not suffer them to want, nor withhold any good thing from them, or ever leave them and forsake them ; and for their souls, for which he has made provision in his son, and in the covenant of his grace has laid help upon a mighty Saviour ; and who has obtained an eternal redemption for them, bestows his grace upon them, and gives every needful supply of it to them, and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation.*

Ver. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant, &c.] The apostle had exhorted to each of these before ; see ch. i. 13. and iv. 7. but thought fit to repeat them ; sobriety and watchfulness being exceeding necessary and useful in the Christian life ; and the one can't well be without the other : unless a man is sober in body and mind, he will not be watchful, either over himself or others, or against the snares of sin, Satan, and the world ; and if he is not on his watch and guard, he is liable to every sin and temptation. The Syriac version renders the words, watch, and be ye mindful, or remember ; watch with diligence, care, and industry, keeping a good look-out, minding and observing every thing that presents, and remembering the power and cunning of the enemy ; and the Ethiopic version renders them thus, be ye prudent, and cause your heart to understand ; referring them not to temperance of body, but sobriety of mind, and to a prudent conduct and behaviour, as having a subtle as well as a malicious enemy to deal with : because your adversary the devil ; he who is a defamer and calumniator ; who accuses God to men, and men to God, and is therefore styled the accuser of the brethren ; he is the saints' avowed and implacable enemy. Satan is an enemy to mankind in general, but more especially to the seed of the woman, to Christ personal, and to Christ mystical, to all the elect of God : the word here used is a forensic term, and signifies a court-adversary, or one that litigates a point in law, or opposes another in an action or suit at law. The Jews^c have adopted this word into their language, and explain it by בעל דין, a law-adversary, or one that has a suit of law depending against another. Satan accuses men of the breach of the law, and pleads that*

justice might take place, and punishment be inflicted, and which he pursues with great violence and diligence : as a roaring lion ; so called, both on account of his strength, and also because of his rage, malice, and cruelty, which he breathes out against the saints, who, though he can't destroy them, will do all he can to terrify and affright them ; so the young lions in Psal. civ. 21. are, by the Cabalistic Jews^d, understood of devils ; to which, for the above reasons, they may be truly compared : walketh about ; to and fro in the earth ; see Job i. 7. as a lion runs about here and there, when almost famished with hunger ; and it also denotes the insidious methods, wiles, and stratagems Satan takes to surprise men, and get an advantage of them : he takes a tour, and comes round upon them, upon the back of them, at an unawares, so that they have need to be always sober, and upon their guard : seeking whom he may devour ; this is the end of his walking about : and the like is expressed in the Targum on Job i. 7. and ii. 2. "and Satan answered before the Lord, and said, from going about in the earth למכרד בעברי, to search into the works of the children of men, and from walking in it ;" that so he might have something to accuse them of, and they fall a prey into his hands. This is the work he is continually employed in ; he's always seeking to do mischief, either to the souls, or bodies, or estates of men, especially the former ; though he can do nothing in either respect without a permission, nor unless he may ; and though this, with respect to body and estate, is sometimes granted, as in the case of Job, yet never with respect to the souls of any of God's elect, which are safe in Christ's hands, and out of his reach ; this hinders not but that saints should be sober and watchful.

Ver. 9. *Whom resist, &c.] By no means give way to him, by indulging any sin, or yielding to any temptation, but oppose him, and stand against his wiles, his cunning and his power : steadfast in the faith ; both in the doctrine of faith, which Satan endeavours to remove from, or cause to stagger in ; and in the grace of faith, exercising it on the promises of God, and his perfections, particularly his power and faithfulness concerned in them, and in the blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and person of Christ, which faith is capable of making use of, as a shield, to good purpose, against all the fiery darts of Satan ; as also in a profession of faith, which, as it should be held fast without wavering, and which the devil is very busy to keep persons from making, or to cause them to drop it when they have made it, by violent suggestions, strong temptations, and a flood of reproaches and persecutions ; all which should be disregarded : knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world ; and therefore should not be surprised and staggered by them, nor think them strange, but endure them without murmuring, and with patience and cheerfulness ; since they are the same afflictions and trials which others have been exercised with in all ages ; the same which the fraternity, or brotherhood, as the word signifies, see ch. ii. 17. who stand in the same relation to God and Christ as they do, endure ; yea, the same which Christ himself, who stands in this relation to*

^c Yalkut Simoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 41. 4. & Jarchi & Aruch in Mattaot Cehuna in ib.

^d Lex. Cabal. p. 231, 417.

them, has endured; and which must be expected whilst they are *in the world*; but this is the great mercy, that they are only endured in this world; there will be none in the world to come; they'll be *accomplished* and finished here; and every believer has his measure, which must be filled up; and so has the whole body of Christ, his church, and when they are fulfilled, they'll be no more.

Ver. 10. *But the God of all grace, &c.*] Who has riches of grace, an immense plenty of it in himself, has treasured up a fulness of grace in his son; is the author of all the blessings of grace, of electing, adopting, justifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace; and is the giver of the several graces of the spirit, as faith, hope, love, repentance, &c. and of all the supplies of grace; and by this character is God the father described as the object of prayer, to encourage souls to come to the throne of his grace, and pray, and hope for, and expect a sufficiency of his grace in every time of need; as well as to shew that the sufferings of the saints here are but for a while; that they are in love and kindness; and that they shall certainly enjoy the glory they are called unto by him; and which is the next thing by which he stands described, *who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ*. This call is not a mere external one, by the ministry of the word, which is not always effectual and unto salvation; but an internal, special, and efficacious one, and which is high, holy, heavenly, and unchangeable. The persons who are the subjects of it are *us*, whom God has chosen in Christ, and are preserved in him, and redeemed by him; and who are a select people, and distinguished from others, and yet in themselves no better than others; nay, often the vilest, meanest, and most contemptible. Some ancient copies read *you*, and so do the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: what they are called to is *his eternal glory*; that which is glorious in itself, and is signified by what is the most glorious in this world, as a kingdom, crown, throne, inheritance, &c. and lies in constant and uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; in a complete vision of the glory of Christ, and in perfect conformity to him; in a freedom from all evil, and in a full enjoyment of all happiness: and this is *his*, God the father's; which he has prepared and provided for his people of his own grace, and which he freely gives unto them, and makes them meet for: and it is *eternal*; it will last for ever, and never pass away, as does the glory of this world; it is a continuing city, a never-fading inheritance, an eternal weight of glory; and to this the saints are called *by*, or *in Jesus Christ*; the glory they are called to is in his hands; and they themselves, by being called unto it, appear to be in him, and as such to belong unto him, or are the called of Christ Jesus; and besides, they are called by him, by his spirit and grace, and into communion with him, and to the obtaining of his glory. *After that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you*; some copies, and also the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read these words in the future tense, not as a prayer, but as a promise, *shall make you perfect, &c.* the sense is the same; for if it is a prayer, it is a prayer in faith, for what shall be done; for God will make his people

perfect: and which respects not their justification; for in that sense they are perfect already in Christ, their head, who has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and fully expiated their sins; has completely redeemed them, and procured for them the pardon of all their trespasses; and has justified them from all their iniquities: but their sanctification; for though all grace is implanted in them at once, yet it is gradually brought to perfection; there is a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or creature, but not of degrees; and there is a comparative perfection with respect to themselves, before conversion, or with respect to hypocrites; for perfection oftentimes means no other than integrity and sincerity; or with respect to other Christians, who are weaker in knowledge and experience: and there is a perfection of holiness in Christ, who is their sanctification, but not in themselves; for every part of the work of grace is imperfect, as faith, love, knowledge, &c. and sin dwells in them, and they stand in need of fresh supplies of grace; and even the best of them disclaim perfection, though they greatly desire it, as here the apostle prays for it; and which shews that, as yet, they had it not, though they will have it hereafter in heaven, where there will be perfect knowledge, and perfect holiness, and perfect happiness. He also prays that God would *stablish* them, or believes and promises that he would. The people of God are in a safe and established state and condition already; they are in the arms of everlasting love, and in the hands of Christ, and in a sure and inviolable covenant of grace, and are built on the rock of ages; and are in a state of grace, of justifying, adopting, and sanctifying grace, from whence they can never finally and totally fall; and yet they are very often unstable in their hearts and frames, and in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in their adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel; and need to be established, and to have a more firm persuasion of their interest in the love of God, and a more steady view of their standing in Christ, and the covenant of his grace, and a more lively and comfortable exercise of grace on him, and a more constant discharge of duty, and a more firm and closer adherence to the truths and ordinances of the Gospel; and they will have a consummate stability in heaven, where are sure dwelling-places. Another petition, or promise, is, that God would *strengthen* them; which supposes them to be weak and feeble, not as to their state and condition, for their place of defence is the munition of rocks; nor in the same sense as natural men are, or as they themselves were before conversion; nor are they all alike weak, some are weaker in faith and knowledge, and of a more weak and scrupulous conscience than others, and are more easily drawn aside by corruptions and temptations, and are in greater afflictions: and this is to be understood, not of bodily, but spiritual strength; that God would strengthen their souls, and the work of his grace in them, their faith, hope, and love; and strengthen them to perform their duties, to withstand temptations, oppose their own corruptions, bear the cross, reproaches, and persecutions, and do their generation-work: and he further adds, and *settle* you, or *found* you; not that God would now lay the foundation, Christ, for he had been laid by him al-

ready in his counsels and decrees, and in the covenant of his grace, in the mission of him into this world, and by his spirit in their hearts; nor that he would afresh lay them on Christ, the foundation, for they were there laid already, and were safe; but that he would build them up, and settle their faith on this foundation, that they might be rooted and grounded in the love of God, have a lively sense and firm persuasion of their interest in it, and be grounded and settled in the faith of the Gospel; be settled under a Gospel ministry, have a fixed abode in the house of God, enjoy the spiritual provisions of it, and have fellowship with Christ, and his people here; and at last enter and dwell in the city which has foundations, where they will be never more subject to wavering, instability, and inconstancy, and from whence they will never be removed; this will be their last and eternal settlement: and this will be *after they have suffered awhile*; in their bodies, characters, and estates, through the malice and wickedness of men; and in their souls, from their own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face; which will be but for a very little while, for a moment, as it were; these are only the sufferings of this present time, and in the present evil world; nor are they inconsistent with God being the God of all grace unto them, or with their being called to eternal glory, the way to which lies through them; and they are the means of perfecting, stablishing, strengthening, and settling them.

Ver. 11. *To him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen.*] The Syriac version begins this doxology in the preceding verse, reading the words thus, *to the God of grace*, and then putting what follows, *who hath called us*, &c. into a parenthesis, connects them with these, *be glory, and power, and honour*, &c. *glory* is due to God for all the grace he bestows on men; and to give it to him shews a sense of divine goodness, and a grateful heart; and to him very fitly is *dominion* ascribed, whose kingdom rules over all, and who dispenses his grace, as well as his providential favours, in a sovereign way; and whom the saints are in a peculiar manner under obligation to obey; to which is added, *Amen*, signifying that so the apostle prayed it might be, and believed it would be.

Ver. 12. *By Sylvanus, a faithful brother unto you, &c.*] Sylvanus is the same with Silas, so often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, as a companion of the Apostle Paul; whom Peter met with in his travels, and sent this letter by him, or used him as his amanuensis, or both: his character is, that he was a *faithful brother* to those persons to whom this epistle is written; that is, he was a faithful minister of the Gospel to them, who with great sincerity and integrity preached the word unto them, as the apostle was well informed, and had reason to believe; for what follows, *as I suppose*, does not suggest any doubt of it, but, on the contrary, a firm belief; for the word used signifies to repute, to reckon, to conclude a thing upon the best and strongest reasons; though some connect this phrase, as that also *unto you*, with the following clause, *I have written briefly*; as does the Syriac version, which renders the whole thus, *these few things, as I*

think, I have written unto you, by Sylvanus, a faithful brother; and then the sense is, this short epistle, as in my opinion it is, I have wrote and sent to you by Sylvanus, who is faithful and upright, as a brother, a minister, and a messenger. The Arabic version seems to refer the above clause, *as I suppose*, neither to the character of Sylvanus, nor to the brevity of the epistle, but to the matter of it, rendering it thus, *these things, in a few words, I have written unto you, according to my sense*; according to my judgment and reason, as I think, by which you will see and know my real sentiments and thoughts of things; for what I have written is according to the best of my understanding and knowledge: *exhorting, and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand*; or *have stood*, and still continue to do so: the Syriac version renders it, *I am persuaded and testify*; expressing his great confidence and assurance, that the Gospel of the grace of God, which springs from the grace of God, is full of it, and declares it, and which he had delivered in this epistle, and they had formerly received, and had stood fast in, and abode by, was the true Gospel. The Arabic version gives another sense, rendering the words thus, *entreating and beseeching, that this grace of God, in which ye stand, may be true and firm*; that is, that ye may still continue truly to embrace and profess it, and firmly abide by it; though the meaning rather is, that the apostle bears a testimony to the truth of the Gospel, and of the Christian religion, as held and professed by them with constancy hitherto; and exhorts them unto the consideration of the truth of it, which might be depended upon, to cleave unto it with full purpose of heart.

Ver. 13. The church that is at *Babylon*, &c.] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, supply the word *church*, as we do. Some, by *Babylon*, understand Rome, which is so called, in a figurative sense, in the book of the Revelations: this is an ancient opinion; so Papias understood it, as Eusebius relates; but that Peter was at Rome, when he wrote this epistle, cannot be proved, nor any reason be given why the proper name of the place should be concealed, and a figurative one expressed. It is best therefore to understand it literally, of *Babylon* in Assyria, the metropolis of the dispersion of the Jews, and the centre of it, to whom the apostle wrote; and where, as the minister of the circumcision, he may be thought to reside, here being a number of persons converted and formed into a Gospel church-state, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy in Psal. lxxxvii. 4. perhaps this church might consist chiefly of Jews, which might be the reason of the apostle's being here, since there were great numbers which continued here, from the time of the captivity, who returned not with Ezra; and these are said by the Jews^f to be of the purest blood: many of the Jewish doctors lived here; they had three famous universities in this country, and here their Talmud was written, called from hence ^g *Babylonian*. The church in this place is said to be *elect together with you*; that is, were chosen together with them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to grace here, and glory hereafter; or were equally the elect of God as

^e Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 15.

^f T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 2. & 71. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

^g T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 1.

they were, for as such he writes to them, ch. i. 2. and this the apostle said in a judgment of charity of the whole church, and all the members of it, being under a profession of faith in Christ; and nothing appearing to the contrary, but that their faith was unfeigned, and their profession right and sincere. This church, he says, *saluteth* you; wishes all peace, happiness, and prosperity of every kind, and so doth *Marcus, my son*; either, in a natural sense, his son according to the flesh; since it is certain Peter had a wife, and might have a son, and one of this name: or rather in a spiritual sense, being one that he was either an instrument of converting him, or of instructing him, or was one that was as dear to him as a son; in like manner as the Apostle Paul calls Timothy, and also Titus, his own son. This seems to be Mark the evangelist, who was called John Mark, was Barnabas's sister's son, and his mother's name was Mary; see Col. iv. 10. Acts xii. 12, 25. He is said^a to be the interpreter of Peter, and to have wrote his Gospel from what he heard from him; and who approved of it, and confirmed it, and indeed it is said to be his.

Ver. 14. *Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity,*

&c.] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, *with an holy kiss*; and so some copies, as in Rom. xvi. 16. and elsewhere; see the note there; and intends such a kiss, as is not only opposite to every thing that is lascivious and impure, but is expressive of true love and affection, and is hearty and sincere: and such a love the Jews call, as the apostle does here, נשקה דררימו, *a kiss of love*^b; for as Philo the Jew^c observes, a kiss and love differ, the one may be without the other, a mere compliment, a shew of friendship, and not arise from sincere love. *Peace with you all that are in Christ Jesus*; who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and appeared to be in him by effectual vocation; and were at least by profession in him, and were in Christ mystical, and incorporated in a Gospel church; the Arabic version reads, *who are in the love of Jesus Christ*. To these the apostle wishes *peace*, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The Vulgate Latin reads *grace*, which is most usual in Paul's epistles. The epistle is closed with *Amen*, as is common; the apostle wishing that this might be the case, and believing that it would be.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

PETER.

THOUGH there was, among the ancients, a doubt concerning the authority of this epistle, which is first mentioned by Origen^a, and afterwards by Eusebius^b and Jerom^c, yet it prevailed not among the churches, nor hindered the diligent reading and use of it, together with other Scriptures; it appearing to be useful and profitable, as Eusebius declares; and in process of time this doubt was entirely removed, and it was universally received by fathers and councils into the canon of the Scriptures, where it is justly retained, it having plain signatures of its divine original. Nor is there any thing in it unworthy of so great an apostle, whose name it bears; but the whole of it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, to the rest of the sacred writings, particularly to the epistle of Jude, between which, and the second chapter of this, there is a great likeness. The only reason of the doubt of the genuineness of this epistle, and whether it was written by the Apostle Peter, is the difference of its style from the

former; but the Holy Ghost, the dictator of the sacred writings, is not limited to a man's natural style, but could vary it as he pleased: besides, a man's style is not the same at different times, and when writing on different subjects; add to which, that this objection can only regard the second chapter, for the first and third agree with the former epistle. And some have thought that the second chapter is an extract out of some ancient Hebrew book, describing the characters of the old false prophets; which book Peter and Jude having before them, took the characters of the old prophets, and, under divine direction, applied them to the false teachers of the present age; and if so 'tis not to be wondered at that the style of the epistle should differ from the former, and even from itself in this part. But that it was written by the Apostle Peter, not only the inscription shews, which, if false, would indeed discredit the genuineness of the book, but the account that is given of the writer of it, as one

^a Papias apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. Tertullian. adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5. Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 2. 18.

^b Zohar in Exod. fol. 60. 3. 4.

^c Quis rerum divinarum. p. 486, 487.

^a Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25.

^b Ib. l. 3. c. 3. 25.

^c Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 2.

that was with Christ at his transfiguration, ch. i. 16, 17, 18. Now there were only the three following disciples there, Peter, John, and James. The last of these had been dead some time when this epistle was written, and it was never ascribed by any to the Apostle John, and therefore it remains that Peter must be the writer of it. As for Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, that succeeded James, whom Grotius would suggest as the author of it, the character does not agree with him; he was not with Christ on the holy mount, nor heard the voice from heaven, asserting the sonship of Christ, and the divine complacency in him: moreover, this epistle is called *a second epistle*, ch. iii. 1. and supposes a first, and manifestly refers to the former epistle of Peter's, about which there never was any doubt, as the authors before mentioned observe. It was written

by the apostle in his old age, when upon the decline of life, just as he was about to put off his tabernacle, ch. i. 13, 14, 15. a little before his martyrdom, in the year 68, though Dr. Lightfoot places it in 66; and it is sent to the same persons as his first, namely, to the believing Jews scattered throughout several parts of Asia, he being the minister of the circumcision; see 1 Pet. i. 1. compared with 2 Pet. iii. 1. The scope and design of it are, to put them upon a concern for a larger increase of grace and spiritual knowledge; to confirm and establish them in the present truth of the Gospel; to warn them against false teachers, which he largely describes; and he puts them in mind of the dissolution of all things, and of what will precede and follow it; from whence he draws several useful hints and inferences.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle takes notice of gifts of grace bestowed; and exhorts to the exercise of holiness and good works; and gives the reasons why he was so pressing to them; and endeavours to establish the saints in the Gospel that had been preached among them. In the inscription, the writer of the epistle describes himself by his names, the one given him by his parents, the other by his Lord and master, and by his character and office; and the persons to whom he writes are described as having faith, and that of the same kind with the apostles, and which they obtained through the righteousness of Christ, ver. 1. The salutation is the same with that in the former epistle, only here is added a wish for an increase of divine knowledge, ver. 2. and which might be expected, since, by the power of divine grace, every thing necessary to a spiritual and godly life had been given them in effectual vocation, through the knowledge of Christ; even exceeding great and precious promises, whereby they partook of the divine nature, and escaped the vices which prevailed in the world, ver. 3, 4. upon which he exhorts not to rest where they were, but to go on in the exercise of grace, and performance of duties, many of which he enumerates, ver. 5, 6, 7. to enforce which he adds several arguments, as that through an abounding in these things they would appear not to have a superficial and speculative knowledge of Christ, ver. 8. or otherwise it would be evident that they were blind and ignorant, and in an unrenewed state, ver. 9. whereas by these things they would make their calling and election sure and manifest to men, and would never fall totally and finally, and in the issue have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, ver. 10, 11. and then he gives the reasons of his conduct, why he so much urged a regard to these things, and put them in mind of them; namely, the usefulness of them for their establishment, the duty of his office, which required it, the short time he had to live, and the profitableness of such exhortations to them, after his decease, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15. and in order to establish them in the

truths of the Gospel, and particularly in that which concerns the coming of Christ in power and glory, on which he enlarges in the latter part of this epistle; he observes, that this was not a cunningly-devised fable, but was what he and others were eye-witnesses of, even of that which was an emblem and pledge of it; namely, the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, when they saw the glory he received from God his father, and heard the voice from heaven which declared him to be his well-beloved son, ver. 16, 17, 18. and besides, they had a surer proof of the certainty of his coming; namely, the prophecies concerning it, which should be regarded and given heed to, being as a lamp to direct in the present state of darkness and imperfection, until the illustrious day of Christ's coming appears, ver. 19. and the rather this should be attended to, since no scriptural prophecy is an invention and device of men; nor was it formerly given out at the pleasure of men, but by saints, who were influenced and moved unto it by the Holy Ghost, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *Simon Peter, a servant, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*] The writer of this epistle is described first by his names, Simon Peter; the first of these was the name by which he was called from his infancy by his parents, and by which he was known when Christ called him to be a disciple and follower of him, and is the same with Simeon; and so 'tis read in most copies; see Acts xv. 14. a name common with the Jews; the latter is what was given him by Christ at his conversion, John i. 42. and answers to Cephas in the Syriac language; and both signify a rock or stone, because he was built upon Christ, the rock and foundation, and chief corner-stone, and with a view to his future solidity, firmness, and constancy; and he is next described by his character as a *servant*, not of sin, nor Satan, nor man, but Jesus Christ, whose servant he was, not only by creation, but by redemption and grace; and not merely a servant of his, in common with other believers, but in a ministerial way, as a preacher of the Gospel, which this phrase sometimes designs. The use of it shews the apostle's hu-

mility, his sense of obligation to Christ, and acknowledgment of him as his Lord, and that he esteemed it an honour to stand in such a relation to him: but to distinguish him from a common servant of Christ, and an ordinary minister of the word, 'tis added, *an apostle of Jesus Christ*: one that was immediately sent by Christ, had his commission and doctrine directly from him, and a power of working miracles, in confirmation of his mission and ministry being divine, and an authority at large to go everywhere and preach the Gospel, plant churches, and put them in due order, and place proper persons over them. This is said to give weight and authority to his epistle: and further, in this inscription of the epistle, the persons are described to whom it is written, as follows, *to them that have obtained like precious faith with us*; they were believers in Christ, who had a faith of the right kind; not a faith of doing miracles, which was not common to all, nor was it saving; nor an historical faith, or a mere assent to truths, nor a temporary one, or a bare profession of faith; but that faith which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of his grace, and the operation of his power; which sees the son, goes to him, ventures on him, trusts in him, lives upon him, and works by love to him. This is said to be *precious*, as it is in its own nature, being a rich and enriching grace, of more worth and value than gold that perisheth, or than thousands of gold and silver; it is not to be equalled by, nor purchased with the riches of the whole world; it is precious in its object, it being conversant with the precious person, precious blood, and precious righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, and is that grace which makes Christ, and all that is his, precious to souls; it is precious in its acts and usefulness; it is that grace by which men go to God and Christ, receive from them, and give all glory to them, and without which it is not possible to please God: to which add the durability of it; it is an abiding grace, and will never fail, when the most precious things in nature do: and it is *like precious* with that the apostles had; for there is but one faith, and which is called a common faith, even common to all the elect; and which is the same in all, not as to degrees, for in some it is strong, and in others weak; or as to the actings of it, which are not in all alike, nor in the same persons at all times; in some 'tis only a seeing of the son, his glory, fulness, and suitability, and longing for views of an interest in him; in others a reliance on him, and trusting in him; and in others a holy confidence, and full assurance of being his: but then it is alike with respect to its nature, as it is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and as it works by love to Christ and his people; it springs from the same cause, the love and favour of God, and has the same object, Jesus Christ, and is followed with the same salvation; for though it is but as a grain of mustard-seed, yet, being genuine, the person that has it shall certainly be saved: wherefore, for the comfort and encouragement of these scattered believers, the apostle assures them, that their faith was the same with their brethren that dwelt at Jerusalem and in Judea, who believed in Christ, and even with them that were the apostles of Christ; and this he says they

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had *obtained*, not by their own merits or industry, but by the grace of God; for faith is not of a man's self, it is the gift of God, and the produce of his grace and power. Some have rendered it, *obtained by lot*; not by chance, but by the all-wise, good, and powerful providence of God, ordering, directing, assigning, and giving this grace unto them. And which came to them *through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; or *of our God, and Saviour Jesus Christ*, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, of Christ Jesus, who is our God and Saviour: so that here is a testimony of the deity of Christ, as well as of his character as a Saviour, who is an able and a willing one, a full, complete, suitable, and only Saviour: and the reason why he is so is because he is truly and properly *God*: and why he is so to us, because he is *our God*: wherefore by *righteousness* here, cannot be meant the goodness and mercy of God, as some think, though faith undoubtedly comes through that; nor the faithfulness of God making good his purpose and promise of giving faith to his elect, as others think: but the righteousness of Christ, which is not the righteousness of a creature, but of God; that is wrought out by one that is God, as well as man, and so answerable to all the purposes for which it is brought in. Now faith comes *in*, or *with* this righteousness, as the phrase may be rendered; when the spirit of God reveals and brings near this righteousness to a poor sensible sinner, he at the same time works faith in him to look to it, lay hold upon it, and plead it as his justifying righteousness with God: or it comes *through* it; hence it appears that faith and righteousness are two distinct things; and that faith is not a man's righteousness before God, for it comes to him through it; as also that righteousness is before faith, or otherwise faith could not come by it; and, moreover, is the cause and reason of it; faith has no causal influence upon righteousness, but righteousness has upon faith: the reason why a man has a justifying righteousness is not because he has faith; but the reason why he has faith given him is because he has a justifying righteousness provided for him, and imputed to him.

Ver. 2. *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, &c.*] By a multiplication of *grace* may be meant a larger discovery of the love and favour of God; which though it admits of no degrees in itself, being never more or less in God's heart, yet, as to the manifestations of it, it is different, and capable of being increased, and drawn out to a greater length; or else an increase of the internal graces of the spirit of God, as to the actings and exercise of them; or a larger measure of the gifts of the spirit, for greater usefulness among them; or a clearer view, and a more enlarged knowledge of the Gospel of the grace of God, and the truths of it; and indeed, the word *grace* may take in all these senses: and by a multiplication of *peace*, which the apostle in this salutation also wishes for, may be designed an affluence of all kind of prosperity, temporal and spiritual, external and internal; and more especially an increase of spiritual peace, a fulness of joy and peace in believing, arising from a sense of free justification by Christ's righteousness, and full pardon and atonement by his blood and sacrifice: *through the*

knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord ; which is to be understood, not of a natural, but of a spiritual and evangelical knowledge ; of a knowledge of God, not as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace, as in Christ, and a covenant-God in him, and of the person, offices, and grace of Christ ; and which designs true faith in him, by which means larger discoveries of the grace of God are made, and a greater enjoyment of spiritual peace is had : or it may be rendered, *with the knowledge of God, &c.* and the sense then is, that the apostle prays, as for a multiplication of grace and peace, so along with it, an increase of spiritual and evangelical knowledge ; which in the best is imperfect, but may be increased by the blessing of God on those means which he has appointed for that end, such as the word and ordinances. The Syriac version renders this clause, *through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*, leaving out the word *God*, and the copulative *and*, and adding the word *Christ* ; and the Ethiopic version reads, *in the knowledge of our God, Christ Jesus our Lord*, without any distinction. After the inscription and salutation begins the epistle, with an account of various special favours bestowed upon these persons ; and are mentioned by the apostle to encourage his faith and theirs, in expectation of enjoying what he here wishes unto them, since already such great and good things had been bestowed upon them.

Ver. 3. *According as his divine power, &c.*] Meaning either the power of God the father, to whom belong eternal power and Godhead ; and he is sometimes called by the name of *power* itself ; see Matt. xxvi. 64. being all-powerful and mighty ; or rather the power of Christ, since he is the next and immediate antecedent to this relative ; and who, as he has the fulness of the Godhead in him, is almighty, and can do all things ; and is *El-shaddai*, God all-sufficient, and can communicate all things whatsoever he pleases, and does, as follows : for he *hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness* ; referring not so much to a temporal life, though he gives that and preserves it, and furnishes with all the mercies and comforts of it ; and which come to his, from him, in a covenant way, as his left-hand blessings, and in great love ; but rather a spiritual life, which he is the author and maintainer of, all the joys, pleasures, blessings, and supports of it, being given by him ; as also eternal life, for that, and every thing appertaining to it, are from him ; he gives a meetness for it, which is his own grace, and a right unto it, which is his own righteousness ; and he has power to give that itself to as many as the father has given him, and he does give it to them ; and likewise all things belonging to *godliness*, or internal religion ; and which is the means of eternal life, and leads on to it, and is connected with it, and has the promise both of this life, and of that which is to come ; and every thing relating to it, or is in it, or it consists of, is from Christ : the internal graces of the spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which, when in exercise, are the principal parts of powerful godliness, are the gifts of Christ, are received out of his fulness, and of which he is the author and finisher ; and he is the donor of all the fresh supplies of grace to maintain the inward power of religion, and to assist in the external exercise of it ; all which things are

given *through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*. The call here spoken of is not a bare outward call, by the ministry of the word, but an internal, special, and powerful one, which springs from the grace, and is according to the purpose of God, and is inseparably connected with justification and glorification ; and is either of God the father, who, as the God of all grace, calls to eternal glory by Christ ; or rather of Christ himself, who calls by his spirit and grace ; and hence the saints are sometimes styled, *the called of Jesus Christ*, Rom. i. 6. what they are called unto by him is, *glory and virtue* ; by the former may be meant, the glorious state of the saints in the other world, and so answers to *life*, eternal life, in the preceding clause ; and by the latter, grace, and the spiritual blessings of grace here, and which answers to *godliness* in the said clause ; for the saints are called both to grace and glory, and to the one, in order to the other. Some render it, *by glory and virtue* ; and some copies, as the Alexandrian and others, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, *by his own glory and virtue* ; that is, by his glorious power, which makes the call as effectual, and is as illustrious a specimen of the glory of his power, as was the call of Lazarus out of the grave ; unless the Gospel should rather be intended by glory and virtue, which is glorious in itself, and the power of God unto salvation, and is the means by which persons are called to the communion of Christ, and the obtaining of his glory : so then this phrase, *him that hath called us to glory and virtue*, is a periphrasis of Christ, through a *knowledge* of whom, and which is not notional and speculative, but spiritual, experimental, fiducial, and practical, or along with such knowledge all the above things are given ; for as God, in giving Christ, gives all things along with him, so the spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, when he makes him known in the glory of his person, grace, and righteousness, also makes known the several things which are freely given of God and Christ : and this is what, among other things, makes the knowledge of Christ preferable to all other knowledge, or any thing else.

Ver. 4. *Whereby are given unto us, &c.*] Or *by which*, that is, glory and virtue ; by the glorious power of Christ, or by the glorious and powerful Gospel of Christ ; and so the Arabic version renders it, *by both of which* ; or *by whom*, as the Vulgate Latin version reads ; that is, by Christ ; for as in him are all the promises of God, so they are at his dispose, and by him are given unto the saints : *exceeding great and precious promises* ; meaning the promises of the new and everlasting covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, surety, and messenger ; and which are *exceeding great*, if we consider the author of them, who is the great God of heaven and earth, and who was under no obligation to make promises of any thing to his creatures ; and therefore must arise from great grace and favour, of which they are largely expressive, and are like himself ; are such as become his greatness and goodness, and are confirmed by his oath, and made good by his power and faithfulness : and they are also great, as to the nature and matter of them ; they are better promises than those of the covenant of works ; they are not merely temporal ones, nor are they conditional and

legal; but as they relate to things spiritual and eternal, to grace here and glory hereafter, so they are absolute, free, and unconditional, and are irreversible and unchangeable; and they answer great ends and purposes, the glory of God, and the everlasting good and happiness of his people; and therefore must be *precious*, of more value and worth than thousands of gold and silver, and to be rejoiced at more than at the finding of a great spoil, being every way suited to the cases of God's people, and which never fail. The end of giving them is, *that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature*; not essentially, or of the essence of God, so as to be deified, this is impossible, for the nature, perfections, and glory of God, are incommunicable to creatures; nor hypostatically and personally, so as the human nature of Christ, in union with the son of God, is a partaker of the divine nature in him; but by way of resemblance and likeness, the new man, or principle of grace, being formed in the heart in regeneration, after the image of God, and bearing a likeness to the image of his son; and this is styled, Christ formed in the heart, into which image and likeness the saints are more and more changed, from glory to glory, through the application of the Gospel, and the promises of it, by which they have such sights of Christ as do transform them, and assimilate them to him; and which resemblance will be perfected hereafter, when they shall be entirely like him, and see him as he is: *having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*; not the corruption and depravity of nature, which is never escaped by any, nor got rid of so long as the saints are in the world; but the corrupt manners of the world, or those corruptions and vices which are prevalent in the world, and under the power and dominion of which the world lies; and particularly the sins of uncleanness, adultery, incest, sodomy, and such-like filthy and unnatural lusts, which abounded in the world, and among some that called themselves Christians, and especially the followers of Simon Magus. Now the Gospel, and the precious promises, being graciously bestowed, and powerfully applied, have an influence on purity of heart and conversation, and teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; such are the powerful effects of Gospel promises. under divine influence, as to make men inwardly partakers of the divine nature, and outwardly to abstain from and avoid the prevailing corruptions and vices of the times.

Ver. 5. *And besides this, giving all diligence, &c.] Or upon this, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read, bestow all your labour, diligence, and care; namely, on what follows, and that from the consideration of what goes before; for nothing can more strongly animate, and engage to the diligent exercise of grace and discharge of duty, than a consideration of the high favours, and free-grace gifts of God, and the exceeding great and precious promises of his Gospel: add to your faith virtue; or with your faith, so the Arabic version renders it, and the like, in the following clauses. They had faith, even like-precious faith with the apostles, not of themselves, but by the gift of God, and which is the first and principal grace; it leads the van, or rather the *chorus*, as the word rendered*

add signifies; and though it is in itself imperfect, has many things lacking in it, yet it can't be added to, or increased by men; ministers may be a means of perfecting what is lacking in it, and of the furtherance and joy of it, but it is the Lord only that can increase it, or add unto it in that sense, and which is not the meaning here: but the sense is, that as it is the basis and foundation of all good works, it should not stand alone, there ought to be virtue, or good works along with it, by which it may be perfected, not essentially, but essentially, or might appear to be true and genuine; for by *virtue* may be either meant some particular virtue, as justice towards men, to which both the grace and doctrine of faith direct; and indeed pretensions to faith in Christ, where there is not common justice done to men, are of little account; or, as others think, beneficence to men; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *proceed to bounty by your faith*; and faith does work by love and kindness to fellow-creatures and Christians; but this seems rather designed by brotherly kindness and charity, in ver. 7. or boldness, courage, constancy, and fortitude, which ought to go along with faith. Where there is true faith in Christ, there should be a holy boldness to profess it, and constancy in it, and courage to fight the good fight of faith, and firmness of mind to stand fast in it, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements; or virtue in general is here meant, not mere moral, but Christian virtues, which are the fruits of the spirit of God, and of his grace; and differ from the other, in that they spring from the grace of God, are done in faith, by the assistance of the spirit of Christ, and by strength received from him, and in love to him, and with a view to the glory of God; whereas moral virtues, as exercised by a mere moral man, spring from nature, and are performed by the mere strength of it, and are destitute of faith, and so but *splendida peccata*, splendid sins, and proceed from self-love, from sinister ends, and with selfish views: *and to virtue, knowledge*; not of Christ, mentioned ver. 8. and which is included in faith, for there can be no true faith in Christ, where there is not knowledge of him; but of the will of God, which it is necessary men should be acquainted with, in order to perform it; or else though they may seem zealous of good works, their zeal will not be according to knowledge; they ought to know what are virtues or good works in God's account, and what are the nature and use of them, lest they should mistake and misapply them; or of the Scriptures of truth, and of the mysteries of the Gospel, which should be diligently searched, for the increase and improvement of knowledge in divine things, and which has a considerable influence on a just, sober, and godly living; or by knowledge may be meant prudence and wisdom, in ordering the external conversation aright towards those that are without, and in shewing good works out of it, to others, by way of example, and for the evidence of the truth of things, with meekness of wisdom.

Ver. 6. *And to knowledge, temperance, &c.]* Avoiding all excess in eating and drinking, and all impure and unclean lusts; for it signifies nothing what a man knows, or professes to know, if his life is a scene of intemperance and debauchery: this seems to be levelled against the followers of Simon Magus, who as-

certained salvation to knowledge, though the life was ever so impure. Moreover, this may include abstinence, not only from hurtful lusts, but from the use of things indifferent, when the peace and comfort of a weak brother are endangered; for then to knowledge must be added love, otherwise that knowledge will not be right, at least not rightly used; see 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 7, 10, 11. *and to temperance, patience*: which is necessary to the running of the Christian race, which is attended with many difficulties and exercises; and under affliction from the hand of God, that there be no murmuring nor repining; and under reproaches and persecutions from men, that they faint not, and are not discouraged by them; and in the expectation of the heavenly glory: this is proper to be superadded to the former, because there may be intemperance in passion, as well as in the use of the creatures; a man may be inebriated with wrath and anger, and overcome with impatience, as well as with wine and strong drink: *and to patience, godliness*: either internal, which is distinguished from bodily exercise, or outward worship, and lies in the inward and powerful exercise of grace, as faith, hope, love, fear, &c. and the Syriac version here renders it, *the fear of God*: or rather external, and intends the whole worship of God, as prayer, praise, hearing of the word, and attendance on all ordinances.

Ver. 7. *And to godliness, brotherly kindness, &c.*] Without which, godliness, or external worship, or a profession of religion, is a vain shew; for this is both the evidence of regeneration, and of the truth and power of real godliness; and also the beauty, comfort, and security of Christian society and worship, and without which they can't be maintained with peace, profit, and honour: *and to brotherly kindness, charity*: or *love*; that is, to all men, enemies, as well as to the household of faith; and to God and Christ, to his house, worship, ordinances, people and truths. Charity is more extensive in its objects and acts than brotherly kindness or love. As faith leads the van, charity brings up the rear, and is the greatest of all.

Ver. 8. *For if these things be in you, &c.*] Are wrought in you by the spirit of God, and exercised and performed by his assistance, who works in his people both to will and do: *and abound*: increase in their acts and exercises by the frequent performance of them: *they make you*; both by way of influence and evidence, that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a knowledge of Christ which is barren and fruitless; and those that have it are so in their conversations, and it will be of no avail to them another day: and this is a mere notional and speculative knowledge, such as is not attended with any inward experience and application of Christ to themselves, or any fruits of righteousness in their lives, and is a bare theory of things relating to his person, offices, and works; but there is a knowledge of him that is spiritual and experimental, by which a soul not only approves of Christ, but places its trust and confidence in him, and appropriates him to himself, and practically observes his commands and ordinances in the faith of him; and in love to him he performs the above duties, and exercises the above graces; from whence it appears, that

he is neither barren nor unfruitful himself in the profession of his knowledge of Christ; or in the acknowledgment of him, as it may be rendered; nor is that a vain, empty, and useless thing: he is not like the barren fig-tree, or the earth that bears briars and thorns, and is nigh to cursing and burning, but like a tree planted by a river of water, and is green, flourishing, and fruitful. This is used as an argument to enforce the foregoing exhortation, to add to, that is, to exercise and perform the above graces and duties, in conjunction with each other.

Ver. 9. *B. he that lacketh these things, &c.*] Or in, and with whom, they are not; that is, these virtues, as the Arabic version reads, as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; where the principles of those things are not, and they are not exercised and performed, such an one is blind; let him boast ever so much of his light and knowledge, and value himself upon it, and expect to be saved by it, let him live as he will; for he has no true knowledge of God, as in Christ, as the God of all grace, as his covenant God and father; nor does he know what it is to have communion with him in Christ; he only professes to know him in words, whilst in works he denies him; nor has he any right knowledge of Christ, only notional and general, not spiritual, experimental, particular, and practical; he does not see the son, so as truly to believe in him; he has no true sight of his beauty, suitableness, and fulness, and of him for himself; nor any experience of the work of the spirit of God upon his heart, whom he neither receives, sees, nor knows spiritually, any more than the world itself does; nor does he see the plague of his own heart, the corruptions of his nature, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; nor has he any true spiritual light into the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, only a form of godliness, without the power of it: and therefore, whatever natural understanding of things he has, he is spiritually blind, and cannot see afar off; at least, not the good land that is afar off, the kingdom of heaven; the invisible glories of the other world; things that are not seen, which are eternal, which one that has true faith has a glimpse and sight of; nor Christ, who is in heaven at the right hand of God, and the things of Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, carried within the veil; nor even what is within himself, the sins of his heart, the pollution of his nature, and the evil that dwells there; he sees not that he is poor, and wretched, and miserable, but fancies himself to be rich, and in need of nothing; he sees nothing but outward things, the things of time and sense, worldly and earthly things, which are near him, and all around him, which he minds, on which his heart is set, and he pursues with vigour. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *trying with the hand*, as blind men do, feeling and groping to find the way; see Acts xvii. 27. *and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*; not by baptism, from the sins committed before it, for that does not purge from any sins, old or new, but that which it leads the faith of believers to, for pardon and cleansing, even the blood of Christ; but this also, and purification by it, is not meant here, though generally interpreters give this as the sense, and under-

stand it of the sin of ingratitude in such a person, who had received so great a benefit by Christ, and was unmindful of it; since it can't be thought that one so described as above should ever have had his conscience purged by the blood of Christ from his old sins, or those before conversion, unless it be by profession; and then the sense is, that he has forgotten that he once professed to have been purged from all his sins by Christ; which, if he had, would have made him zealous of good works, and put him upon glorifying Christ both in body and spirit. The Ethiopic version renders it, *and he hath forgot to purge himself from old sins*; which he would have been concerned for, had he had a true and spiritual knowledge of Christ, and his Gospel, and an application of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, or had been made a partaker of the divine nature through them; see 2Cor. vii. 1. but the words are better rendered agreeably to the original text, *and hath forgotten the purification of his old, or former sins*; or *sins of old*; as they are rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; that is, he does not consider, nor think of it, that he was a sinner of old, a sinner in Adam, that he was conceived and shapen in sin, and went astray, and was called a transgressor from the womb; he does not think that he stands in any need of being purged from former sins; and is entirely unmindful of, and neglects, the purification of them by the blood of Christ.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence, &c.]* To exercise the afore-mentioned graces, and to perform the above duties, since this is the way to *make your calling and election sure*; by *calling* is not meant a call to any office in the church, nor an external call, either by the voice of nature, or by the ministry of the word; but an internal and effectual call by special grace, to grace here, and glory hereafter; instead of *calling*, the Alexandrian copy reads, *comfort*: and by *election* is meant, not a national, nor church-election, but a particular and personal one, since scattered saints, and particular believers, are here written to, and each called upon to be diligent to make their own, and not another's, calling and election sure; nor is a choice of persons to an office designed, seeing the apostle writes not to officers of churches in particular, but to believers in common; nor a separation of persons from the world by effectual vocation, since these two are both mentioned here, and as distinct from each other, and to be made sure; but an election of particular persons to eternal life and salvation is here intended, which is an eternal act of God, arises from his free grace and favour, and is according to his sovereign will and pleasure; and is absolute, and independent of any condition, foreseen, or required in men, as faith, holiness, and good works; all which are fruits and effects, and not causes and conditions of electing grace. These may be made *sure*, not in themselves, or with respect to God, for in this sense they can't be made surer than they are: effectual calling is according to the purpose of God, which can't be frustrated, and is, without repentance, irreversible, and irrevocable, and is inseparably connected with eternal glory; and election stands not upon the foot of works, but upon the free grace of God, which cannot be made void, and upon the will of God, which

cannot be resisted; and is also closely connected with glorification; see Rom. viii. 30. nor are those to be made sure by saints, with respect to themselves; for though they may sometimes be at a loss about them, and may have some scruples and doubts in their minds concerning their interest in them, and an assurance of their being both called and chosen, may be after all attained unto by them; yet this is not their work, but it is the work of the spirit of God, to certify and make sure unto them, or assure them of their vocation and election of God: but the sense is, that diligence is to be used by the saints, to make their calling and election sure to others; not their election by their calling only, which is to themselves; for both are to be made sure, and that to others, and by some third thing; either to their fellow-Christians, which they may do by giving them an account of the work of God upon their souls, joined with a testimony of their good lives and conversations; or rather to the world by *good works*, as the Vulgate Latin version and two copies of Beza's read; or by *your good works*, as the Alexandrian copy and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or by the exercise of the graces, and the discharge of the duties before mentioned, whereby the men of the world may be certified and assured, by the best evidence the saints are capable of giving to them, or they of receiving, that they are the called and chosen of God, they profess themselves to be; and which is a reason why those things should be done: and another follows, *for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall*; or *sin*, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; not that they should never fall at all, or in any sense, for in many things we all offend or fall; or should ever commit any act of sin, or fall into sin, for there is no man that lives, and sins not; or that they should not fall from a degree of the lively exercise of grace, or from a degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of faith, but that they should never sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, or fall totally and finally; for though they fall, they should rise again by faith and repentance, through the grace and power of Christ, who is able to keep them from falling: and besides, whilst they were exercising those graces, and doing those duties, they should not fall; for these are the means of final perseverance, and therefore the rather to be regarded. Another argument, strengthening the exhortation, follows:

Ver. 11. *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, &c.]* An abundant supply of grace and strength shall be freely afforded, to carry you through all the duties and trials of life; and when that shall be ended, an admission will be granted into the *everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; meaning, not the Gospel dispensation, or the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, but lies among his people, who are called out of it, in whom he reigns by his spirit and grace, according to laws of his own enacting; nor his personal kingdom on earth with his saints, which will last only a thousand years, and not be for ever; but the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate glory, which will be everlasting; and is called a kingdom, to denote the glory and excellency of that state; and an everlasting one, because it will never end; and the kingdom of Christ

because it is in his possession, for his people; it is prepared by him, and he will introduce them into it, when they shall be for ever with him, and reign with him for ever and ever. Some copies read, *the heavenly kingdom*. There is an entrance of separate souls into this kingdom at death; and which may be said to be ministered *abundantly* to them, or *richly*, as the word signifies, when they depart out of this world with joy and comfort; triumphing over death, and the grave, in a full view by faith of their interest in the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the glories of another world; and there is an entrance into it at judgment, and which will be abundantly, when all the saints together, in their souls and bodies, shall be introduced by Christ into the full joy of their Lord. As the saints enter the kingdom through many tribulations, the gate is strait, and the way is narrow, and they are scarcely saved, and many of them so as only by fire; but when the abundant grace given unto them by the way to heaven, the great consolation many enjoy in their last moments, and especially the free and full admission of them, both at death and at judgment, to eternal happiness, are considered, the entrance ministered may be said to be abundantly; or, as the Arabic version renders it, *with a breadth*; the entrance is large and broad.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore I will not be negligent, &c.*] The apostle having made use of proper arguments to excite the saints he writes to regard the exhortation he had given, to the diligent exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, proceeds to give the reasons of his own conduct, why he gave such an exhortation to them, and pressed it, and continued to do so, and determined for the future to go on with it, as particularly the usefulness and profitableness of it; and therefore, seeing it would be attended with so many advantages before mentioned, he was resolved that he would not be careless, nor omit any opportunity that should offer: *to put you always in remembrance of these things*; of the exercise of the above graces, and the performance of the above duties, which saints are too apt to forget, and therefore should be reminded of; and it is the duty and business of the ministers of the word frequently to inculcate those things: *though ye know them, and be established in the present truth*; for those that know the most, know but in part; and may have their knowledge increased; and those that are the most established in the truths of the Gospel, may be confirmed yet more and more. This the apostle mentions as an apology for himself, and to prevent an objection that might be made, as if he had suggested that they were ignorant and unstable; or which might insinuate that there was no necessity of such frequent putting in remembrance; since they were both knowing and stable: by *the present truth* may be meant, either the whole scheme of the Gospel, which was now come by Christ, in opposition to the exhibition of it under the former dispensation, by promise and type; and it being so called, shews that it is always now, and new; that there will be no alteration in it, nor addition to it, it being like the author of it, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and will not give place to another scheme of things; or else the particular truth of the coming of Christ, either to take

vengeance on the Jewish nation, or to judge the world in righteousness, and introduce his own people into the new heavens, and new earth, ch. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13.

Ver. 13. *Yea, I think it meet, &c.*] Or *just*. This is the apostle's other reason for his conduct, taken from the duty of his place and office; judging it to be what became him as an apostle and elder, and the minister of the circumcision, and was what was due to God and Christ, whom he served, and the souls of men under his care: *as long as I am in this tabernacle*; or *body*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and so some copies; for the body is as a tabernacle for the soul to dwell in, pitched for a time, and, ere long, to be taken down; see the note on 2 Cor. v. 1. *to stir you up*; to the lively exercise of grace, and constant performance of duty: *by putting you in remembrance*: of the said things; for saints are apt to be forgetful of their duty, and backward to it, and sluggish and slothful in it.

Ver. 14. *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, &c.*] Which is another reason why the apostle was so pressing in this case, and so much urged the exhortation, and was so diligent in reminding the saints of it, and stirring them to observe it, because he knew he had but a little time to live, and which therefore he was willing to improve for their good. He sets forth his death in a very easy and familiar way, it being not at all terrible and distressing to him; it was but like the putting off of a garment, or unpinning of a tabernacle, or a removing from a tent to a palace. Saints are pilgrims here, they dwell in tents or tabernacles, at death they remove to their own country, and father's house. Death is not a destruction of man, an annihilation of him, neither of his soul nor body: the soul is not mortal, it dies not with the body; it only removes from this world to another, from a cottage to a kingdom; and the body though it dies, it is not reduced to nothing, it is only like a tabernacle put off, or taken down, which will be put together again in better order than now it is. *Even as our Lord Jesus hath shewed me*; by some special revelation lately made to him; or by some strong impulse upon his mind; just as the Apostle Paul knew that the time of his departure was at hand, 2 Tim. iv. 7. or this may have respect to the words of Christ to Peter, above thirty years before, in John xxi. 18. which both signified what kind of death he should die, and when it should be; namely, when he was old, as now he was.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, I will endeavour, &c.*] He signifies, that he should not only use all diligence to stir them up to, and put them in remembrance of the necessary duties of their calling whilst he was alive, but should make it his study to concert some measures, and take some steps, that *you may be able after my decease*; or Exodus, meaning his going out of this world by death, in allusion to the Israelites going out of Egypt, and marching for Canaan's land; this world being, like Egypt, a place of wickedness, misery, and bondage; as heaven, like Canaan, a place and state of rest and happiness. *To have these things always in remembrance*; by which they might be always put in mind of them, or by recurring to which they might have their memories refreshed; and what he means is,

to leave these exhortations and admonitions in writing, which they might read, and be of use to them when he was dead and gone; and indeed by this, and his former epistle, though being dead, he yet speaketh.

Ver. 16. *For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, &c.*] Such as Jewish fables, cautioned against Tit. i. 14. which their traditionary and oral law, their Talmud, and other writings, mention; as concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, the sumptuous feast, and carnal pleasures and entertainments, of that state, with many other things; some of which indeed are not very cunningly put together, but weak enough: or Gentile fables concerning the theogony and exploits of their deities; and which may be meant by fables and endless genealogies in 1 Tim. i. 4. and especially reference may be had to the metamorphoses of their gods, and their fables relating to them, devised by Ovid, and others, since the apostle is about to speak of the metamorphosis, or transfiguration of Christ; and also other fables with which their poets and histories abound; and likewise the prophecies of the Sibyls, and the oracles at Delphos, and elsewhere: or the fabulous accounts of the followers of Simon Magus concerning God, angels, the creation of the world, and the several *Æones*; or the more artful composites of the false teachers, set off with all the cunning, sophistry, wit, and eloquence they were masters of. Now in order to set forth the nature, excellency, and certainty of the doctrine the apostle taught, especially that part of it which respected the coming of Christ; and to shew that it was worth his while to put them in mind of it, and theirs to remember it; he observes, that he and his fellow-apostles did not proceed in their account of it on such a foundation, but upon an evidence which they had received, both with their eyes and ears, and also on a word of prophecy surer than that: *when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*; not his first coming, though that, and the benefits arising from it, were the subject of their ministry; and that was attended with divine power, which appeared in the incarnation of Christ itself, which was owing to the power of the Highest; and was seen in his doctrine and ministry, which were with great authority; and in the miracles which he wrought, which proved him to have power equal with God, his father; and in the work of redemption, which he came about and finished; in doing which he made an end of sin, and saved his people from it, redeemed them from the curse of the law, overcame the world, destroyed Satan, and abolished death; and especially in his resurrection from the dead, when he was declared to be the son of God with power: but notwithstanding his first coming was in great humility, in much meanness and imbecility, he grew up as a tender plant, and was encompassed with infirmities, and at last was crucified through weakness. This therefore was to be understood of an after-coming of his, which the apostle had wrote of, and made known in his former epistle, ch. i. 7, 13. and iv. 5. and which he puts them in mind of in this, ch. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13. nor is the word *παροιμία* used of any other coming of

Christ, and this will be with power; and it designs his more near coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, and deliver his people from the afflictions and persecution they laboured under, and which was with great power; see Matt. xxiv. 3, 30. Mark ix. 1. or more remote, namely, at the last day, when there will be a great display of power in raising the dead, gathering all nations before him, separating them one from another, passing the final sentence on each, and executing the same in the utter destruction of the wicked, and the complete glorification of the saints. *But were eye-witnesses of his majesty*: meaning, not of the glory of his divine nature by faith, and with the eyes of their understanding, while others only considered him as a mere man; nor of the miracles he wrought, in which there was a display of his glory and majesty, of all which the apostles were eye-witnesses; but of that glory and greatness which were upon him, when he was transfigured on the mount before them; then his face was as the sun, and such a glory on his whole body, that it darted through his clothes, and made them glitter like light, and as white as snow, and so as no fuller on earth could whiten them; at which time also Moses and Elias appeared in glorious forms: and now this was a prelude and pledge of his power and coming, of his kingdom coming with power, and of his coming in his own, and his father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. This was a proof that notwithstanding his meanness in his incarnate state, yet he was glorified, and would be glorified again; and this was a confirmation of it to the apostles, and might be to others: see Matt. xvi. 27, 28. and xvii. 1. Mark viii. 38. and ix. 1. Luke ix. 26, 27, 28.

Ver. 17. *For he received from God the father honour and glory, &c.*] Not as an inferior from a superior, for he was equal in glory with the father, and was, and is, the brightness of his father's glory; nor essentially, having the same glory as his father, and to which nothing can be added; but declaratively, God the father testifying of his glory, declaring the honour that belonged to him, as the son of God, at the same time that an external glory was put on him, and received by him, as the son of man: *when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory*; from the bright cloud which overshadowed Jesus, Moses, and Elias, and was a symbol of the glory and presence of God, as the cloud in the tabernacle and temple were, Exod. xl. 35, 36. 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. or from heaven, the habitation of the holiness and glory of God, and where he displays the glory of his being and perfections; or from himself, who is the God and father of glory, and is glorious in himself, in all his attributes and works. So *כבוד*, *glory*, with the Cabalistic Jews, signifies the Shechinah, or divine presence^d; and every number in the Cabalistic tree is called by the name of *glory*; the second number, which is *wisdom*, is called *the first glory*; and the third number, *understanding*, is called *כבוד עליון*, *the supreme, or chief glory*^e: so the first path, which is the supreme crown, is sometimes called the first glory, as the father is here the most excellent glory; and the second path, which is

^d Guido. Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 92.

^e Lex. Cabalist. p. 464.

the understanding enlightening, the second glory^f. And this voice was not that at his baptism; for though that was from heaven, and from God the father, and expressed the same words as here; yet it was not on a mount, nor from a cloud, nor was it heard by the apostles, who, as yet, were not with Christ, nor called by him; nor that of which mention is made in John xii. 28. for though that also was from God the father, and from heaven, and which declaratively gave honour and glory to Christ, yet did not express the words here mentioned; but that voice which came from the cloud, when Christ was transfigured on the mount, and which was heard by his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, when the following words were articulately pronounced, *this is my beloved son, in whom I am well-pleased*: see the note on Matt. xvii. 5. The Vulgate Latin version adds here, as there, *hear ye him*.

Ver. 18. *And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, &c.*] Peter, who wrote this epistle, and James and John, the favourite disciples of Christ; and who were a sufficient number to bear witness of what they then saw and heard: *when we were with him*; and saw his glory, and the glory of Moses and Elias, and were so delighted with his company, and theirs, and with communion with him, that Peter, in the name of the rest, desired to stay there: *in the holy mount*; the Ethiopic version reads, *in the mountain of his sanctuary*; and so Grotius understands it of Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, called the holy hill, and the holy hill of Zion; and supposes that this voice was heard in the temple, and that it refers to John xii. 28. but without any foundation; for the mount on which Christ was transfigured is here meant; and which was either, as is generally said, Tabor, a mountain in Galilee; or it may be Lebanon, which was near Cæsarea Philippi, in the parts of which Christ then was: and it is called *holy*, from his presence or transfiguration on it, who is the holy One; just as the land on which Moses was, and the city and temple of Jerusalem, and Mount Sion, and Sinai, are called *holy*, from the presence of the holy God there, Exod. iii. 5. Matt. iv. 5. Psal. ii. 6. and lxviii. 17. Now such a declaration of the honour and glory of Christ, as the Son of God, being made by God the Father, in a voice from heaven, which the apostles heard with their ears, at the same time that they saw with their eyes his human body glorified in an amazing manner, was to them a confirming evidence that he would come again in power and glory; and upon this evidence they declared, and made known to the saints, the power and coming of Christ; though not on this evidence only, but also upon the more sure word of prophecy, which entirely agrees with it.

Ver. 19. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy, &c.*] Though this word of prophecy is generally understood of the writings and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Christ, yet different ways are taken to fix the comparison: some think the sense is, that they are more sure than the cunningly-devised fables, ver. 16. but as these have no certainty nor authority in them, but are entirely to be rejected, the

apostle would never put the sacred writings in comparison with them: and it is most clear, that the comparison lies between this word of prophecy, and the testimony of the apostles, who were eye and ear witnesses of the majesty and glory of Christ; but how prophecy should be a surer evidence of Christ, and the Gospel, than such a testimony, is difficult to understand; and is a sense which all agree to reject, by different methods: some think that a comparative is used for a positive, and that the meaning is, that besides the testimony of the apostles, prophecy is a very sure evidence; and this is countenanced by the Syriac version, which renders it, *and we have also a firm, or true word of prophecy*; to which the Arabic agrees, *and we have a word of prophecy very true*: others choose to retain the comparison, and which indeed ought not to be thrown out; but these are divided about it; some are of opinion that it is to be understood of the Jews to whom the apostle writes, and he himself was one, and the sense to be this; not that prophecy in itself was surer than an apostolical testimony, but that it was surer to the Jews, and more valid with them, who had been trained up in, and long used to the prophetic writings; and who had a greater esteem for the prophets of the Old Testament than for the apostles of the New; but it is scarcely credible that the apostle, who had been an eye and ear witness in the holy mount, would put himself in among them, and say, *we have, &c.* for whatever prophecy was to them, it could not be surer to him than what he had seen with his eyes, and heard with his ears. Others suppose that the meaning is, that prophecy was *now* surer to the Christians than it was *before*, it being confirmed and established by facts and events, and also by miracles, and even by the attestation of this voice heard on the mount, and by the majesty of Christ seen there; but if this had been the sense of the apostle, he would have used these words, *now and before*; and besides, this puts the comparison quite out of its place, which manifestly stands between former prophecy, and the present testimony of the apostles: but the truth of the matter is, that this word of prophecy is not to be understood of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; for though these are the word of God, and do testify of Christ, and are to be taken heed, and attended to, as proofs and evidence of Gospel truths, and are a light to direct and guide in matters both of faith and practice, yet they are not the only light, and are far from being the clearest, and what are only to be attended to; for the Gospel that came by Christ, and is preached by his apostles, and is contained in the writings of the New Testament, is a much clearer light, and at least equally to be attended to: nor are the prophecies of the Old Testament, which particularly relate to Christ, designed; there are many of this kind, which, put together, may very well be called the word of prophecy, and which were to the Jews a light in a dark place, until Christ came in the flesh; and though they are to be attended to, and compared with facts, to shew the truth of the divine revelation, yet they are not a surer evidence, nor so sure an evidence, as the evangelical testi-

mony is, which is of facts, and these supported by miracles; for now the day-spring from on high hath visited us, and Christ, the bright and morning-star, has appeared: but the word of prophecy, concerning Christ's second coming, is here intended, whether it lies in the words of the prophets of the Old Testament, as in Psal. xcvi. 13. Dan. vii. 9, 10, 13. or in the words of Christ, Matt. xvi. 27, 28. and xxiv. 3, 30, 44. which latter is most likely. The Ethiopic version understands this of some particular prophecy, and as if the words were a citation of some prophet, rendering the words thus, *and we have a voice more ancient than this of a prophet, saying, ye do well who take heed, &c.* Sir Isaac Newton is of opinion, that the apostle refers to the book of the Revelation of St. John, which would not be unlikely, could it be proved that it was then written. Now this prophecy or prediction, concerning Christ's coming again with power and great glory, was a surer evidence of it than what the apostles saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears upon the mount; nothing was surer to them, nor could any thing make it surer to them, that he was honoured and glorified, than what they saw and heard: but then this did not so certainly prove that he would hereafter be glorified, or come again in glory. What they saw and heard was a presumptive proof that it *might* be so, and was a confirming pledge and evidence to them that so it *would* be, and was a glorious representation of it; but Christ's prophecy or prediction, that so it *should* be, more strongly ascertained it, since he said it, to whom all things were known from the beginning, and whose counsel shall stand, and not one word of his shall ever fail. *Whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* The prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is as a *light*; 'tis a revelation of that which was in the dark, lay hid as a secret and mystery in the heart of God; and which could not be known by men, had it not been foretold by God; and 'tis made as prophecy in all other cases is, by throwing light, as to this affair, into the mind of him, or them, to whom it is revealed; and is a light to them to whom it is delivered, and which they should attend unto, as to a lamp or torch to guide and direct them; though in some sense it is but a feeble one, and is as a *light that shineth in a dark place*; meaning not the world, which is a place of darkness, ignorance, and error; nor merely the state of the saints in general in this life, who, at most and best, see but through a glass darkly; but has a particular respect to the darkness which attends the saints, concerning the second coming of Christ, and which will especially attend them a little before that time. Prophecy holds out clearly that Christ will come again; that he will come in great glory, in his father's, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels, and with great power, to raise the dead, and judge mankind; and though it gives hints, that upon this, the saints shall be with Christ in the air, on earth, and in heaven; and that there will be new heavens, and a new earth; and that the saints shall reign here with Christ a thousand years, after which the Gog and Magog army will attack them without success; yet these are not so clear, as for saints to be agreed in the sense of them; and much

more are they in the dark about the time of his coming. Now prophecy is the surest evidence and best light the saints have concerning this matter, *until the day dawn*; not the Gospel day, so much spoken of by the prophets; that had dawned already; rather a more clear knowledge of Christ, and Gospel truths, which will be in the spiritual kingdom and reign of Christ hereafter; or else the latter-day glory, at the personal coming of Christ, when the light of the moon shall be as that of the sun, and that of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days; yea, when there will be no need of sun or moon, but Christ shall be come, and be the light of his people; see Isa. xxx. 26. and ix. 1, 2. Rev. xxi. 23, 24. after which will follow the everlasting day of glory, when all darkness will be gone, and saints shall see face to face, and know as they are known: *and the day-star arise in your hearts*; or *the sun*, as the Syriac version renders it; not Christ, the morning-star, the day-spring from on high, and the sun of righteousness, who was already risen upon them; nor the grace of God implanted in their hearts, by which they were already called out of darkness, and made light in the Lord; but as the day-star is the bringer of light, as the word used signifies, or the forerunner of the day, so it here intends the immediate signs and forerunners of the coming of Christ; which when observed *in their hearts*, and by their understandings, as being come to pass, they may lift up their heads with joy, because their redemption draws near, Luke xxi. 28. and so the Ethiopic here renders it, *and redemption arise for you in your hearts.* Now till this time the sure word of prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is to be *taken heed unto*, as a lamp, light, and torch, to direct us to it, to encourage us to love it, long for it, and hasten to it: and in so doing we shall *do well*; it will be well for the glory of God and Christ, this being setting our seals to them as true; and well for ourselves to keep up our faith, hope, and expectation of it, unmoved.

Ver. 20. *Knowing this first, &c.*] Especially, and in the first place, this is to be known, observed, and considered; that *no prophecy of the Scripture*, that is contained in Scripture, be it what it will, *is of any private interpretation*: not that this is levelled against the right of private judgment of Scripture; or to be understood as if a private believer had not a right of reading, searching, examining, and judging, and interpreting the Scriptures himself, by virtue of the unction which teacheth all things; and who, as a spiritual man, judgeth all things; otherwise, why are such commended as doing well, by taking heed to prophecy, in the preceding verse, and this given as a reason to encourage them to it? the words may be rendered, *of one's own interpretation*: that is, such as a natural man forms of himself, by the mere force of natural parts and wisdom, without the assistance of the spirit of God; and which is done without comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and which is not agreeably to the Scripture, to the analogy of faith, and mind of Christ; though rather this phrase should be rendered, *no prophecy of the Scripture is of a man's own impulse*, invention, or composition; is not human, but purely divine: and this sense carries in it a reason why the sure word of prophecy, concerning the second coming of Christ, should be taken heed to, and made use of

as a light, till he does come; because as no Scripture prophecy, so not that, is a contrivance of man's, his own project and device, and what his own spirit prompts and impels him to, but what is made by the dictates and impulse of the spirit of God; for whatever may be said of human predictions, or the false prophecies of lying men, who deliver them out how and when they please, nothing of this kind can be said of any Scripture prophecy, nor of this concerning the second coming of Christ; and this sense the following words require.

Ver. 21. *For the prophecy, &c.*] The whole Scripture, all the prophetic writings; so the Jews call the Scriptures הנביאים, *the prophecy*^s, by way of eminence, and from the subject-matter of the sacred word: *came not in old time by the will of man*; was not brought into the world at first, or in any period of time, as and when man would, according to his pleasure, and as he thought fit: neither Moses, nor David, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor Ezekiel, nor Daniel, nor any other of the prophets, prophesied when they pleased, but when it was the will of God they should; they were stirred up to prophesy, not by any human impulse, but by a divine influence: with this agrees what R. Sangari

says, "that the speech of the prophets, when the Holy Spirit clothed them, in all their words was directed by a divine influence, and the prophet could not speak in the choice of his own words," or according to his will: *but holy men of God*; such as he sanctified by his spirit, and separated from the rest of men to such peculiar service; and whom he employed as public ministers of his word: for so this phrase *men, or man of God*, often signifies, 1 Sam. ii. 27. 2 Tim. iii. 17. *spoke, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; who illuminated their minds, gave them a knowledge of divine things, and a foresight of future ones; dictated to them what they should say or write; and moved upon them strongly, and by a secret and powerful impulse stirred them up to deliver what they did, in the name and fear of God: which shews the authority of the Scriptures, that they are the word of God, and not of men; and as such should be attended to, and received with all affection and reverence; and that the spirit is the best interpreter of them, who first dictated them; and that they are to be the rule of our faith and practice; nor are we to expect any other, until the second coming of Christ.

C H A P. II.

THIS chapter contains a description of false teachers, that were then in Christian churches, as there had been false prophets among the Jews; and they are described by the doctrines, which they privily introduced; in general, damnable heresies; in particular, denying the Lord that bought them; and by their success, having many followers of them in their pernicious ways; and by the sad effects following hereupon; with respect to the way of truth, that was blasphemed; with respect to their hearers, they, through the covetousness of these false teachers, were made merchandise of; and with respect to themselves, swift and sure destruction would be brought upon them, ver. 1, 2, 3. which is illustrated and confirmed by the instances of punishment in the angels, the men of the old world, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. and whereas, in these instances, notice is taken of the deliverance of some righteous persons, as Noah and Lot, when wicked men were destroyed; the apostle draws this conclusion from the whole, that the Lord knows both how to deliver the saints out of afflictions, and to reserve wicked men until the day of judgment, then to be punished, ver. 9. especially such shall be then punished, who are described by their impure course of life, their contempt of civil government, and their presumption and self-will, ver. 10. which sins of theirs are aggravated by the different conduct of angels, superior to them; and by their being like brute beasts, as ignorant as they, and even below them; whose punishment will be to perish in their corruption, as the just reward of their

unrighteousness, since they are open in sin, take pleasure in it, and sport themselves with it, and are spots and blemishes in Christian societies, ver. 11, 12, 13. and these, who are no other than the false teachers. before spoken of, are further described by their adulterous eyes, which cannot cease from sin; by their beguiling unstable souls; by the covetous practices their hearts were exercised with; by their just desert, cursed children; by the course they steer, forsaking the right way, going astray from it, and following the way of Balaam in his covetousness, and other wicked practices, for which he was reproved by his ass; and by various metaphors, which express the emptiness of these persons, and which also point at their destruction, and describe their boasts and brags, and the influence they have, through their lasciviousness and uncleanness, on some persons, who have been outwardly reformed, ver. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. and this they obtain over them in a very stupid and senseless way, by promising them liberty, when through being overcome by them, and drawn into sin, they were brought into bondage, and become servants of corruption; and so their case is worse than it was before their reformation, and profession of religion; and better it would have been not to have had the knowledge they had, than after it to turn from the paths of truth and holiness, which is illustrated by a true Scripture proverb, which expresses the filthy nature of sin, the character of these men, and their irrecoverable state and condition, ver. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *But there were false prophets also among the*

^a R. Eliabu in Adderet apud Trigland. de Sect. Karaorum, c. 10. p. 153.

^b Corsi, par. 5. sect. 20. fol. 267. 2.

people, &c.] As well as holy men of God, who gave out prophecies, by the inspiration and impulse of the Holy Spirit; that is, among the people of the Jews, God's professing people, whose God was the Lord, and who had chosen them to be a special and peculiar people, above all people of the earth; and had distinguished them by his favours from all others: among these, though the Syriac version reads *in the world*, there were false prophets, who ran, and were not sent; and who prophesied, and the Lord spake not to them: of these there were many in Jeremiah's time, and in the times of Ezekiel; and in Ahab's time, besides the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, slain by Elijah, there were four hundred that called themselves the prophets of the Lord; among whom went forth a lying spirit, encouraging Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilead, promising him prosperity and success; Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, with whom Micajah, the true prophet, had much contention, was at the head of them; and such there were among that people in all ages, until the times of Christ, and in his likewise; see Matt. vii. 15. now from these, by an easy transition, the apostle proceeds to another part of his design in this epistle, to describe the characters of false teachers under the present dispensation, that saints may beware, and avoid their pernicious principles and practices: *even as there shall be false teachers among you*; which need not to be wondered at, or stumble any, it being no new or strange thing, but what was always more or less the case of the people of God. This is a prophecy of what should be, and agrees with the prediction of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 11, 24. and which regards not only the times immediately following, in which it had a remarkable fulfilment, for false teachers now began to arise, and appeared in great numbers in the age succeeding the apostles, but to all periods of time from hence, to the second coming of Christ; and these were to spring from, and be among such that bore the Christian name, and so regards not Mahometans and Deists; and it is to be observed, that the phrase is varied in this clause, and these are called not *prophets* but *teachers*: because as prophecy was more peculiar to the former dispensation, so is teaching to the present: *who privily shall bring in damnable heresies*; errors in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel; such as relate to a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and to the person of Christ, to his proper deity, distinct personality, eternal sonship, and real humanity; and to his office as Mediator, rejecting him as the true Messiah, and as the only Saviour of sinners; denying his sacrifice and satisfaction, and the imputation of his righteousness; and to the Holy Spirit, his deity, personality, and divine influences and operations: these are *damnable*, or *destructive*, or *heresies of destruction*; which lead to eternal destruction both those that introduce and propagate them, and those that embrace and profess them; for they remove, or attempt to remove, the foundation of eternal life and happiness: the manner in which these are usually introduced is *privily*; at unawares, secretly, under a disguise, and gradually, by little and little, and not at once, and openly; and which is the

constant character and practice of such men, who lie in wait to deceive, creep into churches at unawares, and into houses privately; and insinuate their principles under specious pretences and appearances of truth, using the hidden things of dishonesty, walking in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully, and colouring things with false glosses and feigned words: and *even denying the Lord that bought them*; not the Lord Jesus Christ, but God the father; for the word *κύριος* is not here used, which always is where Christ is spoken of as the *Lord*, but *θεοπάτρις*; and which is expressive of the power which masters have over their servants¹, and which God has over all mankind; and wherever this word is elsewhere used, it is spoken of God the father, whenever applied to a divine person, as in Luke ii. 29. Acts iv. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 21. Rev. vi. 10. and especially this appears to be the sense, from the parallel text in Jude 4. where the Lord God denied by those men is manifestly distinguished from our Lord Jesus Christ, and by whom these persons are said to be bought: the meaning is not that they were redeemed by the blood of Christ, for Christ is not intended; and besides, whenever redemption by Christ is spoken of, the price is usually mentioned, or some circumstance or another which fully determines the sense; see Acts xx. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 20. and vii. 23. Eph. i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Rev. v. 9. whereas here is not the least hint of any thing of this kind: add to this, that such who are redeemed by Christ are the elect of God only, the people of Christ, his sheep and friends, and church, and who are never left to deny him so as to perish eternally; for could such be lost, or deceive, or be deceived finally and totally by damnable heresies, and bring on themselves swift destruction, Christ's purchase would be in vain, and the ransom-price be paid for nought; but the word *bought* regards temporal mercies and deliverance, which these men enjoyed, and is used as an aggravation of their sin in *denying the Lord*; both by words, delivering out such tenets as are derogatory to the glory of the divine perfections, and which deny one or other of them, and of his purposes, providence, promises, and truths; and by works, turning the doctrine of the grace of God into lasciviousness, being disobedient and reprobate to every good work; that they should act this part against the Lord who had made them, and upheld them in their beings and took care of them in his providence, and had followed them with goodness and mercy all the days of their lives; just as Moses aggravates the ingratitude of the Jews in Deut. xxxii. 6. from whence this phrase is borrowed, and to which it manifestly refers: *do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise! is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?* nor is this the only place the apostle refers to in this chapter, see ver. 12, 13. compared with Deut. xxxii. 5. and it is to be observed, that the persons he writes to were Jews, who were called the people the Lord had *redeemed* and *purchased*, Exod. xv. 13, 16. and so were the first false teachers that rose up among them; and therefore this phrase is very applicable to them: *and bring upon themselves swift destruction*; either in this life, being suddenly cut

¹ Vid. Ammonium *επι* *ομοιωται*, in voce *διοπασις*.

off in the midst of their days, and by the immediate hand of God, as Arius and other heretics have been; or eternal damnation in the other, which their tenets lead unto, and which will swiftly come upon them when they are promising themselves peace and safety.

Ver. 2. *And many shall follow their pernicious ways, &c.*] Their principles and their practices, which lead to destruction. The Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, and six copies of Beza's, and others, read *their lasciviousnesses*; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, their *luxuries*; and all the Oriental versions seem to have read in like manner. The Syriac version renders it, *their impurity*; and the Arabic version, *their unchastities*; and the Ethiopic version, *their lust*; and which seems to have respect to the impure conversation of the followers of Simon Magus, the Nicolaitans, the Gnostics, Carpocratians, and others, who indulged themselves in all unnatural lusts and uncleanness; and generally, when men make shipwreck of faith, they also do of a good conscience, and become immoral in their conversations; and yet, as destructive as their principles, and as dishonourable and scandalous as their practices be, many were, and are their followers; so it was foretold by Christ, Matt. xxiv. 11. and so it has been, Rev. xiii. 3. The road both of error and wickedness is a broad one, in which many walk; and a multitude is no proof of the truth of a church, or of the principles of men, nor to be followed: *by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil-spoken of*; that is, either Christ, who is truth itself, and the true way to eternal life and happiness; or the Gospel, the word of truth, which holds forth Christ the truth, and points to him, and every other truth, and nothing but truth; or the Christian religion, which is the true way, in opposition to all sects and heresies; and is what should be blasphemed and spoken against, either by these men or their followers; for the phrase may be rendered, *by whom*, as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and the meaning be, that they should, in a blasphemous way, speak and write against Christ and his truths, reproach and revile them, and in a virulent manner oppose them, and trample them under foot: *or for the sake of them*, as other versions read; and as we do; *by reason of them*; they should be the occasion, by their impure lives, of the name of Christ, and his doctrines, being blasphemed by profane and irreligious men; see Rom. ii. 24. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Stephens's, read *the glory of truth*; and so the Ethiopic version, *the glory of his truth*.

Ver. 3. *And through covetousness, &c.*] Which is generally a prevailing vice among false teachers, they having no other end in view than themselves; either to gain popular applause and vain-glory, which they are always covetous of; or to amass riches to themselves, after which they have an insatiable desire: *shall they with feigned words*; made words, words of their own devising, and not which the Holy Ghost teacheth; whereby they cover themselves, and privily introduce their pernicious principles; and therefore new words and phrases are always to be suspected and guarded against, especially in articles of moment and importance: or with flattering words and fair speeches, great swelling words of vanity, having men's persons in admiration, because of worldly advantage; and in this

way they gain their point: *make merchandise of you*; deal with the souls of men, as merchants do with their goods, carry them to market and sell them; so false teachers deal with the souls of their followers, draw them into their destructive principles and practices at their own expense, enrich themselves by the price of them, and sell them to Satan, and they themselves pay for it; see Zech. xi. 5. Rev. xviii. 13. but in the issue, and that in a short time, they'll be no gainers by such practices: *whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not*; that is, their condemnation, which God in righteousness has determined, *from the creation of the world*, as the Ethiopic version reads, or from all eternity, see Jude 4. to bring them into, for their vile principles and practices, is not retarded and delayed; it does not linger and stay behind, or slacken its pace; it will not tarry, it will come upon them at the appointed time: *and their damnation slumbereth not*; an avenging God, who has appointed them to damnation for their sins, slumbers not; the justice of God is not asleep, nor careless and negligent, but is awake, and watches over them, to bring the evil upon them they have deserved, and is in reserve for them, and will hasten to perform it; the determined destruction does not lie dormant, but in a little time will be stirred up, and fall with dreadful weight on such sinners, as may be concluded from the following awful instances.

Ver. 4. *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, &c.*] By whom are meant the devil and his angels; who are spirits created by God, and as such were good; their first estate which they left was pure and holy, as well as high and honourable; they were at first in the truth, though they abode not in it; they were once among the morning-stars and sons of God, and were angels of light; their numbers are many, and therefore are here expressed in the plural number, *angels*, though it cannot be said how large; a legion of them was in one man; one at first might be in the rebellion, and draw a large number with him into it, at least was at the head of it, who is called Beelzebub, the prince of devils: what their first sin was, and the occasion of it, is not easy to say; it is generally thought to be pride, affecting a likeness to, or an equality with God; since this was what man was tempted to by them, and by which he fell, as they are thought to do; and because this is the sin of such who fall into the condemnation of the devil; 1 Tim. iii. 6. and is the sin that goes before a fall in common; as it did before the fall of man, so it might before the fall of angels, Prov. xvi. 18. The passage in John viii. 44. seems most clearly of any to express their sin, which was *not abiding in the truth*; in the truth of the Gospel, particularly the great truth of the salvation of men, by the incarnate son of God; and which they could by no means brook, and which might spring from pride, they not bearing the thought that the human nature should be exalted above theirs; hence the Jews, in opposing Christ as the Messiah and Saviour, are said to be of their father the devil, and to do his lusts; and Judas that betrayed him, and fell from his apostleship, and the truth, is called a devil; and the heresies of men, respecting the person and offices of Christ, are styled doctrines of devils; and men that have professed this truth, and afterwards deny it, are represented in the same irrecoverable and dea-

perate case with devils, and must expect the same punishment, John viii. 44. and vi. 70. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Heb. vi. 6. and x. 26, 29. and also it may be observed on the contrary, that the good angels that stand, greatly love, value, esteem, and pry into the truths of the Gospel; particularly the scheme of man's salvation, by the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ: now these *God spared not; or had no mercy on*, as the Arabic version renders it; he did not forgive their sin, nor provide a Saviour for them; but directly, and at once, notwithstanding the dignity and excellency of their nature, in strict justice, and awful severity, without any mercy, inflicted due punishment on them; wherefore it cannot be thought that false teachers, who, as they, abide not in the truth, but deny and oppose it, should escape the vengeance of God: *but cast them down to hell*; they were hurled out of heaven, from whence they fell as lightning, into the *lowest*, or inferior places, as the Syriac version renders it; either into the air, as in Eph. ii. 2. or into the earth, as in Rev. xii. 9. or into the deep, the abyss, the bottomless pit, where they are detained, as in a prison, Luke viii. 31. Rev. ix. 11. and xx. 3, 7. though for certain reasons, and at certain times, are suffered to come forth, and rove about in this earth, and in the air: and these, when removed from their ancient seats in heaven, were not merely bid to go away, as the wicked will at the day of judgment; or were *drove out*, as Adam was from the garden of Eden; but *cast down*; with great power, indignation, wrath, and contempt, never to be raised and restored again: and *delivered them into chains of darkness*; leaving them under the guilt of sin, which is the power of darkness, and in black despair; shutting them up in unbelief, impenitence, and hardness of mind; being holden with the cords of their sins, and in the most dreadful state of bondage and captivity to their lusts, in just judgment on them; and in the most miserable and uncomfortable condition, being driven from the realms of light, deprived of the face and presence of God, in the utmost horror and trembling, and fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation to consume them; and in utter darkness, without the least glimmering of light, joy, peace, and comfort; and where there is nothing but weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and being also under the restraints of the power and providence of God, and not able to stir or move, or do any thing without divine permission; and being likewise, by the everlasting, unalterable, and inscrutable purposes and decrees of God, appointed to everlasting wrath and destruction; by which they are consigned and bound over to it, and held fast, that they cannot escape it: *to be reserved unto judgment*; to the day of judgment, to the last and general judgment; the judgment of torment, as the Syriac version here calls it; the words may be rendered, *and delivered them to be kept at judgment, in chains of darkness*; when they will be in full torment, which they are not yet in; and then they will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for them,

and be everlastingly shut up in the prison of hell, from whence they'll never more be suffered to go out; till which time they are indeed under restraints, and are held in by Christ, who has the power of binding and loosing them at pleasure; and who then, as the Judge of men and devils, will bring them forth, and pass and execute sentence on them. The Jews give an account of the dejection, fall, and punishment of the angels, in a manner pretty much like this of Peter's, whom they speak of under different names; so of the serpent that deceived Adam and Eve, whom they call Samael, and because of that sin of his, they say^k, that the Lord "cast down Samael and his company from the place of their holiness, out of heaven;" and of Aza and Azael, angels, who, they say, sinned by lusting after the daughters of men, they frequently affirm, that God cast them down from their holiness^l, and that he *מפיל לון לתתם*, *cast them down below in chains*^m; and that God cast them down from their holiness from above; and when they descended, they were rolled in the air—and he brought them to the mountains of darkness, which are called the mountains of the east, and bound them *in chains of iron*, and the chains were sunk into the midst of the great deepⁿ: and elsewhere they say^o, that God cast them down from their holy degree, out of heaven—from their holy place out of heaven—and bound them *in chains of iron*, in the mountains of darkness.

Ver. 5. *And spared not the old world, &c.*] In distinction from the present world, that now is; which was, as it were, formed anew out of that which was destroyed by the deluge. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *the original world*; and the Ethiopic version, *the first world*; it designs the ancient inhabitants of the world, as it was from the beginning, before the flood; who, being wicked, were not spared by God, but had just punishment inflicted on them: *but saved Noah the eighth person*; not the eighth from Adam, as Enoch is said to be the seventh from him, Jude 14. for he was the tenth; nor is it to be read with the following clause, *the eighth preacher of righteousness*; but he was the eighth person, or one of the eight persons, saved from the flood; see 1 Pet. iii. 20. hence the Ethiopic version, rather as a paraphrase than a version, renders it, *but caused to remain seven souls with Noah, whom he saved*; Hottinger^p and Dr. Hammond^q observe, from the Arabic writers, that the mountain on which the ark rested, and a town near it, were called Themanim; that is, *the eight*, from the number of persons then and there saved: *a preacher of righteousness*; of the righteousness of God, in all his ways and works, and in case he should destroy the world by a flood, as he had threatened; and of civil and moral righteousness among men, both by words, during the building of the ark, and by works, by his own example, in his righteous life and conversation; and of the righteousness of faith, or of Christ, by which he was justified and of which he was an heir, Heb. xi. 7. the Jews^r say that Noah was a prophet; and they represent him also as a preacher, and even tell us the very words he

^k Sepher Bahir in Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3.

^l Zohar in Gen. fol. 25. 3.

^m Ib. fol. 32. 2.

ⁿ Midrash Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 45. 1. 2. vid. fol. 77. 3.

^o Zohar in Numb. fol. 84. 1. vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 4. & p. 4. & Razieli, fol. 14. 2. & 18. 2.

^p Smegma Orientale, p. 251, 252.

^q In loc.

^r Aben Ezra in Gen. viii. 21.

used in his exhortations to the old world¹, saying, "be ye turned from your evil ways and works, lest the waters of the flood come upon you, and cut off all the seed of the children of men:" but though Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was saved, false teachers can't expect to escape divine vengeance; who only are transformed as ministers of righteousness, but in truth are ministers of unrighteousness; opposers of the righteousness of Christ, and live unrighteous lives and conversations, and so their end will be according to their works: *bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; or the ungodly of the world, as רשעי ארץ, the ungodly of the earth*²; see Psal. lxxv. 8. though here it indeed means a whole world of wicked men, all but a very few, which were destroyed by the flood. This expresses both the wickedness of the men of that generation, the imagination of the thoughts of whose heart were evil continually; and whose lives were filled up with uncleanness, violence, rapine, oppression, injustice, and corruption, of all sorts; and likewise the large numbers of them, there was a whole world of them; and yet this did not secure them from the wrath of God, but served to stir it up the more; wherefore false teachers and their followers must not build upon their numbers, or hope to be screened from just punishment on that account; since a world of ungodly men were, for their wickedness, at once swept away, with a flood of God's bringing upon them; causing that very useful and serviceable element of water to be the means of their destruction; for this was not a casual thing, which came of itself, or by chance, but was of God himself, who broke up the fountains of the great deep, and opened the windows of heaven, and destroyed at once all mankind, men, women, and children, and every living creature, excepting what were with Noah in the ark: and since they were persons of such a character as here described, it is not to be thought their punishment is ended here; it is the general notion of the Jews³, that "the generation of the flood shall have no part in the world to come, nor shall they stand in judgment."

Ver. 6. *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes, &c.*] By raining brimstone and fire upon them from heaven, Gen. xix. 24. which soon reduced them to ashes, with Admah and Zeboim, Deut. xxix. 25. cities delightfully situated, which were as the garden of God, and the land of Egypt, together with the inhabitants of them; and after they had received a signal mercy, in being rescued by Abraham from the kings who had carried them captive; and though Abraham, the friend of God, interceded for them, and righteous Lot dwelt among them. The first of these cities is in the Hebrew language called Sedom; Philo the Jew⁴ calls it Sodoma, as in Rom. ix. 29. and in the Septuagint on Gen. xiii. 10. and xviii. 22. and xix. 1. and Isa. i. 9. here it is said to be a city, and Josephus⁵ always calls it the city of the Sodomites, but in Matt. x. 15. and xi. 24. we read of the land of Sodom;

and so Philo⁶ the Jew speaks of *χώρα*, the region or country of the Sodomites; here the word is of the plural number, as in Matt. x. 15. and xi. 23, 24. Luke xvii. 29. as it is also in the Septuagint in Gen. x. 19. and xiii. 13. and xiv. 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22. and in Philo the Jew⁷, and so is Gomorrhah in some copies of this place, as in Matt. x. 15. Solinus, the historian, gives an account of these cities, in agreement with this; "a good way off of Jerusalem (he says⁸) is opened a sorrowful gulph, which the black ground, *in cinerem soluta, reduced to ashes*, shews it to be touched by heaven; there were two towns, or cities, the one called Sodom, and the other Gomorrhah; where an apple is produced, which, although it has an appearance of ripeness, cannot be eaten; for the outward skin that encompasses it only contains a sort of soot, or embers within, which, ever so lightly squeezed, evaporates into smoke and dust;" and so the author of the book of Wisdom, ch. x. 7. speaking of the five cities, on which fire fell, says, "of whose wickedness, even to this day, the waste land that smoketh is a testimony; and plants bearing fruit, that never come to ripeness." Philo the Jew⁹ says, that "there are shewed to this day in Syria monuments of this unspeakable destruction that happened; as ruins, *ashes, sulphur, smoke, and a weak flame, breaking forth as of a fire burning*;" *condemned them with an overthrow*; by this sad catastrophe God condemned the sins of those men of Sodom and Gomorrhah, and adjudged their persons to everlasting damnation; of which their temporal punishment was an emblem and figure; see Jude 7. the word *overthrow* is generally used when this destruction is spoken of, Deut. xxix. 23. Isa. xiii. 19. Jer. l. 40. Amos iv. 11. and therefore retained by the apostle here: *making them ensamples unto those who after should live ungodly*; in the commission of any sins, and be open, bold, and impudent in them, and declare them as they did; and especially that should live in the commission of the same sins, those unnatural lusts and uncleannesses, which to this day go by the name of *sodomy, and sodomitical practices*; now the punishment of the inhabitants of these cities was an ensample to such wicked livers, shewing what they must expect, and was a representation of those everlasting burnings, which such sinners, as a righteous retaliation for their burning lusts, shall be cast into. The Jews say¹⁰ the same of the men of Sodom and Gomorrhah as of the old world; "the men of Sodom have no part in the world to come, as is said Gen. xiii. 13. *but the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly*; wicked in this world, and sinners in the world to come;" see the note on Jude 7.

Ver. 7. *And delivered just Lot, &c.*] Who was a just man, being justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and having the new man formed in him, which is created in righteousness and true holiness; and living soberly, righteously, and godly,

¹ Pirke Eliezer, c. 22.

² Targum in Psal. xvi. 8.

³ Misna Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 149. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 2.

⁴ De Temulentia, p. 272.

⁵ Antiqu. l. 1. c. 8. sect. 3. c. 11. sect. 3.

⁶ De Abrahamo, p. 381.

⁷ De Temulentia, p. 272.

⁸ Polyhistor, c. 43.

⁹ De Vita Moisi, l. 2. p. 662.

¹⁰ Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 149, 1.

though not without sin: for there is not a just man that lives and sinneth not; this righteous man was delivered from the burning of Sodom by the means of angels, Gen. xix. 16, 17. The Jews are very injurious to this good man's character, and give a very different one of him from this of the apostle's; they call him a wicked man, a perfect wicked man, as wicked as the inhabitants of Sodom^d; and say, that because they abounded in sin, therefore Lot chose to dwell among them^e; and affirm^f, that all the time he was with Abraham, God did not join himself to him, and did not commune with Abraham on his account; but, when he was separated from him, did; they call him the evil imagination, and the old serpent that was accursed, and cursed Lot^g; but Philo the Jew^h speaks better of him, and says that he did not embrace and delight in the iniquities of the inhabitants, though he did not arrive to the perfection of wisdom; and the author of the book of Wisdom, ch. x. 6. calls him the *righteous man*, as the apostle does here; and very truly, since it follows: *vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked*; the inhabitants of Sodom, who had no regard to the laws of God or man, or to the law and light of nature; but as worse than brute beasts, lived daily in the commission of unnatural lusts; and therefore their conversation is rightly said to be filthy, and was a grievous burden to righteous Lot: for to a good man, not only his own sins, but the sins of others, whether professors or profane, are a burden, and make him groan under them, being grievously fatigued with them, as this good man was, and weary of life because of them, as Rebekah was, through the daughters of Heth.

Ver. 8. *For that righteous man dwelling among them, &c.*] Which is sometimes the lot of good men, to their great sorrow and grief, Psal. cxx. 5, 6, 7. Isa. vi. 5. Upon mentioning those words in Gen. xiii. 12, 13. *and pitched his tent towards Sodom, but the men of Sodom were wicked, &c.* says R. Eleazarⁱ; "he is a righteous man that dwells between two wicked men, and does not learn their works;" and such an one was Lot, whatever they are elsewhere pleased to say of him: *in seeing and hearing*; the Vulgate Latin version reads this in connexion with the word *righteous*, thus, *in seeing and hearing he was righteous*: he could not bear to see their filthy actions, and hear their obscene language, but turned away from them, and shut his eyes, and stopped his ears, by which he appears to be a righteous and good man; though rather this belongs to what follows, seeing their wicked practices, and hearing their filthy talk: *vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*; either they vexed him, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; or rather he vexed himself; he fretted and teased himself, and became exceeding uneasy, and was put upon a rack and torture, as the word signifies, continually, with their wicked actions; see Psal. cxix. 158.

Ver. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly, &c.*] That *fear him*, as the Syriac version renders it; or that *rightly worship*, as the Arabic; such as Noah and Lot, men that know God in Christ spiritually and

experimentally; that believe in him, love him, fear him, worship him in spirit and truth, and live soberly, righteously, and godly. This verse is a conclusion from the preceding instances and examples; respecting both the mercy and justice of God; the mercy of God in delivering the godly and righteous *out of temptations*; by which are meant, not the temptations of Satan to sin, distrust, and despondency, though the Lord knows how, and is both able and willing to, and does deliver them from them; but afflictions and tribulations, such as Noah and Lot were exposed to; and which are so called, because they try the graces, particularly the faith and patience of the godly; and to deliver from these is the Lord's work: he grants his presence in them; he supports under them; he sanctifies them to them, and in his own time delivers out of them; for he knows how, and by what means, and when to do it, and is both able and willing: he has determined to do it, for the nature, measure, and duration of afflictions are fixed by him, and in his providence he does do it, as the instances before given prove. *And to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.* This is that part of the conclusion from the above premises, respecting the justice of God; and by the *unjust* are designed, persons without a righteousness, and that are full of all unrighteousness, and take pleasure in it, and live unrighteous lives, committing acts of injustice, both with respect to God and men; and the Lord, that has reserved the fallen angels in chains of darkness unto judgment, knows how to reserve *in prison*, as the Arabic version renders it, the souls of those in hell, and their bodies in the grave *unto the day of judgment*; of the last and general judgment, when Christ shall judge both quick and dead, and bring every secret thing to light, which that day shall declare, God has appointed to judge the world in; in order to be *punished* in soul and body, with everlasting and complete destruction, which, as yet, is not. This phrase, *the day of judgment*, is used in Judith xvi. 17. and is a Jewish one.

Ver. 10. *But chiefly them that walk after the flesh, &c.*] Not merely after the dictates of corrupt nature, as all men, and even God's elect do, in a state of unregeneracy; but *after strange flesh*, as Jude expresses it, after the flesh of men: *in the lust of uncleanness*; not of fornication and adultery, but of sodomy, and sodomitical practices; sins exceeding great, not only contrary to the law and light of nature, but dishonourable to human nature; and are what prevail where idolatry, infidelity, errors, and heresies do; and which, as they are sins of the deepest die, deserve the greater damnation, and are chiefly and more especially punished by God with great severity: *and despise government*; of parents, to whom these proud boasters and blasphemers are generally disobedient; and of masters, pretending it to be contrary to their Christian liberty; and of magistrates on the same account, and as being a restraint upon their lusts; which is to despise the ordinance of God, his representatives, and to introduce anarchy and confusion, and to open a door to all manner of sin;

^d Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14. 4. & 16. 4. & 20. 2.

^e Jarchi in Gen. xiii. 10.

^f Zohar in Gen. fol. 57. 2. Jarchi in Gen. xiii. 13.

^g Zohar in Gen. fol. 56. 1. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 14. 3. & 20. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 44. fol. 39. 1.

^h De Vita Mosis, 1. 2. p. 662.

ⁱ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 28. 2.

and also the government of Christ, as head of the church, and King of Zion, whom they will not have to reign over them, and therefore reject his laws, and submit not to his ordinances; and likewise the government of the world itself by God; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *despise their Creator*; denying his omniscience and his providence, giving out that he neither sees, observes, and takes notice of what is done in the world; nor does he himself do either good or evil, or concern himself about what is done by men. *Presumptuous are they*; bold and daring, not fearing to speak against men of the most exalted character on earth, and against God himself in heaven; see Psal. lxxiii. 8, 9. *Self-willed*; pleased with themselves, and their own conceits, their dogmas and opinions, with their high sense and profound judgment; and being obstinate in their sentiments, and resolutely bent to retain and defend them. *They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities*; or *glories*: of the apostles, who were set in the first place in the church, and were the glory of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 28. 2 Cor. viii. 23. or of angels, styled thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; or rather of civil magistrates, set in high places, and to whom glory and honour are due; which to do is contrary to the law of God, and of dangerous consequence, Exod. xxii. 28. Eccl. x. 20.

Ver. 11. *Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, &c.*] Which is not to be understood of evil angels, or devils; for, besides that they are greatly weakened and impaired by their fall, they are the accusers of men, and railers and slanderers of the best and greatest of men, and the origin of all the blasphemies that are vented against God or men; but of good angels, who excel in strength, who are not only guardians to particular men, and encamp about the saints, but preside over provinces and kingdoms, for which their power and might do abundantly qualify them; and in which they are greater, that is, not than the devils, or than the false teachers, though both are true, but than dominions and dignities, than kings, princes, and civil magistrates: and yet these *bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord*: either *against themselves*, as the Arabic version and one of Beza's copies read; against one another, against those of their own species, that are in a higher or lower class or office than themselves; and therefore men ought not to despise magistracy, or the higher powers that are over them: or else against the fallen angels, the devils, as should seem from Jude 9. or rather against civil magistrates, kings, and princes of this world, who, though so much below them, they vouchsafe to take under their care, and protect them, even Heathen princes, Dan. x. 20. and though there may be oftentimes many things unbecoming in them, yet they don't accuse them, or rail against them before the Lord; and even when, by his orders, they inflict punishment on their persons, as on Sennacherib, and Herod, and others, yet they do not speak evil of their office; and therefore, since angels, who are so much above men, even above the most dignified among them, behave in this manner, it must be an aggravation of the sin of these persons, who are so much below them, to speak evil of them.

Ver. 12. *But these, as natural brute beasts, &c.*] So

far are these men from acting like the angels, that they are sunk below their own species, and are like beasts, and become brutish in their knowledge and behaviour; are like the horse and the mule, without understanding, act as if they were without reason; yea, are more stupid and senseless than the ox, or the ass, which know their owner, and their crib; and even in those things which they might, and do know by the light of nature, they corrupt themselves; and being given up to judicial blindness, and a reprobate mind, call good evil, and evil good, and do things that are not convenient, and which even brute beasts do not; and like as they are guided by an instinct in nature, to do what they do, so these men are led and influenced by the force and power of corrupt nature in them, to commit all manner of wickedness: and like them are *made to be taken and destroyed*; or, as it may be rendered, *to take and destroy*; as beasts and birds of prey, such as lions, tigers, wolves, bears, vultures, hawks, &c. to which abusers of themselves with mankind, ravishers of women, extortioners, oppressors, thieves, robbers, and plunderers of men's properties, may be compared: or *to be taken and destroyed*; that is, they are made or appointed to be taken in the net and snare of Satan, are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and are afore ordained to condemnation and ruin: and this being their case, they *speak evil of the things they understand not*: either of angels, of whose nature, office, and dignity, they are ignorant; and blaspheme them, by either ascribing too much to them, as the creation of the world, and divine worship, as were by some ancient heretics; or by speaking such things of them as were below them, and unworthy of them; or of civil magistrates, not knowing the nature and end of magistracy and civil government, and therefore spoke evil of them, when they ought to pray, and be thankful for them, and live peaceable and quiet lives under them; or of the ministers of the word, whose usefulness for the conversion of sinners and edification of saints were not known, at least not acknowledged by these men; hence they were traduced, and went through ill report among them, being as unknown by them; or of the Scriptures of truth, which heretical men do not truly know and understand, but wrest to their own destruction, or deny; and of the Gospel and the mysteries of it, which are things not seen, known, and understood by carnal men, and therefore are blasphemed, reviled, and reproached by them: *and shall utterly perish in their own corruption*; of which they are servants, ver. 19. in their moral corruption, in their filthy and unnatural lusts, which are the cause of their everlasting perdition and destruction, to which they are righteously appointed of God.

Ver. 13. *And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, &c.*] Due punishment, both in body and soul, for all their injustice to God and men; which will be a just recompense of reward they shall receive at the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works: the justice of which appears by what follows, *as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time*; who place all their satisfaction and happiness in sensual delight, in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, day after day; putting away the evil day far from them, supposing

that to-morrow will be as this day, and that there will be no future judgment nor state; and therefore don't take the night for their revels, as other sinners do, but being without all shame, declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not: *spots they are, and blemishes*; which defile themselves, their minds and consciences, their souls and bodies, with sin, and defile others by their evil communications, and bring dishonour and disgrace upon the ways, doctrines, and interest of Christ: *sporting themselves with their own deceivings*; with their sins and lusts, by which they deceive themselves and others, it being a sport to them to commit sin; and in which they take great pleasure and pastime, and not only delight in their own sins, but in those of others, and in them that do them. Some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, instead of *analis, deceivings*, read *afanais, love-feasts*, as in Jude 12. and so the Alexandrian copy; in which they behaved in a very scandalous manner, indulging themselves in luxury and intemperance: to which agrees what follows, *while they feast with you*; at the above feasts, or at the Lord's table, or at their own houses, which shews that they were of them, and among them, as in ver. 1. and carries in it a tacit reproof for the continuance of them, when they were become so bad in their principles, and so scandalous in their lives.

Ver. 14. *Having eyes full of adultery, &c.*] For the seventh command is not only violated by unclean actions; and obscene words, but also by unchaste looks: and so the Jews explain* that precept, "thou shalt not commit adultery: you shall not go after your hearts, nor after your eyes; says R. Levi, the heart and the eye are sin's two brokers." Hence we read¹ of *נֹאֲמָר בְּעֵינָיו*, one that commits adultery with his eyes; see the note on Matt. v. 28. compare Job xxxi. 1. Ezek. vi. 9. Some read the words, *having eyes full of the adulteress*; that is, having a lewd and infamous woman always in mind and sight, continually looking at her and lusting after her: and that cannot cease from sin; which may be understood either of these wicked men, who are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but are continually casting up the mire and dirt of sin out of their polluted heart; who live and walk in sin, and are always committing it, their conversation being nothing else but one continued series of sinning; nor can they do otherwise, since they are slaves to their lusts, and are carried away with the force and power of them: or of their eyes, which were always rolling after unlawful objects; their eyes and their hearts were only, and always, for their lust, as the prophet says of others, that they were but for their covetousness, Jer. xxii. 17. a sin also which reigned in these men: *beguiling unstable souls*: such as were unsteady in their principles, and unstable in their ways; were like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, not being rooted in Christ, nor established in the faith; these, as the serpent beguiled Eve, they corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; imposed false doctrines on them, and deceived them by false glosses and outward appearances; and by fair words and good speeches, and by their wanton looks and carnal lusts, they allured them

into the sin of adultery; or ensnared them, drew them into the net and snare of Satan, and so they were taken and led captive. *An heart they have exercised with covetous practices*: an immoderate love of money, a covetous desire after it, is the root of all evil, the bane of religion, and source of heresy, and is a vice which has always prevailed among false teachers; and the character here given well agrees with Simon Magus, the father of heresies, and his followers: hence care is always taken to insert, among the characters and qualifications of Gospel ministers, that they be not greedy of filthy lucre; this iniquity, when it is a reigning one, and is become an habit, as it was in the persons here described, for it had its seat in their heart, they were habituated to it, and continually exercised it in a multitude of instances and wicked practices, is insatiable and damnable: *cursed children*; or *children of the curse*; which may be understood either actively, children that do curse, as children of disobedience are such as commit acts of disobedience; so these were cursing children, who, though their mouths might not be full of cursing and bitterness, as openly profane sinners be, yet they inwardly, and from their hearts, cursed the true followers of Christ, and their principles; or passively, cursed children who were under the curse of the law, and from which there was no redemption for them, but at the last day will have the awful sentence pronounced on them, Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.

Ver. 15. *Which have forsaken the right way, &c.*] The right way of the Lord, the way of truth, the Gospel of truth; or Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; the true way to eternal life, and which is the right way to eternal happiness; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by Christ, the Christian faith, and the doctrine of it, which they once professed, but now relinquished: *and are gone astray*; from the right way, the way of truth and holiness, into the paths of error and profaneness: *following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor*; which Jude calls his error, and is the path of covetousness, uncleanness, and idolatry, sins which he was either guilty of himself, or taught, advised, and seduced others to; see Rev. ii. 14. The Vulgate Latin version reads *Balaam* out of *Bosor*, taking *Bosor* for the name of a place, of which *Balaam* was; but not *Bosor*, but *Pethor*, was the place of Balaam's residence, Numb. xxii. 5. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply, as we do, *the son of Bosor*; and the Syriac version reads, *the son of Beor*, as in Numb. xxii. 5. for *Beor* and *Bosor* are the same names; the *sheva* being pronounced by o, as it is by oa in *Boanerges*, and the *ain* by s. Moreover, the letters *ז* and *שׁ* are sometimes used for one another, as in *זָרַח* and *שָׁרַח*, and *זָרַח*, and so *שׁ* and *ז*, especially in the Chaldean dialect; and Peter now being at Babylon in Chaldea, see 1 Pet. v. 13. it is no wonder that he so pronounced. *Who loved the wages of unrighteousness*: which were the rewards of divination, Numb. xxii. 7. which were brought him for his divining or soothsaying, and may well be called unrighteous wages, since it was for doing unrighteous things, or things in an unrighteous manner; and these he loved, desired, and

* T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 3.

¹ Vajikra Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 165. 1. Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. 1. 3. e. 5.

greedily coveted, and fain would he have taken Balak's gold and silver, and have cursed Israel, but was restrained by the Lord: he shewed a good will to it, in going along with the messengers, and in building altars, and offering sacrifice in one place after another, in which there was a great resemblance between him and the men here spoken of.

Ver. 16. *But was rebuked for his iniquity, &c.*] Which was not merely going along with the messengers of Balak, for he had leave from the Lord so to do; but going along with them with a desire to curse Israel, when it was the will of God he should go and bless them, in order to get Balak's money; so that his governing iniquity was covetousness, which led him to other sins; and for this he was rebuked by the angel, as well as reproved by his ass: for *the dumb ass*, as it was naturally so, the ass on which he rode, *speaking with man's voice*; which was supernatural and miraculous, for it was God that opened the mouth of the ass: the mouth of that ass is said, by the Jews^m, to be one of the ten things created between the two evenings on the sixth day of the creation; that is, as the gloss on it says, concerning which it was decreed, that its mouth should be opened to speak what this ass said; and the occasion of it may be seen in Numb. xxii. 29—30. Lactantiusⁿ observes, that there are two stars in the constellation of Cancer, which the Greeks call the *asses*; and which, the poets feign, are those that carried Liberus over a river, when he could not pass it; to one of which he gave this for a reward, ut humana voce loqueretur, *that it should speak with man's voice*; a fable, no doubt, hatched from the sacred history, and said in imitation of this ass. Which *forbad the madness of the prophet*; and so Balaam, though a diviner and soothsayer, is called by the Jewish writers^o; who, they say, was first a prophet, and then a soothsayer, from whom Jerom^p seems to have received the tradition; who says, that he was first a holy man, and a prophet of God, and afterwards, through disobedience, and a desire of gifts, was called a diviner; for his eyes were opened, and he saw the vision of the Almighty; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied many things concerning Israel, and the Messiah, and others, Numb. ch. xxiv. His *madness* lay in going with the messengers of Balak, in order to curse Israel, contrary to the will of God; and 'tis madness in any to oppose God in his counsels, purposes, providences, and precepts; and every sin, which is an act of hostility against God, has madness in it; and this of Balaam's was forbid by his ass, and he was convinced of it. Very appositely is mention made of this dumb ass, when the persons here spoken of were as natural brute beasts, and worse than them, ver. 12.

Ver. 17. *These are wells without water, &c.*] Which look large and deep, promise much, and have nothing in them; so these men looked like angels of light, transformed themselves as ministers of righteousness, had a form of godliness, and boasted of their great knowledge; promised great advantages to their followers, but were like deceitful brooks, or dry wells,

and so disappointed those that came to them, and attended on them; having nothing but the filth and slime of error and iniquity, being destitute both of the grace of God, comparable to water, and of the truth of heavenly doctrine, which is like the rain that fills the wells, pools, and fountains. *Clouds that are carried with a tempest*; these false teachers may be compared to clouds for their number, for many antichrists and false prophets soon came into the world; and for their sudden rise in the churches, into which they crept privily and unawares; and because of the general darkness they spread, for when errors and heresies prevail 'tis a dark and cloudy day with the churches, a day of gloominess and darkness, of thick darkness, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; and because of the height of them, especially light clouds, as these are compared to, who are high in their own conceits and imaginations, and think, and give out themselves to be some great persons; and also because of their sudden destruction, which lingers and slumbers not, but comes upon them in a moment, and their glory passes away like the morning cloud: and these may be said to be as clouds *carried with a tempest*: of their own lusts and passions, by which they are governed, and are led, and carried away with the force of them, and have no power to resist them, being under the dominion of them, and captives to them; and of Satan's temptations, who works effectually in them, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, and being taken in his snare, are led captive by him at his will: Jude says, *carried about of winds*; with every wind of false doctrine, like meteors in the air; are never at a point, always unsteady and unsettled, and ready to embrace every new and upstart notion: *to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever*: the nature of their punishment is expressed by *darkness*, the blackest darkness, the mist of darkness, and which Jude calls blackness of darkness, the same with utter darkness; and which signifies a most forlorn and uncomfortable condition, and is a righteous judgment, and just retaliation upon them who studied to darken counsel by words without knowledge; and the certainty of their punishment is signified by its being *reserved*, even as the happiness of the saints, and the safety and sureness of it are represented by an inheritance reserved in heaven: and as God has his treasures, magazines, and stores of grace and mercy, felicity and glory, for his people; so he has his wrath and vengeance reserved, laid up in store with him, and sealed up among his treasures, which he will surely bring forth in his own time: and the duration of this punishment is *for ever*; 'tis a worm that never dies, a fire that is never quenched; 'tis everlasting fire and burnings, the smoke of which ascends for ever and ever.

Ver. 18. *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, &c.*] Marvellous things against the God of gods, great things and blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and his saints; see Dan. xi. 36. Rev. xiii. 5, 6. or against men, dominions, and dignities, ver. 10. or it may design their self-appeals and

^m Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 6. & Jarchi in ib. Sopher Cosri, par. 2. p. 254.

ⁿ De falsa Religione, l. 1. c. 21.

^o Pesikta, Hmelema & Gerundensis apud Drus. in loc. T. Bab. Saucedrin, fol. 106. 1. Aben Ezra in Numb. xxii. 28.

^p Tradition, Heb. in Genes. fol. 67. D.

vain-gloring in themselves, and their empty boast of knowledge and learning; and also express the windiness of their doctrines, and the bombast style, and high-flown strains of rhetoric in which they were delivered; as likewise the flattering titles they bestowed on men for the sake of their own worldly interest and advantage; see Jude 16. and hereby *they allure, through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error*; that is, from those who lived in the error of Heathenism or Judaism, from whom, and which, they were clean escaped; or truly, really, and entirely delivered, being fully convinced of the falsity thereof, and of the truth of the Christian religion; though some copies, as the Alexandrian, and two of Beza's, and two of Stephens's, read, not *ολιγως, truly*, but *ολιγως, a little*; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *a very little*: to which agrees the Complutensian edition; and the Syriac version renders it *in a few words, or almost*; and according to the Ethiopic version, *a few persons* are designed; but be they more or less, and truly, or but a little, and for a little while, or almost, escaped from their former errors, in which they were brought up, and lived; yet by the carnal lusts and liberties, lasciviousness and wantonness, which these false teachers indulged, they were allured, ensnared, and drawn by them into their wicked principles and practices.

Ver. 19. *While they promise them liberty, &c.*] Not Christian liberty, which lies in a freedom from sin, its dominion, guilt, and condemnation, and in serving God with liberty, cheerfulness, and without fear; but a sinful carnal liberty, a liberty from the law of God, from obedience to it as a rule of walk and conversation, and from the laws of men, from subjection to the civil magistrate, and from servitude to masters, and obedience to parents; a liberty to lay aside and neglect the ordinances of the Gospel at pleasure, and to live in all manner of sin and wickedness; a liberty which is contrary to the nature, will, and work of Christ, to his spirit, and to the principle of grace in the heart, and to the Gospel, and to the conduct and conversation of real saints. Now this was the snare by which the false teachers beguiled unstable souls; liberty being what is greatly desirable to men, and is suited to their carnal lusts and interests: but a vain promise was this, when *they themselves are the servants of corruption*; of sin, which has corrupted all mankind in soul and body; and particularly the lust of uncleanness, which these men walked in, and by which they not only corrupted themselves, but the good manners of others also; and which tended and led them both to ruin and destruction, signified by the pit of corruption: and yet these very preachers, that promised liberty to others, were the servants of sin; they were under the power and government of sin. They were not only born so, and were home-born slaves to sin, but they sold themselves to work wickedness; voluntarily and with delight, they served divers lusts and pleasures, and were slaves and drudges thereunto; as likewise to Satan, whose lusts they would do, and by whom they were led captive; so that their condition was mean, base, and deplorable, and therefore could never make good their

promise, or give that which they had not themselves: and which is confirmed by the following reasoning, *for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage*; as this is a certain point in war, that when one man is conquered by another, he is no longer a free man, but the other's prisoner and captive, and is in a state of servitude and bondage; so it is when a man is overcome by sin, which must be understood not of a partial victory or conquest, for a good man may be surprised by sin, and overtaken in a fault, and be overcome and carried captive by it for a time, as was the apostle, see Rom. vii. 23. Gal. vi. 1. and yet not be a servant of corruption, or properly in a state of bondage to it; but this is to be understood of a total and complete victory, when a man is wholly under the dominion of sin, it reigns in his mortal body, and he obeys it in the lusts of it, and yields his members instruments of unrighteousness; such a man is neither a free man himself, nor can he much less promise and give liberty to others.

Ver. 20. *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, &c.*] The sins of it, the governing vices of it, which the men of the world are addicted to, and immersed in; for the whole world lies in wickedness, and which are of a defiling nature: the phrase is Rabbinical; it is said⁹, "he that studies not in the law" in this world, but is defiled *במנופי עלימה*, *with the pollutions of the world*, what is written of him? and "they took him, and cast him without:" these, men may escape, abstain from, and outwardly reform, with respect unto, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; so that this can be no instance of the final and total apostasy of real saints; for the house may be swept and garnished with an external reformation; persons may be outwardly righteous before men, have a form of godliness and a name to live, and yet be dead in trespasses and sins; all which they may have *through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *our Lord*, and the latter leave out, *and Saviour*; by which *knowledge* is meant, not a spiritual experimental knowledge of Christ, for that is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it; but a notional knowledge of Christ, or a profession of knowledge of him, for it may be rendered *acknowledgment*; or rather the Gospel of Christ, which, being only notionally received, may have such an effect on men, as outwardly to reform their lives, at least in some instances, and for a while, in whose hearts it has no place. Now if, after all this knowledge and reformation, *they are again entangled therein*; in the pollutions of the world, in worldly lusts, which are as gins, pits and snares: *and overcome*; by them, so as to be laden with them, and led away, and entirely governed and influenced by them: *the latter end, or state, is worse with them than the beginning*; see Matt. xii. 45. Their beginning, or first estate, was that in which they were born, a state of darkness, ignorance, and sin, and in which they were brought up, and was either the state of Judaism, or of Gentilism; their next estate was an outward deliverance and escape from the error of the one, or of the other, and an embracing and professing the truth of the Christian

⁹ Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 3. Vid. Bechiot Olam, p. 178.

religion, joined with a becoming external conversation; and this their last estate was an apostacy from the truth of the Gospel they had professed, a reception of error and heresy, and a relapse into sin and immorality, which made their case worse than it was at first; for, generally, such persons are more extravagant in sinning; are like raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; and are seldom, or ever, recovered; and by their light, knowledge, and profession, their punishment will be more aggravated, and become intolerable.

Ver. 21. *For it had been better for them, &c.*] Not that ignorance is good, or to be excused; but it would have been a lesser evil, and not so much aggravated: *not to have known the way of righteousness*; the same with *the way of truth*, ver. 21. and *the right way*, ver. 15. the Gospel, which points out the way and method of a sinner's justification before God, which is not by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and received by faith; and which teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and a large, notional, though not an experimental knowledge, these apostates had of the word and doctrine of righteousness, and indeed of the whole of the Christian religion, which may truly go by this name: *than after they have known it*; owned, embraced, and professed it: *to turn*; the Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, as the Alexandrian and others, add, *to that which is behind*; to their former lusts, or errors, or worse, which they had turned their backs upon externally: *from the holy commandment delivered unto them*; by the commandment is meant the Gospel also, see ch. iii. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 14. called *holy*, because of its

nature and influence, and in opposition to the pollutions of the world; and which is the faith once delivered, Jude 3. and which they received, as delivered to them; and, particularly, the ordinances of it, which they once submitted to, kept, and observed, as they were delivered to them, but now relinquished, or corrupted: wherefore, it would have been better for them to have been in their former ignorance, either in Judaism, or in Gentilism, since proportionate to a man's light is his guilt, and so his punishment, see Rom. ii. 12. Luke xii. 47, 48.

Ver. 22. *But it is happened unto them, according to the true proverb, &c.*] Which is true, both in fact and in the application of it, and which lies in the Scriptures of truth, at least the first part of it, Prov. xxvi. 11. *The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*; which expresses the filthy nature of sin, signified by vomit, mire, and dirt, than which nothing is more abominable and defiling; and also the just characters of these apostates, who are fitly compared to dogs and swine; and likewise their irreclaimable and irrecoverable state and condition, it being impossible they should be otherwise, unless their natures were changed and altered. In the Hebrew language, a *sow* is called *דוויק*, from the root *דוור*, which signifies to *return*, because that creature, as soon as it is out of the mire and dirt, and is washed from its filthiness, naturally returns to it again: so such apostates return to what they were before, to their former principles and practices: in this manner the Jews explain the proverb, "Tobiah returns to Tobiah, as it is said, Prov. xxvi. 11. *as a dog returneth to his vomit*."

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle makes mention of the end and design of his writing this second epistle; foretels that there would be scoffers at the coming of Christ in the last days; describes the coming of Christ and the burning of the world; and closes with the use saints should make of these things. The end of his writing both this and the former epistle was to put the persons he writes unto in mind of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, delivered by the prophets and apostles, ver. 1, 2. and then, agreeably to what the prophets had said, he predicts that there would be scoffers in the last day; who are described by their sinful course of life, and by their words, what they would say concerning the coming of Christ, and their reasoning about it, ver. 3, 4. which arose from their ignorance of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the situation of them; and is refuted by shewing that things have not remained as they were from the creation; that the earth standing in and out of the water, as it was capable of being overflowed with a flood, so it perished by one; and that the present heavens and earth are reserved and prepared for a general burning at the day of judgment, in which wicked men will be destroyed, ver. 5, 6, 7. but let these men scoff as they will, the

length of time since the promise of Christ's coming was made should be no objection with the saints to the performance of it; since the longest term of time is nothing with God, however considerable it may be with men, ver. 8. besides, the reason of the coming of Christ being deferred, is not owing to any dilatoriness in the performance of the promise, but to the long-suffering of God towards his elect, being unwilling that any one of them should be lost, but that all should be brought to repentance, ver. 9. but as for the coming of Christ, that is certain, and will be sudden; at which time will be the general conflagration, which is described in a very awful manner, ver. 10—12. and the use to be made of such a tremendous dispensation by the saints is to live a holy and godly conversation, ver. 11. to be eagerly looking for the coming of Christ, ver. 12. and to expect, according to his promise, new heavens and a new earth, in which will dwell righteous persons, ver. 13. and to be diligent to be found in peace at that day, ver. 14. and to account the long-suffering of God salvation; and the whole of this account, and the use of it, is strengthened by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, of whom, and of his epistles, a character is given, ver. 15, 16. and the epistle is concluded with

some cautions and exhortations to the saints, to beware lest they should be carried away with the errors of wicked men, and so fall from any degree of steadfastness in the faith; and to be concerned for a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, to whom glory is to be ascribed for ever and ever, ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, &c.*] This is a transition to another part of the epistle; for the apostle having largely described false teachers, the secret enemies of the Christian religion under a profession of it, passes on to take notice of the more open adversaries and profane scoffers of it; and from their ridicule of the doctrine of Christ's second coming, he proceeds to treat of that, and of the destruction of the world, and the future happiness of the saints: he calls this epistle his *second epistle*, because he had written another before to the same persons; and that the author of this epistle was an apostle, is evident from the following verse; and which, compared with ch. i. 18. shews him to be the Apostle Peter, whose name it bears, and who was an eye-witness to the transfiguration of Christ on the mount: he addresses these saints here, as also in ver. 8, 14, 17. under the character of *beloved*: because they were the beloved of God, being chosen by him according to his fore-knowledge, and regenerated by him, according to his abundant mercy; and were openly his people, and had obtained mercy from him, and like-precious faith with the apostles; and were also the beloved of Christ, being redeemed by him, not with gold and silver, but with his precious blood; for whom he suffered, and who were partakers of his sufferings, and the benefits arising from them, and who had all things given them by him, pertaining to life and godliness, and exceeding great and precious promises; and were likewise beloved by the apostle, though strangers, and not merely as Jews, or because they were his countrymen, but because they were the elect of God, the redeemed of Christ, and who were sanctified by the Spirit, and had the same kind of faith he himself had. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *my beloved*; and the Ethiopic version, *my brethren*: his end in writing both this and the former epistle follows; *in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance*; that this was his view both in this and the former epistle, appears from 1 Pet. i. 13. and 2 Pet. i. 12, 13, 14, 15. he calls their *minds pure*; not that they were so naturally, for the minds and consciences of men are universally defiled with sin; nor are the minds of all men pure who seem to be so in their own eyes, or appear so to others; nor can any man, by his own power or works, make himself pure from sin; only the blood of Christ purges and cleanses from it; and a pure mind is a mind sprinkled with that blood, and which receives the truth as it is in Jesus, in the power and purity of it, and that holds the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, render the word *sincere*, as it is in Phil. i. 10. and may design the sincerity of their hearts in the worship of God, in the doctrines of Christ, and to one another, and of the grace of the spirit of God in them; as that their faith was unfeigned, their hope without hypocrisy, and their love without dissimulation, and their repentance real and genuine; but yet they needed to be stirred up by way

of remembrance, both of the truth of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; for saints are apt to be forgetful of the word, both of its doctrines and its exhortations; and it is the business of the ministers of the word to put them in mind of them, either by preaching or by writing; and which shews the necessity and usefulness of the standing ministry of the Gospel: the particulars he put them in mind of next follow.

Ver. 2. *That ye may be mindful, &c.*] This is an explanation of the above-mentioned end of his writing this and the other epistle; which was, that those saints might be mindful of two things more especially: *of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets*; that is, the prophets of the Old Testament, who were holy men of God, and therefore their words are to be regarded, and retained in memory; the Gospel itself was spoken by them, and so was Christ, and the things relating to his person and offices, and to his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and the glory that should follow; and indeed the apostles said no other than what they did, only more clearly and expressly; and particularly many things were said by them concerning the second coming of Christ to judge the world, and destroy it, and to prepare new heavens and a new earth for his people, which is what the apostle has chiefly in view; see Jude 14. Isa. xi. 3. and lxxv. 17. Mal. iv. 1. Dan. vii. 9, 10, 13, 14. *and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour*; that is, Jesus Christ, as Jude expresses it, and the Ethiopic version adds here; and which likewise, and also the Syriac version, and some ancient copies, read, *our Lord and Saviour*, and omit the *us* before the apostles; by whom are meant the twelve apostles of Christ, of which Peter was one, and therefore says, *us the apostles*; though the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and the Complutensian edition, read *your apostles*, and so the Alexandrian copy; but the former is the received reading; now the *commandment* of these intends either the Gospel in general, so called because it was the commandment of our Lord to his apostles to preach it; and therefore the word *commandment*, in the original, stands between *us the apostles*, and *the Lord and Saviour*, as being the commandment of the one to the other; unless it can be thought any regard is had to the new commandment of love, or that of faith, inculcated both by Christ and his apostles; John xiii. 34. 1 John ii. 7, 8. and iii. 23. or rather, particularly the instructions, directions, and predications of the apostles concerning the second coming of Christ, and what should go before it, as appears from the following words, and the parallel place in Jude 17, 18. the words of the prophets and apostles being here put together, shew the agreement there is between them, and what regard is to be had to each of them, and to any thing and every thing in which they agree.

Ver. 3. *Knowing this first, &c.*] In the first place, principally, and chiefly, and which might easily be known and observed from the writings of the apostles and prophets; see 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2. 2 Tim. iii. 1. *that there shall come in the last days scoffers, or mockers*; such as would make a mock at sin, make light of it, plead for it, openly commit it, and glory in it; and scoff at all religion, as the prejudice of education, as an engine of state, a piece of civil policy to keep subjects in awe, as cant, enthusiasm, and madness, as a gloomy melancholy thing,

depriving men of true pleasure; and throw out their flouts and jeers at those that are the most religious, for the just, upright man, is commonly by such laughed to scorn, and those that depart from evil make themselves a prey; and particularly at the ministers of the word, for a man that has scarcely so much common sense as to preserve him from the character of an idiot, thinks himself a wit of the age, if he can at any rate break a jest upon a Gospel minister: nor do the Scriptures of truth escape the banter and burlesque of these scoffers; the doctrines of it being foolishness to them, and the commands and ordinances in it being grievous and intolerable to them; yea, to such lengths do those proceed, as to scoff at God himself; at his persons, purposes, providences, and promises; at Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, and especially as the God and Father of Christ, and of all grace in him; at Jehovah the Son, at his person, as being the son of God, and truly God, at his office, as Mediator, and at his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which they trample under foot; and at Jehovah the Spirit, whom they do despite unto, as the spirit of grace, deriding his operations in regeneration and sanctification, as dream and delusion; and, most of all, things to come are the object of their scorn and derision; as the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, a future judgment, the torments of hell, and the joys of heaven; all which they represent as the tricks and juggles of designing men: such as these, according to the prophets and apostles, were to come *in the last days*; either in the days of the Messiah, in the Gospel dispensation, the times between the first and second coming of Christ; for it is a rule with the Jews*, that wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended; see Heb. i. 1. when the prophets foretold such scoffers should come; or in the last days of the Jewish state, both civil and religious, called *the ends of the world*; 1 Cor. x. 11. a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, when iniquity greatly abounded; Matt. xxiv. 11, 12. or *in the last of the days*; as the words may be rendered; and so answer to *בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים*, in Isa. ii. 2. and may regard the latter part of the last times; the times of the apostles were the last days, 1 John ii. 18. they began then, and will continue to Christ's second coming; when some time before that, it will be a remarkable age for scoffers and scorers; and we have lived to see an innumerable company of them, and these predictions fulfilled; from whence it may be concluded, that the coming of Christ is at hand: these scoffers are further described as *walking after their own lusts*; either after the carnal reasonings of their minds, admitting of nothing but what they can comprehend by reason, making that the rule, test, and standard of all their principles, and so cast away the law of the Lord, and despise the word of the holy One of Israel; or rather, after their sinful and fleshly lusts, making them their guides and governors, and giving up themselves entirely to them, to obey and fulfil them; the phrase denotes a continued series of sinning, a progress in it, a desire after it, and pleasure in it, and an obstinate persisting in it; scoffers at religion and revelation are generally

libertines; and such as sit in the seat of the scornful, are in the counsel of the ungodly, and way of sinners, Psal. i. 1.

Ver. 4. *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? &c.*] That is, of the coming of the Lord and Saviour, ver. 2. the object of their scorn and derision, and whom they name not, through contempt; and the meaning is, what is become of the promise of his coming? where the accomplishment of it? The prophets foretold he would come; he himself said he would come again; the angels, at his ascension, declared he would come from heaven in like manner as he went up; and all his apostles gave out that he would appear a second time to judge both quick and dead, and that his coming was at hand; but where is the fulfilment of all this? he is not come, nor is there any sign or likelihood of it: *for since the fathers fell asleep; or died*; which is the language of the Scriptures, and here sneered at by these men, who believe them so fast asleep as never to be awaked or raised more; and by *the fathers* they mean the first inhabitants of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, &c. and all the patriarchs and prophets in all ages; the Ethiopic version renders it, *our first fathers: all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*; reasoning from the settled order of things, the constant revolution of the sun, moon, and stars, the permanency of the earth, and the succession of the inhabitants of it, to the future continuance of things, without any alteration; and consequently, that Christ would not come, as was promised, to raise the dead, judge mankind, destroy the world, and set up a new state of things: the fallacy of which reasoning is exposed by the apostle in the following words.

Ver. 5. *For this they willingly are ignorant of; &c.*] Namely, what follows; for as these men were such as had professed Christianity, and had the advantage of revelation, and had the opportunity of reading the Scriptures, they might have known that the heavens and the earth were from the beginning; and that they were made by the word of God; and that the earth was originally in such a position and situation as to be overflowed with a flood, and that it did perish by a general inundation; and that the present heavens and earth are kept and reserved for a general burning; and it might be discerned in nature, that there are preparations making for an universal conflagration; but all this they chose not to know, and affected ignorance of: particularly *that by the word of God the heavens were of old*: not only in the times of Noah, but *from the beginning*: as the Ethiopic version reads, and which agrees with the account in Gen. i. 1. by *the heavens* may be meant both the third heaven, and the starry heavens, and the airy heavens, with all their created inhabitants; and especially the latter, since these were concerned in, and affected with the general deluge; and these were in the beginning of time, out of nothing brought into being, and so were not eternal, and might be destroyed again, or at least undergo a change, even though they were of old, and of long duration: for it was *by the word of God* that they at first existed, and were so long preserved in being; either

* Kinchi in Isa. ii. 2.

by the commanding word of God, by his powerful voice, his almighty fiat, who said, Let it be done, and it was done, and who commanded beings to rise up out of nothing, and they did, and stood fast; and so the Arabic version renders it, *by the command of God*; or by his eternal Logos, the essential Word of God, the second Person in the Trinity, who is often in Scripture called the Word, and the Word of God, and, as some think, by the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. i. 23. and certain it is that the creation of all things is frequently ascribed to him; see John i. 1, 2, 3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2, 10. and xi. 3. wherefore by the same Word they might be dissolved, and made to pass away, as they will: *and the earth standing out of the water and in the water*; that is, *by the Word of God*: for this phrase, in the original text, is placed after this clause, and last of all; and refers not only to the being of the heavens of old, but to the rise, standing, and subsistence of the earth, which is here particularly described for the sake of the deluge, the apostle afterwards mentions: and it is said to be *standing out of the water, or consisting out of it*; it consists of it as a part; the globe of the earth is terraqueous, partly land and partly water; and even the dry land itself has its rise and spring out of water; the first matter that was created is called the deep, and waters in which darkness was, and upon which the spirit of God moved, Gen. i. 2. agreeably to which Thales the Milesian asserted¹, that water was the principle of all things; and the Ethiopic version here renders the words thus, and the *Word of God created also the earth out of water, and confirmed it*: the account the Jews give of the first formation of the world is this²; "at first the world was מים במים, *water in water*: what is the sense (of that passage Gen. i. 2.) *and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters?* he returned, and made it snow; he casteth *forth his ice like morsels*, Psal. cxlvii. 17. he returned *and made it earth; for to the snow he saith, Be thou earth*, Job xxxvii. 6. and the earth stood upon the *waters; to him that stretched out the earth above the waters*, Psal. cxxxvi. 6." however, certain it is, that the earth was first covered with water, when at the word, and by the command of God, the waters fled and hasted away, and were gathered into one place, and the dry land rose up and appeared; and then it was that it *stood out of the water*; see Gen. i. 9, 10. Psal. civ. 6, 7. moreover, the earth consists, or is kept and held together by water; there is a general humidity or moisture that runs through it, by which it is compacted together, or otherwise it would resolve into dust, and by which it is fit for the production, increase, and preservation of vegetables and other things, which it otherwise would not be: and it is also said to stand *in the water, or by the water*; upon it, according to Psal. xxiv. 2. or rather in the midst of it, there being waters above the firmament or expanse, in the airy heavens, in the clouds all around the earth, called the windows of heaven; and water below the firmament or expanse, in the earth itself; besides the great sea, a large body of waters is in the midst of the earth, in the very bowels of it, which feed rivers, and form springs, fountains, and wells, called the fountains of the great

deep; and in this position and situation was the earth of old, and so was prepared in nature for a general deluge, and yet was preserved firm and stable by the word of God, for a long series of time; so the Arabic version renders it, *and the earth out of the water, and in the water, stood stable, by the command of God*: but when it was his pleasure, he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, of which an account follows.

Ver. 6. *Whereby the world that then was, &c.*] The old world, as it is called in ch. ii. 5. and as the Ethiopic version here renders it; the world before the flood, that had stood from the creation 1656 years: *being overflowed with water*; by the windows of heaven being opened, and the waters over the earth poured down upon it; and by the fountains of the great deep being broken up in it; thus by these waters from above and below, a general inundation was brought upon it; for that the deluge was universal is clear from hence, and from the account by Moses; for as the earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted its way, God threatened a general destruction, and which was brought by a flood, which overflowed the whole earth; for all the hills that were under the whole heaven were covered with it, and every thing that had life in the dry land died, and every living substance was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground; see Gen. vi. 11, 12, 13. and vii. 11, 19, 22, 23. and hence it follows, that hereby the then world *perished*; not as to the substance of it, whatever alteration there might be in its form and position; but as to the inhabitants of it; for all creatures, men and cattle, and the creeping things, and fowls of the heaven, were destroyed, excepting Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives, and the creatures that were with him in the ark; see Gen. vii. 23. 1 Pet. iii. 20. and by this instance the apostle shews the falsehood of the above assertion, that all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation; for the earth was covered with water at first, and which, by the command of God, was removed, and, after a long series of time, was brought on it again, and by it drowned; and from whence it also appears, that this sort of reasoning used by those scoffers is very fallacious; for though the heavens and the earth may continue for a long time, as they did before the flood, in the same form and situation, it does not follow from thence that they always will, for the contrary is evident from what follows.

Ver. 7. *But the heavens and the earth which are now, &c.*] In being, in distinction from, and opposition to the heavens that were of old, and the earth standing in and out of the water, and the world that then was when the waters of the flood overflowed it: *by the same word are kept in store*; that is, by the word of God, as in ver. 5. and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *by his word*; by the same word that the heavens and the earth were made of old, or in the beginning, are they kept, preserved, and upheld in their being; or *are treasured up*; the heavens and the earth are a rich treasure, they are full of the riches of God, as the God of nature and providence; and they are kept with care, as a treasure is, not to be touched

¹ Vid. Laert. l. i. in Vit. Thaletis.

² T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 1.

or meddled with at present, but must continue in the same position and use; or they are laid up in the stores, and sealed up among the treasures of divine wrath and vengeance, and will be brought out another day, and made use of, to the destruction of the ungodly inhabitants of the world, and to aggravate and increase their misery and ruin: for it is further said of them, that they are *reserved unto fire*; for though the world is, and has been preserved a long time without any visible alteration in it, yet it will not be always so preserved: and though it is, and will be kept from being drowned by water again, through the promise and power of God, yet it is kept and reserved for a general conflagration; see ver. 10, 12. And as the old world was put into a natural situation, so as to be drowned by water, there are now preparations making in nature, in the present world, for the burning of it; witness the fiery meteors, blazing stars, and burning comets in the heavens, and the subterraneous fires in the bowels of the earth, which in some places have already broke out: there are now many volcanos, burning mountains and islands, particularly in Sicily, Italy, and the parts adjacent, the seat of the beast, and where it is very likely the universal conflagration will begin, as *Ætna, Vesuvius, Strombilo*, and other volcanos; and even in our own island we have some symptoms and appearances of these fires under ground, as fiery eruptions in some places, and the hot waters at the Bath, and elsewhere, shew; from all which 'tis plain that the heavens and earth, that now are, are not as they always were, and will be, but are reserved and prepared for burning; and that things are ripening apace, as men's sins also are, for the general conflagration. Josephus^w relates, that Adam foretold that there would be a destruction of all things, once by the force of fire, and once by the power and multitude of water; and it is certain the Jews had knowledge of the destruction of the earth by fire, as by water: they say^x, "that when the law was given to Israel, his (God's) voice went from one end of the world to the other, and trembling laid hold on all the nations of the world in their temples, and they said a song, as it is said, Psal. xxix. 9. *and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory*: all of them gathered together to wicked Balaam, and said to him, what is the voice of the multitude which we hear, perhaps a flood is coming upon the world? he said unto them, *the Lord sitteth upon the flood, yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever*, Psal. xxix. 10. Thus hath the Lord swore, that he will not bring a flood upon the world; they replied to him, a flood of water he will not bring, but *מבול של אש, a flood of fire* he will bring, as it is said, Isa. lxvi. 16. *for by fire will the Lord plead,*" or judge: and hence they speak^y of the wicked being judged with two sorts of judgments, by water, and by fire: and, according to our apostle, the heavens and earth are kept and reserved to fire, *against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men*: the time when God will judge the world

is fixed, though it is not known; and it is called a *day*, because of the evidence and light in which things will appear, and the quick dispatch of business in it; and the *judgment* spoken of is the future judgment, and which is certain, and will be universal, righteous, and eternal, and when wicked and ungodly men will be punished with everlasting destruction: the bodies of those that will be alive at the general conflagration will be burnt in it, though not annihilated, and will be raised again, and both soul and body will be destroyed in hell.

Ver. 8. *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, &c.*] Here the apostle addresses the saints he writes unto, and for whom he had a tender affection and regard, and for whose welfare he was concerned, lest they should be stumbled at the length of time since the promise of the coming of Christ was given, and which these scoffers object; and therefore he would have them know, observe, and consider this one thing, which might be of great use to them to make their minds easy, and keep up their faith and expectation of the coming of Christ: *that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*; referring either to Psal. xc. 4. or to a common saying among the Jews, founded on the same passage, *ימי של הק' בה אלה שנים*, *the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years*^z; suggesting, that though between thirty and forty years had elapsed since the promise was given out that Christ would come again, and should even a thousand, or two thousand years more, run off, before the coming of Christ, yet this should be no objection to the accomplishment of the promise; for though such a number of years is very considerable among men, ye not *with God*, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, with whom a thousand years, and even eternity itself, is but as a day, Isa. xliii. 13. Unless this phrase should be thought to refer, as it is by some, to the day of judgment, and be expressive of the duration of that: 'tis certain that the Jews interpreted days of millenniums, and reckoned millenniums by days, and used this phrase in confirmation of it. Thus they say^a, "in the time to come, which is in the last days, on the sixth day, which is the sixth millennium, when the Messiah comes, for the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years."—And a little after, *the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man*. This is in the time of the Messiah, which is in the sixth day." And elsewhere^b, "the sixth degree is called the sixth day, the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years.—And in that day the King Messiah shall come, and it shall be called the feast of gathering, for the holy blessed God will gather in it the captivity of his people." So they call the sabbath, or seventh day, the seventh millennium, and interpret^c "the song for the sabbath-day," Psal. xcii. title, for the seventh millennium, for one day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years." To which agrees the tradition of Elias, which runs

^w Antiqu. Jud. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 3.

^x T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1.

^y Zohar in Gen. fol. 50. 4. & 51. 1.

^z Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 7. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 216. 1. Shirhashirim

Rabba, fol. 20. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 60. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 137. 1. & Nishmet Chayim Orat. 1. c. 5. fol. 12. 1.

^a Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 4.

^b Ib. fol. 16. 1.

^c Barteuora in Misn. Tamid, c. 7. sect. 4.

thus^d; " 'tis the tradition of the house of Elias, that the " world shall be six thousand years, two thousand years " void (of the law), two thousand years the law, and two " thousand years the days of the Messiah;" for they suppose that the six days of the creation were expressive of the six thousand years in which the world will stand; and that the seventh day prefigures the last millennium, in which will be the day of judgment, and the world to come; for " the six days of the creation (they say^e) is a sign or intimation of these " things: on the sixth day man was created; and on " the seventh his work was finished; so the kings of " the nations of the world (continue) five millenniums, " answering to the five days, in which were created " the fowls, and the creeping things of the waters, " and other things; and the enjoyment of their kingdom is a little in the sixth, answerable to the creation of the beasts, and living creatures created at this time in the beginning of it; and the kingdom of the house of David is in the sixth millennium, answerable to the creation of man, who knew his Creator, and ruled over them all; and in the end of that millennium will be the day of judgment, answerable to man, who was judged in the end of it; and the seventh is the sabbath, and it is the beginning of the world to come."

Ver. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, &c.*] The Syriac version reads in the plural, *his promises*, any of his promises; though the words seem rather to regard the particular promise of Christ's coming, either to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, of which coming there was a promise made, and is often referred to by Christ, and his apostles; see Mark ix. 1. John xxi. 22. Heb. x. 37. and it now being upwards of thirty years since it was given out, some men began to charge God with slackness and dilatoriness; whereas the true reason of the delay of it was, that there might be time for the gathering in of his elect among them by his angels, or apostles and ministers, sent into the several parts of Judea, that so none of them might perish, but be brought to faith and repentance; and thus as the time of Christ's coming was prolonged more than was thought it would, so when the days of afflictions were come, they were shortened also for these elect's sake: or this promise regards the second coming of Christ, to judge the quick and dead at the last day, of which the former was a prelude, presage, and pledge; that Christ would come again, and appear a second time in person, was promised by himself, and often spoken of by his apostles; and many of the primitive Christians thought it would be very soon, and which might be occasioned by the hints that were given of his coming in the other sense. Now this being deferred longer than was expected, the scoffers or mockers take upon them to charge the Lord with slackness in the fulfilment of his promise: *as some men count slackness*; as if he had either changed his purpose, or had prolonged it beyond the appointed time, or was unmindful of his promise, and would never fulfil it; whereas he is in one mind, and none can turn him, nor will he delay

the fulfilment of his promise beyond the set time; he has fixed a day for his coming, in which he'll judge the world in righteousness, and he'll keep it: he is not dilatory, *but is long-suffering to us-ward*; not to all the individuals of human nature, for the persons intended by *us* are manifestly distinguished from *some men* in the text, and from scoffers, mocking at the promise of Christ's coming, in the context, ver. 3, 4. and are expressly called *beloved*, ver. 1, 8, 14, 17. and God's long-suffering towards them is their salvation, ver. 15. nor is it true of all men, that God is not willing that any of them should perish, and that every one of them should come to repentance, since many of them do perish in their sins, and do not come to repentance, which would not be the case, if his determining will was otherwise; besides, a society or company of men are designed, to which the apostle himself belonged, and of which he was a part; and who are described, in his epistles, as the elect of God, called out of darkness, into marvellous light, and having obtained like-precious faith with the apostles; and must be understood either of God's elect among the Jews, for Peter was a Jew, and they were Jews he wrote to; and then the sense is, that the delay of Christ's coming is not owing to any slackness in him, but to his long-suffering to his elect among the Jews, being unwilling that any of that number among them should perish, but that all of them repent of their sins, and believe in him; and therefore he waits till their conversion is over, when a nation shall be born at once, and they that have pierced him look on him and mourn, and so all Israel shall be saved; or rather of the elect in general, whether among Jews or Gentiles, upon whom the Lord waits to be gracious, and whose long-suffering issues in their conversion and salvation. And upon account of these the Lord stays his coming till their number is complete in effectual vocation; and for their sakes he is long-suffering to others, and bears with a wicked world, with the idolatry, superstition, heresy, profaneness, and impiety, with which it abounds; but when the last man that belongs to that number is called, he'll quickly descend in flames of fire, and burn the world, and the wicked in it, and take his chosen ones to himself. The Alexandrian copy reads, *for you, or your sakes*; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions. A passage somewhat like to this is met with in a book of the Jews^f, esteemed by them very ancient. " God prolongs or defers his " anger with men; and one day, which is a thousand " years, is fixed, besides the seventy years he delivered to David the king.—And he does not judge " man by his evil works which he continually does, " for if so, the world would not stand; but the holy " blessed God defers his anger with the righteous, " and the wicked, that they may return, by perfect " repentance, and be established in this world, and " in the world to come." And it is an observation of theirs^g, that when God is said to be *long-suffering*, it is not written ארך אפים, but ארך אפים, intimating, that he is long-suffering both to the righteous and the wicked; but then he bears with the latter, for the

^d T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 9. 1.

^e Cesphe Misna in Maimon. Hilchot Tesubva, c. 9. sect. 2.

^f Zohar in Gen. fol. 83. 2.

^g T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 65. 2. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 50. 2.

to which best agrees the following use to be made of these things.

Ver. 11. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, &c.*] By fire; the heaven with all its host, sun, moon, and stars, clouds, meteors, and fowls of the air; the earth, and all that is upon it, whether of nature, or art; and, since nothing is more certain than such a dissolution of all things, *what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* not as the scoffers and profane sinners, who put away this evil day far from them, but as men, who have their loins girt, and their lights burning, waiting for their Lord's coming; being continually in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of their religious duties, watching, praying, hearing, reading; living soberly, righteously, and godly; guarding against intemperance and worldly-mindedness, and every worldly and hurtful lust.

Ver. 12. *Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, &c.*] The same with *the day of the Lord*, ver. 10. and so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions here read; and it intends the day of Christ's second coming to judgment, and so is a proof of the deity of Christ; and is called *the day of God*, in distinction from man's day, or human judgment, 1 Cor. iv. 3. which is often fallacious; whereas the judgment of God is according to truth; and because in that day Christ will appear most clearly to be truly and properly God, by the manifest display of his omniscience, omnipotence, and other glorious perfections of his; and because it will be, as the day of God is, a thousand years; and also the day in which God will finish all his works, as on the seventh day the works of creation, on this the works of Providence; when all his purposes, promises, and threatenings, relating to the final state of all persons and things, will be fulfilled, and every work be brought to light, and into judgment, and every thing will stand in a clear light; for the day will declare it, either respecting God, or men; and there will be a display, as of his grace and mercy, to his church and people; for it will be the day of his open espousals to them, and of the gladness of his heart; so of his wrath and anger towards the wicked: for this great and dreadful day of the Lord shall burn like an oven, and destroy the wicked, root and branch: and it will be the day of Christ's glorious appearing, and of his kingdom, in which he will reign, before his ancients, gloriously; and when it is ended, God, Father, Son and Spirit, will be all in all: now *the coming* of this day saints should be *looking for* by faith; believing that it certainly will come, since the patriarchs, prophets, Christ himself, the angels of heaven, and the apostles of the Lamb, have all declared and asserted the coming of this day; and they should look for it, and love it, as with the strongest affection for it, and most vehement desire of it, since they will then appear with Christ in glory; and they should look out, and keep looking out for it, as what will be quickly; and though it is not as soon as they desire and expect, yet should still look wistly for it, and with patience and cheerfulness wait for it: yea, they should be *hastening unto it, or hastening it*; for though the day is fixed for the coming of Christ, nor can it be altered, as his coming will not be longer, it cannot be sooner, yet it becomes the saints to pray earnestly for it, that it may be quickly, and for the ac-

complishment of all things that go before it, prepare for it, and lead unto it; such as the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; and by putting him in mind of, and pleading with him, his promises concerning these things, and giving him no rest till they are accomplished; there seems to be some reference to the prayers of the Jews for the Messiah's coming, which they desire may be *במזור, in haste*; which will shew that they are in haste for the coming of this day; and all which things God will hasten, though it will be in his own time: and moreover, saints should be hastening to it by their readiness for it, having their loins girt, and their lights burning, and their lamps trimmed, and they waiting for their Lord's coming, and going forth in acts of faith and love, and in the duties of religion, to meet him, and not slumber and sleep: *wherein*; in which day, as in ver. 10. or *by which*; by which coming of Christ, or of the day of God, *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*; at whose coming and presence, and from whose face, the heavens and earth shall flee away, just as the earth shook, and the heavens dropped, and Sinai itself moved, when God appeared upon it; see Rev. xx. 11. Psal. lxxviii. 8. This is a repetition of what is said in ver. 10. exciting attention to the exhortation given.

Ver. 13. *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, &c.*] Or *promises*, as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; namely those in Isa. lxx. 17. and lxxvi. 22. *look for new heavens and a new earth*; not figuratively, the world to come in distinction from the Jewish world or state; a new church-state, the Gospel dispensation, with new ordinances, as baptism and the Lord's supper, all legal ceremonies and ordinances being gone, and every thing new; for these things had taken place already, and were not looked for as future: but these phrases are to be understood literally, as the heavens and the earth are in every passage in the context, ver. 5, 7, 10. and designs not new heavens and earth for substance, but for qualities; the heavens and elements being melted and dissolved, and so purged and purified by fire, and the earth and its works being burnt up with it, and so cleared of every thing noxious, needless, and disagreeable, new heavens and a new earth will appear, refined and purged from every thing which the curse brought thereon for man's sin: and such heavens and earth the saints look for by faith and hope, and earnest expectation, and with desire and pleasure; and therefore are not distressed, as they have no reason to be, with the burning of the present heavens and earth, as awful as these things will be; and they expect them not upon their own fancies and imaginations, or the vain conjectures and cunningly-devised fables of men, but according to the promises of God recorded in the above passages, and in which they may be confirmed by the words of Christ, and by the vision of John, Rev. xx. 1, 5. The Alexandrian copy reads, *and his promises*; as if it respected other promises the saints looked for besides the new heavens and earth; namely, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, the ultimate glory and happiness: *wherein dwelleth righteousness*; meaning not the heavenly felicity, called sometimes the crown of righteousness, and the hope of righteousness, to which

righteousness gives a right, and where it will be perfect, for the apostle is not speaking of the ultimate glory of the saints; nor the righteousness of Christ, as dwelling in the saints, as if the sense was this, we in whom righteousness dwells, look for new heavens and a new earth; for though the righteousness of Christ is unto and upon them that believe, yet it is not in them; it is in Christ, and dwells in him, and not in them; it is not inherent in them, but imputed to them: by *righteousness* is meant righteous men; such as are so not in and of themselves, or by the deeds of the law, or by works of righteousness done by them, but who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and are righteousness itself in him; see Jer. xxxiii. 16. 2 Cor. v. 21. now these, and these only, will be the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth; there will be no unrighteous persons there, as in the present world, which lies in wickedness, and is full of wicked men; and they will be stocked with inhabitants after this manner; all the elect will now be gathered in, and Christ, when he comes, will bring all his saints with him from heaven, and will raise their bodies, and reunite them to their souls; and those that are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up together the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and whereas, upon the coming of Christ, the present heavens and earth will be burnt or purified by fire, and so made new and fit for the spirits of just men made perfect, who being again embodied, will fill the face of them, and shall inherit the earth, and reign with Christ on it for a thousand years, during which time there will not be a wicked man in them; for the wicked that will be alive at Christ's coming will be burnt with the earth, and the wicked dead shall not rise till the thousand years are ended, and who being raised, will, together with the devils, make the Gog and Magog army; wherefore none but righteous persons can look for these new heavens and earth, for to these only are they promised, and such only shall dwell in them; so the Targum on Jer. xxiii. 23. paraphrases the words, "I God have created the world from the beginning, saith the Lord, I God will *renew the world for the righteous*;" and this will be, the Jews say, for the space of a thousand years; "it is a tradition (they say¹) of the house of Elias, that the righteous, whom the holy blessed God will raise from the dead, shall not return to their dust, as is said, Isa. iv. 3. *and it shall come to pass, &c.* as the holy One continues for ever, so they shall continue for ever; and if you should say those years (some editions read, *those thousand years*, and so the gloss upon the place) in which the holy blessed God *renews the world*: as it is said Isa. ii. 11. *and the Lord alone*: &c. what shall they do? the holy blessed God will make them wings as eagles, and they shall fly upon the face of the waters:" and this renovation of the heavens and the earth, they say, will be in the seventh millennium; "in the seventh thousand year (they assert^m) there will be found new heavens and a new earth;" which agree with these words of Peter.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for these*

things, &c.] For the burning of the heavens and the earth, for the coming of Christ, and for the new heavens and new earth, *be diligent that ye may be found of him*; Christ, or *with*, in him, as in Phil. iii. 9. for such as are in Christ will have an undoubted right to the new heavens and the new earth, and will certainly dwell in them, because they'll be found not in their own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ: or *before him*, as the Arabic version renders it; before him the Judge of all, at whose tribunal they must stand; but being clothed with his righteousness, and so without spot and blemish, they'll not be ashamed before him: or *by him*; Christ first finds his in redemption, and next in effectual vocation, and last of all at his coming, when all the elect will be looked up, gathered in, and presented first to himself, and then to his father, complete and perfect, not one wanting; and thus to be found in him, and before him, and by him, should be the concern of all that look for the glorious things here spoken of, and particularly that they be found in the following situation and circumstances: *in peace*; interested in that peace Christ has made by the blood of his cross; for such as are reconciled to God by his death, shall be saved by his life, and live with him in the new heavens and new earth, and for ever in the ultimate glory; and in enjoying that peace of conscience which he himself gives, and which flows from his blood, righteousness, and atonement; so that the day of his coming by death, or at judgment, will not be terrifying to them, but they will look for these things with great delight and satisfaction: or in peace one with another; for peace-makers and keepers are called the children of God, and so heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; or in happiness and glory, expressed by peace, which is the end of the righteous man, which he enters into at death, and will rest in to all eternity: *without spot and blemish*; no man is so in himself, sanctification is imperfect, and many are the slips and falls of the saints, though their desire is to be harmless and inoffensive, and to give no just occasion for blame or scandal; but the saints are so in Christ Jesus, being washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness, and will be found so by him when he comes again, when he will present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, and also before the presence of his father's glory, as faultless, with exceeding joy; and so will they be fit and meet to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and new earth, and reign with him therein, and be with him to all eternity.

Ver. 15. *And account that the long-suffering of our Lord, &c.*] Not his long-suffering towards the wicked, and his forbearance with them, for that is not the means of, nor the way to, nor does it issue in, their salvation, but in their sorer punishment and greater damnation, see Rom. ii. 4. and ix. 22. but towards the elect, as in ver. 9. whom he bears much and long with before conversion, whilst in their sins, and in a state of unregeneracy, and waits to be gracious to them, as he is in their vocation, and to make known and apply his great salvation to them; and as with particular persons, so with the whole body of them, till they are all gathered in, and even with the world for their sakes; and parti-

¹ T. Bab. Sanhedriu, fol. 92. 1, 2. Ed. Coch. p. 317.

^m Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3.

cularly the Lord's long-suffering here intends the deferring of his coming, or his seeming slackness in the performance of his promise: the reason of which is, *salvation*: the salvation of all his chosen ones, and in that it issues; he waits, he stays, that none of them might perish, but that they might be all brought to faith and repentance, and so be saved: wherefore the apostle would have the saints consider it in this light, and not imagine and conclude, with the scoffing infidels, that he is slack and dilatory, and will not come, but that his view in it is the salvation of all his people, which by this means is brought about: in confirmation of which, and other things he had delivered, he produces the testimony of the Apostle Paul; *even as our beloved brother Paul also*; he calls him a *brother*, both on account of his being a believer in Christ, one that belonged to the same family with him, and was of the household of faith, born of the same Father, and related to the same Redeemer, the first-born among many brethren, and likewise on account of his being a fellow-apostle; for though he was not one of the twelve apostles, but his call and mission were later than theirs, yet Peter does not disdain to put him among them, and upon an equal foot with them, nor was he a whit behind the chief of them: he styles him a *beloved brother*; expressing his affection for him, which the relation between them called for, and which he bore to him, notwithstanding his public opposition to him, and sharp reproof of him, Gal. ii. 11. and perhaps loved him the more for it; see Psal. cxli. 5. Prov. xxvii. 5, 6. and he makes mention of him, and that under these characters, partly to shew their agreement and consent in doctrine; and partly to recommend him to the Jews, to whom he writes, who had, upon report of his doctrine and ministry, entertained an ill, at least a mean opinion, of him; as also to set us an example to speak well of one another, both as ministers and private believers: *according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you*; meaning not all his epistles, as being written for the general good of all the saints, as well as for those particular churches or men to whom they were sent; for what Peter speaks of is what was particularly written to them, and is distinguished in the following verse from the rest of Paul's epistles; nor does he intend the epistle of Paul to the Romans, for the long-suffering of God spoken of in that, as in ch. ii. 4. and ix. 22. is his long-suffering to the wicked, which issues in their destruction, and not his long-suffering to his elect, which is salvation, as here; but he seems manifestly to have in view the epistle to the Hebrews, for Peter wrote both his first and second epistles to Jews; wherefore, since none of Paul's epistles but that were written particularly to them, it should seem that that is designed, and serves to confirm his being the author of it; in which he writes to the Hebrews concerning the coming of Christ, and of the deferring of it a little while, and of the need they had of patience to wait for it, Heb. x. 36, 37. and in it also are some things difficult to be understood concerning Melchizedek, the old and new covenant, the removing of the Aaronical priesthood, and the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law, &c. things not easily received by that nation; and the whole is written with great wisdom, respecting the person and office of Christ, the nature of his priesthood,

and the glory of the Gospel dispensation; and in a most admirable manner is the whole Mosaic economy laid open and explained: he was indeed a wise master-builder, and whatever he wrote was *according to wisdom*; not fleshly wisdom, the wisdom of this world, nor with enticing words of men's wisdom, but according to the divine wisdom, under the influence of the spirit of wisdom and revelation; for he had not this of himself naturally, nor did he learn it at Gamaliel's feet, but it was what was *given to him*; it came from above, from God, who gives it liberally; and as he himself always owned it to be a free-grace gift of God bestowed on him, and that all his light and knowledge were by the revelation of Christ, so Peter ascribes it to the same, that God might have all the glory, and all boasting in man be stopped.

Ver. 16. *As also in all his epistles, &c.*] From whence it appears, that the Apostle Paul had, by this time, wrote several of his epistles, if not all of them; and they were all written according to the same wisdom, and under the influence of the same spirit, as his epistle to the Hebrews: *speaking in them of those things*; of the same things Peter had been speaking of, of the coming of Christ, as that he should appear a second time to them that look for him, and would come as a thief in the night, and that the fashion, scheme, and form of this world should pass away, and that saints should look and wait for his coming, and love it: something of this kind is said in all his epistles; see Heb. ix. 28. 1 Thess. v. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 31. and i. 7. Tit. ii. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 8. and also of mockers, scoffers, seducers, and wicked men that would arise in the last days; see 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. *in which are some things hard to be understood*. The phrase, *in which*, refers either to the epistles, or the things spoken in them. The Alexandrian manuscript, and three of Robert Stephens's copies, read *in* *which* epistles, but the generality of copies read *in* *is*, *in*, or *among* *which* *things*, spoken of in them, concerning the subject here treated of, the coming of Christ; as the time of Christ's coming, which is sometimes represented by the apostle, as if it would be whilst he was living; and the manner of his coming in person with all his saints, and his mighty angels, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, things not easily understood; and the destruction of antichrist at his coming, which will be with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; as also the resurrection of the dead, of the saints that will rise first, and that with spiritual bodies; and likewise the change of the living saints, and the rapture both of living and raised saints together, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and the standing of them before the judgment-seat of Christ, and the account that every one must give to him, 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16, 17. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. and ii. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 44, 51, 52. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rom. xiv. 12. *which they that are unlearned*; untaught of God, who have never learned of the Father, nor have learned Christ, nor have that anointing which teacheth all things; who, though they may have been in the schools of men, were never in the school of Christ; and though they have been ever learning, yet will never come to the knowledge of the truth; for men may have a large share of human literature, and yet be unlearned men in the sense of the apostle; and very often it is,

that such wrest and pervert the Scriptures to the ruin of themselves, and others: *and unstable*; unsettled in their principles, who are like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; the root of the matter is not in them; nor are they rooted and built up in Christ, and so are not established in the faith; they are not upon the foundation Christ, nor do they build upon, and abide by the sure word of God, or form their notions according to it, but according to their own carnal reasonings, and fleshly lusts; and so *wrest* the word of God, distort it from its true sense and meaning, and make it speak that which it never designed; dealing with it as innocent persons are sometimes used, put upon a rack, and tortured, and so forced to speak what is contrary to their knowledge and consciences; and so were the words of the Apostle Paul wrested by ill-designing men, as about the doctrines of grace and works, so concerning the coming of Christ; see Rom. iii. 8. 2Thess. ii. 1, 2. *as they do also the other Scriptures*; the writings of Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the other epistles of the apostles of the New Testament: and which is eventually *unto their own destruction*; for by so doing they either add unto, or detract from the Scriptures, and so bring the curse of God upon them; and they give into doctrines of devils, and into heresies, which are damnable, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, which lingers not, and slumbers not. Now from hence it does not follow, that the Scriptures are not to be read by the common people; for not all the parts of Scripture, and all things in it, are hard to be understood, there are many things very plain and easy, even every thing respecting eternal salvation; there's milk for babes, as well as meat for strong men: besides, not the Scriptures in general, but Paul's epistles only, are here spoken of, and not all of them, or any one whole epistle among them, only some things in them, and these not impossible, only difficult to be understood; and which is no reason why they should be laid aside, but rather why they should be read with greater application and diligence, and be followed with fervent prayer, and frequent meditation; and though unlearned and unstable men may wrest them to their perdition, those that are taught of God, though otherwise illiterate, may read them to great profit and advantage.

Ver. 17. *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, &c.*] As that there will be such mockers and scoffers in the last days, and such unlearned and unstable men that will deprave the Scriptures, and wrest them in such a miserable manner: *beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked*; from the simplicity of the Gospel, along with such wicked men, that wax worse and worse, deceivers and being deceived, by giving into any of their errors which respect the grace of God, or the person and offices of Christ, or particularly his second coming; be upon the watch and guard against them, having previous notice of them, for they lie in wait to deceive: *lest ye fall from your own steadfastness*; which was proper to them, and which, by the grace of God, they had, and retained, both in the faith of Christ, and doctrine of the Gospel; for though the saints can never finally and totally fall

into sin, or from the truth, yet they may fall from their steadfastness, both as to the exercise of the grace of faith, and as to their profession of the doctrine of faith; and to be fluctuating, hesitating, and doubting in either respect, must be very uncomfortable and dishonourable.

Ver. 18. *But grow in grace, &c.*] In the gifts of grace, which, under a divine blessing, may be increased by using them: gifts neglected decrease, but stirred up and used, are improved and increase. And though men are to be thankful for their gifts, and be contented with them, yet they may lawfully desire more, and in the use of means seek an increase of them, which may be a means of preserving themselves, and others, from the error of the wicked. Moreover, by *grace* may be meant internal grace. The work of grace is gradual; it is like a grain of mustard-seed, or like seed cast into the earth, which springs up, it is not known how, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; saints are first babes, and from children they grow to young men, and from young men to fathers. There is such a thing as growth in grace, in this sense; every grace, as to its act and exercise, is capable of growing and increasing; faith may grow exceedingly, hope abound, love increase, and patience have its perfect work, and saints may grow more humble, holy, and self-denying: this is indeed God's work, to cause them to grow, and it is owing to his grace; yet saints should shew a concern for this, and make use of means which God owns and blesses for this purpose, such as prayer, attending on the word, and looking over the promises of God, for an increase of faith; recollecting past experiences, and looking to the death and resurrection of Christ for the encouragement of hope, and to the love of God and Christ, for the stirring up of love to both, and to the saints; considering the sufferings of Christ, the desert of sin, and the glories of another world, to promote patience and self-denial, and the pattern of Christ, to excite to humility; though *grace* may also intend the Gospel, the knowledge of which is imperfect, and may be increased in the use of means, and which is a special preservative against error, a growth in which saints should be concerned for: *and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; of his person, office, and grace, than which nothing is more valuable, and is to be preferred to every thing; it is the principal thing in grace, and is the beginning and pledge of eternal life, and will issue in it; for an increase of which, and a growth in it, the word and ordinances are designed; and nothing can be a greater security against error than an experimental growing knowledge of Christ. The Syriac version adds, *and of God the father*; and so some copies read: *to him be glory, both now, and for ever; or to the day of eternity*; that is, to Christ, who is truly God, or otherwise such a doxology would not belong to him, be ascribed the glory of deity, of all divine perfections; the glory of all his offices and work as Mediator; the glory of man's salvation; and the glory of all that grace, and the growth of it, together with the knowledge of himself, which saints have from him; and that both in this world, and that which is to come. Amen; so be it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

J O H N.

THE author of this epistle was John, the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved: he was the youngest of the apostles, and survived them all. He does not indeed put his name to this epistle, as the Apostles Paul, Peter, James, and Jude do to theirs; and it is easy to observe, that when this disciple, in his writings, had any occasion to speak of himself, it was usually by such a circumlocution, as the disciple whom Jesus loved, or the other disciple, studiously concealing his name: so that his not putting his name to this epistle need not create any scruple about his being the author of it, which everywhere breathes the temper and spirit of this great apostle; and whoever compares this epistle, and the Gospel written by him, together, will easily conclude it to be his, both from the style and subject-matter of it: besides, as Eusebius asserts^a, this epistle was generally received without scruple, both by ancient and modern writers. It is called *general*, because it was not written and sent to any particular church, or person, and not because it was for the general use of the churches, for so are all the particular epistles; but because it was written to the Christians in general, or to the believing Jews in general, wherever they were; for that it was written to the Jews seems evident from ch. ii. 2. It was called, by some of the ancients, the epistle of John to the Parthians^b; by whom must be meant, not the natives of Parthia, but the Jews professing to believe in Christ, who dwelt in that empire. We read of Parthian Jews at the feast of Pentecost, Acts ii. 9. who at that time might be converted, and, upon their return to their own country, lay the foundation of a Gospel church-state there. Dr. Lightfoot^c conjectures from a passage in 3 John 9. that this epistle was written to the Corinthians; but there does not seem to be any sufficient reason for it. As for the time when, and place where, this epistle was written, it is not easy to say: some think it was written at Patmos, whither the apostle was banished in the reign of Domitian, and where he wrote the book of the Revelations; see Rev. i. 9. and here some say he wrote his Gospel, and this epistle, and that a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, and which he calls the last time or hour; and that his design in writing it was to exhort the believing Jews,

either in Parthia, or scattered about in other countries, to brotherly love, and to warn them against false Christs and false prophets, which were now gone forth into the world to deceive men; see ch. ii. 18. and iv. 1. Others think that it was written by him, when a very old man, after his return from his exile to Ephesus, where he resided during his life, and where he died, and was buried. It is called his *first* epistle general, not that it is the first general epistle, for the other two are written to particular persons, but is the first he wrote, and which is general: the occasion, and manifest design of it, is to promote brotherly love, which he enforces upon the best principles, and with the strongest arguments, taken from the love of God and Christ, from the commandment of Christ, and its being an evidence of regeneration, and the truth and glory of a profession of religion: and also to oppose and stop the growth of licentious principles, and practices, and heretical doctrines. The licentious principles and practices he condemns are these, that believers had no sin in them, or need not be concerned about it, nor about their outward conversation, so be they had but knowledge; and these men boasted of their communion with God, notwithstanding their impieties; and which were the sentiments and practices of the Nicolaitans, Gnostics, and Carpocratians. The heresies he sets himself against, and refutes, are such as regard the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person and office of Christ. There were some who denied a distinction of persons in the Trinity, and asserted there was but one person; that the Father was not distinct from the Son, nor the Son from the Father; and, by confounding both, tacitly denied there was either, as Simon Magus, and his followers; regard is had to these in ch. ii. 22. and v. 7. and others, as the unbelieving Jews, denied that Jesus was the Messiah, or that Christ was come in the flesh; these are taken notice of in ch. ii. 22. and iv. 2. 3. and v. 1. Others, that professed to believe in Jesus Christ, denied his proper deity, and asserted he was a mere man, and did not exist before he took flesh of the virgin, as Ebion and Cerinthus; these are opposed in ch. i. 1. 2. and iii. 16. and v. 20. And others denied his real humanity, and affirmed that he was a mere phantom; that he only had the appearance of

^a Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 24.
Augustin. apud Grotium.

^c Hor. Hebr. in 1 Cor. i. 14.

a man, and assumed human nature, and suffered, and died, and rose again in shew only, and not in reality; of which sort were the followers of Saturninus and Basilides, and which are confuted in ch. i. 1, 2, 3. This

epistle is, by Clemens Alexandrinus ⁴, called his *greater* or *larger epistle*, it being so in comparison of the other two that follow.

C H A P. I.

IN this chapter the apostle gives a summary of the Gospel, and the evidence of it, and from thence presses to a holy life and conversation. The sum of the Gospel is Jesus Christ, who is described both as God and man; his deity is expressed by being that which was from the beginning, the Word of life, life, and eternal life; his humanity by being the life manifested in the flesh, of which the apostles had full evidence by the several senses of seeing, hearing, and handling, and so were capable of bearing witness to the truth thereof, ver. 1, 2. And the ends had in view in giving this summary, evidence, and testimony, were, that the saints wrote unto might have fellowship with the apostles, whose fellowship was with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and that their joy on hearing these things might be full, ver. 3, 4. And the amount of the message declared by them was, that God is light, or a pure and holy Being, and that there is no darkness of sin, or unholiness in him; wherefore all such that pretend to communion with him, and live a sinful course of life, are liars; only such have fellowship with him, and with his son, whose blood cleanses them from all sin, who live holy lives and conversations, ver. 5, 6, 7. not that it is to be expected that men should be clear of the being of sin in this life, only that they should, as often as they sin, be humbled for it, and confess it before God, who will forgive them, and cleanse them from all unrighteousness; but as for those who affirm they have no sin in them, or any done by them, they are self-deceivers, the truth of grace is not in them, nor the word of God, and they make him a liar, ver. 8, 9, 10.

Ver. 1. *That which was from the beginning, &c.*] By which is meant not the Gospel, as if the apostle's design was to assert the antiquity of that, and clear it from the charge of novelty; for though that is called the word, and the word of life, and is the spirit which gives life, and is the means of quickening dead sinners, and brings the report of eternal life and salvation by Christ, yet the seeing of it with bodily eyes, and handling it with corporeal hands, do not agree with that; but Jesus Christ is here intended, who in his divine nature *was*, really existed as a divine person, as the everlasting Jehovah, the eternal I AM, which is, and was, and is to come, and existed *from the beginning*; not from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel by John only, for he was before the Gospel was preached, being the first preacher of it himself, and before John was; yea, before the prophets, before Abraham, and before Adam, and before all creatures, from the beginning of time, and of the creation of the world, being the Maker of all things, even from everlasting; for otherwise he could not have been set up in

an office-capacity so early, or God's elect be chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and they have grace and blessings given them in him before the world began, or an everlasting covenant be made with him; see John i. 1. *which we have heard*; this, with what follows, proves him to be truly and really man; for when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, the apostles heard, and saw, and handled him; they not only heard a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the son of God, but they often heard him speak himself, both in private conversation with them, and in his public ministry; they heard his many excellent discourses on the mount, and elsewhere, and those that were particularly delivered to them a little before his death; and blessed were they on this account, Matt. xiii. 16, 17. *which we have seen with our eyes*; with the eyes of the body, with their own, and not another's; and they saw him in human nature, and the common actions of life he did, as eating, drinking, walking, &c. and his many miracles; they saw him raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, restore sight to the blind, cause the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, and the deaf to hear; and they saw him transfigured on the mount. John was one that was present at that time, and saw his glory, as he also was when he hung upon the cross, and saw him bleeding, gasping, and dying there; they saw him after his resurrection from the dead, he shewed himself to them alive, and was seen of them forty days; they saw him go up to heaven, and a cloud receiving him out of their sight: *which we have looked upon*; wistly and intently, once and again, and a thousand times, and with the utmost pleasure and delight; and knew him perfectly well, and were able to describe exactly his person, stature, features, and the lineaments of his body: *and our hands have handled of the Word of life*; as Peter did when Jesus caught him by the hand on the water, when he was just ready to sink; and as this apostle did, when he leaned on his bosom; and as Thomas did, even after his resurrection, when he thrust his hand into his side; and as all the apostles were called upon to see and handle him, that it was he himself, and not a spirit, which has not flesh and bones as he had. Now as this is said of Christ, *the Word of life*, who is so called, because he has life in himself, as God, as the Mediator, and as man, and is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, it must be understood as he, the Word, is made manifest in the flesh; for he, as the Word, or as a divine person, or as considered in his divine nature, is not to be seen nor handled: this therefore is spoken of the Word, or of the person of Christ, God-man, with respect to his human nature, as united to the Logos, or

⁴ Stromat. l. 2. p. 289.

Word of God; and so is a proof of the truth and reality of his human nature, by several of the senses.

Ver. 2. *For the life was manifested, &c.*] That is, the Word of life, who is life itself, the fountain of life, having it as God, in and of himself, without derivation from, and independent of another, originally and eternally, and who is the cause, author, and giver of life in every sense to others; this living God, who from all eternity was invisible, was in the fulness of time manifested in human nature; see John i. 14. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 John iii. 8. *And we have seen it*; as before with the eyes of their bodies: *and bear witness*; for they were both eye and ear witnesses of the Word, and of the truth of his incarnation, and bore a faithful record both to his proper deity, and real humanity: *and shew unto you that eternal life*; Jesus Christ, the true God, and eternal life, as in ch. v. 20. so called, because he has everlasting life in himself; as he is the living God, and because he has eternal life for all his people; not only the purpose and promise of it are in him, but the thing itself; and it is in his power and gift to bestow it on all the father hath given to him, and to them he does give it. The beginning of it lies in the knowledge of him, and the consummation of it will be in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him: *which was with the father*; that is, which life, eternal life, and Word of life, was from the beginning, or from all eternity with God the father; which phrase is expressive of the eternal existence of Christ, as the Word and Son of God, with his Father, his relation to him, his oneness in nature, and equality with him, and his personal distinction from him; see John i. 1. *and was manifested unto us*; in human nature, as before observed, and that to the apostles, as he was not to the patriarchs and prophets; for though they saw him in promise, in prophecy, in type, and figure, and he sometimes appeared in an human form for a short time to them, yet they did not see him incarnate, in actual union with human nature; nor had they him dwelling among them, and conversing with them, as the apostles had; this was an happiness peculiar to them.

Ver. 3. *That which we have seen and heard, &c.*] This is repeated, both to confirm and illustrate what had been before said, and to carry on the discourse to what follows: *declare we unto you*; in the ministry of the word; the person and offices of Christ being the sum and substance of the Gospel ministration, that declares him to be the true God and eternal life, God over all, blessed for ever; and truly man, made of a woman, and made under the law; and to be the only Mediator between God and man, to be prophet, priest, and King, and to be the alone Saviour and Redeemer: this declares the greatness and excellency of his salvation, what an able, proper, and suitable Saviour he is; and what precious promises and spiritual blessings are in him, even all grace and eternal glory. And this declaration of him is made in the Gospel, for the following ends and purposes, *that ye also may have fellowship with us*; in hearing, seeing, and handling of Christ in a spiritual sense; and by enjoying the same privileges in God's house and family, the same ordinances and spiritual provisions; joining and partaking with them in all the immunities and advantages of a Gospel church-state here; and by being with them to all eter-

nity hereafter. *And truly our fellowship is with the father*; the father of Christ, the covenant-God and father of his people; and which they have with him, when under the influence and witnessings of the spirit of adoption, and can in the strength of faith call him their father, draw nigh to him through Christ as such, and are indulged with his presence, and the discoveries of his love: *and with his son Jesus Christ*; being in union to him, they become partakers of him, and of his blessings; they receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace; they are admitted to an intimacy and familiarity with him; they are had into his chambers of secret retirement; they are brought into his banqueting-house, where his banner over them is love, and where he supps with them, and they with him; and into this fellowship are they called by the grace of God, through the Gospel; as also they have fellowship with the blessed Spirit, though not here mentioned; see 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Ver. 4. *And these things write we unto you, &c.*] Concerning the deity and eternity of Christ, the Word; and concerning the truth of his humanity, and the manifestation of him in the flesh; and concerning that eternal life and salvation which is declared in the Gospel to be in him; and concerning the saints' fellowship one with another, and with God the father, and with Jesus Christ: *that your joy may be full*; meaning either their spiritual joy in this life, which has Christ for its object, and is increased by the consideration of his proper deity, his incarnation and mediation; by a view of free justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his blood; by a sight of his glorious person by faith, and by intimate communion with him, and a discovery of his love, which passeth knowledge: and which joy, when it is large, and very great, may, in a comparative sense, be said to be full, though not absolutely so, and being as much as can well be enjoyed in this state; and nothing can more contribute to it than a declaration of the above things in the Gospel, and an experimental acquaintance with them, and enjoyment of them: or else it may intend the joy of the saints in the world to come, in the presence of Christ, where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; and so may express the ultimate glory and happiness of God's people, which is the chief end, as of his purposes, promises, and covenant, so of the Gospel, and the declaration of it. The Syriac version renders it, *that our joy, which is in you, may be full*; for it is the joy of the ministers of the word, when the saints are established in the faith of Christ's person and offices, and have communion with him, with which view they declare him, and bear record of him. Some copies read, *our joy*.

Ver. 5. *This then is the message, &c.*] Of God by his Son the Word, or from Christ by his apostles. The Syriac version renders it, *this is the Gospel*; which is good news from a far country, a message sent from the King of kings to sinful men: or *this is the annunciation*, or declaration; that is, the thing declared, or shewed. Some render it, *this is the promise*, that whereas God is light, such who walk in the light shall have communion with him, and others shall not: *which we have heard of him*; of Christ, who has declared him, that he is light without any mixture of darkness; that he

is a pure Spirit, and must be worshipped in a spiritual way; and that only spiritual worshippers are such as he seeks, and admits to communion with him. Moreover, they might hear and learn this of Christ, by his telling them that he himself was light, who is the image of the invisible God, insomuch, that he that has seen the Son, has seen the Father also. Wherefore, if the one is light, the other must be likewise; nor is there any coming to the Father, and enjoying communion with him, but through Christ; all which our Lord told his disciples. The Ethiopic version reads, *which ye have heard*, very wrongly; for the words regard the apostles, who made a faithful declaration of the message they heard, and had from Christ, which is as follows: *and declare unto you that God is light*: that is, God the Father, as distinguished from *him*, Christ, of whom they had heard this message, and from Jesus Christ *his Son*, ver. 7. what is declared of him, agreeably to the report of Christ, is, that he is *light*: that is, as light is opposed to the darkness of sin; he is pure and holy in his nature and works, and of such pure eyes as not to behold iniquity; and so perfectly holy, that angels cover their faces before him, when they speak of his holiness: and as light is opposed to the darkness of ignorance, he is wise and knowing; he knows himself, his own nature, being, and perfections, his Son and Spirit, and their distinct modes of subsisting; he sees clearly all things in himself, all things he could do, or has determined shall be done; he has perfect knowledge of all creatures and things, and the darkness and the light are alike unto him, nor can the former hide from him: he is knowable, and to be discerned; he is clothed with light, and dwells in it; he may be known by the works of creation and providence; even the invisible things of him, his eternal power and Godhead, may be clearly seen and understood by them, and especially in his word, and most clearly in his son; it is owing to the darkness of men, and not to any in and about God, who is light, that he is so little known as he is: and, like the light, he illuminates others; he is the father of lights, the author and giver of all light; of the light of reason to men in general; and of grace here, and glory hereafter, to his own people, which are both signified by light; in whose light they see light; and he refreshes and delights their souls with the light of his countenance now, and with his glorious presence in the other world: *and in him is no darkness at all*; no darkness of sin; nothing is more contrary to him, or more distant from him: nor any darkness of error and ignorance; what is unknown to men, as the times and seasons; what angels were ignorant of, and even Christ, as man, as the day and hour of Jerusalem's destruction, were known to the father; in him is no ignorance of any thing whatever; nor is there any variableness or shadow of turning in him, as there is in the luminous body of the sun; but God is always the same pure and holy, wise and knowing Being. It is usual with the Cabalistic Jews^e, to call the supreme Being אור, *light*; the most simple light, hidden light, and infinite light, with respect to his nature, glory, and majesty, and with regard also to his grace and mercy, justice and

judgment; though, as R. Sangari says^f, this is to be understood of him figuratively.

Ver. 6. *If we say that we have fellowship with him, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy reads, *for if we say*: that is, if any profess to be partakers of the divine nature, to be like unto God, and to have communion with him, to have the light of his countenance, and the discoveries of his love: *and walk in darkness*; in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, or are in a state of unregeneracy and blindness; whose understandings are darkened, and they know not God in Christ, nor have any true sight and sense of themselves, their sin and danger; and are ignorant of Christ and his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and are strangers to the spirit of God, and the work of his grace; and are unacquainted with the truths of the Gospel; and not only so, but go on in darkness more and more; prefer it to the light, love it, and the works of it; have fellowship with them, and choose them; take pleasure in the ways of sin and wickedness, and continue, and walk on in them; if such persons pretend to fellowship with God, they are liars: *we lie*; it cannot be, it is a contradiction, the thing is impossible and impracticable; what communion hath light with darkness? or what fellowship can the throne of iniquity, or those in whom sin reigns, have with God? for God is light, and were they partakers of him, or like unto him, or had communion with him, they would consequently be in the light, and not in darkness, and much less walk in it: wherefore they are liars, *and do not the truth*; they don't say the truth, nor act according to it; they don't act uprightly or sincerely, but are hypocrites, and pretend to that which they have not; and if they did the truth, they would come to the light, and not walk in darkness; see John iii. 21.

Ver. 7. *But if we walk in the light, &c.*] Are persons enlightened by the spirit of God, so as to have a true sight and sense of sin, to know Christ, and the way of salvation by him; and are children of the light, and are going on and increasing in spiritual light and knowledge; walk on in Christ, the light, by faith, and in the light and truth of the Gospel, and as becomes it, and as children of light; and as such who are called out of darkness into marvellous light: *as he is in the light*: according to the light which he has given, who is light itself, is in it, and dwells in it. This *as* denotes not equality, but likeness: when this is the case, then it is a clear point, that *we have fellowship one with another*; not with the saints, with the apostles, and other Christians, but with God: *we have mutual communion*, as the Arabic version renders it; God with us, and we with him. Some copies read, *with him*, as in ver. 6. and such a reading the sense requires; and agreeably to this the Ethiopic version renders it, *and we are partakers among ourselves with him*; that is, we all jointly and mutually appear to be like him, and partake of his nature, and have communion with him; and not only so, but with his son Jesus Christ, as appears from our having a share in the cleansing efficacy of his blood: *and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin*: there is a pol-

^e Lex. Cabalist. p. 63, 64.

^f Sepher Cosri, par. 2. sect. 2. fol. 61. 2.

lution on human nature, which is original, natural, universal, and internal, and is such that nothing can remove but the blood of Christ; not ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, nor moral duties, nor evangelical performances, or submission to Gospel ordinances, and particularly baptism, which is not the putting away the filth of the flesh; nor even the graces of the spirit, no, not faith, no otherwise than as it has to do with this blood; for this cleansing is not to be understood of sanctification, for that more properly belongs to the spirit of God, and besides, does not cleanse from all sin; for notwithstanding this, sin is in the saints: but either of the atonement of sin, by the sacrifice of Christ, and so of a complete justification from it by his blood, which is put for both his active and passive obedience, the one being finished in the other; or rather of the pardon of sin, procured by the blood of Christ, and the application of that blood to the conscience, which purges it from dead works, and which has a continued virtue in it for that purpose. Christ's blood, being applied by the spirit of God, has been always cleansing from sin; it had this virtue in it, and was of this use, even before it was actually shed, to the Old-Testament saints; whence Christ is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and it has the same efficacy now as when first shed, and will have to the end of the world; and being sprinkled upon the conscience, by the spirit of God, it takes away the sins of believers, and cleanses from them, as fast as the corruption of nature rises, or sins appear; and removes them out of their sight, and speaks peace to their souls; and which is owing, as to the dignity of Christ's person and the value of his sacrifice, so to his continual intercession, advocacy, and mediation; and which reaches to all sin, original and actual, secret and open sins; sins of heart, thought, lip, and life; sins of omission and commission, greater or lesser sins, committed against light and knowledge, grace and mercy, law and Gospel, all but the sin against the Holy Ghost; and in this Christ was the antitype of the scape-goat, of which the Jews say*, that "it atoned for all the transgressions of the law, whether small or great, sins of presumption, or of ignorance, known, or not known, which were against an affirmative or negative command, which deserved cutting off (by the hand of God), or death by the sanhedrim." The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, *from all our sins*; and this must be ascribed to the greatness of his person, as the son of God; wherefore the emphasis lies on these words, *his son*: the son of God, who is equal with God, and is truly and properly God: as it must be the blood of man that must, according to the law, be shed, to atone for and expiate sin, and cleanse from it, and that of an innocent man, who is holy, harmless, and without sin; so it must not be the blood of a mere man, though ever so holy, but the blood of one that is God as well as man; see Acts xx. 28. The divine nature of the son of God, being in union with the human nature, put virtue into his blood to produce such an effect, which still continues, and will, as long as there is any occasion for it.

Ver. 8. *If we say that we have no sin, &c.*] Notwithstanding believers are cleansed from their sins by the blood of Christ, yet they are not without sin; no man is without sin: this is not only true of all men, as they come into the world, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and of all that are in a state of unregeneracy, and of God's elect, while in such a state, but even of all regenerated and sanctified persons in this life; as appears by the ingenuous confessions of sin made by the saints in all ages; by their complaints concerning it, and groans under it; by the continual war in them between flesh and spirit; and by their prayers for the discoveries of pardoning grace, and for the fresh application of Christ's blood for cleansing; by their remissness in the discharge of duty, and by their frequent slips and falls, and often backslidings: and though their sins are all pardoned, and they are justified from all things by the righteousness of Christ, yet they are not without sin; though they are freed from the guilt of sin, and are under no obligation to punishment on account of it, yet not from the being of it; their sins were indeed transferred from them to Christ, and he has bore them, and took them and put them away, and they are redeemed from them, and are acquitted, discharged, and pardoned, so that sin is not imputed to them, and God sees no iniquity in them in the article of justification; and also, their iniquities are caused to pass from them, as to the guilt of them, and are taken out of their sight, and they have no more conscience of them, having their hearts sprinkled and purged by the blood of Jesus, and are clear of all condemnation, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, or the second death, by reason of them; yet pardon of sin, and justification from it, though they take away the guilt of sin, and free from obligation to punishment, yet they don't take out the being of sin, or cause it to cease to act, or don't make sins cease to be sins, or change the nature of actions, of sinful ones, to make them harmless, innocent, or indifferent; the sins of believers are equally sins with other persons', are of the same kind and nature, and equally transgressions of the law, and many of them are attended with more aggravating circumstances, and are taken notice of by God, and resented by him, and for which he chastises his people in love: now though a believer may say that he has not this or that particular sin, or is not guilty of this or that sin, for he has the seeds of all sin in him, yet he cannot say he has no sin; and though he may truly say he shall have no sin, for in the other state the being and principle of sin will be removed, and the saints will be perfectly holy in themselves, yet he cannot, in this present life, say that he is without it: if any of us who profess to be cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ should affirm this, *we deceive ourselves*; such persons must be ignorant of themselves, and put a cheat upon themselves, thinking themselves to be something when they are nothing; flattering themselves what pure and holy creatures they are, when there is a fountain of sin and wickedness in them; these are self-deceptions, sad delusions, and gross impositions upon themselves: *and the truth is not in us*; it is a plain case the truth of grace is not

* Mian Shebuot, c. 1. sect. 6.

in such persons, for if there was a real work of God upon their souls, they would know and discern the plague of their own hearts, the impurity of their nature, and the imperfection of their obedience; nor is the word of truth in them, for if that had an entrance into them, and worked effectually in them, they would in the light of it discover much sin and iniquity in them; and indeed there is no principle of truth, no veracity in them; there is no sincerity nor ingenuity in them; they don't speak honestly and uprightly, but contrary to the dictates of their own conscience.

Ver. 9. *If we confess our sins, &c.*] Not to one another; for though it is our duty to confess our faults to our fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians which are committed against them, yet are under no obligation to confess such as are more immediately against God, and which lie between him and ourselves; or at least it is sufficient to confess and acknowledge in general what sinful creatures we are, without entering into particulars; for confession of sin is to be made to God, against whom it is committed, and who only can pardon: and a man that truly confesses his sin is one that the spirit of God has convinced of it, and has shewn him its exceeding sinfulness, and filled him with a godly sorrow for it, and given him repentance unto salvation, that needeth not to be repented of; and who, under such a sight and sense of sin, and concern for it, comes and acknowledges it before the Lord, humbly imploring, for Christ's sake, his pardoning grace and mercy; and such obtain it: *he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins*; forgiveness of sin here intends not the act of forgiveness, as in God, proceeding upon the bloodshed and sacrifice of Christ, which is done at once, and includes all sin, past, present, and to come; but an application of pardoning grace to a poor sensible sinner, humbled under a sense of sin, and confessing it before the Lord; and confession of sin is not the cause or condition of pardon, nor of the manifestation of it, but is descriptive of the person, and points him out, to whom God will and does make known his forgiving love; for to whomsoever he grants repentance, he gives the remission of sin; in doing of which he is *faithful* to his word of promise; such as in Prov. xxviii. 13. Isa. lv. 7. *and just*; in being *true*, as the Arabic version adds, to his word; and shewing a proper regard to the blood and sacrifice of his son; for his blood being shed, and hereby satisfaction made to the law and justice of God, it is a righteous thing in him to justify from sin, and forgive the sinner for whom Christ has shed his blood, and not impute it to him, or punish him for it; though

the word here used may answer to the Hebrew word צַדִּיק, which sometimes carries in it the notion and idea of mercy and beneficence; hence mercy to the poor is sometimes expressed by righteousness; and the righteous acts of God intend his mercies and benefits unto men; see Dan. iv. 27. 1 Sam. xii. 7. and so forgiveness of sin springs from the tender mercies of our God, and is both an act of justice and of mercy; of justice, with respect to the blood of Christ, and of pure grace and mercy to the pardoned sinner: the following clause, *and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, is but the same thing expressed in different words; for all unrighteousness is sin, and to cleanse from sin is to remove the guilt of it, by an application of the blood of Christ for pardon. The antecedent to the relative *he* in the text, is either God, who is light, and with whom the saints have fellowship; or his son Jesus Christ, who is the nearest antecedent, and who, being truly God, has a power to forgive sin.

Ver. 10. *If we say that we have not sinned, &c.*] Have never sinned, in time past as well as now; deny original sin, and that men are born in sin, but affirm they come into the world pure and holy; and assert that concupiscence is not sin; and so not regarding internal lusts and desires as sinful, only what is external, fancy they have so lived as to have been without sin: but if any of us give out such an assertion, *we make him a liar*; that is, God, who in his word declares that the wicked are estranged from the womb, and go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; that his own people are transgressors from the womb; that all have sinned and come short of his glory; and that there is none that does good, no, not one, but all are under sin, under the power and guilt of it, and become filthy by it, and so obnoxious to the wrath of God: *and his word is not in us*; either Christ the Word of God, or rather the word of God which declares these things; no regard is had unto it; it is *not with us*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it; it is not used and attended to as the rule and standard of truth, but is cast away and despised; at least it has no place in the hearts of such, nor does it work effectually; for, was this the case, they would have other notions of themselves than that of sinless creatures. The apostle has regard either to the Gnostics, a set of heretics of this age, who fancied themselves pure, spiritual, and perfect, even in the midst of all their impurities, and notwithstanding their vicious lives; or to judaizing Christians, and it may be to the Jews themselves, who entertained such sort of notions as these of being perfect and without sin^b.

C H A P. II.

IN this chapter the apostle comforts the saints under a sense of sin; urges them to an observance of the commandments of God, in imitation of Christ, particularly to the new commandment of brotherly love, and gives his reasons for it; dehorts them from the love of

the world, and the things of it; cautions them against false teachers and antichrists, and exhorts them to abide in Christ, and persevere in the faith of him. He first declares that the end of his writing was to prevent their sinning; but supposing any should fall into sin

^b Vid. T. Bab. Temara, fol. 15. 2. & Bava Kama, fol. 80. 1. T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 24. 1. & Chagiga, fol. 77. 4.

through infirmity, he comforts them with the consideration of the advocacy of Christ, and of his being the propitiation for the sins both of Jews and Gentiles, ver. 1, 2. and whereas some persons might boast of their knowledge of Christ, and neglect his commands, he observes, that the keeping of them is the best evidence of true knowledge, and of the sincerity of their love to God, and of their being in Christ; and that such who shew no regard to them are liars, and the truth is not in them; and such that profess to be in Christ and abide in him, ought to walk as they have him for an example, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. and instances in a particular commandment, to love one another, which on different accounts is called an old and a new commandment, and which has been verified both in Christ and his people; for which a reason is given in the latter, the darkness being past, and the true light shining, ver. 7, 8. upon which some propositions are founded, as that he that professes to be in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness to this very moment; and that he that loves his brother is evidently in the light, nor will he easily give or take offence; and that he that hates his brother is not only in darkness, but walks in it, being blinded by it, and so knows not whither he is going, ver. 9, 10, 11. and this commandment of love the apostle writes to the saints, as distinguished into the several classes of fathers, young men, and children; and urges it on them from the consideration of the blessings of grace peculiar to them; as ancient knowledge to fathers, strength and victory to young men, knowledge of the father, and remission of sins, to children, ver. 12, 13, 14. and then he dissuades from the love of worldly things, seeing the love of them is not consistent with the love of God; and seeing the things that are in it are vain and sinful, and are not of God, but of the world; and since the world and its lust pass away, when he that does the will of God abides for ever, ver. 15, 16, 17. he next observes unto them, that there were many antichrists in the world; which was an evidence of its being the last time; and these he describes as schismatics and apostates from the Christian churches, ver. 18, 19. but as for the saints he writes to, they were of another character, they were truly Christians, having an anointing from the holy One, by which they knew all things; nor did the apostle write to them as ignorant, but as knowing persons, and able to distinguish between truth and error, ver. 20, 21. and then he goes on with his description of antichristian liars, shewing that they were such who denied Jesus to be the Messiah, and the relation that is between the Father and the Son, ver. 22, 23. and closes the chapter with an exhortation to perseverance in the doctrine of Christ; since it was what they had heard from the beginning, and since by so doing they would continue in the Father and in the Son, and besides had the promise of eternal life, ver. 24, 25. and indeed this was the main thing in view in writing to them concerning seducers, to preserve them from them, though indeed this was in a great measure needless, since the anointing they had received abode in them; and taught them all things, and according as they regarded its teaching they would abide in Christ, ver. 26, 27. to which he exhorts them from the consideration of that boldness and confidence it would give

them at his appearance, who they must know is righteous, and so that every one that doth righteousness is born of him, ver. 28, 29.

Ver. 1. *My little children, &c.*] The apostle may address the saints under this character, on account of their regeneration by the spirit and grace of God, in which they were as new-born babes; and on account of his being the instrument of their conversion, and so was their spiritual father, and therefore calls them his own children; and he might the rather use such a way of speaking, because of his advanced age, being now in his old age, and John the elder in age as well as in office; as well as to shew his paternal affection for them, and care of them, and that what he had wrote, or should write, was not from any disrespect, but from pure love to them; and it might serve to put them in mind of their weakness in faith, in knowledge, and spiritual strength, that they might not entertain high notions of themselves, as if they were perfect and without infirmities; and it is easy to observe, that this is one of Christ's expressions, John xiii. 33. from whose lips the apostle took it, whose words and phrases he greatly delighted in, as he seems to do in this, by his frequent use of it; see ver. 18, 28. and iii. 7, 18. and iv. 4. and v. 21. *These things write I unto you*; concerning the purity and holiness of God, who is light itself; concerning fellowship with him, which no one that lives in sin can have; concerning pardon and cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, and concerning sin being in them, and they not without it. The Ethiopic version reads, *we write*, as in ch. i. 4. *that ye sin not*; not that he thought they could be entirely without it, either without the being of it, or the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed, for this would be to suppose that which is contrary to his own words, in ch. i. 8, 10. but he suggests that the end of his writing on these subjects was, that they might not live in sin, and indulge themselves in a vicious course of living, give up themselves to it, and walk in it, and work it with all greediness: and nothing could be more suitably adapted to such an end than the consideration of the holiness of God, who calls by his grace; and of the necessity of light and grace and holiness in men to communion with him; and of the pardoning grace of God and cleansing blood of Christ, which, when savingly applied, sets men against sin, and makes them zealous of good works; and of the in-dwelling of sin in the saints, which puts them upon their guard against it: *and if any man sin*; as every man does, even every one that is in the light, and walks in it, and has fellowship with God; every one that believes in Christ, and is justified through his righteousness, and pardoned by his blood; every one of the little children; for the apostle is not speaking of mankind in general who sin, for Christ is not an advocate for all that sin, but of these in particular; hence the Arabic version renders it, *if any of you sin*; and this, with the following, he says not to encourage in sin, but to comfort under a sense of it: *we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous*; Christ is an advocate, not for just or righteous persons, for as he came not to call these to repentance, nor to die for them, so such have no need of an advocate, nor is he one for them; but as he came to call sinners, and to save them, and died for

them, the just for the unjust, so he is an advocate, and makes intercession for transgressors; and not for all men, though they have all sinned; not for the world, or those so called in distinction from the persons given him by his father, for these he prays not; but for all the elect, and whatsoever charges are brought against them he answers to them, and for them; and for all that believe in him, be they weak or strong, even for the apostles as well as others; for they were not without sin, were men of like passions as others, and carried about with them a body of sin, and had their daily infirmities, and so needed an advocate as others; and hence John says, *we have an advocate*, &c. but then Christ is not an advocate for sin, though for sinners; he does not vindicate the commission of sin, or plead for the performance of it; he is no patron of iniquity; nor does he deny that his clients have sinned, or affirm that their actions are not sins; he allows in court all their sins, with all their aggravated circumstances; nor does he go about to excuse or extenuate them; but he is an advocate for the non-imputation of them, and for the application of pardon to them: he pleads in their favour, that these sins have been laid upon him, and he has bore them; that his blood has been shed for the remission of them, and that he has made full satisfaction for them; and therefore in justice they ought not to be laid to their charge; but that the forgiveness of them should be applied unto them, for the relief and comfort of their burdened and distressed consciences: and for this he is an advocate for his poor sinning people *with the father*; who being the first Person, and the Son the advocate, and the Spirit sustaining a like character, is only mentioned; and he being God against whom sin is committed, and to whom the satisfaction is made; and the rather, as he is the father of Christ, and of those for whom he is an advocate; seeing it may be concluded that his pleadings will be with success, since he is not only related to him, and has an interest in him himself, but the persons also, whose patron he is, are related to him, and have a share in his paternal affection and care: moreover, this phrase, as it expresses the distinct personality of Christ from the father, so his being with him in heaven at his right hand, and nearness to him; where he discharges this office of his, partly by appearing in person for his people in the presence of God; and partly by carrying in and presenting their confessions of sin, and their prayers for the fresh discoveries and applications of pardoning grace, which he offers up to his father with the sweet incense of his mediation; and chiefly by pleading the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which are carried within the vail, and are always in sight, and call aloud for peace and pardon; as also by answering and removing the charges and accusations of the court-adversary, the accuser of the brethren, the devil; as well as by the declarations of his will, demanding in point of justice, in consideration of his sufferings and death, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon his people, as pardon, righteousness, grace, and supplies of grace, and at last

glory; and by applying these benefits to their souls as a *comforter*; which the word here used also signifies, and is so rendered, John xiv. 16, 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7. and by the Arabic version here. Now the saints have but one advocate, and that is enough for them; the apostle does not say we have advocates, but *an advocate*; not angels, nor saints departed, but Jesus Christ only, who is the one Mediator between God and man: and he is a continual one, he ever lives to make intercession; his blood is always speaking, and he is always pleading; and therefore 'tis said *we have*, not we have had, or we shall have an advocate: and he is a prevalent one, he is always heard, he thoroughly pleads the cause he undertakes, and ever carries it; which is owing to the dignity of his person, his interest with his father, and the virtue and value of his sacrifice: and he is every way fit for such a work, for he is *righteous*: not only in his natures, both divine and human, but in his office, as Mediator, which he faithfully and righteously performs; he is a very proper person to plead for guilty persons, which he could not do if he himself was guilty; but he is so holy and righteous that nothing can be objected to him by God; and it need not be doubted by men that he will act the faithful part to them, and righteously serve them and their cause; and it is moreover his righteousness which he has wrought out, and is imputed to them, that carries the cause for them; and therefore this character of Christ is fitly added, as is also the following. The Jews¹ have adopted the word in the text into their language, but have applied it to a different purpose, to aims—deeds, repentance, and good works. Much more agreeably Philo the Jew^k speaks of the son of perfect virtue, *παρακλητος*, as an *advocate* for the forgiveness of sins, and for a supply of everlasting good things.

Ver. 2. *And he is the propitiation for our sins, &c.*] For the sins of us who now believe, and are Jews: *and not for ours only*; but for the sins of Old-Testament saints, and of those who shall hereafter believe in Christ, and of the Gentiles also, signified in the next clause: *but also for the sins of the whole world*; the Syriac version renders it, *not for us only, but also for the whole world*; that is, not for the Jews only, for John was a Jew, and so were those he wrote unto, but for the Gentiles also. Nothing is more common in Jewish writings than to call the Gentiles *עלמא*, *the world*; and *כל העולם*, *the whole world*; and *אומות העולם*, *the nations of the world*¹; see the note on John xii. 19. and the word *world* is so used in Scripture; see John iii. 16. and iv. 42. Rom. xi. 12, 15. and stands opposed to a notion the Jews have of the Gentiles, that *אין להן כפרה*, *there is no propitiation for them*^m: and it is easy to observe, that when this phrase is not used of the Gentiles, it is to be understood in a limited and restrained sense; as when they sayⁿ, “it happened to a certain high-priest, that when he went out of the sanctuary, כרלי עלמא, *כרלי עלמא*, *the whole world* went after him;” which could only design the people in the temple. And elsewhere^o it is said, “כרלי עלמא, *כרלי עלמא*, *the whole world* has left the Misna, and gone after the

¹ Pirke Aboth, c. 4. sect. 11. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 1. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1.

^k De Vita Mosis, l. iii. p. 673.

^l Jarchi in Isa. liii. 5.

^m T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 57. 3. vid. T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 2.

ⁿ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2.

^o T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 33. 2.

"Gemara;" which at most can only intend the Jews; and indeed only a majority of their doctors, who were conversant with these writings: and in another place, "כולי עלמא, *the whole world* fell on their faces, but "Raf did not fall on his face:" where it means no more than the congregation. Once more, it is said, when "R. Simeon ben Gamaliel entered (the syna-
"gogue), כולי עלמא, *the whole world* stood up before him;" that is, the people in the synagogue: to which may be added, "when a great man makes a mourning, כולי עלמא, *the whole world* come to honour him;" i. e. a great number of persons attend the funeral pomp: and so these phrases, כולי עלמא לא פליגי, *the whole world* is not divided, or does not dissent; כולי עלמא סברי, *the whole world* are of opinion, are frequently met with in the Talmud, by which an agreement among the Rabbins, in certain points, is designed; yea, sometimes the phrase, *all the men of the world*, only intend the inhabitants of a city where a synagogue was, and, at most, only the Jews: and so this phrase, *all the world, or the whole world*, in Scripture, unless when it signifies the whole universe, or the habitable earth, is always used in a limited sense, either for the Roman empire, or the churches of Christ in the world, or believers, or the present inhabitants of the world, or a part of them only, Luke ii. 1. Rom. i. 8. and iii. 19. Col. i. 6. Rev. iii. 10. xii. 9. and xiii. 3. and so it is in this epistle, ch. v. 19. where the whole world lying in wickedness is manifestly distinguished from the saints, who are of God, and belong not to the world; and therefore cannot be understood of all the individuals in the world; and the like distinction is in this text itself, for *the sins of the whole world* are opposed to *our sins*, the sins of the apostle and others to whom he joins himself; who therefore belonged not to, nor were a part of the whole world, for whose sins Christ is a propitiation as for theirs: so that this passage cannot furnish out any argument for universal redemption; for besides these things, it may be further observed, that for whose sins Christ is a propitiation, their sins are atoned for and pardoned, and their persons justified from all sin, and so shall certainly be glorified, which is not true of the whole world, and every man and woman in it; moreover, Christ is a propitiation through faith in his blood, the benefit of his propitiatory sacrifice is only received and enjoyed through faith; so that in the event it appears that Christ is a propitiation only for believers, a character which does not agree with all mankind; add to this, that for whom Christ is a propitiation he is also an advocate, ver. 1. but he is not an advocate for every individual person in the world; yea, there is a world he will not pray for, and consequently is not a propitiation for them. Once more, the design of the apostle in these words is to comfort his *little children* with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who might fall into sin through weakness and inadvertency;

but what comfort would it yield to a distressed mind, to be told that Christ was a propitiation not only for the sins of the apostles and other saints, but for the sins of every individual in the world, even of those that are in hell? Would it not be natural for persons in such circumstances to argue rather against, than for themselves, and conclude that seeing persons might be damned notwithstanding the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that this might, and would be their case. In what sense Christ is a propitiation, see the note on Rom. iii. 25. The Jews have no notion of the Messiah as a propitiation or atonement; sometimes they say^w repentance atones for all sin; sometimes the death of the righteous^x; sometimes incense^y; sometimes the priests' garments^z; sometimes it is the day of atonement^a; and indeed they are in the utmost puzzle about atonement; and they even confess in their prayers^b, that they have now neither altar nor priest to atone for them; see the note on ch. iv. 10.

Ver. 3. *And hereby we do know that we know him, &c.*] Either the Father, with whom Christ is an advocate; not as the God of nature, and by the light of it, nor as the lawgiver and Judge of the whole earth, and by the law of Moses; but as the God of all grace, as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, as the father of Christ, and as in him by the Gospel; and this not in a mere notional and speculative way, but with love and affection; not with fear and trembling, as devils know him, nor in theory, as formal professors and hypocrites, but with a knowledge, joined with hearty love of him, and cheerful obedience to him: or else Christ, the advocate and propitiation for sin; and him also, not with a mere notional knowledge of his person and offices, which carnal men and devils themselves have of him, but with that which is spiritual, special, and saving, being from the spirit and grace of God; and regards Christ as a Saviour, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and an advocate with God the father; and by which he is approved as such, to the rejection of all other saviours, sacrifices, and advocates; and is trusted, confided, and believed in as such, and affectionately loved, and that above all others, in sincerity and truth; and is readily obeyed in his word and ordinances; for where there is true knowledge of Christ, there is faith in him; and where there is faith in him, there is love to him, for faith works by love; and where there is love to him, there will be an observance of his commands; and this is here made the evidence of the true knowledge of him: for it follows, *if we keep his commandments*; not the commandments of men, for the keeping of them arises from ignorance of God, and is a proof of it; nor the commandments of the ceremonial law, which are abolished, particularly circumcision, which is opposed to the keeping of the commandments of God, 1 Cor. vii. 19. but either those of the moral law, and which are more particularly the commandments of God the father; the

^w T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 22. 2.

^x T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 13. 2.

^y Piske Toseph. Megilla, art. 104.

^z T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 90. 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 47. 2. & 49. 1. & 65. 2. & Gittin, fol. 8. 1. & 60. 2.

^a T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 48. 1.

^b Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 16.

^w Zohar in Lev. fol. 29. 1.

^x Ib. fol. 24. 1. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 2.

^y T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 88. 2. & Erachin, fol. 16. 1.

^z T. Bab. Zebachim, ib. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 44. 2.

^a T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1. & T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 45. 2. 3.

^b Seder Tephillot, fol. 41. 1. Ed. Amsterd.

observance of which, though it can't be with perfection, yet being in faith, and from love to God, and with a view to his glory, is an evidence of the true knowledge of him and of his will: or else those commandments, which are more especially the commandments of Christ Jesus; such as the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, which are peculiar to the Gospel dispensation; and which being kept as they were delivered by Christ, and in his name and strength, and to his glory, without depending on them for life and salvation, is an argument and proof of the right knowledge of him; and particularly his new commandment of loving one another may be chiefly designed, that being what the apostle has greatly in view throughout this epistle; now let it be observed, that keeping of the commands of God, or Christ, is not the knowledge of either of them itself, for much may be done in an external way, yet neither God nor Christ be spiritually and savingly known; nor is it the cause of such knowledge, for that is owing to the spirit and grace of God; but is an effect or consequence of spiritual knowledge, and so an evidence of it; hereby is not the knowledge itself, but the knowledge of that knowledge, that is, that it is true and genuine.

Ver. 4. *He that saith I know him, &c.*] God or Christ, as the Gnostics did, who pretended to great, even perfect, knowledge of divine things: *and keepeth not his commandments*; which the above persons had no regard to, and as many who profess great light and knowledge in our days shew no concern for: *is a liar*; he contradicts what he says, and gives the lie to it; for though in words he professes to know God, in works he denies him, and which betrays his ignorance of him: *and the truth is not in him*; there is no true knowledge of God and Christ in him; nor is the truth of the Gospel in his heart, however it may be in his head; nor is the truth of grace in him, for each of these lead persons to obedience. The Ethiopic version renders it, *the truth of God is not with him*; see the note on ch. i. 8.

Ver. 5. *But whoso keepeth his word, &c.*] Either the word of the Gospel, and the truths of it, who receives it in love, cordially embraces and retains it, and will by no means part with it, but holds it fast, and stands fast in it; or the precepts and ordinances of the word, who loves these, and esteems them above fine gold, and concerning all things to be right, and observes them as they should be: *in him verily is the love of God perfected*; not the love wherewith God loves him, for that is perfect in himself, and admits of no degrees, and cannot be more or less in his heart, and is entirely independent of the obedience of men, or any works of theirs; it is true indeed the manifestations of this love to the saints are imperfect, and may be more and greater, and greater manifestations of love are promised to such that love Christ, and keep his commandments, John xiv. 21, 23. but here it is to be understood not actively, but passively, of the love wherewith God is loved by his people; and intends not the absolute perfection of it in them, in whom it often waxes cold, and is left, or the fervour of it abated, but the sincerity and reality of it; for by keeping the word of God, both his truths and his ordinances, it is clearly seen that their love to him is with-

out dissimulation, and is not in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: now it is not the keeping of the word of God that causes this love, or makes it perfect or sincere, for it is a fruit of the spirit, and is owing to the grace of God; but love, on the other hand, is the cause of keeping of the word; and the latter being a consequent and an effect of the former, is the evidence of it, of the truth and sincerity of it: *hereby know we that we are in him*; in Christ, not merely nominally, or by profession, as all that name the name of Christ, and are in a Gospel church-state, may be said to be; but really, first secretly, through the love of Christ, the election of God, and the covenant of grace, and then openly, in conversion and effectual vocation, through believing in Christ, when the saints appear to be in him as branches in the vine; and which is known by their fruits, as here, by keeping the word, and doing the commandments of Christ, which do not put a man into Christ, but only shew that he is there; for a man's being in Christ is owing to the grace of God; this is the first thing done in grace, 1 Cor. i. 30.

Ver. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, &c.*] As all do that are in him; once in Christ, and always in Christ; they are set as a seal on his arm and heart, which can never be removed; they are in his arms, and can never be plucked from thence; and are members of him, and can never be disunited from him: *or dwelleth in him*, as in John vi. 56. that is, by faith; who under a sense of sin and danger have fled to Christ, as to a strong tower and place of defence, where they dwell safely, peaceably, pleasantly, and comfortably, enjoying whatever is necessary for them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *he that saith I am in him*; loved by him, chosen in him, united to him, a member of his, and have communion with him: *ought himself also to walk even as he walked*; as Christ walked, lived, and acted, so ought he; that is, to imitate him and follow him, as he has him for an example; not in his miraculous works in raising the dead, healing the sick, and walking upon the waters, &c. which were wrought as proofs of his deity and of his Messiahship, and not intended for imitation; nor in his mediatorial performances, as in his propitiatory sacrifice and advocacy; but in the exercise of grace, and duties of religion as a man, and in a private way; and may chiefly regard walking in love, as he walked, see Eph. v. 2. and is what is in the following verses insisted on, namely, the new commandment of love to the brethren; which should be to all as his was, and, like his, constant and lasting; and, when the case requires, should be shewn by laying down life for them. The *as* is not a note of equality, but of likeness; for it cannot be thought that saints should walk in that degree of perfection, in humility, patience, love, and in the exercise of every other grace, and in the discharge of duty, as Christ did; only that they should copy after him, and make his obedience and life the rule of theirs.

Ver. 7. *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, &c.*] Some understand this of faith, which this apostle calls a commandment, ch. iii. 23. but it rather intends the commandment of love, especially to the brethren, of which the apostle says the same things as here in his second epistle, ver. 5, 6. and this sense

agrees both with what goes before and follows after, and is a considerable branch of the commandments of Christ to be kept, and of walking as he walked; and the word *brethren*, prefixed to this account, may direct to, and strengthen this sense, though the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, *beloved*; and so the Alexandrian copy, and others: and this commandment is said to be not a new one, *but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning*; it being in its original a part of the eternal law of truth, founded upon the unalterable nature and eternal will of God, who is love itself, and requires it in all his creatures; being what was written on Adam's heart in a state of innocence, and a branch of the divine image instamped upon him; and is what was delivered in the law of Moses, for love to God and men is the sum and substance of that; and was taught by Christ and his apostles from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation; and was what these saints had been acquainted with, and influentially instructed in from their first conversion, being taught of God in regeneration to love one another; so that this was no novel doctrine, no upstart notion, no new law, but of the greatest and most venerable antiquity, and therefore to be regarded in the most respectful manner. *The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning*; or this ancient law of love is contained in, and enforced by that word or doctrine which was delivered from the beginning of time; and which these saints had heard of, concerning the seed of the woman's bruising the serpent's head, which includes the work of redemption and salvation by Christ, atonement by his sacrifice, forgiveness of sin through his blood, and justification by his righteousness, than which nothing can more powerfully engage to love God, and Christ, and one another; and which is also strongly encouraged by the word of God and Gospel of Christ, which they had heard, and had a spiritual and saving knowledge of, from the time they were effectually called by the grace of God: the phrase, *from the beginning*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and others, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; it is omitted in both clauses of the text in the latter.

Ver. 8. *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, &c.*] Which is the same with the former, considered in different respects. The command of brotherly love is a new one; that is, it is an excellent one, as a new name is an excellent name, and a new song is an excellent one; it is renewed by Christ under the Gospel dispensation; it is newly explained by him, and purged from the false glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees; see Matt. v. 43, 44. and enforced by him with a new argument, and by a new example of his own, even his own love to his people; and which is observed by them in a new manner, they being made new creatures; and this law being anew written in their hearts, under the renewing work of the spirit of God, as a branch of the new covenant of grace; see John xiii. 34. The Jews^c expect *חֲרִישׁת חַיִּים*, a new law to be given them by the hands of the Messiah; and a new one he has given, even the new commandment of love, and which

is the fulfilling of the law. *Which thing is true in him, and in you.* The Alexandrian copy reads, *in us*; the sense is either, it is true *in itself*, as the phrase will bear to be rendered, and it is verified in you, or in us, to be a new commandment; or it is true in Christ, it is yea and amen in him; it has its full completion in him, who is the fulfilling end of the law, as well as it has been faithfully delivered, truly explained, and warmly and affectionately recommended and urged by him; and he is the great pattern and exemplar of it: and the love which this new commandment requires is really and truly in the saints, implanted in them in regeneration, is a fruit of the spirit, and which faith works by, and will always continue in them; and should be in its actings like Christ's, true, sincere, cordial, affectionate, constant, and universal: and some think the word *is*, or *is*, or *let it be*, is wanting in the last clause, and may be read, *which thing is true in him, and is*, or *let it be in you*; that is, as love to the brethren is true and sincere in Christ, so it is, or should be in you; it should be without dissimulation, and so it was, as the reason following shews: *because the darkness is past, or is passing*; meaning either the darkness of the ceremonial law, which lay in dark types and shadows, and in cloudy sacrifices, and mystical representations of things, and was a shadow of good things to come; and its shadows were now fleeing away apace, in fact as well as in right; and so the Alexandrian copy reads, *because the shadow is passing away*; the night of Jewish darkness was far spent, and the Gospel day was not only broke, but it was, or near noon-day, which brought the light of faith, and the heat of love with it: or else the darkness of sin and ignorance, of a state of nature, and of the kingdom of Satan, in which the people of God are before conversion; which then passes away gradually, by little and little, for it is not removed at once, or wholly gone; for though the saints are at once removed out of a state of darkness, and from the kingdom of darkness, and the power of it, yet they are not wholly free from the darkness of sin and ignorance, they still see but through a glass darkly: and the words are better rendered, *the darkness passes, or is passing away*, and not *is past, or has passed away*; for as yet it is not entirely gone: *and the true light now shineth*; either the Gospel, which is a light, and a true and substantial one, in distinction from the dim light of nature, or the shadowy law of Moses; and which now, under the present dispensation, shines out in a most glorious manner, as the sun in its full strength; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *the light of truth*; the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation: or Jesus Christ, who is so called, John i. 9. in distinction from typical lights, as the *Urim* on the high-priest's breastplate, the candlestick in the tabernacle and temple, and the pillar of fire by night, which guided the Israelites through the wilderness; and in opposition to all false lights, to the Scribes and Pharisees, to false Christs and false prophets, which are so many *ignes fatui*; but Christ is the sun of righteousness that is risen in our horizon, and the true light which shines out in a most illustrious manner: or the light of grace

^c Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 461.

is here intended, that light which the spirit of God illuminates with in conversion; in which a man sees sin in its true colours, and has a spiritual and saving sight of Christ, of pardon, peace, life, righteousness, and salvation by him; which is no other than the light of faith, by which an enlightened person sees the son, looks to him, and has an evidence of the unseen glories of another world. Now this is a true light, things are seen by the believer in a right light, both his own sins, and the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; this is a shining one, which cannot but be observed by himself, and shines more and more to the perfect day; and it now shines as it did not before, in a state of nature, and continues to shine, and ever will: this light will never be put out, and is the cause of brotherly love, being truly in the saints, and of the continuance of it; before this light shines, men live in malice, but when it comes and shines, as they walk in light, they walk in love.

Ver. 9. *He that saith he is in the light, &c.*] Is in Christ the light, or has the true knowledge of the light of the Gospel, or is illuminated by the spirit of God; for persons may profess to be enlightened ones, and not be so: wherefore the apostle does not say, he that is in the light, but he that says he is, *and hateth his brother*: who is so either by creation, as all men are brethren, having one father, that has made them, and brought them up; or by regeneration, being born of God the father, and in the same family and household of faith; and so regards such who are in a spiritual relation, whom to hate internally, or not to love, is inconsistent with being in the light, or having faith, which is always naturally and necessarily accompanied with the heat of love; for as light and heat, so faith and love go together: wherefore, let a man's profession of light be what it will, if love to his brother is wanting, he *is in darkness even until now*: he is in a state of nature and unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness and ignorance; he is under the power of darkness, and in the kingdom of Satan, who is the ruler of the darkness of this world; he ever was so from his birth; he never was called nor delivered out of it, but is still in it to this moment, and so remains. This seems to be very much levelled against the Jews, who make hatred of the brother in some cases lawful: for they say^a, "if one man observes sin in another, and reproveth him for it, and he does not receive his reproof, כותר לשנאתו, *it is lawful to hate him*;" see the note on Matt. v. 43.

Ver. 10. *He that loveth his brother, &c.*] As such, and because he is his brother in Christ, and that cordially and sincerely, without hypocrisy and dissimulation, and by love serves him, both in things temporal and spiritual, and so observes the new, and yet old commandment, *abideth in the light*: it is a plain case, that such a man is in the light of grace, and continues in it; for though it is not his love to the brethren which is the cause of his light, of his being and continuing in it, for that is owing to the spirit of light and knowledge, but on the contrary, light is the cause of his love; yet it is an evidence of it, that by which it is known, as the cause is known by the effect; see

1 John iii. 14. *and there is none occasion of stumbling in him, or there is no scandal or offence in him*; he gives no offence to his brother, or at least, as much as in him lies, he takes care that he gives none; he avoids, as much as can be, putting a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way, by the use of things indifferent, or by any other action; nor will he easily take offence at what is said or done unto him, for charity or love is not easily provoked, it suffers long, and bears all things; see 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7. nor does he so much and so frequently transgress the laws of God, and particularly those which regard his neighbour or his brother, and so easily fall into the snares of Satan, because he is in the light, and walks in the light, and sees his way, and what lies in his way, and so shuns and avoids occasion of stumbling and falling. There is not in him that wrath, and malice, and envy, which lead on to the commission of other sins; for love works no ill, but fulfils the law, and will not suffer him to commit adultery, to kill, to steal, or bear false witness against his neighbour, friend, and brother; see Rom. xiii. 9, 10. and such one enjoys great peace, tranquillity, and happiness; he has much comfort in himself, and pleasure in the saints, and delight in their company; he walks inoffensively, and in a harmless manner, without hurting himself, or any other, Psal. cxix. 165.

Ver. 11. *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, &c.*] As is before expressed in ver. 9. to which is added, *and walketh in darkness*; he goes on in it, and takes delight in it, as dangerous and uncomfortable as it is: *and knoweth not whither he goeth*; he can't discern between good and evil; he puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; he sees not what is before him, nor what stumbling-blocks lie in the way; he is not aware of the snares, pits, and traps he is in danger of falling into; nor does he know and consider what these paths of darkness, of sin, and ignorance, and infidelity, lead unto, even unto utter darkness, where is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth: and the reason is, *because that darkness hath blinded his eyes*; either Satan, the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not, and who is darkness itself, and the cause of darkness in himself and in others, and one of whose names this was with the Jews^a; see the note on Luke xxii. 53. or that natural darkness which sin has brought upon the understanding, and has blinded the eyes of it, called the blindness of the heart, Eph. iv. 18. so that a man under the power of it is ignorant of himself, and knows not that he is blind and miserable; is a stranger to the way of peace, and life by Christ, and knows not what he is about, and where he is, or whither he is going, and what his end will be.

Ver. 12. *I write unto you, little children, &c.*] By whom the apostle means in common all the saints he writes to, whom he afterwards distributes into fathers, young men, and little children; for the same word is used here as in ver. 1. and a different one from that which is rendered *little children* in the next verse; and besides, the following blessing of pardon of sin is common to all the children of God of different ages: now

^a Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 5.

^a Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 44. 4.

what the apostle says he writes unto them, intends not the epistle in general, but the new commandment of love in particular; and which he urges and enforces on them all, for this reason, *because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake*: these little children had been sinners by nature and practice, and were not now without sin, but they shared in the blessing of the forgiveness of it; which arises from the abundant mercy and rich grace of God, and proceeds on the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and therefore is said to be *for his name's sake*; not for the sake of any merits in men, any services or works of theirs, but for the sake of Christ, his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; and it reaches to all sins, original and actual, secret and open, past, present, and to come; and here intends the application of it by the spirit of God, and the reception of it by faith: and which, as it is a reason and argument encouraging love to God, who freely and fully forgives, and to Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin, so to their brethren and fellow-Christians; who are equally sharers in the same blessing, and whom they should love, because they are loved of God and Christ; and whom they should forgive, because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven them. It may be, they may be called here *little children*, with a view to their interest in this blessing of grace. So the Jews say¹, that Saul was called "*the son of one year in his reign*"; 1 Sam. xiii. 1. "because all his iniquities were forgiven him, כְּתִינוּק, *as a sucking child of a year old.*"

Ver. 13. *I write unto you, fathers, &c.*] Not merely in age, though they might be men in years who are here intended, or only with respect to their long standing in the church, which might be the case; though persons may be in years, and of a long standing in the church, and yet be children in knowledge and experience: but here it designs such, who, in comparison of others, were perfect, and were spiritual, and judged all things; had a well-informed and established judgment in divine things, and were, in understanding, men, fathers, and not babes in Christ; so the Jews used to call their men of wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding, אֲבוֹת, *Abot, fathers*. Hence there is a whole treatise in the Misna called *Pirke Abot*, which contains the apophthegms, wise sayings, and sentences of their fathers, or wise men. Now the apostle writes the new commandment of love, and urges it on these, for this reason, *because ye have known him that is from the beginning*; either God the Father, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the Ancient of days, the eternal I AM, whom to know is life eternal; whose everlasting love to them, whose covenant of grace with his Son for them, before the world was, and the ancient transactions, and settlements of his grace on their account, they were acquainted with: or Jesus Christ, the Logos or Word, which was from the beginning, who existed from all eternity, as a divine person, as the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father; as the eternal choice made in him, and the everlasting covenant with him shew; and who in his office-capacity, as Mediator, was set up from everlasting; and who, with respect to the virtue of his blood, righteousness,

and sacrifice, was from the beginning of the world, and was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; it being by his blood that all the patriarchs, from the beginning of time, were pardoned, and by his righteousness they were justified, and by his grace they were saved; all which, respecting the antiquity of Christ's person, office, and grace, was known to these fathers: they knew him, so as to approve of him, trust in him, and appropriate him to themselves, and which obliged them to the new commandment of love, not only to God and Christ, but to one another; and the reason here given, engaging to it, is exceeding suitable to their character, it being what fathers and aged men delight in, even ancient things, to call them to remembrance, to talk of them as things well known unto them; but nothing is more ancient than what is here instanced in, and nothing so honourable and profitable to know as this, or to be gloried in; and therefore the argument from hence to love those that belong to him, who is the everlasting Father, is very strong and forcible. *I write unto you, young men*; who are warm and zealous for God, for his cause and interest, for the glory of a Redeemer, for his truths and ordinances; and are lively in the exercise of grace, and fervent in the discharge of duty; and are active, diligent, and industrious, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and are strong and robust, able to go alone, to walk by faith, being strong in it, and in the grace that is in Christ, and don't need the staff that old age does, nor the hand to lead and teach to go, as children do: to these the apostle writes the new commandment of love, for this reason, *because ye have overcome the wicked one*; Satan, who is eminently so, being the first that was, and the worst that is so; for he is wickedness itself, he is wholly, entirely, immutably, and unalterably wicked; and his whole work and employment is in wickedness. Now these young men had overcome him, not only in Christ their head, who has spoiled him, destroyed him, and led him captive in triumph, in whom they were more than conquerors; but in themselves, through the power of divine grace, holding up, and making use of the shield of faith against him, whereby they quenched his fiery darts, and got the victory over him: and this is also said in perfect agreement with the character of young men, who are apt to glory in their strength, and are fond of getting the advantage, or a victory over others; and which is used to teach such as are so in a spiritual sense, not to glory in their strength, but in the Lord; and to love him whom they know, and whose loving-kindness is exercised towards them, and in Christ; and to love him through whom they get the victory, and to bear the infirmities of weaker saints, to whom they should be strongly affected. *I write unto you, little children*; or babes in Christ, such as were newborn babes, just born again, not able to go alone, or walk by faith, but were dandled on the knee, and lay at the breasts of divine consolation: could speak but stammeringly, and not plain, it being as much as they could do to say *Abba, father*. To these the apostle writes, and urges the new commandment of love, for this reason, *because ye have known the father*: the

¹ T. Hieros. Biccurim, fol. 65. 4.

father of Christ, and him, as their father in Christ, under the witnessings of the spirit of adoption; so as, in some good measure, to hope and believe he was their father, and to love, honour, and obey him as such, to apply to him for whatever they stood in need of, and always to put themselves under his care and protection: and a consideration of this their relation to him, and interest in him, is a strong and prevailing argument why they should not only love him, their father, and Christ, who is begotten of him, but also all the saints, who are the children of this their father, and their brethren; and very aptly does the apostle mention their knowledge of the father as suitable to their age and character, it being one of the first and most necessary things for a child to know.

Ver. 14. *I have written unto you, fathers, &c.*] This, with the reason annexed to it, is repeated, to raise the attention of the aged servants of Christ, and to quicken them to a discharge of their duty, who are apt to abate in their zeal, to grow lukewarm and indifferent, to cleave to the world, and to the things of it, which they are cautioned against in the following verse. The whole of this, with the reason, *because ye have known him that is from the beginning*, is left out in the Vulgate Latin version, and Complutensian edition. *I have written unto you, young men*; this repetition to them, with some additions, is also made, to stir them up the more to love the saints, who are too apt to be carried away with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, warned against in ver. 16. *because ye are strong*; not naturally, for sin has sadly weakened human nature, so that a man, by the strength of nature, can do nothing that is spiritually good: nor in themselves, though regenerated, but in Christ, in whom are righteousness and strength; without whom they can do nothing, though they can do all things through him strengthening them; and so are strong in the exercise of grace on him, and in the performance of every duty, being strengthened by him with strength in their souls: *and the word of God abideth in you*; either Christ the Logos, the essential Word of God, who might be said to be in them, and abide in them, because his grace was implanted in their hearts, called Christ, formed there, and because he dwelt in their hearts by faith, and lived in them; and hence they had their strength, or came to be so strong as they were, and also overcame Satan, because he that was in them was greater than he that is in the world: or else the Gospel is meant, which cometh not in word only, but in power, has a place in the heart, and works effectually, and dwells richly there; and this is a means of spiritual strength against sin and temptation, and to perform duty, and to stand fast in the truth against the errors and heresies of men; and is that piece of spiritual armour, the sword of the spirit, by which Satan is often foiled, and overcome: hence it follows, *and ye have overcome the wicked one*; see the note on ver. 13.

Ver. 15. *Love not the world, &c.*] The habitable earth, the world in which men live; this is not to be loved by saints, as if it was their habitation, where they are always to be, and so loth to remove from it,

seeing they are but sojourners, and pilgrims, and strangers here; this is not their rest, nor dwelling-place, their continuing city, or proper country, that is heaven. Nor should they love the men of the world, who are as they came into it, are of it, and mind the things of it, and lie in wickedness, and are wicked men; for though these are to be loved, as men, as fellow-creatures, and their good, both spiritual and temporal, is to be sought, and good is to be done to them, as much as lies in our power, both with respect to soul and body; yet their company is not to be chosen, and preferred to the saints, but to be shunned and avoided, as disagreeable and dangerous; their evil conversation, and wicked communications, are not to be loved, but abhorred, and their works of darkness are to be reproved; nor are their ways to be imitated, and their customs followed, or their manners to be conformed unto: *neither the things that are in the world*; good men that are in the world, though they are not of the world, are to be loved; and the kingdom of Christ, though it is not of the world, yet it is in the world, and is to be regarded and promoted to the uttermost; and there are the natural and civil things of the world, called this world's goods, which may be loved within due bounds, and used in a proper manner, though they are not to be loved inordinately and abused. This is the character of worldly men; so the Jews call such, *אֲהַבְי הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה*, *such that love this world* *. Near relations and friends in the world, and the blessings of life, may be loved and enjoyed in their way, but not above God and Christ, or so as to take up satisfaction and contentment in them, to make idols of them, and put trust and confidence in them, and prefer them to spiritual and heavenly things, and be so taken with them, as to be unconcerned for, and careless about the other; but the evil things of the world, or at least the evil use of them, and affection for them, are here intended, as appears from the following verse. Now it is chiefly with respect to the fathers, and young men, that this exhortation is given; and the repetition of what is said to them before is made, to introduce this; which is exceeding suitable to their age and characters. Old men are apt to be covetous, and love the world and worldly things, just when they are going out of it, and about to leave them; and young men are apt to be carried away with lust, vanity, ambition, and pride: and therefore, from each of these, the apostle dissuades, from the following arguments, *if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him*; that is, the love of God, as the Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version read; who is the father of Christ, and of all the elect in him; and who is indeed, by creation, the father of all men, the father of spirits, of the souls of men, and of angels, and the father of mercies and of lights, and by the love of him is meant, either the love with which he loves his people, and which being shed abroad in the heart, attracts the soul to himself, and causes it to love him above the world, and all things in it; and such an one esteems of it, and an interest in it, more than life, and all the enjoyments of it, and is by it loosened to the world, and sets light by it, and can part with all

* Kimchi in 'Psal. xlix. 9. Ben Melech in ib. ver. 14.

good things in it, and suffer all evil things cheerfully, under the constraints and influence of this love; so that it is a clear case, that when the affections of men are set upon the world, and they are glued to the things of it, their hearts are not warmed with a sense of the love of God, or that is not sensibly in them, or shed abroad in their hearts: or else by the love of God is meant love to God, which is inconsistent with the love of the world, or with such an inordinate love of mammon, as to serve it; for a man may as soon serve two masters, as serve God and mammon, which he can never do truly, faithfully, and affectionately; and which also is not consistent with friendship with the men of the world, or a conversation and fellowship with them in things that are evil, whether superstitution or profaneness; see Matt. vi. 24. Jam. iv. 4.

Ver. 16. *For all that is in the world, &c.*] This is the sum of the evil things in the world; or these following are the objects of sin in the world, or about which wicked men are conversant; even such as are carnal or grateful to the flesh, visible to the eye, and belong to this vain life, or serve to fill with pride and vanity; or these are the main things, which men that love the world most highly value and esteem: *the lust of the flesh*; by which is meant, not lust in general, or concupiscence, the corruption of nature, which is the fountain of all sin, or in-dwelling sin, the flesh, or that corrupt principle which lusts against the spirit; nor the various lusts of the flesh, fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and which are many, and are also called worldly lusts; but some particular one, *a lust of the body*, as the Syriac version reads; either the lust of uncleanness, which includes all unchaste desires, thoughts, words, and actions, fornication, adultery, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; and which maketh up a considerable part of the all that is in the world: or else intemperance in eating and drinking, gluttony and drunkenness; excess of wine, surfeitings, rioting, and revellings, and all the sensual pleasures of life, by which the carnal mind, and the lusts of it, are gratified; whereby the soul is destroyed, the body is dishonoured, and a wound, dishonour, and reproach brought on the character, not to be removed; for which reasons the world, and the things of it, are not to be loved: the next follows, *the lust of the eyes*: after unlawful objects, and may design unchaste and lascivious looks, eyes full of adultery, and whereby adultery is committed; see Matt. v. 28. but then this falls in with the other, unless that be confined to intemperance; rather then this may intend a sinful curiosity of seeing vain sights, and shews, with which the eye of man is never satisfied, Eccl. i. 8. and against which the psalmist prays, Psal. cxix. 37. or rather the sin of covetousness is here designed, the objects of which are visible things, as gold, silver, houses, lands, and possessions, with which riches the eyes of men are never satisfied, and which sin is drawn forth and cherished by the eyes; and indeed a covetous man has little more satisfaction than the beholding his substance with his eyes, and in which he takes much sinful pleasure; see Eccl. iv. 8. and v. 11. and what a poor vain empty thing is this! therefore, love not the world, since this is a principal thing

in it: as is also *the pride of life*; by which seems to be meant, ambition of honour, of chief places and high titles, as in the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 6, 7. or of grand living, for the word signifies not so much life as living; living in a sumptuous, gay, luxurious, and pompous manner, in rich diet, costly apparel, having fine seats, palaces, and stately buildings, and numerous attendance; all which is but vanity and vexation of spirit; see Eccl. ii. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, *the pride of the age*; and every age has some peculiar things in which the pride of it appears. Now neither of these *is of the father*; of God the father, as the Ethiopic version reads; the things which are desired and lusted after are of God, but not the lust itself; God is not the author of sin, nor is it agreeable to his will: *but is of the world*; of the men of it, and agreeable to their carnal minds; and is a reason why things of the world are not to be loved by the saints, who are not of it, but chosen and called out of it; and besides, all these things are mean, base, vile, and contemptible, and unworthy of their love and affection.

Ver. 17. *And the world passeth away, &c.*] Not the matter and substance, but the fashion, form, and scheme of it, 1 Cor. vii. 31. kingdoms, cities, towns, houses, families, estates, and possessions, are continually changing, and casting into different hands, and different forms; the men of the world, the inhabitants of it, are continually removing; one generation goes, and another comes, new faces are continually appearing; the riches and honours of the world are fading, perishing, and transitory things; every thing is upon the flux, nothing is permanent; which is another argument why the world, and the things of it, are not to be loved: *and the lust thereof*; also passes away; and objects of lust are fading and fleeting, as beauty, and riches, and honours; these are continually taking away from men, or men are taken away from them, and will not be hereafter; and even the pleasure of lust itself passes away as soon as enjoyed; the pleasures of sin are but for a season, and a very short one; and are indeed but imaginary, and leave a real bitterness and sorrow behind them, and at length bring a man to ruin and destruction: *but he that doeth the will of God*; not perfectly as contained in the law, which is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; for no man can do that in such a manner, though a regenerate man desires to do it, even as it is done in heaven, and serves the law of God with his mind, and under the influence of the spirit of God; and does walk in his statutes, and keeps his judgments from a principle of love, in faith, and without mercenary views and sinister ends, without depending on what he does for life and salvation; and such an one may be said to be a doer of the will of God: though rather here it intends such an one as believes in Christ, as the propitiation for his sins, and as his advocate with the father, and who makes Christ his pattern and example, and walks as he walked; and particularly observes the new commandment of love, loves God, and Christ, and his fellow-Christians, and not the world, and the things of it: and such a man is happy, for he *abideth for ever*; in the love of God, which will never depart from him, nor shall he be separated from that; and in the hands and arms of Christ, out of

which none can pluck him; and in the family and household of God, where he, as a son, abides for ever, and shall never be cast out; and in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; and in a state of grace and holiness, from whence he shall never fall totally and finally; and in heaven with Christ to all eternity: the reason of this his abiding is not his doing the will of God, which is only descriptive of him manifestatively, and not the cause of his perpetuity and immovableness; but his eternal election of God, which stands sure, not on the foot of works, but of him that calleth; and the covenant of grace in which he is interested, and which is immovable, sure, firm, and inviolable; and the foundation Jesus Christ, on which he is built; and the principle of grace in him, which always remains, and is connected with eternal life.

Ver. 18. *Little children, it is the last time, &c.*] Or *hour*: not of the Jewish civil and church state, for that had been at an end for some time; this epistle was written some years after the destruction of Jerusalem; nor the last hour of the Gospel dispensation, or world to come, for this was but the first age of that; and much less the last hour of time, or of the present world itself, for that has been many hundreds of years since; but the last hour of the apostolic age. All the apostles were now dead, John was the last of them; perilous times were now coming on, impostors and heretics were rising apace, against which the apostle cautions his little children; and so still he writes to them, agreeably to their age and character, who, being such, were most likely to be imposed upon by those who lie in wait to deceive. *And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come; or is coming*: and begins to shew himself in the false teachers and deceivers, who were his forerunners; and this they had heard and understood, either from the words of Christ in John v. 43. or from the account the Apostle Paul gave to the Thessalonians concerning him, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10. or rather it may be from what the apostle had said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, where the Apostle John now was, when he met them at Miletus, Acts xx. 29, 30. *even now there are many antichrists*. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, *false Christs*; but such are not intended here, that set up for Messiahs, whom Christ foretold should arise before the destruction of Jerusalem, Matt. xxiv. 24. for that was now over, and those false Christs had arisen and were gone: if this sense could be admitted, Bar Cocab, in Adrian's time, bids fair to be the false Christ, or Messiah, in the preceding clause, as the same versions there read; but such as were adversaries of Christ, as the Arabic version renders it, are meant, who set themselves against Christ, and were opposers of his person, incarnation, and office; who either denied that he was the Christ, or that he was come in the flesh, the truth of his incarnation, or his proper deity, or real humanity, such as Ebion, Cerinthus, and others. The apostle might well say there were many, since in his time were the followers of Simon Magus, the Menandrians, Saturnilians, Basilidians, Nicolaites, Gnostics, Carpocratians, Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Nazarenes, as reckoned up by Epiphanius. And hence we learn, that antichrist is not one single individual, but many; antichrist in the former clause is explained by antichrists

in this; see ver. 22. and iv. 1, 3. 2 John 7. and though the popes of Rome are, by way of eminence, the antichrist that should come, and which those deceivers were the forerunners of, and paved the way for; yet they are not the only antichrists, there were others before them, and there are many now besides them. *Whereby we know that it is the last time*: the pure apostolic age was now going off, with the doctrines, discipline, and worship of it, which was easy to be discerned by the multitude of antichrists which now appeared; and it may well be thought to be the last time, or near the end of things with us, since almost every heresy is revived among us.

Ver. 19. *They went out from us, &c.*] Which intends not the persons that went down from Judea to Antioch, Acts xv. 1, 24. who preached destructive doctrines to the Gentiles, which the apostles and the church of Judea disowned and censured; by which it appeared, that all the preachers of these doctrines were not of them, and of the same mind with them: for this sense makes these antichrists to be only preachers; whereas, though many of them might be such, yet not all; for whoever, in a private capacity denied the Father and the Son, or that Christ was come in the flesh, was antichrist; and to these private believers are opposed in the next verse; and it also makes the *us* to be the apostles, whereas they were all dead but John; and these antichrists were men that had risen up then in the last time, and therefore could not, with propriety, be said to go out from the apostles; besides, whenever the apostle uses this pronoun *us*, he includes with himself all true believers, and may more especially here intend the churches of Asia; or rather the members of the church at Ephesus, where he was; nor is it likely he should have in view the church of Judea, and a case in which that was concerned near forty years ago: moreover, such a sense makes the going out to be merely local and corporeal, and which is in itself not criminal; the persons that went from Judea to Antioch were not blamable for going thither, nor for going out from the apostles thither, but for troubling the disciples with words, to the subverting of their souls; nor was a corporeal departure from the apostles any evidence of not being of the same mind with them; for they often departed one from other, yet continued of the same mind, and in the same faith: but the sense is, that there were some persons in the Apostle John's time, who had made a profession of religion, were members of the church, and some of them perhaps preachers, and yet they departed from the faith, and dropped their profession of it, and withdrew themselves from the church, or churches to which they belonged, and set up separate assemblies of their own: *but they were not of us*: they were of the church, and of the same mind with it, at least in profession, antecedent to their going out; for had they not been in communion with the church, they could not be properly said to go out of it; and if they had not been of the same mind and faith in profession, they could not be said to depart from it; but they were not truly regenerated by the grace of God, and so apparently were not of the number of God's elect: notwithstanding their profession and communion with the church, they were of

the world, and not of God; they were not true believers; they had not that anointing which abides, and from which persons are truly denominated Christians, or anointed ones: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the fellowship of the church, as true believers do: if their hearts had been right with God, they would have remained steadfast to him, his Gospel, truths, and ordinances, and faithful with his saints; for such who are truly regenerate are born of an incorruptible seed, and those that have received the anointing which makes them truly Christians, that abides, as does every true grace, faith, hope, and love; and such who are truly God's elect cannot possibly fall into such errors and heresies as these did, and be finally deceived, as they were: but they went out; they went out from us, so the Syriac version reads; that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us; the word *all* is left out in the Syriac version. The defection and apostacy of these persons were permitted by God, that it might appear they had never received the grace of God in truth; and their going out was in such a manner, that it was a certain argument that they were not of the elect; since they became antichrists, denied the deity or sonship of Christ, or that he was come in the flesh, or that he was the Christ, and therefore are said to be of the world, and not of God, ver. 22. and iv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6. so that this passage furnishes out no argument against the saints' perseverance, which is confirmed in the following verse.

Ver. 20. *But ye have an unction from the holy One, &c.*] Meaning the spirit, and his graces, with which Christ, the head, is anointed without measure, and his members in measure; from whence he is called Christ, and they Christians. These were really the Lord's anointed ones; they were true believers; were the wise virgins who had oil in their vessels with their lamps, which would never go out. The grace of the spirit is called a chrism, or an ointment, or an anointing, in allusion to the anointing oil under the law; see the note on Matt. xxv. 3. of which anointing oil the Jews say ^h, that it continues all of it, לעתיד לבוא, *to time to come*, (i. e. to the times of the Messiah,) as it is said, Exod. xxx. 31. Now this these saints had, *from the holy One*; or *that holy One*; meaning, not the Holy Spirit of God, though it is true that this anointing, or these graces, were from him; he is the author of them, and may truly be said to anoint with them; nor the Father, who is holy in his nature, and in his works, and is the God of all grace, and is said to anoint the saints too, 2 Cor. i. 21. but rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is holy, both as God and man, and from whose fullness all grace is had. This oil, or ointment, was first poured on him without measure, and from him it descends to all the members of his mystical body, as the ointment poured on Aaron's head descended to his beard, and to the skirts of his garments; see ver. 27. *and ye know all things*. for this anointing is a teaching one; it makes persons of quick understanding; it enlightens their understandings, refreshes their memories, and strengthens all the powers and faculties of the soul; it leads

into the knowledge of all spiritual things, into all the mysteries of grace, and truths of the Gospel, into all things necessary for salvation; for these words are not to be taken in the largest sense, in which they are only applicable to the omniscient God, but to be restrained to the subject-matter treated of, and to those things chiefly in which the antichrists and deceivers erred; and regard not a perfect knowledge, for those that know most of these things, under the influence of this unction, know but in part. The Syriac version reads, *all men*, and so refers to that discerning of spirits, of the spirit of truth, from the spirit of error; a gift which was bestowed on many in the primitive times, by which they could distinguish hypocrites from true believers, and antichrists and deceivers from the faithful ministers of the word. One of Stephens's copies reads, *and ye all know*.

Ver. 21. *I have not written unto you, &c.*] Either this epistle, or rather what particularly here regards those apostates from the truth, in order to shun them and not be deceived by them: the apostle here obviates an objection that he saw might be made upon what he last said, that they knew all things; and, if so, why then did he write the things he did, since they knew them before? to which he answers, that he did not write to them as to ignorant, but as to knowing persons: *because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it*: the Father, who is the God of truth; Christ, who is truth itself; and the Spirit, who is the spirit of truth; and the Gospel, which is the word of truth; and the Scriptures, which are the Scriptures of truth, and from whence truth is to be fetched, and by them to be confirmed and defended; and which, if they had not known, it would have been to no purpose for him to have written to them about the antichrists that were come into the world; and though they did know the truth, it was very proper to put them in remembrance of it, and to establish them in it, against these deceivers, which supposes former knowledge of it: *and that no lie is of the truth*; either springs from it, or is according to it, but just the reverse. The apostle has respect to the errors and heresies of the above apostates, which were flagrant contradictions to the Gospel, and as distant from it as a lie is to truth; and of such lies, and of those liars, he speaks in the next verses. The Arabic version reads, *and that every liar is not of the truth*.

Ver. 22. *Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? &c.*] Or that very Christ, and true Messiah, who was spoken of by all the prophets, since the beginning of the world, and so much, and so long desired by the Old-Testament saints: he that denies that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of the prophets, is not indeed the only liar in the world, but he is the greatest of liars; this is a consummate lie, being opposed to a glaring truth, to a fact clear and indisputable; and which rests not merely on the testimony of Jesus, who is truth itself, and who, in express words, more than once, declared and asserted himself to be the Christ; but all the characters of the Messiah, every thing that is said of him in the Prophets, meet in Jesus; and the miracles which were done by him

^h T. Hieros. Horayot, fol. 47. 3.

are flagrant proofs and undeniable evidences of his being the Christ of God; and all the apostles believed, and were sure that he was Christ, the son of the living God: to which may be added the testimony of John, who was sent, and came to bear witness of him, and did; and who was a prophet, and a man of great probity and integrity. But there was a greater witness than he; even God himself, by a voice from heaven, bore a testimony to him; and angels, at his incarnation, declared him to be the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord; yea, the devil himself, who is a liar, and the father of lies in other things, knew and owned Jesus to be the Christ; so that those that deny him are the worst of liars, even worse than the devil himself. This may have regard not only to the Jews, that deny Jesus to be the Messiah, but chiefly to such who went by the name of Christians; who denied either his proper deity, or real humanity, as Ebion and Cerinthus, which was denying him to be the God-man, the Mediator, and Messiah; and is true of all such that deny him in any of his offices, or in things relating to them, as his Gospel, and any of the peculiar doctrines of it, delivered by him, and so deny his prophetic office; or any of his ordinances, institutions, and appointments, as lawgiver in his house, and King of saints, and so deny him in his kingly office; or reject him as the alone Saviour, joining their own works with him, in the business of salvation, and oppose his sacrifice and satisfaction, and despise his imputed righteousness, and so deny him in his priestly office. Now these are some of the liars, and these some of the doctrinal lies, which are not of the truth, as in the preceding verse. *He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son*: that denies the Father of Christ to be the Creator of the world, but asserts that it was made by angels, as some ancient heretics did; or that the Father of Christ is not the God of the Old Testament, as Marcion; or that denies that God is the Father of Christ, and that Christ is the Son of God; who will not allow that there is any such relation in nature between them; who affirm that Christ is only the Son of God by adoption, or because of his love to him, or because of his incarnation and resurrection from the dead; or that he is not his true and proper Son, only in a figurative and metaphorical sense; that he is not the natural and eternally-begotten Son of God, only by office, and as Mediator, and that God is only his Father, as having installed him into an office; or he that denies that these two are distinct from each other, but affirms that the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Father, and so confounds them both, and, by confounding both, denies that there are either Father or Son; and all such persons are antichrists, or opposers of Christ.

Ver. 23. *Whosoever denieth the Son, &c.*] Jesus Christ to be the true, proper, natural, essential, and eternal Son of God: *the same hath not the Father*; or does not hold the Father; or *believe the Father*, as the Syriac version renders it; for there can't be a father without a son; and he that honours not the son, by owning him as such, honours not the father; and whatever reflects dishonour on the son, reflects dishonour on the father. If Christ is not truly and properly the Son of God, the Father is not truly and properly the Father of Christ; if Christ is only a Son in

a figurative and metaphorical sense, the Father is only a Father in a figurative and metaphorical sense; if Christ is a Son only by office, then the Father is a Father only by office, which is monstrously stupid. Such an one does not hold the true doctrine of the Father, and does not appear to have true faith in him, true love unto him, or real interest in him, only by profession: *but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also*; this clause is left out in many copies, and stands as a supplement in our version; but is in the Alexandrian copy, in four of Beza's manuscripts, and in some others; and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and confirms and illustrates what is before said; for as he that denies the sonship of Christ cannot hold the paternity of God, so he that owns the sonship of Christ, the second Person, maintains the paternity of the first; for these two are correlates, and mutually put, or take away each other: no mention is made of the Spirit, because, as yet, no controversy had risen concerning him.

Ver. 24. *Let that therefore abide in you, &c.*] Meaning the word of God, ver. 14. the Gospel of Christ, which there was reason to believe had a place in their hearts, and which they had embraced and professed; and therefore the apostle exhorts them to perseverance in it; and particularly not to let go the doctrine concerning the Father and the Son, and this their relation to each other, which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the distinct personality of Father, Son, and Spirit; the contrary to which leaves the three without either name, or distinction from each other: the arguments to enforce this exhortation follow, *which ye have heard from the beginning*; they had heard it not externally only, but internally; they had hearkened to it, and from the heart obeyed it; they had mixed it with faith, and received the love of it; they had heard it from the apostles of Christ, who were eye and ear witnesses of the word; and this they had heard at the first preaching of the Gospel to them, at the first of their conversion: the apostles of Christ began their ministry with the sonship of Christ, and greatly insisted on it, in it, and required a profession of it before baptism, and which was made in order to it; and these believers had been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, as standing in such a relation to each other; see Acts ix. 20. and viii. 37. Matt. xxviii. 19. and therefore ought not to relinquish this truth, and receive a new and upstart notion: and for further encouragement to continue in it, 'tis added, *if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father*; as those that are once in either always will; what is here said is not either the cause or condition of men being in the Father, and in the Son, or of their continuance in them, but is descriptive of the persons that are in them, and is an open and manifest evidence of their being and continuance in them. Such are in union with Christ, and at times enjoy sensible communion with him, and shall never be finally and totally removed from it; they are in the love of Christ, from whence there is no separation, and in the arms and hands of Christ, out of which none can pluck them; and they abide by him in the exercise of faith and love, and cleave unto him with full purpose of

heart, and will hold on and out, professing his name to the end: and they are, and abide in the love of God the father, which is from everlasting to everlasting; and in the covenant of his grace, which is sure and inviolable; and in the participation of all the blessings and promises of it, among which, the following one, eternal life, is a principal one.

Ver. 25. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, &c.*] Either God the Father, who is that God that cannot lie, who in the covenant of his grace, before the world began, made this promise unto his people, even *eternal life*; which promise, with all others, was put into the hands of Christ, where, with them, it is yea and amen; and also the thing itself promised, where it is hid, and lies safe and secure: or the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has promised it in the Gospel; for this is the sum of the Gospel declaration, that whoever believes in him shall have everlasting life; and this lies in the knowledge of the Father, and of the Son, and in the enjoyment of them, and conformity to them; wherefore the doctrine respecting them ought to be retained, and firmly adhered to.

Ver. 26. *These things have I written unto you, &c.*] The little children, who were most likely to be imposed upon by antichrists and deceivers: *concerning them that seduce you*. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, *for them that seduce you*; not that they were actually seduced and carried away with the error of the wicked; for though God's elect may be staggered and waver, and be tossed to and fro by false teachers, and their doctrines, yet they cannot be totally and finally deceived: but the sense is, these men endeavoured to seduce them: they lay in wait to deceive, and attempted to deceive them, by walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully; and therefore that they might be known, and so shunned and avoided, the apostle points them out, and shews who they are; that they are such who deny that Jesus is the Christ, and do not own neither the Father nor the Son; in doing which he acted the part of a tender father, a faithful shepherd, and a careful monitor.

Ver. 27. *But the anointing which ye have received of him, &c.*] The spirit, and the grace of the spirit, which they had received out of the fulness of grace which is in Christ; and is compared to oil or ointment; see the note on ver. 20. for Christ, the anointed, is the fountain of it all, and it is had from him in a way of giving and receiving. So the second *Sephira*, or number in the Jews' Cabalistic tree, which is wisdom, has for one of its surnames, the fountain of the oil of union¹: this *abideth in you*; the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *if it abideth*, which spoils the text, for the words are not conditional, but affirmative: grace is an internal thing, it is oil in the vessel of the heart, and where it once is, it abides; as does every grace of the spirit, as faith, hope, love, and every other: grace can never be taken away; God will not take it away, where he has once bestowed it, and men and devils cannot; it can never be lost as to the principle and being of it; it is an incorruptible seed, and a living

principle, which can never be destroyed, notwithstanding all the corruptions in a man's heart, the pollutions of the world, and the temptations of Satan: *and ye need not that any man teach you*; not that they were perfect in knowledge, for no man is absolutely, only comparatively so, in this life; or that they needed not, and were above and exempt from the instructions of Christ's faithful servants; for John himself taught them, and to teach and instruct them was the end of his writing this epistle to them; but the sense is either that they needed not the teachings of these men before mentioned, the antichrists, liars, and seducers, being better taught, and having an unction by which they knew all things; or they needed not to be taught as if they were babes in Christ, as unskilful in the word of righteousness, but so as to increase in spiritual knowledge, and go on to perfection, and be established in the present truths, at least so as to be put in remembrance of them; or rather they needed not, nor were they to regard any mere human revelation and doctrine, for the whole Gospel was come by Jesus Christ, and no other is to be expected or received by men, nor any doctrine but what is according to the revelation of Christ; wherefore saints under the Gospel dispensation are taught of God by his spirit, according to the word of truth, and by the ministry of it, and have no need of learning every man from his neighbour, or from his brother, any separate revelation; so that this passage does not militate against the external ministry of the Gospel, or human teachings according to that perfect rule and declaration of the whole mind and will of God by Christ under the Gospel dispensation: *but as the same anointing*. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, *his anointing*; that is, God's or Christ's; and so the Syriac version renders it, *that unction which is of God*; meaning the same as before: the Ethiopic version renders it, *his spirit*, which, though not a true version, is no improper or impertinent sense of the phrase: and this *teacheth you of all things*; truths and doctrines necessary to salvation, as in ver. 20. *and is truth, and is no lie*; or true and not a liar; which is a just character of the spirit of truth, in opposition to the spirit of error; and holds good of the grace of the spirit, which is truth in the inward parts, and is genuine and sincere: *and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him*; in Christ, from whom they received this anointing, see the note on ver. 24. or in the anointing itself, in the grace of the spirit, in which they stood. Some versions read in the imperative, *abide in him, or it*, as in the following verse.

Ver. 28. *And now, little children, abide in him, &c.*] The apostle having finished his separate instructions and exhortations to the fathers, young men and children, returns to the whole body of the saints in general, whom he addresses, as in ver. 1, 12. under the name of little children, see the note on ver. 1. and whom he exhorts to abide in Christ, that is, in the exercise of faith on him, of hope in him, and love to him; and to hold to him the head, and to hold fast his word and Gospel, and abide by his truth and ordinances, and adhere to his cause and interest, and not to be moved

¹ Cabala Denudata, par. 2. p. 8.

away on any consideration; to which the following encouragement is given: *that when he shall appear: that is, Christ, who is now hid, and out of the sight of bodily eyes, is in heaven, at the right hand of God; but ere long he will appear a second time, and not only to those that look for him, but even every eye shall see him; and his appearance will be a glorious one, and his saints shall appear in glory with him, and shall be like him, and see him as he is: we may have confidence; boldness or freedom, as now at the throne of grace, so then at the throne of judgment; where the saints will stand with courage and intrepidity, when the wicked will flee to the rocks and mountains, being filled with amazement, terror, and trembling: and not be ashamed before him at his coming; they'll not be put to shame by him; nor will they be ashamed of their confidence, faith, hope, and expectation; their hope will not make them ashamed, for they will now enjoy what they hoped for; and, notwithstanding all their sins and infirmities, they'll not be ashamed, for they will have on the wedding-garment, the righteousness of Christ, and will stand before the throne without fault, spot, or blemish; nor will Christ be ashamed of them who have not been ashamed of him and his words, but have confessed him, and have been faithful unto death, and have cleaved to him and his cause with full purpose of heart to the end. Some think ministers of the Gospel are here meant, who, when those that are under their care abide faithful, and persevere to the end, will give up their account with joy; and will have what they have expressed confidence in, and will have their expectations answered, and not disappointed, by having such souls as their joy and crown of rejoicing.*

Ver. 29. *If ye know that he is righteous, &c.] That*

is, Christ, who is righteous as God in his nature and in his works; and as man in his obedience, life, and conversation; and as Mediator, in faithfully discharging the work he undertook; and is the author of an everlasting righteousness, which is imputed by God, revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith; all which they knew, for this is not said as doubting, but rather as taking it for granted that they did know it; *if, or seeing ye know, &c.* then it follows; *ye know, or know ye; ye may assure yourselves, that every one that doeth righteousness; not merely works of righteousness, especially in order to justify him before God; for such an one is so far from being born of God, or born again, that he is manifestly in a state of nature, and of opposition to, and enmity against God; he is not subject to him, he does not submit to the righteousness of God, but goes about to establish his own, and betrays his ignorance and want of grace; but it intends such an one who with the heart believes unto righteousness, and lays hold by faith, and lives upon the righteousness of Christ for justification; and who performs good works in faith, and from a principle of love, not to obtain a justifying righteousness, but because he is justified by the righteousness of Christ: and such an one is born of him; either of God, or rather of Christ; being regenerated by his spirit, having his grace implanted in him, as appears by his faith in his righteousness, and by his works of righteousness, as fruits of faith; and having his image instamped on him, and he himself formed in him, and so made like unto him; by all which it is evident he is one of his spiritual seed and offspring. The Syriac version reads, *is of him; belongs to him, is one of his; and this makes way for what is said of adoption in the following chapter, and which should begin here.**

C H A P. III.

IN this chapter the apostle exhorts to a holy life and conversation in general, and to the exercise of brotherly love in particular. The former of these is urged from the consideration of the great blessing of adoption, which springs from the free love and favour of God, is unknown to the men of the world, and indeed, in the present state of things, does not appear to the saints themselves in all its fulness and advantages, as it will do in the future state, when the children of God will be like to Christ, and see him as he is; the hope of which should engage them to purity of life and conversation, ver. 1, 2, 3. and this is further enforced from the nature of sin, which is a transgression of the law, ver. 4. from the end of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, which was to take away sin, and who was without it, ver. 5. from communion with Christ, expressed by abiding in him, seeing and knowing him, which such must be strangers to that live a sinful course of life, ver. 6. from this, that only such that do righteousness are righteous persons, and these are righteous as Christ is, ver. 7. and from a man's being of the devil, that is, of a vicious conversation, who was a sinner from the beginning, and whose works Christ was manifested in

the flesh to destroy, ver. 8. and from the nature of the new man, or that which is born of God, which is not to sin, nor can it, ver. 9. and from the distinction there is between the children of God and the children of the devil, those not being of God who do not righteousness, nor love their brethren, ver. 10. from hence the apostle passes to brotherly love, and excites and engages to that, from its being a message which had been heard from the beginning, ver. 11. which is illustrated by its contrary in the instance of Cain, who by the instigation of Satan slew his brother, because his works were righteous, and his own were evil, ver. 12. wherefore, it is no wonder that good men should be hated by the world, who, as Cain, are of the same wicked one, ver. 13. brotherly love is further urged unto, from its being an evidence of passing from death to life, or of regeneration; whereas he that hates his brother openly continues in a state of death, is a murderer, and so has not eternal life abiding in him, ver. 14, 15. and from the great instance of Christ's love, in laying down his life for his people, the saints are incited to lay down their lives for one another; to such a pitch does the apostle carry brotherly love, ver. 16. wherefore, he that is rich, and is

incompassionate to his brother in distress, cannot be thought to have the love of God dwelling in him, ver. 17. hence he presses the exhortation to brotherly love, that it be not in profession only, but true, real, and cordial, ver. 18. and that by observing the advantages of it, as that hereby men know they are of the truth, and can assure their hearts before God; and which is illustrated by the contrary, the condemnation of the heart, ver. 19, 20. the advantages of non-condemnation of the heart are confidence before God, and receiving whatsoever we ask of him; the reason of which is, because his commandments are kept, and things done which are pleasing to him, ver. 21, 22. the commandments are explained of faith in Christ, and love to one another, ver. 23. and the happiness of them that do them is, that Christ dwells in them, and they in him, the evidence of which is, the spirit that is given unto them, ver. 24.

Ver. 1. *Behold what manner of love, &c.*] See, take notice, consider, look by faith, with wonder and astonishment, and observe how great a favour, what an instance of matchless love, what a wonderful blessing of grace, the *father hath bestowed upon us*; the father of Christ, and the father of us in Christ, who hath adopted us into his family, and regenerated us by his grace, and hath freely given us the new name: *that we should be called the sons of God.* The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, add, *and we are, or be*; and the Ethiopic version, *and have been*; for it is not a mere name that is bestowed, but the thing itself in reality; and in the Hebrew language, *to be called, and to be*, are terms synonymous, see Isa. ix. 6. Hos. i. 10. in what sense the saints are the sons of God, see the note on Gal. iv. 6. this blessing comes not by nature, nor by merit, but by grace, the grace of adoption; which is of persons unto an inheritance they have no legal right unto; the spring of it is the everlasting and unchangeable love of God, for there was no need on the adopter's side, he having an only-begotten and beloved son, and no worth and loveliness in the adopted, they being by nature children of wrath; it is a privilege that exceeds all others, and is attended with many; so that it is no wonder the apostle breaks out in this pathetic manner, and calls upon the saints to view it with admiration and thankfulness: *therefore the world knoweth us not*; that is, the greater part of the world, the world that lies in wickedness, the men of the world, who have their portion in this life, whom the god of this world has blinded, and who only mind the things of the world, and are as when they came into it, and have their conversation according to the course of it; these don't know the saints are the sons of God; the new name of sons is what no man knoweth but he that receiveth it; they don't own the saints as theirs, as belonging to them, but reckon them as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things; nor do they love them, and that because they are not their own, but hate them and persecute them: the reason is, *because it knew him not*; neither the Father, whose sons they are, and who has bestowed the grace upon them; wherefore they know not, and disown and persecute his children; see John xvii. 25. and xv. 21. and xvi. 3. nor the Lord Jesus Christ, the only be-

gotten of the father, the first-born among many brethren; who, though he made the world, and was in it, was not known by it, but was hated, abused, and persecuted; and therefore it need not seem strange that the saints, who are the sons of God by adoption, should be treated in like manner.

Ver. 2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, &c.*] By adoption, secretly in God's predestination, and in the covenant of grace; and openly in regeneration, through faith in Christ, and by the testimony of the Spirit: *and it doth not yet appear what we shall be*; though they are sons, they don't appear now as such, as they will do, when they shall be introduced into their father's house, and into the many mansions there prepared for them; when Christ shall publicly own them as the children given unto him, and when they shall be put into the possession of the inheritance they are heirs of; besides, they will appear then not only to be kings' sons, but kings themselves, as they now are; they'll then inherit the kingdom prepared for them, and will sit down on a throne of glory, and have a crown of righteousness, life, and glory, put upon them; and will appear not only perfectly justified, their sins being not to be found; and the sentence of justification afresh pronounced, and they placed out of the reach of all condemnation; but they will be perfectly holy and free from all sin, and perfectly knowing and glorious; they have a right to glory now, and glory is preparing for them, and they for that: and they are now representatively glorified in Christ, but then they'll be personally glorified: now, though all this shall certainly be, yet it does not now manifestly appear; it appears to God, who calls things that are not as though they were; and to Christ, whose delights were with the sons of men, these children of God, before the world was, and saw them in all the glory they were to be brought to; but not even to angels, until they are owned and confessed before them; much less to the world, who don't know what they are now, and still less what they will be, seeing them now in poverty, meanness, under many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions; and even this does not appear to the saints themselves, whose life is a hidden life; and that by reason of darkness, desertion, and diffidence, for want of more knowledge, and from the nature of the happiness itself, which is at present unseen: *but we know that when he shall appear*; that is, Jesus Christ, who is now in heaven, and out of sight, but will appear a second time: the time when is not known, but the thing itself is certain: *we shall be like him*; in body, fashioned like to his glorious body, in immortality and incorruption, in power, in glory, and spirituality, in a freedom from all imperfections, sorrows, afflictions, and death; and in soul, which likeness will lie in perfect knowledge of divine things, and in complete holiness; *for we shall see him as he is*; in his human nature, with the eyes of the body, and in his glorious person, with the eyes of the understanding; not by faith, as now, but by sight; not through ordinances, as in the present state, but through those beams of light and glory darting from him, with which the saints will be irradiated; and this sight, as it is now exceeding desirable, will be unspeakably glorious, delightful, and ravishing, soul-satisfying, free

from all darkness and error, and interruption; will assimilate and transform into his image and likeness, and be for ever. Philo the Jew observes*, that Israel may be interpreted one that sees God; but adds, *οὐκ οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Θεός, not what God is, for this is impossible: it is indeed impossible to see him essentially as he is, or so as to comprehend his nature, being, and perfections; but then the saints in heaven will see God and Christ as they are, and as much as they are to be seen by creatures; God will be seen as he is in Christ; and Christ will be seen as he is in himself, both in his divine and human natures, as much as can be, or can be desired to be seen and known of him.*

Ver. 3. *And every man that hath this hope in him, &c.]* Or on him, Jesus Christ; for a true hope of that eternal happiness, which lies in likeness to Christ, and in the vision of him, is only founded on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice: and this hope every man has not, only he who is born again; for this grace is implanted in regeneration, when men are of abundant mercy begotten unto it, and have it bestowed upon them as a free-grace gift; and which is of great service to them both in life and in death; and among the rest it has this influence and effect upon them, that every such person that has it, *purifieth himself even as he is pure*; not that any man can purify or cleanse himself from sin, this is only owing to the grace of God and blood of Christ; nor that any man can be so pure and holy as Christ is, who is free from all sin, both original and actual; but this must be understood either of a man that has faith and hope in Christ, dealing by these with the blood of Christ for purity and cleansing, with whom and which these graces are conversant for such purposes; or of such a person's imitating of Christ in the holiness of his life and conversation, making him his pattern and example, studying to walk as he walked; to which he is the more excited and stimulated by the hope he has of being a son of God, a dear child of his, and therefore ought to be a follower of him, and walk as Christ walked, in humility; love, patience, and in other acts of holiness; and by the hope he has of being like unto him, and with him in the other world to all eternity: but then this *as* is only expressive of some degree of likeness and similitude, and not perfect equality, which is not to be expected in this, or in the world to come; believers indeed, who have faith and hope in the justifying righteousness of Christ, may, and should consider themselves pure and righteous, and free from sin, as Christ is; being clothed upon with his robe of righteousness, in which they stand without fault before the throne, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but this does not seem to be the sense of the place here, the argument being to engage the saints to purity and holiness of life and conversation, from the consideration of the great love of God bestowed upon them in their adoption, and from their hope of eternal happiness, as the context shews; see 2 Cor. vii. 1. other arguments follow.

Ver. 4. *Whosoever committeth sin, &c.]* This, in connexion with what follows, is true of any sin, great or small, but here designs a course of sinning, a wilful, obstinate, persisting in sin: *transgresseth also the law;*

not of man, unless the law of men is founded on, and agrees with the law of God, for sometimes to transgress the laws of men is no sin, and to obey them would be criminal; but the law of God, and that not the ceremonial law, which was now abolished, and therefore to neglect it, or go contrary to it, was not sinful; but the moral law, and every precept of it, which regards love to God or to our neighbour, and which may be transgressed in thought, word, and deed; and he that committeth sin transgresses it in one or all of these ways, of which the law accuses and convicts, and for it pronounces guilty before God, and curses and condemns; and this therefore is an argument against sinning, because it is against the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, and contains the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which is agreeable to his nature and perfections; so that sin is ultimately against God himself: *for sin is a transgression of the law*; and whatever is a transgression of the law is sin; the law requires a conformity of nature and actions to it, and where there is a want of either, it is a breach of it; it is concerned with the will and affections, the inclinations and desires of the mind, as well as the outward actions of life; concupiscence or lust is a violation of the law, as well as actual sin; and especially a course of sinning both in heart, lip, and life, is a continued transgression of it, and exposes to its curse and condemnation, and to the wrath of God; and is inconsistent with a true hope of being the sons and heirs of God: but then the transgression of what is not the law of God, whether the traditions of the elders among the Jews, or the ordinances of men among Papists, Pagans, and Turks, or any other, is no sin, nor should affect the consciences of men.

Ver. 5. *And ye know that he was manifested, &c.]* This is a truth of the Gospel the saints were well instructed in and acquainted with; that Jesus Christ, the Word and Son of God, who is here meant, who was with the Father, and lay in his bosom from all eternity, was in the fulness of time made manifest in the flesh, or human nature, by assuming it into union with his divine person; in which he came and dwelt among men, and became visible to them: the end of which manifestation was, *to take away our sins*; as the antitype of the scape-goat, making reconciliation and satisfaction for them, through the sacrifice of himself; which was doing what the blood of bulls and goats, or any legal sacrifices or moral performances, could never do: and this he did by taking the sins of his people upon himself, by carrying them up to the cross, and there bearing them, with all the punishment due unto them, in his body; by removing them quite away, and utterly destroying them, finishing and making an end of them: and by causing them to pass away from them, from off their consciences, through the application of his blood by his spirit: *and in him is no sin*; neither original, nor actual; no sin inherent; there was sin imputed to him, but none in him, nor done by him; and hence he became a fit person to be a sacrifice for the sins of others, and by his unblemished sacrifice to take them away; and answered the typical sacrifices under the law, which were to be with-

out spot and blemish : and this shews that he did not offer himself for any sins of his own, for there were none in him, but for the sins of others; and which consideration, therefore, is a strong dissuasive from sinning, and as such is mentioned by the apostle; for, since sin is of such a nature that nothing could atone for it but the blood and sacrifice of Christ, an innocent, as well as a divine person, it should be abhorred by us; and since Christ has taken it away by the sacrifice of himself, it should not be continued and encouraged by us; and since in him is no sin, we ought to imitate him in purity of life and conversation; the end of Christ's bearing our sins was, that we might live unto righteousness, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and his love herein should constrain us to obedience to him : so the Jews¹ speak of a man after the image of God, and who is the mystery of the name Jehovah; and in that man, they say, there is no sin, neither shall death rule over him; and this is that which is said, Psal. v. 4. *neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

Ver. 6. *Whosoever abideth in him, &c.*] As the branch in the vine, deriving all light, life, grace, holiness, wisdom, strength, joy, peace, and comfort from Christ; or dwells in him by faith, enjoys communion with him as a fruit of union to him; and stands fast in him, being rooted and grounded in him, and abides by him, his truths and ordinances, takes up his rest, and places his security in him, and perseveres through him : *sinneth not* ; not that he has no sin in him, or lives without sin, but he does not live in sin, nor give up himself to a vicious course of life; for this would be inconsistent with his dwelling in Christ, and enjoying communion with him : *whosoever sinneth* ; which is not to be understood of a single action, but of a course of sinning : *hath not seen him, neither known him* ; that is, he has never seen Christ with an eye of faith; he has never truly and spiritually seen the glory, beauty, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, his need, and the worth of him; he has never seen him so as to enjoy him, and have communion with him; for what communion hath Christ with Belial, or light with darkness, or righteousness with unrighteousness? nor has he ever savingly known him, or been experimentally acquainted with him; for though he may profess to know him in words, he denies him in works.

Ver. 7. *Little children, let no man deceive you, &c.*] Neither by false doctrines, nor by wicked practices, drawing into the belief of the one, or into the performance of the other; suggesting, as the Gnostics did, that knowledge without practice was enough, and that it was no matter how a man lived, provided his notions of the Gospel were right : *he that doeth righteousness, is righteous* ; not that any man is made righteous by the works of the law, or by his obedience to the law of works, for this is contrary to the express word of God; and besides, the best righteousness of man is imperfect, and can never constitute or denominate him righteous before God; and was he justified by it, it would not only lay a foundation for boasting in him, which ought not to be, but would make the death, the sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, to be in vain; men are only

made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, which he has wrought out, which is revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith, and which God imputes without works; so that he that doeth righteousness is he that being convinced of the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and of the excellency and suitableness of Christ's righteousness, renounces his own, and submits to his; who lays hold upon it, receives it, and exercises faith on it, as his justifying righteousness; and, in consequence of this, lives in a course of holiness and righteousness, in opposition to, and distinction from one that commits sin, or lives a sinful course of life; which, though it does not make him righteous in the sight of God, yet it shews him to be righteous in the sight of men, and proves that faith to be right which lays hold on the righteousness of Christ, by which he is truly righteous : *even as he is righteous* ; as Christ himself is righteous; and so the Syriac version reads; not as personal, or as he is personally and essentially righteous as God; but as mystical, every member of his body being clothed with the same robe of righteousness the whole body of Christ is, and indeed justified by the same righteousness that he as Mediator was, when he rose from the dead, as the representative of his people : moreover, as Christ shewed himself to be righteous as man, by doing good, so believers in him, by imitating him, and walking as he walked, shew themselves to be good and righteous, like, though not equal to him; for as a tree is known by its fruits, so is a good man by his good works, and a righteous man by doing righteousness; and as good fruit does not make a good tree, but shews it to be good, so good works don't make a good man, nor a man's own righteousness make him a righteous man, but shew him to be so.

Ver. 8. *He that committeth sin is of the devil, &c.*] Not every one that sins, or commits acts of sin, then every man is of the devil, because no man lives without the commission of sin; but he who makes sin his constant business, and the employment of his life, whose life is a continued series of sinning, he is of the devil; not as to origin and substance, or by proper generation, as some have literally understood the words; but by imitation, being like him, and so of him their father, doing his lusts, living continually in sin, as he does, and so resemble him, as children do their parents; and hereby also appear to be under his government and influence, to be led captive by him at his will, and so to belong to him, and such as will have their part and portion with him in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, so living and dying : *for the devil sinneth from the beginning* ; not of his creation, for he was made by God a pure and holy creature; but from the beginning of the world, or near it, at least from the beginning of man's creation; for he not only sinned by rebelling against God himself, and by drawing in the rest of the apostate angels into the rebellion with him, but by tempting man, as soon as created, to sin against God : what was his first and particular sin is not certain, whether pride or envy, or what; it seems to be, his not abiding in the truth, or an opposition to the truth of the Gospel, respecting the incar-

¹ Sopher Tikkunim, fol. 112. 1. apud Rittangel. de ver. Rel. Christ. p. 68.

nation of the son of God, mentioned in the following clause; see John viii. 44. however, he has been continually sinning ever since: he *sinneth*; he is always sinning, doing nothing else but sin; so that he that lives a vicious course of life is like him, and manifestly of him: *for this purpose the son of God was manifested*; in human nature, as in ver. 5. whence it appears that he was the son of God before his incarnation, and so not by it; he did not become so through it, nor was he denominated such on account of it; he was not made the son of God by it, but was manifested in it what he was before; and for this end: *that he might destroy the works of the devil*; and the devil himself, and all his dominion and power, and particularly his power over death, and death itself; and especially the sins of men, which are the works of the devil, which he puts them upon, influences them to do, and takes delight in; and which are destroyed by Christ, by his sacrifice and death, being taken, carried, removed away, finished, and made an end of by him; see the note on ver. 5.

Ver. 9. *Whosoever is born of God, &c.*] In a figurative and spiritual sense; who are regenerated, or born from above; who are quickened by the grace of God, and have Christ formed in them; who are made partakers of the divine nature, and new creatures in Christ; which spiritual birth is not owing to men, to the power and will of men, but to the grace of God; and is sometimes ascribed to the father, who of his own will and abundant mercy begets souls again to a lively hope, and saves them by the washing of regeneration; and sometimes to Christ, who quickens whom he will, whose grace is implanted, and image instamped in it, and by whose resurrection from the dead men are begotten again; and chiefly to the spirit of God, who is the author of regeneration, and of the whole of sanctification: and such as are born of him are alive through him, the spirit of life entering into them, and live to God and upon Christ, and breathe after divine and spiritual things, and have their senses to discern them; they see, hear, feel, taste, and savour them; and desire the sincere milk of the word, for their nourishment and growth; and have every grace implanted in them, as faith, hope, and love: and of every such an one it is said, he *doth not commit sin*; does not make it his trade and business; it is not the constant course of his life; he does not live and walk in sin, or give up himself to it; he is not without the being of it in him, or free from acts of sin in his life and conversation, but he does not so commit it as to be the servant of it, a slave unto it, or to continue in it; and that for this reason: *for his seed remaineth in him*; not the word of God, or the Gospel, though that is a seed which is sown by the ministers of it, and blessed by God, and by which he regenerates his people; and which having a place in their hearts, becomes the ingrafted word, and there abides, nor can it be rooted out; where it powerfully teaches to avoid sin, is an antidote against it, and a preservative from it: nor the Holy Spirit of God, though he is the author of the new birth, and the principle of all grace; and where he once is, he always abides; and through the power of his grace believers prevail against sin, and mortify the deeds of the body, and live: but rather the grace of the spirit, the internal

principle of grace in the soul, the new nature, or new man formed in the soul, is meant; which seminally contains all grace in it, and which, like seed, springs up and gradually increases, and always abides; and is pure and incorruptible, and neither sins itself, nor encourages sin, but opposes, checks, and prevents it: *and he cannot sin*; not that it is impossible for such a man to do acts of sin, or that it is possible for him to live without sin; for the words are not to be understood in the sense of those who plead for perfection in this life; for though the saints have perfection in Christ, yet not in themselves; they are not impeccable, they are not free from sin, neither from the being nor actings of it; sin is in them, lives in them, dwells in them, hinders all the good, and does all the mischief it can: or in such sense, as if the sins of believers were not sins; for though they are pardoned and expiated, and they are justified from them, yet they don't cease to be sins; they are equally contrary to the nature, will, and law of God, as well as the sins of others; and are oftentimes attended with more aggravated circumstances, and which God in a fatherly way takes notice of, and chastises for, and on the account of which he hides his face from them: nor does the phrase intend any particular single sin, which cannot be committed; though there are such, as sinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, or denying Christ to be the Saviour of sinners, and a sacrifice for sin, and hatred of a Christian brother as such, and sinning the sin unto death, or the unpardonable sin; neither of which can be committed by a regenerate man: nor is the meaning only, though it is a sense that will very well bear, and agrees with the context, that such persons cannot sin as unregenerate men do; that is, live in a continued course of sinning, and with pleasure, and without reluctance, and so as to lie in it, as the whole world does: but rather the meaning is, he that is born of God, as he is born of God, or that which is born of God in him, the new man, or new creature, cannot sin; for that is pure and holy; there is nothing sinful in it, nor can any thing that is sinful come out of it, or be done by it; it is the workmanship of the Holy Spirit of God; it is a good work, and well-pleasing in the sight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold sin with delight; and an incorruptible seed, which neither corrupts nor is corrupted; and though it is as yet an imperfect work, it is not impure: the reason of the impeccability of the regenerate man, as such, is *because he is born of God*: for that which is born of God in him, does, under the influence of the spirit, power, and grace of God, preserve him from the temptations of Satan, the pollutions of the world, and the corruptions of his own heart; see 1 John v. 18. which the Vulgate Latin version there renders, *the generation of God*, meaning regeneration, or that which is born of God, *preserveth him*: this furnishes out a considerable argument for the perseverance of the saints.

Ver. 10. *In this the children of God are manifest, &c.*] By regenerating grace, and not sinning, in the sense before explained, in consequence of it: adoption is an act of God's grace and sovereignty will; it is secret in his own heart, and is secured in divine predestination, and in the covenant of grace, and is antecedent to regeneration: regeneration and faith do not make men

the children of God, but manifest them to be so; adoption makes them the children of God, and entitles them to the inheritance; regeneration gives them the nature of the children of God, and makes them meet for it, and manifests their right unto it; not to the men of the world, but to themselves and other saints: *and the children of the devil*: such as imitate him, do his will and his lusts, and are openly under his power and influence; these are distinguishable from regenerate persons, and the children of God, by their lives and conversations; so the people of the nations of the world are called, *בְּנֵי הַחַיִּים*, the children of Samael, and the serpent, by the Jews^m, which are with them the names of the devil. *Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God*: that is, he does not appear to be born of God, who does not by faith lay hold on the righteousness of Christ for his justification before God, and acceptance with him; and who does not do works of righteousness in faith from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; for where regenerating grace is, there will be such graces and such practices: *neither he that loveth not his brother*; for as he that loveth God, and Christ, and the brethren, appears manifestly to be born again, and to have passed from death to life, so he that does not is in darkness, in a state of unregeneracy, and walks and continues therein; for was he born again, he would be taught of God to love the saints; see 1 John iv. 7. and iii. 14. and ii. 11.

Ver. 11. *For this is the message, &c.*] Sent from God by Christ, or what he in his ministry declared, and is the commandment which was so frequently urged by him, John xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17. *that ye have heard from the beginning*; of the preaching of the Gospel to them, and of their conversion; see ch. ii. 7. *that we should love one another*; to which the commandment of Christ, the reason with which it is enforced, and the early notice of it, should engage.

Ver. 12. *Not as Cain, &c.*] That is, let us not be like him, or do as he did, hate the brethren. The apostle illustrates brotherly love by its contrary, in the instance of Cain, who was the first instance and example of hatred of the brethren, and of fratricide, and a very detestable one, by which he would dissuade from so vile and abominable a practice: who *was of that wicked one*; Satan, a child of his, an imitator of him, one that appeared to be under his influence, and to belong unto him. So the Jews say of Cainⁿ, that "he was of the side of the serpent (the old serpent the devil); and as the way of the serpent is to slay and to kill, so Cain immediately became a murderer." And again, "because Cain came from the side of the angel of death, he slew his brother^o;" though they say that he afterwards repented, and became worthy of paradise^p. *And slew his brother*; see Gen. iv. 8. According to the tradition of the Jews^q, he struck a stone into his forehead, and killed him: *and wherefore slew he him?* what was the cause and occasion of it? what moved him to it? *because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous*; or *his work*, as the Ethiopic version reads: the sacrifice which he offered up, which,

though it was not evil as to the matter and substance of it, yet was so, being offered with an evil mind, and with an hypocritical heart, and without faith in the sacrifice of Christ, and so was unacceptable to God; whereas, on the other hand, the sacrifice his brother brought was offered up in the faith of Christ, by which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous, and that the work he did was a righteous work, being done in faith, and so was acceptable to God; which Cain perceiving, was filled with envy, and this put him upon killing him. The Jews^r relate the occasion of it after this manner; "Cain said to Abel his brother, come, and let us go out into the open field; and when they were both out in the open field, Cain answered and said to Abel his brother, there's no judgment, nor Judge, nor another world; neither will a good reward be given to the righteous, nor vengeance be taken on the wicked; neither was the world created in mercy, nor is it governed in mercy; or why is thy offering kindly accepted, and mine is not kindly accepted? Abel answered and said to Cain, there is judgment, and there is a Judge, and there is another world; and there are gifts of a good reward to the righteous, and vengeance will be taken on the wicked; and the world was created in mercy, and in mercy it is governed, for according to the fruit of good works it is governed; because that my works are better than thine, my offering is kindly accepted, and thine is not kindly accepted; and they both strove together in the field, and Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." In the Hebrew text in Gen. iv. 8. there is an extraordinary large pause, as if a discourse of this kind, which passeth between the two brothers, was to be inserted. Philo the Jew says^s, that in the contention or dispute between Cain and Abel, Abel attributed all things to God, and Cain ascribed every thing to himself; so that the controversy was about grace and works, as now; and as then Cain hated his brother upon this account, so now carnal men hate and persecute the saints, because they will not allow their works to be the cause of justification and salvation: and from hence also it may be observed, that a work may be, as to the matter of it, good, and yet as to its circumstances, and the end and view of it, evil.

Ver. 13. *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*] By the world is meant the inhabitants of the world, the wicked part of them; these hate the saints, though without a cause, any just cause, and for no other reason, but because they are chosen and called out of the world, and don't live the wicked life they do: and this hatred of theirs is not at all to be wondered at; so it was from the beginning, and has been in all ages since; immediately upon the fall there was enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which shewed itself in Cain, the instance just given, who hated and murdered his righteous brother; Ishmael, that was born after the flesh, persecuted Isaac, that was born after the spirit; and as it was then, 'tis now, the Jews persecuted the prophets of old, and hated Christ and his apostles. This is the common lot

^m Raza Mehimsa in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 2.

ⁿ Midrash Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 42. 4.

^o Zohar in ib. fol. 43. 1.

^p Ib. fol. 41. 1, 2.

^q Targum Jon. in Gen. iv. 8. Pirke Eliczer, c. 21.

^r Targum Hieros. & Jon. in Gen. iv. 8.

^s Quod Det. Potior. p. 161.

of all the saints, of all that will live godly in Christ Jesus; and therefore it should not be reckoned a strange and unusual thing; it always was so, even from the beginning, as soon as ever there were two sorts of persons, good and bad, righteous and wicked. This is a corollary or conclusion drawn from the above instance of Cain.

Ver. 14. *We know that we have passed from death to life, &c.*] From a death in sin, a moral or spiritual death; which lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in an alienation from the life of God; in a loss of the image of God, of righteousness, holiness, and knowledge, in which man was created; in a privation of all true sense of sin, and in a servitude to it, which is unto death, and is no other than death: and from a legal death, or death in a law-sense, under the sentence of which all men are, as considered in Adam; and which God's elect are sensible of, when convinced by the spirit of God, and are in their own apprehension as dead men. Now in regeneration, which is a quickening of sinners dead in sin, a resurrection of them from the dead, the people of God pass from this death of sin, and the law, to a life of sanctification, having principles of grace and life implanted in them; and to a life of justification, and of faith on Christ, as the Lord their righteousness; and to a life of communion with Christ; and to such a life as is to the glory of Christ; and to a right to eternal life. And this passing from the one to the other is not of themselves, it is not their own act; no man can quicken himself, or raise himself from the dead; in this men are passive: and so the words are rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, *we know that we are translated*; that is, by God the Father, who delivers from the power of darkness, and death, and translates into the kingdom of his dear Son, which is a state of light and life; or by Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, who is the author of the resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace; or by the Spirit of life from Christ, by whom souls are quickened, and of whom they are born again: and this passage from death to life, or regeneration, is a thing that may be, and is known by the regenerate man; who, as he knows surely, that whereas he was blind he now sees, so that whereas he was dead in sin, he is now alive; and among other things it may be known by this, *because we love the brethren*: this is not the cause of passing from death to life, but the effect of it, and so an evidence of it, or that by which it is known; brotherly love being what the saints are taught of God in regeneration, and is a fruit of the spirit of God, and is what true faith works by, and is what shews itself as soon as any thing in a regenerate man; nor can any one love the saints, as such, as brethren in Christ, unless he is born again; a man may indeed love a saint, as a natural relative, as a good neighbour, and because he has done him some good offices, and because of some excellent qualities in him, as a man of learning, sense, candour, civility, &c. though he has not the grace of God; but to love him as a child of God, a member of Christ, and because he has his image stamped on him, no man can do this, unless he has received the grace of God; so that this is a certain evidence of it: *he that loveth not his brother, abideth*

in death; in the death of sin, in a state of nature and unregeneracy; under the sentence of condemnation and death; and he is liable to eternal death, which is the wages of sin, under the power of which such a man manifestly is. This is said to deter from hatred, as also what follows.

Ver. 15. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, &c.*] A soul-murderer, as the Ethiopic version renders it; not only of himself, for every sinner, by sinning, wrongs and destroys his own soul; but of his brother whom he hates: he is a murderer of him in his heart, even as he that lusts after a woman hath committed adultery with her in his heart, out of which arise murders, as well as adulteries; it is not only taking away life, but also causeless anger, malice, and hatred, that is a breach of the sixth command; see Matt. v. 21, 22, 28. and xv. 19. *and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*; he has not the grace of life, or the beginning of eternal life in him; he has no meekness for it, being unregenerate; and no right unto it, being unrighteous; nor has he the earnest and pledge of it, being destitute of the spirit of God; all which a regenerate man has, and has them abiding in him: not but that the sin of murder may be forgiven; a man guilty of it may truly repent, and have pardoning grace applied unto him, and enjoy eternal life, through the grace of the spirit, and the blood and righteousness of Christ; but without these he is so far from having eternal life, that he is not only punishable with a corporeal death, according to the laws of God and man, but he is exposed unto, and will die the second, or an eternal death.

Ver. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, &c.*] The phrase of *God* is not in the Oriental versions, nor in the Greek copies, but is in the Complutensian edition, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is favoured by the Syriac version, which reads, *by this we know his love to us*; and so the Ethiopic version, *by this we know his love*. That is, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and properly God, the great God, the mighty God, the true God, and God over all, blessed for ever. His love is manifested to his people, and perceived by them in various instances; but in nothing is it more clearly seen than in the following one: *because he laid down his life for us*: of the life of Christ, and his laying it down in the room of his people, see the note on John xv. 13. which shews his love, his free grace and favour; for this arose not from any merit or worth in the persons he died for; not from their love, loveliness, or duty, but from his rich mercy, and the great love wherewith he loved them; and which, though it cannot be equalled, should be imitated: *and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*; not in such sense, or for such ends and purposes, as Christ laid down his life for us; for no man, as by giving his money, so by laying down his life, can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him: but the meaning is, that saints ought to risk their lives, and expose themselves to dangers, for the sake of their brethren, when they are called to it, and the case requires it: as Priscilla and Aquila laid down their necks, or ventured their lives for the Apostle Paul, Rom. xvi. 3, 4. and they should also, when called unto it, freely lay down their lives in the cause of Christ, and for the sake of

his Gospel, for the gaining of souls to Christ, and for the confirming of the faith of the brethren in him, as the apostles of Christ, and the martyrs of Jesus, have done; this is an argument for brotherly love, in the highest instance of it, taken from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, than which nothing is more forcible, or can lay a greater obligation on the saints.

Ver. 17. *But whoso hath this world's good, &c.*] The possessions of this world, worldly substance, the temporal good things of it; for there are some things in it, which are honestly, pleasantly, and profitably good, when used lawfully, and not abused, otherwise they are to the owner's hurt: or *the living of this world*; that which the men of the world give up themselves to, are bent upon, and pursue after; or on which men live, and by which life is maintained, and preserved, and made comfortable in the present state of things; such as meat, drink, apparel, money, houses, lands, &c. The Ethiopic version renders it, *he that hath the government of this world*; as if it pointed at a person that is in some high office of worldly honour and profit, and is both great and rich; but the words are not to be restrained to such an one only, but refer to any man that has any share of the outward enjoyments of life; that has not only a competency for himself and family, but something to spare, and especially that has an affluence of worldly substance; but of him that has not, it is not required; for what a man distributes ought to be his own, and not another's, and in proportion to what he has, or according to his ability: *and seeth his brother have need*; meaning, not merely a brother in that strict and natural relation, or bond of consanguinity; though such an one in distress ought to be, in the first place, regarded, for no man should hide himself from, overlook and neglect his own flesh and blood; but any, and every man, *his neighbour*, as the Ethiopic version reads, whom he ought to love as himself; and especially a brother in a spiritual relation, or one that is of the household of faith: if he has need; that is, is naked and destitute of daily food, has not the common supplies of life, and what nature requires; and also, whose circumstances are low and mean, though not reduced to the utmost extremity; and if he sees him in this distress with his own eyes, or if he knows it, hears of it, and is made acquainted with it, otherwise he cannot be blame-worthy for not relieving him. *And shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him*; hardens his heart, turns away his eyes, and shuts his hand; has no tenderness in him for, nor sympathy with his distressed brother, nor gives him any succour: and this shews, that when relief is given, it should be not in a morose and churlish manner, with reflection and reproach, but with affection and pity; and where there is neither one nor the other, *how dwelleth the love of God in him?* neither the love with which God loves men; for if this was shed abroad in him, and had a place, and dwelt in him, and he was properly affected with it, it would warm his heart, and loosen his affections, and cause his bowels to move to his poor brother: nor the love with which God is loved; for if he don't love his brother whom he sees in distress, how should he love the invisible God? ch. iv. 20. nor that love which

God requires of him, which is to love his neighbour as himself.

Ver. 18. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, &c.*] Which though it holds good of love to God, and to Jesus Christ, yet here is to be understood of love to the brethren, as the context shews; and so the Syriac version reads, *let us not love one another in word, &c.* that is, without the heart, or with a double heart; speaking one thing with the lip, and designing another thing in the heart; speaking peaceably with the mouth, and with the heart laying wait; or we should not love in this manner *only*; and so the Arabic version of De Dieu adds. It is very lawful and right to express our love to one another, and to all men in words, to give good words, and use courteous language, and speak in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, and especially to persons in distress; but this should not be all, it will be of no avail to say to such, be warmed and filled, and give them nothing but these good words, nothing to warm and fill them with; see Jam. ii. 15, 16. *but in deed and in truth*; for true love is a laborious and operative grace, hence we read of the work and labour of love; it shews itself by the saints serving one another, in spirituals; as by bearing one another's burdens, forbearing with, and forgiving one another, praying for each other, and building up one another on their most holy faith; exhorting each other to the duties of religion, and not suffering sins upon one another, but admonish in love, and restore with meekness; and in temporals, distributing to the necessities of the saints, ministering to them of their worldly substance, and supplying their daily wants: and this is loving *in deed, or in work*; this is actual love, love in fact, and what is apparent and evident: and it is *in truth*, when it is in reality, and not in shew only; and when it is cordially and heartily done, with cheerfulness, and without grudging.

Ver. 19. *And hereby we know that we are of the truth, &c.*] By the saints loving one another in deed and in truth, they know, as the cause is known by the effect, that they are of God, who is the true God, the God of truth, and cannot lie, and is truth itself; that they are the children of God, and are born of him, since they love those that are, and every like loves its like; and that they are of Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; that they belong to him, are his, since they have his spirit, as appears by his fruits in them, and this, among the rest, love to the brethren; and that they are his disciples, which others, even all men know, as well as themselves, by their mutual brotherly love; and that they are of the Gospel, which is truth, and the word of truth; that they are begotten, and born again, according to the will and grace of God by it, and are on the side of it, and can do nothing against, but all for it; and that they are true, sincere, and upright persons, true believers in Christ, whose faith works by love, and are real lovers of him, and his, since they love not in word only, but in deed and in truth. *And shall assure our hearts before him*; or *persuade our hearts*; arrive to a full assurance of faith, hope, and understanding, that we are of the truth, do belong to God, are loved by him with an everlasting love, are chosen by him unto salvation, and are his adopted and regenerated ones,

having passed from death to life, of which brotherly love is a sure evidence, ver. 14. Some render the words *shall pacify, or make our hearts tranquil; or quiet*; this only the blood of Christ can do, and does, being sprinkled on the conscience: he only has a quiet mind, or true peace of conscience, that looks to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and deals with his blood for the full and free remission of his sins: it is true indeed, that one that loves his brother heartily and sincerely, has peace of mind in it, though not for it; when, on the other hand, there is no peace to the wicked man, that hates his brother; for where there is envying, malice, hatred, and strife, there is no true peace, pleasure, and comfort, but confusion, uneasiness, distraction, and every evil work. Or this passage may refer to that holy confidence before God, which true believers in Christ, and cordial lovers of the brethren, have; both now at the throne of grace, where they can come with boldness, intrepidity, and freedom, to ask for what they want, and confidently believe they shall receive what is proper and needful for them; and also hereafter, at the throne of judgment, and in the day of judgment, when they shall have boldness, and not be ashamed before the Judge at his coming; who will particularly take notice of their love in feeding, clothing, and visiting the least of his brethren, which he takes as done to himself.

Ver. 20. *For if our heart condemn us, &c.*] Of want of love to the brethren, and of hypocrisy in it, as well as of any other sin; for the conscience, which is meant by the heart here, is accuser, witness and judge; it accuses of the evil of sin, and is as good as a thousand witnesses; and upon its own testimony pronounces guilty, and condemns. *God is greater than our heart*: for he is the Maker of it, and he has the power over it, and the management of it; it is in his hands, and to be turned by him as he pleases; and he is the searcher and trier of it; and besides, is a swifter witness than conscience, and a superior Judge unto it. *And knoweth all things*; that are in the heart; the principles of actions, and all the actions of men, for which their hearts condemn them; and all the sinfulness in them, and the aggravations of them; wherefore, as he knows them more perfectly, he judges of them more exactly, and will reprove more sharply, and condemn more severely for them: hence, if the condemnation of men's hearts and consciences be so very great, as sometimes to be intolerable and insupportable, what will be the righteous judgment, and dreadful condemnation of God? how fearful a thing will it be to fall into the hands of the living God! this sense is confirmed by the Syriac version rendering it, *how much greater is God than our hearts?* there is another sense given by some, which is not by way of terror, but comfort, and that is, that if the hearts of believers accuse, reprove, and condemn for sin through unbelief, or want of clear view of pardon and righteousness by Christ, God is greater, as in power, so in knowledge, than the hearts of men; and he knows the thoughts he has towards them, which are of peace, and not of evil; the covenant he has made with his son, of which he is ever mindful; and what his son has done, that he has made full satisfaction for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness: so that let sin, or Satan, or the world, or

the law, or their own hearts condemn them, there is no condemnation of any avail unto them. But the former sense seems best to agree with the context.

Ver. 21. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, &c.*] Which must be understood, not of a stupidity of mind, as is in unregenerate men, who have no sense of sin, no sorrow for it, or remorse of conscience on account of it; or as is in them who are past feeling; having their consciences seared as with a red-hot iron; such cannot be entitled to the advantages that follow; nor is it of such persons the apostle speaks, but of himself, and other Christians, the beloved of the Lord, and one another, who had an experience of the grace of God upon their souls, and made a profession of religion: nor does it design such a purity of heart and life in believers, as that their hearts do not smite, reproach, and condemn them for sin at any time, for such a state of perfection is not to be attained to and expected in this life; but rather a conscience purged by the blood of Christ, or an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by that blood, which speaks peace and pardon, so that there is no more conscience of sin, for the removal of which that is applied; and this gives boldness and confidence at the throne of grace: though it is best of all to confine it to the case of brotherly love; for the sense is not, if our heart condemn us not of any thing but of the want of brotherly love, or insincerity in it, then *have we confidence towards God*: or with him, at the throne of his grace: such can draw nigh to him, and stand before him with an holy and humble confidence, when such as hate the brethren, as Cain did, in whom the apostle instances, and those that go in his way, cannot; whose heart condemned him, his conscience smote him, and he went from the presence of the Lord; but those that love the brethren have confidence of their relation to God; by this they know their regeneration, and by that their adoption, and so that they are the children of God; and can therefore draw nigh to God as their father, and call him so; they can come with an holy boldness and intrepidity of mind before him, and use a *παρρησια*, freedom of speech, with him; can tell him all their mind, pour out their souls unto him, and lay before him their case and wants; they have confidence of his power, faithfulness, and willingness to supply their need, and fulfil all his promises to them, and that their prayers will be heard, answered, and regarded by him in his own time.

Ver. 22. *And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, &c.*] According to his promise, Matt. vii. 7. that is, whatever is asked according to the will of God, in the name of Christ, and for his sake, and in faith, nothing wavering, but believing in God, in his covenant and promises, for these are provisos in the case; and such as ask in this way may exercise an holy confidence that they shall receive; and indeed they do receive what they ask for; see 1 John v. 14. John xiv. 13, 14. Matt. xxi. 22. *because we keep his commandments*; not that keeping the commands of God is the meritorious cause of receiving any thing from him; for when men have done all they can, or are assisted to do, they are but unprofitable servants in point of merit: whatever is received from God, as it is in consequence of asking, so it is entirely owing to his own grace and favour, and for the sake of Christ; but keeping the commands of

God is a necessary adjunct, or, as Calvin on the text calls it, an inseparable accident, or what necessarily belongs unto, and enters into the character of such, who are heard and answered by God, and receive at his hands; for there is a great deal of truth in what the Jews say to the blind man, John ix. 31. and which may serve as a comment on these words: *and do those things that are pleasing in his sight*; as keeping of his commandments is; not that these things ingratiate into the love and favour of God, or are the causes and conditions of it, for the love of God is prior to any thing of this kind; nor are they the causes of men's acceptance with God, for the acceptance both of persons and services is only in Christ the beloved; but these things are what God approves of, when done in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to his glory: and since he hears such persons that are worshippers of him, and do his will, and has promised good things to them; this is therefore a reason strengthening their confidence in him, that what they ask they shall receive.

Ver. 23. *And this is his commandment, &c.*] Having mentioned the keeping of the commandments of God, the apostle proceeds to shew what they are; that they are faith in Christ, and love to one another; which two are reduced to one, because they are inseparable; where the one is, the other is; faith works by love. *That we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ*; Christ is the object of faith, and he is so, as he is Jesus, a Saviour; faith deals with him as such, and will have no other Saviour but he: and now to believe in him, is not merely to believe that he is the son of God, the true Messiah, the Saviour of the world, that he is come in the flesh, has suffered, and died, and rose again from the dead, is ascended into heaven, and is set down at the right hand of God, makes intercession for his people, and will come again to judge the quick and dead; but it is to go forth in special and spiritual acts upon him, such as looking at him, coming to him, venturing on him, trusting in him for life and salvation, committing all into his hands, and expecting all from him. And this is called a *commandment*, and comes under the notion of one; not that it is properly a law, or belongs

to the law; for faith in Christ Jesus is a fruit of electing grace, and a blessing of the covenant of grace; it is the free gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, and is peculiar to the elect of God, and sheep of Christ; and so cannot belong to the law of works; but, as the Hebrew words, *תורה*, and *מצוה*, both signify any doctrine, and instruction in general; see Psal. xix. 7, 8. so the word here used designs an evangelical doctrine, a divine instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, which declares that he that believes in Christ shall be saved; and so the word is used for a doctrine in this epistle, ch. ii. 7. and that of the next command or doctrine, which follows, *and love one another as he gave us commandment*; that is, as Christ taught and instructed his disciples, John xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17.

Ver. 24. *And he that keepeth his commandments, &c.*] Attends to those instructions and declarations concerning faith in Christ, and love to the brethren, and acts according to them: *dwelleth in him, and he in them*; that is, he dwells in Christ, and Christ dwells in him; the same is said of believing in Christ under the figurative expressions of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, in John vi. 56. see the note there: *and hereby we know that he abideth in us*; or *dwelleth in us*, as before, *by the spirit which he hath given us*; which if understood of private Christians, as the preceding verses incline to, the sense is, that union to Christ, and the continuance of it, or his in-dwelling as a fruit of union, and the permanency of that, are evidenced by the spirit of God; who is given in consequence of union and relation to Christ, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, of faith and love, of adoption, and as the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; but if of the apostles and ministers of the word, it may regard the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on them, fitting them for their work and office, and who is a spirit of truth, and not of error; and by having and enjoying these, they knew that Christ abode in them, and had reason to believe, according to his promise, that he would be with them, and with his ministering servants in succession, to the end of the world; and this sense seems to be encouraged by the former part of the following chapter.

C H A P. IV.

IN this chapter the apostle cautions against seducing spirits; advises to try them, and gives rules by which they may be known, and by which they are distinguished from others; and then returns to his favourite subject, brotherly love. He exhorts the saints not to believe every man that came with a doctrine to them, but to try them, since there were many false teachers in the world; and gives a rule by which they may be tried and judged, as that whatever teacher owns Christ to be come in the flesh is of God, but he that does not is not of God, but is the spirit of antichrist that should come, and was in the world, ver. 1, 2. but, for the comfort of those to whom he writes, he observes, that they were of God, and had overcome these false teachers, through the mighty power of the divine Spirit in them, who is greater than Satan, and all his emissaries, ver. 4.

He distinguishes between seducing spirits, and faithful ministers of the word; the former are of the world, speak of worldly things, and worldly men hear them; but the latter are of God, and they that have any spiritual knowledge of God hear them; but such as are not of God do not hear them, by which may be known the spirit of truth from the spirit of error, ver. 5, 6. And then the apostle returns to his former exhortation to brotherly love, which he enforces by the following reasons, because it is of God, a fruit of his spirit and grace, and because it is an evidence of being born of God, and of having a true knowledge of him; whereas he that is destitute of it does not know him, seeing God is love, ver. 7, 8. and having affirmed that God is love, he proves it, by the mission of his son, to be a propitiation for the sins of such that did not love him, and that they might live through him;

wherefore he argues, that if God had such a love to men, so undeserving of it, then the saints ought to love one another, ver. 9, 10, 11. Other arguments follow, engaging to it, as that God is invisible; and if he is to be loved, then certainly his people, who are visible; and that such who love one another, God dwells in them, and his love is perfected in them; and that he dwells in them is known by the gift of his Spirit to them, ver. 12, 13. and that God the Father so loved the world, as to send his Son to be the Saviour of it, before asserted, is confirmed by the apostles, who were eyewitnesses of it; who also declare, that whoever confesses the sonship of Christ, God dwells in him, and he in God; and who had an assurance of the love of God to them, who is love itself; so that he that dwells in God, and God in him, dwells in love, ver. 14, 15, 16. And great are the advantages arising from hence, for hereby the saints' love to God is made perfect; they have boldness in the day of judgment, since as he is, so are they in this world, and fear is cast out by it, ver. 17, 18. but lest too much should be thought to be ascribed to love, that is said to be owing to the love of God to them, which is prior to theirs to him, and the reason of it, ver. 19. And the chapter is closed with observing the contradiction there is between a profession of love to God, and hatred of the brethren, seeing God, who is invisible, cannot be loved, if brethren that are seen are hated; and also the commandment, that he that loves God should love his brother also, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, &c.*] The apostle having mentioned the word *spirit* in the latter part of the preceding chapter, takes an occasion from thence to return to what he had been suggesting in the second chapter, concerning the many antichrists that then were, and whom he points out, and here cautions against. By *every spirit* he means, either every doctrine that is pretended to come from the spirit of God, or every teacher, who professes to be qualified and sent by him, and to have his light, knowledge, and doctrine from him. Every true minister of the Gospel has the spirit, and the gifts of the spirit, more or less, to qualify him for his work; he is separated, and called to it by him, and receives his spiritual light and knowledge from him; it is he that teaches him sound doctrine, and leads him into all truth, as it is in Jesus, and brings every necessary truth to his remembrance; and who succeeds his ministrations to the good of souls: but there are some who call themselves the ministers of the Gospel, who, though they may have some natural abilities, and a share of human learning, and a notional knowledge of things, yet have never received either grace or gifts from the spirit; nor have they been ever called by him; nor are their ministrations according to that divine word which is inspired by him, nor attended with his demonstration and power; wherefore, though some professing to have the spirit of Christ are to be believed, yet not every one; and though the spirit is not to be quenched in any, nor prophesying to be despised, yet care should be taken what is heard and received: some persons are so obstinate and incredulous as not to believe any thing that is declared, be the evidence what it will; as the Jews would not believe Christ and his apostles, though what they said agreed with Moses and the prophets, and was confirmed by

miracles; and others are too credulous; at once receive every teacher, and embrace every upstart doctrine; this they should not do, *but try the spirits whether they are of God*; not by human reason, especially as carnal and un sanctified; for though the doctrines of the Gospel are not contrary to true reason, they are above it, and not to be judged of by it, and are disapproved of and rejected by carnal reason; but by the word of God, which is the standard of all doctrine; and whatever agrees with that is to be received, and what does not should be rejected. And so to do is very commendable, as appears from the instance of the Bereans, who on this account are said to be more noble than those of Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 11. and from the commendation of the church at Ephesus, Rev. ii. 2. And this is what every believer, every private Christian should do; to them it belongs to read and search the Scriptures, and prove all things, and judge for themselves of the truth of doctrine; and to such a probation or trial of the spirits, spiritual light, knowledge, judgment, sense, experience, and divine guidance are necessary, which should be asked of God, and an increase thereof; and all such diligent searchers, and humble inquirers, are capable of making judgment of persons and doctrines, whether they are from the spirit of God or not, for the spirit of God never speaks contrary to his word: and the reason why such a trial should be made is, *because many false prophets are gone out into the world*: such who pretended either to a revelation of future things, and to foretell things to come; or rather to a gift of prophesying, or preaching in Christ's name, to be *prophets* and spiritual men, and ministers of the word, but were *false ones*; who either predicted what did not come to pass, or rather preached false doctrine, by corrupting the word, and handling it deceitfully, and so imposed upon and ruined the souls of others, as well as deceived their own: and there were not only one, or two, or a few of these, but *many*, as our Lord had foretold, Matt. xxiv. 11, 24. and which makes the reason the stronger for not believing every spirit, but trying them; and the rather, since they were not sent of God, nor called out by his churches, but were *gone out* of themselves; of their own heads, and without any mission from God or man: and *into the world* too; they were in every part of it, and especially where there were any churches of Christ; into which they first crept in privily, and at unawares, but afterwards became public preachers of the word, and then separating from them, set up openly in the world for themselves.

Ver. 2. *Hereby know ye the spirit of God, &c.*] This is a rule by which believers may know whether a man professing to have the spirit of God, and to be called and sent by him, and whether the doctrine he preaches, is of him or no: *every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God*; or of the spirit of God; that is, every doctrine which carries this truth in it; or every man that owns, and professes, and publishes this doctrine concerning Christ, is on the side of God and truth; and which contains several articles in it, respecting the person and office of Christ; as that he existed before he came in the flesh, not in the human nature, or as man, or as an angel, but as the son of God, as a divine person, being truly and properly God; so that this confession takes in his divine sonship, and

proper deity, and also his true and real humanity; that the Messiah was incarnate, against the Jews, and was God and man in one person; and that he was really man, and not in appearance only, against the heretics of those times: and it also includes his offices, as that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Messiah, which the Jews denied, and that he was the anointed prophet, priest, and King; and so is a confession or acknowledgment of all the doctrines of the Gospel, which came by him, as a prophet; and of his satisfaction, sacrifice, and intercession, as a priest; and of all his ordinances and commands as a King; and that he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of men. Now, whoever owns and declares this system of truth, *is of God*: not that every one that assents unto this, or preaches it, is born of God; a man may believe, and confess all this, as the devils themselves do, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; but the spirit, or doctrine, which contains these things in it, is certainly of God, or comes from him; or whoever brings these truths with him, and preaches them, he is, so far as he does so, on the side of God and truth, and to be regarded.

Ver. 3. *And every spirit that confesseth not, &c.*] The proper deity and sonship of Christ, his true and real humanity, and his Messiahship; or any of his offices, doctrines, and ordinances; or his satisfaction and righteousness; or that peace, pardon, justification, life, and salvation, are by him; all which are meant by what follows, *that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*: this clause is left out in the Ethiopic version, and that without hurting the sense, since it is easily supplied from the preceding verse; and the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, only read *Jesus*: and the latter reads the whole thus, *and every spirit that dissolves Jesus*; that separates the two natures, human and divine, in him, and makes two persons of them; or denies either of them, either that he is truly God, or really man, or denies him to be Jesus, the Saviour; who, as much as in him lies, destroys his person, office, and work, and makes void his obedience, sufferings, and death: *is not of God*; neither he nor his doctrine are of God; his doctrine cannot come from God, being contrary to the word of God; and he himself is neither born of God, nor on his side. *And this is that spirit of antichrist*, who is against Christ, or opposes himself to him; as he who denies his sonship, his deity, his humanity, his offices, and his grace, manifestly does; every doctrine that is calculated against these truths is the spirit and doctrine of antichrist: *whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world*: in the false teachers, the forerunners of antichrist; see the note on ch. ii. 18.

Ver. 4. *Ye are of God, little children, &c.*] This, with what follows, is said for the comfort of the saints, and to deliver them from the fears of being drawn aside by the delusions of the false prophets, and antichrists; since they belonged to God, were his elect, and therefore could not be finally and totally seduced; they were the children of God by adopting grace, and could not become the servants of men; they were born of God, and so were kept by the power of God unto salvation, as all that are begotten unto a lively hope are; they were enlightened by the spirit of God, and had a discerning of truth from error, and therefore could

not be imposed upon: *and have overcome them*; the false prophets, being in a good cause, fighting the good fight of faith, and having good weapons, particularly the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and invincible arguments from thence; and also gracious assistance from the spirit of God, who gives a mouth that none can shut, and wisdom that none can resist; as well as an inward experience of the truth, and power of Gospel doctrines: a testimony within themselves, which will stand the whole shock and opposition of the enemy: the Vulgate Latin version reads, *and have overcome him*; antichrist, whose spirit was then in the world; or the world itself, or Satan, the god of the world; and so the Ethiopic version reads, *and have overcome the evil one*, as in ch. ii. 13, 14. the reason of which victory, and which adds to the comfort and support of saints in their present warfare, is, *because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*; by he that is in the world is meant either the devil, the prince and god of the world, and who goes up and down in it, dwells in the hearts of the men of it, under whose influence they are, and in whom he works effectually; or antichrist, whose spirit was now in the world, and whose doctrine was propagated by the false teachers, in whom he began to appear; but he that is in the saints, either God who dwells in them, and they in him, ver. 15. is mightier than the man of sin, and his emissaries, to keep and preserve from all corruptions, and every false way; or Christ, who dwells in their hearts by faith, and is stronger than the strong man armed, and able to save and deliver out of his hands; or the Spirit of God; and so the Arabic version reads, *the Spirit that is in you*; who is in the saints, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as a spirit of adoption, and the earnest of their inheritance; he is able to carry on the work of grace in them, and finish it, and will do it; and he, as a spirit of truth, is more powerful than the spirit of error; and when the enemy comes in like a flood, or pours in a flood of errors and heresies, he lifts up a standard against him, causes him to fly, and secures the saints from being carried away with it: compare with this the Septuagint version of Psal. cxxiv. 1, 2. *if it had not been the Lord who was on our side*; which render it thus, *if the Lord had not been in us*.

Ver. 5. *They are of the world, &c.*] That is, the false prophets and teachers that were gone into the world, and had the spirit of antichrist in them; these were as they were when they came into the world, under the pollution, guilt, and dominion of sin, in a state of unregeneracy, carnality, and darkness; they properly belonged unto it, and walked after the course of it, and were under the influence of the god of it, who led them into error; and were sensual, and indulged themselves in worldly lusts, and were seeking after worldly things; supposed that gain was godliness, and had men's persons in admiration because of advantage; their nature and disposition, their principles and practices, and their ends and views, were worldly; and were quite different from Christ and his apostles, John xvii. 14, 16. *therefore speak they of the world*; they speak the wisdom of the world, or that in which the world thinks wisdom lies, and cry up for true knowledge, and right principles; and this they do with the enticing words of man's wisdom, or in words which man's wisdom teacheth;

speaking great swelling words of vanity, which take with vain and carnal minds; and preach doctrines suited to their own taste, and the taste of others, as carnal and worldly men; such as the purity of human nature, in its first conception and birth, its freedom from any original corruption, and from any concern with the sin of Adam, only with actual sin of its own; and the power of it to do that which is good, keep the law of God, and obtain his favour; the non-necessity of any internal work of efficacious grace, a reformation of life and manners being thought sufficient to render a man acceptable to God, and prepare him for eternal happiness; the doctrine of justification and salvation by works; all which are pleasing to carnal men: hence it follows, *and the world heareth them*; the wicked of the world; worldly and unregenerate men attend on their ministry, approve of what they deliver, and receive it with pleasure, and believe it: this expresses both the quality of the hearers of false teachers, that they are that part of the world, the worse part of it, which lies in wickedness; and the quantity of them, the greater part of the world, as it was foretold by Christ, and his apostles, that they should deceive many, that many should follow their pernicious ways, and that they should draw many disciples after them; wherefore the numbers that attend such persons, as it need not be wondered at, since both preachers and hearers, and the doctrines preached and heard, are all alike, they are of the world, so it should not be stumbling to the people of God.

Ver. 6. *We are of God, &c.*] Not only as the chosen of God, the children of God, regenerated ones, and believers, but as ministers of the Gospel; they were chosen, and called, and sent of God to preach the Gospel, and were qualified for it, by gifts received from him, and had their doctrine from him, as well as their commission and mission: they were not of the world, and therefore did not speak of the world, nor things suited to worldly men; but being of God, they spoke the words of God, which were agreeable to him, which made for the glory of the three divine Persons, and were consistent with the divine perfections; which maintained the honour and dignity of the persons in the Godhead; which magnified the grace of God in salvation, and debased the creature: *he that knoweth God*; not only as the God of nature and providence, but as in Christ, and that not only professionally, but practically; that has an experimental knowledge of him, that knows him as exercising loving-kindness, having tasted of his grace and goodness; that knows him so as to trust in him, and love him; for such a knowledge of God is meant, as has true real affection to him joined with it; so that it is he that loves his name, his glory, his truths, and his ordinances: *he heareth us*: not only externally, constantly attending on the ministry of the word, as such do; but internally, understanding what is heard, receiving it in love, cordially embracing it, and firmly believing it, and acting according to it: *he that is not of God*: who is not born of God, but is as he was when born into the world, and is of it: and who does not righteousness, nor loves his brother, nor confesses the divinity, humanity, and offices of Christ, and so is not on the side of truth, nor has the truth of grace in him; see ch. iii. 10. and iv. 3. such a

man *heareth not us*; he is a mere natural man, a carnal and unregenerate man; and such an one cannot attend on a Gospel ministry, or receive Gospel doctrines, which are with him senseless, stupid, and foolish notions, yea, foolishness itself; nor can he know and understand them through ignorance, and want of a spiritual discerning; they are hard sayings, and he cannot hear, nor bear them; and when this is the case, it is a plain token of unregeneracy, and that such persons are not of God; see John viii. 47. *Herby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error*; the difference between truth and error; can distinguish one from another, and discern who are the true ministers of Christ, and who are the false teachers; for not only the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, are the test and standard, the touchstone to bring them to, and try them by; and the doctrines they severally bring shew who they are; but even their very hearers distinguish them. Spirits, or men pretending to the spirit of God, may be known in a great measure by their followers; they who have the spirit of error, and are of the world, they are followed, and caressed, and applauded by the men of the world, by unregenerate persons; they who have the spirit of truth, and are of God, they are heard and approved of, and embraced by spiritual men, by such who know God in Christ, and have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Ver. 7. *Beloved, let us love one another, &c.*] The apostle having finished what he proposed to say concerning the trying of spirits, returns to his former exhortation to brotherly love, and which comes with fresh force and strength; for since worldly men follow, hear, embrace, and cleave to the false teachers; such as are of God, and on the side of truth, should love one another, and their faithful ministers, and stand fast in one spirit by the truths of the Gospel, in opposition to every error: *for love is of God*; to love one another is the command of God, it is his revealed will, and is well-pleasing in his sight; it comes from him, is a gift of his grace, and a fruit of his spirit, and which he teaches regenerate ones to exercise: *and every one that loveth God*, as the Alexandrian copy reads, or Christ, and the saints, who seem to be particularly meant: *is born of God*; for love to the brethren is an evidence of regeneration; see the note on ch. iii. 14. *and knoweth God*; he knows God in Christ, and therefore loves those who have the grace of God in them, and the image of Christ upon them; he knows the mind and will of God, being taught of God to love the brethren; and he knows the love of God, and has had an experience of the grace of God, which influences him to love the saints.

Ver. 8. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God, &c.*] If a man loves not the children of God, those that are born of him, he does not know, so as to love God, the father of them; for to pretend love to God, the begetter of them, whom he sees not, and not love those who are begotten by him, and are visible objects of respect, is a contradiction, and cannot be reconciled; see ver. 20. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version, and is transposed in the Syriac version, which reads the text thus, *for God is love, and whoever loveth not, knoweth not God*. By which reading, the following reason stands in close connexion with ver. 7.

For God is love; he loves himself; there is an entire love between the three divine Persons, who are in the strictest, and in the most inconceivable and inexpressible manner affected to each other; their love is natural and essential: God loves all his creatures as such, nor does he hate any of them, as so considered; and he bears an everlasting, unchangeable, and invariable love to his elect in Christ Jesus; of which an instance is given in the following verses, and is a reason why the saints should love one another; that they might be like their heavenly Father, by whom they are begotten, and of whom they are born, and whose children they are; seeing he is love itself, and in his breast is nothing else but love. So the Shechinah is, by the Cabalistic Jews¹, called אהבה, love.

Ver. 9. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, &c.] The love of God here spoken of, and instanced in, is not his general love to all his creatures, which is shewn in the make of them, and in the support of them in their beings, and in his providential care of them, and kindness to them; but his special love towards his elect, and which was before it was manifested; it was secretly in his heart from everlasting, and did not begin to be at the mission of Christ into the world, but was then in a most glaring manner manifested: there were several acts of it before, as the choice of them in Christ, the appointment of him to be their Saviour, and the covenant of grace made with him on their account; these were more secret and hidden; but now the love and kindness of God appeared, broke forth, and shone out in its glory; this is a most flagrant and notorious instance of it, in which it is exceedingly conspicuous; this is a most clear proof, a plain and full demonstration of it: because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world; the sender is God the Father, who is distinguished from the Son that is sent; of which act of sending, see the notes on Rom. viii. 3. and Gal. iv. 4. and for him, who is that God against whom we have sinned, and is that lawgiver that is able to save, and to destroy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, to send his son to be the Saviour of sinful men is an amazing instance of love; and which appears the more manifest, when 'tis observed that it is his only-begotten son that is sent; of which see the note on John i. 14. and the place he was sent into is the world, where his people are, and where their sins are committed, he came to expiate; and where he was treated with great indignity and contempt, and suffered many things, and at last death itself: the end of his mission was, that we might live through him; who were dead in Adam, dead in sin, and dead in-law, and could not quicken themselves; nor obtain eternal life for themselves, by their performances. Christ came, being sent, that they might have life, and that more abundantly than Adam had in innocence, or man lost by the fall; and accordingly they were quickened together with him; when he was quickened, after he had been put to death, they were virtually and representatively quickened and justified in him; and in consequence of his death and resurrection from the dead, they are regenerated and

made spiritually alive, and live unto righteousness; and through his righteousness wrought out for them, and imputed to them, they are in a law-sense alive unto God, and alive and comfortable in their own souls, living by faith on Christ, and have a right and title to eternal life; and which they also have through him, and which is chiefly intended here; for the design is not only that they may live spiritually and comfortably here, but eternally hereafter.

Ver. 10. Herein is love, &c.] The love of God, free love, love that cannot be matched: herein it is manifested, as before; this is a clear evidence of it, an undoubted proof, and puts it out of all question: not that we loved God: the love of God is antecedent to the love of his people; it was when theirs was not; when they were without love to him, yea, enemies in their minds, by wicked works, and even enmity itself, and therefore was not procured by theirs; but on the contrary, their love to him is caused by his love to them; hence his love, and a continuance in it, do not depend on theirs; nor does it vary according to theirs; wherefore there is good reason to believe it will continue, and never be removed; and this shews the sovereignty and freeness of the love of God, and that it is surprising and matchless: but that he loved us; that is, God; and so the Syriac version reads, but that God himself loved us. The Vulgate Latin version adds, first, as in ver. 19. the instance of this love follows: and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins: this is a subordinate end to the other, mentioned in the preceding verse; for, in order that sinful men may possess everlasting life and happiness, 'tis necessary that their sins be expiated, or atonement be made for them, which is meant by Christ's being a propitiation for them; that the justice of God should be satisfied; that peace and righteousness, or love and justice, should be reconciled together, and kiss each other; and that all obstructions be removed out of the way of the enjoyment of life, which are brought in by sin; and that the wrath of God, which sin deserved, be averted or appeased, according to our sense and apprehension of it; for otherwise the love of God to his people is from everlasting, and is unchangeable, and never alters, or never changes from love to wrath, or from wrath to love; nor is the love of God procured by the satisfaction and sacrifice of Christ, which are the effects of it; but hereby the way is laid open for the display of it, and the application of its effects, in a way consistent with the law and justice of God. This phrase is expressive of the great love of Christ to his people, and of his substitution in their room and stead; and so it is used among the Jews for a substitution in the room of others, לרוב אהבתו, to express the greatness of love; see the notes on Rom. iii. 25. and ix. 3.

Ver. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, &c.] As to send his son to be a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and to obtain eternal life for us through his sufferings and death: the apostle uses the same language his Lord and master did, John iii. 16. we ought also to love one another; for those who are the objects of God's love

¹ Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 15. 1. & Lex. Cabal. p. 43. 44.

² Misn. Negaim, c. 2. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Misn.

Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1. & Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 23. 1. & Succa, fol. 20. 1.

ought to be the objects of ours; and if God has loved our fellow-Christians and brethren to such a degree, as to send his son to die for them, we ought to love them too; and if we are interested in the same love, the obligation is still the greater; and if God loved them with so great a love, when they did not love him, but were enemies to him, then surely we ought to love them now they are become the friends of God, and ours also; as God loved them freely, and when unlovely, and us likewise in the same manner, and under the same circumstances, then we ought to love, and continue to love the saints, though there may be something in their temper and conduct disagreeable: God is to be imitated in his love; and his love to us, which is unmerited and matchless, should influence and engage us to the love of the brethren, who have a far greater claim to our love than we can make to the love of God; and which indeed is none at all, but what he is pleased to give us.

Ver. 12. *No man hath seen God at any time, &c.*] The same is said by the Evangelist John, ch. i. 18. but here it is observed with a different view, and upon another account; there it signifies that no man has seen and looked into the counsels and designs of God, and been able to make a discovery and declaration of his mind and will, his love and grace, and which is there ascribed to the son of God, see the note there; but here the sense is, that whereas God is invisible in his nature, and incomprehensible in his being and perfections, so that there is no coming to him, and seeing of him, and conversing with him in a familiar way, and so not of loving him as he is in himself, and ought to be loved, as one friend sees, converses with, and loves another, and finds his love increased by sight and conversation; then we ought to love the saints and people of God, who are visible, may be seen, come at, and conversed with, see ver. 20. for this clause stands among the arguments and reasons for brotherly love: *if we love one another God dwelleth in us*; not as he does in his son, by union of nature; nor as in heaven, by the displays of his glory; nor as in the whole world, by his omnipresence and power; but by his spirit, and the communications of his love, and by his gracious presence and communion, which he indulges the saints with; for such who love one another, as they appear to have the spirit of God, of which that grace is a fruit, so they are by the spirit built up a fit habitation for God, and by which spirit he dwells in them; and such may expect the presence of God, for they who live in peace, the God of love and peace shall be with them: *and his love is perfected in us*; not that love of God, with which he loves his people; for that admits of no degrees, and is not more or less in itself, or in his heart; but is always invariably and unchangeably the same, and is full, complete, and perfect in his own breast, as it was from all eternity; and does not pass by degrees, or gradually rise from a love of benevolence to a love of complacency and delight, or increase as our love does to him and to one another, on which it has no dependence: nor is this love perfected in the saints in this life; that is to say, they have not perfect knowledge and enjoyment of it; nor have they all the effects of it bestowed upon them, and applied unto them; the perfection

of it, in this sense, will be in heaven: but the love with which God is loved is here designed; and it is called his, because he is both the object and the author of it; and this is not perfect as to degrees; yea, sometimes, instead of abounding and increasing, it goes back, it is left, and waxes cold; and it will not have its completion till the saints come to heaven, and then it will be in its full perfection and glory, when faith and hope shall be no more: but the sense is, that this grace of love is sincere and hearty, and without dissimulation; it is unfeigned love; and it is in deed and in truth, and not in word and in tongue only; and this appears to be so, by the love which is shewn to the brethren, the children of God; so that love to God in the saints is perfected by love to the brethren, just in such sense as faith is made perfect by works, Jam. ii. 22. that is, is made to appear to be genuine, right, and true.

Ver. 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, &c.*] That there is a communion between God and us, and a communication of his love and grace to us, and an exercise of grace upon him; for God dwells in his people by his spirit and grace, and they dwell in him by the exercise of faith and love upon him: and this is known, *because he hath given us of his spirit*; not of the essence and nature of the Spirit, which is the same with the nature of the Father and of the Son, and is incommunicable; but either of the gifts of the Spirit, which are divided to every man as he pleases, and which being bestowed on men, and used by them, for the profit and advantage of the church of God, shew that God is with them, and dwells among them of a truth; or of the graces of the Spirit, such as faith, hope, and love, which are severally the gifts of God; and these being bestowed and exercised, are proofs of the mutual in-dwelling of God and his people; see the note on ch. iii. 24.

Ver. 14. *And we have seen, and do testify, &c.*] This seems to be particularly said of the apostles, who had a clear discerning of the love and grace of God, manifested in the mission of Christ into the world; for though no man had seen his nature and his person, yet they had seen his love, and the exceeding riches of his grace, which he had shewn forth in Christ Jesus; and they had also seen Christ, God manifest in the flesh; they had seen his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the father; they had seen him with their bodily eyes; they had seen his works and miracles; they had seen him dying and risen again from the dead, and go up to heaven; they were witnesses, and eye-witnesses of him, and bore a faithful testimony of him, and for him, and particularly set their seal to this truth, *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*; not of every individual person in it, for there are some that will go into everlasting punishment, and even a world that will be condemned; Christ is not in fact the Saviour of all the individuals of human nature, and therefore was not sent to be such; for if he was, the end of his mission is not fully answered; nor of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, and who are chiefly intended by the world; see the note on ch. ii. 2. and even of all the elect of God, styled his people, his sheep, his friends, his church, and the sons of God; and it may be said of all that believe in him through-

out the whole world, without any distinction of nation, age, sex, state, or condition: and Christ is the Saviour both of the souls and bodies of these, from all their sins, original and actual; from the power of Satan, the bondage and curse of the law, and wrath to come, and he is the only, able, willing, and complete Saviour, and who saves with an everlasting salvation.

Ver. 15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, &c.*] The only-begotten of the Father; that he is not a mere man, as the Jews, and Ebion and Cerinthus said, but a divine person, equal with the Father; which contains all that relates to the dignity of his person, and his fitness for his office as a Saviour, and which was the test of faith in those times, and the grand article of belief: not that a bare assent to this had what followed annexed to it; for the devils believed and owned that Jesus was the son of God; and so might, and did, unregenerate persons, as the centurion at the cross of Christ, who know nothing what communion with God is; but this confession is such as is attended with a believing in Christ from the heart unto righteousness, life, and salvation, and a cheerful obedience to his ordinances and commands, from a principle of love to him, and faith in him, things not to be found in devils and carnal men; see Rom. x. 9, 10. *God dwelleth in him, and he in God*; see the note on ver. 13. this should encourage to an open and hearty confession of Christ as the son of God, and Saviour of sinners, and to a public profession of his name, and faith in him, and an holding it fast without wavering.

Ver. 16. *And we have known and believed, &c.*] Or have a full assurance and knowledge of, and faith in, the love that God hath to us; shewn as in many instances, so more especially in sending his son to be the propitiation for our sins, to be the Saviour of us, and that we might live through him. *God is love*; as in ver. 8. see the note there: *and he that dwelleth in love*; who dwells by faith upon the love of God as displayed in Christ, and abides in the exercise of love to God and to the saints: *dwelleth in God, and God in him*; see the note on ver. 13. the last clause, *and God in him*, is left out in the Syriac version.

Ver. 17. *Herein is our love made perfect, &c.*] Or love with us; which some understand of the love of God towards his people, and which is shed abroad in them: this indeed removes all fear of an awful judgment, and renders that amiable and desirable; and such who are interested in it, shall stand in that day with intrepidity and boldness; and this sense may seem to be favoured by the Syriac version, which reads, *his love with us*; and especially by the Vulgate Latin version, which renders it, *the love of God with us*; but it is best to understand it agreeably to the context, of our love to God, which is with and in our hearts; and which is made, or made to appear to be perfect, true, and genuine, by our love to the brethren; since the love of God to us does not admit of degrees, nor does it, or the reality and sincerity of it, depend upon our love to the saints; see the note on ver. 12. *that we may have boldness in the day of judgment*; not of men's judgment, when brought before judges, governors, and kings, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, and stand at their bar, where saints, who have true love to God and Christ and the brethren, have stood with great courage and intrepidity, and shewn much

boldness, and used great freedom of speech; nor of judgment in this life, which sometimes begins at the house of God, though the saints often have great boldness and presence of mind, and freedom of expression both to God and man in a day of affliction, as Job had; but of the future judgment, which, though it will be very awful and solemn, Christ the Judge will appear with great majesty and glory, and all men will stand before him, and the books will be opened, and the judgment will proceed with great strictness and justice, and will issue in the everlasting perdition of devils and wicked men, yet the saints will have boldness in it: whilst evil men and devils tremble at the thoughts of it now, they rejoice and are glad; they love it, look for it, long for it, and hasten to it; and will stand fearless, and without the least dread, whilst others will flee to the rocks, and into the holes of the earth; and they will use freedom of speech with Christ, as the word here signifies; they'll sing his new song, and ascribe the glory of their salvation to him, and express their praises of him, and love to him, then and to all eternity: and this boldness the saints may be said to arrive at through a perfect, or sincere, and genuine love of the brethren; for by this they know they are born again, and are born to an inheritance incorruptible, which they have both a meetness for, and a right unto; and knowing hereby that they are passed from death to life, they justly conclude they shall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are not afraid of the awful judgment: hereby they know that their faith is right, and that therefore they are manifestly the children of God; and if children, then heirs, and so shall be saved, and have everlasting life: *because as he is, so are we in this world*; which may be understood either of God, to whom the saints are like; for such who are born again, as those who love the brethren are, they are partakers of the divine nature, and bear a resemblance to God, even in this present state of things; and as it becomes them to be holy in all manner of conversation, as he is holy, and to be merciful to wicked men, as he is merciful, so to love the saints as he does, and to be kind, tender-hearted, and forgive one another, as he for Christ's sake has forgiven them; for as God is love, they should be all love likewise: or of Christ, see ch. iii. 3, 7. and that with respect to God; as he is the son of God, so are they the sons of God; he by nature, they by grace and adoption; as he is loved by God with an everlasting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, so are they loved by him with the same kind of love, even whilst they are in this world; and as he is the chosen of God, and precious, so they are chosen in him, and unto salvation by him. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, *as he was*; and the sense may be, as he was in this world, so are they; and which may regard not so much likeness in nature, though there is an agreement in that, excepting sin, but the sameness of state and condition; as he was a man of sorrows, attended with afflictions, loaded with reproaches, and followed with the persecutions of men, so are they; nor need they wonder that they are the objects of the world's hatred and contempt, since he was also; as he was tempted by Satan, forsaken by his friends, and deserted by his God, so sometimes are they in this world; and as he went through a variety of sufferings, and death itself.

to glory, so through many tribulations do they enter the kingdom: moreover, as he now is in heaven, so are they in this world; even as he is in heaven, so are they representatively in him, whilst in this world; and as he is righteous, being justified and acquitted from all the charge of sin he took upon him, and therefore will appear a second time without sin, so they are completely righteous in him: and once more, as he is, so they are, or should be in this world; they should be holy as he is holy, and be humble, meek, and patient, as he is, and walk as he walked; and particularly love the saints and one another, as he does; and which seems to be greatly intended here, and must be understood not of an equality, but of a likeness. The Arabic version reads the words conditionally, and as depending on the preceding clause, *if as he was, we are in this world*; and then the sense is, that the saints shall have boldness in the day of judgment, provided they are in this world as Christ was.

Ver. 18. *There is no fear in love, &c.*] In the love of the brethren; where that is, there is no fear: so far as that prevails and gains ground, fear removes; not the filial fear of God, the new-covenant grace of fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, and is consistent with faith, hope, love, and spiritual joy; but either the fear of men, which brings a snare: those that truly love Christ, his Gospel, and his people, they are not afraid of men; the spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind, is opposite to a spirit of fear, nor can they stand together; and such strength there is sometimes in brotherly love, that the saints are not afraid of death itself, but freely lay down their lives for one another; see ch. iii. 16. or it may be rather, that they are not afraid of the day of judgment, and of hell and damnation; where hatred of the brethren has place, there is a fear and dread of these things, as were in Cain; but those that love the brethren, they know they are passed from death to life, and shall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are in no fear of any of these things: *but perfect love casteth out fear*; when love to the brethren appears to be perfect, that is, genuine and sincere, and a man knows that from the bottom of his heart he sincerely loves the saints, he concludes from hence, as he may, the truth of his faith, which works in this way; and this frees him from the fears of men and devils, and of the future judgment and wrath to come. The Jews have a saying, "worthy is his portion that rules over the place of fear, for lo, there is "nothing that rules over the degree of fear but love." *Because fear hath torment*; it distresses a man, fills him with anguish, and makes him restless and uneasy, and keeps him in servitude; through the fear of men, of the devil, death, judgment, and hell, he is all his life-time, or as long as this fear lasts, subject to bondage: or *fear has punishment*, as it may be rendered, and is by the Vulgate Latin version; it is a punishment itself to a man; and its being criminal deserves punishment, and is punishable; see Rev. xxi. 8. *he that feareth is not made perfect in love; or by love*; that is, he that is possessed, and under the power of a servile fear of punishment, is one who is not, by the love to the brethren, made to appear to himself to be a sincere lover of God, and true believer in Christ; for was

he, he would not be in fear of destruction and death, since whoever truly loves God, and believes in Christ, shall certainly be saved; though such persons, at times, may not be without their doubts and fears.

Ver. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us.*] Lest love to God, and so to one another, should be thought to be of ourselves, and too much be ascribed unto it, the apostle observes, that God's love to us is prior to our love to him; his love is from everlasting, as well as to everlasting; for he loves his people as he does his son, and he loved him before the foundation of the world; his choosing them in Christ as early, and blessing them then with all spiritual blessings, the covenant of grace made with Christ from all eternity, the gift of grace to them in him before the world began, and the promise of eternal life to them so soon, shew the antiquity and priority of his love: his love shewn in the mission and gift of his son was before theirs, and when they had none to him; and his love in regeneration and conversion is previous to theirs, and is the cause of it; his grace in regeneration brings faith and love with it, and produces them in the heart; and his love shed abroad there is the moving cause of it, or what draws it first into act and exercise; and the larger the discoveries and applications of the love of God be, the more does love to him increase and abound; and nothing more animates and inflames our love to God, than the consideration of the earliness of his love to us, of its being before ours; which shews that it is free, sovereign, distinguishing, and unmerited. Some read the words as an exhortation, *let us love him*; and others as in the subjunctive mood, *we should love him, because, &c.* some copies read, *we love God*, and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and the Alexandrian copy, read, *because God first loved us*; and so some others.

Ver. 20. *If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, &c.*] Than which profession nothing can be more contradictory, not black and white, or hot and cold in the same degree: *he is a liar*; it is not truth he speaks, it is a contradiction, and a thing impossible: *for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen*; his person, which might have drawn out his affection to him; and something valuable and worthy in him, which might have commanded respect; or his wants and distresses, which should have moved his pity and compassion: *how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* it cannot be thought he should; the thing is not reasonable to suppose; it is not possible he should; see the note on ver. 12.

Ver. 21. *And this commandment have we from him, &c.*] Either from God, as the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read; and that to love the brethren is a commandment of God, is clear from ch. iii. 23. or from Christ, for it is also a command of his, even his new commandment, which he has given, and his people have received from him: *that he who loveth God, love his brother also*; see John xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17. which is an argument persuading to attend to the one as well as to the other; for the same command that requires the one, requires the other: and he that transgresses it in one case, is a transgressor of it, as well as in the other.

C H A P. V.

IN this chapter the apostle treats of the nature of faith and love; of Christ the object of both, and of the witness that is bore to him; of the necessity of believing the testimony concerning him; of the confidence of prayer being heard, and concerning whom it should be made; of the happiness of regenerate persons, and of their duty to keep themselves from idols. Faith in Christ is the evidence of regeneration, and where that is, there will be love to the author of regeneration, and to them that are regenerated; and love to them is known by love to God, and keeping his commandments; and keeping the commandments of God, and which are not grievous, is a proof of love to God, ver. 1, 2, 3. and whereas every regenerate man overcomes the world, it is by his faith, the evidence of his regeneration, that this victory is obtained; nor can any other man be pointed out that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the son of God, ver. 4, 5. and Christ, the son of God, the object of this victorious faith, is described by his coming by water and blood, of which the spirit is witness, who is a true one; and six witnesses of the truth of this and his divine sonship are produced, three in heaven, the Father, Word, and Spirit, who are the one God, and three on earth, the spirit, water, and blood, who agree in their testimony, ver. 6, 7, 8. wherefore this testimony concerning the son of God ought to be received, since it is the testimony of God, which is greater than that of men; besides, he that believes in Christ has a witness of this in himself, and honours God, whereas he that believes not makes God a liar, not giving credit to his record concerning his son; the sum of which is, that God has made a grant of eternal life to some persons, which is in his son, which those that believe in the son of God have, but those that do not believe in him have it not: all which shew the necessity of receiving the above testimony; and the ends proposed in writing these things were, to believe in Christ, and that it might be known they had eternal life in him, ver. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. and from faith in Christ the apostle passes to confidence in prayer, as a particular effect and fruit of it: as, that whatever is asked according to the will of God is heard; and that such who are satisfied of this, that they are heard, may be assured that they have the petitions they desire to have, ver. 14, 15. and whereas it is one branch of prayer to pray for others as well as for ourselves, the apostle directs who we should pray for; for the brethren in general, and in particular for such who have sinned, but not unto death, and life shall be given to such: but as for those who have sinned unto death, he does not say prayer should be made for them, for though all unrighteousness in general is sin, yet there is a particular sin which is unto death, and is not to be prayed for, ver. 16, 17. but happy are those who are born of God, for they do not sin this sin; and through the use of the armour of God, and the power of divine grace, they keep themselves from the evil one, and he cannot come at them, to draw them into this sin; also they know that they are of God, and are dis-

tinguished from the world, which lies in wickedness; yea, they know that the son of God is come in the flesh, and hath given them an understanding of the true God, by which they know that they are in him, and in his son Jesus Christ, who is with him, and the divine Spirit, the one true God, and the author and giver of eternal life, ver. 18, 19, 20. and the chapter, and with it the epistle, is concluded with an exhortation to these regenerate ones, as they had kept themselves from Satan, that they would also keep themselves from idols of all sorts, ver. 21.

Ver. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, &c.]* Or the Messiah that was prophesied of of old, was long promised to the Jews, and whom they expected; there was a person spoken of in the writings of the Old Testament under this character, Psal. ii. 2. Dan. ix. 25, 26. and the Jews looked for him; and Jesus of Nazareth is he, as appears by all the characteristics of the Messiah in prophecy being found upon him: this the Jews deny, but is the grand article of faith embraced by the apostles and followers of Jesus, and is of very great importance; he that denies it is a liar, and he that does not believe it shall die in his sins: the word signifies *anointed*, and includes all the offices of the son of God, to which he was anointed, as prophet, priest, and King; so that to believe him to be the Christ, is to believe him to be that prophet Moses said should come, and who has declared the whole mind and will of his father; and that he is that priest that should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and make atonement for sin, and intercession for transgressors; and that he is that King whom God has set over his holy hill of Zion, whose laws are to be obeyed, and his commands observed: but to believe that Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah, is not barely to give an assent to this truth, or to acknowledge it; so the devils themselves have done, Luke iv. 41. and whole nations of men, multitudes of which were never born of God; it is not a mere profession of it before men, or an idle, inoperative faith, which is destitute of love to Christ, and obedience to him; but whereas his work and business, as the Christ of God, was to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to procure the remission of sin, and to make peace and reconciliation for it, and to obtain eternal salvation; true faith in him as the Messiah is a believing with the heart unto righteousness, or a looking to, and trusting in the righteousness of Christ for justification; and a dealing with his blood for pardon and cleansing, under a sense of guilt and filth; and a laying hold on his atoning sacrifice for the expiation of sin, and peace with God; and a reception of him as the only Saviour and Redeemer, or a dependence on him for life and salvation; and which faith shews itself in love to him, and in a professed subjection to his Gospel, and cheerful submission to his ordinances: and every such person is *born of God*; is a partaker of the divine nature; has Christ formed, and every grace of the spirit implanted in him, among which faith in Christ is a considerable one; and such an one in consequence is openly a child

and heir of God, wherefore, to be born of God is an instance of great grace, and an high honour and privilege, and of the greatest moment and importance. Regeneration is not owing to the power and will of man, but to the abundant mercy and good will of God, and is an instance of his rich mercy, great love, and free favour, and commands love again: *and every one that loveth him that begat*: that is, God the father, who has begotten them again to a lively hope, according to his abundant mercy and sovereign will; and as he is their father that has begotten them, they cannot but love him: and such an one *loveth him also that is begotten of him*: not only Jesus Christ, who by nature is the only-begotten of the father; for those who know God to be their father by adoption and regeneration, will love Christ, who is the son of God by nature; see John viii. 42. but also every regenerate person, all that are born of God; since they are the children of the same father with them, belong to the same household and family, and bear the image and likeness of their heavenly Father on them.

Ver. 2. *By this we know that we are the children of God, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *by this we know that we love God*; which, in connexion with what follows, makes a tautology, and is a proving *idem per idem*; whereas the apostle's view is to shew when love to the saints is right; and that is, *when we love God, and keep his commandments*: love to the brethren may arise from such a cause, as may shew that it is not brotherly love, or of a spiritual kind; it may arise from natural relation, or civil friendship, or from a benefit or favour received from them, and from some natural external excellency seen in them; and a man may do acts of love and kindness to the brethren, from what may be called good nature in himself, or with sinister views; but true love to the brethren springs from love to God: such who love the saints aright, and by which they may know they do so, they love them because they themselves love God, and in obedience to his command; they love them because they belong to God, and are the objects of his love; because his grace is wrought in them, and his image instamped upon them.

Ver. 3. *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, &c.*] Keeping of the commandments of God is an evidence of love to God; this shews that love is not in word and tongue, in profession only, but in deed and in truth; and that such persons have a sense of the love of God upon their souls, under the influence of which they act; and such shall have, and may expect to have, greater manifestations of the love of God unto them: *and his commandments are not grievous*; heavy, burdensome, and disagreeable; by which are meant, not so much the precepts of the moral law, which through the weakness of the flesh are hard to be kept, and cannot be perfectly fulfilled; though believers indeed, being freed from the rigorous exaction, curse, and condemnation of the law, delight in it after the inward man, and serve it cheerfully with their spirit; and still less the commands of the ceremonial law, which were now abolished, and were grievous to be borne; but rather those of faith in Christ, and love to the saints, ch. iii. 23. or it may be the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's sup-

per, with others, which though disagreeable to unregenerate persons, who don't care to be under the yoke of Christ, however easy and light it is, yet are not heavy and burdensome to regenerate ones; and especially when they have the love of God shed abroad in them, the presence of God with them, communion with Jesus Christ, and a supply of grace and strength from him; then are these ways ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace, and the tabernacles of the Lord are amiable and lovely.

Ver. 4. *For whatsoever is born of God, &c.*] Which may be understood either of persons born of God; or of the new creature, or principle of grace wrought in them, particularly faith hereafter mentioned, which is an heaven-born grace, the gift of God, and the operation of his spirit: *this overcometh the world*; the god of the world, Satan; the lusts which are in the world; false prophets gone forth into the world; and the wicked men of the world, who by temptations, snares, evil doctrines, threatenings, promises, and ill examples, would avert regenerate ones from observing the commands of God; but such are more than conquerors over all these, through Christ that has loved them: *and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, *your faith*; great things, heroic actions, and wonderful victories, are ascribed to faith; see Heb. xi. 33, 34. which must not be understood of the grace itself, as separately considered, but of Christ the object of it, as supported, strengthened, assisted, and animated by him: and then it does wonders, when it is enabled to hold Christ, its shield, in its hand, against every enemy that opposes.

Ver. 5. *Who is he that overcometh the world, &c.*] This question carries in it a strong affirmation, that no other person is the conqueror of the world: *but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God?* and this points out what that faith is which obtains the victory over the world; and shews that it is not that trust and confidence which has a man's self, or any mere creature, thing, or person, for its object, but only Jesus Christ, and that as he is the son of God; and which is not a mere assent to such a proposition, to which devils and unregenerate persons may assent, and do; but it is a seeing of the son in the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his person, office, and grace; a going to him, being drawn by the father; and a living upon him as the son of God, and trusting in him for life, righteousness, and salvation: and this shews, that the victory over the world is not owing to faith itself, but to its object Christ, who has overcome it, and makes true believers in him more than conquerors over it.

Ver. 6. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, &c.*] *By water* is not meant the ablutions or washings of the ceremonial law; Christ came not by these, but to make an end of them; his blood, which cleanseth from all sin, being the antitype, and so the fulfilling end of them: nor the purity of his nature, life, and conversation; though he came into the world that holy thing which is called the son of God; and was holy in his nature, and harmless in his life, and did no sin, and so was fit to be a sacrifice for the sins of others: nor does it intend the washing and cleansing of his people from their sins; this is

what he came to do, and has done, and not what he came by : but the ordinance of water-baptism is designed ; and though Christ did not come baptizing with water, he having a greater baptism to administer, yet that he might be made manifest, John came baptizing in that way ; and Christ, as the son of God, came, or was made manifest by John as such, at the waters of Jordan, and at his baptism ; there he was declared to be the son of God by his father's voice from heaven : *not by water only* ; he did not come by water only, as Moses did, who was drawn out of it, and therefore so called ; or as John, who came administering water-baptism externally only : *but by water and blood* ; by *blood* as well as water ; by which is meant, not the blood of bulls and goats ; Christ came to put an end unto, and lay aside the shedding of that blood ; but his own blood is intended, and not reconciliation and atonement for the sins of his people, which was what he came to do, and has done, and not what he came by : but the sense is, that as at baptism, so at his sufferings and death, he was made manifest to be the son of God ; as he was to the centurion and others, that were with him, when they observed the earthquake, and the things that were done ; and at his resurrection from the dead he was declared to be the son of God with power : and this might be seen in the cleansing and atoning virtue of his blood, which is owing to his being the son of God. There may be here an allusion to the water and blood which came out of his side, when pierced on the cross, which this Apostle John was an eye-witness of. Some copies add here, and in the former clause, *and by the spirit* ; as the Alexandrian copy, three of Beza's copies, and the Ethiopic version : but it seems unnecessary, since it follows, *and it is the spirit that beareth witness* : by which may be meant, either the Gospel, which is the spirit that gives life, and is so called, because by it the spirit of God, in his gifts and graces, is received, and which is a testimony of the person, as well as of the offices and grace of Christ ; or rather those miraculous works which Christ did by the spirit, to which he often appeals, as witnesses of his divine sonship, and equality with the father, as well as of his being the true Messiah ; or else the Holy Spirit, who bore testimony to Christ, by his descent on him at his baptism, and upon his apostles at the day of Pentecost, and by attending, succeeding, and confirming the Gospel, which is the testimony of him ; and he is elsewhere, as well as here, and in the context, spoken of as a witness of Christ, Acts v. 32. *because the spirit is truth* ; he is the spirit of truth, and truth itself ; he is essentially truth ; his testimony is most true, and firmly to be believed. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *because Christ is the truth*.

Ver. 7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, &c.*] That is, that Jesus is the son of God. The genuineness of this text has been called in question by some, because it is wanting in the Syriac version, as it also is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions ; and because the old Latin interpreter has it not ; and it is not to be found in many Greek manuscripts ; nor cited by many of the ancient fathers, even by such who

wrote against the Arians, when it might have been of great service to them : to all which it may be replied, that as to the Syriac version, which is the most ancient, and of the greatest consequence, it is but a version, and a defective one. The history of the adulterous woman in the eighth of John, the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, and the book of the Revelations, were formerly wanting in it, till restored from Bishop Usher's copy by De Dieu and Dr. Pocock, and who also, from an eastern copy, has supplied this version with this text. As to the old Latin interpreter, it is certain it is to be seen in many Latin manuscripts of an early date, and stands in the Vulgate Latin edition of the London Polyglot Bible : and the Latin translation, which bears the name of Jerom, has it, and who, in an epistle of his to Eustochium, prefixed to his translation of these canonical epistles, complains of the omission of it by unfaithful interpreters. And as to its being wanting in some Greek manuscripts, as the Alexandrian, and others, it need only be said, that it is to be found in many others ; it is in an old British copy, and in the Complutensian edition, the compilers of which made use of various copies ; and out of sixteen ancient copies of Robert Stephens's, nine of them had it : and as to its not being cited by some of the ancient fathers, this can be no sufficient proof of the spuriousness of it, since it might be in the original copy, though not in the copies used by them, through the carelessness or unfaithfulness of transcribers ; or it might be in their copies, and yet not cited by them, they having Scriptures enow without it, to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ : and yet, after all, certain it is, that it is cited by many of them ; by Fulgentius^a, in the beginning of the sixth century, against the Arians, without any scruple or hesitation ; and Jerom, as before observed, has it in his translation made in the latter end of the fourth century ; and it is cited by Athanasius^a about the year 350 ; and before him by Cyprian^b, in the middle of the third century, about the year 250 ; and is referred to by Tertullian^c about the year 200 ; and which was within a hundred years, or little more, of the writing of the epistle ; which may be enough to satisfy any one of the genuineness of this passage ; and besides, there never was any dispute about it till Erasmus left it out in the first edition of his translation of the New Testament ; and yet he himself, upon the credit of the old British copy before mentioned, put it into another edition of his translation. The heavenly witnesses of Christ's sonship are, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*. The *Father* is the first Person, so called, not in reference to the creatures, angels, or men, he is the Creator, and so the father of ; for this is common to the other two Persons ; but in reference to his son Jesus Christ, of whose sonship he bore witness at his baptism and transfiguration upon the mount. The *Word* is the second Person, who said and it was done ; who spoke all things out of nothing in the first creation ; who was in the beginning with God the father, and was God, and by whom all things were created ; he declared

^a Respons. contr. Arian. obj. 10. & de Trinitate, c. 4.

^b Contr. Arianum, p. 109.

^b De Unitate Eccles. p. 255. & in Ep. 73. ad Julianum, p. 184.

^c Contr. Praxeam, c. 25.

himself to be the son of God, and proved himself to be so by his works and miracles; see Mark xiv. 61, 62. John v. 17, &c. and x. 30, &c. and his witness of himself was good and valid; see John viii. 13—18. and because it is his sonship that is here testified of, therefore the phrase, *the Word*, and not *the Son*, is here used. The *Holy Ghost* is the third Person, who proceeds from the father, and is also called the spirit of the son, who testified of Christ's sonship also at his baptism, by descending on him as a dove, which was the signal given to John the Baptist, by which he knew him, and bare record of him, that he was the son of God. Now the number of these witnesses was three, there being so many persons in the Godhead; and such a number being sufficient, according to law, for the establishing of any point: to which may be added, that they were witnesses in heaven, not to the heavenly inhabitants, but to men on earth; they were so called, because they were in heaven, and from thence gave out their testimony; and which shews the firmness and excellency of it, it being not from earth, but from heaven, and not human, but divine; to which may be applied the words of Job, in ch. xvi. 19. It follows, and these three are one; which is to be understood not only of their unity and agreement in their testimony, they testifying of the same thing, the sonship of Christ; but of their unity in essence or nature, they being the one God. So that this passage holds forth and asserts the unity of God, a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the proper deity of each person, and their distinct personality; the unity of essence in that they are one; a trinity of persons in that they are three, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and are neither more nor fewer; the deity of each person, for otherwise their testimony would not be the testimony of God, as in ver. 9. and their distinct personality; for were they not three distinct persons, they could not be three testifiers, or three that bare record. This being a proper place, I shall insert the faith of the ancient Jews concerning the doctrine of the Trinity; and the rather, as it agrees with the apostle's doctrine in words and language, as well as in matter. They call the three Persons in the Godhead three degrees: they say ^d, "Jehovah, Elohenu (our God), Jehovah, " Deut. vi. 4. these are the three degrees with respect " to this sublime mystery, *in the beginning Elohim*, or " *God, created*, Gen. i. 1, &c." And these three, they say, though they are distinct, yet are one, as appears by what follows^e: "come see the mystery of the " word; there are three degrees, and every degree is " by itself, yet they are all one, and are bound together " in one, and one is not separated from the other." Again, 'tis said^f, "this is the unity of Jehovah the " first, Elohenu, Jehovah, lo, all of them are one, and " therefore called one; lo, the three names are as if " they were one, and therefore are called one, and " they are one; but by the revelation of the Holy " Spirit it is made known, and they by the sight of

" the eye may be known, רַבְרַבְתָּ אֵלֶיךָ אֱוֶה, *that these* " *three are one*: and this is the mystery of the voice " which is heard; the voice is one, and there are three " things, fire, and spirit, and water, and all of them " are one in the mystery of the voice; and they are " but one: so here, Jehovah, Elohenu, Jehovah, they " are one, the three, נִוְיָו, forms, modes, or things, " which are one." Once more^g, "there are two, and " one is joined unto them, and they are three; and " when the three are one, he says to them, these are " the two names which Israel heard, Jehovah, Jehovah, " and Elohenu is joined unto them, and it is the seal " of the ring of truth; and when they are joined as " one, they are one in one unity." And this they illustrate by the three names of the soul of man^h; " the three powers are all of them one, the soul, spirit, " and breath, they are joined as one, and they are one; " and all is according to the mode of the sublime mys- " tery," meaning the Trinity. "Says R. Isaacⁱ, "worthy are the righteous in this world, and in the " world to come, for lo, the whole of them is holy, " their body is holy, their soul is holy, their spirit is " holy, their breath is holy, holy are these three de- " grees according to the form above.—Come see these " three degrees cleave together as one, the soul, spirit, " and breath." The three first Sephiroth, or numbers, in the Cabalistic tree, intend the three divine Persons; the first is called the chief crown, and first glory, which essence no creature can comprehend^k, and designs the Father, John i. 18. the second is called wisdom, and the intelligence illuminating, the crown of the creation, the brightness of equal unity, who is exalted above every head; and he is called, by the Cabalists, the second glory^l; see 1 Cor. i. 24. John i. 9. Rev. iii. 14. Heb. i. 3. Eph. i. 21. This is the Son of God: the third is called understanding sanctifying, and is the foundation of ancient wisdom, which is called the worker of faith; and he is the parent of faith, and from his power faith flows^m; and this is the Holy Spirit; see 1 Pet. i. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 13. Now they sayⁿ that these three first numbers are intellectual, and are not מַדְרֵת, *properties, or attributes*, as the other seven are. R. Simeon ben Jochai says^o, "of the three su- " perior numbers it is said, Psal. lxii. 11. *God hath* " *spoken once, twice have I heard this*; one and two, lo " the superior numbers of whom it is said, one, one, " one, three ones, and this is the mystery of Psal. " lxii. 11." Says R. Judah Levi^p, "behold the mys- " tery of the numberer, the number, and the num- " bered; in the bosom of God 'tis one thing, in the " bosom of man three; because he weighs with his " understanding, and speaks with his mouth, and " writes with his hand." It was usual with the an- " cient Jews to introduce Jehovah speaking, or doing " any thing, in this form, I and my house of judgment; " and it is a rule with them, that wherever it is said, *and* " *Jehovah*, he and his house of judgment are intended^q; " and Jarchi frequently makes use of this phrase to ex-

^d Zohar in Gen. fol. 1. 3.

^e Ib. in Lev. fol. 27. 2.

^f Ib. in Exod. fol. 18. 3, 4.

^g Ib. in Numb. fol. 67. 3.

^h Ib. in Exod. fol. 73. 4.

ⁱ Ib. in Lev. fol. 29. 2.

^k Sopher Jetzira, Semit 1.

^l Sopher Jetzira, Semit. 2.

^m Ib. Semit. 3.

ⁿ R. Menachem apud Rittangel. in Jetzira, p. 193.

^o Tikkune Zohar apud ib. p. 64.

^p Apud ib. p. 38.

^q Zohar in Gen. fol. 48. 4. Jarchi in Gen. xix. 24. Vid. T. Ea^b. Beraco^t, fol. 6. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Sanhedrin, fol. 3. 2.

plain texts where a plurality in the Godhead is intended, as Gen. i. 26. Cant. i. 11. and it is to be observed, that a house of judgment, or a sanhedrim, among the Jews, never consisted of less than three. They also had used to write the word *Jehovah* with three *Jods*, in this form, *יהוה*, as representing the three divine Persons: one of their more modern writers has this observation on the blessing of the priest in Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26. "these three verses begin with a *Jod*, in reference to the three *Jods* which we write in the room of the name, (*i. e.* *Jehovah*,) for they have respect to the three superior things."

Ver. 8. *And there are three that bear witness on earth, &c.]* To the same truth of the sonship of Christ: *the spirit, and the water, and the blood*: by the *spirit* is not meant the human spirit or soul of Christ; for however that may be a witness of the truth of his human nature, yet not of his divine sonship: and moreover cannot be said to be a witness in earth; rather the Gospel, called the *spirit*, which is a testimony of Christ's person, office, and grace, and is preached by men on earth; or else the gifts of the spirit bestowed on men on earth, both in an extraordinary and ordinary way, by which they have been qualified to bear witness to this truth; or it may be the Holy Spirit itself is intended, as he is in the hearts of his people here on earth, where he not only witnesses to the truth of their sonship, but also of the sonship of Christ, and is that witness a believer has within himself of it, mentioned in ver. 10. By *water* is designed, not internal sanctification, which though an evidence of regeneration and adoption, yet not of Christ's sonship; but water-baptism, as administered on earth in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and which is a noble and standing testimony to the proper, natural, and eternal sonship of Christ: and by *blood* is intended, not justification by the blood of Christ, but rather the blood of the saints, the martyrs of Jesus, who have shed it on earth, in testimony of their faith in the son of God, and thereby sealing the truth of it; or rather the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which is the communion of the blood of Christ; and represents that blood which was shed for the remission of sins, and has a continual virtue to cleanse from all sin, which is owing to his being the son of God. The three witnesses on earth seem therefore to be the Gospel, attended with the spirit and power of God, and the two ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper: *and these agree in one*; in their testimony of Christ, the word and ordinances agree together; and the sum and substance of them is Christ; they come from him, and centre in him; they are like the cherubim over the mercy-seat, that looked to one another, and to that; and the two ordinances are the church's two breasts, which are equal, and like to one another; there is a great agreement between them, they are like to two young ones that are twins.

Ver. 9. *If we receive the witness of men, &c.]* The witness of a sufficient number of credible men, of men of good character and report, is always admitted in any case, and in any court of judicature; it was allowed of in the law of Moses; every thing was proved and

established hereby; upon this men were justified or condemned, cognizance was taken of men's sins, and punishment inflicted, yea, death itself, Deut. xvii. 6. and xix. 15. Heb. x. 28. and even in this case concerning the son of God, his coming into the world, and the dignity of his person, the testimony of men is credited; as that of the wise men, who declared that the King of the Jews was born, and his star had been seen in the east, which Herod himself gave credit to, and upon it summoned the chief priests, and inquired of them where he should be born; and also of the shepherds, who testified to the appearance of angels, who told them that there was then born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, and who also related that they themselves saw the infant at Bethlehem; and especially of John the Baptist, whose testimony was true, and could not be objected to by the Jews themselves, who sent to him, before whom he bore a plain and faithful witness. Now if an human testimony may be, and is received, *the testimony of God is greater*; more valuable, surer, and to be more firmly depended on, since it must be infallible; for God can neither deceive, nor be deceived: *for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his son*; even the witness of the spirit, the water, and the blood, is the testimony, not of men, but of God; the Gospel, attended with the spirit of God, is the testimony of God; and so the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, which bear witness of Christ, are not of men, but of God; and especially the witness of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, must be the testimony of God, since, though three persons, they are one God; particularly the witness which God the Father testified of his Son Jesus Christ at his baptism and transfiguration, must be allowed to be the testimony of God, and far greater than any human testimony, and therefore to be received.

Ver. 10. *He that believeth on the son of God, &c.]* As a divine person who came in the flesh, and obeyed the law, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and obtained life and salvation for men: he that with the heart believes in him for righteousness, and eternal life, he being the son of God, truly and properly God, and so able to save all that believe in him, *hath the witness in himself*; of the need he stands in of Christ, and of the suitableness, fulness, and excellency of him; the spirit of God enlightening him into the impurity of his nature, his impotence to do any thing spiritually good, his incapacity to atone for sin, and the insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God; and convincing him that nothing but the blood of the son of God can cleanse him from sin, and only his sacrifice can expiate it, and his righteousness justify him from it, and that without him he can do nothing; testifying also to the efficacy of his blood, the completeness of his sacrifice and satisfaction, the excellency of his righteousness, and the energy of his grace and strength: so he comes to have such a witness in himself, that if ten thousand arguments were ever so artfully formed, in favour of the purity of human nature, the power of man's free will, and the sufficiency of his righteousness, and against the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, the dignity of his person,

as the son of God, which gives virtue to his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, they would all signify nothing to him, he would be proof against them. And such an one very readily receives into him the testimony God gives of his son, of the glory and excellency of his person, and retains it in him. The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, *hath the witness of God in him*; to which the Ethiopic version agrees, and confirm the last observation: *he that believeth not God*; does not receive his testimony concerning his son: the Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's, and the Vulgate Latin version read, *he that believeth not the son*; and the Ethiopic version, *his son*; and the Arabic version, *the son of God*; and so is a direct antithesis to the phrase in the former clause of the verse: *hath made him a liar*; not the son, but God, as the Arabic version renders it, *hath made God himself a liar*; who is the God of truth, and cannot lie; it is impossible he should; and as nothing can be more contumelious and reproachful to the being and nature of God, so nothing can more fully expose and aggravate the sin of unbelief, with respect to Christ, as the son of God: *because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son*; at the times and places before observed.

Ver. 11. *And this is the record, &c.*] The sum and substance of it, with respect to the person of Christ, and the security of salvation in him, who is the true God, and eternal life: *that God hath given to us eternal life*; which is a life of glory and happiness hereafter; in the present state is unseen, but will in the world to come be a life of vision, free from all the sorrows and imperfections of this; and will be of the utmost perfection and pleasure, and for ever. This is a pure free-grace gift of God the father, proceeding from his sovereign good will and pleasure, and which he gives to all his chosen ones, for they are ordained unto eternal life; to as many as he has given to his son; to all that are redeemed by his blood, and are brought to believe in him: to these he gave it in his son before the world began; and to the same in time he gives the right unto it, the meekness for it, and the pledge and earnest of it; and will hereafter give them the thing itself, the whole of it, to be possessed and enjoyed by them in person, to all eternity. *And this life is in his son*: not only the purpose and promise of it, but that itself; Christ asked it of his father in the covenant of peace, and he gave it to him, that he might have it in himself for all his people; and here it is safe and secure, it is hid with Christ in God, it is bound up in the bundle of life with him; and because he lives, this life will never be lost, or they come short of it.

Ver. 12. *He that hath the son, &c.*] Has a spiritual and experimental knowledge of him, true faith in him; who has him dwelling in his heart, and living in him: *hath life*: not only spiritual life, being quickened by him, and living by faith on him, but eternal life; the knowledge he has of him is eternal life; he has it in faith and hope, and has a right unto it, and the earnest of it, as well as has it in Christ his representative, whom he has, and in whom this life is: and *he that hath not the son of God*; no knowledge of him, nor

faith in him, nor enjoyment of him: *hath not life*; he is dead in sin, he is alienated from the life of God, has no title to eternal life, nor meetness for it, nor shall enjoy it, but shall die the second death.

Ver. 13. *These things have I written unto you, &c.*] Which are contained in the epistle in general, and particularly what is written in the context, concerning the victory of the world, being ascribed to him who believes that Christ is the son of God; and concerning the six witnesses of his sonship, and the record bore by God, that the gift of eternal life is in him: and which are especially written to them, *that believe on the name of the son of God*; who not only believed that Christ is the son of God, which this six-fold testimony would confirm them in, but also believed in his name, for righteousness, life, and salvation; in which name there is all this, and in no other; and who also professed their faith in him, and were baptized in his name, and continued believing in him, and holding fast their profession of him. The end of writing these things to them was, *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*; that there is such a thing as eternal life; that this is in Christ; that believers have it in him, and the beginning of it in themselves; and that they have a right unto it, and meetness for it, and shall certainly enjoy it; the knowledge of which is had by faith, under the testimony of the spirit of God, and particularly what is above written concerning eternal life, being a free-grace gift of God; and this being in Christ, and the assurance of it, that such who have him, or believe in him, have that which might serve to communicate, cultivate, and increase such knowledge: *and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God*; which they had done already, and still did; the sense is, the above things were written to them concerning the son of God, that they might be encouraged to continue believing in him, as such; to hold fast the faith of him, and go on believing in him to the end; and that their faith in him might be increased; for faith is imperfect, and is capable of increasing, and growing exceedingly; and nothing more tends unto, or is a more proper means of it, than the sacred writings, the reading and hearing them explained, and especially that part of them which respects the person, office, and grace of Christ. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Beza's manuscripts, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *these things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who believe in the name of the son of God*.

Ver. 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, &c.*] Either in God, to whom prayer is made; or in the son of God, through whose blood and righteousness believers in him have confidence with God at the throne of grace; they can come with boldness and intrepidity, and use freedom and liberty of speech, as the word here used signifies; especially when they have the spirit of Christ with them, and are under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and have a comfortable assurance of being heard and answered; and this is what the Jews call *עיון תפילה*, *the consideration, or attention of prayer*, which they explain thus; "after a man has prayed, he judges in his heart that

“ the holy blessed God will give him his reward, and “ will do every thing needful for him, and will hear “ his prayer, because he has prayed with intention ; ” but this is much better expressed, and upon a much better foundation, by our apostle here : *that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us* : to ask any thing according to the will of God, is to ask, as to matter, what, and in a manner which, is agreeably to it ; by which is meant, not his secret will, or his purposes and decrees, which are unknown, though, so far as these are made known, they are not to be prayed against, for they can never be made void ; and therefore, when God had declared it as his purposing will, that the Israelites in the wilderness should not enter into Canaan's land, and that he had rejected Saul from the kingdom, in these cases it would have been wrong for Moses to have prayed for the one, or Samuel for the other ; 1 Sam. xvi. 1. and though no one person is to be excluded from our prayers on the account of the decree of reprobation, since no man can certainly be known to be a reprobate ; yet it does not become us to pray for the conversion and salvation of reprobates in general, since this would be contrary to the decree of God : and such purposes which God has declared by prophecy he has purposed in himself, as the conversion of the Jews, the bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles, the destruction of antichrist, and the glory of the Gospel church, for these we should pray that God would hasten them in his own time, and we are sure of being heard ; but the revealed will of God is here intended, by which it appears that all grace is laid up in Christ, and all spiritual blessings are with him, and that the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and full of the sure mercies of David, and of exceeding great and precious promises ; all which are treasured up for the benefit and use of the people of God ; and if, therefore, they ask for any grace, or supply of grace, for any spiritual blessing or mercy laid up in Christ, in the covenant, or in any of the promises, they ask that for matter which is according to the will of God, and which they may be assured they shall have, sooner or later : and to ask in a manner agreeably to his will, is to come in the name of Christ, and make mention of his righteousness, and ask for his sake ; to put up all petitions in faith, with fervency, in sincerity, and uprightness ; with reverence, humility, and submission to the divine will, and with importunity ; and such asks God hears, even so as to answer, and grant their requests in his own time, though not always in theirs ; in some cases sooner, in others later, according to his infinite wisdom, and in his own way, which is always the best, though not in theirs, as in the case of the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version read, *if we ask any thing according to, or in his name* : that is, of Christ, and which agrees with John xiv. 13, 14. and xvi. 23, 24.

Ver. 15. *And if we know that he hear us, &c.*] As it may be assured he does hear and answer all such persons that ask according to his will : *whatsoever we ask, we know*, or are assured, *that we have the petitions that we desired of him* ; for as it is the nature of that holy confidence, which believers have in God, to believe whatever they ask according to his will, in general, shall be granted, so every request in particular ;

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yea, before the mercy desired, or the favour asked for is conferred, they are as sure of having it in God's own time and way, as if they now had it in hand and fact.

Ver. 16. *If any one see his brother sin, &c.*] Those who have such an interest at the throne of grace, and such boldness and freedom there, should make use of it for others, as well as themselves, and particularly for fallen believers ; for a *brother* ; not in a natural or civil sense, but in a spiritual sense, one that is judged to be born again, and belongs to the family and household of God, and is a member of a Gospel church ; and so is under the watch, inspection, and care of the saints ; and is observed to sin, as the best of men are not without it, nor the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed : and this sin of his is a *sin* which is *not unto death* ; every sin, even the least sin, is in its own nature mortal, or deserving of death ; the proper wages of sin is death, yea, death eternal ; yet none of the sins of God's elect are unto death, or issue in death, in fact ; which is owing not to any different nature there is in their sins, or to their good works which counterbalance them ; but to the grace of God, and to the blood and righteousness of Christ, by which they are pardoned and justified, and freed from obligation to punishment, or eternal death, the just demerits of them : but how should another man know that a brother's sin is not unto death, when it is of the same nature and kind with another man's ? it is known by this, that he does not continue in it ; he does not live in the constant commission of it ; his life is not a course of iniquity ; that sin he sins is not a governing one in him ; though he falls into it, he rises up out of it through divine grace, and abides not in it ; and he has a sense of it, and is sorry for it, after a godly sort, loaths it, and himself for it ; is ashamed of it, ingenuously confesses it, and mourns over it and forsakes it : now when any strong believer or spiritual man sees or knows that a brother has sinned, and this is his case, *he shall ask* ; he shall pray to God for him, that he would administer comfort to him, discover his love, and apply his pardoning grace to him, and indulge him with his presence and the light of his countenance : *and he shall give him life* ; that is, God shall give the sinning brother life ; by which may be meant comfort, that which will revive his drooping spirits, and cause him to live cheerfully and comfortably, that so he may not be swallowed up with over-much sorrow ; or he shall grant a discovery of the pardon of his sin unto him, which will be as life from the dead, and will give him a comfortable hope of eternal life, of his right unto it, and meetness for it : *for them, or to them that sin not unto death*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it ; for this phrase is only descriptive of the persons to whom life is given by God, upon the prayers of saints for them, and not that this life is given to him that prays, and by him to be given to the sinning person. The Vulgate Latin version renders the whole thus, *and life shall be given to him that sins not unto death* ; which leaves the words without any difficulty : the Ethiopic version indeed renders it, *and he that prays shall quicken him that sins a sin not unto death* ; and this sense some interpreters incline to, and would have with this text compared 1 Tim. iv. 16. James v. 20. *There is a sin unto death* ; which is not only deserving of death, as

every other sin is, but which certainly and inevitably issues in death in all that commit it, without exception; and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is neither forgiven in this world nor in that to come, and therefore must be unto death; it is a sinning wilfully, not in a practical, but doctrinal way, after a man has received the knowledge of the truth; it is a wilful denial of the truth of the Gospel, particularly that peace, pardon, righteousness, eternal life, and salvation, are by Jesus Christ, contrary to the light of his mind, and this joined with malice and obstinacy; so that there is no more or other sacrifice for such a sin; there is nothing but a fearful looking-for of wrath and fury to fall on such opposers of the way of life; and as the presumptuous sinners under Moses's law died without mercy, so must these despicable ones under the Gospel; see Matt. xii. 31, 32. Heb. x. 26—29. Some think there is an allusion to one of the kinds of excommunication among the Jews, called *shammatha*, the etymology of which, according to some Jewish writers, is *שם מיתה*, *there is death*¹. *I do not say that he shall pray for it*; the apostle does not expressly forbid to pray for the forgiveness of this sin, yet what he says amounts unto it; he gives no encouragement to it, or any hopes of succeeding, but rather the reverse; and indeed where this sin is known, or can be known, it is not to be prayed for, because it is irremissible; but as it is a most difficult point to know when a man has sinned it, the apostle expresses himself with great caution.

Ver. 17. *All unrighteousness is sin, &c.*] All unrighteousness against God or man is a sin against the law of God, and the wrath of God is revealed against it, and it is deserving of death; yet all unrighteousness is not unto death, as the sins of David, which were unrighteousness both to God and man, and yet they were put away, and he died not; Peter sinned very foully, and did great injustice to his dear Lord, and yet his sin was not unto death; he had repentance unto life given him, and, a fresh application of pardoning grace: *and there is a sin not unto death*; this is added for the relief of weak believers, who hearing of a sin unto death, not to be prayed for, might fear that theirs were of that kind, whereas none of them are; for though they are guilty of many unrighteousnesses, yet God is merciful to them and forgives, Heb. viii. 12. and so they are not unto death.

Ver. 18. *We know that whosoever is born of God, &c.*] Who is regenerated by his spirit and grace, and quickened by his power; who has Christ formed in him, and is made a partaker of the divine nature, and has every grace implanted in him: *sinneth not*; the sin unto death; nor does he live in sin, or is under the power and dominion of it, though he does not live without it; see the note on ch. iii. 9. *but he that is begotten of God*; the Vulgate Latin version reads, *the generation of God keeps or preserves him*; that is, that which is born in him, the new man, the principle of grace, or seed of God in him, keeps him from notorious crimes, particularly from sinning the sin unto death, and from the governing power of all other sins; but all other versions, as well as copies, read as we

do, and as follows: *keepeth himself*: not that any man can keep himself by his own power and strength; otherwise what mean the petitions of the saints to God that he would keep them, and even of Christ himself to God for them on the same account? God only is the keeper of his people, and they are only kept in safety whom he keeps, and it is by his power they are kept; but the sense is, that a believer defends himself by taking to him the whole armour of God, and especially the shield of faith, against the corruptions of his own heart, the snares of the world, and particularly the temptations of Satan: *and that wicked one toucheth him not*; he can't come at him so as to wound him to the heart, or destroy that principle of life that is in him, or so as to overcome and devour him; he may tempt him, and sift him, and buffet him, and greatly afflict and grieve him, but he can't touch his life, or hurt him with the second death; nay, sometimes the believer is so enabled to wield the shield of faith, or to hold up Christ the shield by faith, and turn it every way in such a manner, that Satan, who is here meant by the wicked one, because he is notoriously so, can't come near him, nor in with him; can't work upon him at all with his temptations, nor in the least hurt his peace, joy, and comfort: the saints know their perseverance from the promises of God and declarations of Christ; Psal. cxxv. 1, 2. Jer. xxxii. 40. Matt. xvi. 18. John x. 28.

Ver. 19. *And we know that we are of God, &c.*] The sons of God, and regenerated by him; this is known by the spirit of God, which witnesses to the spirits of the saints that they are the children of God; and by the fruits and effects of regenerating grace, as love to the brethren, and the like: *and the whole world lies in wickedness*; that is, the men of the world, the greater part of the inhabitants of it, who are as they were when they came into it, not being born of God; these are addicted to sin and wickedness; the bias of their minds is to it, they are set upon it, and give themselves up to it, are immersed in it, and are under the power of it: or *in the wicked one*; Satan, the god of this world; they are under his influence, and led according to his will, and they are governed by him, and are at his beck and command; and this is known by sad experience, it is easy of observation; see 2 Esdras, iv. 27.

Ver. 20. *And we know that the son of God is come, &c.*] That the second Person in the Godhead, who is equal to the father, and of the same nature with him, is come from the father, from heaven into this world, not by local motion, but by assumption of nature; that he is come in the flesh, or is become incarnate, in order to work out salvation for his people, by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and this John and others knew, for they had personal knowledge of him, and converse with him; they saw him with their eyes, heard him, and handled him: he dwelt among them, preached to them, wrought miracles before them, which proved him to be what he was; and it may be known that the Messiah must be come, since Daniel's weeks, which fixes the time of his coming, are long ago up; the sceptre is departed from Judah, and the second temple is destroyed, neither of which were to be till

¹ T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 17. 1.

the Messiah came; and that Jesus of Nazareth is he who is come may be known by the characters of him, and the works done by him: *and hath given us an understanding*; not a new faculty of the understanding but new light into it; a knowledge of spiritual things of himself, and of God in him, and of the truths of the Gospel, and of all divine and heavenly things; for he, the son of God, is come a light into the world, and gives spiritual light to men: *that we may know him that is true*; or *the true God*, as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; that is, God the Father, who is the true God, in opposition to the false gods of the Heathens, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and the spiritual knowledge of him as the father of Christ, and as a covenant-God and father in him, is only given to men by Christ, and this is life eternal; see Matt. xi. 27. John xvii. 3. *and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ*; the words *Jesus Christ* are left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version; however, certain it is, that Jesus Christ is meant by his son, who is the son of the true and living God, and is himself *true*; not only true God, as hereafter asserted, but true man, having a true body and a reasonable soul, and was true and faithful in the discharge of his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; he faithfully declared the whole will of God, and taught the way of God in truth; he was faithful to him that appointed him, by securing his glory when he made reconciliation for the sins of the people; and all the administrations of his kingly office are just and true; yea, he is truth itself, the substance of all the types, in whom all the promises are yea and amen, and who has all the truths of the Gospel and treasures of wisdom in him; now his people are in him; they were secretly in him before the world was, being loved by him, chosen in him, put into his hands, preserved in him, and represented by him; and openly, at conversion, when they are anew created in him, brought to believe in him, and live upon him, and he lives in them, and they are in him as branches in the vine; and this is known by his

spirit being given them, by the communication of his grace unto them, and by the communion they have with him. *This is the true God and eternal life*; that is, the son of God, who is the immediate antecedent to the relative *this*: he is the true God, with his Father; and the Spirit, in distinction from all false, fictitious, or nominal deities; and such as are only by office, or in an improper and figurative sense: Christ is truly and really God, as appears from all the perfections of deity, the fulness of the Godhead being in him; from the divine works of creation and providence being ascribed to him; and from the divine worship that is given him; as well as from the names and titles he goes by, and particularly that of Jehovah, which is incommunicable to a creature; and he is called *eternal life*, because it is in him; and he is the giver of it to his people; and that itself will chiefly consist in the enjoyment and vision of him, and in conformity to him.

Ver. 21. *Little children, keep yourselves from idols, Amen.*] From Heathen idols and idolatry, into which the saints in those times might be liable to be drawn, by reason of their dwelling among Heathen idolaters, and being related to them, and by the too great freedom used in eating things sacrificed to idols in their temples; and from all other idols that might be introduced by some who went by the name of Christians, as the Gnostics, who worshipped the images of Simon and Helena; and the passage may be an antidote against the worshipping of images, afterwards introduced by the Papists. Moreover, errors and false doctrines, which are the figments of men's minds, and what they are fond of, may be called idols, and should be guarded against, and abstained from; as also the lusts of men's hearts, and all the evil things that are in the world, which are adored by the men of it; and even every creature that is loved too much is an idol; hence covetousness is called idolatry; nor should any creature or thing be loved more than God or Christ: the one only living and true God, Father, Son, and Spirit, he is only to be worshipped, feared, and loved.

THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF

JOHN.

THOUGH this epistle was called in question and gainsaid by some as authentic, as Eusebius says^a, yet there is no room to doubt of the authority of it; it was very early received into the canon of the Scripture,

and is cited as such, and also as the Apostle John's, by Irenæus^b, who was a disciple of Polycarp, and an hearer of Papias, who were both disciples of the Apostle John; nor need there be any question as to

^a Eocl. Hist. l. 3. c. 24.

^b Adv. Hæres. l. 1. c. 13. & l. 3. c. 18.

his being the author of it. Eusebius indeed does say^c, it was a doubt whether it was the Apostle John's, or another of the same name; and some have since asserted, that it was written not by John the Evangelist, but by John the Presbyter of Ephesus, after the apostle; and this is thought to have some confirmation from the author of it being called an elder, or presbyter, which is judged not so agreeable to the Apostle John; though it should be observed, that Peter an apostle styles himself an elder, as John here does, 1 Pet. v. 1. moreover, the above ancient writer, Irenæus, expressly

ascribes this epistle to John, the disciple of the Lord; and whoever compares some passages in this epistle with the former, particularly ver. 5, 6, 7, 9. with 1 John ii. 7, 8. and iii. 23. and v. 3. and iv. 1, 2, 3. will easily conclude, from the likeness of style and matter, that it is a genuine epistle of the Apostle John: the design of which is to exhort and encourage the lady he writes to, to continue in the truth and faith of the Gospel, and in love to God and his people, and to avoid false teachers and their doctrines.

THE writer of this epistle describes himself by his office, an *elder*, and inscribes it to a certain matron, whom he styles, on account of her honour and riches, a *lady*; and by reason of her grace, *elect*; and to her children, who, as well as herself, were the objects of the apostle's love, and of all that knew the truth, and that for the sake of it, which was common to them all, ver. 1, 2. the salutation follows, ver. 3. and then a congratulation of the lady, that some of her children walked in the same path of truth with herself, ver. 4. and next an exhortation to brotherly love, which is the commandment from the beginning; the evidence of which love is walking according to that, and every other command of God, ver. 5, 6. and the rather this should be closely attended to, since many deceivers, who were no other than antichrist, had got into the world, who did not own that Christ was come in the flesh; wherefore it became those that were concerned for his name and glory, as well as their own interest, to take heed lest what was wrought should be lost, and so a full reward be not received, ver. 7, 8. and then a description of these deceivers and false teachers is given; that they are transgressors of the rule of God's word, abide not in the doctrine of Christ, and so have not God, any interest in him; whereas he that abides in the doctrine of Christ has an interest both in the Father and in the Son, ver. 9. wherefore the apostle gives advice to the lady how to behave towards such; not to receive them into her house, nor wish them success, since so to do would be to join with them in their evil deeds, ver. 10, 11. and then he excuses the shortness of his letter, though he had many things to write unto her, yet would not, because he hoped shortly to visit her, and then would personally relate what he had to communicate to their mutual joy, ver. 12. and closes the epistle with the salutation of her sister's children to her, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. *The elder unto the elect lady and her children, &c.*] By the *elder* is meant the writer of this epistle, the Apostle John, who so calls himself either on account of his age, he being now near an hundred years of age, having outlived all the apostles: or on account of his office, being a bishop or overseer, not only of the church at Ephesus, but of all the Asiatic churches, which is the same with an elder; nor is this incompatible with his being an apostle; see 1 Pet. v. 1. *the elect lady* is the person he writes unto; by whom is designed not the church of Christ, since such a way

of speaking is unusual; and besides, he speaks of coming to see her face to face, and of the children of her elect sister: but some particular person, some rich, as well as gracious woman of John's acquaintance; and these words, *elect lady*, are neither of them proper names of the person: some think that the word *Kyria*, rendered *lady*, was the name of the person, as *Domina* with the Romans, and answers to the Hebrew word *Martha*; for as מַרְיָה, *Mar*, signifies *lord*, so מַרְתָּה, *Martha*, *lady*; and then the inscription runs, *to the choice or excellent Martha*; and the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *to the elect Kyria*: and others think that the word rendered *elect* is a proper name, and that this person's name was *Electa*, as *Electus*^d is a man's name; and then it must read thus, *to the lady Electa*; but her sister also is so called, and it can hardly be thought that two sisters should be both of a name; neither of them are proper names, but characters and titles of respect and honour: she is called a *lady*, because she was a person of distinction and substance, which shews that God sometimes calls by his grace some that are rich and noble; and also that titles of respect and honour, where flattery is avoided, may be lawfully given to persons of dignity and wealth; so Nazianzen^e calls his own mother by the same title; and it was usual to call women by this name from fourteen years of age^f: and this person also is said to be *elect*; either because she was a choice, famous, and excellent person, not only for her birth, nobility, and riches, but for her virtue, grace, and good works; or because she was chosen unto eternal life and salvation; and which the apostle might know without a special and divine revelation, by the Gospel coming with power to her; by the grace that was wrought in her; by the faith of God's elect, which she appeared to have, seeing it worked by love; and which may be, and ought to be concluded in a judgment of charity, of every one that professes faith in Christ, and walks according to it; and this also makes it appear that election is of particular persons, and not of nations, communities, and churches, as such; nor is it unusual to salute single persons under this character; see Rom. xvi. 13. this epistle is inscribed not only to this lady, but also to *her children*; who were not infants, but grown up, and had made a profession of the truth, and walked in it, ver. 4. and both the mother and the children the apostle represents as the objects of his love: *whom I love in the truth*; either as being in the truth and faith of the Gospel; for though all

^c Adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 25.

^d Herodian. Hist. l. 1. c. 51, 52, 53, 54.

^e Epist. ad Basil. 4. p. 769. vol. 1.

^f Epictet. Enchirid. c. 62.

men are to be loved as men, and to be done well to, yet they that are of the household of faith, or are in the faith, are in and especial manner to be loved and respected; see Gal. vi. 10. Tit. iii. 15. or the sense is, that the apostle loved this lady and her children sincerely and heartily, without dissimulation; not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth: *and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth*; either the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth; not with a notional knowledge, but with the knowledge of approbation and affection; with a fiducial and appropriating one: or the Gospel, the word of truth; not with a speculative, but with a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it: and this is not to be understood of every individual person then living, which had such a knowledge of the truth; for it can't be reasonably thought that every individual person should know this lady and her children; but of all such persons who had any knowledge of them; for such who are born again by the word of truth, love not only him that begat them, but all those who are begotten of him: this shews in what sense the word *all* is sometimes taken.

Ver. 2. *For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, &c.*] Not for her high birth, nobility, or riches; but either for Christ's sake, who is the truth, and who dwells in the hearts of believers by faith, and who is the same that dwells in one as in another; and on his account it is that saints love one another, because they belong to him, he is formed in them, and his image is instamped upon them; and every like loves its like: or for the Gospel's sake, which has a place, and dwells in every saint, and is the same for matter and substance in one as in another; and unity of mind and judgment produces unity of affection: or for the sake of the truth of grace, the inward principle of grace, which dwells in every regenerate person; a communication of the experience of which knits the saints one to another: *and shall be with us for ever*; where Christ enters and takes up his abode, from thence he never finally and totally departs, though he may sometimes hide his face with respect to communion, or withdraw his gracious presence; and where the Gospel has once took place in the heart, and is become the ingrafted word, it can never be rooted out, or be removed; and where the truth of grace is, it will remain; it is an incorruptible seed, a well of living water, springing up into eternal life.

Ver. 3. *Grace be with you, mercy and peace, &c.*] This form of salutation, or wish and prayer for the blessings mentioned, *from God the father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ*, is the same used by other apostles; see 1 Tim. i. 2. Jude 2. and the note on Rom. i. 7. Only 'tis added here with respect to Christ, that he is *the Son of the Father in truth and love*; which is mentioned by the apostle to confirm the deity of Christ, which is plainly implied in wishing for the above things equally from him, as from the father; and to oppose and confront some heretics of those times, who denied the true and proper sonship of Christ; and therefore he calls him, *the Son of the Father*, the only-begotten of the Father; and that *in truth*, or truly and properly, and not in a figurative and metaphorical sense, as magistrates are called the sons of God, and children of the most High, by reason of their office;

but so is not Christ, he is God's own son, in a true, proper, and natural sense: and he is *so in love*; he is his well-beloved son, his dear son, the son of his love; as he cannot otherwise be; since he is not only the image of him, but of the same nature, and has the same perfections with him.

Ver. 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children, &c.*] Not all, but some of them; for good parents have not always good children, or at least not all of them; Adam had a Cain, Abraham an Ishmael, and Isaac an Esau: God is pleased to shew his discriminating grace in tribes and families, by taking some, and leaving others: it is a great mercy when any are called by grace, and instead of the fathers are the children: and this was the case of some of the children of this elect lady, they were *walking in the truth*; in Christ, the truth, by faith, as they had received him; and in the truth of the Gospel, as they had embraced and professed it; they abode in it, and by it, and made a proficiency in the knowledge of it, which may be signified by walking, that being a progressive action: as also they walked according to it, and as became it; and likewise they walked in the truth of Gospel worship, discipline, and ordinances: *as we have received a commandment from the father*; and which has been made known by Jesus Christ, as his mind and will. Now as it is matter of joy and gladness to godly parents when their children walk in the paths of faith, truth, and holiness, so it is also to ministers of the Gospel, as well as to the angels in heaven; it gives them an inward pleasure and joy, and which is not only expressed by them, to such children and their parents, but is also abundant by many thankgivings unto God.

Ver. 5. *And now I beseech thee, lady, &c.*] Or *Kyria*, which word the Syriac and Arabic versions retain, as if it was a proper name: the apostle having finished the inscription, salutation, and congratulation in the preceding verses, passes to an exhortation and entreaty to observe the commandment of love to one another, which is not a new commandment, but what was from the beginning: *not as though I wrote a new commandment, &c.* see the note on 1 John ii. 7, 8.

Ver. 6. *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments, &c.*] By observing them as a rule of conversation, in so doing love is shewn to God; and such may expect the fresh discoveries of the love of God to them; see the note on 1 John v. 3. *this is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it*; that is, this is the will of God, that his people should walk in the truth of the Gospel, and abide by it, as they heard and received it at their first conversion, from the mouths of the apostles, or other faithful ministers of the word; a reason for which is given in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *For many deceivers are entered into the world, &c.*] By whom are meant false teachers, who are described by their quality, *deceivers*, deceitful workers, pretending to be ministers of Christ, to have a value for truth, a love for souls, and a view to the glory of God, but lie in wait to deceive, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and by their quantity or number, *many*, and so likely to do much mischief; and by the place where they were, they were *entered into the world*; or *gone out into the world*; as

the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, as in 1 John iv. 1. see the note there; and by their tenet, *who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*; these were not the Jews who denied that Jesus was the Christ, though they would not allow that Christ was come in the flesh; but these were some who bore the Christian name, and professed to believe in Jesus Christ, but would not own that he was really incarnate, or assumed a true human nature, only in appearance; and denied that he took true and real flesh of the virgin, but only seemed to do so; and these are confuted by the apostle, 1 John i. 1. and upon every one of these he justly fixes the following character. *This is a deceiver and an antichrist*; one of the deceivers that were come into the world, and one of the antichrists that were already in it; and who were the forerunners of the man of sin, and in whom the mystery of iniquity already began to work; for antichrist does not design any one particular individual person, but a set of men, that are contrary to Christ, and opposers of him.

Ver. 8. *Look to yourselves, &c.*] This is an exhortation to the elect lady, and her children, to look about them, and take care of themselves, and beware of these deceivers, and their doctrines: *that we lose not those things which we have wrought*; or as the Alexandrian copy, and many other copies, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, *that ye lose not those things which ye have wrought*; in embracing the Gospel, making a profession of it, walking in it, shewing a zeal, and contending for it, expressing a love both by words and actions to the ministers of it, and suffering much reproach on the account of it; all which would be lost, and in vain, should they at last drop the Gospel, and embrace the errors of the wicked; see Gal. iii. 4. Moreover, such who don't go such lengths, as to let go the head, Christ, but retain him as the foundation, and the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, yet, among many precious things, may lay much rubbish on this foundation; and therefore should take heed what they build upon it, since, though they themselves may be saved, their works may be destroyed, and so they suffer loss; see 1 Cor. iii. 11—15. and if we read the words, *that we lose not—which we have wrought*; the sense is the same, it being only a figure which rhetoricians call communion, and it is frequently used when a common duty is exhorted to; see 1 John ii. 28. 2 John 5. unless it should be thought that this has a peculiar reference to the ministers of the Gospel, as it may: for though the Gospel preached by them can never be lost, being the everlasting Gospel, and the word which abides for ever; yet it may be received in vain, and persons may fall from it, and imbibe error, and so the labour of Christ's faithful ministers may be so far in vain, and lost; and likewise, many souls whom they have thought they have gained to Christ, and that they have been instruments of working upon them for good, and have hoped they would be their joy and crown of rejoicing another day; when such are carried away by deceivers, fall off from the truth, ministers of the word lose what they thought

they had wrought, which must give them great concern; and this is improved by the apostle into a reason and argument why the persons he wrote to should beware of seducers and their errors: *but that we receive a full reward*; in heaven, and which itself is called the recompense of reward, and the reward of the inheritance; not that this is a reward of debt due to the works of men, which are not rewardable in themselves; for they are such as are due to God before they are performed; and when they are done, they are not profitable to him, nothing is given to him, or received by him; when all is done that can be done, men are unprofitable servants; but this is a reward of grace, God has of his own grace promised it to those who love and serve him; and because it will be given them of his grace, after their work is over, as wages are given to a servant when he has done his work, it goes by this name: and whereas it is said to be a *full one*, the meaning is not as if it was different to different persons, for there is but one recompense of reward, or reward of the inheritance common to all the saints; or, as if it might be incomplete in some; it only signifies a large and exceeding great reward; see Gen. xv. 1. and Ruth ii. 12. in which last place the same phrase is used as here; and where the Septuagint interpreters use the same words as here; and which is thus paraphrased by the Targumist, "the Lord give thee a good recompense in this world for thy good work, and let thy reward be שלימה, full, or perfect, in the world to come." And the Jews⁵ often speak of a full reward, and an equal one, to be received hereafter. Perhaps regard is here had particularly to the ministers of the Gospel, who have their reward in part here, for the workman is worthy of his reward, and they will have it in full hereafter. Moreover, the apostle might here be concerned, that he, and every faithful minister, might have their full number, they expected, that none may be missing, and which he may call a full reward: though the above copies and versions read here, as before, *ye, and not we*.

Ver. 9. *Whosoever transgresseth, &c.*] Not the law of God, of which every one is a transgressor, and that daily, in thought, word, or deed; but who passes over the rule and standard of doctrine, the word of God, and will not adhere to that, nor walk according to it, but rejects and despises that rule: *and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ*; which he received from his father, and delivered to his apostles, and of which he is the sum and substance; the doctrine which is concerning his person as the son of God, and as truly God, and the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his one person; and concerning his offices, as the Mediator, surety, and messenger of the covenant, and as the prophet, priest, and King of his church; and concerning his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at God's right hand, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; concerning peace and pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation by him: this is תלמודו של מלך המשיח, the doctrine of the King Messiah, or the Messiah's Talmud⁶, to use the

⁵ Targum on Eccl. i. 2. & ii. 11. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4.

⁶ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3.

Jewish phrase, and which agrees with John's. Now, whoever has embraced and professed this doctrine, but errs concerning it, and rejects it, and abides not in it, as Satan abode not in the truth, appears to be of him: *hath not God*; for his Father, but the devil, the father of lies; he has no true knowledge of God, for there is none but in Christ, whose doctrine such an one has denied; nor has he, nor can he, have communion with him, nor any interest in him. *He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ*; as he hath received and professed it; neither can any thing remove him from it, not the arguments of false teachers, nor the reproaches and persecutions of men, or the snares and allurements of the world: *he hath both the Father and the Son*; he has an interest in them both, and has knowledge of each of them, and fellowship with them. The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version leave out the phrase, *of Christ*, in the preceding clause, and only read, *in the doctrine*; and the Syriac version, *in his doctrine*; the sense is the same.

Ver. 10. *If there come any unto you, &c.*] Under the character of a preacher; and bring not this doctrine; or does not preach the doctrine of Christ, as before explained, but despises it, and preaches a contrary one: *receive him not into your house*; neither into the house of God, suffer him not to preach there; nor into your own house, give him no entertainment there: false teachers always tried to creep into houses, where they served their own turn every way, both by feeding their bellies, and spreading their pernicious doctrines; and therefore such should be avoided, both publicly and privately; their ministry should not be attended on in the church, or house of God; and they should not be entertained in private houses, and much less carressed: *neither bid him God speed*; or give him the usual civil form of salutation, as a good day to you, all hail, all health and prosperity attend you, the Lord be with you, and the like. The word used by the Jews was *אִשְׁרָי*, which signifies *happiness*; so it is said¹, what do they salute with? *אִשְׁרָי*, *God speed*; which was forbidden to say to one that was ploughing in the seventh year. The meaning is, that with such no familiar conversation should be had, lest any encouragement should be given them; or it should induce a suspicion in the minds of other saints, that they are in the same sentiments; or it should tend to make others think favourably of them,

and be a snare and a stumbling-block to weak Christians.

Ver. 11. *For he that biddeth him God speed, &c.*] Wishes him well, and success in his ministry, or in a friendly and familiar way converses with him: *is partaker of his evil deeds*; he has fellowship with him, instead of reproving or shunning him, as he ought; he is an abettor of him in his principles, and so far joins in the propagation of them, and helps to spread them, and gives too much reason to think he is one with him in them.

Ver. 12. *Having many things to write unto you, &c.*] Either on a civil, or on a religious account, concerning the state of the churches of Asia, and particularly Ephesus, and of private families and persons, and concerning the truths and doctrines of the Gospel; not that he had any new one, or any other than what they had heard from the beginning, to communicate to them, by word of mouth, for this he denies, ver. 5, 6. wherefore this makes nothing for the unwritten traditions of the Papists, and as if the Scriptures did not contain the whole of doctrine and of the will of God. *I would not write with paper and ink*; any more than what was written: *but I trust to come unto you*; where they were, but where that was is not known; very likely in some parts of Asia, and it may be not far from Ephesus, since any long journey would not have been fit for the apostle to have taken in this his old age: *and speak face to face*; that is, freely and familiarly converse together about things omitted in this epistle: *that our joy may be full*; in seeing one another's faces, and through hearing the things that may be talked of; and since the conversation would doubtless turn on divine and evangelic things, so fullness, or a large measure of spiritual joy, may be here intended. Instead of *our joy*, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and the Ethiopic versions, read, *your joy*.

Ver. 13. *The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.*] Not the members of a sister-church, as some think; but the children of one who was the sister of this lady, according to the flesh; and who, as she, was either a very famous and excellent person, or rather one chosen of God likewise unto eternal life and salvation; and whose children also were walking in the truth, and here send their Christian salutation to their aunt; very likely those sister's children lived at Ephesus, where John resided.

¹ T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 2. Vid. Taanith, fol. 64. 2.

THE THIRD EPISTLE

OF

JOHN.

THIS epistle was written by the Apostle John, who calls himself an *elder*, as in the preceding, and is inscribed to a friend of his, whom he mentions by name, and expresses a very great affection for, on account of his steady adherence to the truths of the Gospel, ver. 1. he wishes him bodily health equal to that prosperity of soul he was indulged with, ver. 2. congratulates him upon the testimony the brethren that came from him gave him of the truth being in him, and of his walking in it, and upon hearing that his children also trod in the same path, ver. 3, 4. commends him for his hospitality and charity, of which testimonies were given before the church; and encourages him to go on doing the same acts of beneficence, since it was to such persons that went forth for the sake of Christ, and preaching in his name, and had nothing of the Gentiles for so doing; wherefore they ought to be received, and entertained by those of ability, that they might be fellow-helpers to the truth with them, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. He complains of Diotrephes as a proud, haughty, and overbearing man in the church, where Gaius was a member, who would neither receive the letters the apostle sent, nor the brethren that came with them; nay, forbid them that would, and cast them out of the church for it, and prated against them with malicious words, whom he threatens to remember when he himself should come thither, ver. 9, 10. wherefore he exhorts Gaius not to follow such an ill example, but that which is good in any person; since he that does good appears to be of God, and he that does evil, it looks as if he had never known him, ver. 11. And particularly he recommends Demetrius, who had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself, and had a testimony from the apostle, and those that were with him, which was known to be a true one, ver. 12. But though he had many things to say, both of one, and of the other, he determines to write no more at present, hoping he should shortly see him, and personally converse together; and closes the epistle with his own good wish, and with mutual salutations of friends, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 1. *The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, &c.*] *The elder* is the writer of the epistle, the Apostle John, who so styles himself on account of his age, and office, as in the preceding epistle. The person to whom he writes is *the well-beloved Gaius*; not that Gaius, who was the Apostle Paul's host, Rom. xvi. 23. for though their characters agree, being both hospitable men, yet neither the place nor time in which they lived. The Apostle Paul's Gaius lived at Corinth,

this is in some place near to Ephesus, for the apostle in his old age purposed to come and see him shortly; the other was cotemporary with Paul, this with John; there were thirty or forty years difference between them: besides, the Corinthian Gaius was baptized by Paul, and was doubtless one of his spiritual children, or converts, whereas this Gaius was one of the Apostle John's spiritual children, ver. 4. nor does he seem to be the same with Gaius of Macedonia, Acts xix. 29. or with Gaius of Derbe, Acts xx. 4. who seem to be two different persons by their country, though both companions in travel of the Apostle Paul; for which reason, as well as the time of their living, neither of them can be this Gaius, who was a settled housekeeper, and resided at some certain place. His name is a Roman name, and the same with Caius, though he seems to have been a Jew, as he might, it being usual with the Jews in other countries to take Gentile names. His character is, that he was *well-beloved*; that is, of God, as it appears he was from the grace bestowed on him, from the prosperous estate of his soul, and from the truth that was in him, and his walking in it; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the same reasons; and also of all the brethren and saints that knew him; he being a person not only truly gracious, and of faithfulness and integrity, but of great liberality and beneficence, which must gain him much love and esteem among them; and he was well-beloved by the Apostle John; and so the Syriac version renders it, *to my beloved Gaius*; though his love to him is expressed in the following clause, *whom I love in the truth*; as being in it, or for the sake of it, or truly and sincerely; see the note on 2 John 1.

Ver. 2. *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper, &c.*] Or succeed in all temporal affairs, in the business of life, in which he was; and as success of this sort depends upon the blessing of God, which maketh rich, it is to be wished and prayed for from him: *and be in health*; that is, of body, which above all things, above all outward mercies, is the most desirable; for without this, what are the richest dainties, the largest possessions, or the best of friends? without this there can be no comfortable enjoyment of either of them; and therefore of this sort of mercies, it is in the first place, and above all others, to be wished for, and desired by one friend for another. The rule and measure of this wish is according to the prosperity of his soul, *even as thy soul prospereth*: the soul is diseased with sin, and may be said to be in good health, when all its iniquities are forgiven; and

may be said to prosper, when having a spiritual appetite for the Gospel, the sincere milk of the word, it feeds upon it, is nourished by it, and grows thereby; when it is in the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love; when spiritual knowledge is increased, or it grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; when the inward man is renewed day by day with fresh strength; and when it enjoys communion with God, has the light of his countenance, and the joys of his salvation; and when it is fruitful in every good work.

Ver. 3. *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came, &c.*] From the place where Gaius lived, to that where John now resided; these brethren seem to be preachers of the word, who travelled from place to place to spread the Gospel: *and testified of the truth that is in thee*; either of Christ, who was formed in him; or of the Gospel, which had a place in his heart; or of the truth of grace that was in him, as well as of that faithfulness, integrity, and sincerity he appeared to be possessed of, being an Israelite indeed, and without guile: *even as thou walkest in the truth*: in Christ, and in the Gospel, and as became it, and with all uprightness; see 2 John 4. and this occasioned great joy in the apostle; as it is matter of joy to every one that truly loves Christ, and his Gospel; or has the true grace of charity in him, which envies not the gifts and graces of others, but rejoiceth in the truth, wherever it is found; and especially to the faithful ministers of the word, when they hear of the truth of grace in any souls, and that such continue walking in the truth of the Gospel, and particularly those who have been wrought upon under their ministry, as follows.

Ver. 4. *I have no greater joy, &c.*] Nothing that causes greater joy. The Vulgate Latin version reads *grace or thanks*; and then the sense is, that he had nothing to be more thankful for: *than to hear that my children walk in truth*; meaning his spiritual children, those whose conversion he had been the instrument of; and among these it seems Gaius was one.

Ver. 5. *Beloved, thou doest faithfully, &c.*] Or a faithful thing, and as became a faithful man, a believer in Christ; in all his beneficence and charity he acted the upright part; he did not do it in an hypocritical way, to be seen of men, and gain applause from them, but from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God: *whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers*; which may design either different persons; and by *brethren* may be meant the poor brethren of the church that Gaius belonged to, and others that were well known to him; and by *the strangers*, not unconverted persons, but such of the saints as came from foreign parts, and travelled about to spread the Gospel, and enlarge the interest of Christ: or else the same persons may be intended, for the words may be read, as they are in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, *what thou doest to the brethren, and this to strangers*; that is, as the Arabic version renders it, *to strange brethren*; or, as the Syriac version, *to the brethren, and especially them that are strangers*; so that Gaius was a very hospitable man, one that entertained and lodged strangers, and used them very civilly and courteously, with great liberality, and with much integrity and sincerity.

Ver. 6. *Which have borne witness of thy charity before*

the church, &c.] At Ephesus, where John was; these brethren and strangers coming thither, and being greatly affected with Gaius's kindness and liberality to them, could not forbear speaking of it to his praise, in the presence of the members of the church, as well as acquainted the Apostle John with it; the Syriac version reads, *before the whole church*; they bore testimony of his liberality in a very public manner. And this the apostle mentions to encourage Gaius to go on, and continue in his kindness to the same persons, since they retained such a grateful sense of past favours; and whereas they were now returning back, he desires that he would give them some further assistance: *whom if thou bring forward on their journey*; the word here used signifies, *to send on before*, as in Acts xv. 3. and xx. 38. and xxi. 5. Rom. xv. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11. 2 Cor. i. 16. Tit. iii. 13. and is used by the Septuagint in the same sense as here, and in the above places, in Gen. xviii. 16. where 'tis said, that *Abraham went with them* (the angels) *to bring them on in the way*, לשלוחם, *to send them on, or send them away*; dismiss them, take his leave of them in a friendly and honourable way. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it, ללואיתיהו, *to accompany them*; and so this Greek word, which seems to answer to the Hebrew phrase, signifies an honourable accompanying, leading forth, and taking leave of friends; and so the apostle encourages Gaius to behave in like manner to the brethren and strangers; meaning, either by accompanying them in person, or by sending his servants along with them, both to direct them the way, and to secure them from danger, and chiefly by furnishing them with every thing necessary for them; see Tit. iii. 13. And this he would have him do, *after a godly sort*; or *worthy of God*: in imitation of God, who is merciful, kind, and beneficent; or as it became him whom God had called by his grace to his kingdom and glory; or as it was fit and proper such servants of God, as those brethren were, should be used; and this would be doing well: *thou shalt do well*: what is grateful and well-pleasing to God, and beautiful and lovely in the eyes of his people.

Ver. 7. *Because that for his name's sake they went forth, &c.*] From Judea; either of their own accord to preach the Gospel, or being drove out by the unbelieving Jews, for professing the name of Christ; and be it which it will, there was good reason why they should be regarded, and especially since they did as follows, *taking nothing of the Gentiles*; even of those who were converted, through their preaching the Gospel, to whom they ministered, for of others, the unconverted Gentiles, they could not expect to receive; and this they did, as the apostles before them, because they would not be chargeable to them, and lest it should be thought they sought their own worldly interest, and not the good of souls and glory of Christ, and so a stumbling-block be laid in the way of the Gospel, to hinder the progress of it. The Ethiopic version reads this in the singular number, and *I went forth for his name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles*.

Ver. 8. *We therefore ought to receive such, &c.*] We who are Jews, that have believed in Christ, for such an one Gaius, it seems, as well as the apostle, were, ought to receive such preachers of the word into our

houses, and entertain them cheerfully, whilst they continue, and supply them with all necessaries when they depart: *that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth*: that is, to the Gospel, and the propagation of it in the world: some are helpers to it, in preaching of it, by making use of the ministerial gifts bestowed upon them; and others are fellow-helpers with them, to the same good work, by their purses, communicating freely to the support of those, who labour in the word and doctrine; and these latter have the honour to be co-workers, or fellow-labourers with the former, as the word here used signifies. The Alexandrian copy reads, *fellow-helpers to the church*, that so the whole burden of taking care of these ministers might not lie upon them. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *fellow-helpers of the truth*.

Ver. 9. *I wrote unto the church, &c.*] Where Gaius was a member: those who take Gaius to be the same with Paul's host, and whom he baptized at Corinth, think the church at Corinth is here meant; but it seems rather to be meant of some church in Asia nearer Ephesus; nor is it likely that John's first epistle should be here intended, which makes no mention of relieving the brethren, the ministers of the Gospel, that came from Judea: and that this epistle should not be preserved, need not seem strange; for it cannot be thought that every thing that was written by him to particular persons, or churches, should be continued. The Alexandrian copy and one of Stephens's read, *I wrote something to the church*; upon this head, concerning receiving and supporting ministers of the Gospel, and so prevents an objection that Gaius might make, why did he not write to the church about it? The Vulgate Latin version reads, *I should, or would have wrote*: and the Syriac version, *I desired, or wished to have wrote*; suggesting, that though he had not wrote, yet it was much upon his mind, he had a great desire to it: *but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not*; which hindered him from writing, or was the reason why he wrote now to Gaius. since Diotrephes gave no heed to what he had wrote, suppressed his letter, and would not suffer it to be read to the brethren. This Diotrephes, by his name, which signifies one *nourished, or brought up by Jupiter*, was a Gentile; there was one of this name, who was one of the kings of Athens^a; and what may confirm this is, his slighting and rejecting the brethren that came from Judea: it is very likely he was more than a private member in the church, and that he was an officer, and it may be the pastor; and though there is a pre-eminence, which of right belongs to such an officer, as to preside over the church, to govern, guide, and direct, according to the laws of Christ, he being set over the church, as a ruler, governor, and guide; yet this may be carried too far, as it was by this man, who coveted more than was his due, and lorded it over God's heritage, ruled the flock with force and cruelty, and usurped a tyrannical power over them; whereas every thing in a church ought to be done, by pastor and people, in love, meekness, and with mutual consent. And it may be also, that he sought to have the pre-eminence over the rest of the elders of the church, for

in those large churches there were oftentimes more elders and pastors than one; see Acts xx. 17, 28. Phil. i. 1. This ambitious spirit prevailed and obtained among the false teachers, who set up themselves at the head of parties, and above the apostles of Christ, and paved the way for antichrist, who assumed the title of universal bishop, which has introduced all the errors and impieties of the Romish church. Now this man being of such an ambitious, lordly, and governing spirit, received not the Apostle John, and those that were with him; meaning not their persons, for as yet he and they were not in person where he was; but his letter, his orders, and instructions; these he paid no regard to, concealed them from the church, and would not admit them to be read: or else the apostle's sense is, that he received not the brethren that came from him, and were recommended by him, and whom he affectionately loved, and who were near and dear to him as himself; and therefore not receiving them is interpreted by him as not receiving himself.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore, if I come, &c.*] Where both Gaius and Diotrephes lived, as he trusted he should shortly, ver. 14. *I will remember his deeds which he doth*; meaning, not only that he would tell him of them to his face, but make mention of them, and expose them to the whole church, and reprove him for them: and which are as follow, *prating against us with malicious words*; it is a common thing for ministers of the Gospel to be prated against, not only by the men of the world, but by professors of religion, and by such who call themselves preachers also; nor need it be wondered at, since John, an apostle of Christ, the beloved disciple, who was so harmless and inoffensive in his conversation, so kind and loving in his disposition and temper, so meek and humble in his deportment, and now in such an advanced age, was prated against by a Diotrephes: and what is said against Christ's ministers is no other than prating; silly, idle, trifling, and empty stuff, as the word used signifies; for want of greater things, they take up any little matter, and improve it against them; and this is often done with a malicious intent, to hurt their characters, spoil their usefulness, and render their ministry unprofitable. *And not content herewith*; with prating against the Apostle John, and the ministers with him, in this wicked way: *neither doth he himself receive the brethren*; the meaning is not, that he did not receive them into the church, for they were there, since afterwards mention is made of his casting them out from thence; but he did not receive them into his house, and entertain them as he ought to have done; for a minister of the Gospel, and a pastor of a church, ought to be hospitable, and given to hospitality, and entertain strangers, especially those who are brethren in Christ, and fellow-ministers of the word: and the rather these were to be received, since they travelled about to spread the Gospel among the Gentiles, and took nothing of them. And this was not all, he not only did not receive them himself, and reject them, but was not willing that others should receive them: *and forbiddeth them that would*: on such who had a heart, as well as ability, to receive and entertain these

^a Vid. Fabricii Bibliograph. Antiqu. p. 211.

poor brethren, he laid his injunctions, and gave them strict orders, in his lordly and tyrannical way, not to shew any respect unto them; and *casteth them out of the church*; that is, he excommunicated them, either those that entertained them, or rather the brethren themselves; which was an abuse of the ordinance of excommunication, as that ordinance is abused, when any single person, a pastor, or any other, as here, assumes the power of doing it himself, and does it without the church; whereas it is a punishment or censure, to be inflicted by many, or to be done by the joint suffrage of the church; and when it is done in a wrong cause, for some small trifling matter, or none at all, and not in a case of heresy or immorality, obstinately persisted in; and when it is done from wrong principles, and with wrong ends, as to gratify the pride and passion of some; and not for the good of the person cast out, or to prevent others from falling into the same snare, or for the honour of religion, and the glory of God. The phrase seems to be taken from the Jews, who expressed their excommunication, or putting out of the synagogue, by a casting out; see John ix. 34, 35.

Ver. 11. *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, &c.*] Follow not evil in general, it being hateful to God, contrary to his nature and will, and bad in itself, as well as pernicious in its consequences; and particularly follow not, or do not imitate the particular evil or evils in Diotrephes; as his pride, ambition, love of pre-eminence, and tyrannical government in the church, and especially his hard-heartedness, cruelty, and inhospitality to the poor saints; and so the Arabic version reads, *do not imitate him in evil*; the examples of persons in office and authority have great influence, especially in cases of charity, when men can be excused thereby, and save their money, or be freed from an expense: *but that which is good*; follow and imitate that, be a follower of God, imitate him in acts of kindness and beneficence, be merciful as he is; copy after Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, and declared it to be more blessed to give than to receive; and tread in the steps of those good men, who have shewn love to the name of Christ, by ministering to his saints; for though the apostle may mean every thing that is good, which is to be followed and imitated in any, yet he chiefly designs acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints and ministers: to which he encourages by the following, *he that doeth good is of God*; he is a child of God, he appears to be so, in that he is like to his heavenly Father, who is kind and merciful; he is born of God, he is passed from death to life, which his love to the brethren shews; he has the grace of God, and strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, without either of which he could not do that which is good: *but he that doeth evil hath not seen God*; has had no spiritual saving sight of God in Christ; for if he had, he would abhor that which is evil, and, with Job, abhor himself for it, and reckon himself, with Isaiah, as undone, Job xliiii. 6. Isa. vi. 5. for such effects has the sight of God on the souls of men; such an one knows not God, nor what it is to have communion with him: for those who live in sin, in whom it is a governing principle, cannot have fellowship with God; nor has such an one ever felt the love of God in his soul, or been made

a partaker of his grace, which would teach and constrain him to act otherwise. Compare this text with 1 John iii. 10. which shews the Apostle John to be the writer of this epistle. The Ethiopic version reads, *shall not see God*; that is, hereafter, in the world to come.

Ver. 12. *Demetrius hath good report of all men, &c.*] This man was of a quite different cast from Diotrephes, and therefore the apostle makes mention of him to Gaius, to be followed by him, and not the other; he was either the same with Demas, which is a contraction of this name, or the person that John sent from Ephesus with this letter: we read of an Ephesian of this name, Acts xix. 24. though not the same person; or else one that also was a member of the same church with Gaius and Diotrephes; and he being kind and beneficent, obtained a good report of the generality of men, not only of the brethren, but of those that were without; for a liberal man is universally respected. The Syriac version adds, *and of the church itself*; as distinct from all men, or the generality of the men of the world: *and of the truth itself*; that is, whoever speaks truth must give him a good character, for this cannot be understood with any propriety of the Gospel, nor of Jesus Christ: *yea, and we also bear record*; or a testimony to the character of Demetrius; that is, I John, the apostle, and the saints at Ephesus: *and ye know that our record is true*: faithful, and to be depended upon. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, read, *thou knowest*, as does also the Vulgate Latin version, which seems most agreeable, since this epistle is directed to a single person; compare this with John xix. 35. and it will give a further proof of this epistle being the Apostle John's.

Ver. 13. *I have many things to write, &c.*] With regard to churches, and particular persons, and concerning hospitality to the poor brethren: *but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee*; suggesting he should take another method of communicating his mind to him, which he next mentions.

Ver. 14. *But I trust I shall shortly see thee, &c.*] Either at Ephesus, where John was, or rather at the place where Gaius lived, see ver. 10. *and we shall speak face to face*; freely and familiarly converse together about these things, which were not thought proper to be committed to writing: *peace be to thee*; which was the usual form of salutation with the Jews, and John was one; see the note on John xx. 19. *our friends salute thee*; or send their Christian salutation to thee, wishing all health and prosperity in soul and body; meaning the members of the church at Ephesus: the Arabic version reads, *thy friends*; such at Ephesus as had a particular knowledge of him, and affection for him. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *the friends*: the members in general; and the Alexandrian copy reads, *the brethren*; and the Syriac version, *our brethren*: and then the epistle is closed thus, *greet the friends by name*; meaning those that were where Gaius lived, to whom the apostle sends his salutation, and desires it might be delivered to each of them, as if they had been mentioned by name. This and the epistle of James are the only epistles which are concluded without the word *Amen*.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

J U D E.

THAT this epistle was written by Jude, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, and not by Jude the fifteenth bishop of Jerusalem, who lived in the time of Trajan, a little before Bar Cocob, the false Messiah, as Grotius thought, is evident from his being called, in the epistle itself, the brother of James, and which is confirmed by all copies; and its agreement with the second epistle of Peter shews it to have been written about the same time, and upon the same occasion. As to Jude's not calling himself an apostle, but a servant of Jesus Christ, it may be observed, that the latter is much the same with the former, and the Apostle Paul sometimes uses them both, as in Rom. i. 1. Tit. i. 1. and sometimes neither, as in 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. Philem. 1. and sometimes only servant, as Jude does here, Phil. i. 1. though in some copies of the title of this epistle he is called *Jude the Apostle*; and as to Jude's making mention of the apostles as if he was later than they, and not of their number, ver. 17. it may be returned for answer to it, that the Apostle Peter expresses himself much in the same manner, 2 Pet. iii. 2. where some copies, instead of *us the apostles*, read *your apostles*, see the note there; moreover, Jude seems to cite a passage out of Peter, as Peter in the same chapter cites the Apostle Paul, which only shews agreement in their doctrine and writing; and at most it only follows from hence, that Jude wrote after some of the apostles, as Paul and Peter, who had foretold there would be mockers in the last time; and that Jude had lived to be a witness of the truth of what they had said; nor does he exclude himself from their number. And that this epistle is a genuine one appears from the majesty of its style, the truth of doctrine contained in it, and its agreement with the second epistle of Peter, and from the early reception of it in the churches. Eusebius* says, it was reck-

oned among the seven catholic epistles, and was published in most churches; though he observes, that many of the ancients make no mention of it: but certain it is, that several of the ancient writers before him do make mention of it, and cite it as genuine, as Clemens Alexandrinus^b, Tertullian^c, and Origen^d; and as for the prophecy of Enoch, cited in this epistle, it is not taken out of an apocryphal book, that bears that name, for the apostle makes no mention of any writing of his, but of a prophecy; and had he cited it out of that book, as it was truth, it can no more prejudice the authority of this epistle, than the citations made by the Apostle Paul out of the Heathen poets can affect his epistles: and whereas there is an account also given in this epistle of a dispute about the body of Moses, nowhere else to be met with, supposing it to be understood of his real body, of which see the note on the place; this can be no more an objection to the genuineness of this epistle, than the mention of Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, by the Apostle Paul, is an objection to an epistle of his, whose names are not to be met with in other parts of Scripture; but were what were known by tradition, as might be the case here. The epistle is called *catholic*, or *general*, because it is not written to any particular person or church, but to the saints in general, and it may be to the same persons that Peter wrote his; see 1 Pet. i. 1. 2 Pet. i. 1. and who seem to be chiefly the believing Jews; see ver. 5, 17. though the Syriac version of ver. 1. reads, *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ—לעממת, to the nations, or Gentiles, called, &c.* the design of the epistle to both is to exhort them to continue in the faith, and contend for it; and to describe false teachers, to point out their principles, practices, and dreadful end, that so they might shun and avoid them.

THE writer of this epistle describes himself by his name, Jude; by his spiritual condition, a *servant of Christ*; and by his natural relation, a *brother of James*; and inscribes it to persons chosen of God, secured in Christ, and called by grace, ver. 1. whom he salutes, and wishes a multiplication of mercy, peace, and love unto, ver. 2. and then points at the subject-matter of

his epistle, *the common salvation*; and his view in writing it, which was to exhort them to contend earnestly for the Gospel; which exhortation was necessary, since some reprobate and wicked men, abusers of the grace of God, and blasphemers of the person of Christ, had got in among them, ver. 3, 4. and in order to deter them from following their pernicious ways, he lays before

* Hist. Eccl. 1. 2. c. 23.

^b Pædagog. 1. 3. c. 8. p. 239. & Stromat. 1. 3. p. 431.

^c De Culta Fœmin. 1. 1. c. 3.

^d In Josh. Homil. 7. fol. 156. E. & Comment. in Matth. p. 223. Ed. Huet.

them various instances of divine vengeance on sinners; as the Israelites, whom God delivered out of Egypt, and yet destroyed them for their unbelief; the angels, who not content with their first estate, forsook their habitation, and are reserved in chains of darkness to the day of judgment; and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the adjacent cities, who for their uncleanness suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, as an example to others, ver. 5, 6, 7. in like manner, the apostle observes, these false teachers, who were filthy dreamers, defiled themselves with such sins, and also despised and spoke evil of civil magistrates, ver. 8. which sin of theirs is aggravated by Michael the archangel not railing at the devil, in a contention with him about the body of Moses, but gently reproving him; by speaking evil of what they were ignorant of, and by their brutish sensuality, in corrupting themselves in things they had natural knowledge of, ver. 9, 10. and both their sin and punishment are exemplified in the cases of Cain, Balaam, and Core; being guilty of hatred of the brethren, of covetousness, and of contradiction, ver. 11. and by various metaphors are set forth their intemperance, hypocrisy, instability, unfruitfulness, pride, wrath, and lust, for whom the blackest darkness is reserved for ever, ver. 12, 13. the certainty of which is proved from an ancient prophecy of Enoch, concerning the coming of Christ to judgment, when vengeance will be taken on those men for their ungodly deeds and hard speeches, ver. 14, 15. who are further described by their murmurs and complaints; by their pride, respect of persons, and covetousness; by their scoffs, and walking after their own lusts, as had been foretold by the apostles of Christ; by separating themselves from the saints, and by their sensuality, and not having the spirit of God, ver. 16, 17, 18, 19. and the apostle having thus at large described these false teachers, by reason of whom the saints were in danger, directs them to the use of means by which they might be secured from them; such as building themselves up in their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keeping themselves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life, ver. 20, 21. and he teaches them not only to be concerned for themselves, but for others also, who were in danger from these deceivers; to deal with some in a tender and compassionate way, with others more roughly, expressing an hatred to a filthy conversation, ver. 22, 23. and then the epistle is concluded with a doxology, or an ascription of glory to the only wise God our Saviour, who is able to keep his people from falling into such pernicious principles and practices, and to present them faultless before his glorious presence with exceeding joy, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, &c.*] The author of this epistle is the same who is elsewhere called Judas, Luke vi. 16. and John xiv. 22. who was one of the twelve apostles of Christ, whose name was also Lebbeus, and whose surname was Thaddeus, Matt. x. 3. the name is the same with Jehudah, Gen. xxix. 35. and xlix. 8. which comes from a word that signifies to praise or confess; and in the Rabbinical dialect is called יודא, *Juda*, as here. He styles himself the

servant of Jesus Christ; see the note on Rom. i. 1. though this is a title common to all believers, yet here, and in some other places, it is peculiar to an apostle, or minister of the Gospel; and therefore is used not merely in humility, and to acknowledge obedience to Christ, but as a title of dignity and honour: and the apostle goes on to describe himself by his natural relation, and brother of James; not the son of Zebedee, but of Alpheus, Matt. x. 2, 3. and this he mentions partly to distinguish himself from others of that name, as Judas Iscariot, and Judas called Barsabas; and partly for the sake of honour and credit, James being a very great man, a man of great note and esteem, and who seemed to be a pillar in the church, and was called the brother of our Lord, Gal. ii. 9. and i. 19. an account of the persons to whom this epistle is inscribed next follows, *to them that are sanctified by God the father*; which is to be understood not of internal sanctification, which is usually ascribed to the spirit of God, but of the act of eternal election, which is peculiar to God the father; in which sense Christ is said to be sanctified by the father, and men ordained and appointed to an office, and vessels are set apart for the owner's use; John x. 36. Jer. i. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 21. the language is taken from the ceremonial law, by which persons and things were sanctified, or set apart for sacred use and service; see Exod. xiii. 2, 12. Lev. xxvii. 14, 16. and so the elect of God are by God the father sanctified and set apart in the act of election, which is expressed by this word; partly because of its separating nature, men being by it separated from the rest of the world, to the use and service of God, and for his glory, so that they are a distinct and peculiar people; and partly because such are chosen through sanctification of the spirit, and unto holiness both in this world and that which is to come; so that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine; for though holiness is not the cause of it, yet is a means fixed in it, and is certain by it, and an evidence of it; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, *to them that are loved by God the father*; election is the fruit and effect of love; those that are sanctified or set apart by the father in election, are loved by him. The Ethiopic version renders it quite otherwise, *to them that love God the father*; which flows from the father's love to them: and preserved in Jesus Christ; those who are sanctified, or set apart by God the father in election, are in Christ, for they are chosen in him; they have a place in his heart, and they are put into his hands, and are in him, and united to him as members to an head, and were represented by him in the covenant of grace; and being in him, they are preserved by him, and that before they are called, as well as after; wherefore this character is put before that of being called, though the Syriac version puts that in the first place: there is a secret preservation of them in Christ before calling, from condemnation and the second death; they were not preserved from falling in Adam, with the rest of mankind, nor from the corruption of human nature, nor from actual sins and transgressions; yet, notwithstanding these, were so preserved

that the law could not execute the sentence of condemnation on them, nor sin damn them, nor Satan, who led them captive, hale them to prison; and after calling, they are preserved not from in-dwelling sin, nor from the temptations of Satan, nor from doubts and fears and unbelief, nor from slips and falls into sin; but from the tyranny and dominion of sin, from being devoured by Satan, and from a total and final falling away; they are preserved in the love of God, and of Christ; in the covenant of grace; in a state of justification and adoption; and in the paths of truth, faith, and holiness; and are preserved safe to the heavenly kingdom and glory: their other character follows, *and called*; not merely externally by the ministry of the word, but internally by the spirit and grace of God; so that this is to be understood of a special and effectual call, whereby souls are called out of darkness into light, and from bondage to liberty; and from a dependence on themselves to the grace and righteousness of Christ; and from society with the men of the world to fellowship with him; and to eternal glory, so as to have faith and hope concerning it.

Ver. 2. *Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied.*] In this salutation the apostle wishes for a multiplication of *mercy*, from God the father, by whom these persons were sanctified: mercy is a perfection in God; and shews itself in a special manner towards the elect, in the covenant of grace, in the provision of Christ as a Saviour, in the mission of him into this world, in redemption by him, in the forgiveness of sin, in regeneration, and in their whole salvation; and the multiplication of it intends an enlarged view and fresh application of it, which they sometimes stand in need of, as under desertions, when they want the sense and manifestation of it to them; and under temptations and afflictions, when they need sympathy and compassion; and when they fall into sin they stand in need of the fresh discoveries and application of pardoning mercy to them. Moreover, herein is wished for a multiplication of *peace* from Christ, in whom these chosen ones were preserved; and may design a fresh and enlarged view of peace being made for them by his blood, and an increase of conscience-peace in their own hearts, as the effect of it; and may include peace, and an abundance of it, among themselves, as well as all prosperity, both external, internal, and eternal: likewise in the salutation, *love*, and a multiplication of it is wished for from the spirit of God, by whom they were called; and may be understood of the love with which God loved them; and which may be said to be multiplied, when it is gradually shed abroad in their hearts by the spirit, and they are by degrees led into it more and more, and the acts of it are drawn out and set before them one after another, and fresh manifestations of it are made unto them; as in afflictive providences, after the hidings of God's face, and under temptations: and it may design the love with which they love God, which may be increased and made to abound more and more.

Ver. 3. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you, &c.*] The apostle calls the persons he writes unto *beloved*; as they were of God, and by him and other saints; and he signifies his diligence in writing

to them; and the subject of his writing was, of the *common salvation*; which designs either the Gospel, sometimes called salvation, in opposition to the law, which is a ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation, and a means of it; and may be said to be *common*, because preached to all, Jews and Gentiles: or Jesus Christ the Saviour himself, who is also sometimes called *salvation*, because he was called and appointed to it, and undertook it, and is become the author of it; and may be said to be a *common* Saviour, not of all men, but of all his people; of his whole body, the church, and every member of it, and of all sorts of men, in all nations: or else that spiritual and eternal salvation wrought out by him, which is common, not to all men, for all are not saved with it, but to all the elect of God, and true believers in Christ; the love of God is common to them all alike; the choice of them to eternal salvation is the same; the covenant of grace, the blessings and promises of it, are equally shared by them; and they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness, and are regenerated, sanctified, and called by the same grace, and shall possess the same glory: there is but one way of salvation, and that is not confined to any nation, family, community, or sect among men. The Alexandrian copy and two of Beza's, and the Syriac version, read, *our common salvation*; and two other of Beza's copies and the Vulgate Latin version read, *your common salvation*; the sense is the same: *it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*: by the *faith* is meant the doctrine of faith, in which sense it is used whenever faith is said to be preached, obeyed, departed, or erred from, or denied, or made shipwreck of, or when exhortations are made to stand fast, and continue in it, or to strive and contend for it, as here; and which is sometimes called the word of faith, the faith of the Gospel, the mystery of faith, or most holy faith, the common faith, and, as here, faith only; and designs the whole scheme of evangelical truths to be believed; such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity and sonship of Christ, the divinity and personality of the Spirit; what regards the state and condition of man by nature, as the doctrines of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, the corruption of nature, and the impotence of men to that which is good; what concerns the acts of grace in the Father, Son, and Spirit, towards, and upon the sons of men; as the doctrines of everlasting love, eternal election, the covenant of grace, particular redemption, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, pardon and reconciliation by his blood, regeneration and sanctification by the grace of the spirit, final perseverance, the resurrection of the dead, and the future glory of the saints with Christ. This is said to be *delivered to the saints*: it was delivered by God the father to Christ as Mediator, and by him to his apostles, who may more especially be meant by the *saints*, or holy men; who were chosen to be holy, and to whom Christ was made sanctification, and who were sanctified by the spirit of God; and this faith, being a most holy faith, is fit for holy men, and only proper to be delivered to them,

and preached by them; and by them it was delivered to the churches, both by word and writing; and this delivery of it supposes that it is not an invention of men, that it is of God, and a gift of his, and given in trust in order to be kept, held forth, and held fast; and it was but *once* delivered, in opposition to the sundry times and divers manners in which the mind of God was formerly made known; and designs the uniformity, perfection, and continuance of the doctrine of faith; there is no alteration to be made in it, or addition to it; no new revelations are to be expected, it has been delivered all at once: and therefore should be *earnestly contended for*; for could it be lost, another could not be had; and the whole of it is to be contended for; not only the fundamentals, but the lesser matters of faith; and not things essential only, but also what are circumstantial to faith and religion; every truth, ordinance, and duty, and particularly the purity of faith, and its consistency: and this contention includes a care and solicitude for it, to have it, own it, and hold it fast, and adorn it; and for the preservation of it, and for the spread of it, and that it might be transmitted to posterity: and it denotes a conflict, a combat, or a fighting for it, a striving even to an agony: the persons to be contended with on account of it, are such who deny, or depreciate any of the Persons in the Godhead, the assertors of the purity and power of human nature, and the deniers of sovereign, efficacious, and persevering grace: the persons who are to contend with them are all the saints in general, to whom it is delivered; which they may do by bearing an experimental testimony to it, by praying for the continuance and success of it, by standing fast in one spirit in it, and by dying for it; and particularly the ministers of the Gospel, by preaching it boldly, openly, fully, and faithfully, by disputing for it, and writing in the defence of it, and by laying down their lives, when called for: the manner in which this is to be done, is *earnestly*, heartily, in good earnest, and without deceit, zealously, and constantly.

Ver. 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, &c.*] These words contain a reason why the doctrine of faith should be contended for, because of false teachers, who are described as being then upon the spot; the Apostles Peter and Paul had foretold that they would come, but Jude here speaks of them as in being; wherefore present vigour and vigilance were necessary to be used: their names are not mentioned, nor their number, only that there were *certain*, or *some men*: which is done to stir up the saints to self-examination, whether they were in the faith; to diligence, in finding out these men; to vigour, in opposing them; and to care, to nip error and heresy in the bud: and they are said to have *crept in unawares*: either into private houses, as was the custom of those men; or into the churches, and become members of them, being the tares the enemy sows among the wheat; or into the ministry, assuming that office to themselves, without being called and sent of God; and so into the public assemblies of the saints, spreading their poisonous doctrines among them; and also into their affections, until discovered; and so the Ethiopic version reads here, *because ungodly men have entered into your hearts*; and all this was at an unawares, privily, secretly, with-

out any thought about them, or suspicion of them: *who were before of old ordained to this condemnation*; or *judgment*; meaning either judicial blindness of heart, they were given up to, in embracing and spreading errors and heresies; so that these are not casual things, but fall under the ordination and decree of God, which does not make God the author of them, nor excuse the men that hold them; and they are ordained and ordered for many valuable ends; on the part of God, to shew his power and wisdom; and on the part of truth, that it might be tried and appear the brighter, and to manifest his people and their graces: or else punishment is designed, even everlasting condemnation, to which some are pre-ordained of God; for this act of pre-ordination respects persons, and not mere actions and events; and is not a naked prescience, but a real decree, and which is sure, certain, and irrevocable; is God's act, and springs from his sovereignty, is agreeably to his justice and holiness; nor is it contrary to his goodness, and is for his glory: the date of this act is *of old*; or as the Syriac version renders it, *מן שורית*, *from the beginning*: that is, from eternity; see 2 Thess. ii. 13. Prov. viii. 22. for reprobation is of the same date with election; if the one is from eternity, the other must be so too, since there cannot be one without the other: if some were chosen before the foundation of the world, others must be left or passed by as early; and if some were appointed unto salvation from the beginning, others must be fore-ordained to condemnation from the beginning also; for these words cannot be understood of any prophecy of old, in which it was fore-written, or prophesied of these men, that they should be condemned for their ungodliness; not in Matt. xxiv. in which no such persons are described as here, nor any mention made of their punishment or condemnation; nor in 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. for then the apostle would never have said that they were *of old*, a long while ago, before written, or prophesied of, since according to the common calculation, that epistle of Peter's, and this of Jude's, were written in the same year; nor in the prophecy of Enoch, ver. 14. for Enoch's prophecy was not written, as we know of; and therefore these men could not be said to be before written in it; besides, that prophecy is spoken of as something distinct from these persons being before written, to condemnation; and after all, was a prophecy referred to, the sense would be the same, since such a prophecy concerning them must be founded upon an antecedent ordination and appointment of God; the word here used does not intend their being fore-written in any book of the Scriptures, but in the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees; and the justice of such a pre-ordination appears by the following characters of them, *ungodly men*: all men are by nature ungodly, some are notoriously so, and false teachers are generally such; here it signifies such who are destitute of the fear of God, and of all internal devotion, and powerful godliness; and who did not worship God externally, according to his institutions and appointments, and much less sincerely, and in a spiritual manner; and who even separated themselves from the true worshippers of God, and gave themselves up to sensuality, and therefore their condemnation was just: *turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness*;

not the love and favour of God, as in his own heart, or as shed abroad in the hearts of others; for that can never be turned to such a purpose, it always working in a contrary way; nor the principle of grace wrought in the soul, which being of a spiritual nature, lusteth against the flesh, and cannot be turned into it; more likely the goodness of God in his providential dispensations, which is despised by some, and abused by others; but rather the doctrine of grace, which though lasciviousness is not in its nature, nor has it any natural tendency to it, yet wicked men turn or transfer it from its original nature, design, and use, to a foreign one: and they may be said to turn it into lasciviousness, either by asserting it to be a licentious doctrine, when it is not; or by treating it in a wanton and ludicrous manner, scoffing at it, and lampooning it; or by making the doctrine of grace universal, extending it equally alike to all mankind, and thereby harden and encourage men in sin. *And denying the only Lord God: God the father, who is the only sovereign Lord, both in providence and grace; and the only God, not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, but in opposition to nominal and fictitious deities, or Heathen gods; and he was denied by these men, if not in words, yet in works: the word God is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version. And our Lord Jesus Christ; as his deity, or sonship, or humanity, or that he was the Messiah, or the alone Saviour, or his sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness; with respect to either of which he may be said to be denied doctrinally, as he is also practically, when men don't walk worthy of their profession of him; and both might be true of these men, and therefore their condemnation was righteous. The copulative and is omitted in the Syriac version, which seems to make this clause explanatory of the former.*

Ver. 5. *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once know this, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, *knew all things*; but rather it is to be restrained by the following instance of God's vengeance on unbelievers; which with others is produced, to vindicate the divine conduct in the condemnation of the above persons, and to shew that that is certain, and may be expected, since God has always dealt thus with such persons; and this they knew by reading of the Scriptures; at least they had known it once, though it might now be forgotten by them; and they had known it once for all; they had been perfectly acquainted with it; which is said, lest the apostle should be thought to write to persons ignorant, and rude in knowledge, and to shew that he wrote nothing new and unheard-of, and so should have the more weight and influence upon them; and he thought fit to remind them of it, though they had known it: it is one part of the work of the ministers of the word to put people in mind of what they have known; which is necessary, because of the inattentiveness of hearers, their forgetfulness, and loss of knowledge, and the weakness of some capacities to take in, and retain things; and if the judgment is not more informed hereby, yet the affections may be afresh raised, and

grace be drawn out into exercise, and the mind be established and confirmed. The instance follows, *how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt*: that is, the people of Israel, who were the chosen people of God, a special people, above all others, and had peculiar privileges; these the Lord brought out of the land of Egypt, with an high hand, and a mighty arm, and saved them out of their bondage, and delivered out of their oppressions and afflictions: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of *the Lord*, read *Jesus*: and yet, though they were a special people, and notwithstanding this wonderful deliverance, and great salvation, he *afterward destroyed them that believed not*; their carcasses fell in the wilderness by one judgment or another upon them; so that of all that came out of Egypt, but two entered into the land of Canaan: this shews the evil nature of unbelief; and that God will not suffer sin to go unobserved in any; no outward privileges and profession will screen any from divine vengeance; God sometimes makes severe examples of mere nominal professors; nor must false teachers, deniers of Christ, and perverters of his Gospel, expect to go free: moreover, it may be observed, that God may do great things for persons, and yet after all destroy them; great riches and honours may be conferred on some, great natural gifts on others; some may seem as if they had the grace of God, and were brought out of spiritual Egypt, and enjoy great mercies and favours, and have many deliverances wrought for them, and yet at last perish.

Ver. 6. *And the angels which kept not their first estate, &c.*] Or *principality*; that holy, honourable, and happy condition, in which they were created; for they were created in perfect holiness and righteousness, stood in the relation of sons to God, and were, for the lustre of their nature, comparable to the morning-stars; they were among the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; were a superior rank of creatures to men, and who beheld the face, and enjoyed the presence of God; but this estate they kept not, for being mutable creatures, one of them first sinning, the rest were drawn into it by him, and so were not what they were before, nor in the same estate, or place: *but left their own habitation*; by attempting to rise higher; or by quitting their station and posts of honour, being unwilling to be subject to God, and especially to the son of God, who was to assume human nature, and in it be above them, which they could not bear; and by gathering together in a body, in another place, with Satan at the head of them; though this may be considered as a part of their punishment, and they may be said to do what they were forced to; for they were drove out of their native habitation, heaven; they were turned out of it, and cast down to hell; see 2 Pet. ii. 4. And this their habitation, which they left, or fell from, or they were cast out of, is by the Jews frequently called the place of their holiness, or their holy place ⁵. *He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness*; by these *everlasting chains* may be meant the power and providence of God over them, which always abide upon them; or their sins, and the guilt of them upon their consciences,

⁵ Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 73. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 14, 22, 27. Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 1. & Sepher Bahir in ib. fol. 27. 3.

under which they are continually held; or the decrees and purposes of God concerning their final punishment and destruction, which are immutable and irreversible, and from which there is no freeing themselves: the phrase, *under darkness*, may refer to the chains, as in 2 Pet. ii. 4. where they are called *chains of darkness*; either because the power, providence, and purposes of God are invisible; so the Syriac version reads, *in unknown chains*; or because horror and black despair are the effects of sin, and its guilt, with which their consciences are continually filled: or it may denote the place and state where they are, either in the darkness of the air, or in the dark parts of the earth, or in hell, where is utter darkness, even blackness of darkness; or that they are under the power of sin, which is darkness, and without the light of God's countenance, or any spiritual knowledge, or comfort: and they are reserved in these chains, and under this darkness; or *in prison*, as the Arabic version renders it; which denotes the custody of them, and their continuance in it, in which they are kept by Jesus Christ, who can bind and loose Satan at his pleasure; and it shews that they are not as yet in full torment, but are like malefactors that are kept in prison, until the assize comes: so these are laid in chains, and kept in custody *unto the judgment of the great day*; that is, the future and last judgment of men and devils, which is certain, and will be universal, and executed with the strictest justice: this is called a *day*, which is fixed by God, though unknown to men and angels; and because of the evidence and quick dispatch of things, the matters judged will be as clear as the day, and finished at once; and a *great one*, for the Judge will appear in great glory; great things will be done, the dead will be raised, and all nations will be gathered together, and the process will be with great solemnity; the thrones will be set, the books opened, the several sentences pronounced, and all punctually executed; the judgment of the great day is the same the Jews call *יום דינא רבנא*, *the day of the great judgment*^b. This account shews the imprisoned state of the devils, that they are not their own lords, and can't do as they would; they are under restraints, and in chains, and not to be feared; which must be a great mortification to their proud and malicious spirits: and since this is the case of fallen angels, what severity may be expected from God against the opposers of the truths of the Gospel?

Ver. 7. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, &c.*] Admah and Zeboim, for Zoar was spared. This is a third instance of God's vengeance on sinners; and which, like that of the Israelites, and of the angels, was after great favours had been enjoyed: these places were delightfully situated, and very fruitful, as the garden of God; they were under a form of government, had kings over them, and had lately had a very great deliverance from the kings that carried them captive, being rescued by Abraham; they had a righteous Lot among them, who was a reprove in the gate, and Abraham made intercession for them with God. But they *in like manner giving themselves over to fornication*; not as the angels, who are not capable

of sinning in such a manner; though the Jews make this to be a sin of theirs, and so interpret Gen. vi. 2, 4¹. but rather the Israelites, among whom this sin prevailed, 1 Cor. x. 8. though it seems best of all to refer it to the false teachers that turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and were very criminal this way; and then the sense is, that in like manner as they, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, gave themselves over to the sin of fornication; wherefore these men might expect the same judgments that fell upon them, since their sin was alike; which sin is a work of the flesh, contrary to the law of God, is against the body, and attended with many evils; exposes to judgment here and hereafter, and unfits for the communion of the saints, and for the kingdom of heaven: *and going after strange flesh; or other flesh*; meaning not other women besides their own wives, but men; and designs that detestable and unnatural sin, which, from these people, is called sodomy to this day; and which is an exceeding great sin, contrary to the light of nature and law of God, dishonourable to human nature, and scandalous to a nation and people, and commonly prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the Papists and Mahometans; and arose from idleness and fulness of bread in Sodom, and was committed in the sight of God, with great impudence: their punishment follows, *are set forth for an example*; being destroyed by fire from heaven, and their cities turned into a sulphurous lake, which continues to this day, as a monument of God's vengeance, and an example to all such who commit the same sins, and who may expect the same equitable punishment; and to all who live ungodly lives, though they may not be guilty of the same crimes; and to all that slight and reject the Gospel revelation, with whom it will be more intolerable than for Sodom and Gomorrha; and to antichrist, who bears the same name, and spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt; and particularly to all false teachers, who besides their strange doctrines, go after strange flesh: *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*; which may be understood of that fire, with which those cities, and the inhabitants of it, were consumed; which, Philo the² Jew says, burnt till his time, and must be burning when Jude wrote this epistle. The effects of which still continues, the land being now brimstone, salt, and burning; and is an emblem and representation of hell-fire, between which there is a great likeness; as in the matter of them, both being fire; in the efficient cause of them, both from the Lord; and in the instruments thereof, the angels, who, as then, will hereafter be employed in the delivery of the righteous, and in the burning of the wicked; and in the circumstance attending both, suddenly, at an unawares, when not thought of, and expected; and in the nature of them, being a destruction total, irreparable, and everlasting: and this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who say¹, that "the men of Sodom have no part or portion in the world to come, and shall not see the world to come." And says R. Isaac, "Sodom is judged *בדינא דגיהנום*, *with the judgment of hell*."²

Ver. 8. *Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the*

^a Targum in Psal. l. 3.

¹ Pirke Eliczer, c. 29. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 1.

² De Abrahamo, p. 370.

¹ T. Hieros. Saubedrin, fol. 29. 3.

² Zohar in Gen. fol. 71. 3.

flesh, &c.] Which may be literally understood, either of the Jewish doctors, who pretended to be interpreters of dreams, as R. Akiba, R. Lazar, and others³; or of the false teachers in the apostle's time, and of their filthy dreams, and nocturnal pollutions in them; which sense the Arabic and Ethiopic versions confirm; the former rendering the words thus, *so these retiring in the time of sleep, defile their own flesh*; and the latter thus, *and likewise these, who in their own sleep, pollute their own flesh*; as also of their pretensions to divine assistance and intelligence by dreams; and likewise may be figuratively understood of them; for false doctrines are dreams, and the teachers of them dreamers, Jer. xxiii. 25, 27, 28, 32. as are all those doctrines of men that oppose the trinity of persons in the Godhead; that contradict the deity and sonship of Christ; that depreciate any of his offices; that lessen the glory of the person and grace of the Spirit; that cry up the purity, power, and righteousness of human nature, and are contrary to the free grace of God. These arise from the darkness of the understanding, and a spirit of slumber upon them; are the fictions of their own brain, and of their roving imagination; are illusory and deceitful, and are in themselves vanities, and like dreams pass away. And the dreamers of these dreams may be said to *defile the flesh*; since they appear to follow and walk after the dictates of corrupt nature; and because by their unclean practices, mentioned in the preceding verse, they defile the flesh, that is, the body: all sin is of a defiling nature, and all men are defiled with it; but these were notoriously so; and often so it is, that unclean practices follow upon erroneous principles. *Despise dominion*; either the government of the world by God, denying or speaking evil of his providence; the Ethiopic version renders it, *they deny their own God*, either his being, or rather his providence; or the dominion and kingly power of Christ, to which they cared not to be subject; or rather civil magistracy, which they despised, as supposing it to be inconsistent with their Christian liberty, and rejected it as being a restraint on their lusts; choosing rather anarchy and confusion, that they might do as they pleased, though magistracy is God's ordinance, and magistrates are God's representatives: *and speak evil of dignities*; or *glories*; the Arabic version reads, *the God of glory*: this is to be understood either of angels, those glorious creatures, called thrones, dominions, &c. or ecclesiastical governors, who are set in the first and highest place in the church, and are the glory of the churches; or else civil magistrates, as before; who are the higher powers, and sit in high places of honour and grandeur. False teachers are injurious to themselves, disturbers of churches, and pernicious to civil government.

Ver. 9. *Yet Michael the archangel, &c.*] By whom is meant, not a created angel, but an increased one, the Lord Jesus Christ; as appears from his name Michael, which signifies, *who is as God*: and who is as God, or like unto him, but the son of God, who is equal with God? and from his character as the archangel, or Prince of angels, for Christ is the head of all principality and power; and from what is elsewhere said of Michael, as

that he is the great Prince, and on the side of the people of God, and to have angels under him, and at his command, Dan. x. 21. and xii. 1. Rev. xii. 7. So Philo the Jew⁴ calls the most ancient Word, first-born of God, the archangel; in 2 Esdras iv. 36. Uriel is called the archangel: *when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses*; which some understand literally of the fleshly and natural body of Moses, buried by the Lord himself, partly out of respect to him; and partly, as some think, lest the Israelites should be tempted to an idolatrous worship of him; but rather it was to shew that the law of Moses was to be abolished and buried by Christ, never to rise more: and they think that this dispute was either about the burying of his body, or the taking of it up again; Satan on the one hand insisting upon the taking of it up, in order to induce the Israelites to worship him, and Michael, on the other hand, opposing it, to prevent this idolatry; but then the difficulty is, where Jude should have this account, since the Scriptures are silent about it. Some have thought that he took it out of an apocryphal book, called *the Ascension of Moses*, as Origen⁵, which is not likely; others, that he had it by tradition, by which means the Apostle Paul came by the names of the Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres; and some passages are referred to in some of their writings⁶, as having some traces of this dispute; but in them the discourse is not concerning the body, but the soul of Moses; not concerning burying or taking up of his body, when buried, but concerning the taking away of his soul, when he was alive; which none of the angels caring to undertake, at length Samael, the chief of devils, did, but without success, wherefore God took it away with a kiss himself: besides, the apostle produces this history as a thing well known; nor is it reasonable to suppose that such an alteration should be between Michael, and the devil, on such an account; or that it was in order to draw Israel into idolatry on the one hand, and on the other hand to prevent it; since it never was the custom of the Israelites to worship their progenitors or heroes; nor did they seem so well-disposed to Moses in his life-time; nor was there any necessity of taking up his body, were they inclined to give him honour and worship; yea, the sight of his dead body would rather have prevented than have encouraged it: but this is to be understood figuratively; and reference is had to the history in Zech. iii. 1, 2. as appears from the latter part of this verse: some think the priesthood of Christ is intended, which was the end, the sum and substance, of the law of Moses; and seeing that Joshua, the high-priest, was a type of Christ, and the angel of the Lord contended with Satan about him; he might be said to dispute with him about the body of Moses; but this sense makes a type of a type, and Christ to contend about himself; besides, this should rather be called the body of Christ than of Moses. Others think that the temple of the Jews is meant, about the rebuilding of which the contention is thought to be; and which may be called the body of Moses, as the church is called the body of Christ; though it should be observed, that the temple is never so called,

³ T. Hieros. Maaser Shevi, fol. 55. 2, 3.

⁴ De Confus. Ling. p. 341. & quis. rec. divin. Hæres. p. 509.

⁵ Πτερ ἀγγέλων, l. 3. c. 2.

⁶ Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 3, 4. Abot R. Nathan, c. 12. fol. 4. 2, 3. Petirath Mosis, fol. 57. 1. &c.

and that not the place where the church meets, but the church itself, is called the body of Christ: but it is best of all to understand it of the law of Moses, which is sometimes called Moses himself, John v. 45. Acts xv. 21. and xxi. 21. 2 Cor. iii. 15. and so the body of Moses, or the body of his laws, the system of them; just as we call a system of laws, and of divinity, such an one's body of laws, and such an one's body of divinity: and this agrees with the language of the Jews, who say[†], of statutes, service, purification, &c. that they are נוֹפֵי הַתּוֹרָה, *the bodies of the law*; and so of Misnic treatises, as those which concern the offerings of turtle-doves, and the purification of menstruous women, that they are נוֹפֵי, *the bodies of the traditions*[‡], that is, the sum and substance of them: so the decalogue is said[†] to be *the body of the Shema*, or Hear, O Israel, Deut. vi. 4. so Clemens of Alexandria[‡] says, that there are some who consider the body of the Scriptures, the words and names, as if they were, τὸ Σῶμα τοῦ Μωϋσῆ, *the body of Moses*[‡]. Now the law of Moses was restored in the time of Joshua the high-priest, by Ezra and Nehemiah. Joshua breaks some of these laws, and is charged by Satan as guilty, who contended and insisted upon it that he should suffer for it; so that this dispute or contention might be said to be about the body of Moses, that is, the body of Moses's law, which Joshua had broken; in which dispute Michael, or the angel of the Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, *durst not bring against him a railing accusation*; that is, not that he was afraid of the devil, but though he could have given harder words, or severer language, and which the other deserved, yet he chose not to do it, he would not do it; in which sense the word *durst*, or *dare*, is used in Rom. v. 7. *but said, the Lord rebuke thee*; for thy malice and insolence; see Zech. iii. 2. and this mild and gentle way of using even the devil himself agrees with Christ's conduct towards him, when tempted by him in the wilderness, and when in his agony with him in the garden, and amidst all his reproaches and sufferings on the cross. And now the argument is from the greater to the lesser, that if Christ, the Prince of angels, did not choose to give a railing word to the devil, who is so much inferior to him, and when there was so much reason and occasion for it; then how great is the insolence of these men, that speak evil of civil and ecclesiastical rulers, without any just cause at all?

Ver. 10. *But these speak evil of those things which they know not, &c.*] Which may more particularly refer to dignities, ver. 8. either angels, who are little known, and not at all, but by revelation, and yet were blasphemed, or evil-spoken of by these men; either by ascribing too much to them, as the creation of the world; or by saying such things of them, as were below, and unworthy of them, as their congress with women, &c. Or civil magistrates; these men were ignorant of the nature, use, and end, of magistracy and civil government, and so treated it with contempt; or the ministers of the Gospel, whose usefulness was not known, at least not acknowledged by them, and so became the object of their scorn and reproach: or it may refer

more generally to the Scriptures, which false teachers are ignorant of, and yet speak evil of; either by denying them to be the word of God, or by putting false glosses on them; and so to the several parts of the Scriptures, as to the law, the nature, use, and end of which they are not acquainted with; and therefore blaspheme it, by not walking according to it, or by denying it to be of God, and to be good, or by making the observance of it necessary to justification and salvation; and also to the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it, which they speak evil of, despise, and reject, not knowing the nature, value, and design of them: *but what they know naturally as brute beasts*: man originally had a large share of natural knowledge, and there is in man still, notwithstanding the fall, by which his knowledge is impaired, a natural knowledge of God, and of things natural, civil, and moral; and there is a sensitive knowledge in man, which he has in common with the brutes, and which is here meant: and such was the brutish sensuality of these men, that *in those things they corrupt themselves*; and act as brute beasts without shame and fear; yea, worse than brute beasts, as in the acts of unnatural lust, mentioned in ver. 7. whereby they corrupt both their souls and bodies, and so shall be destroyed, and perish in their corruption.

Ver. 11. *Woe unto them, &c.*] This may be considered as a commiseration of their case, or as a denunciation of deserved punishment, or as a prediction of what would befall them. The Arabic version prefaces these words with an address to the saints, *O my beloved*; that what was about to be said might be attended to, as a caution and instruction to them. *For they have gone in the way of Cain*; which was a way of envy, for Cain envied the acceptance of his brother's gift, and that notice which the Lord took of him; so these men envied the gifts bestowed on Christ's faithful ministers, and the success that attended their labours, and the honour that was put upon them by Christ, and that was given them by the churches; which shews, that they were destitute of grace, and particularly of the grace of charity, or love, which envies not, and that they were in an unregenerate estate, and upon the brink of ruin and destruction. Moreover, the way of Cain was a way of hatred, and murder of his brother, which his envy led him to; so these men hated the brethren, persecuted them unto death, as well as were guilty of the murder of the souls of men, by their false doctrine: to which may be added, as another of Cain's ways, in consequence of the former, absence from the presence of God, or the place of his worship; so these men separated themselves, and went out from the churches, forsook the assembling together with them, and so might expect Cain's punishment, to be driven from the face of God; yea, to be bid go as cursed into everlasting burnings: *and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward*; Balaam's error, which he himself was guilty of, was covetousness, or an immoderate love of money, 2 Pet. ii. 15. which, as it is the root of all evil, is the bane of religion, and the

[†] Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 8.
[‡] Pirke Abof, c. 3. sect. 18.
[§] T. Hieros. Beraot, fol. 6. 2.

[§] Stromat. l. 6. p. 680.
[¶] Vid. Chion. Disput. Theolog. par. 1. & 2. De Corpore Mosis, sub Præsidio Trigland. Lugd. Batav. 1697.

source of heresy, and what the false teachers were greatly addicted to; and where it prevails, it is insatiable, and not to be checked and stopped, as in these men; and is a damnable sin, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, as well as is dishonourable to religion; hence such particular notice is taken of it, lest it be found in a minister of the word: this character exactly agrees with the followers of Simon Magus. The error which Balaam led others into, was both idolatry and adultery, Rev. ii. 14. which these false teachers were both guilty of themselves, and taught others, and indulged them therein; and which both teachers and people ran greedily after. Balaam is one of the four private persons, who, according to the Jews, shall have no part or portion in the world to come*. *And perished in the gainsaying of Core*; the same with Korah, Numb. xvi. 1. The Septuagint there call him *Core*, and so does Philo the Jew^a, as the apostle does here, and by Josephus he is called *Core*: now the gainsaying or contradiction of these men was like Korah's; as his was against Moses, the ruler of the people, so theirs was against magistracy, ver. 8. which was gainsaying God's own ordinance, and a contradiction of that which is for the good of men; the ground of which contradiction was love of liberty, and their own lusts; and, generally speaking, men perish in their factions and rebellions against good and lawful magistrates: also, as Korah gainsayed Aaron, the priest of the Lord, so these men contradicted and opposed the ministers of Christ, whom they would have thrust out, in order to put in themselves, and whose persons they reviled, and contradicted their doctrines, which to do is of dangerous consequence; and they might be said to perish in his gainsaying, as a type and example of their destruction, which would be swift and sudden, as his was; and to denote the certainty of it. So the Jews^a say of Korah and his company, that they shall never ascend, or rise up and stand in judgment, and that they shall have no part or portion in the world to come^a.

Ver. 12. *These are spots in your feasts of charity, &c.*] Or *love*. The Jews speak סעודתיה דמזיכותא, *of a feast of faith*^b. These here seem to be the *Agapæ*, or love-feasts, of the primitive Christians; the design of which was to maintain and promote brotherly love, from whence they took their name; and to refresh the poor saints, that they might have a full and comfortable meal now and then: their manner of keeping them was this; they began and ended them with prayer and singing; and they observed them with great temperance and frugality; and they were attended with much joy and gladness, and simplicity of heart: but were quickly abused, by judaizing Christians, as observing them in imitation of the passover; and by intemperance in eating and drinking; and by excluding the poor, for whose benefit they were chiefly designed; and by setting up separate meetings for them, and by admitting unfit persons unto them; such as here are said to be *spots* in them, blemishes, which brought great reproach and scandal upon them,

being persons of infamous characters and conversations. The allusion is either to spots in garments, or in faces, or in sacrifices; or to a sort of earth that defiles; or else to rocks and hollow stones on shores, lakes, and rivers, which collect filth and slime; all which serve to expose and point out the persons designed. The Alexandrian copy and some others read, *these are in their own deceivings, spots, ἀσπίαις*, instead of *ἀσπίαις*, as in 2 Pet. ii. 13. *when they feast with you*; which shews that they were among them, continued members with them, and partook with them in their solemn feasts, and were admitted to communion; and carries in it a kind of reproof to the saints, that they suffered such persons among them, and allowed them such privilege, intimacy, and familiarity with them: *feeding themselves without fear*; these were like the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, and not the flock, and were very impious and impudent, open and bare-faced in their iniquities, neither fearing God nor regarding man. *Clouds they are, without water*; they are compared to clouds for their number, being many false prophets and antichrists that were come out into the world; and for their sudden rise, having at once, and at an unawares, crept into the churches; and for the general darkness they spread over the churches, making it, by their doctrines and practices, to be a dark and cloudy day, a day of darkness, and gloominess, a day of clouds, and of thick darkness, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; and for the storms, factions, rents, and divisions they made; as also for their situation and height, soaring aloft, and being vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind; as well as for their sudden destruction, disappearing at once. And to clouds *without water*, because destitute of the true grace of God, and of true evangelical doctrine; which, like rain, is from above, from heaven; and which, like that, refreshes, softens, and fructifies. Now these false teachers looked like clouds, that promised rain, boasted of Gospel light and knowledge, but were destitute of it, wherefore their ministry was uncomfortable and unprofitable. *Carried about of winds*; either of false doctrines, or of their own lusts and passions, or of Satan's temptations: *trees whose fruit withereth*; or *trees in autumn*; either like to them, which put forth at that season of the year, and so come to nothing; or like to trees which are bare of leaves as well as fruit, it being the time when the leaves fall from the trees; and so may be expressive of these persons casting off the leaves of an outward profession, of their going out from the churches, separating from them, and forsaking the assembling together with them, when what fruit of holiness, and good works, they seemed to have, came to nothing; and so were *without fruit*, either of Gospel doctrine, or of Gospel holiness and righteousness; nor did they make any true converts, but what they made were like the Pharisees, as bad, or worse than themselves; and from their unfruitfulness in all respects, it appeared that they were not in Christ the true vine, and were not sent forth by him, nor with his Gospel, and that they were destitute of

^a Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 2.

^b De Profugis, p. 471.

^c Antiqu. l. 4. c. 2. sect. 2.

^a Misn. Sanhedrin, ib. sect. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 2. Sanhed. ib. sect. 3.

^b T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 2.

^c Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 3, 4.

the spirit of God. *Twice dead*; that is, entirely, thoroughly, and really dead in trespasses and sins, notwithstanding their pretensions to religion and godliness; or the sense may be, that they were not only liable to a corporeal death, common to them with all mankind, but also to an eternal one, or to the death both of soul and body in hell. Homer calls^d those *ἄθανοι, twice dead*, that go to hell alive: or rather the sense is this, that they were dead in sin by nature, as all men are, and again having made a profession of religion, were now become dead to that profession; and so were twice dead, once as they were born, and a second time as they had apostatized: *plucked up by the roots*; either by separating themselves from the churches, where they had been externally planted; or by the act of the church in cutting them off, and casting them out; or by the judgment of God upon them.

Ver. 13. *Raging waves of the sea, &c.*] False teachers are so called, for their swelling pride and vanity; which, as it is what prevails in human nature, is a governing vice in such persons, for knowledge without grace puffs up; and this shews that they had not received the doctrine of grace in truth, for that humbles; as also for their arrogance, boasting, and ostentation; and for their noisiness, their restless, uneasy, and turbulent spirits, for their furious and wrathful dispositions; as well as for their levity and inconstancy, and for their turpitude and filthiness: *foaming out their own shame*: wrathful words, frothy and obscene language, and filthy doctrines; and which expresses the issue of their noisy and blustering ministry, which ends in uncleanness, shame, emptiness, and ruin. *Wandering stars*: they are called *stars*, because they have the appearance of such, and blaze for a while, in seeming light, zeal, and warmth, and in fame and reputation; and *wandering* ones, not comparable to the planets, which go their regular course, but to fiery exhalations, gliding and running stars; because they wander about from house to house, as well as from one nation to another, and being never settled in their principles, nor at a point in religion; and wander also after their own carnal lusts, and cause others to wander likewise, and at last become falling stars; not from real grace and sanctified knowledge, which they never had; but from truth to error, and from a seemingly holy life and conversation, to a vicious one; and from a profession of religion, to open profaneness; and whose fall is irrecoverable, as that of stars: *to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever*; or the blackest darkness, even utter darkness; which phrase not only expresses the dreadful nature of their punishment, their most miserable and uncomfortable condition; but also the certainty of it, it is reserved for them among the treasures of divine wrath and vengeance, by the righteous appointment of God, according to the just demerit of their sins; and likewise the duration of it, it will be for ever; there will never be any light or comfort, but a continual everlasting black despair, a worm that dieth not, a fire that will

not be quenched, the smoke and blackness of which will ascend for ever and ever; hell is meant by it, which the Jews represent as a place of darkness: the Egyptian darkness, they say, came from the darkness of hell, and in hell the wicked will be covered with darkness; the darkness which was upon the face of the deep, at the creation, they interpret of hell^e.

Ver. 14. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, &c.*] This was Enoch the son of Jared; his name signifies one *instructed, or trained up*; as he doubtless was by his father, in the true religion, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and was one that had much communion with God; he walked with him, and was translated by him, body and soul, to heaven, and did not see death; Gen. v. 18, 22, 24. he is said to be *the seventh from Adam*; not the seventh man from him that was born into the world, for there were no doubt thousands born before him; but he was, as the Jews express it^f, דור שביעי, *the seventh generation from him*; and they have an observation^g, that all sevenths are always beloved by God; the seventh in lands, and the seventh in generations; Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, as it is written, Gen. v. 24. and this is said partly to distinguish him from others of the same name, and particularly from Enoch the son of Cain, the third from Adam in his line, as this was the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth; and partly to observe the antiquity of the following prophecy of his: for it is said *he prophesied of these*; of these false teachers, and such as they; what would be their sad state and condition at the second coming of Christ to judgment: that he had a spirit of prophecy is evident from the name he gave to his son Methuselah, which signifies, *when he dies is the emission*, or the sending out of the waters of the flood, which came to pass the very year he did die. The Arabic writers^h call him Edris the prophet; and the Jews sayⁱ, that he was in a higher degree than Moses or Elias; they also call^k him Metatron, the great scribe, a name which they sometimes give to the angel that went before the children of Israel in the wilderness, and which seems to belong to the Messiah: that Enoch wrote a prophecy, and left it behind him in writing, does not appear from hence, or elsewhere; the Jews, in some of their writings, do cite and make mention of the book of Enoch; and there is a fragment now which bears his name, but is a spurious piece, and has nothing like this prophecy in it; wherefore Jude took this not from a book called the *Apocalypse of Enoch*, but from tradition; this prophecy being handed down from age to age; and was in full credit with the Jews, and therefore the apostle very appositely produces it; or rather he had it by divine inspiration, and is as follows: *saying, behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints*; by the Lord is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is ordained the Judge of quick and dead, and for which he is richly qualified, being omniscient and omnipotent, and faithful and righteous, and who will certainly come again to judge the world in righteousness; for not of his first coming, which was not to judge and condemn,

^d Odys. l. 12. lin. 22.

^e Schemot Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 99. 3.

^f Juch-sin, fol. 5. 2. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 5. 1.

^g Vajkra Rabba, sect. 29. fol. 170. 1.

^h Elmecinus, p. 10. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 240.

ⁱ Shaishet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2.

^k Targum Jon. in Gen. v. 24. Tosephot in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. Juchasin, fol. 5. 2.

but to seek and save, but of his second coming at the last day is this to be understood ; and this is expressed in the present tense, *cometh*, in the manner of the prophets, who speak of things future as if they already were, as Isaiah does of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, and to awaken the attention of persons to it, as if it was near at hand, as also to signify the certainty of it: and when he comes, he'll be attended with *ten thousand of his saints*: meaning either the souls of glorified saints, even all of them, 1 Thess. iii. 13. which will come with Christ, and meet the living ones, and be reunited to their own bodies, which will then be raised ; or else the holy angels, as in Deut. xxxiii. 2. and so some copies and the Arabic version read ; which will be both for the shewing forth of his glory and majesty, and for service in gathering his elect together, as well as for terror to the wicked ; and a *behold* is prefixed to all this, to denote the certainty of Christ's coming, and the importance and wonderfulness of it: the ends of his coming follow.

Ver. 15. *To execute judgment upon all, &c.*] Quick and dead, small and great, high and low, rich and poor, good and bad, righteous and wicked, sheep and goats ; to pass the definitive sentence on each, that of absolution, life, and happiness, on his own people, and that of condemnation, death, and misery, on the wicked ; which will be done in the most strict and righteous manner: *and to convince all that are ungodly among them* ; those who are without God, the fear of him, love to him, or faith in him ; who have lived without the worship of him, or in a false worship ; and particularly false teachers are here meant, the same as in ver. 4. who will then be convicted in their own consciences, by that clear evidence, and full light, in which things will be set: *of all their ungodly deeds* ; both against law and Gospel: *which they have ungodly committed* ; which they lived in the commission of, and continually practised in a vile manner, publicly, and in defiance of heaven, and with seared consciences: *and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him* ; either against God, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, against his being, his perfections, his providence, his purposes, his word, and worship ; or rather against Jesus Christ the Lord, who will come to judge them, against his person and offices, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice ; his ministers and people, his truths and ordinances.

Ver. 16. *These are murmurers, &c.*] That is, at others ; secretly, inwardly, in a muttering way, grunting out their murmurs like swine ; to which, for their filthiness and apostacy, false teachers may be fitly compared: and their murmurs might be both against God and men ; against God, against the being of God, denying, or at least wishing there was no God, and uneasy because there is one ; against the perfections of God, particularly his sovereignty over all, his special goodness to some, his wisdom, justice, truth, and faithfulness ; against his purposes and decrees, both with respect to things temporal, spiritual, and eternal ; against the providence of God and his government of the world, and the unequal distribution of things in it ; and especially against the doctrines of free grace, and the ordinances of the Gospel: and not only are they murmurers against God, and all divine

things and persons, but also against men ; particularly against civil magistrates, who restrain them, and are a terror to them ; and against the ministers of the Gospel, whose gifts and usefulness they envy ; and indeed against all men, their neighbours, and what they enjoy, and at every thing that goes besides themselves: it follows, *complainers* ; some join the above character and this together, and read, as the Vulgate Latin version, *complaining murmurers* ; others, as the Syriac version, place not only a comma, but a copulative between them ; and as the former may design secret and inward murmuring, this may intend outward complaining in words ; not of their own sins and corruptions, nor of the sins of others, with any concern for the honour of religion ; or of the decay of powerful godliness in themselves or others ; or of the unsuccessfulness of the Gospel, and the decrease of the interest of Christ ; but either of God, that he has not made them equal to others in the good things of life, as the Arabic version renders it, *complaining of their own lots* ; or that he lays so much affliction upon them more than on others ; or of men, that their salaries are not sufficient, and that they are not enough respected according to their merit ; and indeed, as the Syriac version reads, *they complain of every thing*, and are never satisfied and easy: *walking after their own lusts* ; which are carnal and worldly, see the note on 2 Pet. iii. 3. and *their mouth speaketh great swelling words* ; both against God and men ; and this may point at their boast of knowledge, their great ostentation of learning, their vain and empty doctrines, their high flights, their rhetorical style, and bombast language: *having men's persons in admiration because of advantage* ; crying up men of their own stamp for the advantage of the party ; and giving flattering titles to men of wealth and riches, for the sake of their money: so the Ethiopic version, *they studied to please persons, to make gain of them* ; they were respecters of persons ; so the phrase is used by the Septuagint in Deut. x. 17. and xxviii. 50. and in Job. xxii. 8. and xxxii. 22. and xxxiv. 19. and in Prov. xviii. 5. and in Isa. ix. 15.

Ver. 17. *But, beloved, &c.*] Or *my beloved*, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read ; or *our brethren*, as the Ethiopic version ; the apostle addresses the saints in this manner, to distinguish them from the false teachers, and to shew that he had a different opinion of them from them ; and that he would have them beware of them, and not be surprised at them, since it was no other than what was foretold ; and also to engage their attention and regard to the following exhortation: *remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ* ; these words mean not the doctrines of the apostles in general, but particularly the prophecies delivered out by them, as by the Apostles Paul and Peter, concerning the false teachers that should arise ; and these being spoken of before, and by apostles, even by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, were worthy of regard, and deserved to be remembered ; a remembrance of which is a preservative from error, and a relief in the worst of times, whether of persecution, or heresy. This does not suppose that Jude was not an apostle, only that there were other apostles besides him ; and that these, some of them at least, had prophesied of

these men, and that he had lived to see their predictions verified; nor does he exclude himself from being one of them; yea, the Ethiopic version reads, *which we the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ have formerly declared unto you*; see 2 Pet. iii. 2.

Ver. 18. *How that they told you that there should be mockers in the last time, &c.*] See the note on 2 Pet. iii. 3.

Ver. 19. *These be they who separate themselves, &c.*] Not from sinners openly profane; such a separation is commendable, being according to the will and word of God, to the mind and practice of Christ, and which tends to the good of men, and to the glory of God; but from the saints and people of God; it is possible that a child of God may for a time leave the fellowship of the saints, but an entire and total forsaking of them, and of assembling with them, looks with an ill aspect; nor did they separate themselves from superstition and will-worship, and every false way of worship, which would have been right, but from the pure worship, ordinances, and discipline of God's house, by a perversion of them, and as being above them, or unwilling to be under any notice and government; not from errors and heresies, and persons that held them, with these they herded; but from the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and ministers of the word, and made divisions and separations among the churches, for worldly ends, and through pride and affectation of vain glory, as if they were more knowing, more holy, and more spiritual than other men: when they were *sensual*; such as gave themselves up to sensual lusts and pleasures; and at best were but natural men, who had only natural and rational abilities, but without spiritual and experimental knowledge: hence it follows, *having not the spirit*; though they might have some external gifts of the spirit; or he himself dwelling in them as a spirit of conviction and illumination, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as a spirit of faith and comfort, as a spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of the heavenly glory; they were not under his influence, nor did they feel the operations of his grace, nor had they communion with him: hence they appeared to be none of Christ's, nor could they claim interest in him, and were without life, and so could not persevere.

Ver. 20. *But ye, beloved, &c.*] See the note on ver. 17. *building up yourselves on your most holy faith*; some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, *our most holy faith*; meaning the doctrine of faith in all its branches, which is holy, a most holy doctrine; which displays the holiness of God, and is a means of beginning and increasing internal holiness in the saints, and of encouraging and exciting them to external holiness of life and conversation: this phrase, *כדִּיבְרִיתָא קְדִישָׁא*, *holy faith*, is in use with the Jews^k; and it becomes the saints to build up one another upon this; the doctrine of faith is a foundation to build upon, particularly what regards the person, offices, and grace of Christ, and is itself of an edifying nature; and they should not content themselves with their present knowledge of it, but seek for an improvement in it; and though they were passive when first built on Christ and

his doctrines, and though ministers are greatly instruments in building of them up more and more; yet they are capable of building up themselves, and one another, by attending on the ministry of the word, and by private conversation with each other, and particularly by *praying in the Holy Ghost*; which is a special means of increase and establishment in the doctrine of faith: the Holy Ghost is the author and enditer of prayer, and an assister in it; without him saints cannot call God their father, nor pray with faith and fervency, or with freedom and liberty.

Ver. 21. *Keep yourselves in the love of God, &c.*] By which may be meant either the grace and favour of God, that love with which God loves his people; and then the exhortation to the saints to keep themselves in it is, to set it always before them, to keep it constantly in view, to exercise faith on it, firmly believing their interest in it; as also to meditate on it, give themselves up wholly to the contemplation of it, and employ their thoughts constantly about it, which is the foundation of all grace here, and glory hereafter; or to preserve themselves by it, for so the words may be rendered, *preserve yourselves by the love of God*; against Satan's temptations, the snares of the world, and the lusts of the flesh; whenever Satan solicits to sin, and any snare is laid to draw into it, and the flesh attempts to be predominant, saints should betake themselves to the love of God, as to a strong hold and preservative against sin, and reason as Joseph did, Gen. xxxix. 9. for the love of God, and continuance in it, do not depend on any thing that can be done by men; nor is there any danger of real believers falling from it, or losing it, since it is unchangeable, and is from everlasting to everlasting; or else by the love of God we are to understand that love with which his people love him, and of which he is the object, Luke xi. 42. and then the meaning of the exhortation is, that though this grace of love cannot be lost, yet, inasmuch as the fervour of it may be abated, and the people of God grow cold and indifferent in their expressions of it, it becomes them to make use of all proper means to maintain and increase it in themselves and others; such as are mentioned in the context, as conversing together in an edifying way about the doctrines of the Gospel, and praying either separately or together, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, and looking forward for the grace and mercy of Christ unto everlasting life; all which, with many other things, by the blessing of God, may serve to maintain and revive the grace of love, and blow it up into a flame: though perhaps this phrase may chiefly design that love, peace, and concord, which ought to subsist among saints as brethren, and which they should be careful to preserve; and may be called the love of God, just as the same thing is styled the peace of God, Col. iii. 15. because it is what God requires, what he calls unto, which is of him, and is taught by him in regeneration, and what his love engages to, and without which there is no true love to him; and he takes love shewn to his people as if shewn to himself; and this sense is favoured by the context, both by the words in the preceding verse, and in the following ones: *looking for*

^k Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4.

the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. The mercy of Christ may be considered either as past, which was shewn in eternity, in his covenant-transactions with his father, in engaging in the cause of his people, in espousing them to himself, and in the care of their persons, grace, and glory; and in time, in assuming their nature, in his tender concern for the bodies and souls of men, in bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, in the redemption of them, and in their regeneration and vocation; and there is the present mercy of Christ, in interceding for his people, in sympathizing with them under all their afflictions, in succouring them under all their temptations, in suiting himself, as the great Shepherd, to all the circumstances of his flock; and there is the future mercy of Christ, which will be shewn at death, in the grave, and at the resurrection, at the day of judgment, and in the merciful sentence he'll pronounce on his people; and this seems to be designed here; the consequent of which, or what is annexed to it, and in which it issues, is eternal life; which is not owing to the works of men, but to the grace of God, and mercy of Christ; eternal life is in him, and is given through him, and to his mercy should men look for it. Christ himself is to be looked for, who will certainly come a second time; and eternal life is to be looked for by him; and this is only to be expected through his grace and mercy; and this is to be looked for, by faith, in the love of it, with delight and pleasure, and cheerfulness, with eagerness, and yet with patience.

Ver. 22. *And of some have compassion, &c.*] That is, of such who have gone astray, being drawn aside; who are simple and ignorant, and out of the way; who sin through infirmity, and the force of temptation; and who are tractable and open to conviction, and whose mistakes are in lesser matters of religion; as also such who are convicted and wounded in their consciences for their sins and mistakes: and to these compassion is to be shewn, by praying with them, and for them, with ardency and affection; instructing them in meekness; giving friendly and brotherly reproofs to them; expressing on all occasions a tender concern for their good; doing them all the good that can be done, both for their souls and bodies: and good reason there is why compassion should be shewn them, because God is a God of compassion; Christ is a merciful high-priest; a contrary spirit is grieving to the Holy Ghost; saints should consider what they themselves were, and what they now are, and that compassion has been shewn to them, and they may want it again. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, *reprove. Making a difference; between one and another; using some more tenderly, others more severely, as the nature and circumstances of their case appear to be.* The Syriac version renders the whole, *when they repent, have compassion on them.*

Ver. 23. *And others save with fear, &c.*] Meaning false teachers, who lead others into errors, and such as give themselves over unto sin, whether teachers or hearers, and who are obstinate and irreclaimable; even

such as these, means should be used to save, if possible, by sharp admonitions and severe language; by denouncing the awful judgments of God, which threaten them; by inflicting on them church-censures in a terrible manner; by declaring the terrors of the Lord, and of hell, and of everlasting damnation: *pulling them out of the fire*: of their soul-destroying doctrines, and of their filthy and unnatural lusts, and as it were out of the fire of hell, of which they are in great danger: *hating even the garment spotted by the flesh*; by which may be meant the conversation of those men, even their filthy conversation, which is to be hated, though their persons are not; but all ways and means should be used to save them; and this is one way, by shewing a dislike unto, and a resentment at their wicked way of living, excluding them from church-communion for it, and shunning all conversation with them. The allusion is not to garments defiled by profluous persons, or menstuous women, as some think, but to garments spotted with nocturnal pollutions, or through unnatural lusts, which these persons were addicted to¹. It was reckoned very dishonourable for religious persons, in the time of divine service, or on a sabbath day, to have on a garment spotted with any thing; if a priest's garments were spotted, and he performed service in them, that service was not right²; and if a disciple of a wise man had any grease on his garments (on a sabbath-day), he was guilty of death³.

Ver. 24. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, &c.*] The people of God are liable to falling into temptation, into sin, into errors and mistakes, from an exercise of grace, or from a degree of steadfastness in Gospel truths, and even into a final and total apostasy, were it not for divine power; and they are not able to keep themselves. Adam, in his state of innocence, could not keep himself from falling; nor could the angels, many of whom fell, and the rest are preserved by the grace of God; wherefore, much less can imperfect sinful men keep themselves, they want both skill and power to do it; nor can any, short of Christ, keep them, and it is his work and office to preserve them; they were given to him with this view, and he undertook to do it; and sensible sinners commit themselves to him, as being appointed for that purpose; and this is a work Christ has been, and is, employed in, and he is every way qualified for it: he is able to do it, for he is the mighty God, the Creator and upholder of all things; and as Mediator, he has all power in heaven and in earth; instances of persons kept by him prove it; and there is such evidence of it, that believers may be, and are persuaded of it: and he is as willing as he is able; it is his father's will he should keep them, and in that he delights; and as he has undertaken to keep them, he is accountable for them; besides, he has an interest in them, and the greatest love and affection for them; to which may be added, that the glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in man's salvation, depends on the keeping of them: and what he keeps them from is, from falling by temptations, not from being tempted by Satan, but from

¹ Vid Sueton. in Vita Neronis, c. 28.

² T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 65. 2. & Zebachim, fol. 18. 2. & Piske Tosephot in Yoma, art. 9. & Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 4.

³ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 114. 1.

sinking under his temptations, and from being devoured by him; and from falling by sin, not from the being or commission of sin, but from the dominion of it, and from the falling into it, so as to perish by it; and from falling into damnable heresies; and from the true grace of God, and into final impenitence, unbelief, and total apostasy. Instead of *you*, the Alexandrian copy reads *us*, and some copies *them*: and to present you *faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*: to himself, in this present state of things, as washed in his blood, and justified by his righteousness, and hereafter in the millennium state, and in the ultimate glory; and also to his father, and this he died to do, and in some sense did it at his death, even in the body of his flesh, through death, and now as the representative of his people in heaven; and will at the last day, when he'll deliver them up complete and perfect; all which is in consequence of his suretyship-engagements: and this presentation is made *before the presence of his glory*; either before the glorious presence of Christ, or Christ himself, who is glorious, and will appear in glory, in his own, and in his father's, and in his holy angels; or else before the glorious presence of God the father, and who is glory itself: and the condition in which the saints are, and will be presented, is *faultless*; though they have sinned in Adam, and were so wretchedly guilty and filthy in their nature-state, so prone to backslidings, and guilty of so many after conversion, and though a body of sin and death is carried by them to the grave; yet they will at last be presented by Christ in perfect holiness, in complete righteousness, and in the shining robes of immortality and glory. The manner in which they will be presented is *with exceeding joy*: in themselves, for what they shall be delivered from, from sin and sorrow, and every enemy, and for the glory and happiness they shall then enjoy; and also in the ministers

of the Gospel, who will then bring their sheaves with joy, and then will their converts be their joy and crown of rejoicing; and likewise this presentation will be with the joy of angels, for if they rejoice at the conversion of men, much more at their glorification; and even with the joy of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Ver. 25. *To the only wise God our Saviour, &c.*] By whom is meant, not the Trinity of Persons in general, nor the Father in particular; but the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly God, though not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit; and is the wisdom of God, and the author of all wisdom, natural and spiritual; and is the only Saviour of his people; and to him may be, as is ascribed, the *glory* of his deity, and divine sonship, of his mediatorial works, and of salvation: *and majesty*; which belongs to him as God, and which he has in his human nature, being crowned with glory, and honour, and enthroned and set down at the right hand of God: *dominion*; both natural, the kingdom of nature and providence belonging to him, and mediatorial, which is above all, reaches far and wide, and will last for ever: *and power*; in making and upholding all things; in redeeming his people; in protecting and defending them, and in destroying his and their enemies; in raising the dead, and judging the world. Though the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, *to the only God our Saviour, by Jesus Christ our Lord*, and leave out the word *wise*; and so they are to be understood of God the Father; but the Ethiopic version reads, *this is the only God our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, &c.* And all this is to be attributed to him, *both now, and ever*; in the present life, and to all eternity. *Amen*; which is an assent unto it, that so it should be; and a wish that so it may be; and an expression of faith, and strong asseveration, that so it shall be.

THE REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

THAT this book was written by the Apostle and Evangelist John, is clear not only from the express mention of his name, and from his office, a servant of Jesus Christ, ver. 1. but also from the character this writer gives of himself, ver. 2. as being an eye-witness of the essential *Logos*, or Word of God, and who bore a faithful record of him as such, as John did in his

Gospel, in a very peculiar and remarkable manner, and from this writer's being in the isle of Patmos when he wrote, ver. 9. for of what other John can this be said? to which may be added the testimonies of the ancient writers, as Justin Martyr^a, who lived within fifty years of the apostle, and Irenæus^b, who was the disciple of Polycarp, an hearer of this apostle, and

^a Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 308.

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^b Adv. Hæres. l. 4. c. 37, 50. & l. 5. c. 30.

Clemens Alexandrinus^c, Tertullian^d, Origen^e, and others, who ascribe it to him. It was a most monstrosly stupid notion of Caius, Dionysius of Alexandria mentions^f, that it was written by Cerinthus the heretic, when his heresies concerning the divinity and humanity of Christ are most strongly refuted in it. What seems to have led to such a thought is, that the account of the thousand-years' reign, and the descent of the new Jerusalem from heaven, seemed to favour the judaism of this man, and his carnal notions of an earthly paradise, whereas they have no such tendency. And as for its being written by another John, who is said to be presbyter at Ephesus, after the apostle, it is not certain there ever was such a man; and if there was, he must be too late to be the writer of this book; nor to him can the above characters agree. What is observed in favour of him, that the penman of this book is called, in the title, John the divine, and not the evangelist, or apostle, will do him no service; for to whom does this character so well agree, as to the Evangelist John, who wrote of divine things in so divine a manner, and particularly concerning the divinity of Christ? hence this book was sometimes called Θεωδοσία, *Divinity*^g; besides, the title of the book is not original, but is what has been affixed to it by others, and varies; for in the Complutensian edition it runs thus, "the Revelation of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Divine." In the Vulgate Latin version it is called the Apocalypse of the blessed John the Apostle; and in the Syriac version, the Revelation which was made to John the Evangelist; and in the Arabic version, the Vision of John, the Apostle and Evangelist, to wit, the Apocalypse. All which acknowledge the Apostle John to be the writer of it, and shew the sense of the ancients concerning it. Nor is it of any moment what is alleged, that this writer makes mention of his name several times, whereas it was usual with John, both in his Gospel and epistles, to conceal his name; since there is a wide difference between writing an history and epistles to friends, and prophecy, which requires the author's name, on whom the authority and truth of the prophecy greatly depend: and so likewise the disagreement of style observed in this book, with the other writings of John, has no force in it; since the prophetic style is always different from an historical and epistolary one; and yet, after all, in many things, there is an agreement; John in this, as in his other writings, speaks of Christ as the Word and Son of God, and under the character of the Lamb; and likewise the fol-

lowing passages may be compared together, as ch. i. 2. with John xix. 35. and 1 John i. 1, 2. and ch. i. 5. with 1 John i. 7. All which being observed, there is no room to doubt, neither of the writer, nor of the authority of this book; especially when the agreement of the doctrine contained in it with other parts of the Scripture, the majesty of its style, and, above all, the many prophecies of things to come to pass in it, several of which have been already fulfilled, are considered; and though it was called in question, and rejected by some heretical men, because some things in it did not suit with their tenets, yet we have not the least reason to doubt of its being authentic, who have lived to see so much of it already accomplished, and which could come from no other but God. As for the time of its writing, this is not agreed upon on all hands; the place where, seems to be the isle of Patmos, which yet some question. Some think it was written in the times of Claudius Cæsar^h, before the destruction of Jerusalem. In the title of the Syriac version, this revelation is said to be made to John in the isle of Patmos, into which he was cast by Nero Cæsar. But the more commonly-received opinion is, that he had this vision there, at the latter end of Domitian's reignⁱ, by whom he was there banished, about the year 95, or 96. But be this as it will, the book is certainly of divine authority, and exceeding useful and instructive; and contains in it the most momentous and important doctrines of the Gospel, concerning a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the deity and sonship of Christ, the divinity and personality of the spirit, the offices of Christ, the state and condition of man by nature, justification, pardon, and reconciliation by the blood of Christ; and it recommends the several duties of religion, and encourages to the exercise of every grace; and gives a very particular account of the rise, power, and fall of antichrist, and of the state of the church of Christ in all the periods of time to the end of the world. And though it is written in an uncommon style, yet may be understood, by the use of proper means, as by prayer and meditation, by comparing it with other prophetic writings, and the history of past times, by which many things in it will appear to have had their accomplishment; and it ought to be observed, that it is a revelation, and not a hidden thing; that it is now not a sealed book, but an open one; and that such are pronounced blessed that read and hear it, and observe the things in it, ch. i. 3. and which is no small encouragement to attempt an explanation of it.

C H A P. I.

THIS chapter contains the preface and introduction to the book, and the first vision in it. The preface begins with the title of the book, in which the subject-matter of it is pointed at, a *Revelation*; the author of it, *Jesus Christ*, who had it from his Father; the mi-

nister of it, *an angel*; the person to whom it was made known, described by his name, office, and the testimony he bore to Christ, his Gospel, and to whatever he saw; and for encouragement to persons to read, hear, and observe it, happiness is pronounced on them;

^c Pædagog. l. 2. c. 12.

^d Adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5.

^e Comment. in Matt. p. 417. Ed. Huet.

^f Apud. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 28. & l. 7. c. 25.

^g Suidas in voce Ἰωάννης.

^h Vid. Epiphani. Hæres. 51.

ⁱ Irenæus adv. Hæres. l. 5. c. 30. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 18.

ver. 1, 2, 3. the inscription of the book follows, in which are the name of the writer, and the place where the churches to whom it is inscribed were, with a salutation of them; in which grace and peace are wished for them, from God the Father, from the Holy Spirit, and from Jesus Christ; who is described by characters expressing his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, and by the benefits, favours, and honours bestowed by him on his people, to whom a doxology or ascription of glory is made, ver. 4, 5, 6. who is further described, first by his future visible coming in the clouds, which will greatly affect the inhabitants of the earth, and then by himself, as the eternal and almighty God, ver. 7, 8. and in order to introduce the vision, hereafter related in this chapter, he that saw it gives an account of himself, by his name, by his relation to the churches, and by his partnership with them in affliction, and of the place he was in; and for what, and of the time when he had the vision, and the frame he was in, and what awakened his attention to it, ver. 9, 10, 11. and how, that adverting to it he saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like the son of man, who is described by his clothes and girdle, by his head, hair, and eyes, by his feet and voice, by what he had in his right hand, and by what went out of his mouth, and by his face shining like the sun in its strength, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. next is related the effect this vision had on John, who upon it fell down as one dead, but was comforted by Christ, laying his right hand on him, and telling him who he was, and bidding him write what he had seen, or should see, ver. 17, 18, 19. and the chapter is concluded with an interpretation of the mystery of the seven stars, and the seven candlesticks, ver. 20.

Ver. 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, &c.*] Either of which he is the author: for it was he that sent and shewed it by his angel to John; it was he, the lion of the tribe of Judah, that took the book, and opened the seals of it, and which is a very considerable proof of his deity; since none but God could foreknow and foretell things to come, or declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet, as is done in this book: or of which he is the subject; for it treats much of his person, offices, and grace, and of Christ mystical, of the state of his church, in the several ages of time; or it is that revelation which was first made unto him, to which sense the following words incline: *which God gave unto him*; not to him as he is God, for as such he is omniscient, and foreknew whatever would come to pass, and needed no revelation to be made to him, but as he was man and Mediator; and this was given him by God the father, and put into his hands, to make known as being a part of the administration of his prophetic office: the end of its being given him was, *to shew unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass*; the Arabic version adds, *in future ages*: things that were to be hereafter, the accomplishment of which was necessary, because of the certain and unalterable decree of God, the good of his people, and his own glory; and these were to come to pass quickly, in a very little time; not that they would all be fulfilled

in a short space of time, for there are some things not fulfilled yet, though it is sixteen hundred years ago*, and more, since this revelation was made; and we are sure there are some things that will not be accomplished till a thousand years hence, and more, for the millennium is not yet begun; and after that is ended, there's to be a second resurrection, and a destruction of the Gog and Magog army; but the sense is, that these things should very quickly begin to be fulfilled, and from thenceforward go on fulfilling till all were accomplished. Now to shew, to represent these things, in a clear manner, as the nature of them would admit of, to the servants of Christ, all true believers, that read and hear and diligently observe them, and especially to the ministers of the Gospel, whose business it is to search into them, and point them out to others, and particularly to his servant John, was this revelation made by Christ, who immediately answered this end: *and he sent, and signified it by his angel unto his servant John*; he who is the Lord of angels, and to whom they are ministering spirits, sometimes sent one angel and sometimes another; and by various emblems, signs, and visions, represented and set before John, a faithful servant, and a beloved disciple of his, the whole of this revelation.

Ver. 2. *Who bore record of the word of God, &c.*] Of the essential and eternal Word of God, his only-begotten son; as John the apostle did in his Gospel, and in his epistles, and also in this book; and which is a clear evidence of his being the writer of it. *And of the testimony of Jesus Christ*; that is, the Gospel, which testifies of the person of Christ, of the truth of his divinity, and reality of his human nature; of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person: of his several offices, of prophet, priest and King; of what he did and suffered for his people; and of the blessings of grace which they receive by him: *and of all things that he saw*; with his bodily eyes, as the human body of Christ, the miracles he wrought in it, the transfiguration of it on the mount, the crucifixion of it, and the piercing of it with a spear, and the resurrection of it from the dead; and also all the visions recorded in this book; and such a faithful witness serves greatly to confirm the authority of this book, and to recommend the perusal of it. The Complutensian edition and the Arabic version read, *which are, and which shall, or must be hereafter*, as in ver. 19.

Ver. 3. *Blessed is he that readeth, &c.*] This book of the Revelation, privately, in his closet or family, carefully and diligently, with a desire of understanding it; or publicly in the church of God, and endeavours to open and explain it to others; and may allude to the reading of the law and the prophets in the synagogues, which were not barely read, but expounded; see Acts xiii. 15. and xv. 21. and the rather this may be thought to be the sense of the words, since there is a change of number in the next clause, *and they that hear the words of this prophecy*: that listen attentively to the reading and exposition of this book, and have ears to hear, so as to understand the prophecies contained in it: for the whole, when delivered to John, was a prophecy of things to come: but some versions read the number alike in both clauses; as either, *blessed is he that*

* The reader will observe that this calculation was made in the year 1747.

readeth, and he that heareth, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; or *blessed are they that read, and they that hear*, as the Arabic version: *and keep those things which are written therein*; the last version adds, *concerning this frail world*: who not only read, and hear, but put in practice what they read and hear; for there are some things in this book which are of a practical nature, especially in the epistles to the seven churches; or the sense is, happy are those persons that observe, and take notice of what is written herein, and meditate upon them, and well weigh them in their minds, and retain them in their memories. Now, though eternal happiness does not depend upon, nor is procured by any of these means, as reading, hearing, and observing; yet there is a real happiness, a true pleasure, that does attend these things, which may stir up to a regard unto them; and for which purpose the following words are added: *for the time is at hand*; when these things should begin to be fulfilled.

Ver. 4. *John to the seven churches which are in Asia, &c.*] In lesser Asia; their names are mentioned in ver. 11. *grace be unto you, and peace*; which is the common salutation of the apostles in all their epistles, and includes all blessings of grace, and all prosperity, inward and outward: see the note on Rom. i. 7. The persons from whom they are wished are very particularly described, *from him which is, and which was, and which is to come*; which some understand of the whole Trinity; the Father by him *which is*, being the *I am that I am*; the Son by him *which was*, which was with God the Father, and was God; and the Spirit by him *which is to come*, who was promised to come from the Father and the Son, as a Comforter, and the Spirit of truth: others think Christ is here only intended, as he is in ver. 8. by the same expressions; and is he *which is*, since before Abraham he was the *I am*; and he *which was*, the eternal Logos or Word; and *is to come*, as the Judge of quick and dead. But rather this is to be understood of the first Person, of God the Father; and the phrases are expressive both of his eternity, he being God from everlasting to everlasting; and of his immutability, he being now what he always was, and will be what he now is, and ever was, without any variableness, or shadow of turning: they are a periphrasis, and an explanation of the word *Jehovah*, which includes all tenses, past, present, and to come. So the Jews explain this name in Exod. iii. 14. "Say *R. Isaac*", the holy blessed God said to Moses, Say "unto them, I am he that was, and I am he that now is, and I am he that is to come, wherefore *אֲנִי הוּא* is "written three times." And such a periphrasis of God is frequent in their writings¹. *And from the seven spirits which are before his throne*; either before the throne of God the father; or, as the Ethiopic version reads, *before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ*; by whom are meant not angels, though these are spirits, and stand before the throne of God, and are ready to do his will: this is the sense of some interpreters, who think such a number of them is mentioned with reference to the seven angels of the churches; or to the seven last *Sephirot*, or numbers in the Cabal-

istic tree of the Jews; the three first they suppose design the three Persons in the Godhead, expressed in the preceding clause, and the seven last the whole company of angels: or to the seven principal angels the Jews speak of. Indeed, in Tobit xii. 15. Raphael is said to be one of the seven angels; but it does not appear to be a generally-received notion of theirs that there were seven principal angels. The Chaldee paraphrase on Gen. xi. 7. is misunderstood by Mr. Mede, for not *seven*, but *seventy* angels are there addressed. It was usual with the Jews only to speak of four principal angels, who stand round about the throne of God; and their names are Michael, Uriel, Gabriel, and Raphael; according to them, Michael stands at his right hand, Uriel at his left, Gabriel before him, and Raphael behind him^m. However, it does not seem likely that angels should be placed in such a situation between the divine Persons, the Father and the Son; and still less that grace and peace should be wished for from them, as from God the father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; and that any countenance should be given to angel-worship, in a book in which angels are so often represented as worshippers, and in which worship is more than once forbidden them, and that by themselves: but by these seven spirits are intended the Holy Spirit of God, who is one in his person, but his gifts and graces are various; and therefore he is signified by this number, because of the fulness and perfection of them, and with respect to the seven churches, over whom he presided, whom he influenced, and sanctified, and filled, and enriched with his gifts and graces.

Ver. 5. *And from Jesus Christ, &c.*] Who, though the second Person in the Trinity, is mentioned last, because many things were to be said of him; and who is described in all his offices: in his prophetic office, *the faithful witness*; as he is of his father, of his mind and will, with respect to doctrine and worship; of his truth and faithfulness in his promises; and of his love, grace, and mercy, to his chosen; and of himself, of his true deity, proper sonship, and perfect equality with the father; of his Messiahship, and of salvation through his obedience, sufferings, and death; and of all truth in general, to which he has bore a faithful testimony several ways, in his ministry, by his miracles, at his death, and by the shedding of his blood to seal it; by his spirit since, and by the ministers of his word: he is described in his priestly office by *the first-begotten of the dead*; being the first that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for though some few were raised before him, yet not by themselves, nor to live for ever, but to die again. Moreover, he is the first-fruits of the resurrection, the pledge and earnest of it, as well as the efficient cause and exemplar of it. This character supposes that he died, as he did, for the sins of his people; and that he rose again from the dead, as he did, for their justification; and that he rose first as their head and representative, and opened the way of life for them. And he is described in his kingly office, for it follows, *and the Prince of the kings of the earth*: which is not to be understood figuratively of the saints, who have

^k Shemot Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 73. 2.

^l Targum. Jon. in Deut. xxxii. 39. Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 3. & in

Numb. fol. 97. 4. & 106. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 205. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 2. 3. Ed. Amsterd.

^m Benmidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 1.

power over sin, Satan, and the world, through the efficacious grace of Christ, and of whom he is Prince or King; but literally of the kings and princes of this world, over whom Christ is King and Lord, who receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and rule by him, and are accountable to him, as they one day must be. Next follows a doxology, or an ascription of glory to him, *unto him that hath loved us; his own, his people, his church, his chosen, and who are given him by his father; these he has loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, which passes knowledge, and will never end: and which he has shewn in espousing their persons, undertaking their cause, assuming their nature, and in nothing more than in giving himself for them as a propitiatory sacrifice, or in dying and shedding his precious blood for them, as is next expressed: and washed us from our sins in his own blood; which shews that these persons were loved before washed; they were not first washed, and then loved, but first loved, and then washed. Love was the cause of washing, and not washing the cause of love; hence it appears that they were in themselves filthy, and unclean through sin; and that they could not cleanse themselves by any thing they could do; and that such was the love of Christ to them, that he shed his precious blood for them, which is a fountain opened, to wash in for sin, and which cleanses from all sin. This is to be understood, not of the sanctification of their natures, which is the work of the spirit, but of atonement for their sins, and justification from them by the blood of Christ, whereby they are so removed, that they are all fair, and without spot. It is afterwards said, that these same persons are made priests; and it may be observed, that the priests were always washed, before they performed their service, as such^p. The Alexandrian copy and the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *and hath loosed us from our sins in, or by his blood; that is, from the guilt of them, which was bound upon them.**

Ver. 6. *And hath made us kings and priests, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition, read, *a kingdom, priests*; and the Vulgate Latin version, *a kingdom and priests*; and the Arabic version, *a kingdom of priesthood*; reference seems to be had to Exod. xix. 6. *and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests*; which the Jerusalem Targum renders, *ye shall be unto me מלכין וכהנין, kings and priests*; and so the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases it thus, *and ye shall be before me, מלכין, kings crowned with a crown, וכהנין, and priests ministering.* Hence it is a common saying with the Jews, that all Israelites are the sons of kings^q; and sometimes their doctors are called מלכי תורה, *kings of the law*^r: and they ascribe the same thing to the word of the Lord as is here attributed to Jesus Christ: so the Targum of Jonathan on Deut. xxviii. 13. paraphrases the words; "the word of the Lord shall appoint or constitute you kings, and not private persons." Likewise they say^s, "that even a Gentile, " if he studies in the law, *ככרן נרול, as an high-*

"priest." All which may serve to shew to what the reference is had in the text, and from whence the language is taken. But the words are used in a higher and greater sense. The saints are made *kings* by Christ; they are so now; they have received a kingdom of grace, which can't be taken away; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and all their enemies; and they live and fare like kings, and are clothed like them, in rich apparel, the righteousness of Christ; and are attended as kings, angels being their life-guards; and they will appear much more so hereafter, when they shall reign on earth with Christ a thousand years, shall sit upon the same throne, and have a crown of life and righteousness given them, and at last be introduced into the kingdom of glory. And they become such by being the sons of God, which power and privilege they receive from Christ, and so are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with him, and by being united to him. And he also makes them *priests* to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and those of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit, and even their souls and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice unto God, by anointing and sanctifying them by his Spirit: and they are made such by him to God, and his Father; not to men, nor to angels. Now to him that has shewn so much love, and bestowed such high favours and honours, is the following ascription made, *to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.* The *glory* of his deity, and of all his offices; of his being the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth; and of all the benefits and blessings, favours and honours, received from him by his people: and *dominion*; over all creatures; and over all his saints, and especially in his kingdom, in the last days, which will be an everlasting one; and which is continually to be wished and prayed for, that it would come, and come quickly. *Amen*; so let it be, and so it shall be.

Ver. 7. *Behold he cometh with clouds, &c.*] John carries on the account of Christ in his kingly office, one branch of which is to execute judgment; and describes him by a future coming of his, which cannot be understood of his coming to take vengeance on the Jews, at the time of Jerusalem's destruction, though that is sometimes expressed in such language, and with such circumstances, as here; see Matt. xxiv. 30. and xxvi. 64. because if this revelation was made to John, in the latter end of Domitian's reign, as is commonly reported by the ancients, and in the year 95 or 96, as chronologers generally place it, it must be upwards of twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore cannot relate to that; nor to his coming in a spiritual sense to convert the Jews in the latter day; for this coming is personal, and with clouds, when he will be seen by every eye; all which circumstances do not so well agree with that; besides, all the kindreds of the earth will not lament on that account: the wicked will take little notice of it, the tribes of the Jews will rejoice at it, and so will all the converted Gentiles: it is better therefore to under-

^p Misen. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 9, 3, 4, 5, 6.

^q Misen. Sabbat, c. 14. sect. 9. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 67. 1. & 111. 1. & 129. 1. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. xii. 1.

^r Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 1. 9. Vid. Jarchium in Psal. lxxviii. 14.

^s T. Eab. Bava Kama, fol. 38. 1.

stand this of Christ's second coming to judge the quick and dead, which is represented as just at hand, to denote the certainty of it; and a *behold* is prefixed to it, to excite attention, and to denote the importance of it: things of great moment, and very surprising, will then be done; Christ will appear in great glory and majesty, the dead in Christ will be raised, Christ's personal kingdom will take place, and the general judgment come on. The manner of his coming will be *with clouds*; either figuratively, with angels, who will attend him both for grandeur and service, or literally, in the clouds of heaven; he shall descend in like manner as he ascended, and as Daniel prophesied he should, Dan. vii. 13. Hence, one of the names of the Messiah, with the Jews, is *ענני*, *Anani*, which signifies *clouds*; and his coming is so described, both to denote the grand and magnificent manner in which he will come, making the clouds his chariots; and to strike terror into his enemies, clouds and darkness being about him, thunder and lightning breaking out of them, as tokens of that vengeance he comes to take upon them; as also the visibility of his coming, he shall descend from the third heaven, where he now is, into the airy heaven, and sit upon the clouds, as on his throne, and be visible to all: hence it follows, *and every eye shall see him*; that is, every one that has eyes shall see him, or all men shall see him; the righteous shall see him, and be glad; they shall see him in his glory, as he is, and for themselves, and be satisfied; they shall rejoice at the sight of him; they will be filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: but the wicked will see him and tremble; they will be filled with the utmost consternation and astonishment; they will not be able to bear the sight of him; they will flee from him, and call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from his face. *And they also which pierced him*; his hands, feet, and side, when they crucified him; both the Roman soldiers, who actually did it, and the body of the Jewish nation, the rulers and common people, who consented to it, and at whose instigation it was done; these, being raised from the dead, shall see him with their bodily eyes, whom they so used. *And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him*; all the wicked, in the several parts of the world, will lament, and wring their hands, and express the inward terror and horror of their minds, at his appearing; they will fear his resentment of all their wicked words and actions; will dread his wrath, and tremble at his righteous judgment: *even so, Amen*, says John, and so say all true believers; what the wicked lament, they rejoice at; they desire the coming of Christ, they love it, look and long for it; they believe it shall be, and wish it may be quickly, as in ch. xxii. 20. This expression of faith in, and desire after the coming of Christ, is signified by two words, the one Greek and the other Hebrew; suggesting, that this is an article of faith among all the saints of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, and is what they are wishing and waiting for.

Ver. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, &c.*] These are the words of Christ himself, appearing at once, and confirming what John had said of him, concerning his

person, offices, and future coming: Alpha is the first letter, and Omega the last in the Greek alphabet, and signifies that Christ is the first and the last, as it is interpreted in ver. 11, 17, and is a character often given to the divine Being in prophetic writings; see Isa. xli. 4. and xlii. 6. and xlviii. 12. and is no small proof of the proper deity of Christ. Alpha is used by the Jews for the chief of persons or things; "Macmas and Mezonicha (names of places) are *אלפא לסת*, *Alpha for fine flour*;" that is, the best fine flour is there, they are the chief places for it: and again, "*Tekoah* is *אלפא לשמן*, *Alpha for oil*," or the chief place for oil; the best oil was to be had there: so Christ, he is the Alpha, the chief as to his divine nature, being God over all, blessed for ever; and in his divine sonship, none, angels or men, are in such sense the son of God as he is; and in all his offices, of prophet, priest, and King; he is the prophet, the great prophet of the church, never man spake like him, or taught as he did; he is the most excellent priest, that exceeds Aaron and all his sons, having an unchangeable priesthood; and he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; he has the chief place in the church, he is the head of it, and has in all things the pre-eminence; he is the chief in honour and dignity, is at the right hand of God, and has a name above every name: he also in some sense may be said to be the Omega, the last and the lowest; as in his state of humiliation, he was not only made lower than the angels, but than man; he was despised and rejected of men, and scarcely reckoned a man, a worm, and no man; and he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Moreover, these letters, Alpha and Omega, being the first and the last in the alphabet, may stand for the whole; and it seems to be a proverbial expression taken from the Jews, who use the phrase, from Aleph to Tau, for the whole of any thing, which two letters in the Hebrew alphabet stand in the same place as these; accordingly the Syriac version renders it Olaph and Tau; and the Arabic version Aleph and Ye. It is said in Ezek. ix. 6. *begin at my sanctuary*; "R. Joseph taught, do not read my sanctuary, but sanctified ones," these are the children of men who confirm the whole law, *מאלף תוי*, *from Aleph to Tau*," the same as from Alpha to Omega, or from one end to the other: and a little after, "says R. Levi, Tau is the end of the seal of the holy blessed God, for says R. Chanina, the seal of the holy blessed God is *אמת*, *truth*," says R. Samuel bar Nachmani, these are the children of men who confirm the whole law *from Aleph to Tau*." So Christ, he is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the chief, the whole of things; as of the covenant of grace, he is the first and last of it, he is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and the ratifier and confirmor of it, he is the covenant itself, all its blessings and promises are in him; he is the sum and substance of the Scriptures, both of the law and of the Gospel; he is the fulfilling end of the law, and he is the subject-matter of the Gospel; he stands in the first verse in Genesis, and in the last of the Revelation; he is the

¹ Targum in 1 Chron. iii. 24. vid. Beckii Not. in ib. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 95. 2.

² Misa. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1. 3. & Bartenora in ib. So Alpha peulorum, the chief of beggars, in Martial, l. 2. Ep. 57.

³ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 1. Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxxiii. 21. & Raziq, fol. 9. & 12 & Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 70. 1, 2.

Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the whole and all in the business of salvation, in the affair of justification before God, in the sanctification of his people, in their adoption, and eternal glorification; he stands first and last in the book of God's purposes and decrees, in the book of the covenant, in the book of the creatures, or creation, being the first cause, and last end of all things, in the book of Providence, and in the book of the Scriptures: likewise, as these two letters include all the rest, this phrase may be expressive of the perfection of Christ, who as God has the fulness of the Godhead, all the perfections of the divine nature in him; and, as man, is in all things made like unto his brethren; and, as Mediator, has all fulness of power, wisdom, grace, and righteousness in him, in whom all the saints are complete; and this may also denote his eternity, he having none before him, nor any after him; and which also is signified by some other following expressions: *the beginning and the ending*; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, leave out this; which seems to be explanatory of the former clause, Alpha being the beginning of the alphabet, and Omega the ending of it; and properly belongs to Christ, who knows no beginning, nor will he have any end with respect to time, being from everlasting to everlasting; and agrees with him as the first cause of all things, both of the old and new creation, and the last end to which they are all referred, being made for his pleasure, honour, and glory: these things now *saieth the Lord*; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *the Lord God*; and the Ethiopic version only *God: which is, and which was, and which is to come*; who is God over all, *was* God from all eternity, and *is to come* as such; which he will shew by his omniscience and omnipotence, displayed in the judgment of the world: who *is* now a Saviour of all that come to God by him; *was* so under the Old-Testament dispensation, being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and *is to come*, as such, and shall appear a second time unto salvation to them that look for him: particularly this phrase is expressive of the eternity of Christ, who is, was, and ever will be; and of his immutability, who is the same he was, and will be for ever the same he is, and was, unchangeable in his person, in his love, and in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; he is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. This same phrase is used of God the father in ver. 4. and is a further proof of the deity of Christ; and which is still more confirmed by the following character, *the Almighty*; as he appears to be, by creating all things out of nothing; by upholding all creatures in their beings; by the miracles he wrought on earth; by the resurrection of himself from the dead; by obtaining eternal redemption for his people; and by his having the care and government of them upon him, whom he keeps, upholds, bears, and carries to the end, through all their infirmities, afflictions, temptations, and trials.

Ver. 9. *I John, who also am your brother, &c.*] Here

begins the narrative of the visions and prophecies of this book, the former verses containing a general preface to the whole; and this, and the two following verses, are the introduction to the first vision, which John saw; who describes himself by his name, *I John*, the evangelist and apostle, a servant of Christ, and a beloved disciple of his; one that was well known to the seven churches to whom he writes, and who had no reason to doubt of his fidelity in the account he gives them; and also by his relation to them as a *brother*, not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense, they and he belonging to that family that is named of Christ, to the household of God, and of faith, and having one and the same father, even God: thus, though he was an elder, an evangelist, yea, an apostle by office, yet he puts himself on a level with the several members of these churches, as he was a believer in Christ: *and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*; many are the afflictions and tribulations of the saints; these lie in the way to the kingdom; and they are companions and partners with one another in them, both by enduring the same, and by their sympathy and compassion with each other; and as they go sharers in the troubles of this life, so they do, and shall in the kingdom; in the kingdom of grace now, being all of them made kings and priests unto God, and in the kingdom of Christ on earth, where they will all reign with him a thousand years, and in the kingdom of glory, where they shall reign together to all eternity; and in the mean while, they join in the exercise of the grace of patience, of which Christ is the author, exemplar, and object; they are directed by the spirit of God into a patient waiting for Christ, or a patient expectation of his coming, kingdom, and glory: the Alexandrian copy reads, *patience in Christ*; and the Complutensian edition, *patience in Christ Jesus*: this same person John, who gives this account of himself, *was in the isle that is called Patmos*; but now *Palmosa*; it is one of the islands of the Cyclades, in the Archipelago, or Icarian sea, and sometimes called the *Ægean sea*, and had its name from the turpentine-trees in it; it is, as Pliny ^u says, about thirty miles in circumference; and it lay next to the churches on the continent, and is said to be about forty miles south-west of Ephesus, from whence John came thither, and to which church he writes first; how he came here he does not say, concealing, through modesty, his sufferings; he did not come here of his own accord; Ignatius says ^v, John *σπουδαίοντο*, was banished to *Patmos*: by Domitian emperor of Rome, as Irenæus says ^x, at the latter end of his reign, about the year 95 or 96: and, as Tertullian ^y, after he had been cast into a vessel of flaming oil, where he got no hurt: and this banishment was not for any immorality, and capital sin he had committed, but *for the word of God*; for believing in Christ, the essential Word of God, and for professing and bearing record of him, both in preaching and writing: *and for the testimony of Jesus*: for the Gospel of Christ, see ver. 2. for embracing it, adhering to it, and publishing it: it is generally thought that John wrote his Revelation in this isle, though some think it is not to be concluded from

^u Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 14.

^v Epist. ad Tarsenses, p. 76.

^x Irenæus adv. Hæres. l. 5. c. 30.

^y De Præscript. Hæret. c. 36.

these words, but the contrary; that he had been here, but now was not, but at Ephesus, where he wrote what he had a vision of here.

Ver. 10. *I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, &c.*] Not on the Jewish sabbath, which was now abolished, nor was that ever called the Lord's day, and had John meant that, he would have said on the sabbath-day; much less the Jewish passover, but the first day of the week is designed; so the Ethiopic version renders it *on the first day*; and is so called just as the ordinance of the supper is called the Lord's supper, being instituted by the Lord, and the Lord's table, 1 Cor. x. 21. and xi. 20. and that because it was the day in which our Lord rose from the dead, Mark xvi. 9. and in which he appeared at different times to his disciples, John xx. 19, 26. and which the primitive churches set apart for his worship and service, and on which they met together to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. and Justin Martyr² tells us, who lived within about fifty years after this time, that on the day called τῆς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμέρας, *Sunday*, (by the Greeks,) the Christians met together in one place, and read the Scriptures, and prayed together, and administered the ordinance of the supper; and this, he adds, was the first day in which God created the world, and our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead; yea, Barnabas³, the companion of the Apostle Paul, calls this day the eighth day, in distinction from the seventh-day sabbath of the Jews, and which he says is the beginning of another world; and therefore we keep the eighth day, adds he, joyfully, in which Jesus rose from the dead, and being manifested, ascended unto heaven: and this day was known by the ancients by the name of *the Lord's day*: as by Ignatius^b, Irenæus^c, Tertullian^d, Origen^e, and others; for it must be some day that was known by this name, otherwise it is mentioned to no purpose, because it would not be distinctive from others; for which reason it cannot merely design the day in which John saw this vision, because the Lord appeared on it to him, for this would not distinguish it from any other day. Some have conjectured that this was not the weekly Lord's day observed by the Christians, but the anniversary of Christ's resurrection; and so the Ethiopians still call Easter *Schambatah Crostos*, the sabbath of Christ: to understand it of the former is best. Now, though John was driven from the house and worship of God, and could not join with the saints in the public worship of that day; yet he was employed in spiritual contemplations and exercises, and was under a more than ordinary influence of the spirit of God; and his spirit or soul was wholly intent upon, and taken up with divine and spiritual things, with visions and representations that were made unto his mind, which he perceived in his spirit, and not with the organs of his body; he was in an ecstasy of spirit, and knew not scarcely whether he was in the body or out of it: *and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet*; which was the voice of the son of God, as appears by what it uttered, ver. 11. and is afterwards said to be as the sound of many waters; and it was be-

hind him, as in Isa. xxx. 21. it came to him at an un-awares, and surprised him, while he was in deep meditation on spiritual things: and it was a very great one; it was the voice of a great person, of the son of God, and expressed great things, and was very sonorous and loud, it was like the sound of a trumpet; and this was partly to awaken the attention of John to it, and partly to express the certainty of the relation he gives of what it said; had it been a low muttering voice, it might be questioned whether John rightly understood it, and whether he might not be mistaken in the account of what he heard; but it being so loud and clear, there is no room for such a doubt.

Ver. 11. *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, &c.*] These characters, which are repeated here, see the note on ver. 8. are left out in the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but are very fitly retained, to point out the person that speaks; to express his dignity, deity, and eternity; to excite the attention of John, and to give weight to what he said: *and, what thou seest, write in a book*; that it might remain, and be read of all men, and be profitable to the churches in the then present age, and in all future ones: *and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia*; from whence it appears, that not only the seven following epistles were sent to the churches, but that after John had written in a book the account of all the visions that he saw, the whole was sent unto them, for their use and benefit; and who are particularly named: *unto Ephesus*: which was a city of Ionia, and which Pliny calls^f the work of the Amazons, and the light of Asia; it was famous for the temple of Diana, but more so for having a church of Christ in it: either the Apostle Paul came and preached, and continued for the space of two years; where a very famous church was planted by him, and proper officers appointed, to whom he wrote a very excellent epistle: this is now a miserable desolate place, not a city, but a village; and is called by the Turks, Aiasalik: of this place and church see the notes on Acts xviii. 19. and xx. 17. *and unto Smyrna*; another city of Ionia, so called from Smyrna, the wife of Theusus^g, the builder of it; or from Smyrna, an Amazon^h, the relics of whose marble bust are to be seen there to this day: it lies about forty-six miles from Ephesus, and is by the Turks now called Fsmir, and is still a place famous, not for pompous buildings, but for number of inhabitants, riches, and commerce: *and unto Pergamos*; this was a city of Mysia, situated by the river Caicus, formerly the seat of the kings of Attalia, and was bequeathed by Attalus, their last king, to the Romans: it is famous for being the native place of Galen the physician, and of Apollodoros the rhetorician, master to Augustus Cæsar, and for the invention of parchment in it, from whence it seems to have its name: it is now called by the Turks Bergamo, and is almost sixty-four miles from Smyrna: *and unto Thyatira*; a city of Lydia, near the river Lycus, formerly called Pelopia, and Euhippia, and now, by the Turks,

^a Apolog. 2. p. 98. 99.

^b Epist. c. 11. p. 244. Ed. Voss.

^c Epist. ad. Magnes. c. 9.

^d Apud Script. Quest. & Respons. ad Orthodox. inter Justin. Opera, p. 468.

^e De Corona, c. 3.

^f Homil. in Exod. fol. 41. 7.

^g Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29.

^h Herodot. de Vita Homeri. c. 2.

ⁱ Vid. Hiller. Onomastic. p. 324.

Ak Hissar, or *the white camp*, and is distant from Pergamos about forty-eight miles; see the note on Acts xvi. 14. and *unto Sardis*; this was another city of Lydia, situated at the side of Mount Tmolus; it was the metropolis of Lydia, and the seat of King Croesus, and is now called, by the Turks, Sart; and instead of a famous city, it is now an obscure little village, of mean houses, and scarce any other inhabitants in it than shepherds and cow-keepers, and is thirty-three miles from Thyatira: and *unto Philadelphia*; another city of Lydia, situated at the foot of Mount Tmolus; it had its name from Attalus Philadelphus, the builder of it; it is now called, by the Turks, Alah Shahr, or *the fair city*, though there is nothing beautiful or magnificent in it; it is distant from Thyatira about twenty-seven miles: and *unto Laodicea*; another city of Lydia, near the river Lycus, first named Diospolis, afterwards Rhoads, and is now, by the Turks, called Eski Hissar, or *the old camp*; and is inhabited by none, unless it be in the night, by wolves, foxes, and jackals, as our countryman Dr. Smith affirms, in his *Notitia* of the seven churches of Asia; from whom I have taken the account of these cities as they now are, and the rest from Pliny and Ptolomy chiefly.

Ver. 12. *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, &c.*] The Complutensian edition reads, *and there I turned*; and so the Arabic version; that is, to see who it was that spoke, from whom the voice came, and by whom it was uttered; see Exod. xx. 18. and *being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks*; which represented the seven churches, ver. 20. in allusion to the seven lamps in the candlestick of the sanctuary, Exod. xxv. 37. Zech. iv. 2. compared to *candlesticks*, for the use of them, which is to hold forth light; these have none of themselves, but what is put into them, and being put into them, they hold it forth; so the churches of Christ have no light of themselves, but what is put into them; and the light which is put into them, is not the mere light of nature, nor the law of Moses, but the Gospel of Christ; which dispels darkness, and is the means of enlightening sinners, and gives light to saints, by which they walk and work; and this light is put into the churches by Christ, whose the Gospel is, and who is himself come a light into the world; and being put here by him, it is held forth by them, especially by the ministers of it, who are the lights of the world, both by their ministry, and in their lives and conversations: and they are compared to *golden candlesticks*, because of their excellency, preciousness, and value, in the esteem of Christ; and, for their brightness and purity in doctrine, discipline, and life; and for their splendour, glory, and beauty; and for their stability and duration; and though they are liable to corruption and taint, yet may be melted, refined, and purified as gold.

Ver. 13. *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the son of man, &c.*] By whom is meant not an angel, for he speaks of himself as a divine Person, as the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, phrases not applicable to any created beings; and of himself also as having been dead, which angels are not capable of, and of living again, and of living for ever-

more, and having power over death and the grave, which no creature has; yea, he calls himself expressly the son of God, ver. 11, 17, 18. and ch. ii. 18. so that Christ is manifestly designed, who, as a divine Person, appeared in a form like that individual human nature which was at his father's right hand; for that human nature of his, or he as the son of man, was not in the midst of these candlesticks, or churches, but he the son of God was in a form like to his human nature in heaven; so before his incarnation, he is said to be like unto the son of man, in Dan. vii. 13. to which there is a reference here, and not only in this, but in some other parts of the description; so after his ascension, he in a visionary way appears, not in that real human nature he assumed, but in a form like unto it, that being in heaven; but when he was here on earth he is called the son of man, and not like to one; though even such a phrase may express the truth and reality of his humanity, for who more like to the son of man than he who is so? see John i. 14. Phil. ii. 7. now Christ was seen by John in the midst of the candlesticks or churches, and among whom he walked, as in ch. ii. 1. which is expressive of his presence in his churches, and which he has promised unto the end of the world; and of the gracious visits he makes them, and the sweet communion and conversation he indulges them with, to their joy and comfort; as well as the walks he takes among them for his own delight and pleasure; and where he is, abides and takes his turns, particularly as a priest, in which form he now appeared, as the antitype of Aaron the high-priest, to trim the lamps or candles in the candlesticks, to cause them to burn more brightly and clearly: *clothed with a garment down to the foot*; which some understand of the righteousness of Christ; this is called a garment, a wedding-garment, the best or first robe, the robe of righteousness; and is fitly compared to one, it being unto, and upon believers, put upon them, and which covers their persons, keeps them warm and comfortable, and beautifies and adorns them; and is a very beautiful, pure, and spotless robe; and reaches to the feet, covers all the members of Christ's mystical body, the meanest and lowest, as well as the more excellent; the weakest believer as well, and as much, as the strongest: but not Christ mystical, but personal, is here represented; others therefore think that this long garment is a sign of gravity and wisdom, it being usual for men of power and authority, and learning, as the Jewish sanhedrim, Scribes and Pharisees, to wear long garments; but it seems rather to design a priestly robe; the robe of the ephod wore by the high-priest is called by this name in the Septuagint version of Exod. xxviii. 4, 31. and so it is by Josephus¹, who speaking of the hyacinthine tunic, or robe of blue, says, this is *σώματος*, a garment down to the foot, which in our language is called *Meeir*; rather it should be *מעיל*, *Meil*, which is its Hebrew name; and so this robe is expressed by the same word here, used by Philo the Jew², and by Jerom³; so Maimonides^m says, the length of his garment was to the top of his heel: and in the habit of a priest did Christ now appear; and so he is described in his priestly office, in the midst of his

¹ Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 4.

² De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 673.

¹ Ad Fabiolam. fol. 19. H.

² Cele Hamikash, c. 8. sect. 17.

churches, having made atonement for their sins by the sacrifice of himself; and now as their high-priest had entered into the holiest of all with his own blood and righteousness; bore their names on his breast-plate, appeared in the presence of God on their account, and ever lived to make intercession for them: *and girt about the paps with a golden girdle*; as the high-priest was with the girdle of the ephod, which was made of gold, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen, Exod. xxviii. 8. and with which the priests were girt about the paps, or breast, as Christ is here described: it is said of the priests in Ezek. xlv. 18. *they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat*; which some render in *sweating-places*; and so some Jewish writers interpret it, which will serve to illustrate the present place; "says R. Abai", (upon citing "Ezek. xlv. 18.") they don't gird themselves in the place "in which they sweat; according to the tradition, when "they gird themselves they don't gird neither below "their loins, nor above their arm-holes, but over-against "their arm-holes;" the gloss says, upon their ribs, against their arm-pit, that is, about their breast, or paps; and which is still more plainly expressed by the Targum on the aboveplace, which paraphrases it thus, "they "shall not gird about their loins, but they shall gird "על לבבון, *about their heart*:" So Josephus^o says, the high-priest's garment was girt about the breast, a little below the arm-holes. Christ's girdle, as a King, is the girdle of faithfulness and righteousness, which is about his loins; and his girdle, as a prophet, is the girdle of truth; but, as a priest, it is the girdle of love; it is that which has constrained him to put himself in the room and stead of his people, to assume their nature, give himself a sacrifice for them, and intercede on their behalf: this is like a girdle, round from everlasting to everlasting; is said to be *golden*, because of the excellency, purity, glory, and duration of it; and because it is very strong, affectionate, and hearty, it is said to be a girdle about the paps, near where is the heart, the seat of love; and this may also denote the power, strength, and readiness of Christ to assist and help his churches in every time of need.

Ver. 14. *His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, &c.*] In allusion to the white head and hairs of old men, said to be hoary, or like the hoar frost, and compared to an almond-tree in bloom, Eccl. xii. 5. and here to wool and snow for whiteness; see Ezek. xxvii. 18. and according to the Jews^p, צמר לבן, *white wool*, is the wool of a lamb just yeaned, about which a cloth is bound, that it may not be defiled; now these metaphors are expressive of the antiquity of Christ, who is the everlasting Father, and whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting; and of his senile gravity and prudence, for with the Ancient is wisdom; he is the wisdom of God, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; and also of his glory and majesty, being the brightness of his father's glory; and likewise of his true and proper deity, since this description is the same with that of the Ancient of days in Dan. vii. 9. for by his

head is not here meant either God the father, who is sometimes called the head of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 3. nor his divine nature, which is the chief and principal in him, nor his headship over the church; nor do his hairs intend his elect, which grow upon him, and are nourished by him, and are so called for their number, weakness, and purity: *and his eyes were as a flame of fire*; see Dan. x. 6. which may design the omniscience of Christ, which reaches to all persons, and things, and is very searching and penetrating, and discovers and brings to light things the most dark and obscure; and also Christ's eyes of love upon his own people, which have both heat and light; Christ's love never waxes cold, and, being shed abroad in the hearts of his people, warms theirs; and in the light of his gracious countenance do they see light; and his love, like flames of fire, melts their souls into a true and genuine repentance for sin: or else, rather his eyes of wrath and vengeance, as set upon his enemies, are here meant: which will be fierce and furious, bring swift and sudden destruction on them, before which there is no standing, and from which there is no fleeing. It is said of Augustus Cæsar, that he had fiery eyes^q.

Ver. 15. *And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, &c.*] By which is meant, not his human nature in a suffering state; or his people, the meaner and lower parts of his mystical body, in a like state; or his apostles and ministers, who are supporters of his church, and run to and fro with spiritual knowledge, for which, though they suffer much, are permanent and glorious; but either the power of Christ in bearing up and supporting his people, in the care and government and defence of them; or his ways, works, and walks in his churches, and all his providential administrations towards them, which are holy, just, and righteous, and will be manifest; or his wrath and vengeance in treading down and trampling upon his enemies: *and his voice as the sound of many waters*; meaning his Gospel, as preached by his apostles and ministers, which was heard far and near; see Rom. x. 18. and which made a great noise in the world; or his voice of vengeance on his enemies, which will be very terrible and irresistible.

Ver. 16. *And he had in his right hand seven stars, &c.*] The angels or pastors of the seven churches, ver. 20. The ministers of the Gospel are compared to stars, because of their efficient cause, God, who has made them, and fixed them in their proper place, and for his glory; and because of the matter of them, being the same with the heavens, so ministers are of the same nature with the churches; and because of their form, light, which they receive from the sun, so preachers of the Gospel receive their light from Christ; and because of their multitude and variety, so the ministers of the Gospel are many, and their gifts different; and chiefly for their usefulness, to give light to others, to direct to Christ, and point out the way of salvation, and to rule over the churches: nor was it unusual with the Jews to compare good men to stars,

^o T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 18. 2. & 19. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 74. 2. Vit. Jarchi & Kimchi in Ezek. xlv. 18.
^p Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 2.

^q T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 54. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Mian. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 2.

^r Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 8. p. 13. 55.

and to the seven stars. The Targumist¹ says, the seven lamps in the candlestick answer to the seven stars to which the righteous are like. These are led and held in Christ's right hand; which shews that they are dear unto him, and highly valued by him; that they are his, in his possession, at his dispose, whom he uses as his instruments to do his work; and whom he upholds and sustains, that they shall not sink under their burdens; and whom he preserves from falling, and so holds them that they shall stand fast in the faith, and not be carried away with the error of the wicked: *and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword*; which designs the word of God; see Eph. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. This comes out of the mouth of Christ, it is the word of God, and not of man; and is a sharp sword, contains sharp reproofs for sin, severe threatenings against it, and gives cutting convictions of it, and is a two-edged one; and by its two edges may be meant law and Gospel; the law lays open the sins of men, fills with grief and anguish for them, yea, not only wounds, but kills; and the Gospel cuts down the best in man, his wisdom, holiness, righteousness, and carnal privileges, in which he trusts; and the worst in man, teaching him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: or the word of God may be so called, because it is a means both of saving and of destroying; it is the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others; and is both an offensive and defensive weapon; it is for the defence of the saints, against Satan, false teachers, and every other enemy; and an offensive one to them, which cuts them down, and destroys them and their principles: or this may mean the judiciary sentence of Christ upon the wicked, which will be a fighting against them, and a smiting of the nations of the world; see ch. ii. 16. and xix. 15. and Psal. cxlix. 6. which the Jews interpret of the law²: *and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength*: at noon-day; such was the countenance of Christ at his transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 2. and designs here the manifestation of himself in the glories of his person, and in the riches of his grace; who is the sun of righteousness that arises upon his people with light, heat, joy, and comfort; see the phrase in Judges v. 31. which the Jewish writers understand of the strength of the sun both in the summer solstice, and in the middle of the day, or at noon, at which time its heat is strongest, and it usually shines brightest; the design of the metaphor is to set forth the glory and majesty of Christ.

Ver. 17. *And when I saw him, &c.*] The glorious person here described, who was just behind him, and of whom he had a full view, being so near him: *I fell at his feet as dead*; through consternation and fear, the sight was so amazing and terrible; the appearance of a divine person in any degree of majesty and glory, has had some considerable effect upon men, even upon the best of men; but John seems to be more affected with it than any, as the vision was the more grand and illustrious: Manoaah was afraid he should die, but did not fall down as dead; Ezekiel fell upon his face,

but had his senses; Daniel's comeliness turned into corruption, and he retained no strength, he fainted, and fell into a deep sleep; see Judges xiii. 22. Ezek. i. 28. Dan. x. 8, 9. but John fell down at once, as dead. This panic which good men were seized with, at any more than ordinary appearance of God, or apprehension of his presence, arose from a notion that present death ensues a sight of him; hence Jacob wonders, and is thankful, that he had seen God face to face, and yet his life was preserved, Gen. xxxii. 30. and such an effect as here, upon the body, any uncommon discovery of the divine Being has, partly through the weakness of human nature, which in its present circumstances is not able to bear the rays and glories of a divine person; hence the resurrection of the body in power, glory, and immortality, incorruption and spirituality, is necessary to the enjoyment of God and Christ in a state of bliss and happiness to all eternity; and partly through a consciousness of sin, which ever since the fall of Adam has occasioned fear and perturbation of mind, even in the best of saints, when they have had any sense of the divine Majesty being near, in an unusual form of glory: *and he laid his right hand upon me*; even the same in which he had, and held the seven stars; and which shewed what an affection he had for him, in what esteem he had him, what care he took of him, and what power he would exert in lifting up, strengthening, and supporting him; for he laid not his hand on him in wrath and anger, but in love; and in order to raise him up and revive his spirits, and remove his fears; hence the Ethiopic version renders it, *and he took hold on me with his right hand, and lifted me up*; as he does all who in a spiritual sense fall at his feet; it is always safe and comfortable falling there: *saying unto me, fear not*; language which John had heard from him in the days of his flesh, and might therefore be chose now on purpose that he might the sooner know who he was and be comforted; see Matt. xiv. 27. Luke xii. 32. *I am the first and the last*; a way of speaking used by God when he is about to comfort his people, and remove their fears; see Isa. xli. 4. and xlv. 6. and xlviii. 12. and is used by Christ for the same purpose here; and so is a proof of his true and proper deity, and is expressive of his eternity, and also of his dignity and excellency: he is the first and last in divine predestination, in the covenant of grace, in creation, in the business of salvation, and in his church, by whom, and for whom, are all things in it; he is the head of the body, the son over his own house, and the first-born among many brethren; and so the Alexandrian copy reads here, *the first-born and the last*. מְשִׁיחַ הַבְּרִיּוֹת, *the first*, is a name of the Messiah with the Jews³; see the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 18. *I am he that liveth, &c.*] As the eternal God, who has life in himself, originally, essentially, and indervatively, and is the fountain and author of life to others; and who ever lived as the Mediator and Redeemer, and still does, and ever will, yea, even when he was dead as man: *and was dead*; he died the death of the cross, for the sins of his people, in due

¹ Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. xl. 4.

² Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 95. 4. & 131. 1.

³ T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 5. 1. Beveshit Rabba, sect. 68. fol. 55. 2. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 171. 2. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 71. 4.

time, and but once; and it was but a short time he was held under the power of death, and will never die more: *and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen*; he was always alive as God, or he was always the living God, and ever will be; and he is now alive as man, and will for ever continue so; and he is alive to God, he lives by him, with him, and to his glory; and he is alive to the benefit and advantage of his redeemed ones, for whom he died; he ever lives to make intercession for them; he rose again from the dead for their justification; their being quickened together with him, and their being begotten again to a lively hope, are owing to his being alive; and as their reconciliation is by his death, so their salvation, or the application of it to them, is by his interceding life; and his resurrection is the cause of theirs: this is very fitly said to John, who was fallen as dead at the feet of Christ, and might be to animate him against the fears of death, or whatever he was to meet with on account of Christ; as well as to make himself known unto him, who had before known him, living, dying, and risen again. The word *Amen* is left out in the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but is in others, and is rightly retained, either as an asseveration of Christ to the truth of what is before said, or as an assent of John's unto it, who was a proper witness both of the death and resurrection of Christ: *and have the keys of hell and death*; or of death and hell; as the words are transposed in the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition, in the Vulgate Latin and in all the Oriental versions, agreeably to ch. vi. 8. and xx. 13, 14. by which phrase is expressed the power of Christ over both: his power over death is seen in taking away persons by death when he pleases, the instances of Ananias and Sapphira are proofs of this; and in delivering persons from death when near it, as the centurion's servant, Peter's wife's mother, and the nobleman's son of Capernaum; and in raising persons from the dead, as Jairus's daughter, the widow of Naim's son, and Lazarus, when he was here on earth; and in his raising up his own body when dead, and which will also appear in raising all the dead at the last day: and his power over hell, by which may be meant the grave, or the place of the departed, and separate souls, or the place of the damned and of the devils, which are there, will be seen in opening the graves at the time of the resurrection, when death and hell, or the grave, will deliver up the dead in them, at his command; and in retaining or sending out the separate souls in *hades*; and in opening the doors of hell, and casting in the wicked, and destroying them, soul and body, there; and in shutting them up, that they cannot come out from thence who are once in; and in binding Satan, and casting him into the bottomless pit, and shutting him up there, the key of which he has in his hand; and in preserving his church and people from his power and malice, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them. This is an expression of the sovereignty, power, and authority of Christ; and is designed to encourage and support John under his present concern and anxiety of mind about the per-

son he saw in this vision: *מפתח של קברות*, *the key of the grave*, and of the resurrection of the dead, is frequently said by the Jews to be one of the keys which are in the hands of the holy blessed God, and his only; not in the hands of an angel or a seraph, or any other*.

Ver. 19. *Write the things which thou hast seen, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Complutensian edition, read, *write therefore the things, &c.* meaning what he had now seen, the vision of one like to the son of man, amidst the golden candlesticks, with seven stars in his right hand, and as above described; this was what he had seen ver. 12, 13, 16. for it does not refer to what he had seen of Christ in the days of his flesh, but to what he had now seen in this representation of him: *and the things which are*; the state of the churches of Christ in the apostolic age, and at that time signified by the Ephesian church, and that part of the Smyranean which John lived to see: *and the things which shall be hereafter*; from hence unto the end of the world, in successive generations, signified by the rest of the churches, and in the visions of the seals, trumpets, and vials.

Ver. 20. *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, &c.*] The sense is, that John was to write the mystery of these stars, or the mystical sense of them: *and the seven golden candlesticks*; the mystery, or mysterious sense of them also; for the words are in a continued connexion with the preceding verse, and have respect to the following interpretation of them, and to the epistles in the following chapter, which are mystical, and prophetic of the state of the churches in all succeeding ages: *the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches*; that is, the seven stars which John saw in Christ's right hand, represent the angels, or pastors of the seven churches of Asia, and in them all the pastors and ministers of the churches in all the periods of time until Christ's second coming. Here it may be observed, that the ministers of the Gospel are not only compared to *stars*, for which see the note on ver. 16. but likewise to *angels*, which signifies *messengers*, as ministers are sent forth by Christ with the message of the Gospel to publish to the sons of men; and as the angels are Christ's ministering spirits, so are the preachers of the Gospel the ministers of Christ, that wait upon him and serve him in the ministry of the word, and in the administration of ordinances; and there is some agreement between them in holiness, knowledge, zeal, diligence, and watchfulness, in their work; as also they may be so called for the honour and esteem in which they are, both with Christ and his churches; and who like the angels rejoice at the conversion of sinners, and the enlargement of the interest of Christ: *and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches*; represent the seven churches of Asia, and in them all the churches of Christ, in successive ages, to the end of time; the reasons why these are signified by *candlesticks*, see the note on ver. 12. and that they are prophetic of the churches of Christ in the several periods of time, until he comes again, will appear from the

* Bereshit Rabba, sect. 73. fol. 64. 3. Targum Jerus. in Gen. xxx.

21. & Jon. in Deut. xxviii. 12. Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 3. Pirke Eliczer, c. 34. T. Bab. Tannith, fol. 2. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 113. 1.

following considerations: the whole book is called a prophecy, and a revelation of things that were shortly to come to pass, and it would be very strange, and very unsuitable to its title, should the three first chapters contain nothing prophetic in them; the characters of the divine Person under which these seven churches are saluted, as he which is, and was, and is to come, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, shew that the things written to them belong to the Gospel church-state, from the beginning to the end of it, for what other reason can be given for such a peculiar use of them? the very grand and illustrious appearance of Christ, antecedent to these epistles, when compared with the appearance of God, previous to the opening of the sealed book, and the seven seals of it, may induce one to conclude, that as the latter introduces the book-prophecy in this revelation, so the former introduces the church-prophecy; nor does it seem that such a magnificent appearance is necessary to the bare sending of some letters of advice to some particular churches: moreover, as there are some things in these epistles too common to all the churches and ministers to be restrained to some particular ones, such as Christ's affording his presence among them, signified by his walking amidst the candlesticks, and his care of, and respect unto the ministers of the Gospel, expressed by holding seven stars in his right hand; for can it be thought that Christ only granted his presence to the seven churches in Asia? or that the pastors of those churches were the only ones Christ holds in his right hand? so there are others too particular to certain periods to belong to those churches, as that Smyrna should have a crown of life, Pergamos hidden manna and a white stone, Thyatira the morning star,

and Philadelphia be delivered from a temptation that would reach all the world, and is not yet come; for which no reason can be given in the literal sense of these epistles; and it is strange that only seven churches should be sent to, and these only in Asia; why not to the churches in Africa and Europe? and these churches also, all but Ephesus, very obscure ones; why not to the churches at Antioch, Corinth, Rome, &c. and it is stranger still, if, as Epiphanius says^v, there was no church at Thyatira till after the writing of these letters: nothing can account for all this but their being prophetic, there being something in the number, names, situation, and case of these churches, which were emblematical of the state of the church in successive periods of time; to which may be added, that the epiphonema at the close of every epistle, *he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*, shews that each epistle to every church is not designed for that church only, but for churches; and for what churches but for those who are represented in that period of time, since they must be unsuitable to one another? and besides, this concluding sentence shews, that what is contained in each epistle is something intricate, abstruse, and parabolical, it being only used when some such thing is delivered; see Matt. xi. 15. and xiii. 9, 43. There is one observation more to be made, and which runs through all the epistles, and that is, that the names of the several churches, and the titles which Christ assumes in writing to each, as well as the subject-matter of the epistles, have respect to the several distinct periods of the church; all which will more clearly appear in the following notes upon them.

C H A P. II.

THIS chapter contains the epistles to the churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. It begins with that to Ephesus, in which the sender of it describes himself by some of his characters mentioned in the preceding chapter; takes notice of some things commendable in this church, ver. 1, 2, 3. reproves her for leaving her first love; gives some advice upon it; threatens her in case of non-repentance; yet notwithstanding commends her for her detestation of some bad practices; and concludes the epistle with a phrase exciting to attention to what is written, and with a promise to them that are constant and conquering, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. next follows the epistle to the church at Smyrna, in which the sender assumes some of his former titles; takes notice of her works in general, and of her afflictions in particular, and of the blasphemy of others, ver. 8, 9. fortifies her against a great affliction to be endured, described by its author, kind, use, and duration; and exhorts to faithfulness and constancy, with a promise of a crown of life, ver. 10. and closes the epistle in the same form as the preceding, promising security from the second death to the

persevering and conquering Christian, ver. 11. and next in order is the epistle to the church at Pergamos, in which the sender takes to him one of the above characters in the description of him; observes her works and place of abode, and commends her faithfulness to him in the worst of times and places, ver. 12, 13. yet exhibits a complaint against her for having, and conniving at persons of bad principles and practice, called Balaamites and Nicolaitans, ver. 14, 15. exhorts to repentance, and in failure of it threatens to come and fight against them; and closes the epistle in the same manner as the two former, with a promise of hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name to him that overcomes, ver. 16, 17. and the last epistle in this chapter is that to the church at Thyatira, in which the sender makes use of some other titles and characters of his before mentioned; takes notice of her good works, and yet signifies he had a controversy with her, for permitting a false prophetess to teach in her, who seduced men to fornication and idolatry, ver. 18, 19, 20. whose impentence is complained of, and which was aggravated by having space for repentance given her,

^v Contra Hæres. l. 2. Hæres. 51.

ver. 21. wherefore, in case of continuance in impenitence, he threatens both her and her followers with tribulation and death, whereby the omniscience and justice of Christ would be manifest to all the churches, ver. 22, 23. and then another and better sort of men in this church are addressed, who are described as not having imbibed the doctrine of the false prophetess, and as not approving the depths of Satan, or her doctrines of devils; and these are told that no other burden should be laid on them than was, and are exhorted to hold fast what they had, until the coming of Christ, ver. 24, 25. and for their encouragement to hold on to the end, many promises are made unto them respecting their power and rule over their enemies, and the happy days that they should enjoy, ver. 26, 27, 28. and the epistle is concluded with the usual epiphonema, ver. 29.

Ver. 1. *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write, &c.*] Of the city of Ephesus, see the notes on ch. i. 11. and on Acts xviii. 19. The church here seems to have been founded by the Apostle Paul, who continued here two years, by which means all Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, Acts xix. 10. of this church, see the note on Acts xx. 17. it is named first, because it was the largest, most populous, and famous, and was nearest to Patmos, where John now was, and most known to him, it being the place where he had resided; and it was the place from whence the Gospel came to others, and spread itself in lesser Asia; but especially it is first written to, because it represented the church in the apostolic age; so that this letter contains the things which are, ch. i. 19. and in its very name, to the state of this church in Ephesus, there may be an allusion; either to *ἐφεσις*, *ephesis*, which signifies *desire*, and may be expressive of the fervent love of that pure and apostolical church to Jesus Christ at the beginning of it; their eager desire after more knowledge of him, and communion with him; after his word and ordinances, and the maintaining of the purity of them; after the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the world; as well as after fellowship with the saints, and the spiritual welfare of each other: the allusion may be also to *ἀφεσις*, *aphesis*, which signifies *remission*, or an abatement; and so may point out the remissness and decay of the first love of these primitive Christians, towards the close of this state; of the abatement of the fervency of it, of which complaint is made in this epistle, and not without cause. This epistle is inscribed to the angel of this church, or the pastor of it; why ministers are called angels, see the note on ch. i. 20. some think this was Timothy, whom the Apostle Paul sent thither, and desired him to continue there, 1 Tim. i. 3. there was one Onesimus bishop of Ephesus, when Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, of whom he makes mention in his epistle² to the Ephesians, and bids fair to be this angel; though if any credit could be given to the Apostolical Constitutions⁷, the bishop of this place was one John, who is said to be ordained by the Apostle John, and is thought to be the same with John the elder², the master of Papias; but though only one

is mentioned, yet all the elders of this church, for there were more than one, see Acts xx. 17. are included; and not they only, but the whole church over whom they presided; for what was written was ordered to be sent to the church, and was sent by John, see ch. i. 4, 11. the letter was sent to the pastor or pastors, to the whole body of ministers, by them to be communicated to the church; and not only to this particular church did this letter and the contents of it belong, but to all the churches of Christ within the period of the apostolic age, as may be concluded from ver. 7. *These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand*: the Syriac version reads, *that holds all things, and these seven stars in his right hand*; for the explanation of this character of Christ, see the note on ch. i. 16. only let it be observed how suitably this is prefixed to the church at Ephesus, and which represents the state of the churches in the times of the apostles; in which place, and during which interval, our Lord remarkably held his ministering servants as stars in his right hand; he held and protected the Apostle Paul for two years in this place, and preserved him and his companions safe amidst the uproar raised by Demetrius the silversmith about them; here also he protected Timothy at a time when there were many adversaries, and kept the elders of this church pure, notwithstanding the erroneous persons that rose up among them; and last of all the Apostle John, who here resided, and died in peace, notwithstanding the rage and fury of his persecutors: likewise Christ in a very visible manner held all his faithful ministers during this period in his right hand, safe and secure, until they had done the work they were sent about, and preserved them in purity of doctrine and conversation; so that their light in both respects shone brightly before men. Moreover, as this title of Christ is prefixed to the epistle to the first of the churches, and its pastor or pastors, it may be considered as relating to, and holding good of all the ministers of the Gospel and pastors of the other churches; and likewise of all the churches in successive ages to the end of the world, as the following one also refers to all the churches themselves: *who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*; see the notes on ch. i. 12, 13. Christ was not only present with, and took his walks in this church at Ephesus, but in all the churches of that period, comparable to candlesticks, which held forth the light of the Gospel, and that in order as the antitype of Aaron, to trim these lamps, and likewise in all his churches to the end of the world; see Matt. xxviii. 20.

Ver. 2. *I know thy works, &c.*] The good works, both of ministers and churches; no evil works are mentioned, nor any thing complained of in this church but an abatement of the fervour of her first love. Christ, as the omniscient God, knows all the works of his people, and the springs, and principles, and ends, and views of them, whether they are done in obedience to him, and spring from love to him, and are performed in his strength, and by his grace, and are directed to his glory; and such he takes notice of,

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 8. c. 36.
 7 L. vii. c. 46.

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 39.

approves of, and is well-pleased with, not as the ground of his delight in their persons, but as the fruits of his own grace; and during the apostolic age, churches and ministers were very diligent in working; yea, they were laborious, as follows: *and thy labour*; particularly the labour of ministers of the Gospel, in these times, in the frequent preaching of it, in season and out of season; and in the constant administration of the ordinances; and in the diligent exercise of church-discipline. The work of the ministry is a laborious work to the mind in studying, and to the body in the outward discharge of it; and it becomes more so, through the malice and opposition of enemies, and the weakness of friends; and such as are diligent and laborious deserve respect, even double honour; and though they may not have it from men, yet Christ takes notice of them and their labours, and commends them for them, and will reward them. *And thy patience*; as this may refer to the ministers of the word, it may denote their patience in suffering reproaches and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, which they bore patiently, cheerfully, and constantly; and in bearing the infirmities of weak saints, in their several communities; and in reclaiming and restoring persons out of the way; and in waiting for the success of their ministry, and their continuance and perseverance in it. And as this may respect members of churches, it may point at their patience under afflictions from the hand of God, and under reproach and persecution from men, for their embracing and professing the Gospel; and their patient waiting for the heavenly glory, and their firm expectation of it, and their perseverance unto it. *And how thou canst not bear them that are evil*; that were so either in their principles or in their practices, or both; men that lived immoral lives, and held erroneous doctrines, these the primitive ministers and churches could not bear; they had an inward abhorrence and detestation of them in their minds; they could not bear them in communion with them; they admonished them according to the nature of their offence, and cast out such as were obstinate and incorrigible; they withdrew from such as were disorderly, and rejected heretics after the first and second admonition; their zeal for church-discipline is here taken notice of to their commendation. *And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars*; this doubtless was done in the church at Ephesus, where, after the Apostle Paul's departure, grievous wolves, in sheep's clothing, entered, and men arose from among themselves, speaking perverse things, Acts xx. 29, 30. yet it was not peculiar to that church, though it was to the apostolic age; for in no other could men with any face pretend to be the apostles of Christ; and such there were, who sprung up in the several churches at Jerusalem, Corinth, Galatia, and elsewhere, who called themselves the apostles of Christ, but were false apostles, deceitful workers; they pretended to have their doctrine, call, mission, and commission, immediately from Christ, as the true apostles had, and a power to work miracles, and talked of inspirations and revelations by the spirit of God. Now the apostles, mini-

sters, and churches of those times, tried their pretensions and doctrines by the word of God, and by the fruits which they produced in themselves and others; and through that discerning of spirits which they had, they found them to be liars; that they were not, nor had they what they pretended to be, and have, and exposed them as such.

Ver. 3. *And hast borne, &c.*] Not evil men, nor false apostles, but *burdens*, as the Ethiopic version reads, and as the word signifies; meaning afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, which pressed sore, and lay heavy on these ministers and churches; and yet they bore them with constancy and cheerfulness, and were not moved by them. The Arabic version reads, *and thou hast borne me*; my name and Gospel, among the Gentiles, and carried it from place to place; see Acts ix. 15. *and hast patience*; which they had from God, as his gift, and which they had in their hearts, and in exercise, and found it useful to them. It was in exercise in a suitable time, and it continued with them; it was not worn out through the length and greatness of their trials. *And for my name's sake hast laboured*; which may refer either to enduring sufferings for Christ's name's sake, for his Gospel's sake, for righteousness-sake, for the sake of the elect, and for the sake of the honour, glory, and interest of Christ; or to labouring in the ministry, not for filthy lucre-sake, nor for party-sake, but for the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; and there never was an interval in which this was more true: *and hast not fainted*; so as to sink under the burden borne; to have patience quite tired out; to be weary of labouring for Christ's name's sake; and so as to give out, and quit the service of Christ.

Ver. 4. *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, &c.*] So the Jews represent God saying, concerning their fathers, *Abraham, &c.* ויש לי עליהם, *I have something against them*. Christ has nothing against his people, his faithful ministers, and true churches, in a judicial way, or to their condemnation, for there is none to them that are in him; but he has often many things to complain of in them, and to rebuke and chastise them for, in a way of providence: and what he had against the church at Ephesus, and against the churches in the period which that represents, follows, *because thou hast left thy first love*; by which is meant, not hospitality to strangers, or an affectionate care of the poor of the church, or a zealous concern to feed the flock, and maintain church-discipline; but the love of the saints to God, and Christ, and one another, which appeared at the beginning of this church-state, when they were all of one heart and one soul, as generally at first conversion love is the warmest; and so it was at the first planting of Gospel churches, and therefore here called first love. Now this, though it was not lost, for the true grace of love can never be lost, yet it was left; it abated in its heat and fervour; there was a remissness in the exercise of it; what our Lord had foretold should be before the destruction of Jerusalem was fulfilled in this period of time, *the love of many waxed cold*, Matt. xxiv. 12. through the prevalence of corruption in some; and through an over-

love to the world, as in Demas, and others; and through a desire of ease and freedom from reproach and persecution; and through the introduction of errors, which damp the heat of love, and spirit of religion; and through the contentions and divisions among themselves, as at Corinth, Galatia, and elsewhere, which greatly weakened their love to one another, and to divine things; and which was very displeasing to Christ, who, for the restoring of them, gives the following advice. Compare with this 2 Tim. i. 15.

Ver. 5. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, &c.*] Believers cannot totally and finally fall away from the grace which they have received; but they may fall into sin, and from a degree of grace, and the exercise of it, as these first and pure churches did, from some degree of their love to God, and Christ, and one another; and therefore are called upon to remember, mind, and observe from what degree of it they were fallen; in order to bring them under a conviction and acknowledgment of their evil, and a sense of their present state, and to quicken their desires after a restoration to their former one: *and repent*; of their coldness and lukewarmness, of the remissness of their love, and of those evils which brought it upon them: *and do the first works*; of faith and love, with the like zeal and fervour, which will shew the repentance to be sincere and genuine; so the Arabic version reads, *and exercise the former works, to wit, charity or love*. The Jews have a saying^b, “if a man repents, don’t say to him, *remember דרשונים*, thy “first works;” which they seem to understand of evil works; but former good works are to be remembered and done, to shew the truth of repentance for evil ones. *Or else I will come unto thee quickly*; not in a spiritual way, to pay a love-visit, nor in a judicial way, to take vengeance or inflict punishment, but in a providential way, to rebuke and chastise: *and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent*; or thee out of the candlestick, the pastor from the church, either by persecution or by death; or else the church, and church-state itself, signified by a candlestick; see the note on ch. i. 12. and may design a shaking and an unsettling of it, which is sometimes done by violent persecutions, and by false teachers and their doctrines, and by the divisions and contentions of saints among themselves; and by the former particularly was there a change made in the state of this apostolic church, when it passed into the Smyranean one, which was a period of great persecution and distress; for this cannot be understood of the total removing of the church-state itself quickly, no, not of Ephesus itself; for though there is not now indeed, nor has there been for many hundred years, a church of Christ in that place, yet there was one till the times of Constantine, when there was none in any of the other seven cities, and a long time after; see the note on Acts xx. 17. which shews, that this was not a commination to that church literally, but to the state of the church, which that represented; nor does it intend the utter abolition of that church, for the apostolical church still

continued, though it ceased to be in the circumstances it was before.

Ver. 6. *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, &c.*] Though these Christians had left their first love, yet they bore an hatred to the filthy and impure practices of some men, who were called *Nicolaitans*; who committed fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness, and had their wives in common, and also ate things offered to idols; who were so called, as some think^c, from Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons in Acts vi. 5. though as to Nicolas himself, it is said^d, that he lived with his own lawful married wife, and no other, and that his daughters continued virgins all their days, and his son incorrupt; and that these men, so called, only shrouded themselves under his name, and abused a saying or action of his, or both, to patronize their wicked deeds: he had used to advise *μακαρηνουαι τι σαρι*, by which he meant a restraining of all carnal and unlawful lusts; but these men interpreted it of an indulgence in them, and so gave themselves up to all uncleanness; and whereas, he having a beautiful wife, and being charged with jealousy, in order to clear himself of it, he brought her forth, and gave free liberty to any person to marry her as would; which indiscreet action of his these men chose to understand as allowing of community of wives. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, that these Nicolaitans were not called so from any man, but from the word *נכילה*, *Nicolah*, *let us eat*, which they often used to encourage each other to eat things offered to idols. However this be, it is certain that there were such a set of men, whose deeds were hateful; but neither their principles nor their practices obtained much in this period of time, though they afterwards did; see ver. 15. Professors of the Christian religion in general abhorred such impure notions and deeds, as they were by Christ: *which also I hate*; all sin is hateful to Christ, being contrary to his nature, to his will, and to his Gospel; and whatever is hateful to him should be to his people; and where grace is, sin will be hateful, both in themselves and others; and men’s deeds may be hated when their persons are not; and hatred of sin is taken notice of by Christ, with a commendation.

Ver. 7. *He that hath an ear, &c.*] Such who have new ears given them, as all have who are made new creatures; such who have their ears circumcised, and opened by the spirit of God; who hear with understanding, affection, and faith; who try what they hear, and approve, embrace, and retain that which is good. *Let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches*; let such hearken, and listen with attention to what is said by the spirit, in what goes before, and follows after, in this epistle, designed for the use of all the churches; from whence it appears, that this epistle was endited by the spirit of God, and is of divine inspiration; that it was not intended for the single use of the church at Ephesus, but of all the churches; and not of the seven churches only, though the Alexandrian copy reads, *to the seven churches*: but of all the churches in that period of time, which the Ephesine church represents; and which may also be useful to

^b Misa. Bava Metzia, c. 4. sect. 10.

^c Vid. Ireneum adv. Hæres. l. 1. c. 27. & Tertull. de Præscript. Hæret. c. 46, 47.

^d Clement. Alex. Strom. l. 3. p. 436. & Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. a. c. 29.

the churches of Christ in all other ages and periods of time. And moreover, it may be concluded from hence, that there are in this epistle, and so in all the rest, for the same words are subjoined to them all, some things which are parabolical and prophetic, and not obvious to every one's understanding and view; for a like expression is used by our Lord, when he had delivered any thing in a parabolical way, or was obscure; see Matt. xi. 15. and xiii. 9. *To him that overcometh*; the false apostles, false teachers, and their doctrines; coldness, lukewarmness, and remissness in love; the impure tenets and practices of the Nicolaitans: *will I give to eat of the tree of life*; by which is meant Jesus Christ himself, in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden; and is so called, because he is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and because of his fruit, the blessings of life and grace, that are in him, of which believers may eat by faith, and which they find to be soul-quickening, comforting, strengthening, and satisfying; and which are Christ's gift to them, even both the food they eat, and the faith by which they eat, are his gifts. So Christ, under the name of Wisdom, is called the Tree of life, in Prov. iii. 18. and this is a name which is sometimes given by the Jews to the Messiah: *which is in the midst of the paradise of God*; as the tree of life was in the garden of Eden, Gen. ii. 9. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, *the paradise of my God*: the God of Christ, as well as of his people; and by which may be meant, either the church on earth, which is as a paradise, Cant. iv. 12. in the midst of which Christ is, affording his gracious presence, and reaching forth his grace, and the benefits of it, to his people; or heaven, see the note on 2 Cor. xii. 4. said to be of God, because it is of his preparing, and where he dwells, and in the midst of which Christ, the Tree of life, is; and this shews, that he is to be come at by faith, and his fruit to be eaten, and lived upon; and he is to be beheld and enjoyed by all his saints, as he is now, and will be more perfectly hereafter.

Ver. 8. *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write, &c.*] Of the city of Smyrna, see the note on ch. i. 11. That there was a church of Christ here is not to be doubted, though by whom it was founded is not certain; very likely by the Apostle Paul, who was in those parts, and by whose means all Asia heard the Gospel of Christ, Acts xix. 10. Some think the present angel or pastor of this church, was Polycarp, the disciple of John. Irenæus^f, who knew him, says he was appointed bishop of Smyrna by the apostles. Here he suffered martyrdom, and was buried: the large amphitheatre, in which he was put to death, is still to be seen, and his sepulchre is yet preserved in this place^g: a very famous epistle, sent by this church at Smyrna to the churches at Pontus, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, and others, is extant in Eusebius^h. According to the Apostolical Constitutionsⁱ, the first bishops of Smyrna were Aristo Stratæus and Aristo the second, and Apelles, of whom

mention is made in Rom. xvi. 10. and who is reckoned among the seventy disciples; see the note on Luke x. 1. and is said to be bishop of Smyrna before Polycarp; who succeeded Polycarp, I do not find; but it is said there was a church at Smyrna in the *third* century; and so there was in the beginning of the *fourth*, since there was a bishop from hence in the council at Nice: and in the *fifth* century, mention is made of several bishops of this place; as of Cyrus, a native of Constantinople; and Protherius, who, 'tis thought, succeeded him, and was present in the synod at Chalcedon; and Æthericus, who assisted at three synods in this century, at Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon: and in the *sixth* century, there was a bishop of Smyrna in the fifth synod held at Rome and Constantinople: and even in the *eighth* century, one Antony, a monk, supplied the place of the bishop of Smyrna in the Nicene synod^k. The Turks have in this place now thirteen mosques, the Jews two synagogues, and of the Christians there are two churches belonging to the Greeks, and one to the Armenians^l. This church, and its pastor, represent the state of the church under the persecutions of the Roman emperors. Smyrna signifies *myrrh*, which being bitter of taste, is expressive of the bitter afflictions, and persecutions, and deaths, the people of God in this interval endured; and yet, as myrrh is of a sweet smell, so were those saints, in their sufferings for Christ, exceeding grateful and well-pleasing to him; wherefore nothing is said by way of complaint to this church; not that she was without fault, but it was proper to use her tenderly in her afflicted state: and, as Dr. More observes, as myrrh was used in the embalming of dead bodies, it may point to the many deaths and martyrdoms of the saints in this period, whereby their names and memories are perpetuated and eternized. *These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive*. Of these characters of Christ, see the notes on ch. i. 8, 11, 17, 18. and they are very appositely mentioned, to encourage the saints under their sufferings of death; since Christ, who is the eternal God, had in human nature tasted of the bitterness of death for them, and was risen again; suggesting, that though they were called to undergo the bitterest deaths for his sake, they should be raised again as he was, and live with him for ever. The Ethiopic version reads, *thus saith the Holy Spirit*; but it can't be said of him that he *was dead*.

Ver. 9. *I know thy works, &c.*] Good works, as before in ver. 2. *and tribulation*; this is Christ's legacy to his people, and which lies in their way to heaven; and never was the way of any to heaven more strewed with it than was the way of the saints in this period. But Christ took notice of it, and of them in it; he knew their souls in adversity, and remarked their patience under it, and their constancy, and close adherence to him: *and poverty*: which was true in a literal sense, through the spoiling of their goods, to which they were exposed for the profession of Christ: nothing is more contemptible among men than poverty, yet Christ takes notice of it, and owns his people in it;

^a Zohar in Gen. fol. 33. 3.

^b Adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 3.

^c Vid. Smith. Notitia septem Eccles. Asiae, p. 164, 165.

^d Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 15.

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^l L. 7. c. 46.

^k Hist. Eccles. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. p. 8. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 595, 596. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 9. p. 4.

^m Smith. Notitia, p. 167.

for this poverty came not by sin, but by sufferings for his sake: *but thou art rich*; they were rich, in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, though poor in this world; they were rich with the riches of Christ, with the blessings of the covenant, with the graces of the Spirit, and in good works; they were kings and priests unto God, had a kingdom of grace here, and a right to the kingdom of glory hereafter; and were heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. *And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not*: who asserted themselves to be the true Israel of God, Jews that were so inwardly, regenerate persons, or truly Christians; for the Christians, baptized persons^m, were by the Heathens called Jews; but these were not, they professed Christianity in words, but in works denied it; they were men of bad principles and practices, and both blasphemed the ways and doctrines of Christ themselves, and caused them to be blasphemed by others also; they were false Christians, nominal professors, and shunned persecution for the Gospel; who were not what they would be thought to be: these were the broachers of heresies in this period of time, in which there was a multitude of them, and which chiefly respected the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person of Christ; and they were introducers of Pagan and Jewish rites into the church, and were men of flagitious lives and conversations, and paved the way for the man of sin: *but are the synagogue of Satan*; were the children of the devil, imitated him, and were influenced by him, and were the forerunners of antichrist, whose coming was about the working of Satan.

Ver. 10. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, &c.*] God's people undergo sufferings of various sorts, as the Christians of those times did, scourgings, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and death itself in various shapes; and these are certain, they shall suffer them; they are all known before-hand to Christ, and he sometimes gives his people previous notice of them, nor should they indulge a slavish fear about them. It is reported of Polycarp, bishop of this church at Smyrna, in a letter written by the church itselfⁿ, that three days before he suffered, he dreamed his pillow, on which he laid his head, was on fire; upon which, awaking, he said to those that were by him, that he should be burnt for Christ; and when he came to suffer, as he was led along, a voice was heard by the by-standers, Polycarp, be strong, and play the man. *Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison*; which has been the lot of many of the saints, and was of some, even of the faithful ministers of the word in this interval; in which Satan had an hand, instigating their enemies to prevent and stop the progress of the Gospel, and deter others both from preaching and professing it: the end was in the permission of it, *that ye may be tried*; that their graces might be tried, their faith, love, zeal, courage, faithfulness, and constancy. Suffering times are trying times, whether men are real Christians or no; whether they have the true grace of God or not; and whether the principles they hold are right and true, and are worth, and will bear suffering for: *and ye shall have tribulation ten*

days; meaning it may be the ten persecutions under the Roman emperors; the *first* was under Nero, in the year 64 or 66; the *second* was under Domitian, about the year 93; the *third* was under Trajan, in the year 104; the *fourth* was under Hadrian, in the year 125; the *fifth* was under Marcus Antoninus, in the year 151; the *sixth* was under Septimius Severus, in the year 197; the *seventh* was under Maximinus, in the years 235, 236, 237; the *eighth* was under Decius, in the year 250; the *ninth* was under Valerianus, in the year 257; and the *tenth* was under Dioclesian, in the year 303. Austin^o reckons the ten persecutions thus: the first by Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trajan, the fourth by Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximus, the seventh by Decius, the eighth by Valerianus, the ninth by Aurelianus, the tenth by Dioclesian and Maximianus. Others, inasmuch as Nero's persecution was before this vision, reckon the ten persecutions thus: Domitian, Trajan, M. Antoninus, Verus and Lucius, Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerianus, Aurelianus, Dioclesianus, Licinius: the Dioclesian persecution lasted ten years almost throughout: and some think that this last persecution, which held ten years, is here particularly meant, and not without some good reason; since it is usual in prophetic writings, and in this book of the Revelation, to put days for years; so that these ten days may be the ten years the last persecution held, and at which time the period of this church-state ended, and that of Pergamos took place. *Be thou faithful unto death*: which is an address to the ministers in this interval, to be faithful in preaching the pure and unmixed Gospel of Christ; in a constant administration of the ordinances, as they were delivered; in watching over the souls of men under their care, reproving, exhorting, &c. with all long-suffering; continuing in the discharge of duty, though in continual danger of death, and though it issued in it. And also to the churches and the members of them, to continue believing in Christ, professing his name, striving for his Gospel, attending on his ordinances, and following him whithersoever he went; though this should expose them to sufferings, even unto death, which it became them cheerfully to undergo: and to which they are encouraged by what follows, *and I will give thee a crown of life*; which may refer not only to eternal life, which is so called, James i. 12. because of the glory of that state, and its everlasting continuance, and is in the possession and gift of Christ; but to the deliverance of the Christians from persecution, by Constantine; who coming to the imperial crown, that became not only a crown of glory to him, but of life to the church, and was as life from the dead unto the saints: to dead men is promised a crown of life, in allusion to the Gentiles, who crowned their dead^p.

Ver. 11. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, &c.*] See the note on ver. 7. *he that overcometh*; and is not intimidated by poverty, confiscation of goods, tribulation, persecution, and death itself, but through Christ is a conqueror, and more than a conqueror over all these things: *shall not be hurt of the second death*; by

^m Vid. Arrian. Epictet. l. 2. c. 9.

ⁿ Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

^o De Civitate Dei, l. 18. c. 52.

^p Vid. Minut. Felix, p. 43.

which is meant eternal death, in distinction from a corporeal and temporal one; and lies in a destruction of both body and soul in hell, and in an everlasting separation from God, and a continual sense of divine wrath; but of this the saints shall never be hurt, they are ordained to eternal life; this is secured for them in Christ, and he has it in his hands for them, and will give it to them. The phrase is Jewish, and is opposed to the first death, or the death of the body; which is the effect of sin, and is appointed of God, and which the people of God die as well as others; but the second death is peculiar to wicked men.—So the Jerusalem Targum on Deut. xxxiii. 6. paraphrases those words, *let Reuben live, and not die*, thus; “let Reuben live in this world, and not die בְּמִיתָתוֹ תְּנִינָה, *by the second death*,” with which the wicked die in the world to come.” Of which sense of the text and phrase Epiphanius makes mention³. See the same phrase in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, in Isa. xxii. 14, and lxx. 6, 15. and in Jer. li. 39, 57. and in Philo the Jew⁴.

Ver. 12. *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, &c.*] Of the city of Pergamos, see the note on ch. i. 11. In it was a church of Christ, but when it began, and how long it lasted, is not certain. Antipas, who is mentioned, ver. 13. is thought, by some, to have been the pastor of it. Though, according to the Apostolical Constitutions⁵, Caius was the first bishop of it; and it appears, that in the second century there were several in this place that suffered martyrdom for Christ, as Carpus, Papulus, and a woman whose name was Agathonice⁶. Attalus, the martyr, who suffered in the same century, was also a native of this place⁷. In the fifth century there was a bishop of Pergamos in the council at Ephesus; and in the sixth century, there was one in the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the seventh century, Theodorus, bishop of the church here, was in the sixth synod held at the same place; and in the eighth century one Pastilas was bishop of Pergamos; and in the same age, Basil, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod⁸; and the Christian name now is not wholly, though almost extinct; for when our countryman, Dr. Smith⁹, was there, there was a little church called St. Theodore's, whither a priest was frequently sent from Smyrna, to perform divine service, there being but a very few Christian families in it. This church represents the church from the time of Constantine, and onward, rising up to, and enjoying great power, riches, and honour. Pergamos signifies high and lofty; things that were sublime and lofty, were, by the Greeks, called τα υψηλα, and also all high and lofty towers¹⁰. It was built under a very high and steep mountain, upon the top of which a tower was erected, by the lords of the lesser Asia, which still continues¹¹. The church it represents had its principal seat at Rome, where Satan dwelt, ver. 13. which signifies exalted likewise; and it introduces the man of

sin, antichrist, the popes of Rome, who exalted themselves above all that is called God, princes, kings, and emperors; whom they excommunicated, dethroned, trod upon their necks, kicked off their crowns, and obliged them to hold their stirrups whilst they mounted their horses, with other haughty actions, too many to name. *These things, saith he, which hath the sharp sword with two edges*; of which see the note on ch. i. 16. This title is used partly to shew, that the only weapon this church, and the true ministers and members of it had, to defend themselves against the growing corruptions of antichrist, who in this interval rose up by degrees, and was revealed, and came to the height of his power, was the word of God, the Scriptures of truth; and partly to shew, that in process of time, though not in this period, the man of sin should be destroyed, with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; of which his fighting against the Nicolaitans, with the sword of his mouth, ver. 16. is an emblem.

Vcr. 13. *I know thy works, &c.*] Both good and bad, and which in that pure part of this church, which opposed the growing corruptions of antichrist, were for the most part good. *And where thou dwellest; even where Satan's seat is.* Pergamos was a city very much given to idolatry, here Satan reigned while it was Pagan, and so was a fit emblem of the idolatrous church of Rome. Pausanias says¹², the country the Pergamenes inhabited was sacred to the Cabiri, the chief gods of the Heathens. And the same writer¹³ observes, that Æsculapius particularly was worshipped at Pergamos; and hence he is called by Martial¹⁴ the Pergamean god; to his temple here, men used to go from different parts of the world for cure of diseases; hither Antoninus the emperor went for such a purpose, as Herodian¹⁵ relates; and this being a common thing, hence Lucian¹⁶ scoffingly says, that Æsculapius had an apothecary's shop at Pergamos. As Rome, and its dominions, were the principal seat of the church in this period of time, it may well be called Satan's seat or throne; not only because it had been the seat of the Roman emperors, the ten-horned and seven-headed beast, ch. xiii. 2. but because it was the seat of antichrist, which the great dragon Satan gave him, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and he was influenced by him; and who, like Satan, exalted himself above all that is called God; yea, placed himself in the temple of God, the church, as God, shewing himself to be God, assuming that power to himself which only belonged to God. Moreover, he may be called so for his enmity and malice against the saints, and for his art and subtlety, and insidious methods to ensnare and destroy them. Now to dwell where such an one has his seat, his throne, has a kingdom, power, and authority, must be very uncomfortable, as well as dangerous; and required great care, circumspection, and prudence how to behave: and

³ Contr. Hæres. Hæres. 9.

⁴ De Præmiis & Pœnis, p. 921.

⁵ L. 7. c. 46.

⁶ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

⁷ Ib. l. 5. c. 1.

⁸ Hist. Eccl. Magdeburgh. cent. 5. c. 8. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 9. p. 4. cent.

7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

⁹ Neititia, p. 120.

¹⁰ Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 1. p. 403. & l. 2. p. 633. Ed Basil. 1596.

¹¹ Smith. Notitia, p. 112.

¹² L. 1. sive Attica, p. 8.

¹³ L. 3. sive Laconica, p. 215.

¹⁴ L. 9. Epig. 14.

¹⁵ Hist. l. 4. c. 14.

¹⁶ In Icaro Menippo.

yet to the commendation of this church it is said, *and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith*: the pure members of this church are the two witnesses, which rose up at the beginning of the apostacy of Rome, and bore their testimony against it, and for the truth; and continued to do so amidst all the corruptions and persecutions of that state: these are the two olive-trees, that, through the golden pipes of the word and ordinances, emptied the golden oil of Gospel truths out of themselves, pure and incorrupt, and the two candlesticks that held forth the light of the Gospel in the darkest times of Popery; these held fast the name of Christ, or the Gospel, and denied not, but confessed the doctrine of faith in the worst of times. They had the truths of the Gospel in their possession, which were dear and valuable to them; and whereas there was danger of losing them, they held them fast, with great courage, magnanimity, and strength, though the greater number was against them, and they were attended with reproach and persecution: *even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth*. Antipas is the proper name of a man; so a son of Herod was called ^f, even he that beheaded John, and mocked Christ: and there might be a man of this name at Pergamus, that might suffer martyrdom for the Gospel of Christ; and who was an emblem of the confessors, witnesses, and martyrs, that suffered for Christ, in this period of time, through their opposition to the popes of Rome; for Antipas is the contraction of Antipater, and is the same with Antipapas, or Antipappas, which signifies one that is against the pope, an opposer of that holy father; and so intends all those that made head against him, upon his rising and revelation, and when he assumed the power he did to himself; such as the Waldenses and Albigenes particularly, who set themselves against him, openly declared that the pope was antichrist, and that his government was tyrannical, and his doctrines the doctrines of devils, abominable and fabulous. They bore a faithful testimony against all his corruptions and innovations, and became martyrs in the cause of Christ, many thousands of them being slain for his sake within the dominions of this first-born of Satan. The Alexandrian copy reads *Antepipas*; and his name is left out in the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 14. *But I have a few things against thee, &c.*] The members of this church before their open separation from the apostacy; who still continued in the communion of the corrupt church of Rome, though they remonstrated against the errors and evil practices that crept in; and so were a stumbling-block, and a snare to others to join in their idolatry and superstition: *because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication*: which latter was in order to the former: the instruction Balaam gave to Balak, which is here called his doctrine, was,

that Balak should get some of the most beautiful women in his kingdom to ply the men of Israel, and draw them into uncleanness, and so to idolatry; by which means, God being angry with them, he might get an advantage over them: that the Israelites did commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and eat things sacrificed to idols, and bowed down to Baal Peor, is certain, Numb. xxv. 1, 2, 3. but that this was brought about through the counsel of Balaam is not so plainly expressed, though it is hinted at in Numb. xxxi. 15, 16. but the Jewish writers are very express about this matter. Jonathan ben Uzziel, one of their Targumists on Numb. xxiv. 14. has these words of Balaam; "Come, and I will counsel thee, (speaking to Balak,) go and set up inns, and place in them whorish women, to sell food and drink at a low price: and this people will come and eat and drink, and be drunken, and will lie with them, and deny their God; and they will be quickly delivered into thine hands, and many of them shall fall." This now was the stumbling-block he taught Balak to lay before them. And elsewhere ^g it is said, "that Balaam, the wicked, gave counsel to Balak, the son of Zippor, to cause the Israelites to fall by the sword; he said to him, the God of this people hates whoredom, cause thy daughters to commit whoredom with them, and ye shall rule over them." And then they go on to relate how they built shops, and placed an old woman without, and a young woman within; and when the Israelites came to buy, how well they used them, and what familiarity they admitted them to; how they made them drink of Ammonitish wine, which inclined to lust; and when they signified their desire, obliged them to worship Baal Peor, and renounce the law of Moses. Both Philo ^h and Josephus ⁱ speak of this counsel of Balaam, much to the same purpose. The Samaritan Chronicle says ^k, that this counsel pleased the king, and he sent into the camp of Israel, on a sabbath-day, twenty-four thousand young women, by whom the Israelites were so seduced, that they did every thing they desired them, which was just the number of those that were slain, Numb. xxv. 9. By Balaam may be meant the pope of Rome, for that name signifies, *the lord of the people*; and is very apposite to him, who in this interval took upon him to be universal bishop, and lorded it over both church and state, in a most haughty and tyrannical manner; and the Balaamites were those who submitted to his power and authority, and received his doctrines; and by Balak, king of Moab, may be intended the secular powers, the emperors, kings, and princes of the earth, who were instructed by the popes of Rome, to draw their subjects into idolatry, which is spiritual fornication, to eat the bread of God, to worship the host, images, and saints departed; and which proved a snare, and a stumbling to some of this church, as to the Israelites of old, to do the same things.

Ver. 15. *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, &c.*] These impure heretics

^f Joseph. Antiqu. l. 17. c. 1. sect. 3. De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 28. sect. 4.
^g T. Hieros. Saulehrin, fol. 28. 4. & Bab. Saulehrin, fol. 106. 1.
^h Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 229. 1. Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 244. 3, 4. & par. 2. fol. 76. 4.

^h De Vita Moysis, l. 7. p. 647, 648.

ⁱ Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 6, 7, 8, 9.

^k Apud Hottinger. Exercit. Antimorin. p. 109.

sprung up in the time of the apostolic church, but their doctrines were not received, and their deeds were hated, see ver. 6. This seems to design the doctrines of the church of Rome, which in this period took place; which forbid marriage to the priests, and recommended celibacy and virginity to others also; which were the source of all uncleanness and abominable lusts; for which pardons and indulgences were given, and, in process of time, brothel-houses were set up, and licensed and encouraged by authority. *Which things I hate*; the doctrine of these men, as well as their deeds.

Ver. 16. *Repent, &c.*] This is said to those who were truly godly in those times, but still retained their communion with these corrupt men, and had not, as yet, separated from them; nor had they protested against these evil doctrines and practices, at least but very coldly, and had too much connived at them; and therefore are called upon to repent of their lukewarmness, negligence, and sinful compliances: *or else I will come unto thee quickly*: in a providential way, to rebuke and chastise for such remissness, indifference, and evil communication: *and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth*; of this sword see the note on ch. i. 16. And it is observable, that Christ does not say, *I will fight against thee*; the true members of his mystical body, though lax and supine, for Christ does not fight against his people, but for them; but he says, *and will fight against them*: the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, for their idolatry and uncleanness.

Ver. 17. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, &c.*] See the note on ver. 7. *To him that overcometh*; the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, and don't give in to the doctrines and practices of the one, or of the other, whatever persecution and trouble he meets with, and endures on that account: *will I give to eat of the hidden manna*; in opposition to eating things sacrificed to idols, refused by him. The allusion is to the manna which the Israelites ate of in the wilderness, which may be called *hidden*: either because they knew not what it was, when they first saw it; or because it was laid up in a golden pot, and put in the most holy place, where it was secret, and none but the high-priest could see it, and who entered there but once a year: or rather, because it was at first hidden under the dew; for according to the account the Jews give of it, a dew first fell upon the ground, then the manna upon that, and then another dew upon the manna; so that there was a dew under it, and a dew over it; inasmuch that it was as if it was laid up, they say, in a box or chest¹; and they supposed the manna had respect to things future², and do expect it in the times of the Messiah. They say³, as the first, so the last Redeemer will cause manna to descend from heaven; and the clouds are by them reckoned the mills which will grind manna for the righteous in the world to come⁴: yea, they speak⁵ of מַנְיָה סְתוּמָה, *hidden manna*, as the food of the righteous, the very phrase here used. Now

this being the food of the children of Israel in the wilderness, is very fitly mentioned here; since the church, in this period of time, in which antichrist arose, was obliged to flee into the wilderness, and there abide during his reign, and where she is nourished with this hidden manna; by which may be meant the Gospel, which is soul-quicken, comforting, strengthening, and satisfying food, by which the saints are nourished up unto everlasting life, and which is hid to the world, which the men of it know nothing of; and especially Jesus Christ, the sum and substance of it, may be meant, and that secret spiritual consolation enjoyed in communion with him, and by eating him, or feeding by faith upon him; in what respects Christ may be compared to manna, see the note on John vi. 32. And he may be said to be *hidden*, because he is unknown to men, until revealed; and is wholly hidden from carnal and unregenerate men, and is enjoyed only by believers; and it may denote the private way, in which the true church of Christ had communion with him in his word and ordinances in the wilderness, and during the dark times of Popery. Philo the Jew⁶ often interprets the manna by the *Logos*, the Word of God, the most ancient Word of God. *And will give him a white stone*. The phrase, *to add a white stone*, with the Latins, is used to give one's approbation of any thing; and could it be applied here, might signify the approbation Christ gives of his church and people here, amidst the testimonies they bear, and the persecutions they endure for his name's sake, and that which he will give of them before his father, angels, and men, at the last day: white stones were used on various accounts. The Grecians used them to mark good or lucky days with them, as they called them; and could the allusion be thought to be to this custom, the sense would be, that Christ promises, to his people that overcome, happy days, after the times of Popish darkness and persecution were over: white stones were also given to the conquerors in the Olympic games, with their names upon them, and the value of the prize they won; and, here applied, may respect the crown of life and glory given to them who are more than conquerors through Christ, with their right and title to it, and the excellency of it. The Romans in judgment used to give their suffrages for condemnation by casting black stones into the urn, and for absolution white stones; to which Ovid has respect, when he says⁷,

*Mos erat antiquis, niveis atrisque lapillis,
His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa.*

And this is thought by many to be referred to here, and may denote, that though the pure members of Christ, and who abhorred and protested against the abominations of the church of Rome, were charged with heresy and schism, and what not, yet Christ would absolve them, and justify them from all those charges. But rather the allusion is to a custom among

¹ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 75. 2. Jarchi in Exod. xvi. 13, 14. Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 30.

² Tzeror Hammor, fol. 38. 4.

³ Midrash Shirhashirim, fol. 11. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 32. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 65. 2. Pesikta in Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 75. 4.

⁴ Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 96. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 68. 4.

⁵ Zohar in Numb. fol. 88. 1.

⁶ Alleg. l. 2. p. 93. Quod det. potior. p. 176. Quis rer. diviu. Hares. p. 491, 492. & Leg. Alleg. l. 3. p. 1103.

⁷ Metamorphos. l. 15. fol. 1.

the Jews, who used to examine the priests and Levites before they went to their service, or to the sanhedrim, to judge and pass sentence, whether their ways and works were right; and if they were as they should be, they gave them *דמקורשן דמורא*, *the stone of the sanctuary*: if not, they might not enter on business, as it is said; and of Levi he said, *thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy holy one*, Deut. xxxiii. 8¹. Now on the Urim and Thummim, the stones in the high-priest's breast-plate, were engraven the names of the children of Israel; and, as the Jews say, the name Jehovah, to which reference may be had in the following clause; and may denote that the church, though in the wilderness, is regarded by Christ, is bore upon his heart and cared for by him; and also its spotless purity in him, and justification by him. *And in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it*; by this name may be meant, either the name of *Jehovah* our righteousness, which is the name both of Christ, and of his church, Jer. xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. or the name of a child of God, sometimes called a new name; see Isa. lvi. 5. and lxii. 2. and so designs the blessing of adoption; this may be said to be a new name, because renewed, manifested to, and put upon the people of God, when they are made new creatures, though provided in predestination, and in the covenant of grace from eternity; and because a renowned and excellent one, better than that of the sons and daughters of the greatest prince on earth; and because a wonderful one, being an instance of amazing love and grace; and is what *no man knoweth*, but the receiver of it; the Father of these adopted ones is unknown to natural men; and so is Christ, through whom this blessing is bestowed; and the Spirit of God also, who witnesses to it; and the persons that enjoy it, and the blessing itself, and the inheritance to which they are adopted: and this new name being on the white stone, may shew that the blessings of justification and adoption, though they are two distinct ones, yet they are inseparable: they go together, and both give a right to the heavenly inheritance; and they are also, as well as the hidden manna, gifts of free grace, and not owing to the works and merit of men, and are given by Christ, and in and through him. At Rome, some white stones have been dug up, some lesser, some greater, with names and letters, and other engravings upon them, which Pignorius¹ has given the figures of; and to such some have thought the allusion here is, and may serve to illustrate this passage. The Ethiopic version, instead of a *white stone*, reads, a *famous book*.

Ver. 18. *And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write, &c.*] Of the city of Thyatira, see the note on ch. i. 11. a church was formed here very likely by the Apostle Paul; Lydia was a native of this place, who, and her household, were converted and baptized by him at Philippi, Acts xvi. 14. though Epiphanius² seems to grant, what some heretics objected to the authority of this book, that there was no church at Thyatira when this letter was written; however, it is cer-

tain, there was one in the *second* century, as the same writer observes, since, as he relates, it was overrun with the Cataphrygian heresy; and in the *fourth* century there was a bishop from Thyatira in the council of Nice; and even in the *eighth* century there was one Esaias a presbyter, who supplied the place of the bishop of Thyatira in another council at Nice³: the Turks have now eight mosques in it, but there is not one Christian church or place of worship to be found in it⁴. Who was the angel, or pastor of this church at the writing of this epistle, is not certain; however, it is designed for all the ministers and churches in the interval this church represents; and this period takes in the darkest and most superstitious times of Popery, until the Reformation. Thyatira is the same as Thygatura, which signifies a *daughter*; and it had its name, as Stephanus Byzantius says⁵, from hence: Seleucus, the son of Nicanor, being at war with Lysimachus, and hearing that he had a daughter born, called this city Thygatura, which was before called Pelopia, and Semiramis; which is a very fit name for this church, and expresses the effeminacy of it, when the virgin Mary, whom the Romanists call the daughter of God, was more worshipped than her son; and was not only made a partner with him in the business of salvation, but even set above him; when there were such swarms of monks and friars, and religious orders of several sorts, as Franciscans and Dominicans, who claimed her as their patroness; when such numbers of them clad themselves in cowls and long garments, that they looked more like women in hoods and petticoats, than really men; hence also the corrupt part of this church is signified by the woman Jezabel, the daughter of Ethbaal the Zidonian; and it should not be forgot that there was once a she pope, a woman that sat in the papal chair, a whore in a literal sense; wherefore antichrist, or the popes of Rome, are fitly called the great whore, the mother of harlots. Mr. Daubuz observes, that the first Christian of Thyatira was a woman, and that the false prophets which first enticed the Christians to apostacy in this church were women, as Maximilla, Quintilla, and Priscilla; to which I would add, that according to Epiphanius, that among those heretics, and which swallowed up this church, their bishops were women, and so were their presbyters, or elders; and Dr. Smith² is of opinion, that the inhabitants of this place, when Heathen, were worshippers of the goddess Diana; so that, upon all accounts, the church here was a fit symbol of the effeminate church of Rome. *These things saith the son of God*: he who is truly, properly, naturally, and essentially the son of God: this character Christ makes use of to assert his proper deity, as being of the same nature, and having the same perfections with his Father, as well as to command the greater regard to what he ordered to be written to the churches; and chiefly in opposition to the effeminate state of this church; it was time for him to take to him his highest name, as expressive of his highest nature, and to assert himself the son of God, when Mary, his mother according to the flesh, and

¹ Zohar in Lev. fol. 8. 1.

² De Servis, p. 342.

³ Contra Hæres. l. 2. Hæres. 51.

⁴ Eccl. Hist. Magdeburgh. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

⁵ Smith. Notitia, p. 130.

² De Urbibus.

³ Notitia, p. 126.

who was but a mere creature, was called the daughter of God, and set upon a level with him, and even preferred unto him: *who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire*; quick and sharp, and penetrating through the darkness of this state; seeing into, discovering, and exposing the horrid actions and wickednesses of men done in the dark; expressing fury, wrath, and vengeance against the Romish antichrist and his followers; and may also design the light of Gospel doctrine, which broke out in those times at certain seasons, to the dispelling of Popish darkness in some measure; see the note on ch. i. 14. *and his feet are like fine brass*; in the description of Christ in ch. i. 14. it is added, *as if they burned in a furnace*; see the note there; and may denote the strength, stability, and support Christ gave his people while suffering for his sake, when in the furnace and burning for him, which kind of death was much used in those times: hence Dr. More, to whom I am much obliged for many hints in this exposition of the epistles to the churches, thinks that Thyatira is an allusion to *ἑσθία*, which signify *altars* for the burning of sweet odours; and so may be expressive of the burning of the saints, those sweet odours, as they are to God and Christ, with fire and faggot; which was now practised, as in the other period killing with the sword was chiefly used; in the midst of which Christ was present, supporting his people.

Ver. 19. *I know thy works, &c.*] Good works, as appears from the particular enumeration of them afterwards, and the commendation of proficiency in them, the last being more than the first, and the distinction from the evil ones in the next verse; this is said to the faithful followers and professors of Christ in this interval: *and charity*; by which is meant not a relieving the wants of the poor; much less such a charity as connives at the errors and heresies of men; but the divine grace of love to God and Christ, and the saints, without which a profession of religion is a vain thing; and, generally speaking, this grace is most in exercise in a time of trouble and persecution: *and service*; or *ministry*, meaning either the ministry of the word, which was exercised by many with great zeal, diligence, and faithfulness, as by Wickliff, John Huss, Jerom of Prague, and others; or the ministering to the necessities of the poor saints, as an evidence of their charity or love; or else the service of God is here intended, which is but reasonable, and is his due, and ought to be performed to him only, and that with fear and fervency, in faith, and with a pure conscience, with humility, and without mercenary views, and in righteousness and true holiness; or the service of love which the saints perform to one another, as praying for one another, bearing one another's burdens, admonishing and reproving for sin, restoring such as are gone astray, comforting the distressed, building up one another in their most holy faith, and exhorting and stirring up each other to the duties of religion: *and faith*; not the doctrine of faith, as preached by the ministers of the word, and held and maintained by the true professors of it; but either the grace of faith, or the profession of both; or rather the faithfulness, both of the ministers and private believers of

those times, as the Waldenses and Albigenses, the Lollards and Wickliffites, who abode by, and were faithful to the light which they had received: *and thy patience*; in suffering for the sake of Christ and the Gospel: and very much it was they did endure, and yet held out to the end: *and thy works, and the last to be more than the first*; that is, that their works or acts of love to God and Christ and one another, and of service to God and to the saints, and of faith and faithfulness in the cause of God, and of patience in suffering for the Gospel of Christ, were more in quantity, and greater in quality, toward the close of this period, which brought on the Reformation, than at the beginning of it; and which were done by the persons before mentioned, and by others.

Ver. 20. *Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, &c.*] By way of complaint; so the Arabic version renders it, *I have a certain complaint against thee*. The impartiality of Christ may be observed in taking notice of the bad deeds, as well as of the good ones of his people, and his tenderness in representing them as few; and these things he had against them not in a judicial way to their condemnation, but in a providential way, in order to chastise them for them, for their good; and they are as follow: *because thou sufferest that woman Jezabel*; or *thy wife Jezabel*, as the Complutensian edition and Syriac version read; the name of King Ahab's wife, who seduced him, in the Hebrew language is *Izebel*, but is read by the Septuagint in 1 Kings xvii. 31. *Jezabel*, as here; and by Josephus *Jezabela*; she had her name from *זבל*, *Zebel*, *dung*, to which Elijah has reference in 2 Kings ix. 37. the Ethiopic version calls her *Elzabel*. By her is meant the apostate church of Rome, comparable to Jezabel, the wife of Ahab; as she was the daughter of an Heathen, so is Rome Papal the daughter of Rome Pagan; and as she was the wife of Ahab, and therefore a queen, so the whore of Babylon calls herself; and as Jezabel was famous for her paintings, so the church of Rome for her pretensions to religion and holiness, and for the gaudiness of her worship; and as she was remarkable for her idolatry, whoredoms, witchcrafts, and cruel persecution of the prophets of the Lord, and for murder, and innocent blood she shed; so the church of Rome, for her idolatrous worship of images, for her whoredoms, both in a literal and spiritual sense, and for the witchcrafts, magic, and devilish arts many of her popes have been addicted to, and especially for her barbarities and cruelties exercised upon the true professors of Christ, and for the blood of the martyrs, with which she has been drunk; and as Jezabel stirred up Ahab against good and faithful men, so has this church stirred up the secular powers, emperors, kings, and princes, against the true followers of Christ: and the end of both of them is much alike; as scarce any thing was left of Jezabel, so Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, shall be cast into the sea, and be found no more at all: compare 2 Kings ix. 7, 22, 30, 31, 33, 37. with Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 17, 18. and xviii. 3, 7, 21, 23. *which calleth herself a prophetess*; as perhaps Jezabel might do, since she was such a favourer of the prophets of Baal, and so fa-

miliarly conversed with them, and kept them, even a hundred of them, at her table: and certain it is, that the antitype of her pretends to an infallible interpretation of the Scriptures, and to have a bulk of unwritten traditions; and which interpretations and traditions are to be regarded as an infallible rule of faith and practice. Now what is complained of in the true members and followers of Christ is, that they suffered this woman to *teach*: when it was insufferable for a woman to teach, and especially such a strumpet: *and to seduce my servants to commit fornication*: to deceive such who called themselves the servants of Christ, and draw them into the commission of spiritual fornication, which is idolatry; as the idolatrous worship of the Mass, and of images and saints departed: *and to eat things sacrificed unto idols*: as Balaam, or the pope, before had done, ver. 14. This may have respect to the latter part of this period, when the eyes of many began to be opened to see these false doctrines and idolatrous practices, and yet had not courage enough to oppose them as they should.

Ver. 21. *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, &c.*] Or idolatry. This may have respect to the time of the witnesses, the Waldenses, and others, who bore a testimony against the Romish idolatry, and reprov'd for it, and denounced the judgment of God in case of impenitence; and as these things were repeated time after time, this may be called a space given to repent in; just as Jezabel had a space given her to repent in, from the time that Elijah declared the word of the Lord, that the dogs should eat her: so the Jews^b say of the old world, that God gave them *זמן לשוב*, *space to repent*, but they repented not, as here: *and she repented not*; see ch. ix. 20, 21. for the time for, *and* means leading to repentance may be given, yet if the grace of repentance itself is not given, men, either particular persons, or whole bodies of men, will never repent of their sins. The Alexandrian copy, Complutensian, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *and she would not repent*.

Ver. 22. *Behold, I will cast her into a bed, &c.*] Of sickness and languishing; and which denotes the sickly, pining, and languishing state of the church of Rome, as a just retaliation for her bed of luxury and deliciousness, adultery and idolatry, she had indulged herself in; this was threatened, and was yet to come, and began at the time of the Reformation, signified by the next church-state; and, ever since, the whore of Rome has been visibly sickening and decaying. The Alexandrian copy reads, *into a prison: and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation*; the kings of the earth, and their subjects, who have joined in the idolatries and corruptions of the Romish church, ch. xvii. 2. and xviii. 3. which may be understood either of that distress and uneasiness the Reformation in some countries gave them; or those outward troubles, wars, and desolations they have been since attended with, particularly the empire of Germany; which has been in great tribulation, formerly by the Turks, and of late by intestine broils among themselves, and by the armies of other princes entering into it; or it may regard that eternal vengeance that

will be recompensed to all such persons; *except they repent of their deeds*; their spiritual fornication or idolatry, and all the abominations the members of that apostate church are guilty of. There seems to be an allusion in this verse to Ahaziah and Joram, sons of Ahab and Jezabel, who followed their mother's idolatrous practices, and were cast upon a bed of sickness, 2 Kings i. 2. and viii. 29.

Ver. 23. *And I will kill her children with death, &c.*] Her popes, cardinals, priests, Jesuits, monks, friars, and all that join in the Romish apostacy, they shall be killed with death; there shall be an utter extirpation of them in God's own time; or they shall be killed with the second death: *מיתתה*, when used alone, or as distinct from any other kind of death, signifies the plague; compare with this 2 Kings ix. 24. and x. 1, 7. *and all the churches*: that shall be in being at the time of Rome's destruction: *shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and heart*; or am the omniscient God; which will be known by inflicting punishment on the followers of antichrist; when their hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, and exposed by him; and they shall receive the righteous reward of their evil practices, which they have coloured over, and glossed with specious pretences of religion and holiness, and a zeal for God and his glory, when they only meant themselves, the gratifying their carnal lusts, and securing their worldly interests, and amassing riches and honours to themselves: *and I will give unto every one of you according to your works*; who have connived at, and joined with them in their evil deeds; as many as were seduced by the false prophetess to commit spiritual fornication with her: as Christ is omniscient, and does not judge according to the outward appearance of things, but knows the principles and ends of all actions, however covert they may be; so he is righteous in judging and in punishing, which will be according as men's works are; and not one shall escape his righteous judgment, nor the due desert of their sins, though the punishment of some may be greater than that of others.

Ver. 24. *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, &c.*] The copulative *and* is left out in the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition, and if retained, it may be rendered thus, *even unto the rest*; the persons spoken to are the same, the pastor of this church, with his colleagues, and all the rest of the faithful in it; which shews that this epistle, and so the rest, were not written to the pastors only, but to the churches; and that the pastor and his colleagues, with others, were free from the abominable errors and corruptions before spoken of; and that, in the worst of times, God does, and will reserve a people for himself, who are described as follows: *as many as have not this doctrine*: who had not given into, and embraced this doctrine of the antichristian church of Rome, concerning infallibility, the worshipping of images, transubstantiation, &c. the Arabic version reads, *this new doctrine*: for notwithstanding the large pretensions of the Romish church to antiquity, her doctrine is but a novel doctrine: *and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak*; that is, had not

^b Juchasin, fol. 7. 1.

approved of the doctrines of antichrist, which though his followers called deep things and mysteries of their holy religion, such as transubstantiation, &c. yet, to speak in the language of the pure and faithful professors of the Gospel, they are no other than the depths of Satan, or doctrines of devils; or else the sense is, as Jezabel and her followers say, to the contempt of the faithful, arrogating knowledge to themselves, and upbraiding them with simplicity and ignorance, as not knowing Satan's devices, nor how to rescue souls out of them, as they did; but the former sense seems best: *I will put upon you none other burden*; meaning not any affliction or tribulation than the present one; nor any other errors and heresies than what were broached; but no other precept or command than what follows; see 2 Kings ix. 25.

Ver. 25. *But that which ye have already, &c.*] Which was something good, even the faithful word, the form of sound words, the mystery and doctrine of faith; this they had received from Christ and his apostles; they had it in their hearts, and a comfortable experience of the truth and power of it, and had made a profession of it, which they now held, and are here exhorted to hold fast: *hold fast till I come*; meaning the coming of Christ, either at the Reformation by Luther, Calvin, and others, which began at the close of this church-state, when the hands and hearts of those professors would be more strengthened, which seems to be the first sense of the words; or to judge Jezabel, destroy antichrist, which will be by the brightness of his coming; till which time the doctrine of the Gospel is to be held fast: and such an exhortation will be always necessary, since, till then, there will be always more or less an opposition to it, and attempts made to wrest it out of the hands of its professors, to cause them to hesitate about it, and to intimidate them in the profession of it, by loading them with reproaches, calumnies, and persecution.

Ver. 26. *And he that overcometh, &c.*] Jezabel and her idolatries, her children, and all that commit adultery with her; such as are not drawn into the same evil practices with them, but bravely stand their ground against the Romish antichrist and his followers, and bear their testimony against his impious doctrines and idolatrous practices: *and keepeth my works unto the end*; either of life, or of this church-state, or of time, when Christ will personally appear, even at the end of the world; and by his works are meant, not the works which were done by him, as his miracles and works of mercy to the souls and bodies of men, and works of righteousness in obedience to the law, and the work of redemption and salvation; though these are works to be observed, and kept in view, and to be preserved in memory, and for the encouragement of faith and hope; but the works which are commanded, and required by Christ to be done by his people; as the public work of the ministry, by the preachers of the Gospel; and every private work, both internal and external, as the work of faith, the labour of love, and every act of obedience, which is constantly to be discharged. The Arabic version reads, *and keepeth my words and my works*; things both relating to doctrine and practice: *to him will I give power over the nations*;

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or Gentiles, the Papists; so called because of the Pagan notions and worship introduced by them; and because they consist of many nations, tongues, and people, who are deceived, and drawn into idolatry by them: and this power over them may be understood in a spiritual sense, through the preaching of the Gospel, which being attended with the power of God, is the means of converting sinners, and so of weakening the kingdom of Satan, and of antichrist; and which had its fulfilment, at least in part, at the time of the Reformation, and onward, and will have still a greater accomplishment in the spiritual reign of Christ and his people, under the Philadelphian church-state; and it may also design the temporal power which the saints shall have over antichrist, when they shall take away his dominion, and consume and destroy it, and the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the most High; Dan. vii. 25, 26, 27.

Ver. 27. *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, &c.*] Either with the Gospel, which is the rod of Christ's strength, and is the power of God unto salvation, and by which the kingdom of Christ is enlarged, and the power of the church of Christ over the antichristian party is increased; or it may design great strictness and severity, with which the man of sin will be used by the saints of the most High, when they shall take away his dominion from him: *as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers*; which may be expressive either of the breaking of rocky hearts in pieces at conversion, and of making souls humble and contrite; or of the irreparable ruin and destruction of antichrist, when the saints shall consume and destroy him: *even as I received of my father*; Christ, as God, has an undervived power and government; but, as Mediator, his rule and power over the nations are asked by him, given to him, and received by him, Psal. ii. 8, 9. This *as* does not intend equality, but similitude; and denotes the participation the saints will have with Christ in the judgment and destruction of antichrist, and in his kingdom and power.

Ver. 28. *And I will give him the morning-star.*] So Christ is called, ch. xxii. 16. and here it designs an illustrious appearance of Christ at the close of this church-state, and a communication of much light and grace from him, which introduced the Sardian church-state, or the reformation by Luther, Calvin, &c. which is the phosphorus, or morning-star, to the spiritual reign of Christ under the Philadelphian church-state; which will be the bright, clear, day of the Gospel, when the present twilight, which is between the appearance of the morning-star and that glorious day, will be removed: for by this morning-star is not meant the glory that shall be put upon the bodies of the saints in the resurrection-morn; nor the heavenly glory itself, or the hope of it; but the dawning of the latter-day glory, which began at the Reformation, and is promised the faithful professors in the Thyatirian church-state, who lived in the darkness of Popery.

Ver. 29. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, &c.*] See the note on ver. 7.

C H A P. III.

THIS chapter contains the epistles to the churches at Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, and begins with that to Sardis; in which the sender describes himself by some things taken out of a former description of him; and gives an account of the state of this church; that her works were known by him, which were imperfect; and that she had the name of a living church, but was dead; wherefore she is exhorted to watchfulness and diligence, to remember how she had heard and received the Gospel, and to hold it fast, and repent of her sins: if not, he threatens to come as a thief unawares upon her, ver. 1, 2, 3. but excepts some few persons from this general account, who were not defiled with the corruptions of the majority, and who therefore should be favoured with communion with him, ver. 4. and then some gracious promises are made to persevering saints, and the epistle is concluded in the usual form, ver. 5, 6. Next follows the epistle to the church at Philadelphia; in which the sender assumes some peculiar titles not before mentioned, taken from his holiness, truth, and power, ver. 7. signifies his approbation of her works; declares he had set before her an open door, which could not be shut; affirms she had a little strength, and commends her for keeping his word, ver. 8. and, for her encouragement, promises that some persons, formerly of bad characters, should come and worship before her, and should know what an interest she had in his love; and that since she had kept his word, he would keep her from an hour of temptation, which will be a trying time to all the world, ver. 9, 10. and in consideration of his speedy coming, he exhorts her to hold fast what she had, that she might not lose her honour and glory; and promises the overcomer a fixed place and name in the house of God; and closes the epistle as the rest, ver. 11, 12, 13. and then follows the last epistle of all, which is that to the church at Laodicea; in which the sender describes himself by some characters taken from his truth and faithfulness, and from his eternity, power, and dominion, ver. 14. represents the members of this church as lukewarm, and very disagreeable to him, ver. 15, 16. and as having a vain opinion of themselves, being ignorant of their real state and case, ver. 17. wherefore he gives them some wholesome counsel and advice, suitable to their condition, ver. 18. and whereas there were some among them he loved, he lets them know that his rebukes and chastenings were from love, and with a view to stimulate them to zeal, and bring them to repentance, which became them, ver. 19. and then he informs them where he was, what he expected from them, and what they might upon a suitable behaviour enjoy with him, ver. 20. and next promises to the overcomer great honour and glory, such as he had

with his father; and concludes the epistle in his usual manner, ver. 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write, &c.*] Of the city of Sardis see the note on ch. i. 11. when, and by whom this church was founded, and who was the present angel or pastor of it, is not now to be certainly known; however, here was a church in the second century, of which Melito was then pastor; and he is thought by some to be the angel here intended; this man wrote upon the book of the Revelation, and an apology for the Christians, sent to the Emperor Antoninus Verus, in whose time he lived^e; and in the third century a church remained in this place; and also in the fourth, as appears from the council of Nice, which makes mention of it; and likewise in the fifth, as is evident from the acts of the synod at Chalcedon, in which age it was the metropolitan church of the Lydians; and in the sixth century there was a bishop of this church in the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the seventh century, Marinus bishop of Sardis assisted at the sixth synod in the same place; and in the eighth century, Euthymius bishop of it was present in the Nicene synod; and even in the ninth century mention is made of an archbishop of Sardis^d: but now there are but very few Christians to be found here, and who have not a place to worship in, nor any to minister to them^e. This church represents the state of the church from the time of the Reformation by Luther and others, until a more glorious state of the church appears, or until the spiritual reign of Christ in the Philadelphian period; under the Sardinian church-state we now are: that this church is an emblem of the reformed churches from Popery, is evident not only from its following the Thyatirian state, which expresses the darkness of Popery, and the depths of Satan in it; but from its being clear of Balaam, and those that held his doctrine; and from the Nicolaitans and their tenets, and from Jezabel, and those that committed adultery with her; things which the two former churches are charged with; but from these the present church reformed. This city of Sardis was once a very flourishing and opulent city; it was the metropolis of Lydia, and the royal seat of the rich King Cræsus, though now a very poor and mean village; and may denote the magnificence and splendour of this church-state, at least in name and figure, it has appeared in, in the world; though now in a very low and mean condition, and may be worse before the spiritual reign of Christ begins in the next period: there may be some allusion in the name of this church to the precious stone *sarda*, which, Pliny says^f, was found about Sardis, and had its name from hence; the same with the Sardinian stone in Rev. iv. 2. and xxi. 20. This stone, na-

^e Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 13. 26. & l. 5. c. 24.

^d Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 2. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 9. c. 3. p. 3.

^e Smith. Notitia, p. 138.

^f Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 7. Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17.

turalists say ⁵, drives away fear, gives boldness, cheerfulness, and sharpness of wit, and frees from witchcrafts and sorceries; which may be expressive of the boldness and courage of the first reformers; of the cheerfulness, joy, and pleasure, which appeared in their countenances, and which they spread in others by preaching the doctrines of the Gospel; and of those excellent gifts and talents both of nature, learning, and grace, by which they were fitted for their service; and of their being a means of delivering men from the witchcrafts of Jezabel, and the sorceries of the whore of Rome: and perhaps some allusion may be in this name, as is thought by Cocceius, to the Hebrew word שריר, *sarid*, which signifies a *remnant*, since in this church-state there was a remnant according to the election of grace, a few names, whose garments were undefiled; or to the word שרר, *sered*, which signifies a carpenter's rule or line; since the first reformers were endeavouring to bring every doctrine and practice to the rule and line of God's word: *these things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God*; the fullness and perfection of the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, as in ch. i. 4. which Christ, as Mediator, has without measure, and are at his dispose, and which he, having received for men, gives unto them; and at the time of the Reformation bestowed them on many eminent servants of his in a very plenteous manner; for which reason he assumes this character in writing to this church: and *the seven stars*; the ministers of the Gospel; see the notes on ch. i. 16. and ii. 1. these were filled by Christ at this time with evangelical light and knowledge; and were sent, and held forth by him as lights in the world; and were instruments in his hand for great good; and were wonderfully held, kept, and preserved by him, notwithstanding the greatness of their work, their weakness in themselves, and the power, rage, and fury of the antichristian party; Luther is a remarkable instance of this: Christ's making use of the same title here as in the epistle to the church at Ephesus, which represents the apostolic church, may shew that this church-state bore some degree of likeness to that, and that it was a sort of renewing of it: *I know thy works*; good works chiefly; the nature and imperfection of them; and also bad works: *that thou hast a name that thou livest*; the reformed churches have had a name for spiritual living, by faith on Christ's righteousness only for justification, that article being the great article of the Reformation: there was in them an appearance of liveliness, by their zeal for Gospel doctrine and worship, and a form of living according to godliness; they were esteemed, were celebrated, and famous for these things, especially for living by faith on Christ's righteousness: *and art dead*; or *but art dead*; for, the most part, or greater part of the members of these churches, are dead in trespasses and sins; and as for the rest, they are very dead and lifeless in their frames, in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duties; and under great spiritual declensions and decays, just as it were ready to die; and but few really alive in a spiritual sense, and especially lively, or in the lively exercise of grace, and fervent discharge of duty; yea,

dead as to those things in which they had a name to live: and this seems to be our case now, who, it is to be hoped, are at, or towards the close of this period.

Ver. 2. *Be watchful, &c.*] Which may respect both ministers and members: the ministers of the Gospel, whose business is to watch over themselves, their conversation and doctrine, and watch every opportunity to preach it, and the success of their ministry; and that they do not grow careless, or be drawn aside through frowns or flatteries; and over others, as shepherds do, to know the state of their flock; as watchmen of cities to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger; and to see that the laws of Christ's house are put in execution: and this may also respect the members of these churches, who ought to be watchful, and constant attenders on the word and ordinances, and in the duty of prayer; and should watch over themselves, their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, and actions, and against sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers: or *be awake*; which shews that both ministers and churches are asleep, or much inclined to it; which is the present case of both in this period of time: *and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*; not good works; though these may be said to be ready to die when men grow weary of them, are lifeless in the performance of them, and want zeal for them; and may be said to be strengthened when men do their first works: nor the graces of the spirit; for the whole work of grace remains, and though it is imperfect, yet no part is, or can be taken away from it; yea, there is an increase of it, though it may not be discerned; the work of grace cannot die, or be ready to die; there may be a decline as to the exercise of it, and a want of liveliness in it; and things may be ready to die in appearance, and in the apprehension of believers, but not in reality; and besides it is God's work, and not man's, to strengthen this: therefore they may intend the truths of the Gospel, which at the beginning of the Reformation were revived, and were preached with great life and liveliness; but towards the close of this state, as now, would be just ready to expire, to be almost lost, and dead, and buried, as they are; and which it becomes both ministers and members of churches to hold, and hold up, establish, and confirm: or else the rest of the members of this church may be meant, those of them that remained, that were not wholly sunk and apostatized; and yet were in a very faint and sickly state, scarce any life in them, ready to give up their religion and profession; which should be strengthened, by preaching the pure Gospel, by faithfully administering the ordinances of it, and by speaking comfortable and encouraging words to them. The Complutensian edition and some copies read, *which thou art about to lose*; which seems a good reading; and the Arabic version, and some other copies, *which thou art going to reject*: for *I have not found thy works perfect before God*; meaning that the reformers, and reformed churches, stuck where they first began; and did not carry their works neither with respect to doctrine, and especially with respect to discipline and worship, to a greater perfection, as they ought to have done:

⁵ Ruæus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 6. Albert. Magn. de Rebus Metall. l. 2. c. 17. Schroder. Pharmacopœia, l. 3. c. 5. p. 18.

and however perfect they might appear before men, they were not so in the sight of the omniscient God, nor found so by Christ, before whom all things are naked and open: the Arabic version reads, *before me*; and the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *before my God*. This church, though she has departed from the corrupt church of Rome, and from her evil doctrines and practices; yet did not go on to that perfection which might have been expected and desired, and which would have rendered her praiseworthy, whereas she is now discommended. It is an observation of a Jewish writer^b, that "if one departs from an evil way, and does not do that which is good, he does not *מעשהו כמשלו*, *make his work perfect*, and he is not pronounced blessed."

Ver. 3. *Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, &c.*] That is, hast received upon hearing; for hearing goes first, and then receiving: the design of the advice is to put this church in mind of the doctrines of grace she had heard at the beginning of the Reformation, from Luther and others; such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon through his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, doctrines now almost lost and buried in forgetfulness; wherefore Christ would have her remember these things; how that she heard them with attention, reverence, humility, and without prejudice; and with much affection, so as to approve and love them, believe them, feel the power of them, and taste the goodness in them; and how she received them with all meekness, readiness, and joy, when now they are greatly disliked and rejected by many; very few attend to the doctrines of the Reformation. This is exactly our case: *and hold fast*: the above doctrines, though the majority is against them, and learned men despise them, and they are charged with enthusiasm and licentiousness. It looks as if there was danger, as there is, that they would be entirely wrested out of her hands: *and repent*; of her deadness, coldness, and indifference to these truths; of her unwatchfulness over them, and imperfection in them; not carrying truth to its fullness and perfection, resting in her first light and knowledge, and even going back from that: *if therefore thou shalt not watch*: and preserve truth, and hold fast the form of sound words, and keep to the order, as well as the faith of the Gospel, and constantly attend divine worship, and look for the coming and kingdom of Christ: *I will come on thee as a thief*; in the night, and at unawares, unthought of, and unexpected; which must be understood of coming to her in a way of rebuke and chastisement, by bringing some affliction, or suffering some sore distress to fall upon her: the phrase, *on thee*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy and in the Ethiopic version: *and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee*; which, though applicable to the spiritual coming of Christ in the next church-state, and to his second coming in his kingdom and glory, which will be both sudden and unexpected, yet these will be to the joy and comfort of the church; whereas what is here spoken is by way of threatening, and must relate to some severe dispensation on her;

and which we might now justly expect, were we not in the unwatchful, unthoughtful, and ignorant situation here described.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *but thou hast a few names, &c. or a few men*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; who were called by name, and were men of renown, excellent men, men famous for holding the truth of doctrine, and for powerful and practical godliness; men of great light and grace, and who were known by name to God and Christ: these are said to be but *few*, not in comparison of the world, in which sense all the elect of God are but few, though a large number, considered in themselves; but in comparison of formal lifeless professors of religion, with which this church-state abounds; and which, if we were not as dead as we are, might easily be observed; there may not only be hypocrites in churches, but a majority of them: yea, these few may be understood in comparison of the greater number of true believers; for in this period of the church there are but few, even of them, that are lively, zealous, and careful, and are heartily concerned for the purity of doctrine, discipline, worship, and conversation; and a few there are, blessed be God, even in this our Sardinian church-state. God will have a few in whom he will be glorified in the most declining times; and the Lord knows and takes notice of these few; and for their sake the church-state is kept up, the Gospel and its ordinances are continued; nor is a church to be judged of by the number of its members, nor is a multitude to be followed to do evil. *Which have not defiled their garments*; the Ethiopic version adds, *with a woman*, the woman Jezabel. They were not guilty either of corporeal or spiritual fornication, which is idolatry; they kept their outward conversation-garments pure, and maintained a profession of Christ and his truths incorrupt; they did not defile it by an unbecoming walk, or by a denial of Christ and a departure from him, and by embracing false doctrines; they were neither erroneous in their principles, nor immoral in their practices; few there are indeed of this sort. *Defiled garments*, in either sense, very ill become members of the reformed churches. Among the Jews^c, if a priest's garments were spotted or defiled, he might not minister; if he did, his service was rejected. *And they shall walk with me in white*; there is a walking in Christ by faith; and a walking before him as in his sight; and a walking worthy of him, in all well-pleasing in his ways and ordinances; and here a walking with him, in a way of special and comfortable communion, both here and hereafter: and this is *in white*; in white raiment, meaning either in the robe of his own righteousness, compared to fine linen and white; or in the shining robes of immortality and glory; and may be expressive of that spiritual joy which such shall be partakers of, as well as of their spotless purity and innocence in the other world. White raiment was used among the Romans as a token of joy at festivals, and on birth-days, and at weddings, and such-like times.

^b R. David Kimchi in Psal. i. 2.

^c T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 35. 1.

For they are worthy; not of themselves, or through any works of righteousness done by them, which are neither meritorious of grace here, nor of glory hereafter; but through the grace of God, and worthiness of Christ. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this^k; "they that walk with God in their life-time, וְיוֹכִים, are worthy to walk with him after their "death;" see 2 Esdras ii. 40. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 5. *He that overcometh, &c.*] The deadness, formality, and imperfection of this church-state; gets over these things, and is among the few names in it: *the same shall be clothed in white raiment*; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, *thus shall he be clothed in white raiment*; he shall have abundance of spiritual peace and joy, great success and prosperity, both inward and outward, in himself, and in the church; and triumph over all his enemies, sin, Satan, the world, death, and every other enemy; and not only be clothed with change of raiment, the pure and spotless righteousness of Christ, but shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness: the allusion seems to be to the custom of the Jewish sanhedrim in judging of priests fit for service^l; "they examined the priests concerning their genealogies and blemishes; every priest in whom was found any thing faulty in his genealogy, he was clothed in black and veiled in black, and went out of the court; but every one that was found perfect and right, לְיוֹשֵׁב לְבָנִים, he was clothed in white, and went in and ministered with his brethren the priests." *And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life*; by which is meant the choice of persons to everlasting life and salvation; and this being signified by a book, and by writing names in it, shews the exact knowledge God has of his elect, the value he has for them, his remembrance of them, his love to them, and care for them; and that this election is of particular persons by name, and is sure and certain; for those whose names are written in it shall never be blotted out, they will always remain in the number of God's elect, and can never become reprobates, or shall ever perish; because of the unchangeableness of the nature and love of God, the firmness of his purposes, the omnipotence of his arm, the death and intercession of Christ for them, their union to him, and being in him, the impossibility of their seduction by false teachers, and the security of their persons, grace, and glory in Christ, and in whose keeping this book of life is; which respects not this temporal life, that belongs to the book of providence, but a spiritual and eternal life, from whence it has its name. *But I will confess his name before my father and before his angels*; which shews that Christ has an exact and perfect knowledge of all the chosen ones, he knows them by name; and that he has a strong and affectionate love for them, and is not ashamed of them, of their cause, of their persons, and of their relation to him; and that he does and will own, acknowledge, and approve of them, both here and hereafter: and

the confession he will make of them will be in their praise; in praise of their persons and the comeliness of them, which he has put upon them; and of their graces, though they are his own; and of their good works as the fruits of grace: and this will be made before his father, who chose these persons, and gave them to him to preserve and save; and before the angels, who rejoice at their salvation and happiness; and this will be at the last day; see the note on Matt. x. 32.

Ver. 6. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, &c.*] See the note on ch. ii. 7.

Ver. 7. *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, &c.*] Of the city of Philadelphia, see the note on ch. i. 11. According to the Apostolical Constitutions^m, one Demetrius was ordained bishop of this church by the Apostle John; but this is not to be depended on; nor is it known who this angel was: however, certain it is there was a church in this place in the second century, in the times of Ignatius, who wrote an epistle to it, and which then had a bishop or pastor over it, whom he mentionsⁿ, though not his name. And in the same century twelve Philadelphians suffered martyrdom at the same time Polycarp did^o; and in the third century a church remained in this place; and also in the fourth, since a bishop of this church was in the council at Nice; and in the fifth century, a presbyter of Philadelphia was in the synod at Ephesus under Celestine; and in the sixth century, a bishop of this place assisted at the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the eighth century, Stephen, bishop of the church here, was in the Nicene synod^p; and there are now a pretty many that bear the name of Christians of the Greek church in this place^q. This church is an emblem of, and represents the church in that period of time, in which will be the spiritual reign of Christ. Its name signifies *brotherly love*, which in this interval will be very remarkable; saints shall not envy, vex, and distress one another any more; they shall be one in the hand of the Lord, and among themselves. Love, which is now so cold, and so much wanting in our present Sardinian church-state, will be exceeding warm and fervent, and in its highest pitch in the Philadelphian state. The characters Christ here assumes point at the holiness of life, truth of doctrine, and purity of discipline, for which this church-state will be distinguished: in this period of time an open door for the Gospel will be set; it will be preached in its power and purity, and will be greatly succeeded; the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and the Jews will be converted; hypocrites and formal professors will be discerned and detected; great honour and respect will be shewn the church by all men; and this state will be an emblem and pledge of the new Jerusalem state, of which mention is made in this epistle, or the thousand-years' personal reign of Christ with all his saints: *these things saith he that is holy*; which character not only agrees with Christ, as God, who is the holy One of Israel, and equally

^k Tzeror Hammor, fol. 10. 3.

^l Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 6. sect. 11. Mish. Middot, c. 5. sect. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 19. 1.

^m L. 7. c. 46.

ⁿ Ignat. Epist. p. 39. Ed. Voss.

^o Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

^p Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

^q Smith. Notitia, p. 142.

glorious in holiness as his father, but as man; his nature was free from original sin; his life from any actual transgression; his doctrines were pure and holy, and so were all his works, and all his administrations in each of his offices: and, as Mediator, he is the cause and author of holiness to his people; they are sanctified in him, and have their sanctification from him, and are sanctified by him: this character he chooses now to take, because he was sending an epistle to such as were lovers of holiness, and famous for it, both internal and external; so that while he describes himself, he points at persons, the members of churches in this interval: *he that is true*: truly God, and truly man: true and faithful in the discharge of his several offices, and in the trust reposed in him, both of the grace and persons of the saints, and in what he undertook to do for them: he is truth itself, the truth of types, promises, and prophecies; and the sum and substance of all the truths of the Gospel; and is therefore to be depended on in every prediction and promise; and this title of Christ may have some view to the truth of doctrine which shall, in this period, prevail, and to the faithfulness and integrity of his people to his cause and interest: *he that hath the key of David*: mention is made of David, because he was a type of Christ; and because from him Christ came according to the flesh, and whose throne he was to sit upon, in a spiritual sense; and because, in this period of time, the Jews are to be converted, who will seek the Lord their God, and David their king: and by *the key of David* is meant the key of the house of David; that is, the church of Christ, of which David's house and family were a type: and this key is either the key of knowledge, or it is expressive of power and authority. Christ has the key of knowledge, he knows all the persons of his people, all their affairs, and what they do in his house, and how they behave there: he has the key of knowledge in the Scriptures, and gives it to his ministers. And it may also design his authority in his house and church, in fixing the ordinances of it, in bestowing gifts on men, and in dispensing the blessings of grace and goodness; this may have some regard to the pure discipline of this church, as well as to its light and knowledge in the doctrines of the Gospel. The Targum on Isa. xxii. 22. interprets *the key of the house of David*, שלשן, *the dominion* or government of the house of David. *He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth*: he opens the Scriptures, which are shut to a natural man, as he did in his own personal ministry, when here on earth, and now by his spirit; and none can shut them, either men or devils, or hinder the spread of light and knowledge by them: he opens the door of the Gospel, and gives an opportunity to preach it, and liberty of mind and expression to his ministers, and a door of utterance to them, and of entrance for it into the hearts of men, which none can shut, or hinder: he opens the door of the church, which is himself, and lets in his sheep into the sheep-fold, into a Gospel church-state, and the ordinances of it; and he opens the door of heaven by his blood and righteousness, and gives his people liberty and bold-

ness to enter into the holiest of all, and brings many sons to glory in spite of all the opposition of men and devils: on the other hand, when he pleases, he shuts up the Scriptures, and the eyes of men from seeing what is in them; he shuts up the door of the Gospel, and forbids the preaching of it in this and that place; and the door of heaven will be shut by him at the last day, when all called to the marriage of the Lamb are entered, and there will be no opening. This shews the sovereignty, power, and authority of Christ, and which he will exercise in this church-state; see Job xii. 14. A like phrase is in the Talmud, כיון שסגור פתוח שוב אינו פתוח, *when he shuts again, there is none that opens.*

Ver. 8. *I know thy works, &c.*] Good works, of faith, love, and patience; and which lay much in preaching, professing, and maintaining the pure Gospel, and in acts of charity to one another; and which were done to some degree of perfection, and with great sincerity; since this church is not complained of, that her works were not perfect before God, as the former church is: *behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; or which no man can shut*, as read the Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions. This *open door* may design an uncommon opportunity of preaching the Gospel; and a very great freedom of mind in the preachers of it, and great attention in the hearers, whose hearts will be opened to observe, receive, and embrace it; and a very large gathering in of souls to Christ, and his churches; much and frequent preaching of the word with great success, which it won't be in the power of any creature to stop or hinder: now will the abundance of the sea, the forces of the Gentiles flow in, and the nation of the Jews shall be born at once. *For thou hast a little strength*: which is not to be understood of inward spiritual strength, for of this the church in this period will have a great deal, as well as of courage and fortitude of mind, but outward power and authority: some great men, and princes of the earth, will come into the churches of Christ, even kings will come to the brightness of her rising; for now will all those prophecies have their accomplishment, which respect the secular grandeur of the church, with regard to its numbers, power, and riches; see Isa. xlix. 18—23. and lx. 3—17. *And hast kept my word*: both the commands and ordinances of Christ in practice, and that in their primitive purity, as they were delivered by Christ and his apostles, particularly baptism and the Lord's supper; which have been, one or other of them, or both, most sadly corrupted in all the periods of the churches hitherto, excepting the apostolical one, but will now be restored to their pristine purity and glory; and also the doctrines of the Gospel, which will be kept, not in memory only, but in the heart and life; they will be publicly and openly preached, professed, and defended: *and hast not denied my name*; Christ himself, his doctrine respecting his person, office, and grace, neither in words, nor in works, but both ways confessed and owned it.

Ver. 9. *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of*

¹ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 70. 3.

Satan, &c.] Which may be understood either of the Papists, the followers of the man of sin, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and whose doctrines are the doctrines of devils, many of whom will now be converted, and brought to the true church; or rather of the Jews, who had, and have, and will have till this time, their synagogues for religious worship in their way; but they are no other than synagogues of Satan; the men that assemble in them are of their father the devil, and do his works, and will do them: *which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie*; they are Jews by name and nation; they are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly and spiritually, Rom. ii. 28, 29. they are carnal wicked men, under the influence of Satan, though they pretend to be religious men, and worshippers of God: *behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet*; the conversion of the Jews is here intended. The *worship* here spoken of is not either a religious or civil worship of the church, for the church is not the object of worship; only before whom, and at whose feet, this worship shall be given to God in the most humble and hearty manner: the sense is, that the convinced and converted Jews shall come to the church, and in the most lowly and contrite manner acknowledge their former blindness, furious zeal, and violent hatred of the Christians, and shall profess their faith in Christ; shall join themselves to the church, and partake of the ordinances of the Gospel with them; and shall worship God and Jesus Christ, their Lord and King, in their presence, and at their feet: *and to know that I have loved thee*; the Gentile church, and the members of it, in assuming human nature, and dying for, and redeeming them, as well as the Jews; in sending his Gospel to them, and calling them by his grace, and planting them into Gospel churches; giving them a place, and a name in his house, better than that of sons and daughters.

Ver. 10. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, &c.*] The Gospel, so called because it gives an account of the patience of Christ, in the midst of all his outward meanness and humiliation; and because it is a means of implanting and increasing the grace of patience, which God is the efficient cause of, and Christ is the example of; that patience, which bears a resemblance to his, in enduring afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, desertions, and temptations, and in waiting for his kingdom and glory; and because both the preachers and professors of the word have need of patience, and should exercise it in like manner as Christ did. This word, the churches, in the Philadelphian state, will keep pure and incorrupt, and observe the ordinances of it according to the directions given in it; and will believe the promise of Christ's personal coming, and patiently wait for it: wherefore, Christ promises as follows, *I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*; this hour seems to refer not to any of the vials which will be poured out on the antichristian states, but to some affliction and distress which will befall the reformed churches, and will light upon the outward court worshippers among

them. It seems to be the last struggle of the beast of Rome, and to denote some violent and sharp persecution, such as what Daniel mentions, that never was before nor since; but it will be but short, but one hour, the twenty-fourth part of a prophetic day or year, perhaps about a fortnight; yet it will be very extensive; it will reach all the world, the whole Roman empire, and all that dwell upon the earth, that are called by the name of Christians, and will try them, whether they are so or no; Christ will now have his fan in his hand, and purge his floor of all his formal professors and hypocrites; and it will be known who are his true churches, and pure members; and these he'll keep close to himself, and preserve safe amidst all the distress and confusion the world will be in. This cannot refer to the bloody persecutions under the Roman emperors, for from those the church at Philadelphia was not preserved. We read * of twelve members of it that suffered with Polycarp.

Ver. 11. *Behold, I come quickly, &c.*] To bring on this hour of temptation on the reformed churches, which will be at the beginning of this period; to help and deliver, save and preserve the truly godly among them; to destroy antichrist, and introduce the latter-day glory: *hold that fast which thou hast*; either her grace in the exercise of it, as her faith, patience, &c. or rather the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which she had received, as delivered by Christ and his apostles: and which she had held in the truth and purity of them, and is now exhorted to hold them fast, since this hour of temptation would be a trying time to her faith, patience, integrity, and constancy: *that no man take thy crown*; not eternal happiness, called a crown of life, glory, and righteousness, and which was prepared for her, and promised to her, and would be certainly given her; nor was there any danger of another's taking it from her; not but that exhortations of this kind to the saints are necessary, with respect to that, to excite to diligence, care, and watchfulness; and are no ways contrary to their final perseverance, and certain salvation, but are means thereof: but either her honour for her faith and faithfulness, for her integrity, sincerity, and purity, is here meant; or the glorious things which were spoken of this church-state, and to be accomplished in it, Psal. lxxxvii. 3. see Isa. lx.

Ver. 12. *He that overcometh, &c.*] In the hour of temptation, in this period of time; that stands his ground then, sustains the shock of the beast, with courage and intrepidity, and overcomes him: *will I make a pillar in the temple of my God*; by which is meant not the church triumphant, though such will have a place, and an abiding one there; but the church militant, so called in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem, for its author, matter, situation, strength, solidity, magnificence, and stateliness, and for its holiness; and may be said to be the temple of God, because it is of his building, and is the place where he dwells, and is worshipped; and the temple of Christ's God, as he is man and Mediator, through whom all worship is given to God in it; and those who are overcomers by the grace and strength of Christ are made pillars by

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

him here, in allusion to the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, in Solomon's temple; that is, they become very ornamental in the church, they are made honourable members of it; they come in at the right door into it, and fill up their places, and all relative duties in it, and walk becoming their profession; and, like pillars, are a support to it, to the interest of the church, the truths of the Gospel, and to weak and poor saints; and, as pillars, they are upright in heart and conversation, and are steady, firm, and constant: *and he shall go no more out*; out of the church, the temple of the Lord, but shall abide in it unto death: it is a promise of perseverance both in the grace of God, and in a profession of religion; there shall not be such instances of apostasy as now. *And I will write upon him the name of my God*; in allusion to inscriptions of names on pillars; the sense is, that it should be manifest that such are interested in God, as their covenant-God and father, in like manner as he is the God and father of Christ; and this should be as plain and as evident as an inscription on a pillar, or as if it was written upon their foreheads, as the high-priest had on his forehead written, *holiness to the Lord*; and indeed it will be by their holiness that it will so clearly appear that God is their covenant-God; for in this church-state, or spiritual reign of Christ, holiness unto the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses: *and the name of the city of my God*: which is new Jerusalem, in allusion to *Jehovah Shammah*; meaning the Gospel church in the latter-day glory; and the sense is, that such shall be manifestly citizens of this city, in this new and glorious state of the church, and shall enjoy all the privileges of it, which at this time especially will be many and great. This will not be the new Jerusalem church-state, or the thousand-years' reign of Christ in person, for in that there will be no temple, as in this; but it will have the name, and some appearance of it; it will bear some resemblance to it, and be a pledge of it: *which cometh down out of heaven, from my God*; as it is before called new Jerusalem, in distinction from the old, so here it is said to come down from heaven, or to be the heavenly Jerusalem, in distinction from the earthly one. The inhabitants of it will be born from above, and be called with an heavenly calling, and their conversation will be in heaven, and all the glory of this church will come from God. *And I will write upon him my new name*; either the name of *Jehovah* our righteousness; or rather the name of King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. xix. 16. which Christ will now acquire, or at least this will now be made more manifest upon the destruction of antichrist, in this church-state; in which conquest he will make all his people sharers, and they shall now more openly appear to be kings, and to reign with him in his spiritual kingdom.

Ver. 13. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, &c.*] See the note on ch. ii. 7.

Ver. 14. *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, &c.*] Of the city of Laodicea, see the note on ch. i. 11. There was a church here in the times of the

Apostle Paul; by whom it was founded is not known; mention is made of it in Col. ii. 1, 2. and iv. 13, 15, 16. who was now the angel, or pastor of it, whether Epaphras, who is there named, or another, is not certain. According to the Apostolical Constitutions¹, Archippus was ordained bishop of it by the apostles; see Col. iv. 16, 17. There was a church here in the *second* century, for Sagaris, bishop of it, suffered martyrdom in the times of Antoninus Verus²; and in the *fourth* century, this church was famous for two eminent bishops, Theodorus and Gregory; and in the *fifth* century, it was the metropolitan church of Phrygia, as it was in the *seventh* century, in which age Tyberius, bishop of this place, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople³; but now it is even without inhabitants⁴. This church represents the state of the church, from the end of the spiritual reign of Christ, till the time of his personal appearing and kingdom, to judge the quick and dead; for after the spiritual reign is over, professors of religion will sink into a formality, and into a lukewarm frame of spirit, and into great spiritual sloth and security, ver. 15, 16. which will make those times like the times of Noah and of Lot; and such will be the days of the coming of the son of man to judge the world. Its name signifies either *the righteousness of the people*; and so may point at that popular and external righteousness, which the majority of the professors of religion in this period of time will be boasting of, and trusting in; being self-sufficient, and self-dependent, when at the same time they'll be naked, as well as poor and blind, ver. 17, 18. or it signifies *the judging of the people*; for this church-state, at the end of it, will bring on the general judgment; the Judge will now be at the door indeed, standing and knocking; and they that are ready to meet the bridegroom, when he comes, will be admitted into the nuptial chamber, and sit down with him in his throne, in the thousand-years' kingdom, at the close of which will be the second resurrection, when all the people, small and great, shall be judged, ver. 19, 20, 21. *These things saith the Amen*; see Isa. lxxv. 16. The word *Amen* is the name of a divine Person with the Jews, and it seems the second Person; for so on those words in Prov. viii. 30. *then was I by him as one brought up with him*, they observe⁵, don't read *Amon*, the word there used, but *Amen*; and, a little after, *Amen*, they say, is the *notaricon*, or sign of *אל מלך נאמן*, *God the faithful King*; they make⁶ *Amen* to be one of the names of the second *Sephira*, or number in the Cabalistic tree, by whom the second Person in the God-head seems to be designed: and they say⁷, that the word *Amen*, by gematry (or numerically) answers to the two names *Jehovah*, *Adonai*. Christ may be so called, because he is the God of truth, and truth itself; and it may be expressive of his faithfulness, both to God his father, and to his people, in whom all the promises he either made, or received, are yea and amen; and also of the firmness, constancy, and immutability of Christ, in his nature, person, and offices, in his love, fulness of grace, power, blood, and righteousness; and is very appositely assumed by him now, when he was

¹ L. 7. c. 46.

² Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 4. c. 26. & l. 5. c. 24.

³ Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 112. c. 10. p. 254.

⁴ Smith. Notitia, p. 159.

⁵ Zohar in Deut. fol. 121. 4. so in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 119. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 111. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 46. 1.

⁶ Cabal. Denud. par. 2. p. 7.

⁷ Lex. Cabal. p. 130. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxviii. 15.

about to give the finishing stroke to all covenant-engagements, and to all promises and prophecies; see ch. i. 18. *The faithful and true witness*; who as he was in the days of his flesh, see the note on ch. i. 5. so he will be at the day of judgment, a swift witness against all ungodly men; and he may the rather take up this title, not only on that account, but to shew that the description he gives of the state and condition of this church is just, ver. 15, 16. and to engage it to take his advice the more readily, ver. 18. and to assure it of the nearness of his coming, ver. 20. and to strengthen the faith of his people, and quicken their hope and expectation of the happiness with him promised, ver. 21. the same character is given to the Logos, or Word of the Lord, by the Targumist in Jer. xlii. 5. *let the Word of the Lord be to us לְסוּדֵי קִשְׁוֹ וּמְדוּכֵי נַס*, for a true and faithful witness; the very phrase here used. *The beginning of the creation of God*: not the first creature that God made, but the first cause of the creation; the first Parent, producer, and efficient cause of every creature; the author of the old creation, who made all things out of nothing in the beginning of time; and of the new creation, the everlasting Father of every one that is made a new creature; the Father of the world to come, or of the new age and Gospel dispensation; the Maker of the new heaven and new earth; and so a very fit person to be the Judge of the whole world, to summon all nations before him, and pass the final sentence on them. The phrase is Jewish, and it is a title the Jews give to Metatron, by whom they sometimes mean the Messiah; so those words in Gen. xxiv. 2. and Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, they paraphrase thus^b; “and Abraham said unto his servant, this is Metatron, (or the Mediator), the servant of God, the eldest of his house: for he is תְּהִלַּת בְּיַד יְיָ, the beginning of the creation of God, who rules over all that he has; for to him the holy blessed God has given the government of all his hosts.” Christ is the מֶלֶךְ, the Prince, or Governor of all creatures.

Ver. 15. *I know thy works, &c.*] Which were far from being perfect, and not so good as those of the former church: *that thou art neither cold nor hot*; she was not cold, or without spiritual life, at least in many of her members, as all men by nature are, and carnal professors be; she was alive, but not lively: nor was she wholly without spiritual affections and love; to God, and Christ, to his people, ways, truths, and ordinances; she had love, but the fervency of it was abated: nor was she without spiritual breathings and desires altogether, as dead men are; or without the light and knowledge of the Gospel, and a profession of it, and yet she was not hot; her love to God and Christ, and the saints, was not ardent and flaming; it was not like coals of fire, that give a most vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench. She had not fervency of spirit in the service of the Lord; nor was she zealous for the truths of the Gospel, and for the ordinances of it, and for the house of God and its discipline; nor did she warmly oppose all sin, and every error and false way. *I would thou wert cold or hot*; which must be understood, not absolutely, but comparatively; and not that it was an indif-

ferent thing to Christ whether she was one or the other; but he alludes to what is natural among men, it being generally more agreeable to have any thing entirely hot, or entirely cold, than to be neither; and so uses this phrase to shew his detestation of lukewarmness, and that it is better to be ignorant, and not a professor of religion, than to be a vain and carnal one; Christ desires not simply that she might be cold, but that she might be sensible of her need of spiritual heat and fervency.

Ver. 16. *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, &c.*] A lukewarm professor is one that serves God and mammon; that halts between two opinions, and knows not what religion is best, and cares little for any, yet keeps in a round of duty, though indifferent to it, and contents himself with it; and is unconcerned about the life and power of godliness, and takes up with the external form of it; and has no thought about the glory of God, the interest of Christ and truth; and this was too much the case of this church, at least of a great number of its members; wherefore it was very loathsome to Christ, hence he threatens: *I will spew thee out of my mouth*: this shews how nauseous lukewarmness is to Christ, insomuch that on account of it he would not own and acknowledge her as his; but even cast her out, unchurch her, and have no more any such imperfect church-state upon earth, as he afterwards never will, this is the last; nor is there any church-state, or any remains of one in Laodicea; it is indeed quite uninhabited.

Ver. 17. *Because thou sayest, I am rich, &c.*] In worldly goods, which occasioned her lukewarmness, as riches often do, and her vanity, pride, and arrogance, afterwards expressed. Laodicea was a very rich city, and so will be this church-state, through the accession of kings and princes, and great men of the earth unto it, in the former period: riches seldom do any good to the churches of Christ, they did not in Constantine's time; and it seems that even at the close of the spiritual reign of Christ they will be of bad consequence, since they will usher in the Laodicean church-state: or her meaning is, that she was rich in spiritual things; not in grace, but in external gifts, which still remained, upon the very great pouring forth of the spirit in the last church-state; and in good works, on which she too much trusted for salvation, placing her righteousness in them: she is one whom the Jews^c call עֲשִׂיר בְּתוֹרָה, rich in the law: and increased with goods: with outward peace and prosperity, with much natural and divine light and knowledge, with the purity of Gospel ordinances, even beyond the former church-state in her own imagination: and have need of nothing: contenting herself with these external things: true believers, as considered in Christ, stand in need of nothing indeed, they are complete in him, and have every thing in him; but, as considered in themselves, they are daily in need of daily food for their souls, as for their bodies, of fresh light and life, strength and comfort, and of new supplies of grace; wherefore this church shews great ignorance of herself, as well as great pride and arrogance to express herself in this manner: and knowest not that thou art wretched; as all men are in a state of nature and unregeneracy; which

^b Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 1.

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^c Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 106. 2.

may be the case of many professors, and they be ignorant of it; as to be under a sentence of wrath, obnoxious to the curses of the law, in danger of hell and destruction, lost and undone, and unable to extricate themselves out of such a state: true believers account themselves wretched, as the Apostle Paul did, on account of in-dwelling sin, and the plague of their own hearts, which the members of this church, the greater part of them, were ignorant of: *and miserable*: a miserable man is one that is attended with outward afflictions, but this was not the case of this church; and with spiritual poverty, blindness, and nakedness, and this was her case; some persons neither know their misery, nor their need of mercy: *and poor*: not in purse, nor in spirit, nor with respect to outward afflictions, nor as to her church-state, but in a spiritual sense; one whom the Jews call רש בתורה^d *poor in the law*; as such may be said to be who have nothing to eat that is fit to eat; nothing to wear but rags, and have no money to buy either; who are in debt, and not able to pay, nor to help themselves on any account; and this may be the case of professors, and yet not known and considered by them: *and blind*; natural men are blind as to a saving knowledge of God in Christ, as to the way of salvation by Christ, as to the plague of their own hearts, as to the work of the spirit of God upon the soul, and as to the truths of the Gospel, in the power of them; but here it regards blindness with respect to her church-state, and its imperfection: *and naked*; sin has stripped man of his moral clothing; man's own righteousness will not cover his nakedness; and whoever is destitute of the righteousness of Christ is a naked person.

Ver. 18. *I counsel thee, &c.*] Christ is a Counsellor, and is every way fit to be one, for he is the all-wise God, the Ancient of days, and the Father of his people, and, as Mediator, the Wisdom of God; and he was concerned in the council of peace from everlasting; and when he was here on earth he gave counsel in person, and now he gives it by his spirit, and by his word and ministers; and the substance of it is, to come to him for grace, life, and salvation; for pardon, peace, and righteousness; for spiritual light and knowledge, and every supply of grace; and his advice is always wholesome, good, and suitable; is hearty, sincere, and faithful, and is freely given, and is wise and prudent; and, being taken, infallibly succeeds; the counsel here given follows: *to buy of me gold tried in the fire*: by which is meant either a more pure and glorious state of the church, such as was in the former period, or greater; or a larger measure of light and knowledge in the Gospel, which is better than fine gold; or some particular graces, and a comfortable exercise of them, as fervent love and strong faith, which is much more precious than gold; or rather, all spiritual riches in general, which are in Christ, and are unsearchable, solid, substantial, and satisfying; are lasting and durable, precious, excellent, and incorruptible: and the buying of this gold is not to be understood in a proper sense, by giving a valuable consideration for it, for no such is to be given, but in an improper sense; it is a buying without money and without price; Christ and his grace are given freely; Christ, of whom it is to be had, and

of him only, does not sell it, but he gives it to those that come to him for it, and desire to have it, and are willing to part with all, so they may but enjoy it; for that it is to be understood in such a sense, is clear from the character of the persons who are advised to buy, who were poor, or beggars, ver. 17. the end of it is, *that thou mayest be rich*; for though this church was rich, yet not in spirituals; and though she was rich in her own conceit, yet not really so: persons are not to be accounted truly rich who have only this world's goods; none are rich but those who have an interest in Christ and his grace; and they who are poor in this world, and yet have grace, are really rich: the next thing advised to is, *and white raiment*; that is, and buy white raiment, by which some understand the heavenly glory, robes of immortality, a being clothed upon with the house which is from heaven; this may be compared to raiment, for it is a glory, an immortality, an incorruption to be put on; and fitly enough to white raiment, for the purity and spotlessness of it; and being clothed with this, no nakedness, or shame of it will appear; and this is to be had from Christ, and in the same way as gold is to be bought of him; the design of this advice may be to quicken the desires of the church after heavenly things; though it rather seems to respect something suitable to her in this present state: wherefore others think that by it are meant good works, holiness of life and conversation; but these are never called white raiment, but even rags, yea, filthy ones, in the best; and whatever cover they may be from nakedness in the sight of men, they are no cover from it in the sight of God, nor do they preserve from shame and blushing: rather then by it is meant the righteousness of Christ, which may be compared to raiment; it is upon the saints, and is put upon them as such; it covers as a garment does, protects from injuries, keeps warm, beautifies and adorns, as raiment does; and it may be compared to white raiment for its purity and perfection; now this is to be bought of Christ, it is to be had of him, and is to be had of him freely, without money and without price; it is a free gift of grace; and even faith itself, which receives it, is the gift of God: the ends of giving this advice are, *that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear*; the soul may be naked when the body is well clothed; and notwithstanding a man's moral righteousness, he may not be clothed; they, and they only are clothed, who have on the righteousness of Christ; nakedness arises from want of righteousness, which is only covered by the righteousness of Christ; and from hence also springs shame, which Christ's righteousness hides: *and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve*; by which may be meant the word of God, particularly the Gospel; and anointing with it is making use of it for the gaining of light and knowledge: all without this divine revelation are in darkness, and such who reject the authority of it go astray; the Scriptures are the only directory, and rule of faith and practice; the law is a means of enlightening persons to see their sin and misery, and the danger they are in; and the Gospel is a light, whereby is beheld the glory of Christ, of his person and office, of

^d Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 173. 4. vid. Targum in Cant. viii. 9.

his grace and righteousness, and of salvation by him; and this is the Gospel of Christ, and is to be had of him freely, even the saving knowledge of it. The Jews have adopted the very Greek word here used into their language, and apply it to the law; says R. Chija^s, speaking of the law, "קלורית לעין, *it is a salve for the eye*, a plaster for a wound, &c. it is a salve for the "eyes, as is written Psal. xix. 8." or else the illumination of the spirit is meant, by which the eyes of the understanding being enlightened, men see themselves, the impurities of their hearts and nature, the imperfection of their righteousness, their impotency to all that is spiritually good, and that they are lost and undone in themselves; and by which they see Christ and salvation by him, that it is in him, and in no other, and that it is full and suitable, and for the chief of sinners, and that it is all of free grace, and that they have an interest in it; by this they have light into the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of the glories of another world; and this is to be had of Christ, who gives his spirit freely, and an understanding to know spiritual things: and the end of the advice is, *that thou mayest see*: who, notwithstanding the conceit she had of herself, was blind; persons may have much human prudence, much knowledge in things moral, yea, in things evangelical, notionally, and yet be blind as to true spiritual light and experience; they only see spiritually and savingly who have the spirit of God.

Ver. 19. *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, &c.*] The persons the objects of Christ's love here intended are not angels, but the sons of men; and these not all of them, yet many of them, even all who are his own by his father's gift and his own purchase; and who are called his church, and sometimes represented as such who love him and obey his commands: the instances of his love to them are many; as his suretyship-engagements for them, his assumption of their nature, dying in their room and stead, paying their debts, procuring their peace and pardon, bringing in a righteousness for them, purchasing their persons, his intercession for them, preparations in heaven, supplies of grace, and frequent visits in a kind and familiar manner; and as for the nature of his love, it is free and sovereign, everlasting and immutable, and it is matchless and inconceivable, it is strong and affectionate, and as his father loved him; and such are rebuked by Christ, not in a way of wrath, but in a tender manner, in order to bring them under a conviction of their sin and of their duty, and of their folly in trusting in, or loving any creature more than himself, and of all their wrong ways; and they are chastened by him, not in a vindictive, but in a fatherly way, which is instructive and teaching to them, and for their good. This seems to refer to some afflictions which Christ was about to bring upon this church, by some means or another, to awaken her out of her sloth and security, and which would be in love to her, and the end be to rouse her zeal and bring her to repentance. Some think this respects the Gog and Magog army, which will encompass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; but that will not be till after the thousand-years' reign, and besides will be no affliction to them; rather it designs

the unchurching them, signified by spewing them out of his mouth, ver. 16. *be zealous, therefore, and repent*: zeal was what was wanting in this church; which is nothing else than hot, fervent, and ardent love, love in a flame; whereas she was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, Christ would have her be *zealous* for God; for his cause and interest, for his Gospel, ordinances, and the discipline of his house, and against every thing that is evil; against all false worship, all errors in doctrine, all sin and iniquity; and to be zealous of good works, and in the worship of God, both private and public: and *repent*: in an evangelical way, of her lukewarmness, remissness, and supineness; of her pride, arrogance, and vain boastings of herself; and of her self-sufficiency, self-dependence, and self-confidence.

Ver. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, &c.*] The phrase of standing at the door may be expressive of the near approach, or sudden coming of Christ to judgment, see James v. 9. and his knocking may signify the notice that will be given of it, by some of the immediate forerunners and signs of his coming; which yet will be observed but by a few, such a general sleepiness will have seized all professors of religion; and particularly may intend the midnight cry, which will, in its issue, rouse them all: *if any man hear my voice*; in the appearances of things and providences in the world: *and open the door*; or shew a readiness for the coming of Christ, look and wait for it, and be like such that will receive him with a welcome: *I will come unto him, and sup with him, and he with me*; to and among these will Christ appear when he comes in person; and these being like wise virgins, ready, having his grace in their hearts, and his righteousness upon them, he'll take them at once into the marriage-chamber, and shut the door upon the rest; when they shall enjoy a thousand-years' communion with him in person here on earth; when the Lamb on the throne will feed them with the fruit of the tree of life, and lead them to fountains of living water, and his tabernacle shall be among them.

Ver. 21. *To him that overcometh, &c.*] The lukewarmness, and self-confidence, and security of this state: *will I grant to sit with me in my throne*; at the close of this church-state, which will be the last of this kind, consisting of imperfect saints, Christ will descend from heaven with the souls of all the righteous, and raise their bodies and unite them to them; which, with the living saints, will make one general assembly and church of the first-born, all perfect in soul and body; among these he'll place his tabernacle, and fix his throne; and they being all made kings as well as priests to him, shall now reign on earth with him, and that for the space of a thousand years: and this is the blessing promised the overcomers in the Laodicean state, that when Christ shall set up his kingdom among men, and reign gloriously before his ancients, they shall sit on the same throne with him, or share with him in his kingdom and glory; see ch. v. 10. and xx. 4. and Dan vii. 27. *even as I also overcame*; sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell: *and am set down with my father in his throne*; in heaven, at his right hand; which is expressive of equality to him,

* Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 96. 3. Debarim Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 243. 3. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 12. fol. 155. 3.

distinction from him, communion with him, and of the honour and glory he is possessed of; but it is not on this throne that the saints will sit, only Christ sits on the same throne with the Father in heaven; it is on Christ's throne on earth, or in his personal reign there, that the saints shall sit down with him; and which honour they shall all have, all that are more than conquerors through him, and are made kings by him. And when this reign is over, then will follow the second resurrection, or the resurrection of the

wicked, when will come on the judgment of the people, as Laodicea signifies; and when these, with the devils, will form themselves into the Gog and Magog army, and attack the beloved city, the church of glorified saints on earth, under Christ their King, which will issue in the everlasting destruction of the former; and thus these seven churches bring us to the end of all things.

Ver. 22. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, &c.*] See the note on ch. ii. 7.

C H A P. IV.

THIS chapter contains an account of the second vision John saw, as preparatory to the sealed book, and the opening of it, as the first vision was to the epistles to the seven churches. The preface to this vision, or the introduction to it, and preparation of John for it, are in ver. 1, 2. which declare the time of it, the position John was in, what he saw and heard, a call to him to come up, and the effect it had upon him; and then follows the vision itself, which is of a throne, described by the place where it was set, in heaven; and by him that sat upon it, ver. 2. who was like to a jasper and a sardine stone; and by what was about it, first a rainbow of an emerald colour, ver. 3. then four-and-twenty seats, with as many elders upon them, sitting clothed and crowned, ver. 4. and by what went out from it, lightnings, thunders, and voices; and by what were before it, seven burning lamps, which are the seven spirits of God, ver. 5. and a sea of glass like crystal; and by what were between it all around, and the elders, four living creatures, described in general by their being full of eyes, before and behind, ver. 6. in particular, the first by its likeness to a lion, the second by its likeness to a calf, the third by its likeness to a man, and the fourth by its likeness to a flying eagle, ver. 7. and by what were common to them, first by their wings, of which they had each of them six; and by their eyes, they were full of within; and by their constant employment in celebrating the perfections of God, and in giving glory, honour, and thanks unto him, ver. 8, 9. at which time also the four-and-twenty elders appear in a worshipping posture, and give adoration to God; partly by deeds, casting their crowns before his throne; and partly by words, ascribing glory, honour, and power to him; giving a reason for it, taken from his creating all things for his pleasure, ver. 10, 11.

Ver. 1. *After this I looked, &c.*] After John had seen the vision of Christ, in the midst of the golden candlesticks, with seven stars in his right hand; after he was bid to write what he had seen, and what were, and should be hereafter; and after he had by order written the seven epistles to the seven churches, he looked about him to see what else he could, having his desires and expectations raised of seeing more, and other things, for the eye is never satisfied with seeing; though this is to be understood, not of looking with

the eyes of his body, but with the eyes of his mind; of his beholding things in a visionary way, as the prophets did, whence they are called *seers*, and their prophecies *visions*: how long this was after the first vision is not certain, it may be but a few minutes; and it is to be observed, that as the first chapter of this book, with the vision in it, is the preface or introduction to the church-prophecy delivered out in the seven epistles; so this and the following chapter, with the vision therein, contain the preface or introduction to the book-prophecy exhibited in the opening of the seven seals of the sealed book: *and behold, a door was opened in heaven*; not in a literal sense, as the heavens were opened at Christ's baptism, and at Stephen's martyrdom, but in a figurative sense; and the phrase is to be understood of a discovery of things that were, or were to be in the church of God, which in this book is oftentimes signified by *heaven*; and it must be conceived as done in a visionary way, just as Ezekiel, in the visions of God, was brought to Jerusalem, and the temple there, and in at a door was shewn all the abominations committed in the court and temple; so John, in a visionary way, through an opened door, had a scene of things in the church presented to him, as follows: *and the first voice which I heard was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with me*: this voice is not called the first voice with respect to any other voices that were to follow; but it designs the former voice, the voice that John heard behind him, when he saw the first vision; and this, as that, was clear, loud, and sonorous as a trumpet, so that he thoroughly heard, and rightly understood what was said; it was the same Person that made the following representation of things as did then, even he who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the whole revelation; the *first* is left out in the Arabic version: the allusion is to the blowing of trumpets at the opening of the door of the temple; "every day there were one-and-twenty soundings of a trumpet in the temple, " three לפתיות שעי"ם, *at the opening of the doors,* " and nine at the daily morning sacrifice, and nine at " the daily evening sacrifice". And one of them was called the great door of the temple; and he that slew the daily sacrifice, did not slay till he heard the sound of that door when it was opened⁶; so here at the opening of the door in heaven, in the church, of which the

⁶ Misn. Succa, c. 5. sect. 5.

⁶ Misn. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 7.

temple was a type, the voice of the son of God is heard as the sound of a trumpet, talking loudly and familiarly to John: *which said, come up hither*; from the isle of Patmos, where he was, up to heaven; not into the third heaven, where Paul was caught up, but rather up into the Gospel church, the Jerusalem which is above; though this, as before, is to be understood in a visionary way, in like manner as Ezekiel was lifted up by the spirit between the earth and the heavens; and so John, in a vision, was called up from Patmos into the air, where he had a representation of the church made unto him: *and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter*: in the world, in the Roman empire, and in the church of God, to the end of the world; not but that there were some things shewn him, as before, in the church-prophecy, which had been, and were, and which was done to give him a complete view of things from first to last: and these things were shewn in the following visions of the seals, trumpets, and vials, and by the Lord Jesus Christ, who talked with him, and to whom this revelation was given to shew unto his servants; and it was of things that *must be*, because determined and resolved upon in the unalterable purposes and decrees of God.

Ver. 2. *And immediately I was in the spirit, &c.*] As he had been before, ch. i. 10. it seems he had been some little time out of his ecstasy, how long cannot be said, and now, upon this new scene of things, returned to it; upon the opening of the door in heaven, and hearing the former voice, and the things it said, the spirit of God at once possessed and filled him, in an extraordinary manner; and his soul or spirit was immediately taken from the consideration of all sensible objects, and was fixed and intent upon the things presented to it in the vision, so that it was as if it was out of the body. The Arabic version reads, *then therefore I went in the spirit*: in obedience to the voice that called him up, in which he was assisted by the spirit of God, who lifted him up as he did Ezekiel, when he saw what follows: *and behold, a throne was set in heaven*; not for the final judgment, on which the son of man will sit, when he comes to judge the quick and dead, for he is not the person that fills this throne; but this is a symbol of the power, authority, and dominion now exercised by God, not over the world in general, who has prepared his throne in the heavens, and governs among the nations, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, but which he exercises in his church, signified by *heaven*. The allusion is to the temple, and the throne of God in it, Isa. vi. 1. Jer. xvii. 12. The temple was an emblem of the Gospel church, Jerusalem, or the Gospel church-state, and was to be called the throne of the Lord, Jer. iii. 17. and now his throne is set there. Here he exercises a jurisdiction and government; he is King and lawgiver in it; he has enacted laws, and he writes them on the hearts of his people, and puts his spirit within them, and makes them both able and willing to obey them. *And one sat on the throne*: not the trinity of persons in the Godhead, which some think are signified by the three precious stones in the next verse, the jasper, sardine,

and emerald; for, as distinct from him that sat upon the throne, the Lamb is said to be in the midst of it, and the seven spirits of God are said to be before it: nor is Jesus Christ intended, and his two natures; his divine nature by the jasper, and his human nature by the red and blood-coloured sardine; since he, the Lamb, is represented as in the midst of the throne, and is often distinguished from him that sat upon it; see ch. v. 6, 7, 13. and vii. 10. but God the Father is designed, who sits on the throne, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, yet in distinction from them. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 3. *And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper, &c.*] For the brightness, glory, and majesty of his countenance, and for his being light itself, clothed with it, and dwelling in it; see ch. xxi. 11, 18, 19. and for the various perfections of his nature, as eternity, infinity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, power, goodness, truth, love, grace, and mercy; for the jasper, at least one sort of them, is of various colours, and spotted with divers spots; that which is most valued is the green, spotted with red or purple^b: hence this stone, which is the twelfth in the high-priest's breast-plate, and on which the name of *Benjamin* was written, is called, by the Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos on Exod. xxviii. 20. *Pantere*, and of ben Uzziel, on the same place, *Apanturin*, and on Cant. v. 14. *Apantor*, because some are variegated and spotted like panthers. *And a sardine stone*; the same with the *Sardius*; and so read here the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Arabic versions, as in ch. xxi. 20. and in Exod. xxviii. 17. on which *Reuben's* name was written; this is of a red, or blood colour, as its name סַרְדִּיּוֹן, in Hebrew, shews, and the same that is called a cornelian; and is expressive of the fiery indignation of God, whose fury is poured out like fire, and who, nakedly and absolutely considered, is a consuming fire to the wicked, his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people. Some jaspers being white and sky-coloured, and the white colour being most agreeable to deity, as Cicero says¹, and the sardine being red, and a gem of the ruby kind, make up the description of the church's beloved; Cant. v. 10. and may denote in general his purity, glory, and excellency, and in particular good will to his people, and wrath to his enemies. And to the comfort of the former 'tis added, *and there was a rainbow round about the throne*; which signifies the covenant of grace; see Gen. ix. 12, 16. Isa. liv. 9, 10. Ezek. i. 28. The rainbow is a reverberation, or a reflection of the beams of the sun upon a thin watery cloud; and the covenant of grace is owing to Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness; it is he that has formed it, and filled it with blessings and promises; he is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and who in ch. x. 1. is represented as clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow on his head: the rainbow is of various colours, and fitly expresses the various promises and blessings, in the covenant of grace, and the various providences, both prosperous and adverse, with respect to soul and body; and as the rainbow was an emblem

^b Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 8. Ruzus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 1.

¹ De Legibus, l. 2.

of mercy, peace, and reconciliation in God to man, after he had destroyed the world by a flood, so the covenant is a covenant of grace and mercy; it springs from it, and is full of it, and provides for the peace and reconciliation of the people of God, by the blood of Christ; whence it is called a covenant of peace: and as the rainbow is a security to the world, and the inhabitants of it, from a destruction by a flood any more, so the covenant is a security to those who are interested in it, from eternal destruction, and wrath to come; herein lies all their salvation, and this is the security of it: to which may be added, that God calls it *my bow*, as he often calls the covenant of grace *my covenant*, in distinction from man's; see Gen. ix. 12. Psal. lxxxix. 28, 34. Ezek. xvi. 60, 61, 62. and this being round about the throne of God, shews that the covenant of grace does, as it were, include and enclose God in his persons, and in his perfections; all the three divine Persons have a concern in it, and all the divine perfections are glorified by it; and it being around it, it is always in his view; he is ever mindful of it, and constantly remembers it for the good of his people, and faithfully keeps it; and it being in this form denotes, that in whatsoever way he comes forth unto his people, it is always in a covenant-way, whether it be in things temporal or spiritual, in adversity or prosperity, with regard to the things of time and eternity; nor is there any coming to him with comfort, but as he is encompassed with the rainbow of the covenant; stripped of this, he is like the jasper and sardine stones, full of sparkling majesty, dread and terror, so that there is no coming nigh him; but being encircled with the rainbow, he may be approached as a covenant-God, as the God of all grace, seated on a throne of grace, whither believers may come with boldness, freedom, and cheerfulness: and this rainbow was *in sight like unto an emerald*; the stone on which Judah's name was written, in the high-priest's breast-plate; this is of a green colour, which colour is the prevailing one in the rainbow; it is of an exceeding fine green, very delightful to the eye, and gives pleasure to the mind to look upon it: and what a lovely and delightful sight is the covenant of grace to a believer! to see God as a covenant-God, Christ as the Mediator of it, the exceeding great and precious promises and blessings, both of grace and glory, which are in it, yields an unspeakable pleasure to such persons; the covenant of grace, like the emerald, is ever green, it is always new; its promises and blessings are always fresh, and, like that, it is durable; it is sure, and can't be broken, and is more immovable than rocks and mountains: the emerald is very bright, clear, and transparent; it is reported of Nero^k, that he could see in his emerald the combat of the gladiators in the theatre; in the covenant of grace, as in a glass, may be seen the glory of all the three Persons in the God-head, for it is ordered in all things for the glory of each Person; as also all the perfections of the divine nature; here God appears abundant in goodness and truth; here mercy and truth meet together, and righte-

ousness and peace kiss each other: to which may be added, that the emerald is said^l to help and refresh the memory; now though God stands in no need of any thing to bring things to his remembrance, yet such is his condescension to men, that he sets the rainbow in the cloud, to look at, that he might remember his everlasting covenant; and so he allows his people to put him in remembrance, by making mention of the covenant of his grace, and pleading the promises of it. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version, instead of *eis*, a rainbow, read *iepus*, priests.

Ver. 4. *And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats, &c.*] In a semicircular form, as the rainbow also was; the throne being at the upper end, these seats, or thrones in the above form, came to both ends, or sides of it; just as when the sanhedrim, or great court of judicature among the Jews sat^m, the *Nasi*, or prince, sat in the uppermost seat, at his right hand was *Ab Beth din*, or the father or the sanhedrim, and at his left hand a doctor or wise man, and all the rest of the members sat in a semicircular form upon seats before them, so that they could see them all; and to this the allusion might be thought to be, did their numbers agree, but in the great sanhedrim there were seventy-one, and in the lesser twenty-three, which last comes very near the number here: *and upon the seats I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting*; by whom are meant not the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, as some of the ancients thought, and also some of the modern writers, as Lord Napier and others; for the things said of them are such as cannot be applied to inanimate things, such as sitting on seats, being clothed with white raiment, having golden crowns on their heads, falling down before the throne, and worshipping him that sat on it; and besides, in ch. v. 8, 9. they are said to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; for which last reason, angels also cannot be designed, and who, moreover, in the place referred to, are manifestly distinguished from these elders; nor are they to be understood as the representatives of the Jewish church, or of the Jewish and Christian church together, as triumphant in heaven, and so be signified by the twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles, which together make up twenty-four; but rather the members of the Gospel church-state, throughout the whole of it, in every succession and period of time, are here meant; and are expressed by the number *twenty-four*, in allusion to the twenty-four courses of the priests, into which they were divided by David, 1 Chron. xxiv. 1, 4, 18. and to the twenty-four stations of the Levites, who in turn attended the service of the temple daily, and represented the whole body of the people of Israel, in putting their hands upon the sacrifices, and praying for them; of which see the note on Luke i. 5. add to this, that in twenty-four places the priests and Levites kept watch in the temple; so these twenty-four elders before the throne of God, in his temple, represent the whole Israel of God, all the members of the Gospel church-state, from the first to the last of it: and they

^k Ruæus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 4.

^l Ruæus, ib. & Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17

^m Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. & Maimon. Bihot Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3.

ⁿ Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1.

are styled *elders*, not on account of office, as pastors of the churches are called, but because of their senile gravity, prudence, and knowledge; they having a greater degree of spiritual knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God than the Jewish church, which was in a state of infancy, and under tutors and governors, had; but the Gospel church is in a state of manhood, and no longer under a schoolmaster, and so fitly expressed by *elders*; and these are represented as *sitting* on their seats, not only to hear the word of God, but as judging in cases that come before them, respecting the admission or exclusion of members, the laying on or taking off of censures, &c. and these, their seats being around and near unto the throne, denote their nearness to God, and their communion with him, in his house and ordinances, and his dwelling in the midst of them. *Clothed in white raiment*; in the pure and spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, which is comparable to fine linen, clean and white; and is the righteousness of the saints in common, of every true member of Christ's body. *And they had on their heads crowns of gold*; being made by Christ kings, as well as priests, unto God; for so these four-and-twenty elders are said to be, in ch. v. 10. and they now reign as kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and have a kingdom of grace which shall never be removed; and they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, and then reign with him to all eternity in heaven. It is a common saying with the Jews^o, "that there is no eating and drinking in the world to come, but the righteous are sitting, וְעֹטְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרֹאשֵׁיהֶם, and their crowns upon their heads."

Ver. 5. *And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices, &c.*] Which may be understood either of the doctrines of the Gospel which come out of Zion, and out of Jerusalem, the church of God, where he has his throne; and which are comparable to *lightning*, both for the light and knowledge they give, and for the swiftness with which they were spread over the world, by the apostles of Christ; and to *thunderings*, for the awfulness, authority, and majesty of them, especially as they were delivered out by the Boanergeses, or sons of thunder; and as the prophecies of the prophets are called *the voices* of the prophets, Acts xiii. 27. so may the doctrines of the Gospel be called *voices*, as they are the voice of God, and of Christ, and of his ministers; and are voices of love, grace, mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. The allusion is to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, when such things were seen and heard, Exod. xix. 16. or else the judgments of God, and the punishments inflicted upon his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people, and his awful threatenings of them, may be designed; see Psal. xviii. 13, 14. Joel iii. 16. with which compare Rev. viii. 5. *And there were seven lamps of burning fire before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God*; in allusion to the seven lamps in the tabernacle and temple, which were trimmed by the priests, and always kept burning, and are expressive of the spirit, and his gifts; and these being signified by the number *seven*, denote the ful-

ness and perfection of them; and being said to be *before the throne*, shew that there is always a sufficiency of them for the supply of the churches in all ages, to fit and qualify proper persons to minister the word, and administer ordinances; and these being called *lamps of burning fire*, point at the light the spirit of God in his gifts communicates to the churches; and that warmth and heat, comfort and refreshment, conveyed to them, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the dispensation of the ordinances of it, under his illuminating and quickening influences.

Ver. 6. *And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal, &c.*] By which is meant, not heaven, nor the souls of the blessed there, nor the multitude of the holy angels, nor the first converts to Christianity at Jerusalem; for those that got the victory over the beast are said to stand upon this sea, ch. xv. 2. which these senses, especially the three last, will by no means admit of. Some by it understand the world, which may be compared to a *sea*, for the multitude of people in it, as many waters in this book signify people and nations, ch. xvii. 15. and to a *sea of glass*, which is brittle, for the frailty and transitoriness of the world, of the fashion of it, and of men and things in it; and to the clear *crystal*, because all things in it are open and manifest to the omniscient eye of God; but the world, and men of it, used not to be compared to a still and quiet sea, as this is, but to one disturbed and troubled by winds and tempests, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa. lvii. 20. Others think the ordinance of baptism is designed, of which the Red sea, through which the Israelites passed under the cloud, was an emblem; and which may be compared to a *sea of glass*, for its transparency, it clearly expressing the sufferings, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and to *crystal*, for its purity; and to all this for its cleansing nature, as it leads unto the blood of Christ; and its being before the throne may denote its being the way of entrance into the Gospel church. Others think the blood of Christ is meant, in allusion to the brazen sea in the tabernacle, which was made of the looking-glasses the women brought, and for the priests to wash in, before they entered on business, Exod. xxx. 18. and xxxviii. 8. and to the molten sea in the temple, which was for the same purpose, 1 Kings vii. 23. Christ's blood is the fountain opened to wash in for sin, and may be compared to a sea for its abundant efficacy in cleansing from all sin; and it is this which makes way to the throne, and to him that sits on it; and is a special privilege enjoyed by those who come to Mount Zion, or into a Gospel church-state; there is always this laver to wash their garments in, and make them white: though this sea, being of glass, seems not so much designed to wash in; and therefore rather I think by it is meant the Gospel, compared to a *sea* for the deep things of God and mysteries of grace which are in it; to a *sea of glass*, because in it is beheld, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, of his person, office, and righteousness, as well as many other wondrous things; and to one like *crystal*, for the clearness, perspicuity, and evidence of the truths contained in it; and to a fixed, still, and quiet sea, because

^o Zohar in Numb. fol. 106. 3. & Raya Mechimus in ib. fol. 96. 3. T.

Bab Beraot, fol. 17. 1. Abot R. Nathan, fol. 1. 3. Caphter, fol. 82. 2. & 86. 2. & 108. 2. & Nishmat Chayim, fol. 30. 2.

it is the Gospel of peace, love, grace, and mercy, and brings peace, joy, and tranquility to troubled minds, when the law works wrath: but here are no tossing, foaming, raging waves of wrath, and fury, but all smooth, stable, solid, tranquil, and quiet. And this is said to be before the throne, where the rainbow of the covenant is, of which the Gospel is a transcript; and where the four-and-twenty elders, or members of churches be, for their delight and comfort; and where the seven spirits of God are, to furnish men with gifts to preach it; and where the four living creatures, or ministers of the word, have their place, who officiate in it. Agreeably to this figurative way of speaking, the Jews call ^p the law, *יְמִינָה דְאֹרְיָהָ*, *the sea of the law*, and the *sea of wisdom*; and frequently give the characters of such and such a doctor, as being very expert and conversant *בְּיַם הַדְּלִמּוֹד*, *in the sea of the Talmud*, or *doctrine*.^q The Alexandrian copy, the Compluten-tension edition, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, *there was as a sea of glass*, somewhat that looked like one. The word *glass* is left out in the Ethiopic version, but very aptly is it so described, the colour of the *sea* being sometimes green like that of glass. *And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts; or living creatures*, as the word may be better rendered, agreeably to Ezek. i. 5. to which reference is here had; and by whom are meant not the angels, though there are many things which agree with them; they are said to be the *four spirits of the heavens*, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth, Zech. vi. 5. They may be rightly called *living creatures*, since they live a most happy life in heaven; their situation is before the throne, and in the presence of God; and their being so sedulous, diligent, and watchful in doing the will of God, may be signified by their being *full of eyes behind, and before, and within*: their strength may be fitly expressed by the *lion*: their indefatigableness in the service of God, by the *ox*: their wisdom, prudence, and knowledge, by the *face of a man*; and their swiftness in obeying the divine commands by the *flying eagle*: their number of wings agrees with that of the *seraphim* in Isa. vi. 2. to which the allusion seems to be; and their work, in continually ascribing glory to God, suits with them: to which may be added, that the Jews often speak of four angels, *סְבִיב לְכַתָּן*, *round about his throne*, that is, the throne of God; whose names are Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael; the three first they place in this manner, Michael at his right hand, Uriel at his left, and Gabriel before him.^r Sometimes thus, Michael on his right hand, Gabriel on his left, Uriel before him, and Raphael behind him, and the holy blessed God in the middle; and they are expressly called ^s by them the four living creatures, meaning in Ezekiel's vision; and they make mention of the intellectual living creatures which are *סְרֻרִין לְכַתָּן*, *round about the throne*.^t Notwithstanding all this, the angels cannot be intended, because these four living creatures are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are distinguished from angels in ch. v. 8, 9, 10, 11. nor are the four Gospels, with the four evangelists, here meant; for whatever agreement may be fancied there is be-

tween these, and the likeness of the living creatures; as that Matthew may be signified by the creature that has the face of a man, because he begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Christ, as man; and Mark by the lion, because he begins his Gospel with the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and Luke by the ox, because he begins his Gospel with an account of Zacharias the priest, offering in the temple; and John by the eagle, because he begins his Gospel, the first face or leaf of it, in a very high style, and with the divinity of Christ: and with what truth soever it may be said of these that they are full of divine light and knowledge, and swiftly spread it in the world, and are continually giving glory to God; yet it cannot be said of them, with any propriety, as is said of these four living creatures, that they fall down before God, and worship him, and are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb: besides, these four are represented as calling to John at the opening of the first four seals, to come and see what was to be seen; and one of them is said to give to the seven angels the vials of wrath to pour out, ch. v. 8, 9, and vi. 1, 3, 5, 7. and xv. 7. to which may be added, that this sense is attended with this inconvenience, that it makes John to be one of the four creatures which he saw: nor are four particular apostles, as Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, pointed at, as others think; nor the pure apostolical church, for the church is represented by the four-and-twenty elders, and these four living creatures are distinguished from the hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion, in ch. xiv. 1, 3. Dr. Goodwin has a very ingenious thought upon these words, could it be supported; he thinks that these four living creatures design the four officers in the Christian church, the ruling elder, the pastor, the deacon, and the teacher; the ruling elder by the *lion*, who needs courage to deal with men in case of sins; the pastor by the *ox*, for his laboriousness in treading out the corn; the deacon by that which has the *face of a man*, it being necessary that he should be merciful and pitiful to the poor, as is the heart of a man; and the teacher by the *flying eagle*, who is quick to espy errors, and soars aloft into high mysteries: but then it should be observed, that there is no such officer as a ruling elder in the church, distinct from the pastor; and that the pastor and teacher are one; so that there are but two sorts of officers in the church, pastor, and deacon; see Phil. i. 1. to which may be added, that the four living creatures are all in the same situation, and are alike full of eyes, and have the same number of wings, and are employed in the same work; all which cannot be said equally of church-officers. By these four living creatures, I apprehend, we are to understand the ministers of the Gospel in general, in the successive ages of the church, to whom all the characters do well agree. And though they may not be all found in every one, at least not in all alike, yet they are in one or another of them, and in them as together considered. They are said to be *four*, being fewer in number than the members of the church, which are signified by the twenty-four elders, and yet a sufficient number; and in allusion to the four standards of the

^p Zohar in Numb. fol. 90. 3. & 92. 1. & in Lev. fol. 24. 3. & in Deut. fol. 118. 4. Tikkune Zohar apud Rittangel. not. in Jetzira, p. 133, 134.
^q Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 46. 2. & 47. 1, 2.

^r Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 1. Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4.

^s Zohar in Numb. fol. 91. 3.

^t Raya Mehimna in Zohar in ib. fol. 95. 4.

camp of Israel in the wilderness, to which there seems to be some reference in the whole of this account; as the tabernacle there was placed in the midst, so the throne of God here; as the priests and Levites were round about that, so the four-and-twenty elders here; as there were seven lamps, over-against the candlestick in the tabernacle, continually burning, so there are seven spirits here before the throne; and as there were four princes, who were standard-bearers, placed at the four corners of the camp, so here four living creatures, or ministers of the word, who are standard-bearers: the standard of Judah, with Issachar and Zabulon under him, was at the east of the tabernacle; and Ephraim, with Menasseh and Benjamin, at the west; Reuben, with Simeon and Gad, at the south; and Dan, with Asher and Nephthali, at the north; and the Jewish writers say*, that on Judah's standard was the figure of a lion, on Ephraim's the figure of an ox, on Reuben's the figure of a man, and on Dan's the figure of an eagle; and to which the four living creatures are likened here. And this number *four* may be the rather mentioned, with respect to the four parts of the world, and corners of the earth, whither the ministers of the Gospel are sent to preach, and whither their commission reaches; there being of the elect of God in all parts to be gathered in by their ministry: and very properly may they be called *living creatures*, because they are alive in themselves, being quickened by the spirit of God; or otherwise they would not be fit for their work; and because their work requires liveliness in the exercise of grace, and fervency in the performance of duty: and because they are a means in the hand of God of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints by the word of life, which they hold forth: the situation of these four living creatures agrees with them, who are said to be both in the midst of, and round about the throne, and so were nearer to it than the four-and-twenty elders, and were between that and them; as the ministers of the Gospel are set in the first place in the church; have nearness to God, and much of his presence, which is particularly promised them; and stand between God and the people, and receive from the one, and communicate to the other, and lead on the worship of God, as these four do; see ver. 9, 10. And these are said to be *full of eyes*; of spiritual light, and evangelical knowledge; and they have need of all the eyes they have to look into the Scriptures of truth, to search and pry into them, and find out the sense and meaning of them; to overlook the flock committed to them, they have taken the oversight of; to look to themselves, their doctrine, and their conversation; to spy enemies and dangers, and give notice of them to the churches; to look to God upon the throne, and to the Lamb in the midst of it, for fresh supplies of gifts and grace; and to see to it, that all their ministrations tend to the glory of God, the honour of a Redeemer, and the good of souls. And they had eyes *before and behind*; before them, to look to the word of God, and the deep things in it, which continually lies before them, and to the things that are yet to come relating

to the kingdom and church of Christ; and *behind* them, to observe how all sacrifices and types, predictions and promises, have had their accomplishment in Christ; they have eyes before them to watch over the church they are in the midst of, and which is the flock that is before them; and eyes behind, to guard against Satan and his emissaries, false teachers, who sometimes slyly and secretly come upon the back of them; they have eyes before them, to look to him that sits upon the throne, on whom their dependence, and from whom their expectations are; and they have eyes behind them, to look to the four-and-twenty elders, the members of churches, to whom they minister.

Ver. 7. *And the first beast was like a lion, &c.*] And this figure expresses the strength of the ministers of the word, the lion being the strongest among beasts, Prov. xxx. 30. to do the work they are called to, to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, and to bear the infirmities of the weak; and also it denotes their courage and boldness in preaching the Gospel of Christ, without fearing the faces of men, or of being afraid of their revilings: *and the second beast like a calf*: or ox, for so the word here used signifies in the Hellenistic language, and with the Septuagint interpreters, and agrees with Ezek. i. 10. and designs the laboriousness of Christ's faithful ministers in treading out the corn of Gospel labour, who labour in the word and doctrine, and are labourers with God; as also their humility, meekness, and patience in bearing insults, reproaches, and sufferings for Christ, and instructing those that oppose themselves: *and the third beast had a face as a man*; and points at the humanity and tender-heartedness, the wisdom, prudence, knowledge, and understanding, and the use of the reasoning faculty, together with a manly spirit in abiding by the Gospel at any rate; all which are so necessary in the ministers of the word. *And the fourth beast was like a flying eagle*; which sets forth the sagacity and penetration of Gospel ministers into the deep things of God, and mysteries of grace, and their readiness and swiftness to do the will of God, in publishing the everlasting Gospel; see ch. xiv. 6.

Ver. 8. *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, &c.*] As the *seraphim* in Isa. vi. 2. with two of which they might cover their faces as they did, testifying thereby their reverence of God, when in his presence; and with the other two cover their feet, signifying their sense of their sinfulness, weakness, and imperfection, in their conversation, even in their best works, and in the ministry of the word; and with the other two fly about, as denoting their readiness to minister the word and ordinances, to visit the members of the church, and do all good offices of love and service to them that lie in their power: and they were *full of eyes within*; to look into the sin and corruption of their own hearts, which is a means of keeping them humble amidst all their attainments, gifts, and graces, and of qualifying them to speak aptly of the cases of others; and they have eyes within, to look into and consult their own experience; for besides the word of God, which lies before them, they have a testimony in themselves of the truth of the doctrines of the Gos-

pel, which they do well to attend unto; and they have these inward eyes to look into that treasure which God has put into their earthen vessels, in order to bring out of it things new and old. *And they rest not day and night*: they give up themselves to the ministry of the word, and prayer; are wholly in these things, meditate on the word continually, and preach the Gospel in season, and out of season: *saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*; living under a continual sense of the holiness of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and how necessary holiness is in themselves, who bear the vessels of the Lord, and in the churches and house of God; taking care that all their doctrines are according to godliness, and serve to promote holiness of life and conversation; and also under a sense of the power of God, and of their need of it, to carry them through their work, and make their ministry successful; and of the eternity and immutability of God, which is a wonderful support unto them amidst all the difficulties and troubles that attend them. The word *holy* is three times used here, as by the *seraphim* in Isa. vi. 3. and in some copies 'tis repeated six times, and in others nine times, as in the Complutensian edition.

Ver. 9. *And when these beasts give glory, &c.*] When they give God the glory of all his perfections, covenant, and promises, and of all the gifts and grace bestowed on them, and of the success of their ministry; and in it glorify Father, Son, and Spirit, who bear their respective parts in the business of salvation; and ascribe to each their due glory in election, redemption, and sanctification: *and honour*; in the several parts of religious worship performed by them; and not with their lips only, but with their hearts also: *and thanks*; for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, bestowed on them, and on the saints: *even to him that sat on the throne*; God the father, ver. 3. *who liveth for ever and ever*; he who is the living God, and will always continue so.

Ver. 10. *The four-and-twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, &c.*] The ministers of the Gospel begin the worship of God, and lead in it, who are the four living creatures; when the members of churches, who are the four-and-twenty elders, follow, and approach the divine Being in a most humble manner: *and worship him that liveth for ever and ever*; in spirit, and in truth, with faith and fervency, in every

part of duty they are directed to: *and cast their crowns before the throne*; signifying, that they received them from him that sits upon it, being by the grace of God what they are; and that they are unworthy to wear them in his presence, being but unprofitable servants in all they do; and hereby also acknowledging their subjection to him as their King and lawgiver. Something like this the Jews relate of the family above; they say, "when the holy blessed God ascends the glorious throne of judgment, the whole family above tremble; and when they see the holy blessed God, they take their crowns from off their heads—and pray and seek mercy for Israel; and immediately he ascends the throne of mercy." And such like actions have been done by kings and princes to one another, in token of subjection. Thus Tigranes, king of Armenia, fell down at the feet of Pompey, and cast his crown from his head, which Pompey replaced; and having commanded him certain things, ordered him to enjoy his kingdom: so Herod meeting Augustus Cæsar at Rhode, when he entered the city took off his crown, and after a speech made to him, with which Cæsar was pleased, he set it on him again. *Saying*; as follows.

Ver. 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental ones, read, *thou art worthy, O Lord, and our God, to receive*; that is, to receive the acknowledgment and ascription of glory, honour, and power; for otherwise God cannot be said to receive these from his creatures, than by their confessing and declaring that they belong unto him: and that for the reasons following, *for thou hast created all things*; the whole universe, the heavens, the earth, and sea, and all that in them are: *and for thy pleasure they are and were created*; God is the first cause, and the last end of all things; by his power they are made, and according to his will, and for his own glory, and therefore is worthy of such a doxology; see Prov. xvi. 4. Rom. xi. 36. What is here said is contrary to a notion imbibed by the Jews, that the world was not created but for the sake of the Israelites: and elsewhere they say, "the world was not created but for David; and one says for Moses; and Rabbi Jochanan says for the Messiah;" which last is truest.

C H A P. V.

THIS chapter contains the vision of the sealed book, and the opening of it by Christ, which occasions universal joy among all ranks and sorts of creatures. The book is described by the place where it was, in the right hand of God; by the uncommon manner in which it was written within and without; and by the seven seals it was sealed with, ver. 1. next follows a proclamation made by a mighty angel, with a loud

voice, to find out a person worthy and able to open this book, and loose its seals, ver. 2. upon which a declaration is made, that none could be found in heaven, earth, or hell, ver. 3. which had such an effect upon John, that it set him a-weeping, ver. 4. but was comforted by one of the elders suggesting, that there was a person that could, and would do it, whom he calls the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the root of David,

^v Raziell, fol. 45. 2.

^z Cicero, Orat. pro Sextio. p. 904.

^f Joseph. Antiqu. l. 15. c. 6. sect. 6, 7.

^z Zohar in Exod. fol. 6. 3. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 109. 1. & 161. 2.

^a T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

which are names of Christ, ver. 5. of which he was assured by what he quickly saw, namely, the same person the elder spoke of, described by his position, standing between the throne, and the living creatures, and elders; and by his similitude and likeness, as a Lamb that had been lately slain, with seven horns and eyes in him; and by what he did, he went and took the book out of the right hand of God, his father, ver. 6, 7. This occasioned a general joy among all kind of creatures; first among the four living creatures, and four-and-twenty elders, who are described by what they had, harps and golden vials, the one for praise, the other for prayer; and by what they did, they fell down in a worshipping posture before the Lamb, and sung the new song of redeeming love to him; in which they ascribe worthiness to him, to take the book and open its seals; declare their redemption unto God, by his blood, out of all nations of the earth; take notice of the honour done them by him, in making them kings and priests to God; and express their assurance that they shall reign with him on earth, ver. 8, 9, 10. and next an innumerable company of angels join the living creatures and elders, in a doxology or ascription of glory to him, ver. 11, 12. yea, every creature in heaven and earth, upon it, and under it, and in the sea, are introduced as giving glory both to him that sat upon the throne, and to the Lamb, ver. 13. and the whole is closed by the living creatures saying *Amen*, to all, and by the elders prostrating themselves, and worshipping the living and eternal God, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. *And I saw on the right hand of him that sat on the throne, &c.*] Of this throne, and who it was that sat upon it, see the note on ch. iv. 2. and who had in his right hand, or *at*, or *upon* his right hand, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, lying by, or near his right hand; though according to ver. 7. the book appears to have been in his right hand, as our version, and others render it: *a book written within, and on the backside, sealed with seven seals*; this book was very much like Ezekiel's roll, Ezek. ii. 9, 10. which was written *אחור פנים*, *within* and *without*, before and behind, and indeed it was in the form of a roll: the manner of writings in those times was on sheets of parchment, which, when finished, were rolled up in the form of a cylinder; hence a book is called a *volume*. This book seems to have consisted of seven rolls, to which was annexed seven seals; and there being not room enough within, contrary to the common way of writing, some things were written upon the backside of the outermost roll; and such writings were by the ancients called *Opistographi*; and the word is used by them sometimes for very prolix writings^b. By this book some understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which were written in rolls; see Heb. x. 5. Luke iv. 17, 20. and which came out of the right hand of God, and were given forth by him; and being written within, and on the backside, may denote the fulness of them, they containing a variety of matter, useful and profitable, for different purposes; or else the literal and mystical, or spiritual meaning of some parts of them: or, as others think,

the more clear explanation of the books of the Old Testament, by those of the New, is meant; and its being sealed may signify the authentickness of those writings, having the seal of God's truth, and the impress of his wisdom, power, and goodness on them; and also the hidden sense and meaning of them, they being, especially in the prophetic and spiritual part of them, a sealed book to natural men, and of which Christ is the truest and best interpreter; but then this book was opened, and looked into, and read, and, in some measure, understood, even by the Old-Testament saints, and had been before this time expounded by Christ, concerning himself; yea, he had opened the understandings of his disciples to understand those Scriptures, and had counted them, and others, worthy to open and explain this book to others, and had sent them into all the world for this purpose; and for the same reasons it can't be understood of the Gospel published to Jews and Gentiles, the one within, and the other without; rather therefore the book of God's decrees is here meant, which respects all creatures, and all occurrences and events in the whole world, from the beginning to the end of time; and so Ezekiel's roll, according to the Targum on Ezek. ii. 10. which was written before and behind, signified that which was *שְׂרִיטָא מִן שְׂרִיטָא*, *from the beginning*, and which *דַּעֲתֵי לְמוֹרֵי בְּסוּפָא*, *shall be in the end*, or hereafter. This book God holds in his right hand, as the rule and measure of all he does, and of the government of the world, and which he constantly fulfils and executes; and its being written *within* and *without* may denote the perfection and comprehensiveness of it, it reaching to all creatures and things, even the most minute; and its being sealed shews the certainty of its fulfilment, and the secrecy and hiddenness of it, until accomplished; though it seems best of all to understand it of that part of God's decrees relating to the church and world, particularly the Roman empire, which from henceforward, to the end of time, was to be fulfilled; and so is no other than the book of the Revelation itself, exhibited in the following scenes and visions; and this may be truly said to be in the right hand of God, and from thence taken by the Lamb, it being the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, ch. i. 1. and may be said to be written, both *within* and *on the backside*, to shew that it contains a large account of things, a long train of events to be accomplished; as also to signify, that it regards the church, and the members of it, who are those that are within, in the several ages of time, and the world, or those that are without; for this book-prophecy regards both the state of the Roman empire, and of the Christian church; and its being sealed shews the authentickness, certainty, and also the obscurity of what was contained therein; and with seven seals, with respect to the seven periods of time, in which the prophecies in it are to be fulfilled.

Ver. 2. *And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, &c.*] This was not the increased angel, Jesus Christ; for he is after spoken of as the lion of the tribe of Judah, and as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, but a created one; though who he was,

^b Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Hier. l. 2. c. 30. & Salmuth in Pasciroll. rer. Memorab. par. 1. tit. 42. p. 145.

whether Gabriel, as some say, because his name signifies the strong or mighty One of God, is not material to be known; angels are said to be mighty, and to excel in strength: this is called so here, chiefly with respect to his voice, which he, by reason of his great strength, exerted so loudly, as to be heard by all the creatures in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; however, this was not John the Baptist, but if a minister of the Gospel, rather some one since, making the following proclamation: *who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?* suggesting, that if there was any such person, that he was desired to come, and do it; and it seems, that he must not only be one of power and ability, but of dignity and authority, a person of greatness and worth, from whence his ability arises; as he ought to be that can engage his heart to draw nigh to God, and take a book out of his right hand, this mysterious book of the Revelation, as it was indeed whilst sealed; and open and explain it to others, unseal it or exhibit it, as it afterwards was in the following scenes and visions, and give a view of all that is contained in it; and not only so, but fulfil and accomplish all the prophecies in it; and who can, or is worthy to do all this, but he that sits at the right hand of God, and who is God as well as man? and this proclamation was made to stir up an earnest desire in John, and all the saints he represents, to know what was in this book; and to shew the impotence of all creatures to make any discovery of it; and to illustrate, and set off with a greater foil, the glory, excellency, ability, and worth of Jesus Christ. There seems to be an allusion to the president of the temple calling to the priests under him, to attend to the several parts of service assigned them, saying unto them, *מי שזוכה, whosoever is worthy, let him do so and so*.

Ver. 3. *And no man in heaven, &c.*] Or no one in heaven, whether angels, or the souls of departed saints; neither the one nor the other know any thing of what is to come, until it is revealed unto them: *nor in earth*; among all the men on earth, even those of the greatest sagacity and penetration, the wise, the prudent, the scribe, the disputer of this world, such who are most conversant with books, and have the greatest reach into the things of nature, or of grace: *neither under the earth*; the damned buried there, good or bad; which may be said agreeably to the notions of the ancient Jews, who believed the immortality of souls, and that they were rewarded or punished, *υπο χθονος, under the earth*, according to their virtue or vice in life^d: or the devils in hell; or whoever on the earth are influenced by them, as magicians, sorcerers, soothsayers, and necromancers: *was able to open the book, neither to look thereon*; or in it, so as to read it, understand it, and shew to John what was in it; for the sense is, there was no creature in heaven, earth, or hell, who were masters of the deepest knowledge, and made pretensions to any, that were able to foresee and foretell things to come; or to exhibit the prophecies in this book, and represent them to John in the manner they afterwards were, and much less to accomplish them.

Ver. 4. *And I wept much, &c.*] Not so much on

his own account, because he feared his curiosity would not be gratified, and that strong desire answered, which were raised in him upon sight of the book, and increased by the angel's proclamation; but for the sake of the church of God, whose representative he was, and to whom the knowledge of this book, and the things contained in it, he judged must be very useful and profitable. The Ethiopic version reads, *and many wept*; many of those that were about the throne, as well as John: *because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon*; because there was no creature in heaven, earth, or under it, that were of dignity and authority, as well as of ability, to open the book by unsealing it; and read and deliver out the prophecies in it upon the taking off of every seal; and so not to look into it, and foresee and foretell what was hereafter to come to pass, in the church and world: the phrase of being worthy to look on it seems to be Jewish; of the book of the generation of Adam, Gen. v. 1. the Jews say^c, that "it descended to the first man, and by it he knew the wisdom which is above; and this book came to the sons of God, the wise men of the age, *מין דוכי לאשנחא ביה, whosoever is worthy to look in it, knows by it the wisdom which is from above.*" This whole verse is left out in the Alexandrian copy; and the phrase, *to read*, is neither in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions.

Ver. 5. *And one of the elders said unto me, &c.*] The Ethiopic version reads, *one of these elders*; that is, one of the four-and-twenty elders that were round about the throne; not the first of the four-and-twenty books of the Old Testament; nor the patriarch Jacob, because of the prophecy concerning Shiloh, Judah's son, which stands in Gen. xlix. 10. nor Moses, who spoke of the Messiah as the great prophet of the church; nor John the Baptist, who pointed out the Lamb of God; these are all fancies and conjectures. It was one of the members of the Christian church, who was near the throne of God, had communion with him, and knowledge of his will, who in this visionary way is represented as comforting John under his sorrow and concern, and giving him information: and sometimes persons of superior abilities may receive instruction from meaner persons, as did Apollon from Aquila and Priscilla: the same said unto John, *weep not; cease sorrowing, don't be cast down, nor despair: behold the lion of the tribe of Judah*; by whom is meant Christ, who, according to the flesh, was to come of the tribe of Judah; and certain it is, that our Lord sprang from thence: and he is said to be the lion of that tribe, in allusion to the prophecy concerning Judah in Gen. xlix. 9. where he is said to be a lion, an old lion stooping down and couching, and on whose standard was the figure of a lion. Christ may be compared to one, because of his great strength, he being the mighty God, the able Saviour, and strong Redeemer, and protector of his church and people, and the avenger of their enemies; and because of his courage and intrepidity when he engaged with Satan, and his principalities and powers, when he bore the sins of

^c Miana Tamid, c. 1. sect. 4. & c. 5. sect. 4. 5.

^d Joseph. Antiqu. 1. 19. c. 1. sect. 3.

^c Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2.

his people, sustained his father's wrath, and the terrors of death set themselves in array against him; and because of the fierceness of his wrath, and fury against the wicked, and for his generosity and lenity towards those that stoop unto him, and obey him. So the Jews say^f, that "of Messiah, the son of David, who comes forth from Judah, is it said, Gen. xlix. 9. "*Judah is a lion's whelp*;" and a little after, Messiah, the son of David, who is אַרְיֵהוּ, a lion, shall be on his right hand, and Messiah, the son of Joseph, who is an ox, on his left hand; so the word of the Lord frequently, in the Chaldee paraphrase, is said to be a lion^g. *The root of David*; in like manner is Christ called the root of Jesse in Isa. xi. 10. and the meaning either is, that he is a branch that springs out of the roots of Jesse and David, is David's son and offspring, according to his human nature; see ch. xxii. 16. or that he is David's Lord, according to his divine nature: and the metaphor of a root well agrees with him as Mediator, he being hidden out of sight, and unknown to a natural man; and may denote his meanness in his state of humiliation, when he was as a root out of a dry ground; and because he is the root from whence all the elect of God spring, in whom they have their being, and by whom they are bore and supported, and from whom are derived to them all the blessings of grace, all their spiritual life, holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance. Now this illustrious Person, so described, *hath prevailed*; or overcome all difficulties, being one of worth and value, of great authority and ability: *to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof*; and deliver out all the prophecies in it, and fulfil them; and this through the merits of his blood, and in consequence of his sufferings and death: hence, in the next verse, he is represented as a lamb as it had been slain; and the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders, put his worthiness to take the book, and open it, upon his having been slain, and having redeemed them by his blood, ver. 9. And as he, upon his resurrection from the dead, had all power in heaven and in earth given him, as Mediator, for the protection of his church, so he was deserving; and it was fit and necessary that he, as the great prophet of the church, should have and deliver out the prophecies concerning the state and condition of his redeemed ones in all ages.

Ver. 6. *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, &c.*] These words, *in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts*, are left out in the Syriac version: *and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb*; John, upon the intimation given him by the elder, lift up his eyes, and with great earnestness looked about, and saw the person he pointed at, though not in the form of a lion, but in the appearance of a *lamb*, to which Christ, both in the Old and New Testament, is often compared; and that very aptly, for his innocence and purity of nature; for his harmless and inoffensive conversation; and for his meek and humble deportment throughout the whole of his life; and for his patience at the time of his sufferings and death; and for his usefulness both for food and clothing to his people; and chiefly for his sacrifice for them, typified both by the passover-lamb, and by

the lambs of the daily sacrifice: hence it follows, *as it had been slain*; or *as having been slain*; Christ had been really slain by the wicked hands of the Jews, and not in appearance only; the *as*, here, is not a note of mere similitude and likeness, but of reality and truth; see John i. 14. Phil. ii. 7. but he was now risen from the dead, and therefore is said to have been slain some time before, though now alive; and he appeared to have the marks of his sufferings and death upon him, as he had after his resurrection the print of the nails and spear, in his hands, feet, and side; and he was as a lamb that had been newly or lately slain: and it may denote the continued efficacy of his blood, to cleanse from all sin, and of his sacrifice to take it away; he was as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, with respect to the continual virtue of his blood and sacrifice; and he will be, on the same account, the Lamb as it had been slain, unto the end of the world. The position and situation of this Lamb were, *he stood in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders*; he *stood*, being risen from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, but was not as yet set down upon the throne with his father, but was very near it; he stood before it, ready to be placed upon it, and receive his power and his kingdom; he stood between the throne, and between the living creatures, and the elders, being the Mediator between God, and his church, and people; he appeared before the throne for them, as their advocate, and stood ready to give them all the assistance, and to do them all the good he could: and this his situation may also denote, that he is continually in view, is always in the sight of God, as the Lamb that had been slain; his blood is carried within the veil, is sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and is always in sight, and calls for peace and pardon; and God the father always looks upon it, and to his righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction, on account of his people: moreover, his being in the midst of the four living creatures, and elders, may signify his presence in his churches, and with his ministers, which he has promised them to the end of the world. This Lamb is further represented, *as having seven horns*; it is very unusual for a lamb to have horns, and especially seven: these horns are expressive of the power of Christ, of his dominion and government, even of his kingly power and authority; so kings are signified by horns in Dan. viii. 20, 21. and vii. 24. and Christ himself is called the horn of David, and the horn of salvation, Psal. cxxii. 17. Luke i. 69. and signify, that upon his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Christ; and the number *seven* expresses the fulness and perfection of his power and authority, having, as Mediator, all power in heaven and in earth given him; and what is above all power, might, dominion, and every name in this world, and that to come; and may have some relation to the seven states of his churches in so many periods of time; and shew not only that he has power sufficient to protect and defend his people in all times, and to push at and destroy his and their enemies, but to open the then sealed book, and unloose the seals: and as another qualification for this

^f Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49, 4.

^g Targum in Hos. v. 14. & xi. 10. & xiii. 7.

work, it follows, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth; which some understand of angels, and of a sufficient number of them, which belong to Christ, and are at his command, and who are ready to do his will, and to be sent forth by him, into the several parts of the earth, to execute his pleasure: but these rather design the spirit of God and his gifts, which Christ received without measure, both in his human nature, at his incarnation, and after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension; which he bestowed on his apostles and ministering servants, whom he sent forth into all the world, to preach his Gospel with them; and which he has, more or less, ever since continued to do. The Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, and this is the spirit of God which is sent into all the earth; see the note on ch. i. 4. these seven eyes may design the perfect knowledge of Christ, his foresight of future events, and his all-wise providence, which is always and everywhere concerned to fulfil and accomplish them; so that he is every way qualified to take the book of future events, as to the church and world, and reveal it, open and explain it, and fulfil the things contained in it; see Zech. iii. 9. and iv. 10.

Ver. 7. *And he came, &c.*] He drew nigh to the throne of God, he engaged his heart to approach unto him, and came up even to his seat, which a mere creature, without a Mediator, cannot do: and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne; see the note on ver. 1. it being given unto him, as in ch. i. 1. and a commission and authority to open it, and make it manifest to others, and to accomplish the several events, in the several periods of time, it points unto.

Ver. 8. *And when he had taken the book, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin version reads, *when he had opened the book, very wrongly*; for the opening of it by unloosing the seals, one after another, is hereafter mentioned, in ch. vi. but when it was observed, that the Lamb took the book, and his commission to open, unseal, and fulfil it, the four beasts, and four-and-twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb; by way of religious worship and adoration of him; which shews that he was not a mere creature, who assumed human nature, suffered, and died, and is the Mediator between God and men, but is truly God, and is the proper object of worship; and so he is regarded by all his faithful ministers, and true churches, which are here signified by the four living creatures, and four-and-twenty elders; who are represented as *having every one of them harps*; which were instruments of music, and with which the saints formerly used to praise God, Psal. xxxiii. 2. and so may here intend the praises and thanksgivings of the saints, of every one of them, greater or lesser, upon the present occasion; having their hearts in right tune, making melody with them to the Lord, and giving thanks unto him for all their blessings, temporal and spiritual, and particularly for the Lamb, and his worthiness to open the book, and unloose the seals: and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints; this is said in allusion to the golden censers

full of incense, which ascended upwards, and was of a sweet smell; the vessels on the shew-bread table, in which incense was put, are by Josephus^b called *golden vials*, as here; his words are, upon the loaves were put two *φιάλαι χρυσίας, golden vials*, full of incense: the prayers of the saints are compared to *odours*, or *incense*, as the word may be rendered, and as they are called, Psal. cxli. 2. partly because as incense goes upwards, so do they go up to God, and are received, regarded, and had in remembrance by him; and partly because as incense is of a sweet smell, so the prayers of the saints, put up in the name and faith of Christ, are very grateful and acceptable to God: the *golden vials* said to be full of them, may design the hearts of believers, in which they first are, and from whence they proceed; true prayer is that which is inwrought in the soul, and comes from the heart, even from a heart pure like gold, purified by faith in the blood of Christ, a true heart, that asks in faith, nothing wavering; such as are really saints, true believers in Christ, are praying souls; they are full of prayers for themselves and others; they pray always, and for all saints: this makes nothing for praying to angels and saints departed; for these prayers were their own, and not others; and besides, these four living creatures, and four-and-twenty elders, were not angels, for they are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are distinguished from angels in the following verses; nor the saints in heaven, but ministers and churches on earth, and who were to reign with Christ on earth, ver. 10. it may be observed, that the Jews sometimes represent prayer in such-like figures as here; "prayer (they say) ascends with those spices which are mentioned in Cant. iv. 14. and at the time that prayer ascends it is perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and of this the holy blessed God asks, *who is this that comes up, &c.*" Cant. iii. 6." and they say, prayer is greater than all offerings^k. See ch. viii. 3.

Ver. 9. *And they sung a new song, &c.*] Upon a new occasion and subject, redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and his worthiness to open the sealed book; and in distinction from the old song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red sea; and this was a most famous and excellent song, an unheard-of one, and which none could learn, or sing, but the redeemed of the Lamb: *saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof.* The Arabic version reads, *thou, O Lamb*; the reasons why they ascribe such fitness, ability, and dignity to him, are as follow: *for thou wast slain*; by men, and for the sins of men; whereby, as he became worthy in his priestly office to take away the sins of his people, and to have all the glory of their salvation, and, in his kingly office, to have all power and authority, and to be exalted above every name, so, in his prophetic office, to have perfect knowledge, as man and Mediator, of all the future events that were to befall his church and people, and to make them known, and fulfil them: *and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*; this shews, that as the four living creatures, and four-and-twenty elders, were not angels,

^b Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 6.

^c Raya Mechimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 48. 3.

^k Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 40. 3.

so they were not the representatives of the Jewish church; or the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament; nor even the apostles of the New; for they were all Jews, and could not be said to be redeemed out of every tongue, nation, and people; and also that not the Jews only were redeemed by Christ, but the Gentiles also, and not all mankind, or every individual of human nature, but some out of all the nations of the earth; for God has chosen some, both of Jews and Gentiles, and these Christ has redeemed; and therefore the Gospel is sent unto all nations, that these among them may be called and saved. This redemption of them supposes them to have been in a state of slavery and bondage, as they are by nature, to sin, Satan, and the law; and signifies a deliverance from such a state, which Christ has obtained, not barely by power, but by price, as the word here used signifies, and may be rendered, *and hast bought us*; and the price with which he has bought them is his own blood, and which is of full and sufficient value, it being not only the blood of a man, of an innocent man, but of one that is God as well as man: and this price was paid to God, and to his justice, against whom men have sinned, whose law they have broken, and whose justice they have injured and affronted, that he might reconcile them to God, bring them near to him, and that they might serve him in righteousness and true holiness.

Ver. 10. *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests, &c.*] See the note on ch. i. 6. The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition, and the Syriac, Arabic, and the Ethiopic versions, read *them*, instead of *us*: *and we shall reign on the earth*; meaning not merely in a spiritual sense, through grace reigning over sin and corruption, through Satan being bruised under their feet, and through the victory they have in Christ over the world, but in the millennium state, in the thousand-years' reign with Christ in the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; see Rev. xx. 4, 5, 6. The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition, Syriac and Arabic versions, read, *they shall reign*.

Ver. 11. *And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels, &c.*] Immaterial spirits, made by Christ, and worshippers of him, and ministering spirits to him and his, the holy and elect angels, who are confirmed in their state by Christ; these John beheld in a visionary way, and heard the voices and articulate sounds formed by them; and there were many of them; how many there are, or were here, cannot be said; we read of a multitude of the heavenly host that appeared at the incarnation of Christ, and of more than twelve legions of angels, that Christ could have had of his father for a word speaking, at the time of his apprehension, who would have rescued him out of the hands of his enemies; yea, that company is innumerable. The Syriac version reads, *as the voice of many waters*: these were round about the throne: were near to God, stood before him, beheld his face, hearkened to his voice, and observed his orders: so with the Jews, the four angels, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, are said¹ to be סביב לכסא, round about his throne, the throne of God: it follows here, *and the beasts and the elders*; the sense

is not, that John heard the voice of the living creatures, and of the elders, as well as, and together with, the voice of many angels; for he had heard their voice and song before, but that the angels whose voice he heard, as they were round about the throne, so they were round about the living creatures, and round about the elders: the angels are near unto, and encompass the ministers of the Gospel; they are about them, and give them intimations and discoveries of the mind and will of God, as an angel did to John, Rev. i. 1. and another to Paul, Acts xxvii. 23, 24. and sometimes direct them where to go and preach the Gospel, as in Acts xvi. 9, 10. and surround them for their safety and protection: so horses and chariots of fire, by whom angels are meant, were round about the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 16, 17. and they were also round about the elders, the churches, and particular believers; angels and saints are near to one another; and angels are very friendly to the saints, and do them many good offices; they all belong to the same family, and are social worshippers of God; the angels are the guards that encamp round about them that fear the Lord, and often protect them from enemies and dangers: and it may be observed, that the saints are nearer the Lamb and the throne than the angels be; according to this account, there was a throne, and one that sat on it, who is the living God; nearest to the throne stood the Lamb; next to the Lamb stood the four living creatures, the ministers of the Gospel; next to them the elders, or churches, and members thereof; and in the outermost ring, and as encompassing all, stood the ministering angels, they being servants; whereas the saints are the heirs of salvation, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, and therefore nearer him: *and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*; that is, an innumerable company of them; a like number is mentioned in Dan. vii. 10. to which this seems to refer; see Psal. lxxviii. 17. The Jews speak of nine hundred and six thousand millions of ministering angels, that stand continually before the Lord^m.

Ver. 12. *Saying with a loud voice, &c.*] To signify their zeal, fervour, and affection for Christ, and to make a free, open, and public acknowledgment of him, and that all might hear of his worthiness, and of the praise and glory that were due unto him: *worthy is the Lamb that was slain*; they address him as the Lamb, and not as the Lord of lords, and their Lord; and speak of him as having been slain, and celebrate the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings and death, and ascribe his worthiness to receive glory and honour thereunto; but do not add, as the living creatures and elders do, *and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*; because, though they were the subjects and objects of confirming grace by Christ, yet not of redeeming grace: it follows, *to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*; as the book had seven seals to be unloosed, and Christ had seven horns of power and ability to loose them, and fulfil the things contained in it, and seven eyes to look into it, and discover and reveal what is in it, so here are seven words made use of, to

¹ Benmidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 1.

^m Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 69. 1.

express the praise that was due unto him; a like number is used by the angels in ch. vii. 12. and when he is said to be worthy to receive these, it is not to be understood of his receiving the things themselves, but of the praise of them; and that these are to be observed in him, and to be ascribed to him: power belongs to him, as he is the mighty God; and as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; and as risen from the dead, and as exalted at God's right hand, and made or declared Lord and Christ; having all power in heaven and in earth: *riches* may well be ascribed to him, who has all the perfections of deity in him; whose are the heavens and the earth, and the fulness thereof; and who, as Mediator, is heir of all things, and has both the riches of grace and glory in his hands: *wisdom* also is his; he is wisdom itself, he is the only wise God; and he is the author of all wisdom, natural and spiritual; and, as Mediator, he has the spirit of wisdom and knowledge resting on him, and the treasures of both hid in him: and *strength* may be well attributed to him, which he has shewn in making and supporting all things; in saving and redeeming his people with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm; and in subduing and vanquishing all his and their enemies; and in giving strength to them to discharge their duty, resist temptations, oppose corruptions, and do their generation-work: *honour* is due to him, as the Son of God, he being to be honoured equally as the Father; and who, as man and Mediator, is crowned with glory and honour: *glory* is what ought to be ascribed unto him, even the glory of true and proper deity, and also the glory of salvation; and who, as Mediator, had a glory promised him, and which was due unto him upon his having finished his work, and which he now enjoys: wherefore *blessing* is to be given to him, who is God over all, blessed for evermore, in himself and the perfections of his nature; in whom all spiritual blessings are, and in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed; and to whom praise and thanks are to be rendered, for the blessings of pardoning, justifying, and redeeming grace, and for all other.

Ver. 13. *And every creature which is in heaven, &c.*] Animate or inanimate, angels, and the spirits of just

men made perfect, sun, moon, and stars, and the fowls of the air: *and on the earth*; men and beasts, and every creeping thing, mountains, hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars: *and under the earth*; in the bowels of it, metals, minerals, and every thing of that kind: *and such as are in the sea*; that sail in ships upon the mighty waters, and fishes great and small that are therein: *and all that are in them*; in Heaven, earth, and sea: *heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*; all creatures in their way praise God, and are subservient to the glory and interest of Christ, and are the occasion of glorifying of both; and even the enemies of Christ, wicked men and devils, will be obliged to own Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the father, as well as angels and saints; and the same glory and honour which are given to the one are ascribed to the other, which shews the proper deity of Christ, and his equality with the father. The Syriac version reads, *and I heard him who sitteth upon the throne, saying, to the Lamb be given blessing and honour, &c.* with which compare John v. 22, 23.

Ver. 14. *And the four beasts said, Amen, &c.*] Giving their assent to what the angels and every creature said, and expressing their desires and wishes that so it might be, and also their faith, that so it was, and would be: *and the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever*; either God the father, who sat upon the throne, and is so described, ch. iv. 9, 10; or else the Lamb who had been slain, and was now alive, and lives for evermore; or both of them, for the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Arabic versions, omit the words *him that liveth for ever and ever*; and leave it to be understood of either of them, or both; and the Ethiopic version reads, *and the elders worshipped him*; as the four living creatures and four-and-twenty elders led the chorus, and begun the song, so they close it, as being the persons more immediately concerned in the death and sufferings of the Lamb, and redemption by him, and in the sealed book, and in the things contained in it; the seals of which are next opened, and an account is given of them in some following chapters.

C H A P. VI.

THIS chapter contains the vision of the opening six of the seals of the sealed book, by the Lamb, and of the events following thereupon. The preparation to the vision of the first seal is in ver. 1. the Lamb opens it, John hears a noise like thunder, and one of the living creatures bids him come and see; upon which he saw a horse, of a white colour, and a rider on it, who is described by a bow and crown given him, and by the victory he obtained, ver. 2. at the opening of the second seal, the second living creature invites him as before; and he sees a horse, of a red colour, with a rider on it, described by his power, to take peace from the earth, and suffer men to kill one another, and by a great sword given him, ver. 3, 4. at the opening of the third seal, the third living creature addresses him in like manner as the other; and he sees a horse, of a black colour, and a

rider on it, with a pair of balances in his hands; and hears a voice from among the four living creatures, expressing dearth of provisions, and a charge not to hurt the oil and wine, ver. 5, 6. at the opening of the fourth seal, the fourth living creature speaks to John, as the rest; and he sees a horse, of a pale colour, and a rider on it, described by his name, *Death*, by his follower, *hell*, or the *grave*, and by his power to destroy a fourth part of the earth with the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, ver. 7, 8. at the opening of the fifth seal, John saw the souls of the martyrs, under the altar; hears their cry for vengeance; observes that white robes were given them, and that they were bid to be quiet until the slaying and suffering time of their brethren was over, ver. 9, 10, 11. at the opening of the sixth seal follow an earthquake,

strange changes in the heavens, the sun becomes black as sackcloth, the moon becomes as blood, the stars fall, and the heaven itself departs, and every island and mountain are moved out of their places, ver. 12, 13, 14. the kings and great men of the earth, and even all sorts of men, upon this, fly to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of God the father, that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, the opener of the sealed book; giving this as a reason for it, that the time of his great wrath was come, and none could stand before him, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *And I saw, when the Lamb opened one of the seals, &c.*] Of the sealed book; one of the seven seals of it, as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions, and the Complutensian edition; that is, the first; so *one* is used for *first* in Gen. i. 5. Matt. xxviii. 1. and as appears from the following seals being called second, third, fourth, &c. These seals express events to be fulfilled; and therefore cannot respect the steps towards, and the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, and that itself, which had been accomplished some years before the vision of the seals; and which vision would have been needless: and these are called seals, because they were sealed among God's treasure, or were resolved on, and decreed by him; and because they were hidden and unknown until they came to pass; and when they were come to pass, they were pledges of what God would do in the destruction of Rome Papal, as here in the destruction of Rome Pagan: for these seals, at least the first six of them, concern the Pagan empire, and the state of the church in it; and are so many gradual steps to the ruin of it, and to the advancing and increasing of the kingdom of Christ; and these, with the seven trumpets, which the last seal introduces, reach from the times of the apostles to the end of time, as appears from ch. x. 6, 7. Now the opening of these seals is the revealing of the events signified by them, and expressed in the hieroglyphics here made use of, and the fulfilment of them; and *I heard as it were the noise of thunder*; a voice very loud and sonorous, exciting the attention of John: *one of the four beasts saying, come and see*; this was the first of the four living creatures, for the word *one* is used in the same sense as in the foregoing clause; and this creature was like to a lion, ch. iv. 7. wherefore his voice was loud, as when a lion roars, ch. x. 3. and is fitly compared to thunder: there is no need to look out for any particular person, as intended by this living creature; or to conclude him to be Peter, as Grotius, who was dead before this seal was opened; or Quadratus, Aristides, and Justin Martyr, who courageously appeared in the Christian cause, and made very excellent apologies for it, with success, since these lived under the second seal; it is enough in general to understand the ministers of the Gospel, who, as sons of thunder, loudly and publicly preached the Gospel, and, as lions, boldly and bravely defended, and took notice of the power and providence of God in succeeding their ministry, and in weakening the kingdom of Satan in the Gentile world, and particularly in the Roman empire;

and therefore are represented as calling to John to *come and see*; observe and take notice of the following hieroglyphic, representing the success of the Gospel ministry. *וּמַרְאֵהוּ, come and see*, is a phrase often used by the Jews, to stir up attention to what is about to be said; see the note on John i. 46.

Ver. 2. *And I saw, and behold a white horse, &c.*] Representing the ministration of the Gospel in the times of the apostles, which were just now finishing, John being the last of them, who saw this vision; and the horse being a swift, majestic, and warlike creature, and fearless of opposition and war, may design the swift progress of the Gospel in the world, the majesty, power, and authority with which it came, and the opposition it met with, and which was bore down before it; and its *white* colour may denote the purity of Gospel truths, the peace it proclaims, the joy it brings, and the triumph that attends it, on account of victories obtained by it, and which is afterwards suggested: white horses were used in triumphs, in token of victory²; a white horse, in a dream, is a good sign with the Jews³; and Astrampsyclus says⁴, a vision of white horses is an apparition of angels; and so one of those angels which the Jews suppose to have the care of men, and the preservation of them, is said⁵ to ride by him, and at his right hand, upon a white horse; but the rider here is not an angel, but the head of all principality and power: *and he that sat on him had a bow*; with arrows; the bow is the word of the Gospel, and the arrows the doctrines of it; see Hab. iii. 9. Psal. xlv. 5. so called for their swift motion, sudden and secret striking, piercing, and penetrating nature, reaching to the very hearts of men; laying open the secret thoughts and iniquity thereof; wounding, and causing them to fall, and submit themselves to the sceptre of Christ's kingdom: *and a crown was given unto him*; by God the father; expressive of Christ's regal power and authority, of his honour and dignity, and of his victories and conquests: *and he went forth, conquering and to conquer*; in the ministration of the Gospel, which went forth, as did all the first ministers of it, from Jerusalem, to the several parts of the world; from the east, on which side of the throne was the first living creature, who called upon John to come and see this sight, as the standard of the tribe of Judah, which had a lion upon it, was on the east side of the camp of Israel; and out of Zion went forth the word of the Lord, which was very victorious, both among Jews and Gentiles, to the conversion of thousands of them, and to the planting of a multitude of churches among them, and to the setting up and advancing the kingdom of Christ; but inasmuch as yet all things are not made subject to him, he is represented as going forth in the Gospel, still conquering, and to conquer, what remain to be conquered: that Christ is designed by him that sat on the white horse, and is thus described, is evident from ch. xix. 11, 12, 13. with which compare Psal. xlv. 3, 4. though as this emblem may respect the Roman empire, the white horse may be an emblem of the strong, warlike, and conquering state of it; and the rider with

² Victor Aurel. de Viris Illust. in Fur. Camill.

³ T. Bah. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1.

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⁴ In Oneiro Criticis, apud Mede.

⁵ Shaare Zion, fol. 102. 2.

a bow and crown may design Vespasian, whom Christ made use of as an instrument to conquer his enemies the Jews, and who, in consequence thereof, had the imperial crown put upon him; and it may be further observed, that though his conquest of them was a very great one, yet they afterwards rose up in the empire, in great numbers, rebelled, and did much mischief, when they were entirely conquered by Trajan and Hadrian, who seem to be intended in the next seal.

Ver. 3. *And when he had opened the second seal, &c.*] Of the sealed book; that is, the Lamb, as before: *I heard the second beast say, come and see*; this living creature was the ox, whose situation was on the west side of the throne, as the standard of Ephraim, on which was an ox, was on the west of the camp of Israel; no mention is made of the noise of thunder, as before, the voice of the ox being lower than that of the lion; and this perhaps may point out a decrease in the Gospel ministry; to fix on any particular person, as, with Grotius, the Evangelist Matthew, because he says, Matt. xxiv. 7. *nation shall rise against nation*, which carries in it some likeness to what is said at the opening of this seal; or, as with Brightman, Justin Martyr, whose second apology was not regarded by the emperor, is mere conjecture; the ministers of the Gospel are intended who lived under this seal, who, though they might not be strong and courageous like the lion, or their predecessors, yet were like the ox, laborious in preaching, and patient in suffering; and these are represented in this vision as inviting John to behold and observe the following hieroglyphic.

Ver. 4. *And there went out another horse, that was red, &c.*] Which may be an emblem either of the suffering state of the church, being answerable to the Smyrnanæan one, as the purity and power of the Gospel, represented in the former seal, may answer to the Ephesine church; or else of those contentions and divisions occasioned among men through the Gospel, which, though of a peaceable nature, yet, through the corruption and depravity of men, brings not peace, but a sword; or rather of those bloody wars within the period of time signified by this seal, which came as punishments on the enemies of the Gospel: *and power was given to him that sat thereon*; not the Lord Jesus Christ, who is said to ride on a red horse, Zech. i. 8. though indeed he presides over his church and people, and takes the care of them when the most desolating judgments are in the earth, and causes all things to work together for good; nor Satan, the red dragon, who was a murderer from the beginning, and delights in effusion of blood, and in stirring up of men to destroy one another, whenever he is permitted; but Trajan the Roman emperor, in whose reign John died; and who came from the west, and was a Spaniard, as was Hadrian his successor, who may be joined with him; which was the side, or quarter, on which the living creature was that spoke to John; and in the times of these emperors were very bloody and inter-

nal wars: wherefore power is said to be given him, *to take peace from the earth*; that is, from the Roman empire, which is sometimes called the whole world; and which could not have been done, if power had not been given from him who makes peace, and creates evil: *and that they should kill one another*: which refers not to the havoc and slaughter which the Jews made one of another at the destruction of Jerusalem, but to the Jews murdering of the Greeks and Romans, and the Romans the Jews, in the times of the above emperors. In Trajan's time, the Jews who dwelt about Cyrene, under the conduct of one Andrew, fell upon the Romans and Greeks, and killed many, fed on their flesh, ate their bowels, besmeared themselves with their blood, and covered themselves with their skins; many of them they sawed asunder, from the crown of the head down to the middle; many of them they threw to the wild beasts, and many of them they forced to fight among themselves, till they had destroyed above two hundred and twenty thousand men; in Egypt and Cyprus they committed the same kind of outrages, their leader being one Artemion, where two hundred and forty thousand men perished¹; Lybia was almost emptied of men by them; so that Hadrian, the successor of Trajan, was obliged to send colonies to re-people the places they had made desolate. But at length they were overcome by Lupus, governor of Egypt, and by Marcus Turbo, and by Lucius, whom Trajan sent against them², and destroyed great numbers of them; and for the space of about fourteen years they were quiet; but in Hadrian's time they rose again, and set one Bar Cochab, a false Messiah, at the head of them, whom they proclaimed king: when Hadrian sent forces against them, and with great difficulty subdued them, took the city Bither, where they were, and destroyed at times five hundred and eighty thousand of them³; the Jews say, that he put men, women, and children to death in such numbers, that their blood ran down into the main sea, yea, that a horse might go up to his nose in blood⁴; they say that he destroyed in Bither double the number of those that came out of Egypt, even twelve hundred thousand men⁵; some of their accounts are very extravagant, and exceed all bounds⁶; however, the slaughter was very great, that it may well be said, *and there was given unto him a great sword*; to slay men with; though Hadrian on his death-bed, amidst his pains, would fain have had a sword given to him to have dispatched his own life, and could not obtain one⁷: the Jews say he destroyed all the land of Judea⁸.

Ver. 5. *And when he had opened the third seal, &c.*] Of the sealed book: *I heard the third beast say, come and see*; this living creature was that which was like a man, who was on the south side of the throne, as the standard of Reuben, which had the figure of a man, was on the south side of the camp of Israel; this was not the Apostle Paul, as Grotius thinks, to whom was made a prophecy of a famine in the days of Claudius

¹ Dion Cassius in Vita Trajani.

² Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 2.

³ Dion Cassius in Vita Hadrian.

⁴ T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 57. 1. & Hieros. Taanith, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 3.

⁵ Juchasin, fol. 142. 2. & 143. 1.

⁶ T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 4. & T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 157. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 13. 1.

⁷ Spartianus in Vita Hadriani, & Aurel. Victor. Epitome.

⁸ T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 20. 1.

Cæsar; nor Tertullian, who made an apology for the Christians in the times of this seal, as Brightman connects; but the ministers of the Gospel, whose voice was neither the voice of the lion nor of the ox, but of a man, which was still lower, but yet they retained their humanity, reasoning, prudence, and wisdom; and these are represented as calling upon John to come and see, and take notice of the following hieroglyphic: *and I beheld, and lo a black horse*; an emblem either of the afflicted state of the church, still answering to the Smyrnanæan one, being black with persecutions, schisms, errors, and heresies, which were many; or particularly of the heresies and heretics of those times, who might be compared to a horse for their pride and ambition, speaking great swelling words of vanity, and to a black one, for their hidden things of dishonesty, and works of darkness, for the darkness in themselves, and which they spread over others; or rather of a famine, not in a spiritual sense, of hearing of the word, but in a literal sense; see Lam. iv. 7, 8. and v. 10. not what was at the siege of Jerusalem, or in the times of Claudius Cæsar, Acts xi. 28. but in the times of the Emperor Severus, and others, as the historians of those times^a, and the writings of Tertullian shew; when the Heathens ascribed the scarcity that was among them to the wickedness of the Christians^b, whereas it was a judgment upon them for their persecution of them: *and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand*; by whom is meant not some noted heretic, or heretics, who had balances of deceit in their hands to prove their tenets by, such as spurious writings, &c. or who made pretensions to the Scriptures, the balance of the sanctuary, to weigh doctrines in; nor Christ, whose name heretics shrouded themselves under, and professed, and who overruled and made use of their heresies for the good of his people, that they might be made manifest. Mr. Mede thinks that Septimius Severus, the Roman emperor, who came from Africa, from the south, on which side was the living creature that spoke to John, is intended, and in which country black horses were in great esteem; and he was the only African that ever was emperor of Rome before^c: and the same author thinks, that his having a pair of balances in his hand expresses the strict justice that emperor was famous for; but rather it signifies famine, and such a scarcity as that bread is delivered out by weight to men; see Lev. xxvi. 26.

Ver. 6. *And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, &c.*] Not the voice of Agabus to the Apostle Paul, Acts xi. 28. but rather of Christ, who was in the midst of them, ch. v. 6. the Ethiopic version adds, *as the voice of an eagle: a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; Chænix, the measure here used, signifies as much as was sufficient for a man for one day, as a penny was the usual hire of a labourer for a day, Matt. xx. 2. so a chænix of corn*

was allowed to each man in Xerxes's army for a day, according to Herodotus^d; the same quantity for a day was given by the Romans to their shepherds and servants, and is generally said to be about two pounds; according to Agricola it was two pounds and a quarter^e. This measure was very different; the Attic chænix was a measure that held three pounds, the Italic chænix four pounds, and the military chænix five pounds, and answers to the Hebrew *Kab*^f; and in the Septuagint version of Ezek. xlv. 10, 11. it answers to the *Bath*; and some make it to be the fourth part of a bushel, and others half a bushel^g; the first account of its being about two pounds, and the allowance of a man for a day, seems best to agree with this place: so that this phrase expresses such a scarcity, as that a man's daily wages would be but just enough to buy himself bread, without any thing to eat with it; and when he would have nothing left for clothes, and other things, nor any thing for his wife and children: *and see that thou hurt not the oil and wine*; signifying that this scarcity should fall not upon the superfluities, such as oil and wine, which may be spared, and men can live without; but upon the necessaries of life, particularly bread: some render the words, *and be not unjust in the oil and wine*; and so think they refer to the laws of the Roman emperors, in relation to wine and oil, and to the just execution of them, that there might be plenty of them; and others understand them in an allegorical sense, of the principal doctrines of the Gospel, comparable to oil and wine, and which Christ takes care of, that they shall not be hurt and destroyed by heretics and false teachers, even when they prevail the most, and bring on a famine of the word, and when the church is blackened and darkened with them; and indeed these may much better be applied to the Gospel, than, as they are by the Jews, to the law; who frequently say^h that the law is called *oil*, and speak of תורה של יינה, *the wine of the law*ⁱ.

Ver. 7. *And when he had opened the fourth seal, &c.*] Of the seven seals of the sealed book; that is, when the Lamb had opened it, or took it off, as in ver. 1. *I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, come and see*; this living creature was that which was like an eagle, and was on the north side of the throne, answerable to the standard of Dan, which was on the north of the camp of Israel, and had the figure of an eagle upon it; and the opening of this seal begins with Maximinus the Roman emperor, who came from Thrace, far north. This living creature was not James, the brother of our Lord, who had been dead long ago, as Grotius imagines; nor Cyprian, as Brightman thinks, though he lived under this seal; but the ministers of the Gospel in general in the times referred to are intended: and it may denote some decline in the Gospel ministry, that they had not the courage and strength of the lion, as the first Gospel preachers; nor the patience and laboriousness of the ox, the next set of ministers; nor

^a Spartianus in Vita Severi, & Lampridius in Vita Alexandri.

^b Apolog. c. 40. & ad Scapulum, c. 3.

^c Cassiodor. Chronicon. & Eutrop. Hist. Roman. l. 8.

^d Polyminia, c. 137.

^e De Mensuris Græcis, p. 120.

^f Waserus de Mensuris, l. 3. c. 2. sect. 5, 6. & c. 3. sect. 6. & c. 7. sect. 6.

^g Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 20.

^h Tzeror Hammor, fol. 85. 3. & 96. 1. & 97. 4. & 104. 1. & 105. 2. & 137. 2, 3.

ⁱ Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 3. & in Deut. fol. 115. 3. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 94. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 5. 3. Midrash Kohélet, fol. 64. 4.

the solidity and prudence of the man, the ministers that followed them; and yet they retained some degree of light and knowledge, sagacity and penetration, and contempt of the world, signified by the eagle; these invite John in a visionary way to come and see the following hieroglyphic.

Ver. 8. *And I looked, and behold a pale horse, &c.*] An emblem either of the state of the church, pale not with persecution, as some think, for through that it was red; but with the hypocrisy and superstition of many of its members, who were paving the way for the man of sin, and on account of whom the church was grown sickly and dying; or rather this is an emblem of the sickly and dying state of the Pagan Roman empire, through a complication of judgments upon it, hereafter mentioned, as war, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts: *and his name that sat on him was Death*; not Satan, who has the power of death, but death itself; who is represented as a person, as he elsewhere is, sometimes as a king, Rom. v. 14. and as an enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 25. see Isa. xxviii. 15. and this was a very ancient way of speaking of death among the Heathens; in the theology of the Phœnicians, according to Sanchoniathon¹, who wrote before the Trojan wars, a son of Saturn by Rhea was called Muth, whom the Phœnicians sometimes called Death, and sometimes Pluto; which is manifestly the same with the Hebrew word מוֹת, *death*: the name of the rider of this horse may well be called Death, both with respect to the various kinds of death under this seal, and with respect to the short lives of the emperors; for in less than fifty years' time, which is the period of this seal, namely, from Maximinus, A. D. 235, or 237, to Dioclesian, A. D. 284, or 286, there were more than twenty emperors, and who most of them were cut off by violent deaths; besides the thirty tyrants who sprung up under one of them, as so many mushrooms, and were soon destroyed. This is the only rider that has a name given him; and from hence we may learn what to call the rest, as the rider of the white horse *Truth*, or Christ, who is truth itself; the rider of the red horse *War*; and the rider of the black horse *Famine*; and because both the last, with other judgments, meet together under this seal, the rider of this horse is emphatically called *Death*: *and hell followed with him*; that is, the grave, which attended on death, or followed after him, and was a sort of an undertaker, to bury the dead killed by death; so these two are put together, ch. i. 18. and xx. 13, 14. *and power was given unto them*; to death and hell, or the grave, or rather to death only, for the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, *to him*: and the power that was given him reached *over the fourth part of the earth*; not of the church, which is never called the earth in this book, but is distinguished from it, ch. xii. 16. nor the land of Judea, but the Roman empire; some understand it of *Europe*, the fourth part of the world: *to kill with the*

sword: Maximinus, with whom this seal begins, was of a very barbarous disposition, and a more cruel creature, it is said, was not upon earth; and besides his persecution of the Christians, he acted a most inhuman part to the Pagan Romans themselves, so that the senate dreaded him; and the women and children at Rome, having heard of his barbarities, deprecated his ever seeing that city; and he was called by the names of the worst of tyrants; more than four thousand men he killed without any charge or judicial process against them, and yet his blood-thirsty mind was not satisfied¹: Gallienus, another emperor after him, emptied many cities entirely of men, and killed three or four thousand a day of his own soldiers, whom he understood had thoughts of a new emperor²; under him thirty tyrants sprung up together in the empire, who made great havoc before they were cut off; and in his time the Alemanni (a people in Germany) having wasted France, broke into Italy; Dacia, which beyond the Danube was added by Trajan (to the Roman empire) was lost; Greece, Macedonia, Pontus, and Asia, were destroyed by the Goths; Pannonia was depopulated by (the people called) Sarmatæ and Quadi; the Germans penetrated into Spain, and took the famous city of Tarracon; the Parthians having seized Mesopotamia, began to claim Syria to themselves; so that, as the Roman historian observes³, things were now desperate, and the Roman empire was almost destroyed: not to take notice of the multitudes that were killed in after wars and persecutions, under other emperors, during this seal: *and with hunger*; or *famine*; there was a grievous famine in the times of Gallus and Volusianus, which Dionysius bishop of Alexandria makes mention of⁴; and Cyprian, who lived under this seal, also speaks of famine, and indeed of all these three, war, famine, and pestilence, as then imputed to the Christians, and to their irreligion, which charge he removes⁵: *and with death*; that is, with the pestilence, which, by the Targumist⁶, and other Jewish writers⁷, is commonly called מוֹרֵתָא, *death*, because it sweeps away and carries off such large numbers with it: now in the reign of the last-mentioned emperors was a very noisome pestilence, which raged most cruelly; the Roman historian says⁸, that their reign is only known, or was famous, for the pestilence, diseases, and sicknesses; Hostilianus, who was created emperor by the senate, died of it⁹; Dionysius of Alexandria has given a most shocking account of it, who lived at the same time¹⁰; it began in Ethiopia, and went through the east, and through all parts of the Roman empire, and lasted fifteen years; to which perhaps, for its large extent and long duration, there never was the like: *and with the beasts of the earth*; by which many of the Christians were destroyed in the persecutions of those times; and is also one of God's four judgments, and which goes about with the sword, famine, and pestilence, Ezek. xiv. 21. and may be literally understood of destruction by wild beasts,

¹ Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38.

² Capitolinus in Vita ejus.

³ Pollio in Vita Gallieni.

⁴ Eutropius, l. 9.

⁵ Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 7. c. 22.

⁶ Ad Demetrianum, p. 276.

⁷ Targum in 1 Chron. xxi. 12, 14, 17. & in 2 Chron. vi. 28. & xx. 9.

⁸ T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1.

⁹ Eutrop. l. 9.

¹⁰ Victor. Aurel. de Cæsariibus, & Epitome.

¹¹ Apud Euseb. l. 7. c. 21, 22.

as Arnobius, who lived at this time, observes^v; or allegorically, of men comparable to wild beasts, as Herod is called a fox, and Nero a lion; and such savage creatures were most of the Roman emperors, and particularly the thirty tyrants under Gallienus: so the Targum on Jer. iii. 12. interprets *the beasts of the field*, מלכי עמקיא, *the kings of the nations*. The Alexandrian copy reads, *and upon the fourth part of the beasts*, as if the power of death reached to them as well as to men. Under this seal all the judgments of God on Rome Pagan meet together; and it is observable that Maximinus, a Roman emperor, and one of the last of the Pagans, boasted, that for worshipping of the gods, and persecuting of the Christians, neither pestilence, famine, nor war, were in his times, when on a sudden all these three came together at once^x; to which may be added the following observation, that though the several steps and methods which God took to punish, weaken, and destroy the Roman Pagan empire, were remarkably seen in the distinct periods to which these first four seals belong, yet they must not be entirely restrained and limited to these periods, as if they were not made use of in others; so though the Gospel proceeded with remarkable success under the first seal, in the times of the apostles, to the subduing of multitudes in the Roman empire, it was also preached with great success under the following seals; and though there were most grievous wars under the second seal, in the times of Trajan and Adrian, so there were also in after-times; that was not the only period of war, though it was remarkably so; likewise there was a famine in the times of Claudius, under the first seal, Acts xi. 28. and in the time of Trajan, under the second seal^y, and of Commodus^z, as well as under the third; and there were pestilences also in those times, as well as under the fourth seal; and because God did by each of these weaken, break, and at last bring to ruin that empire, they are shewed to John one after another.

Ver. 9. *And when he had opened the fifth seal, &c.*] Of the seven seals of the sealed book; here is no beast speaking here, nor horse and rider presented to view; it was now a very dark time both with respect to the church of God and ministry of the word, and the Roman empire. This seal refers to the times of Dioclesian, and the persecution under him; and instead of the voice of one of the living creatures, John hears the voice of martyrs: *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain*; these include not only all the martyrs that were put to death in the persecution of Dioclesian, but all those that suffered in all the persecutions preceding; for this, being the last, involves them all. *Souls*, being immaterial and incorporeal, are invisible to the bodily eye; these therefore were either clothed with corporeal forms, as angels sometimes are, or rather John saw them in a visionary way, as he saw the angels: and these were the souls of such as *were slain*; their bodies

were dead, but their souls were alive; which shews the immortality of souls, and that they die not with their bodies, and that they live after them in a separate state: נשמתין דקטורי, *the souls of them that are slain*, is a phrase used by Jewish writers^a, and who have a notion that the souls of those that are slain are kept in certain palaces, under the care of one appointed by God^b: and these were seen *under the altar*; either this is said in allusion to the blood of the sacrifices, which was poured out at the bottom of the altar, Lev. iv. 7. and v. 9. in which the life and soul of the creature is; or because that martyrdom is a sacrifice of men's lives, and an offering of them in the cause of God and truth, Phil. ii. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 7. or with some reference to a common notion of the Jews, that the souls of the righteous are treasured up under the throne of glory^c; they have also a saying, every one that is buried in the land of Israel is as if he was buried *under the altar*^d; for they think that being buried there expiates their sins^e; to which they add, that whoever is buried *under the altar*, is as if he was buried under the throne of glory^f; yea, they talk of an altar above, upon which Michael the high-priest causes the souls of the righteous to ascend^g. Christ may be meant by the altar here, as he is in Heb. xiii. 10. who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest, and is the altar that sanctifies the gift, and from off which every sacrifice of prayer and praise comes up with acceptance before God; and the souls of the martyrs being under this altar, denotes their being in the presence of Christ, and enjoying communion with him, and being in his hands, into whose hands they commit their souls at death, as Stephen did, and being under his care and protection until the resurrection-morn, when they shall be reunited to their bodies which sleep in Jesus: and they were slain *for the word of God*; both for the essential Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose faith they professed; and for the written word, they made the rule of their faith and practice, and which Dioclesian forbid the reading of, and sought utterly to destroy; and for the Gospel principally, which is contained in it: *and for the testimony which they held*; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *for the testimony of the Lamb*; and so the Complutensian edition; either for the Gospel, which is a testimony of the person, office, and grace of Christ, the Lamb, which they embraced, professed, and held fast; or for the witness they bore to him, and the profession which they made thereof, and in which they continued.

Ver. 10. *And they cried with a loud voice, &c.*] With great ardour and fervency, being very pressing and importunate; and which shews that they were awake, and not asleep, and that the soul does not sleep with the body in the grave, or is after the death of that in a state of insensibility and inactivity, as some imagine: *saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true*; the person they address is either the Lamb in the

^v Adv. Gentes, l. 1. p. 13.

^x Euseb. l. 9. c. 8.

^y Aurel. Victor. Epitome.

^z Herodian, l. 1. c. 37.

^a Tosaphta in Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 4.

^b Shaare Ora, fol. 31. 2.

^c T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2. Zohar in Numb. fol. 39. 4. Abot

R. Nathan, c. 12. Raziel, fol. 39. 1. Caphtor, fol. 15. 2. & 112. 2. Nismat Chayim, fol. 16. 2.

^d T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 1.

^e Maimon. Hilchot. Melacim, c. 5. sect. 11.

^f Abot R. Nathan, c. 26.

^g Tzeror Hammor, fol. 85. 3.

midst of the throne, with whom they were, and under the shelter of whom they were safe and happy; or God the father, who sat upon the throne, whom they call *holy*, because being so in his nature, and as appears in all his works, he could not but hate, and so revenge the evil that was done to them by their cruel persecutors; and whereas he is *true* to all his threatenings, as well as his promises, and faithful to every word of his, they doubted not but he would judge and avenge them of their enemies; but they seem desirous to know how long it would be first: saying, *dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* the men of the world, idolatrous persons, earthly princes, who had shed their blood; and which they desire not out of any sinful or malicious affection, but that the holiness and justice of God might appear, and also his truth and faithfulness in his promises to them, and threatenings to his enemies; and that God in all things might be glorified, and his church and people on earth might be supported and delivered; see Job xxiv. 12.

Ver. 11. *And white robes were given to every one of them, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read in the singular number, *a white robe*, and so does the Syriac version; as a token of their innocence, that they did not suffer, or were slain, for any capital crime or immorality they were guilty of; and of their purity and perfection they now enjoyed; as also of that spiritual delight and pleasure, which was unspeakable and full of glory, they now had in the presence of God and Christ; and in short, of that happiness and glory which souls in a separate state, before the resurrection-morn, are partakers of; who besides the righteousness of Christ, comparable to fine linen clean and white, walk with Christ in white, in the shining robes of bliss and glory: *and it was said unto them, that they should rest; or have rest; eternal rest from all their toil and labour, from all their sorrows and sufferings of every kind, which rest remains for the people of God, and into which these were now entered; or that they should cease from expostulating and inquiring after the above manner, and rest satisfied and contented, exercising the graces of faith, hope, and patience, believing, looking, and waiting: yet for a little season; either until the end of this persecution by Dioclesian, when vengeance would be taken of the Roman empire, and it would be no more as Pagan; or until the day of judgment, when full vengeance will be inflicted on the persecutors of the saints; and which is but a little while with God, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and in comparison of that eternity of blessedness glorified saints are partakers of: until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled:* meaning either the rest of the saints that should suffer martyrdom in the following part of this persecution; or those who should suffer under the Arian persecution, when the empire would become Christian; or under Rome Papal, and in all the persecutions of the apostacy, unto the end of that state: these are called the *fellow-servants* and *brethren* of the saints in heaven; for they all worship and serve the same God, and belong to the same family, in heaven and in earth; and the self-same reason that is made

use of to animate the saints below to courage, faith, and patience in suffering, 1 Pet. v. 9. is used to keep up the expectation of the saints in heaven, of that vengeance that will be executed on their enemies, and to point out the time when it will be; and it may be observed, that the number of martyrs, or of those that shall suffer and die in the cause of Christ, and for his Gospel, is fixed and determined by God; and that number shall be perfected and completed, and when that is done, he'll pour out all his wrath on them that have persecuted them and put them to death: and so the Arabic version renders it, *that the number of their companions and brethren, and of those who are to be killed as they have been killed, is fulfilled;* see 2 Esdras ii. 39, 40, 41. Now though this seal does not introduce any judgment to be executed on the Roman empire, as the others do; yet since it introduces all the martyrs with one united voice requiring vengeance on their blood, it may very well be considered as a step towards, and as making way for, the utter ruin of that empire: and which the next seal being opened brings on, and is a full answer to the cry of these souls.

Ver. 12. *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, &c.*] Of the sealed book which the Lamb took out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne, in order to open it, and unloose its seals. About this seal interpreters much differ; some refer this to the destruction of Jerusalem, because of the likeness of expressions here used, and in Matt. xxiv. 7. 29. Luke xxi. 25, 26. and xxiii. 29, 30. but this was past many years before this seal was opened; and besides, though that time was a day of wrath to the uttermost upon the Jewish people, and it was the Lamb's day of wrath, taking vengeance on them for their unbelief and rejection of him as the Messiah; yet they had no sense of the Lamb, nor any apprehension of his wrath at that time, nor have they now, but imputed their calamity to their divisions and quarrels among themselves. Others think this sea belongs to the destruction of the Roman empire by the Goths, Huns, Vandals, &c. but it should be observed, that the empire stood some hundreds of years after the end of the fifth seal and the opening of this; and it was after the seventh seal, and at the sounding of the trumpets, that that destruction came on; moreover, that calamity was by the savageness of some barbarous nations which overran the empire, but this here spoken of comes from the wrath of the Lamb; add to which, that that calamity distressed the Christians in the empire, and them chiefly, whereas this falls only upon the enemies of the Lamb, and the persecutors of his people. Others are of opinion that this has respect to the strange change of affairs in the church of Christ, through the rise, power, and tyranny of antichrist; by the *earthquake* they suppose is meant the shaking of both church and state by the man of sin; who shook the doctrines, ordinances, and discipline of the church, and threw all into confusion, and introduced a new face of things; and also shook the kingdoms of the earth, and the thrones and crowns of princes: by the *sun becoming black*, they think is meant the sun of righteousness, Jesus Christ, who was obscured in the doctrines concerning him, as the one and only Mediator, and justification by his righteousness, and pardon through his blood, by introducing the

mediation of angels and saints, the doctrine of justification by works, and the doctrine of merit, works of supererogation, indulgences, pardons, penance, and purgatory: by the *moon* they understand the church, which receives all its light, grace, righteousness, and holiness, from Christ, and which, like the moon, is changeable as to its outward form and circumstances; and this became *as blood*, through the persecutions, massacres, and cruelties of the Romish antichrist, who has been made drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus: the *stars* they take to be the ministers of the word; either hypocritical ones, who were like unripe figs, destitute of true grace, and so were easily shaken with the wind of Papal power, and fell into the earth, and apostatized from the faith, and conformed to the corruptions of antichrist; or the true ministers of the Gospel, who were put to death, and that to an untimely and violent one, signified by the shaking of untimely figs by a mighty wind: by the *heaven* departing as a scroll rolled up, they suppose is designed either the church, which fled into the wilderness, and remained invisible during the Papal power and cruelty; or else the Scriptures, which the pope made himself sole judge and interpreter of, and shut up from the common people in an unknown language, and forbid the laity the reading of them: by *mountains* they think are intended the kings and princes of the earth, who were obliged to submit to the Romish antichrist, and give their kingdoms to him, and receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and be his vassals: and by the *islands*, the people their subjects, who were forced to acknowledge him as the supreme head, and receive his mark in their right hand or forehead, or they could not buy and sell: and by all ranks and degrees of men, as *kings*, &c. hiding themselves in rocks and mountains, and calling upon them to fall on them and cover them, they apply either to their invoking the virgin Mary, and other saints, to intercede for them, and screen them from the wrath of God and Christ, on account of their sins; or else to the persecutors of the saints, of every rank and in every age, and to the punishments that shall fall upon them. But however feasible this interpretation may seem to be, it is certain that this was not the face of things at the close of the fifth seal, or the Dioclesian persecution, and at the opening of the sixth, when Constantine came to the imperial throne, for then the church appeared as she is described in Rev. xii. 1. which is just the reverse of this. There are others, who because of the very awful things here spoken of, and the very awful language in which they are expressed, conclude that this seal respects the day of judgment; not considering that the fifth seal ends about the year 313, at the close of the last of the ten persecutions, and that the sixth seal begins where that ends; and though above 1400 years * have elapsed since that time, yet the day of judgment is not come, and we know not when it will; besides, here is another seal, a seventh seal, which follows, and introduces punishments on the Roman empire, and seven vials follow, which pour out plagues upon antichrist, all

which can never be thought to be after the day of judgment; moreover, the account of the day of judgment stands in its proper place in Rev. xx. 12. after the destruction of Babylon, the first resurrection, and the saints' thousand-years' reign with Christ. But to proceed; the business which is the subject of this seal is the removing of Paganism, and Pagan governors out of the Roman empire; this was the thing the rider upon the white horse, under the first seal, set out upon to effect, and never ceased until he had accomplished it; and this is what ensued upon the close of the fifth seal, when Pagan persecution ceased, on Constantine, a Christian emperor, having the reins of power in his hands; and it cannot be thought that so wonderful a change of things as this should be omitted in this prophetic history; and it is easy to observe that changes in kingdoms and governments, both as to the polity and religion of them, are sometimes expressed in such-like figurative terms as here; see Isa. xiii. 9, 10, 13, 17, 19, and xxxiv. 4, 5, and Hagg. ii. 21, 22, and which may be accommodated to this event as follows: *and, lo, there was a great earthquake; or shaking*, both of the heavens and earth, and which, as it denotes in Hagg. ii. 6, 7. compared with Heb. xii. 26, 27. the removing of Jewish worship and ordinances, in order to make way for the Christian ordinances and institutions, which were to remain; so here it intends the removing of Pagan worship and idolatry, and of Pagan magistrates, that the Christian religion and Christian magistrates might take place. This, with what follows, concerning the darkness of the sun and moon, might be literally true; and it seems by historians, that there were such phenomena about those times; for 'tis asserted ^h, that a very great earthquake in Syria followed the Dioclesian persecution, which shook and caused to fall the tops of houses at Tyre and Sidon, and killed many thousands; and some such-like happened at Rome, and at Spoleum, where above three hundred and fifty Pagans perished, as they were serving their idols. It is also observed ⁱ, that the moon was turned into blood in the times of Galerius, who succeeded Dioclesian; and that the sun failed, and the stars shined for four hours, when Licinius was conquered by Constantine; but then these may be considered as symbols of the change in the empire. *And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair*; which is made of black hairs; see Isa. l. 3. as when eclipsed. The sun was the chief deity worshipped by the Heathens, under various names, and this becoming black, may design the removing of their principal gods from their honour and glory, or the downfall of idolatry, which the Jews ^k call *שמש של עבודה זרה*, *the sun of idolatry*, which they suppose is meant in Cant. i. 6. And Satan, the god of this world, who was worshipped in different forms, now fell, as Lucifer, the son of the morning, and as lightning from heaven, and was cast down from all his dignity, influence, and power, to the earth; for the casting out of the red dragon, the old serpent, and Satan, after his combat with Michael and his angels, in Rev. xii. 3, 7, 8, 9. refers to this very time; likewise the

* The reader will observe, that this calculation was made in the year 1747.—Ed.

^h Magdeburg. Centuriator. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 86. & c. 13. p. 897.

ⁱ Alost. Chronolog. Thesaur. p. 59.

^k Shihhashirim Rabba, fol. 6. 2.

chief magistrate, the Heathen Roman emperor, may be included; and it is remarkable, that Dioclesian the emperor, who had now retired from the imperial government, and was under a cloud, under disgrace, and in distress, had, in the zenith of his glory, caused himself to be worshipped as a god, and as the brother of the sun and moon. *And the moon became as blood*; as when obscured; the Alexandrian copy and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *the whole moon*: this may design the next Heathen deity, or class of deities, for the moon was also worshipped by the Heathens under different names; and may likewise include the Pagan priesthood, which was next, and was annexed to the imperial dignity; and which was disused by Constantine and his successors; and even the very title, and the robe which was a symbol of it, were laid aside as unworthy of Christian princes; see Mede upon the place.

Ver. 13. *And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, &c.*] All the other inferior deities lost their esteem, worship, and honour; for the idol temples being now opened, the idols and statues were exposed to the common people, and were found to be stuffed with hay and straw, which brought them into great contempt¹. Moreover, as stars sometimes signify the ministers of the Gospel in the Christian church, ch. i. 20. and sometimes the priests in the Jewish church, Dan. viii. 10. so they may here likewise include the idolatrous priests among the Heathens, who were discharged and removed by Constantine, and had their posts and profits taken away from them; yea, Maximianus, an Heathen emperor, or tyrant, being beaten by Licinius, who was then Constantine's colleague, killed many of the priests and prophets of his gods, which were formerly had in great admiration by him, as deceivers and betrayers of him, by whose oracles he was animated to the war^m. And in like manner Licinius put to death the priests and prophets of the new idol at Antiochⁿ. *Even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind*; which figs being young and green, and not fixed, fall off easily, and in great numbers, when a blustering wind beats upon them; and so the rabble of Pagan deities, and idolatrous priests, were easily, and in great numbers, removed through the power of Constantine, which carried all before it.

Ver. 14. *And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, &c.*] The manner of writing formerly was on rolls of parchment; hence the word *volume* is used for a book, which, when rolled up, the writing within could not be seen, not a syllable nor letter of it. In like manner the Roman empire, as Pagan, which was like a large sheet, or rather like the expanse or firmament of the heaven, stretched out over all the earth, was now, as to the Paganism of it, rolled up together, so that there were no more Heathen gods, nor Heathen priests; no more idolatry, and idolatrous worship of that kind were to be seen, and not so much as the names of Heathen gods to be heard of in the empire.

And every mountain and island were moved out of their places; by *every mountain* may be meant the places of idolatrous worship, which were usually upon mountains; see Jer. iii. 6, 23. which were now shut up, or demolished, or used for Christian worship; and *every island* being moved also may shew, that Paganism was not only rooted out of the provinces of the empire upon the continent, but out of the islands also; and the ecclesiastical history of these times informs us, that there were Christian churches in the isles, which enjoyed the Gospel free of persecution and distress; as in the isles of Cyprus, Crete, the Cyclades, Sardinia, Sicily, Corsica, and in ours of England, Scotland, and Ireland^o. Mr. Daubuz thinks, that as *mountains* design the temples of idols, *islands* signify the revenues of them, which were now taken away, and applied to other uses.

Ver. 15. *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, &c.*] The Roman emperors, and other principal magistrates, governors of provinces and cities: *and the rich men*; among the commonalty; these three may design perhaps more particularly the emperors, nobles, and senate of Rome: *and the chief captains*; or captains of thousands, that had the command of the Roman legions: *and the mighty men*; the soldiers that were under them, men of strength, courage, and valour; *and every bondman, and every freeman*; which takes in all the inhabitants of the Roman empire, of every state and condition, and which was an usual distinction among the Romans: these *hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains*; where, through their cruel persecutions, they had forced multitudes of Christians to flee, and therefore, *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation was righteously inflicted on them; and not to take notice of any other, this was remarkably true of their kings or emperors. Dioclesian and Hercules Maximianus, who were emperors together, in the height of their imperial glory and grandeur, the one being at Nicomedia, and the other at Milan, did, on one and the same day, of their own accord, abdicate the empire, and divested themselves of their imperial crown and government, and retired to a private life; pretending in public, that old age, and the weight of business, were the cause, but to their friends they owned, that it was through despair, because they could not extinguish the Christian religion^p. Some ascribed this to phrenzy and madness^q; but the true reason was, that the wrath of the Lamb was let into their consciences, and which they could not bear, and which obliged them to take this step, to the amazement of the whole world. Maximianus, who succeeded them, being overcome by Licinius, laid aside his imperial habit, and hid himself among the common people, and skulked about in fields and villages^r. Maxentius, another emperor, fled from Constantine, the instrument of the wrath of the Lamb, and the pouring it out upon his enemies, and fell into the river Tyber, from the Mylvian bridge, where he perished; and which was the very place in which he had laid snares for Constantine^s.

¹ Sozomen. l. 2. c. 5.

^m Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 9. c. 10.

ⁿ Ib. c. 11.

^o Centuriator. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5, 8.

^p Centur. Magd. cent. 4. c. 16. p. 909. Vid. Eutrop. l. 9.

^q Euseb. Hist. l. 8. c. 13. & de Vita Constantini. l. 5. c. 25.

^r Ib. l. 9. c. 10.

^s Ib. c. 9. & de Vita Constant. l. 1. c. 38. Vid. Aurel. Victor. de Caesaribus.

Ver. 16. *And said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, &c.*] They chose death rather than life. Dioclesian being invited by Constantine to a marriage-feast, excused himself by reason of his old age; but receiving threatening letters, the historian¹ says, in which he was charged with having favoured Maxentius, and with favouring Maximinus, he poisoned himself; and others of the emperors are said to lay violent hands upon themselves: *and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*; thus they owned the proper deity, and almighty power of God, and Christ, which they dreaded; so Maximinus being afflicted with a most horrible disease, of which he died, asked pardon of the God of the Christians, and owned that he suffered justly, for his reproaches of Christ. Licinius, who sometimes pretended to be a Christian, and joined with Constantine, but afterwards revolted and fought against him, being conquered and taken, was put to death; at which

time he, and they that suffered death with him, confessed that the God of Constantine was the only true God². This passage shews, that Christ, God's first-born, is higher than the kings of the earth; yea, that he is equal with him that sits upon the throne, with God his father, since his wrath is equally dreaded as his; and that, though he is a Lamb, mild, meek, and gentle, yet there is wrath, fury, and indignation in him, against his enemies, which is very dreadful and intolerable; see Psal. ii. 12.

Ver. 17. *For the great day of his wrath is come, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, *of their wrath*; both of him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb, against the Heathen gods and Heathen persecutors, in answer to the cry of the martyrs in ver. 9, 10. *And who shall be able to stand?* against either of them, or in their presence, and so as to bear their wrath and displeasure; all which expresses guilt, shame, fear, and despair.

C H A P. VII.

THIS chapter contains a vision seen at the end of the sixth, and at the opening of the seventh seal, which expresses the security of the saints in all ages following, the praises of angels and men on that account, and the happiness of all the people of God in the millennium state. First, a vision of four angels is seen restraining the winds from blowing on the earth, sea, and trees, ver. 1. then of another angel, described by the place from whence he came, the east; by what he had, the seal of the living God, and by his cry to the four angels not to hurt the earth, sea, and trees, until the servants of God were sealed, ver. 2, 3, and then follows the number of the sealed ones in general, ver. 4. and the particular number of them out of each tribe of Israel, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. After which is another vision of all the elect of God together, described by the numberless multitude of them; by their descent from all nations; by their position and situation before the throne, and the Lamb; by their habit and attire, and by their loud cry, ascribing salvation to God, and to the Lamb, ver. 9, 10. who are joined by all the angels around them, worshipping God, and ascribing glory to him, ver. 11, 12. And next is described the happiness of this numerous company, in the thousand-years' reign, introduced by some discourse which passed between John, and one of the elders, ver. 13, 14. who are said to be before the throne, to serve God continually, and to have his presence, ver. 15. to be free from every thing troublesome and distressing, ver. 16. and to be fed by the Lamb, and to be led by him to fountains of living water, and to have all their tears wiped away from them, ver. 17.

Ver. 1. *And after these things, &c.*] After the opening of six of the seals of the sealed book, and after the demolition of Heathen deities, and of Heathen worship, and of Heathen magistrates, in the Roman empire, and the representation of these to John, he had

the following vision; and which therefore does not refer to the preservation of the Christians, before and at the destruction of Jerusalem, which was under the first seal; nor to the security of the saints from the wrath of the Lamb, when it fell upon the Pagan worshippers, of all ranks and degrees, which was under the sixth seal, and was now over; but rather it respects an intermediate space of time between the sixth and seventh seal, as reaching from Constantine to Theodosius; for upon Constantine's being sole emperor, the church enjoyed great peace and tranquillity after the blustering storms of Pagan persecution ceased; and great numbers of God's elect were converted and sealed, and the winds of Heathen persecution were held, and blew no more, unless for a short time under the Emperor Julian; though the church was not free from the wind of error and heresy, and the storms of contention which arose about them, nor from the tempest of Arian persecutions, which were very grievous; wherefore this refers to what should be between the sixth and seventh seal, which brings on the seven trumpets: and now, before John sees that seal opened, a pause is made, and this vision is shewn him, to fortify his mind, and all other saints, that are observers of these things, who by the opening of the following seal would see what judgments and plagues would come upon the empire, now become Christian, and what changes and revolutions would be made in it, and might fear that the church of God would be wholly swallowed up and lost; wherefore this vision is exhibited to shew, that notwithstanding the devastations by the Goths and Vandals, and the rise, progress, and power of Mahomet, and the dreadful apostacy of the church of Rome, and all the miseries of it, and the plagues that should come upon the church for it; yet God would have throughout all this, and in every age of time, a sealed number, a true church, hidden and secured, even

¹ Aurel. Victor. Epitome.

² Euseb. Hist. l. 9. c. 10. & de Vita Constantin. l. 1. c. 59.

³ Euseb. de Vita Constantin. l. 2. c. 18.

until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, and time shall be no more, and the mystery of God will be finished. *I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any trees.* Four angels are mentioned, in allusion to the four spirits of the heavens, in Zech. vi. 5. and though the earth is not a plain square with angles, but round and globular, yet it is said to have four corners, with respect to the four points of the heavens; and though there is but one wind, which blows sometimes one way, and sometimes another, yet four are named with regard to the above points, east, west, north, and south, from whence it blows. These are commonly called *the four winds of heaven*, Dan. viii. 8. and xi. 4. but here, *of the earth*, as in the Targum on Isa. xi. 12. *and he shall bring near the captivity of Judah, כְּאַרְבַּע רוּחַי אֲרַעָא, from the four winds of the earth.* And such things as are chiefly affected with winds are particularly observed, as the earth, upon which buildings are thrown down by them; and the sea, in which ships are wrecked; and trees, which by the violence of them, are blown down, and torn up by the roots. Some by these angels understand evil angels, who are sometimes called angels, without any additional epithet to distinguish them, and that because a desire of hurting seems to have been in them, as well as a power, ver. 2, 3. and who are, in every part of the world, seeking to do all the mischief they can; and may be said to hold the winds, not in a literal sense, for God only gathers the wind in his fist, and holds it there, and lets it loose at his pleasure; but in a mystical sense, as these may refer to the word, and the ministers of the word, whose progress and success are often hindered by Satan and his emissaries; and some particularly understand by them the four monarchies of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; others the four emperors, after that Dioclesian and Maximianus had resigned, as Maximinus, Galerius, Maxentius, and Licinius; others Mahomet, or the Turk, in the east, who hindered the Gospel by his wars and devastations, as well as by false worship; the kings of France and Spain on the west, by fire, and faggot, and sword; and the pope in the south, by bulls and excommunications; and the empire and emperors of Germany on the north, by public edicts; or, in general, all the Popish tribe, popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, by their decrees, anathemas, sermons, writings, and lying miracles, did all they could that the Gospel might not be preached neither in the earth, on the continent, nor in the sea, or in the islands of it; or that any of the saints, the trees of righteousness, who lived in woods and mountainous places, or were forced to fly into woods, might have any advantage by it. But, after all, rather this is to be understood of good angels, and either of their restraining evil angels from doing mischief, see Dan. x. 13, 20, 21. Rev. xii. 4, 7. or keeping back the winds of false doctrines and heresies from the churches of Christ, in the several parts of the world; or rather, and which is the true sense, of their holding in the storms of calamities and

war to the destruction of kingdoms, provinces, islands, and the several inhabitants of them, and intends a general peace throughout the world; see Jer. xlix. 36. and li. 1, 2. This mystical way of speaking seems to agree with the notions of the Jews, who speak of angels standing at the gates of the four winds, *וּכְפֹתָיו רִיחַ, and the keys of the wind in their hands*, whose names they give us²; and make mention of *כְּלֵאֵי רִיחָא, the angels of the wind*³; and the Magi among the Persians call the angel of the wind *Bad*, or *Bud-ran*⁴.

Ver. 2. *And I saw another angel, &c.*] Not Constantine, who came from the eastern parts to the empire, with the true knowledge of God, and the authority of God to propagate it; and who repressed the four angels, or evil spirits, contention, ambition, heresy, and war, from doing the mischief they otherwise would; and sealed the saints, by giving them a platform of doctrine at the council of Nice, as Brightman and others think. But the increased angel, the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ; for who but he should have the privy-seal of heaven, who is the angel of the great council, as the Septuagint render Isa. ix. 6? and who could speak in such an authoritative manner to the four angels, *saying, hurt not the earth, &c.* but he who is the head of all principality and power? and who should seal the servants of the Lord, but he who has them in his hands, and keeps them by his power, so that none of them shall perish? And to him agrees all that follows: *ascending from the east*; from Judea, from Zion, from whence Christ, as the salvation, or Saviour of Israel, came, Psal. xiv. 7. and whose name is *the east*, as some render Zech. iii. 8. he is the day-spring from on high, the sun of righteousness, who rose from the east, the place of the rising sun, and brought light, life, and joy to his people, when he came to seal them. Compare with this Ezek. xliii. 1, 2, 4. and xlv. 1, 2, 3, 4. and xlv. 1, 2. and xlvii. 1. *Having the seal of the living God*; having the impress of deity upon him, being the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image or character of his person; having a testimony, an authentic proof and demonstration of his being the son of God, of his being the true and living God; as also a commission from God, as Mediator, being sealed by him; and having all power and authority from him, to seal and secure the people which were given unto him, and for which purpose he now came: to which may be added, that Christ has the spirit, with his gifts and graces, without measure, by which the saints are sealed unto the day of redemption; and moreover has likewise the seal of the book of life, or of eternal election, in his hands; the elect are chosen in him, and the book of life, in which their names are written to eternal life, is in his keeping, and is therefore called the Lamb's book of life. The Jews speak² of the *east gate* of one of the palaces they suppose above, which they say is shut all the six days, and on the sabbath-day is opened, and the governor of this palace has two ministers, one on his right hand, and one on his left, and two seals in their hands, *חֹתֶם חַיִּים, the seal of life*, and the seal of death, and

² Raziel, fol. 36. 1, 2.

³ Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 17.

² Hyde, Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 12.

⁴ Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1.

all the books of the world, before them; and some are sealed to life, and some to death, with which this passage may be compared. They speak also of an angel that presides at the eastern part of the heavens, who receives the prayers of the Israelites, whose name they call *Gazardia*^b, as this same angel is said to offer up the prayers of the saints, ch. viii. 3. *And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels*: to shew his power and authority over them, they being his creatures and ministers; and to express his great concern for his people, his care of them, and affection for them; and to signify the danger they were in through the calamities that were coming on, should they not be sealed: *to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea*: they had a commission from God to let loose the winds, or to bring on wars, devastations, calamities, and plagues, of various sorts, upon the Roman empire, now Christian; and on the seat of the beast, not only on the continent, but upon the islands also, even upon all the nations, tongues, and people, subject to the see of Rome.

Ver. 3. *Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, &c.*] That is, as yet, for their commission was not contradicted, nor taken away by Christ; and at the time appointed, at the blowing of the several trumpets, they let loose the winds, and let in the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, the Saracens and Turks into the empire, and after that poured out the vials of God's wrath upon the Romish antichrist: this retarding of them was but in appearance, that there might be an opportunity to shew to John what care would be taken all along of the church of Christ, and true servants of the living God: *till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads*: the servants of sin, Satan, and the beast of Rome, were took no notice nor care of; they were the persons to be hurt by the winds, signified by the earth, sea, and trees, even idolaters, small and great; but *the servants of our God*, who serve him with grace in their hearts, from a principle of love, in the exercise of faith, without servile fear, and with reverence and godly fear, in righteousness and true holiness, and with a view to his glory; and are worshippers of him in spirit and in truth, being followers of the Lamb, whithersoever he goes; and so are the servants of his God, and their God; the sealing of them does not design the sealing of them with the seal of election, this was done in eternity; nor with the seal of the spirit, which is common to all the saints in all ages; but it denotes the hiding and concealing, and so securing the saints amidst all the calamities of the empire, and throughout the whole time of the Romish apostacy, from first to last; and respects the time when the church fled into the wilderness, and was hid, and nourished with the hidden manna, for a time, and times, and half a time, Rev. xii. 14. Christ set a mark upon them, as was upon the houses of the Israelites, when the destroying angel passed through Egypt, and destroyed the first-born in it; and as was upon the foreheads of those that sighed and cried in Jerusalem, when orders were given to slay young and old, Exod. xii. 23. Ezek. ix. 4. Christ

will have a people in the worst of times; he knows who are his, and he'll take care of them; he has his chambers of protection to hide them in, till the indignation is over-past: the sealers, *we*, are either Father, Son, and Spirit, who are all jointly concerned for the welfare of the elect; or Christ and his ministering angels that attend him, whom he employs for the good and safety of the heirs of salvation: the seal with which these are sealed is the seal of the living God, the fore-knowledge, love, care, and power of God; and the name of God, even Christ's Father's name, and their Father's name, in their foreheads; the new name of children of God, by and under which they are known and preserved by him: and this is said to be *in their foreheads*, in allusion to servants, who used to be marked in their foreheads; hence they are called by Apuleius^c *frontes literati*; and by Martial, a servant is called *fronte notatus*^d: but then these were such who had committed faults, and this was done by way of punishment^e; wherefore it can hardly be thought that the servants of God should be sealed, in allusion to them: but rather with reference to the mitre on the high-priest's forehead, as some think; or it may be to Ezek. ix. 4. and shews, that though these persons were hid and concealed from men, they were well known to God and Christ; nor were they ashamed to make a public and open confession of Christ before men, as did the true and faithful witnesses of Christ, the Waldenses and Albigenes, in the midst of the greatest darkness of Popery, and of danger from men; and who seem to be chiefly intended.

Ver. 4. *And I heard the number of them which were sealed, &c.*] And therefore could be sure of the exact number, which did not depend upon his sight, and telling them, in which some mistake might have been made, but he heard the number expressed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty, and four thousand*: which is a square number arising from twelve, the square root of it, being just twelve times twelve thousand; and may denote their being the true and genuine offspring of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, holding their doctrine, and being built on their foundation; see ch. xxi. 14. and these were *of all the tribes of the children of Israel*; not that these were all Jews in a literal sense, for the time of their conversion in great numbers is not yet come. Dr. Goodwin thinks that these sealed ones design the believers of the Greek and Armenian churches, and his reasons are not despicable; but this is to limit and restrain them to a particular part of the church of Christ; whereas they take in all the saints within this long tract of time, even all that are the true Israel of God, who are Jews inwardly, of what nation, kindred, tongue, and people soever; and is a certain and determinate number for an uncertain and indeterminate one; and only intends a large number of persons known to God and Christ; see 2 Esdras ii. 38.

Ver. 5. *Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand, &c.*] Judah is mentioned first, because Christ sprung from that tribe, and the pure worship of God was preserved in it; and that itself was preserved a

^b Zöher. in Exod. fol. 79. 2.
^c Metamorph. l. 9. p. 130.

^d Epigr. l. 3. Ep. 20.

^e Vid. Topica de Operis Servorum. p. 170, &c.

distinct tribe until the coming of Shiloh; its name signifies *praise God*, Gen. xxix. 35. and shews, that it becomes all the sealed ones, all true believers, and every member of the church of God, to praise him for all favours and blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. *Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand*; Reuben was Jacob's first-born, but by his sin he lost the honour and privilege of birth-right, and therefore is mentioned after Judah, who prevailed above him and the rest of his brethren; his name signifies *see the son*, Gen. xxix. 32. and shews that the son of God is to be looked unto for righteousness, life, and salvation, by all that expect to be saved, and to him does the true church look for eternal life and happiness. *Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand*; his name signifies *a troop*, Gen. xxx. 11. and may denote that there would be a numerous company of saints and faithful witnesses during the time of sealing, and amidst all the troubles and afflictions that would attend the church and people of God, and who in the issue would be conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Christ; see Gen. xlix. 19.

Ver. 6. *Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand, &c.] Asher*, which the Septuagint pronounce *Aser*, as here, signifies *blessed*, Gen. xxx. 13. as all the sealed ones are, blessed with all spiritual blessings, with grace here, and glory hereafter. *Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand*; the name of this tribe signifies *wrestlings*, Gen. xxx. 8. and may design the wrestlings of saints, both with God in prayer, and with their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also their strivings together for the faith of the Gospel. *Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand*; this word signifies *forgetting*, Gen. xli. 51. and shews that the followers of Christ should forget the things that are behind, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the onions and garlic in Egypt, and their former company and acquaintance, their own people, and their father's house, and all their labours and sufferings for the sake of Christ.

Ver. 7. *Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand, &c.]* The name of this tribe signifies *hearing*, Gen. xxix. 33. and such an hearing as is attended with obedience; and denotes the spiritual and practical hearing of the Gospel by those who hear, and understand, and believe, and practise what they hear, and yield the obedience of faith unto it. *Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand*; this name signifies *joined*, Gen. xxix. 34. and denotes, that these sealed ones were not only joined one to another in love and holy fellowship, but to Christ, and were one spirit with him, and were members of his body, flesh, and bones, and cleaved to him with full purpose of heart. *Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand*; the interpretation of this name is *hire or reward*, Gen. xxx. 18. and may design those rewards of grace which God bestows upon his faithful servants, in times of tribulation.

Ver. 8. *Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand, &c.]* Which signifies *dwelling*, Gen. xxx. 20. and was the tribe in which Christ had his dwelling, and where he much conversed; and may denote his gracious inhabitation, as well as that of God the Father, and of the Spirit, among the saints and sealed ones.

Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand; whose name signifies *adding*, Gen. xxx. 24. and may intend the additions both of numbers, and of gifts and graces to the churches of those times. *Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand*; this word signifies *the son of the right hand*, Gen. xxxv. 18. shewing, that these sealed ones are as a signet on God's right hand, and are as near and dear unto him as a man's right hand is to him; see Psal. lxxx. 17. Now twelve thousand out of each tribe make just the number of a hundred forty and four thousand, ver. 4. The tribe of Dan is not mentioned, it may be because of the apostacy of that tribe, one of Jeroboam's golden calves being set up there; shewing that God had no sealed ones of that sort, and instead of him Levi is reckoned; though that tribe had no part in the division of the land of Israel, yet had a part in Christ, and is therefore mentioned in this mystical account. Nor is the name of Ephraim used, it may be for the same reason; there having been a great defection in that tribe from the pure worship of God, and instead of him the name of Joseph appears.

Ver. 9. *After this I beheld, &c.]* What follows is a distinct vision from the preceding one, and is not a continuation of that, as if the sealing of the Jewish believers was designed by the former, and the sealing of the Gentiles in this latter; whereas in this vision there is no mention made of sealing, nor was there, or will there be any need of it in the time it refers unto; and which is not the time of the Reformation; nor when the vials began to be poured out upon the seat of the beast; for though there were great numbers converted in many nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, yet not in all; nor do the characters of this great multitude, and the happiness they shall enjoy, seem to suit with persons in a state of mortality and imperfection, ver. 14, 15, 16, 17. wherefore many interpreters understand this vision of the saints in heaven: but it rather respects the millennium state, or thousand-years' reign of Christ with his saints on earth, with which all that is here said agrees; compare ver. 14. with ch. xx. 4. and ver. 15. with ch. xxii. 3. and ver. 16, 17. with ch. xxi. 4, 6. And the design of this vision is to shew to John, and every diligent observer, that after the seventh seal is opened, the trumpets are blown, and the vials poured out; during which time there will be a number sealed that will profess Christ; and at the close and winding-up of all things, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, Christ will descend, and all the saints with him; their bodies will be raised, and the living saints changed, and make one general assembly, who are shewn to John here, as in ch. xxi. 9, 10. to relieve his mind, and support his spirits, in a view of the calamities ushered in by the opening of the seventh seal. *And lo, a great multitude, which no man could number*; which design all the elect of God in the new Jerusalem church-state, the bride, the Lamb's wife, or the new Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven; these will appear to be a great multitude, not in comparison of the inhabitants that shall have dwelt upon earth, nor of the professors of religion in one shape or another; for, with respect to each of these, they are but a few, a seed, a remnant, a little flock; but as considered in themselves,

and so they are many who are ordained to eternal life, whose sins Christ has bore, for whom his blood has been shed, and whom he justifies, and who are called by his grace, and are brought to glory; and who make up such a number as no man can number: God indeed can number them, but not man; for they are a set of particular persons chosen by God, and redeemed by Christ, and who are perfectly and distinctly known by them; their number and names are with them; their names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and God and Christ can, and do call them by their name; and when they were given to Christ, they passed under the rod of him that telleth them; and he will give an exact account of them, of every individual person, another day. But then they are not to be numbered by men; and they will be of *all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*, and therefore must consist both of Jews and Gentiles; these were not *all nations*, &c. but of all nations, some of all nations; and such God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit calls; God has not chosen all the Jews, but a remnant, according to the election of grace, nor all the Gentiles, but has taken out of them a people for his name; and so Christ has redeemed, by his blood, some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, of Jew and Gentile: and hence the Gospel has been sent into all the world, and to all nations, for the gathering of these persons out of them; and when they are all gathered in, they'll all meet together in the new Jerusalem church-state, and make up the body here presented to view. *Stood before the throne and before the Lamb*; the throne of God, and of the Lamb, will be in the midst of the new Jerusalem church; the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell among them; and before the presence of his glory will all the saints be presented; and the Lamb will then present to himself his whole church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and they'll behold his glory, and see him as he is: and as they are described before by their number, and their descent, so here by their position and situation, and, as follows, by their habit and attire, *clothed with white robes*: agreeably to their princely and priestly characters: it was usual for princes and noblemen to be arrayed in vestures of linen, as Joseph was in Pharaoh's court; and the Jewish priests wore garments of linen, in their daily ministry and service; and in the thousand-years' reign the saints will appear to be kings and priests, Rev. v. 10. and xx. 6. and accordingly will be clothed as such: and this may also be expressive of their entire freedom from sin by the blood of Christ, ver. 14. and their complete justification by his righteousness, which is sometimes compared to white raiment, and is called fine linen, clean, and white; and likewise their spotless purity and holiness, sanctification in them being now perfect, which was before imperfect: and these robes may also design their shining robes of glory and immortality; for they will now be clothed upon with their house from heaven, and will have put off mortality and corruption, and have put on immortality

and incorruption, and appear with Christ in glory; for such will be the then state of things: *and palms in their hands*; or branches of palm-trees, as in John xii. 13. as an emblem of their uprightness and faithfulness, which they had shewn in the cause of Christ, even unto death, the palm-tree being a very upright tree, Jer. x. 5. Cant. vii. 7. or of their bearing up under a variety of pressures and afflictions, by which they were not cast down and destroyed, but bravely stood up under them, and were now come out of them; the palm-tree being of such a nature, as is reported, that the more weight is hung upon it, the higher it rises, and the straighter it grows; see Psal. xcii. 12. and chiefly as an emblem of victory and triumph over their enemies, as sin, Satan, the world and death, which they had been struggling with, in a state of imperfection, but were now more than conquerors over them; the palm-tree is well known to be a token of victory. So Philo the Jew^f says, the palm-tree is *ὑψηλὸς ἕκαστος, a symbol of victory*. Conquerors used to carry palm-tree branches in their hands^g: those who conquered in the combats and plays among the Greeks, used not only to have crowns of palm-trees given them, but carried branches of it in their hands^h; as did also the Romans in their triumphs; yea, they sometimes wore *toga palmata*, a garment with the figures of palm-trees on it, which were interwoven in it: and hence here palms are mentioned along with white garments; and some have been tempted to render the words thus, *clothed with white robes, and palms o. their sides*; that is, on the sides of their robes^k. The medal which was struck by Titus Vespasian, at the taking of Jerusalem, had on it a palm-tree, and a captive woman sitting under it, with this inscription on it, *Judæa capta*, Judea is taken. And when our Lord rode in triumph to Jerusalem, the people met him with branches of palm-trees in their hands, and cried, Hosanna to him. So the Jews, at the feast of tabernacles, which they kept in commemoration of their having dwelt in tents in the wilderness, carried *Lulabs*, or palm-tree branches, in their hands, in token of joy, Lev. xxiii. 40. and in like manner, these being come out of the wilderness of the world, and the tabernacle of God being among them, express their joy in this way; see the note on John xii. 13.

Ver. 10. *And cried with a loud voice, &c.*] To shew the strength of their affection, and the greatness of their joy, and how sensible they were of the favour they enjoyed, and how hearty they were in the following ascription of glory to God, and the Lamb. *Saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*; by *salvation* is meant, not only temporal salvation, and those many deliverances, which God had wrought for them, and particularly in bringing them out of great tribulation, ver. 14. but spiritual and eternal salvation, which is the salvation of the soul, and is owing to the free grace of God, and the blood of Christ; and the sense is, that God and the Lamb are the sole authors of it, and the glory of it ought to be given to them, and to no other: God

^f Allegor. l. 2. p. 74.

^g A. Gell. Noctes Attic. l. 3. c. 6. Sueton. in Caio, c. 39.

^h Pausan. Arcadica, l. 8. p. 532. Alex. ab Alex. Geuial. Dier. l. 5. c. 8. & l. 6. c. 19.

ⁱ Isidor. Hispalens. Origen. l. 19. c. 24. p. 168.

^k Vid. Lydium de re Militare, l. 6. c. 3. p. 325.

the father, who sits upon the throne, resolved upon it in his eternal purposes and decrees, and contrived and formed the scheme of it in the council of peace, and he made sufficient provision for it in the covenant of grace; and as he from eternity appointed his son to be his salvation to the ends of the earth, so in the fulness of time he sent him to be the Saviour of the world, and delivered him up for all his people, unto death itself, and spared him not, but awoke the sword of justice against him, and sheathed it in him; and since he had such a concern in salvation, the glory of it in right belongs to him: and the Lamb, the son of God, he engaged to do the will and work of God, and from everlasting became the surety of the better testament; and in time he came to seek and to save lost sinners, and he is become the author of eternal salvation to them; his own arm has brought it, and it is in him, and no other, even a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death, and wrath to come; and it will be the employment of the saints, both in the new Jerusalem church-state, during the thousand-years' reign, and in heaven to all eternity, to ascribe the glory of all this, not to themselves, to their merits and works of righteousness, or to any creature whatever, but to God and the Lamb only.

Ver. 11. *And all the angels stood round about the throne, &c.*] The holy and elect angels, even all of them, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, the innumerable company of them, who are represented in the same position, ch. v. 11. see the note there: *and about the elders, and the four beasts:* the churches and ministers; yea, round about the great multitude before mentioned, the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; whose guardians they will be, and to whom they will always be ministering spirits. *And fell before the throne on their faces;* in token of submission and reverence: *and worshipped God;* by celebrating the perfections of his nature, and ascribing to him the glory of all his works.

Ver. 12. *Saying, Amen, &c.*] As approving and confirming what the great multitude of men had said in ver. 10. in ascribing the glory of salvation to God, and the Lamb: the angels, though they have no part in it themselves, yet highly approve of it as right and just, that men should give the glory of it where it is due. *Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* Here a seven-fold praise is given to God by the angels, as to the Lamb, in ch. v. 12. and in words much the same. They rightly ascribe *blessing* to God, who is blessed in himself, and is the source of all blessedness to his creatures, angels and men. And also *glory*; the glory of his divine perfections, who is the God of glory; and of all his works of nature and providence, and especially of the salvation of men by Christ. *And wisdom*; he being the only wise God, whose wisdom is to be seen in all the works of creation, and in the government of the world, and in nothing more than in the scheme of redemption by the son of God: *and thanksgiving*: for all mercies and favours, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, enjoyed by angels, or by men: *and honour*: which is due to him from all his creatures, as he

is the Creator of them; and from all his children, as he is their father; and from all his servants, as he is their master: *and power*; which he has exerted, in making all things out of nothing, in supporting the whole universe in its being, and in saving and preserving his own people: *and might*; or *strength*, he being the almighty God, the strength of Israel, and the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; and the praise and ascription of all this, the angels wish to be given him by themselves and others, to all eternity; and as desiring that so it might be, and as believing that so it would be, they add their *Amen* to it.

Ver. 13. *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, &c.*] This elder was not the Apostle Peter, as some Popish interpreters have thought; and still less Pope Silvester, who lived in the times of Constantine; he is much more likely, according to others, to be Constantine himself, the first of the elders, or the chief magistrate when the church sprung out of its troubles, and enjoyed rest and peace; though some have thought of the prophet Isaiah, since many things said by this elder are to be found in his prophecy; compare ver. 14, 16, 17. with Isa. i. 18. and xlix. 10. and xxv. 8. but it is needless to inquire who the particular person was; it is enough to say, that he was one of the four-and-twenty elders about the throne, one that belonged to the church, perhaps the same as in ch. v. 5. who, in a visionary way, is represented as accosting John upon the above sight. The word *answered* is a common Hebraism of the New Testament, which is often used when nothing goes before, to which a return is made; and only signifies here, that the elder opened his mouth, began to speak, and called to John, and said as follows: *what are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?* This he said, not as being ignorant of them, or of the reason of their being clothed in this manner, nor of the place and state from whence they came, as appears by the account afterwards given of them by him; but to stir up John to take more notice of them, as being a body of men that were worthy of observation and contemplation, and were worth his while to consider well who they were, and from whence they came; and also to try him whether he knew them or no, and to bring him to a confession of his ignorance; and that he might have an opportunity of giving him some hints about them, which might be useful to him, and to the churches, and for the explanation of this vision, and other parts of this prophecy.

Ver. 14. *And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest, &c.*] John replies in a very humble, modest, and respectful manner, to the elder, calling him *sir*, according to the usage of the eastern people; and it is observable, that this word is much used in his Gospel, and more than in any other book; see John iv. 11, 15, 19, 49. and v. 7. and xii. 21. and xx. 15. Some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, *my Lord*; and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions. John confesses his ignorance, and ascribes knowledge to the elder, and desires information of him; for the sense is, that the elder knew who they were, and from whence they came, but he did not, and therefore desires that he would inform him; and so the Arabic version renders

it, *and my Lord, thou art more learned*; that is, than I am, and therefore instruct me, as he accordingly did; *and he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation*; seeing this company designs all the elect of God, that ever were, are, or shall be in the world; *the great tribulation*, out of which they came, is not to be restrained to any particular time of trouble, but includes all that has been, is, or shall be; as all the afflictions of the saints under the Old Testament, from righteous Abel to Zechariah; and all the troubles of the people of God in the times of the Maccabees, Heb. xi. 35—38. all the persecutions of the Christians by the Jews, at the first publication of the Gospel; and the persecutions under the Roman emperors, both Pagan and Arian; and the cruelties and barbarities of the Romish antichrist, during the whole time of the apostacy; and particularly the last struggle of the beast, which will be the hour of temptation, that will come upon all the world; and in general all the afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, and many tribulations of all the saints, and every member of Christ in this world, who in the new Jerusalem church-state will be *come out of them*; which supposes them to have been in them, and yet were not overwhelmed by them, and lost in them; but, by divine support and assistance, waded through them, and were now quite clear of them, and never more to be annoyed with them; see Rev. xxi. 4. *And have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*; not in the blood of bulls and goats, which could not take away sin; nor in their own blood, their sufferings for Christ, on which they did not depend, knowing there's no comparison between them, and the glory revealed in them; nor in any works of righteousness done by them, which are imperfect and filthy, and need washing; but in the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The robes which they washed in his blood may either design themselves, their consciences, which this blood purges from dead works; or their outward conversation-garments, which have their spots, and need continual washing; or else the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, or their justification, which is by the blood of Christ, Rom. v. 9. The act of washing from sin, by the blood of Christ, is sometimes ascribed to Christ himself, as in ch. i. 5. but here to the saints, and designs the concern which faith has in the blood of Christ, which deals with it for justification, peace, and pardon, for the removing of sin from the conscience, and for cleansing from all impurity, both of flesh and spirit: and the effect of this is, that their robes were *made white*; that is, that they were freed from all sin, were without fault before the throne, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This shews that these persons had no trust in themselves, or dependence on their own merits, and works of righteousness, but wholly trusted to, and depended on the blood and righteousness of Christ; which is the only way to come out of tribulation, and enter the kingdom.

Ver. 15. *Therefore are they before the throne of God, &c.*] As in ver. 9. see the note there, not because of their great tribulations, but because they were brought through them, and out of them, by the grace and power of God; nor because of their robes, or conver-

sation-garments, but because those were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; or because of the blood of the Lamb, and their justification, pardon, and cleansing by it: *and serve him day and night in his temple*; not in any material temple, but in the new Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the first-born, the temple of the living God; for in this state there will be no material temple, or place of worship, but God and the Lamb will be the temple thereof, ch. xxi. 22. nor will there be any night there, ch. xxii. 5. wherefore this phrase, *day and night*, only denotes the constancy and uninterrupted of their service, there being nothing to obstruct them in it, or break them off from it, as now; in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were, one or other of them, night or day in the service of the temple: and the service of these persons in the new Jerusalem state will not lie in attending on the word and ordinances, or in the ministration of them, as in the present state; but in praising God, singing Hallelujahs to him, adoring the perfections of his nature, and admiring his wonderful works of providence and grace, and ascribing the glory of salvation to him, and to the Lamb; and this their service will be the glorious liberty of the children of God. Hence the Ethiopic version renders it, *and they praise him day and night*; this will be the employment of the saints in the millennium state, and to all eternity: *and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; or tabernacle over them*; for the tabernacle of God shall be now among men, and he will dwell among the saints; they shall enjoy his presence, and have the most intimate communion with him; it will appear most manifest that he is their covenant God, and they are his covenant people; and he will be a tabernacle, not only of inhabitation, but of protection for them; and the name of this city, this new Jerusalem, will be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there.

Ver. 16. *They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, &c.*] The words are taken out of Isa. xlix. 10. and will be true in a literal and corporeal sense. Now the saints are often in hunger and thirst, then they shall be so no more; and in a mystical and spiritual sense, there will be no famine of the word; for though there will not be the outward ministration of the word, as now, the substance of it will be enjoyed, to full satisfaction; nor will there be any uneasy desires after spiritual things, and much less any hungerings and thirstings, or lusting after carnal, sensual, and earthly things. *Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat*; not the sun of persecution, see Matf. xiii. 6, 22. nor the heat of Satan's temptations, or his fiery darts; nor of any fiery trial, or sore affliction; nor of the divine displeasure, or any fearful sense and apprehension of it; nor of toil and labour, called the burden and heat of the day, from all which they will be now free.

Ver. 17. *For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, &c.*] See ch. v. 6. not before the throne, as the great multitude are said to be, ver. 9. nor round about it, as the angels in ver. 11. but in the midst of it, being equal to him that sits upon it; sitting on the same throne with him, and having the same power and authority, he shall feed them as a shepherd his

flock; for this Lamb is a Shepherd, and this great multitude are his flock; whom he will feed in this state, not by his ministers, word, and ordinances, as now; but in person, and with the rich discoveries of himself, and of his love, signified by a feast, by new wine in his father's kingdom, and his own, and by eating and drinking at his table, in the kingdom appointed by him to his followers; and hence it is they shall never hunger more: or *shall rule them*, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; for the same word signifies to *feed*, and to *rule*, as a king rules his subjects; Christ will now be visibly King of saints, and King over all the earth, and will reign before his ancients gloriously; and, in these days of his, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely under his power and protection: *and shall lead them unto living fountains of water*; by *water* is meant the grace, love, and free favour of God in Christ, that pure river of water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, from divine sovereignty; and with which the saints in this state shall be sweetly and fully so-laced and refreshed; and hence they shall never thirst more: and this is said to be *living*, because not only refreshing and reviving, but because it will last for ever; the love of God is from everlasting to everlasting; and it is signified by *fountains*, to denote the abundance of it, even as it will be perceived and enjoyed by the saints now; for these waters will not be only up to the ankles, and knees, but a broad river to swim in, which can't be passed over; and hither will Christ lead his people, which is one branch of his office as a Shepherd; and which shews his care of them, and affection for them. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; or *out of their eyes*, as the Alexandrian copy reads; see Isa. xxv. 8. The sense is, that that which is now the occasion of tears will cease, as the sin and corruptions of God's people, which now are the cause of many tears; as also Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and the various afflictions of this life, and the persecutions of the men of the world; there will be no more of either of these; all will be made to cease; see Rev. xxi. 4. and in the room of them full and everlasting joy will take place, Isa. xxxv. 10. Mr. Daubuz thinks, that the whole of

this chapter belongs to the sixth seal, and that the promises in it are such as were to be accomplished at the opening of the seventh, and do not belong to the millennium state; but had their fulfilment in the times of Constantine, who he supposes is the angel that came from the east, who restrained the persecutors of the church, and introduced a general peace in church and state; and as he came with the seal of the living God, which he understands of the cross of Christ, he put upon his standard, and on the shields of his soldiers, so he sealed the servants of God on their foreheads with it, by allowing them to make a public profession of a crucified Christ, and by protecting them in that profession, even men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles; and particularly he thinks the innumerable palm-bearing company may design the council of Nice, gathered by him, which consisted of the representatives of the whole Christian church in the several nations of the world, who had great honour, freedom, and immunities conferred upon them; and that the angels are the Christian magistrates, submitting to the Christian religion, and defending the church, which was now come out of the great tribulation of Heathen persecution, and had temples and places of public worship opened for them; in which they had full liberty to serve the Lord continually, without interruption, and were secure from all affliction and persecution, and were filled with joy and gladness; and the Lamb, by the means of Constantine, as Christ's vicar and servant, he declared himself to be, fed and protected the church in peace and quietness; all which are accomplished during the rest, or *silence*, under the next seal; and which I should very readily agree to, since this interpretation carries on the thread of the prophetic history without any interruption, were it not for the description of the palm-bearing company, both as to quantity and quality, and the declaration of the happy state of those come out of great tribulation, which I think cannot be made to suit with any imperfect state of the church on earth, without greatly lowering the sense of the expressions used; however, if any one prefers this exposition to what is given, I am not much averse unto it.

C H A P. VIII.

THIS chapter contains the opening of the seventh seal, and the things that followed on it, and particularly the sounding of the first four trumpets. Upon the opening of the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for half an hour, ver. 1. then follows a vision of seven angels, who stood before God, and had seven trumpets given to them, ver. 2. then of another angel, described by his position, standing at the altar; by his having a golden censer, and by much incense being given him, the end of which was to offer up the prayers of all saints, which with it went up to God, and were acceptable to him; and by filling his censer with the fire of the altar, and casting it to the earth; the effects of which were voices, thunderings, lightnings,

and an earthquake, ver. 3, 4, 5. after which the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets, ver. 6. the first blows his, which brings hail and fire, mingled with blood, upon the earth, which burns up the third part of trees and all green grass, ver. 7. the second blows, upon which a burning mountain is cast into the sea, and a third part of it becomes blood, a third part of the creatures in it die, and a third part of the ships upon it are destroyed, ver. 8, 9. the third angel blows, upon which a star, like a burning lamp, falls upon the third part of rivers and fountains, whose name is Wormwood, and imbitters them, so that many men die of them, ver. 10, 11. the fourth angel blows, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, is smitten,

and becomes dark, so that there is no light for a third part of the day and night, ver. 12. and the chapter is concluded with the vision of another angel flying through the midst of heaven, proclaiming three times woe to the inhabitants of the earth, on account of what would be uttered by the three following angels, who were yet to blow their trumpets, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. *And when he had opened the seventh seal, &c.*] That is, when the Lamb had opened the seventh and last seal of the sealed book: *there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour*; not in the third heaven, the seat of the divine Being, of angels and glorified saints, where are hallelujahs without intermission; but in the church, which is oftentimes signified by heaven in this book, and where now the throne of God was placed, in that form as described in ch. iv. or rather in the Roman empire: nor is this silence the sum of this seal, or the only thing in it; for it includes the preparation of the seven angels to take their trumpets, though none of them were sounded during this period. This space of time some think refers to the time which elapsed, whilst the angel, who had incense given him to offer it with the prayers of saints, did so, and took fire off the altar with his censer, and cast it on the earth: and while the seven angels had their trumpets given them, and they were preparing to sound. Others are of opinion that this was only a pause, a breathing-time for John between the former visions and seals, and the following; nothing being said or done, or any thing exhibited to him during this interval; but he was at leisure to reflect on what he had seen, and to prepare for what was to come. Others understand it of the amazement of the saints at the judgments of God, which were coming upon the Christian empire, and of their quiet and silent preparations for these troubles and combats, both within and without, they were to be exercised with; see Zech. ii. 13. Others have thought that this refers to the state of the saints after the day of judgment, when there will be an entire cessation from persecution and trouble, and when the souls under the altar will have done crying for vengeance; but this will be not for half an hour only, but to all eternity; nor will angels and saints be then silent. Rather this is to be understood of that peace and rest which the church enjoyed upon Constantine's having defeated all his enemies, when he brought the church into a state of profound tranquillity and ease; and this lasted but for a little while, which is here expressed by about, or almost half an hour, as the Syriac version renders it; for in a short time the Arian heresy broke out, which introduced great troubles in the church, and at last violent persecutions. The allusion is, as in the whole of the following vision of the angel at the altar, to the offering of incense; at which time the people were removed from the temple, from between the porch and altar¹, to some more distant place; and the priest was alone while he offered incense, and then prayed a short prayer, that the people might not be affrighted lest he should be dead²: and who in the mean while were

praying in a silent manner without; see Luke i. 9, 10. hence the Jews say³, that the offering of incense atones for an ill tongue, for it is a thing that is introduced *שׁוֹמֵר*, *silently*, and it atones for what is done silently, such as whisperings, backbitings, &c. and they call⁴ silence the best of spices, even of those of which the sweet incense was made.

Ver. 2. *And I saw the seven angels, &c.*] Not the seven spirits of God, ch. i. 4. and v. 5. their names, as well as their office, differ; nor the ministers of the word, though these are often called angels in this book, and blow the trumpet of the Gospel, and lift up their voice like a trumpet; but the angelic spirits, and these either evil ones, since they are the executors of wrath and vengeance, and bring judgments on the earth; and who are sometimes said to stand before God, 1 Kings xxiii. 21, 22. Job i. 6. or rather good angels, who are sometimes ministers of divine wrath; see 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. 2 Kings xix. 35. *seven* of them are mentioned, as being a proper number for the blowing of the seven trumpets, which would complete all the woes that were to come upon the world, and in allusion to the seven princes the eastern monarchs used to have continually about them, Esth. i. 14. as it follows: *which stood before God*: and denotes their nearness to him, and familiarity with him, they always behold his face; and their service and ministrations, and their readiness to execute his will: the allusion is to the two priests standing at the table of fat, with two silver trumpets in their hands, with which they blew, and another struck the cymbal, and the Levites sung, which was always done at the time of the daily sacrifice⁵: *and to them were given seven trumpets*; every one had one; and which were an emblem of those wars, and desolations, and calamities, which would come upon the empire, and upon the world, at the blowing of each of them; the trumpet being an alarm, preparing for, proclaiming, and introducing these things; Jer. iv. 19. Hos. v. 8. these are said to be *given* them; either by him that sat upon the throne, about which they were; or by the Lamb that opened the seal; and shews that they did nothing but what they had a commission and order to do. Here is manifestly an allusion to the priests and Levites blowing their trumpets at the close of the daily sacrifice, and at the offering of incense⁶, as before observed.

Ver. 3. *And another angel came, &c.*] The Ethiopic version adds, *from the east*, as in ch. vii. 2. pointing to the same angel, and who is intended: for not a created angel, as Gabriel, or any other, is meant; nor any mere man, at least not Pope Damasus, who lived in Constantine's time, as Lyra thought; nor Constantine himself, which is the opinion of Brightman, who thinks that his, and the desires of other good men to make peace, and compose the differences occasioned by the Arian heresy, are designed by the incense and prayers; and this being brought about at the counsel of Nice, when the Arian blasphemy was condemned, and truth confirmed, is intended by the ascent of the smoke of the incense with the prayers,

¹ T. Tab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. Maimon. Hilchet Tamidin, c. 3. sect. 3.

² Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1.

³ T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. & Zebachim, fol. 89. 2.

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⁴ T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 18. 1.

⁵ Misn. Tamid. c. 7. sect. 3.

⁶ Maimon. Hilchet Tamidin, c. 6. sect. 5.

out of the angel's hands; when there followed upon this great contentions, heart-burnings, and persecutions, signified by fire, voices, thunderings, &c. and others have been of opinion that the Emperor Theodosius is designed, and that respect is had to his prayer both in the church, and at the head of his army, before the battle with Eugenius, the saints in the mean while putting up united prayers to God for success, and which was obtained; and this victory was attended with a miraculous tempest, and gave a deadly blow to the Pagan religion. Yet neither of those, but Christ himself, the Angel of the covenant, and of God's presence, is here intended, who appeared in an angelic form; so the high-priest in the day of atonement was called שַׁלְיָח, an angel, or messenger, to which the allusion is; and stood at the altar; either of burnt-offerings, and may be rendered stood upon it; and so may represent his sacrifice, which had been lately offered up for the sins of his people, he being both altar, sacrifice, and priest; or rather the altar of incense, since mention is made of a censer and of incense, and the smoke of it; and seeing this altar is a golden one, as that was, and is before the throne, as that was before the vail, by the ark of the testimony; Exod. xxx. 1, 3, 6. and so Christ is here introduced as the high-priest, advocate, and intercessor for his people, though both altars may be respected in this verse: the altar may design the altar of burnt-offering, from whence the coals were taken in the censer; and the golden altar the altar of incense, where the coals being brought, the incense was put upon them, and offered; and here he stood, as every one concerned in the service of the sanctuary did: having a golden censer; the Ethiopic version adds, of fire; for this was a vessel in which were put burning coals of fire, taken from off the altar before the Lord, Lev. xvi. 12. and which may denote the sufferings of Christ, the pains he endured in his body, the sorrows of his soul, and the wrath of God, which was poured like fire upon him; the altar from which they were taken off was typical of Christ in his divine nature, which is the altar that sanctifies the gift, and gave virtue to his blood and sacrifice; and all this being before the Lord may shew that Christ's sufferings were according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; for these burning coals in the censer were also carried within the vail, representing heaven, where Christ entered by his own blood, and where he is as a Lamb that had been slain, the efficacy of whose death always continues; and this being a golden censer shews the excellency and perpetuity of Christ's sacrifice and intercession. In the daily service the priest used a silver censer, but on the day of atonement a golden one; though at the daily sacrifice there was a vessel used, called זִכְבֵּה, like to a large golden bushel, in which was a smaller vessel full of incense, and may be what is here designed: and there was given unto him much incense; the intercession of Christ is meant by the incense, which, like that, is

sweet and fragrant, very grateful and acceptable to God, and also pure and holy; for though it is made for transgressors, yet in a way of righteousness, and consistent with the holiness and justice of God; nor is there any like it, nor should there be any besides it; the intercession of angels, and saints departed, ought to be rejected: and it is perpetual, or will be for ever; see Exod. xxx. 7, 8, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38. and whereas it is said to be much, this is an allusion either to the many spices used in the composition of the incense, see Exod. xxx. 34. the Jews say, that eleven sorts of spices were ordered to Moses, and the wise men have added three more, in all fourteen; or to the priest's handfuls of incense, which he took and brought within the vail on the day of atonement, Lev. xvi. 12. and which were added to, and were over and above the quantity used every day; and even in the daily service the pot of incense was not only filled, but הֵרֵשׂ, heaped up; now this may denote the fulness of Christ's intercession, which is for all his elect, called and uncalled, greater or lesser believers, and for all things for them, as their cases be; for conversion, discoveries of pardon, preservation, perseverance, and glorification; and to support this, he has a fulness of merit, which makes his intercession efficacious; for incense was put upon the burning coals in the censer, or upon the fire before the Lord, Lev. xvi. 13. signifying that Christ's intercession proceeds upon his sufferings and death: his blood and sacrifice, from whence all his pleas and arguments are taken in favour of his people, and which always prevail: and this is said to be given him, as his whole work and office as Mediator, and every branch of it is; he is appointed to this work, is allowed to do it, and is accepted in it, by him that sits upon the throne: in the daily offering of the incense, one took the incense and gave it into the hand of his friend, or the priest that was next him; and if he wanted instruction how to offer it, he taught him, nor might any one offer incense until the president bid him; to which there seems to be an allusion here: now the end of this was, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions add, of God; the prayers of the saints, rightly performed, are themselves compared to incense, being very grateful and acceptable to God, Psal. cxli. 2. and the Arabic version here renders it in connexion with the preceding clause, and explanative of that, and there was given unto him much incense and much spice, which are the prayers of the saints, as in ch. v. 8. and at the time of incense the people prayed; see Luke i. 10. and these are spiritual sacrifices, which Christ the high-priest presents for the saints, perfumes with the incense of his mediation, and makes acceptable to God, being offered upon, and coming up from that altar which is before him, and which gives value to every thing that is put upon it: and they are the prayers of saints, who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated

^r Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

^s Maimon. Eth. Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 17.

^t Yoma, c. 4. sect. 1.

^u Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 4.

^w Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.

^x Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. & T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1.

^y Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 4.

^z Misn. Tamid, c. 6. sect. 3. Maimon. Tamidin, c. 3. sect. 8, 9.

by the blood of Christ, and who are sanctified by the spirit of God; who draw nigh to God with a true heart, and call upon him out of a pure heart, and in sincerity and truth; the prayers of such righteous ones, through faith in Christ, avail much with God; and the prayers of all saints are regarded by Christ, and presented by him, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, greater or lesser believers. The Jews often speak of an angel, whose name is Sandalphon, who is appointed over the prayers of the righteous, and takes them and presents them to God: so Raphael in Tobit xii. 15. says he was one of the seven holy angels that carry up the prayers of the saints; and the heretic Elxai, who was originally a Jew, talked of the holy angels of prayer^b: so the Jews say, that God by, or through his Word, receives the prayers of Israel, and has mercy on them^c. In the Greek text it is, *that he should give*, &c. that is, the *incense*, agreeably to the Hebrew phrase in Numb. xvi. 47. and elsewhere.

Ver. 4. *And the smoke of the incense, &c.*] For the incense being put, as it was used to be, upon burning coals of fire, caused a smoke to arise like a cloud, Lev. xvi. 13. Ezek. viii. 11. so that the whole house, or temple, was filled with it^d: which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God out of the angel's hand; alluding to the incense the priest took in his hand, and cast upon the burning coals; and shews how that by the smoke of the incense, or the virtue of Christ's mediation, the imperfections of the prayers of the saints are covered; and how they are by it perfumed and made acceptable to God; and so are said to ascend up before him, and to be regarded by him, as the prayers of Cornelius were, Acts x. 4. now all this is expressive of the wonderful affection of Christ for his church and people, and care of them; that before the angels sound their trumpets, and bring on wars and desolations into the empire, Christ is represented as interceding for them, and presenting their prayers both for deliverance for themselves, and vengeance on their enemies.

Ver. 5. *And the angel took the censer, &c.*] The golden one before mentioned, the use of which was to take and carry in it burning coals of fire: *and filled it with fire of the altar*: of burnt-offering, for upon that, and not upon the altar of incense, fire was; the allusion is to the priest "that was worthy to use a censer"; "who took a silver censer, and went to the top of the altar (of burnt-offering), and having removed the coals there, and there took them in his censer, and went down and emptied them into a golden one," and there was scattered from it about a kab of coals; for the golden one held a kab less than the silver one^e; and cast it into the earth; the Roman empire: by fire some understand the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces, which sat upon the apostles as cloven tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost; and which they suppose were now plentifully bestowed on the ministers of the word, to enlighten them, inspire them with zeal, and abundantly fit them for the work of the mi-

nistry, in consequence of Christ's mediation and intercession: and others think the Gospel is intended, which is sometimes compared to fire, Jer. xx. 9. and xxiii. 29. or else those contentions and quarrels which, through the corruptions of men, arise on account of the Gospel, Luke xii. 49. though rather by fire here are meant the judgments of God, and his wrath and fury poured forth like fire upon the Roman empire, now become Christian; and so was an emblem of those calamities coming upon it at the sounding of the trumpets; and shews that as Christ prays and intercedes for his own people, for their comfort and safety, so he'll bring down his judgments upon his and their enemies; see Ezek. x. 2. and the Targum on it: *and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake*; which may be understood either of the nature, use, and effects of the Gospel, speaking to the hearts of men by the sons of thunder, enlightening their minds, and shaking their consciences; the like were at the giving of the law, Exod. xix. 16. or rather of those terrors, distresses, and commotions in the world, because of God's righteous judgments, and which particularly will be at the sound of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the seventh vial, ch. xi. 15. and xvi. 17, 18. the allusion is to the sounds that were heard at the time of the daily sacrifice; for besides the blowing of the trumpets by the priests, and the singing of the Levites, of which see the note on ver. 2. there was a musical instrument called *בנרפה*, *magrephah*^f, which being sounded, a man could not hear another speak in Jerusalem: yea, they say it was heard as far as Jericho.

Ver. 6. *And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, &c.*] Given them, ver. 2. *prepared themselves to sound*; they stood up, took their trumpets in their hands, and put them to their mouths; this was giving notice of what was coming upon the earth, and a kind of warning to men, and a call upon them to repentance, and to prepare to meet God in the way of his judgments. The time when these trumpets began to blow was after the opening of the seventh seal, and so after the destruction of the empire as Pagan, which was under the sixth seal; and after that peace and rest from persecution in Constantine's time, signified by the half-hour's silence in heaven; and after the prayers of the saints for vengeance, because of their blood shed in the time of Rome Pagan, were offered up, heard, taken notice of, and accepted; and therefore cannot regard, nor have any concern with the state of the church before Constantine's time, as some have thought the three first trumpets had; the first introducing the contradictions and blasphemies of the Jews, and their persecutions of the Christians, and the effusion of their blood by them; the second the ten persecutions under the Heathen emperors; and the third, the errors and heresies which pestered the churches of those times: nor indeed do they concern the state of the church at all; though it seems much more likely that the first four trumpets should bring in, as others

^a Zohar in Gen. fol. 97. 2. & in Exod. fol. 99. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 2.

^b Epiphanius, Contr. Hæres. l. 1. Hæres. 19.

^c Targum in Hos. xiv. 8.

^d Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1.

^e Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 5.

^f Vid. Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4.

^g Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 6. & 3. 8.

have thought, the several heresies of Arius, Macedonius, Pelagius, and Eutyches, which sprung up before the rise of Mahomet, who appears under the fifth trumpet. But all the six trumpets have to do with the empire as Christian; for as the six seals are so many steps towards the destruction of the empire as Pagan, and the vials bring on the ruin of Rome Papal; so the six trumpets are so many gradual advances to the ruin of the empire, now Christian: and it must be observed, that the Emperor Theodosius, at his death, left the empire divided between his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, the eastern part of it, which had Constantinople for its seat, to the former, and the western part of it, which had Rome for its seat, to the latter; now the first four trumpets bring in a barbarous people out of the north, the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the western part, who, by various incursions and wars, at last utterly destroy it; and the fifth and sixth trumpets bring in the Saracens under Mahomet, and the Turks into the eastern part, who took possession of that, and have kept it unto this day. A preparation being made, the angels begin to sound their trumpets.

Ver. 7. *The first angel sounded, &c.*] Or blew his trumpet: *and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood*; somewhat like one of the plagues of Egypt, Exod. ix. 23, 24, 25. in which was hail mingled with fire, only no blood, but what was caused by its fall on man and beast. Some have thought the Arian heresy is here intended, which may well enough agree with the time; and which may be compared to *hail*, for the mischief it did to the vines, the churches; and because of the violence with which it came, and the chillness of affection to Christ and his people, which it brought on professors of religion; and the barrenness which followed upon it, it making men barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and to *fire*, because of the wrath, contentions, animosities, and divisions it occasioned among those who were called Christians: and *blood* may be brought into the account, since the like persecutions under Constantius and Valens were raised against the orthodox on account of it as were against the Christians under the Heathen emperors: and this storm fell upon *the earth*; the whole Roman empire; for even all the world was once said to be Arian, except one Athanasius; and particularly upon the carnal and earthly part of the church, who were seeking places and preferments under the Arian emperors: *and burnt up the third part of trees*; the trees of righteousness, the saints, particularly the doctors of the church, the tall cedars in Lebanon; who either seemed to be such, and were infected with this heresy, and destroyed by it, as many were; or were truly such, and were greatly oppressed, afflicted, and persecuted for not embracing it: and also *all green grass*; the common people, private Christians, weak believers, who had the truth of grace in them, and suffered much for not giving into this heresy; or who seemed to have it, but had it not, but withered away, being scorched up and destroyed with this pernicious notion: but rather this trumpet regards not the church,

but the empire; and this storm of hail, fire, and blood, designs the irruption of the Goths into it, from the year 395, in which Theodosius died, to the year 408, under Radagaisus their general; with two hundred thousand of them, some say four hundred thousand, he entered and overrun all Italy, but was stopped and defeated by Stilicho; also Alaricus, king of the Goths, penetrated into Italy, came to Ravenna, and pitched his camp not far from Polentia, to whom the Emperor Honorius gave up France and Spain to make him easy, and that he might cease from his ravages and depredations^h; and these irruptions and devastations may be fitly expressed by hail, fire, and blood, just as the coming of the Assyrian monarch into the land of Israel is signified by a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, Isa. xxviii. 2. and it is remarkable, as Mr. Daubuz observes, that Claudian the poetⁱ, who lived at the time of Alarick's war, compares it to hail: *and they were cast upon the earth*: the Roman empire, the continent more especially, as Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, which were particularly affected and distressed with these barbarous people: *and the third part of trees were burnt up*; by which seem to be meant people of the higher rank, the richer sort of people, who suffered much in these calamities; see Isa. ii. 13. Zech. xi. 2. yea, princes, nobles, and rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical, who suffered much at this time, as Jerom^k, who was then living, testifies; and so *trees* are interpreted of kings, rulers, and governors, by the Targum on Isa. ii. 13. and Zech. xi. 1, 2. *the trees of the field*, in Isa. lv. 12. are interpreted of kingdoms^l: the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read before this clause, *and the third part of the earth was burnt*; that is, of the Roman empire: *and all green grass was burnt up*; the common people, who may be compared to spires of *grass* for their multitude, being as it were innumerable; and to *green grass*, for their delightful, comfortable, and flourishing condition before these calamities came upon them; and for their weakness and impotency to withstand such powerful enemies; see Job v. 25. Psal. lxxii. 16. Isa. xl. 6, 7. and xxxvii. 27. Numb. xxii. 4. and these commonly suffer most when a country is overrun and plundered by an enemy.

Ver. 8. *And the second angel sounded, &c.*] His trumpet: *and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea*: by which is meant not the devil, as some think; called a *mountain* from his height of pride, a *great* one from his might and power, and a *burning* one from his great wrath and malice against Christ, his Gospel, and his people; and who may be said to be *cast into the sea* of this world, and the men of it, whom he instigates against the saints, and who are like a troubled sea that cannot rest; but rather some heresy, and, as some have thought, the Macedonian heresy, which was levelled against the deity of the Holy Spirit, as was the Arian heresy against the deity of the Son; the abettors of which looked big, and were supported by power, and shewed great zeal for religion, and pretended to great light and knowledge; and

^h Cassiodor. Chronicon in Arcad. & Honor. 42. Petav. Rationar. Tempor. par. 1. l. 6. c. 10. p. 275. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 16. p. 871.

ⁱ De Bello Getico, v. 174. p. 209. Ed. Barthii.

^k In Epitaph. Nepotian. fol. 9. l.

^l Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 50. 1.

which heresy much affected the sea of pure doctrine, particularly the third part of doctrine, in which the third Person, the Spirit of God, is more especially concerned; and was of so pernicious a nature, as to kill many that professed the Gospel, and had a name to live, and destroy many particular churches, comparable to ships; but, as before, it is best to understand this of another incursion of the Goths into the Roman empire, and of the effects of it; and it seems to have respect to the taking and sacking of Rome by Alaricus, king of the West Goths, in the year 410, or 412^m. Rome is very fitly represented by a great mountain, as kingdoms and cities sometimes are; see Zech. iv. 7. Isa. xiii. 2. seeing it was built on seven mountains; and its being taken and burnt by Alaricus is aptly expressed by a burning mountain, as the destruction of Babylon, which is another name for Rome, is by a burnt mountain in Jer. li. 25. the *sea* into which this was cast may signify the great number of people and nations within its jurisdiction, which suffered, and were thrown into confusion at this time; so distresses and calamities in nations are expressed by a like figure in Psal. xlii. 2. and the *third part of the sea became blood*: that is, a third part of the jurisdiction of Rome, signified by the sea, see Jer. li. 36. was afflicted with wars and bloodshed by this same sort of people; for whilst these things were done in Italy, a like calamity fell on France and Spain; the Alans, Vandals, and Sueves, having depopulated France, passed over the Pyrenean mountains, and seized on Spain; the Vandals and Sueves on Gallæcia; the Alans on Portugal; and the Silingi, which was another sort of Vandals, invaded Andalusiaⁿ; the Goths under Ataulphus entered France, and the Burgundians seized that part of it next the Rhine^o: see Exod. vii. 20, 21.

Ver. 9. *And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, &c.*] The fishes; by whom men are meant, the inhabitants of the Roman empire; see Ezek. xxix. 4, 5. where by *fish* the Targum understands mighty princes and governors: *and had life, died*: were put to death by these savage and barbarous people, who killed all they met with, men, women, and children, young and old, rich and poor, high and low: *and the third part of the ships were destroyed*; by which may be designed either the cities and towns within such a part of the Roman jurisdiction, which were burnt or plundered by them; or their goods and effects, which they pillaged, and carried off the wealth and riches of the people, even all their substance, as Austin^p and Jerom^q, who lived in those times, affirm.

Ver. 10. *And the third angel sounded, &c.*] His trumpet: *and there fell a great star from heaven*; not Mahomet, as some think, for this time is too soon for him, who rose up under the fifth trumpet; nor Arius, for whom it is too late, who lived in the times of Constantine; and still less Origen, who lived before his time; but rather Pelagius, who was a man of great eminence in the church, of much learning, and made

great pretensions to religion and holiness, and, like a star and lamp, shone forth awhile, with great lustre and splendour, but fell into very great errors; denying original sin, and asserting the purity of human nature, crying up the power of man's free will, and asserting that human nature, without the grace of God, was able to keep the whole law, even to perfection; and his name, according to his doctrine, was wormwood and gall, which imbittered the sweet doctrines of the free grace of God, and affected the fountains and rivers, the sacred Scriptures, from whence these doctrines flow; so that instead of being pleasant and wholesome to men, through his false glosses and perverse interpretations of them, they became bitter and poisonous; and many souls, that received and imbibed his sense of them, died spiritually, and were lost and perished, as all must inevitably, who depend on the strength and works of nature, and deny and despise the grace of God: but it is best, as the other trumpets, so to understand this of the invasions of the above barbarous people, particularly the Vandals under Genseric, who being turned out of Spain by the Goths, went into Africa, where peace was made, and part of Africa given them to dwell in; after which Genseric, through treachery, seized upon Carthage, and greatly afflicted Sicily: Theodosius made war against them to no purpose, and peace being made between Valentinian and Genseric, Africa was divided between them; and some time after Rome was spoiled by Genseric of all its riches^r: Mr. Daubuz thinks Attila, king of the Huns, called *the dread of the world*, and *the scourge of God*, is meant by this star; who was a rebel against the Romans, and made sad ravages in the empire; at the beginning of which troubles a great comet appeared; and, according to Cassiodorus^s, the Huns were auxiliaries to the Romans against the Goths; but Litorius the Roman general was taken; and after this the Huns rebelled, and depopulated Thrace and Illyricum; and Attila, their king, having slain his brother Bleda, and partner, became sole monarch; and though the Romans under Actius, by the help of the Goths, beat him in the fields of Catalaun, and obliged him to depart, yet afterwards, having got a reinforcement, he entered with great force into Aquileia, with whom Pope Leo made peace: *burning as it were a lamp*; this star resembled that which is called Lampadius, which Pliny says^t imitates, or bears a likeness to burning torches; and he speaks of a spark which fell out of a star, which had such an appearance^u: this is expressive of war, and great destruction in the empire: *and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water*: that is, upon the large provinces and chief cities belonging to the Roman empire, and the governors of them, who suffered very bitterly and severely in these times; compare with this Ezek. xxxii. 2, 6. The last clause, *and upon the fountains of waters*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy.

Ver. 11. *And the name of the star is called Wormwood,*

^m Cassiodor Chronicon in Honor. & Theodos. 43. Petav. ib. p. 276. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. ib. p. 872. Vid. Hieron. ad Gaudentium, fol. 34. M.

ⁿ Cassiodor. ib. Petav. ib.

^o Cassiodor. Chronicon, ib.

^p De Civitate Dei, l. 1. c. 10. vid. L. Vivem in ib.

^q Ad Eustorhium.

^r Cassi-dor. Chronicon in Theodos. 44. & in Marcian. 45.

^s Chronicon, ib.

^t Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 25.

^u lb. c. 35.

&c.] Because of the bitter afflictions, sorrows, and distresses which it was the instrument of; just as Naomi called herself Mara, because the Almighty had dealt bitterly with her, Ruth i. 20. and the third part of the waters became wormwood: that is, the inhabitants of the provinces and cities belonging to the Roman empire were afflicted with grievous and bitter afflictions and calamities; so great distresses are called wormwood, and waters of gall given to drink, Jer. ix. 15. Lam. iii. 19. and many men died of the waters, because they were bitter; through the barbarities and cruelties of these savage people, who afflicted the empire: there seems to be an allusion to Exod. xv. 23.

Ver. 12. And the fourth angel sounded, &c.] His trumpet. Some think this refers to the Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures of Christ, and of two made one mixed nature, neither human nor divine; and brought great darkness upon the doctrine of Christ's person, the sun of righteousness, and into the church, signified by the moon, and among the ministers of the word, the stars. Others are of opinion that that darkness which preceded the rise of the Papacy, and introduced it, is here intended: and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise; when the doctrine concerning the person and offices of Christ, who is the sun and light of the world, was obscured by heresies; and the discipline of the church, which, like the moon, has all its light, beauty, and order from Christ, was sadly defaced by the introduction of Jewish and Paganish rites and ceremonies; and the ministers, the stars, were drawn by the tail of the dragon, and cast to the earth, became corrupt in their principles, and carnal and sensual in their lives; so that it was a time of great darkness and gloominess, night and day: but rather this trumpet has respect to that darkness and ignorance which the above barbarous nations, the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and Heruli, spread, and left throughout the empire; for from this time there was a visible decline, as of evangelical light and knowledge, so of all kind of useful knowledge, and nothing but ignorance, stupidity, and barbarity, took place everywhere; and which were very assisting to the man of sin, antichrist, to fix and settle his dominion over the kingdoms which rose up out of the empire at this time; and it also refers to the entire destruction of the western Roman empire, which is expressed by much the same figures as the ruin of the Roman Pagan empire, in ch. vi. 12, 13. and which the various irruptions of these savage people issued in; compare with this Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. where the destruction of the Egyptian monarchy is signified in like terms: Jerom, who lived about the time of the first inundation of these nations, in very mournful language expresses the inhumanity and impiety of them, and the ruin they threatened the empire with; and says γ , *Romanus orbis ruit, the Roman empire is falling.* About the year 455, when Rome was taken by Genseric the Vandal, the empire

was divided into ten kingdoms; and in the year 476, Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, was obliged to quit his imperial dignity: the Heruli, a people of the same kind with the Goths, and originally Scythians, as they, under their king and leader Odoacer seized on Italy, took Rome, killed Orestes and his brother Paul, and deposed Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, and banished him into Campania; and so the western empire ceased, Odoacer taking upon him the title of king of Italy, and translated the seat of the empire from Rome to Ravenna²; and then might the sun be truly said to be smitten: but still, though Odoacer the Herulian reigned in Italy, the Roman form of government was not altered, the consulship and senate still continued, as they did also under Theodoric the Goth, his successor; but when Italy was recovered by Narses, the Emperor Justinian's general, these, with other magistrates, ceased, and Rome became a dukedom, and was subject to an exarch of Ravenna; and then the moon and stars were smitten also. The phrase of smiting the sun, moon, and stars, is Jewish; for the Jews express the eclipses of the luminaries in this way, and say γ , that when the luminaries לוקין, are smitten, it is an ill omen; when דחמדה לוקה, the sun is smitten, it is an ill sign to the nations of the world; and when לבנה לוקה, the moon is smitten, it is a bad omen to the nations of Israel²; and so the phrase, the day shone not, is also Jewish; it is said² of some Rabbins, that they sat and studied in the law ער נדהר יומא, until the day shone; and when the day shone, they rose up and went on their way.

Ver. 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, &c.] The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of an angel, read an eagle; and to fly agrees with either of them, and the sense is the same let it be read either way; and this angel may design either Christ, or a created angel, or a minister of the Gospel, as in ch. xiv. 6. did the next trumpet introduce Popery, as some have supposed, Gregory bishop of Rome might be thought, as he is by some, to be the angel here intended, since he gave notice and warning of antichrist being at hand: saying with a loud voice: that all might hear, and as having something of importance to say, and delivering it with great fervour and affection: woe, woe, woe; three times, answerable to the three trumpets yet to be blown; and which are therefore called the woe-trumpets: and these woes are denounced to the inhabitants of the earth; the Roman empire, particularly the eastern part of it, which the fifth and sixth trumpets relate unto; and even the whole world, with which the seventh trumpet is concerned: by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound! the design of this loud cry of the angel is to shew, that though the distresses and ruin which the barbarous nations had brought upon the western empire were very great; yet those which would come upon the eastern empire by the Saracens and Turks, under the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets,

¹ Epitaph. Neptian. fol. 9. l. Tom. 1. vid. etiam Epist. ad Gerontium, fol. 32. E. & Epitaph. Fabiola, fol. 68. H.

² Vid. Cassiodor. Chronicon in Zenon. 47. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 16. p. 876. Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. c. 18. p. 304.

³ Jarchi in Gen. 1. 14.

⁴ T. Bab. Succa, fol. 29. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 63. 1.

⁵ Zohar in Deut. fol. 113. 3.

would be much more grievous; and especially the judgments which the seventh trumpet would bring upon the whole world, when all the nations of the earth will be judged. From the sounding of the fourth trumpet, to the sounding of the fifth, was a space of a hundred and thirty-five years, that is, from the deposition of Augustulus, A. D. 476, to the public preaching of Mahomet, A. D. 612.

C H A P. IX.

THIS chapter gives an account of the blowing of the fifth and sixth trumpets, and of the effects following upon them. The fifth angel blows his trumpet, and a star falls; the key of the bottomless pit is given to him, which being opened by it, out of it comes smoke to the darkening of the sun and air, and out of the smoke locusts, who have power like scorpions, ver. 1, 2, 3, whose power is restrained from using it to the hurt of the grass, or any green thing or tree, only of those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; but are permitted, though not to kill men, yet to torment them five months, which is worse than death unto them, ver. 4, 5, 6. The shapes of these locusts, which are said to be like horses, are described by their heads, faces, hair, teeth, breast-plates, wings, and tails, and are said to have a king over them, whose name is mentioned, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The blowing of this trumpet brings on one of the woes mentioned in the preceding chapter, and the two other follow, ver. 12. The sixth angel blows his trumpet, and a voice is heard from the horns of the altar, directed to the said angel, ordering him to loose four angels bound in the great river Euphrates, where they were prepared, for a determinate time, to slay the third part of men, and they were loosed accordingly, ver. 13, 14, 15. The number of the army, under these angels, is given, ver. 16. and the horses and horsemen are described; the riders by their breast-plates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone; their horses' heads as heads of lions, fire, smoke, and brimstone, issuing out of their mouths, by which the third part of men are killed, ver. 17, 18. The reason of this slaughter is, because they had power both in their mouth and tails, which latter were like serpents, and had heads, with which they did mischief, ver. 19. and yet such who were not killed by these plagues, but escaped, did not repent of their idolatry, murders, sorceries, fornication, and theft, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And the fifth angel sounded, &c.*] His trumpet: and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: some take this star to be Jesus Christ, the bright and morning star; and understand by falling, no other than his descending from heaven to earth, in which sense the word is used in Gen. xiv. 10. and that because he is not only said to have the keys of hell and death, ch. i. 18. but particularly the key of the bottomless pit, ch. xx. 1. but then there is a wide difference in the use of the key by the star here, and the angel there, or between the opening of the pit, and letting out smoke and locusts, and the shutting it up, and Satan in it; the one well suits with Christ, the other not: nor is Satan here designed, as others think, who once was a bright star, and shone among the morning stars, but by sin fell from heaven, his first estate; and the fall of this Lucifer, son of the morning, was as lightning from heaven, Luke x. 18. But then this was a matter over and past, and what was well known to John; nor did he need a vision to represent this unto him: nor is Arius intended, who lived before any of the trumpets were blown; nor the Emperor Valens, who fell from the heavenly doctrine of Christ's divinity into the Arian heresy, which he encouraged and defended; whereby Christ, the sun of righteousness, was obscured, and the air, the church, enlightened by Christ, was darkened; in whose time the locusts, the Goths and Vandals, infected with Arianism, greatly distressed the eastern Christians; but his reign was long before the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, which was after the year 600: wherefore by this star is meant antichrist; but whether the western or eastern antichrist, the pope of Rome, or Mahomet, is a question: some interpreters go one way, and some another: Brightman thinks both are intended, seeing they both are antichrist, and rose to the height of their power much about the same time; and the characters and circumstances in this vision very well agree with them both: what is objected to Mahomet is, that he never was a doctor or teacher in the church, or had any dignity in it, which a star in this book most commonly signifies, and therefore could not be said to fall from it; but this may be observed, that the Arabians, among whom he lived, had received the Christian religion before his time; that he himself was conversant with the Scriptures, as appears by his wretched perversion of them in his Alcoran; and certain it is, that his accomplices were such as had professed Christianity, as Sergius, a Nestorian of Constantinople, and John of Antioch, an Arian, and he himself set up for a prophet: others think the pope of Rome is meant by the star, seeing the bishops of that city had shone out in great light and purity of doctrine and practice formerly, but now about this time most sadly apostatized; they had been indeed gradually declining for some time, but now they may be said openly to fall from heaven, when Phocas, who murdered his master, the Emperor Mauritius, and took the imperial crown to himself, gave to Pope Boniface the Third the title and power of universal bishop, about the year 606, which he and his successors exercised in a most haughty and tyrannical manner: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit: which shews that this could not be a star in a literal sense, but must design some man, or body of men, and agrees well with the popes of Rome: by the bottomless pit is meant hell, out of which the beast arose, and into which Satan will be cast, ch. xi. 7. and xvii. 8. and xx. 3. and by the key is designed the power of it, of opening and shutting it, of saving persons from it, or of casting them into it; and which the popes of Rome take to

themselves, even all power in heaven, earth, and hell, signified by their triple crown; and which they arrogate to such a degree as to say, that if the pope should send many thousands into hell, no one ought to say, what dost thou? This is a different key from what were given to Peter; he had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, his pretended successors have the key of the bottomless pit; his were keys of knowledge, theirs of ignorance, and of the depths of Satan, let out of this bottomless pit, of which the antichristian religion, both Popish and Mahometan, consist; his were given by Christ, theirs by Phocas a murderer; or they had their power from the dragon, ch. xiii. 2, 4. from Satan himself, according to whose working and influence they come forth, though by divine permission.

Ver. 2. *And he opened the bottomless pit, &c.* With the key that was given him; he made use of his universal power over all bishops and churches, enacted laws, issued out decrees, made articles of faith, and imposed them on men's consciences, and obliged all to submit to his hellish principles and practices; and this, as it may be applied to Mahomet, the eastern antichrist, may regard the publishing of his Alcoran, and obliging all his followers to receive it as the infallible word of God: *and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace;* the Complutensian edition reads, *of a burning furnace;* and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; which may design false doctrine, and superstitious worship, which sprung from the decrees of popes and councils, and the Alcoran of Mahomet: and smoke being a dark thin vapour, and very troublesome to the eyes and nose, and of a perishing nature, which soon vanishes away, these are fitly expressed by it; for they are the hidden things of darkness, and the authors and abettors of them are such who darken counsel by words without knowledge; they are empty things, have no solidity and substance in them, are comparable to wood, hay, stubble, smoke, and wind; and are very troublesome and offensive to all enlightened persons, and who have the smell and savour of divine things; and will all perish with the using, being the doctrines and commandments of men, when the true Gospel is an everlasting one. Smoke sometimes designs great afflictions, punishments, and judgments upon men, Gen. xv. 17. Isa. xiv. 31. and here may represent those judgments, both spiritual and temporal, which the antichristian doctrine and worship brought upon the world, and which have been manifest in all ages since. *And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit;* Christ, the sun of righteousness, was greatly obscured by the Romish antichrist, by his false doctrine and worship, in his offices, merits, and grace, he taking upon him to be head of the church, the infallible interpreter of Scripture, and to give out pardons and indulgences; and particularly by the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and of justification by works, &c. as he also was by Mahomet, who represented him only as a mere man, and exalted himself above him as a prophet; and by both were *the air*, the church, which receives its light from Christ, darkened; or the Scriptures, which are the breath of God, are given by inspiration of him,

these were most grievously beclouded, and most wretchedly perverted, both by the decrees of popes, and the Alcoran of Mahomet. And it is remarkable what Abulpharagius^b, an Arabic writer, reports, that in the seventeenth year of Heraclius the emperor, which was the year 627, and the fifth of the Hegira, in which year Mahomet began to plunder and make war; for in this year was his plundering excursion into Damato'l Juudal, and the battle of Bani Lahyan, that half of the body of the sun was darkened; and the darkness remained from Tisirin the first, to the month Haziran, so that very little of its light appeared; which might portend that darkness he was introducing by his wretched religion. And frequently the sun and air have been darkened at noon-day by the locusts, as Pliny^c relates; and of which we have had a late account from Transylvania; see Exod. viii. 15.

Ver. 3. *And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, &c.* Not literally, for these locusts might not meddle with the grass, nor any green thing, or tree, as locusts do, only men, ver. 4. and had a king over them, ver. 11. which locusts have not, Prov. xxx. 27. though the allusion is to such, which spawn and breed in pits, and may be properly said to come out of them; hence in the Hebrew tongue they are called נַבְּ, from נַב, a pit, or ditch: nor are devils intended, though they may be compared to locusts for their original, hell, or the bottomless pit; and for their numbers, we read of a legion of them in one man; and for their hurtful and mischievous nature: nor are the Goths and Vandals designed; these, though they harassed some parts of the eastern empire, yet chiefly the western; besides, they appeared under the former trumpets: but these are to be understood of the western and eastern locusts, especially the latter. The western locusts are the clergy of the church of Rome, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, of every order; these were not instituted by Christ, but rose out of the bottomless pit, from the antichristian smoke of councils, decrees, and traditions; and are fitly compared to locusts for their number, which have been almost as the sand of the sea innumerable, and have spread themselves all over the nations of the earth, that have gone by the name of Christendom; and for their devouring nature, living in plenty and idleness, upon the fat of the land, in the best commons, glutting themselves with the spoils of others, devouring widows' houses, and impoverishing countries and kingdoms wherever they come. The eastern locusts are the Saracens, and who are chiefly designed; and who were to harass and distress the eastern empire, and prepare for its ruin, which is brought on under the next trumpet by the Turks. These are fitly signified by locusts, because the locusts generally come out of the eastern parts: it was an east wind which brought the plague of locusts into Egypt, Exod. x. 13. and the children of the east, the Arabians, are compared to grasshoppers, or locusts, in Judg. vii. 12. and one of the names of a locust is אַרְבֵּה, *Arbeh*, not much unlike in sound to an Arab. To which may be added, that it is a tradition of the Arabians, that there fell locusts into the hands of Mahomet, on whose backs and wings were

^b Hist. Dynast. p. 99, 102.

^c Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

written these words; "we are the army of the most high God; we are the ninety and nine eggs, and if the hundred should be made perfect, we should consume the whole world, and whatever is in it." And it was a law established by Mahomet, ye shall not kill the locusts, for they are the army of the most high God; and the Mahometans fancy that the locusts were made of the same clay as Adam was: and besides the tradition before mentioned, they say, that as Mahomet sat at table a locust fell, with these words on its back and wings; "I am God, neither is there any Lord of the locusts besides me, who feed them; and when I please I send them to be food to the people, and when I please I send them to be a scourge unto them;" hence his Saracens may well go by this name. Now these Saracens sprung up in the times of antichristian darkness, both Papal and Mahometan, and may be said to come out of the smoke of the bottomless pit; and the religion of Mahomet, which they embraced, was no other; and like locusts they were innumerable, they went in troops and bands, as locusts do, Prov. xxx. 27. pillaging and ravaging all they could; and their sudden and frequent incursions, the desolations and ravages which they made in the eastern empire, are very aptly expressed by the running to and fro of locusts; see Isa. xxxiii. 4. Joel ii. 9. *And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power*; that is, to torment men, by striking them with their stings in their tails, ver. 5, 10. These are called *scorpions of the earth*, to distinguish them from sea-scorpions, which are a kind of fish: so Aristotle^d and Pliny speak of terrestrial scorpions, which are the most hurtful; these are of the serpentine kind, have an innocent and harmless look, but are soon angry; have stings in their tails, which they are always striking with, that they may miss no opportunity of doing mischief, and with which they strike in an oblique way^e; and which very fitly describes the Saracens, the race of the Ishmaelites, a generation of vipers, a subtle and treacherous sort of people, very furious and wrathful, and who lived by continual robbing and plundering of others at an unawares: and this may be applied to the western locusts, the monks and friars, who are the seed of the serpent; and who by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, have a form of godliness, and speak lies in hypocrisy, and lie in wait to deceive; and being provoked, are full of wrath and anger, and strike very hard with their anathemas and excommunications, and other sorts of punishment, which they have power to inflict.

Ver. 4. *And it was commanded them, &c.*] The locusts, by Christ, who has a sovereign power over all men, and lays them under the restraints of his providence: *that they should not hurt the grass of the earth*: true Christians, private believers, it may be those of the lower class; who for their numbers, and for their flourishing estate under the dews of heavenly grace, and the distillations of the doctrine of grace, and the clear shining of the sun of righteousness upon them, and for their weakness, may be compared to grass; and

yet as these being a company reserved by Christ for himself, who will not break nor bruise them, so neither will he suffer others to hurt them, and resents every offence done to these little ones: *neither any green thing*; who have the truth of grace in them, are spiritually alive, and in prosperous circumstances, in a fruitful condition, being filled with the fruits of righteousness from Christ, the green fir-tree, and whose leaves of profession continue green; and are themselves, as David says of himself, like a green olive-tree in the house of God, Psal. lii. 8. *Neither any tree*; any trees of righteousness, good and righteous men, who are often compared to trees planted by rivers of water, Psal. i. 3. Jer. xvii. 7. it may be the ministers of the Gospel, men of great grace and gifts, the tall cedars in Lebanon, may be intended; and so by these various expressions, Christians of every size, from the lowest to the highest class, may be signified. Green things and leaves of trees are what the locusts generally destroy, as appears from the plague of them in Egypt, Exod. x. 5, 12, 15. and as they did in Syria in the year 1586, as Thuanus reports^f. Now as grass, green things, and trees, are what locusts most desire to feed upon and hurt, so real believers, truly godly persons, are those which both the eastern and western locusts, the Mahometans and Papists, have been very desirous of rooting out and destroying; but Christ takes care of these; these are as the apple of his eye, his jewels, his sheep, his sealed ones; none shall hurt them, they shall never perish; he knows them that are his, and he'll preserve them amidst fire and smoke, amidst all the corruptions and calamities in the world: *but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads*; see ch. vii. 2, 3. the antichristian party, those of the Romish apostacy, the Papists; and these were they that suffered most by the Saracens, who abhorred image-worship, and fell foul on the idolaters of this kind: and, on the other hand, the western locusts, the clergy of the church of Rome, had only influence over the reprobate part of mankind, and only wrought with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, who were given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, but not upon any of the chosen ones, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 5. *And to them it was given that they should not kill them, &c.*] As the power of the locusts was limited with respect to the persons they should hurt, so with regard also to the mischief they should do; for even those whom they were suffered to annoy they might not kill, that is, utterly root out and destroy, so as that they were no more: and thus, though the Saracens killed great numbers in the eastern empire, by their frequent incursions and ravages, and made large conquests, yet they could never destroy the empire itself, or bring it in subjection to them; nor did they ever take Constantinople, the metropolis and seat of the empire, though they often besieged it. And as for the western locusts, the monks, friars, &c. though they kill the souls, yet not the bodies of men that are under their power and influence: *but that they should be tormented five months*; that is, not that the locusts

^d Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 26.^e Hist. Nat. l. 51. c. 25.^f Hist. Nat. l. 51. c. 25.^g Hist. sui Temporis, par. 4. l. 84. p. 162. Ed. Francofurt.

should be tormented, but men by the locusts; and so the eastern empire was grievously teased and tormented by the Saracens, and many parts of it were conquered, plundered, and pillaged by them, though it was not killed and put an end to. In the year 628, Mahomet with his Saracens having obtained a place in Arabia Felix to dwell in, died in the year 631; from which time his successors, the Saracens, by little and little, subdued Palestine, Syria, and Egypt; and, in the year 640, took Persis, putting King Hormisda to flight; they laid siege to Constantinople seven years, but without success; in the year 698, Carthage was taken by them; and in following times many countries on the continent, and many of the islands, were grievously teased and distressed by them; though the empire itself did not fall into their hands; it was tormented by them, but not destroyed. And the western locusts have most dreadfully tormented men by their exorbitant dues demanded of them; and by obliging them to confessions, and to attend Mass; by enjoining them whippings, fastings, pilgrimages, and penances, and with the terrors of purgatory, and the like. The time that the locusts should torment men, which is *five months*, seems not to design any determinate time; but only that seeing five months is the time that locusts live, and are in their strength and power, even the five hottest months in the year, from April to September^b, this seems to denote, that as long as the locusts live, the Saracens in the east, and the monks and friars in the west, so long men should be tormented by them; for it is certain that these have had power to torment men longer time than barely five months; yea, even though these should be understood, according to the prophetic style used in this book, of five months of years, or an hundred and fifty years; and though this should be doubled, seeing they are repeated, ver. 10. and so make up in all three hundred years; for both the Saracens and the Romish clergy have distressed men, either of them, longer time than this: indeed, the flourishing condition of the Saracens was but about three hundred years, or two five months; but their empire or dominion lasted longer, even from the year 622, which was the year of the *Hegira*, or flight of Mahomet, to the year 1057^c, when the Turkish empire succeeded it: though it is pretty remarkable, that from the year 612, in which Mahomet began to preach publicly, and so let out the smoke with the locusts, to the year 762, in which the city of Bagdad was built, when and where the Saracens settled, and made no more excursions of any consequence, were just an hundred and fifty years, or five months of years, as Mr. Daubuz observes; and I will not say that this is not intended by this prophecy. Noah's flood prevailed over the earth one hundred and fifty days, or five months, Gen. vii. 24. *And their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man*; which gives great pain, is very distressing, and their stings are poisonous and mortal: it signifies how troublesome and afflictive those locusts were; to be among

them was to live among scorpions, as in Ezek. ii. 6. As these locusts are like scorpions, so scorpions have been seen sometimes with wings like locusts; such an one, Pausanias^d relates, was brought into Ionia by a Phrygian.

Ver. 6. *And in those days men shall seek death, &c.*] Or desire to die, as Job did: *and shall not find it*; or shall not die: *and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them*; death will be preferred to a miserable life; it will be chosen rather than life, Jer. viii. 3. The ravages of the Saracens, their incursions, and the invasions by them, struck such terror into the inhabitants of divers parts of the empire, that they made death more eligible to them than life.

Ver. 7. *And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses, &c.*] The heads of locusts, especially of some of them, are very much like the heads of horses: and here they are compared to horses *prepared unto battle*; as they are in Joel ii. 4. The horse is a warlike creature, swift, strong, and courageous, Job xxxix. 21—25. Locusts sometimes have appeared in the form of armies, and have marched in great order with their leaders before them, and have pitched their camps very regularly; see Joel ii. 7. of which we have lately had an account from Transylvania in our public papers. This part of their description may denote the wars of the Saracens, and the rapidity, force, and power with which they over-ran great part of the empire; and as it may be applied to the western locusts, the disputes, contentions, and quarrels raised by the Romish clergy. *And on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold*; and in this shape some locusts have appeared, to which the allusion seems to be in Nah. iii. 17. *thy crowned men are as the locusts*. In the year 1542, 'tis said^e, that locusts came out of Turkish Sarmatia, into Austria, Silesia, and other places, which had on their heads *little crowns*; see Ezek. xxiii. 42. And the Arabians, as Pliny observes, go *mitrati*^m, with mitres, turbans like crowns, on their heads. This may design the several victories and conquests which the Saracens obtained in Arabia, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, and many other places; and supposing this to have any reference to the western locusts, it may respect the triple crown of the head of them, the caps of the cardinals, the mitres of the bishops, and the shaven pates of the priests, in form of crowns. *And their faces were as the faces of men*; which may be expressive of the affable carriage of Mahomet, and his followers, especially to the Christians, and of his great pretensions to holiness and religion, and of the plausible and insinuating ways, and artful methods, used by him, to gain upon men; and being applied to the clergy of the church of Rome, may denote their shew of humanity, and their pretended great concern for the welfare of the souls of men, their flatteries, good words, and fair speeches, with which they deceive the simple and unwary.

Ver. 8. *And they had hair, as the hair of women, &c.*] Some locusts have smooth, others hairy headsⁿ:

^b Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

^c Petav. Rationar. par. 1. l. 7. c. 13. & l. 8. c. 13.

^d Bœotica, sive l. 9. p. 573. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 25. & Elian. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 20. & l. 16. c. 41, 42.

^e Vid. Frenztz. Hist. Animal. sacr. p. 5. c. 4. p. 799.

^m Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.

ⁿ Gloss. in T. Bab. Cholin. fol. 65. 1.

this fitly points at the Arabians or Saracens, who, as Pliny says^o, used to wear long hair without cutting it, and attired as women, and have their names also from women: they were called Hagarenes, from Hagar, Abraham's handmaid, by whom he had Ishmael, the father of these people; afterwards they took the name of Saracens, from Sarah, the wife of Abraham, whose posterity they would be thought to be; though they may have the later name, either from סרק, to rob and steal, with the Arabians, or from the same word, as it signifies to comb, from the combing and plaiting of their hair. This may also point at the effeminacy of the western locusts, the monks and friars, who dress more like women than men; and many of them claim the virgin Mary for their patroness; and may in general design the votaries of the church of Rome, who are under the vow of a monastic life, as those among the Jews, under a Nazarite's vow, wore long hair. *And their teeth were as the teeth of lions*; so in Joel i. 6. which may denote the ravages and devastations of the Saracens in the empire, robbing, pillaging, and destroying all they met with; and is applicable enough to the devouring jaws of the Romish clergy, their plundering the estates of men, their cruelties and barbarities exercised by their Inquisition, &c. Pliny says^p, that locusts will gnaw the doors of houses.

Ver. 9. *And they had breast-plates, as if were breast-plates of iron, &c.* Alluding to the hard skin of the locusts, with which nature has fenced it^q; see Joel ii. 8. and denotes the armour with which the Saracens were accoutred: and if to be understood of the western locusts, the hardness of their hearts, their seared consciences, or their protection by the princes of the earth, the many privileges they are possessed of, the laws made in their favour, and for their security; their breast-plates were not breast-plates of righteousness, faith, and love, nor in defence of truth, but against it. And some think the iron colour may denote the colour of their habit, their black garments: *and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle*; see Joel ii. 5. The sound of locusts, when they fly or march in large companies, is very great. Pliny says^r, they make such a noise with their wings, when they fly, that they have been thought to have been other winged creatures; hence a locust, in Hebrew, is sometimes called צלצל, the same name that is given to the high-sounding cymbal. The sound of them is said to have been heard six miles^s. Aristotle^t ascribes it to the rubbing of their legs or thighs one against another; and so the Ethiopic version here renders it, *the sound of their feet*: this may be expressive of the swift and rapid incursions of the Saracens, and of the dreadful alarms to the nations which their invasions made; and may be applied to the noisy declamations, anathemas, excommunications, and interdicts of the Romish clergy.

Ver. 10. *And they had tails like unto scorpions, &c.*]

Locusts are said to have the tail of a serpent, and of the vipers of the earth^u; see the notes on ver. 3, 5. *And there were stings in their tails*; either in the baser sort of them, the Saracens and Papiets; or in their doctrines, the prophet being the tail, Isa. ix. 15. with which both Mahomet, who set himself up for a prophet, and the Romish clergy, who set up their decrees and unwritten traditions above the word of God, have poisoned and destroyed multitudes of souls: *and their power was to hurt men five months*; see the note on ver. 5.

Ver. 11. *And they had a king over them, &c.*] Which name is meant the false prophet Mahomet, who by whom is meant the false prophet Mahomet, who was at the head of the Saracens, and led them on to commit the outrages they did; and is believed in by the Turks to this day, as the great prophet of God, and by them preferred to all prophets, not only to Moses, but to Jesus Christ; he is the king of the eastern locusts, as the pope of Rome is the king of the western ones; for the Romish antichrist reigns, or at least has reigned, over the kings of the earth, ch. xvii. 17, 18. which is the *angel of the bottomless pit*; to whom the key of it was given, ver. 1. *whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon*; both which signify a destroyer; and are very applicable both to Mahomet, who by his impetuosity has been the cause of the destruction of multitudes of souls, as well as by his wars, and those of the Saracens and Turks, of the lives of millions, and of the ruin of many kingdoms, countries, cities, and towns. Aulpharagius^v, an Arabic writer, relates, that in the times of the Chalif Al-walid, there was one Hejajus, who had caused to be slain, of the chief and illustrious men, an hundred and twenty thousand, besides others of the common people, and that fell in war; moreover, that there died in his prison fifty thousand men, and thirty thousand women: and the same writer reports^w, that the famous Abu Moslem put to death six hundred thousand men, who were known, besides those that were unknown, and whom he slew in wars and battles: both these instances are taken notice of by Mr. Daubuz, who justly observes, that surely nothing can come near this *Abaddon*, but the beast, the son of perdition, 2 Thess. ii. 3. And to him, the pope of Rome, may the name be truly applied, who has led thousands into perdition, and will go into it himself; and both he, and the false prophet, with the devil, will be cast into the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, and will be tormented for ever and ever, 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xvii. 8, 11. and xx. 10. *Abaddon*, with the Jews, is one of the habitations or apartments of hell^x, because it destroys all; *Apollyon* is the same with *Apollo*, the god of the Heathens, who has his name from destroying^y.

Ver. 12. *One voice is past, &c.*] One of the three woe-trumpets, the first of them; that is, in the vi-

^o Hist. Nat. l. 6. c. 28.

^p L. 11. c. 29.

^q Claudian. Epigram. 13.

^r Plin. l. 11. c. 29, 51.

^s Altissiodorensis in Joel ii. 5.

^t Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 9. Vid. Plin. l. 11. c. 51.

^u Scriptores Arab.

^v Hist. Dynast. p. 129. Dya. 9.

^w Ib. p. 140.

^x T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 2. & in Numb. fol. 74. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 47. 3. & 92. 4. Raziell, fol. 14. 2. & 35. 2.

^y Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 92. Macrobi. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17.

son which John had of it, not the thing itself designed by it: and *behold there come two woes more hereafter*; under the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

Ver. 13. *And the sixth angel sounded, &c.*] His trumpet: and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God: the allusion is not to the altar of burnt-offering, which was covered with brass, but to the altar of incense covered with gold; and hence here, and elsewhere, it is called the *golden altar*, and was a figure of the intercession of Christ; for on this altar incense was offered, which was typical of the prayers of the saints offered by Christ, through his mediation: the matter of this altar was shittim-wood, a wood that is incorruptible, and of long duration, denoting the perpetuity of Christ's intercession; and its being covered with gold expresses the glory and excellency of it; its form was four-square, as is the city of the new Jerusalem, and shews that Christ's intercession avails for all his people in the four parts of the world: and on it were *four horns*, which some think represent the four evangelists, or the Gospel sent into the four parts of the world, and which is the power of God unto salvation; and for the contempt of which, in the eastern empire, the judgments signified under this trumpet came upon it; though rather these may point at the large extent and fulness of Christ's intercession, for all his people, in the four corners of the earth, as well as his power to protect and defend them, and to scatter and destroy his and their enemies. This altar is said to be *before God*, in a visionary way, as the altar of incense was before the vail, and the mercy-seat, and by the ark of the testimony, Exod. xxx. 1, 2, 3, 6, suggesting that Christ continually appears in the presence of God for all the saints. Now from hence was a *voice heard* by John, and which seems to be the voice of Christ, the advocate and intercessor. In the Greek text it is, *one voice*; not the voice of many angels round about the throne, nor of the souls under the altar, but of the one and only Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ; and this was a voice, not supplicating, but commanding, being addressed to one of his ministering spirits.

Ver. 14. *Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, &c.*] The sixth trumpet, which was given him, and he had prepared himself to sound, and had sounded: *loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates*: not the four angels in ch. vii. 1. they stood upon the four corners of the earth; these were in, or at the river Euphrates; they held the four winds, that they should not blow, or restrained the savage nations, that they should not hurt; these are bound themselves, that they might not do mischief; nor are angels by nature at all intended; not evil angels, though they are bound in chains of darkness, and are reserved to judgment, they are admitted indeed to rove about in the air and earth, but are under the restraints of the power and providence of God; nor good angels, who are at the divine beck, and go in and out, and are detained and sent forth according to the pleasure of God, and are sometimes employed in killing great num-

bers of men; see 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16. 2 Kings xix. 35. but men are here meant, as appears from ver. 16, 17. and particularly the Turks, as most interpreters agree; who dwelt on the other side the river Euphrates, and were let loose, or suffered to pass over that river into the eastern empire, to ruin and destroy it, as they did: these are called *angels*, because of their might and force, their power and strength, with which they bore all before them; and for their great swiftness and rapidity in the victories and conquests which the Ottoman family obtained; who, from very small beginnings, raised themselves, in a very little time, to a large monarchy, and founded the Turkish empire, which, from them, is to this day called the Ottoman empire. Ottoman the first subdued great part of Bithynia, and fixed the seat of his kingdom at Prusa; or rather his son Urchanes, who conquered Mysia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Caria, and the rest, to the Hellespont, and the Euxine sea. Amurath his son took Callipolis, Hadrianople, and the circumjacent provinces. Bajazet added to the empire Thessalia, Macedonia, Phocis, Attica, Mysia, and Bulgaria; and Mahomet the Second took Constantinople itself, and thereby put an end to the eastern empire; and all this was done in a very few years: it is said of this last, that he conquered two empires, and twelve kingdoms, and above two hundred cities^a. And these Ottoman Turks may be called angels, or messengers, because they were the messengers and executioners of God's wrath upon the eastern empire: they are signified by *four angels*, either, as some think, because of the four names of Saracens, Turks, Tartars, and Arabians, though all Mahometans, under which they went, before they were united under one emperor, Ottoman; or rather because of the four principalities, or governments, into which they were divided, while they were upon the banks of, or near to the river Euphrates; the seat of one being at Iconium, another at Bagdad, a third at Aleppo, and a fourth at Damascus; and chiefly because, when they passed the river Euphrates, they had four princes at the head of them, Soliman Shak, and his three sons. Soliman himself, as he passed, not knowing the fords of the river, was drowned in it; at which his sons being so affrighted, two of them, Sankur Zengi, and Cun Tugdi, returned to Persia, but the third, Ortogrules, with his three sons (which made *four* again) Condoz, Sarubani, and Othman, or Ottoman, continued, to whom Aladdin, sultan of Iconium, gave them some land among the mountains of Armenia^b; and from hence, by degrees, as before observed, a large empire was raised. Now these are said to be *bound in the great river Euphrates*; which river is to be literally understood, and is the same with that which is so called in Gen. ii. 14. and xv. 18. and ran through Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and was the boundary of the Roman empire; so it was fixed by Hadrian^c; and beyond which the Turks, before this time did rarely go, and if they did, retired again: for till this time, as the historian says^d, the Turks had Asia, *ὡς τὴν Εὐφράτην, within Euphrates*, and the Arabians Cœl-Syria and Phœnicia. Now here these were bound; they were not suffered to pass the river, or to make any

^a Petav. Rationem. Temp. par. 1. l. 9. c. 7.

^b Pecock. Supplem. Hist. Dynast. Abulpharaji, p. 41, 42.

^c Rufi Fest. Brev. p. 368. Entrop. Hist. Roman. l. 8. p. 502.

^d Nicephor. Gregor. Hist. Roman. l. 2 p. 29.

inroads of any consequence further into the Roman empire; they were restrained, by the decree of God, from proceeding any further till this time; which, as he fixes a decreed place for the sea, that its waves should come thus far, and no further, so he restrains princes from their enterprises, and settles the bounds of empires, as long as he pleases; and they were kept back by the power of God from pouring in upon the empire, and pouring forth their fury upon it, who causes the wrath of men to praise him, and restrains the remainder of it; and they were also prevented from coming any further, as yet, through the intestine divisions among themselves, and by the victories of the Christians in Palestine.

Ver. 15. *And the four angels were loosed, &c.*] The time being come, fixed by the decrees of God, for making use of the Turks for the destruction of the eastern empire, the restraints of divine Providence were taken off from them, and they were suffered to pass the river Euphrates; they were let loose like so many furies, and in a little time overran and destroyed the whole empire, and settled their own, now called the Turkish or Ottoman empire; and which was done about the year 1301. *Which were prepared for an hour and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men;* which may in general denote their readiness, vigilance, and quick dispatch: they lay for a good while hovering over the banks of the river Euphrates, as if they were waiting for an order, or a commission to go over it: they were ready not only at a year's, a month's, a day's, but at an hour's warning, and all of them together; and as soon as ever they had the divine permission, they lost no time; they improved every opportunity, every year, every month, every day, every hour, to settle and enlarge their dominions to the ruin of others; and in a very short time did they accomplish what they desired: though others think this refers to a certain time fixed by God, in which they should be employed in killing men; and the sense is, that these people were prepared in the purposes and decrees of God, or were appointed for such a length of time here signified, by several dates, in which they should destroy a large multitude of men, by way of punishment for their idolatries, murders, sorceries, fornication, and thefts, ver. 20, 21. An hour, which is the twenty-fourth of a day or year, in the prophetic style, is fifteen days, and a day is a year, and a month is thirty years, and a year is three hundred sixty-five years and a quarter, or ninety-one days; in all, three hundred and ninety-six years, and a hundred and six days; which is the precise time between A. D. 1057, when the Turkish empire begun, the empire of the Saracens being entirely demolished by Togrul Beg, or Tangrolipix, and A. D. 1453, in which year Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and an end put to the eastern Roman empire, signified by the third part of men; or else this space of time may be reckoned from the date of Ottoman's reign, May 19, 1301, which, to Sept. 1, 1697, is just this term of time, when Prince Eugene obtained a remarkable victory over the Turks, the ef-

fect of which was the peace at Carlowitz the next year, since which time the Turks have done but little in Europe: and by this it should seem that their time of killing men here is over, and that their own destruction is hastening on. Mr. Daubuz rejects these computations, since a prophetic year consists of 360 days or years, and not 365, as those suppose; and thinks there is no mystery in these dates, and only signify the angels' unanimous execution of their commission at once.

Ver. 16. *And the number of the army of the horsemen, &c.*] This shews that the four angels before mentioned were men, and design generals of armies, or armies of men, even of horsemen; and manifestly point at the Turks, who were not only originally Persians, and had their name, as some say ^c, from Turca in Persia, and פרש, from whence the Persians have their name, signifies an horseman; but the armies of the Turks chiefly consisted of horse, and what for show and for use, they had generally double the number of horses and mules as of men ^d; and they are very good horsemen, and very dextrous at leaping on and off ^e; and the horse's tail is still carried before the general, and principal officers, as an ensign expressive of their military exploits, and shewing where their main strength lies. And the number of this mighty army, it is said, were *two hundred thousand thousand*; or *two myriads of myriads*; two hundred millions, or twenty thousand brigades of ten thousand each; that is, a very large and prodigious number, almost infinite and incredible, like the army of Gog and Magog, as the sand of the sea, ch. xx. 8. The Turks used to bring, and still do bring vast armies into the field: in the year 1396, Bajazet, with three hundred thousand men, fell upon sixty thousand Christians, killed twenty thousand of them, and lost sixty thousand of his own: against him afterward, in the year 1397, came Tamerlane the Tartar, with four hundred thousand horse, and six hundred thousand foot, and having killed two hundred thousand Turks, took Bajazet prisoner, and carried him about in a cage, in golden chains. In the year 1438, Amurath entered into Pannonia, with three hundred thousand horsemen: and in the year 1453, Mahomet took Constantinople with the like number ^b; yea, it is said, that the army at the siege of that city consisted of forty myriads, or four hundred thousand men ^f. It is reported, that the great Turk contemptuously sent to the emperor of the Romans a camel, or a dromedary, loaden with wheat, with this vow by a message, that he should bring against him as many fighting men as there were grains of wheat therein ^g. And it is related ^h, that when Ladislaus, king of Hungary, went out against Amurath with four-and-twenty thousand horse, Dracula, governor of Walachia, advised him not to attack the emperor of the Turks with so small an army, since he went out every day a-hunting with more men than such a number: *and I heard the number of them*; expressed by some angel, and therefore John was certain of it, otherwise he could not have told them.

^a Laonic. Chalcocondylas de reb. Turc. l. 1. p. 6.

^b Ib. l. 7. p. 227, 255.

^c Laonic. Chalcocond. l. 2. p. 65.

^d Alsted. Chronol. p. 321.

^e Laonic. Chalcocond. l. 7. p. 255.

^f Napier in loc.

^g Bonifinius apud Pareum in loc.

Ver. 17. *And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, &c.*] In such numbers, and with horsemen on them, and in such order, and in appearance, as follows: *having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth and brimstone*; which may be understood either literally of their external breast-plates, which being of polished iron, according to the custom of these people, looked at a distance like sparkling fire, and seemed to be of the colour of hyacinth, or of a sky colour, and appeared as flaming sulphur; though some think that their breast-plates were of different colours, some looked like fire, others like jacinth, and others like brimstone; or it may denote that they would be accoutred in scarlet, blue, and yellow, which are the colours the Turks have commonly wore; or this may be understood of their internal breast-plates, and the disposition of their minds, having in their breasts nothing but wrath, fury, desolation, and destruction; a fire de-voured before them, and behind them a flame burned; *and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions*; gaping and roaring for their prey, or all bloody with it, and looked fierce, and savage, and terrible: this design is not so much the strength, boldness, and intrepidity of their horses, which are warlike creatures, and very undaunted in battle, as of the men that sat upon them, who were like David's heroes and warriors, 1 Chron. xii. 8. *And out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone*; which may be referred either to the horses, or to the horsemen, or both: some interpret this allegorically, and by *fire* understand either the tyranny of the Turks over their own people, or their fury against others, or their blasphemy against God, and Christ, and his people, being like so many railing Rabshakehs against the God of the Christians; and by *smoke* the false doctrine of Mahomet, which came out of the same bottomless pit the doctrine of the Romish antichrist did; and is fitly compared to smoke for its disagreeableness, darkness, levity, and duration; see the note on ver. 2. and by *brimstone* the immorality and sad corruption of manners among the Turks, and what is allowed of, or winked at, as fornication, polygamy, sodomy, &c. but rather this is to be taken more literally, and represents the firing of guns on horseback in battle. Guns are a late invention, and the use of them was found out in the age this trumpet refers to; and were much made use of by the Turks in their wars, and particularly great guns or cannons; these were used by Amurath at the sieges of Belgrade, and of Constantinople^m; and by Mahomet the Second at the taking of Constantinople, where a gun or cannon was used of that bigness, as to be drawn by seventy yoke of oxen, and two thousand menⁿ. Gunpowder set on fire is fitly signified by fire, smoke, and brimstone, which is made of nitre, charcoal, and brimstone; and the firing of guns on horseback is most aptly described by these coming out of the mouths of horses and horsemen: nor could it well appear to John to be otherwise, who could never have seen a gun, and one fired off in his life; nor could he well represent to others what he saw in vision, than in this manner.

Ver. 18. *And by these three was the third part of men killed, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and some others,

the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *by these three plagues*: as the western Roman empire is in the preceding chapter frequently expressed by the third part of several things, see ch. viii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. so here the eastern Roman empire by the third part of men; vast numbers of the inhabitants of which were destroyed by the Turks, through the use of guns, out of which issued fire, smoke, and brimstone; and Constantinople, the metropolis of it, was taken in this way, as before observed, with the taking of which the empire ceased. *By the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths*; that is, by the firing of guns.

Ver. 19. *For their power is in their mouth, &c.*] In what proceeded out of their mouth, or seemed to do so; in their guns, and what came out of them: *and in their tails*; which may design their foot-soldiers, which were as the tail to their horse, and who sometimes did great service; or their way of fighting when they fled, by casting up arrows into the air, which would fall upon the heads and horses of those that pursued them; or their ambushments, by which they destroyed many; or their perfidious violation of treaties; or it may be their tails may intend the doctrine of Mahomet, the false prophet, who is the tail, Isa. ix. 15. *for their tails were like unto serpents*; crooked, crafty, poisonous, and pernicious: *and had heads*; every tail had a head to it; which may be understood of the officers of the foot-soldiers, or of the priests and teachers of the Mahometan religion: *and with them they do hurt*; with their guns, the power in their mouth, they did hurt to the bodies of men; and with their false doctrines, their tails, they did hurt to the souls of men; the Ethiopic version here adds, *five months*; which seems to be taken from ver. 10.

Ver. 20. *And the rest of men which were not killed by these plagues, &c.*] By whom are meant the western antichristian party; and such of them as were not plagued, harassed, and destroyed by the Turks, as in Germany, at least some parts of it, France, Spain, Italy, &c. *yet repented not of the works of their hands*: their idols, their images of saints departed, which their hands had made; the goodness of God in saving them from the depredations of the Turks, should have led them to repentance for their idolatrous worship of images, but it did not: *that they should not worship devils*; or demons, a sort of deities with the Heathens, that mediated between the superior gods and men; and here design angels and saints departed, which the Papists worship, and use as mediators of intercession for them; and this is no other than worshipping of devils, in God's account, and is downright idolatry, and the doctrine of it is the doctrine of devils: *and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood*: which are the several materials of which the Popish images are made: and what aggravates the stupidity of the worshippers of these images, and of the persons represented by them, is, that these are such *which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk*: can neither see their persons, nor hear their prayers, nor stir one foot to their help and assistance; see Psal. cxv. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 21. *Neither repented they of their murders, &c.*]

^m Chalcocond. l. 8. p. 152, 163.

ⁿ Chalcocond. l. 8. p. 152.

Of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood the western antichrist is made drunk, and which will be found in her, and for which she is answerable. Now, though the western parts of the empire escaped the scourge of the Turks, yet this did not bring them to repent of their murderous practices, but they went on to take away the lives of godly men; witness the persecutions of the Waldeseus and Albigenes, the murders of John Huss and Jerom of Prague, the burning of the martyrs here in Queen Mary's days, and the massacres in Paris and in Ireland, and their butcheries elsewhere; and which they have continued unto this day, where the Inquisition obtains: *nor of their sorceries*; Jezabel the whore of Rome has been famous for, by which she has deceived all nations; many of the popes of Rome have been necromancers, given to the magic art, and have entered into covenant, and have had familiarity with the devil; and one part of the Romish service lies in exorcisms, conjurations, and enchantments, and which they still continue: *nor of their fornication*; all sorts of uncleanness; not only

simple fornication, but adultery, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; brothel-houses have been set up and licensed by authority, which have yielded to the popes a yearly revenue of forty thousand ducats; the Romish clergy, popes, cardinals, priests, monks, and friars, have been dreadfully guilty of all manner of uncleanness, and still are; whence Rome is called Sodom, ch. xi. 8. *nor of their thefts*; who under pretence of granting indulgences and pardons, and praying souls out of purgatory, with other tricks, cheat men of their money, pillage and plunder their estates, and devour widows' houses; rob men of their substance, and make merchandise of their souls: now all these iniquities the Papists in the eastern empire were guilty of, for which the Turks as a scourge were let in upon it, and destroyed it; and yet the western papacy, who did not suffer in these calamities, took no warning by them, did not repent of their sins, and reform their practices; but went on, and still go on in the same wicked way, and by their hardness and impenitence treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.

C H A P. X.

THIS chapter contains a vision of an angel of a wonderful appearance, the voices of the seven thunders, and an order to John to take the book in the hand of the angel, eat it, and prophesy. The angel is described by his strength, a mighty one; by his descent from heaven; by his attire, being clothed with a cloud; by a rainbow on his head; by his face being like the sun; by his feet, which were as pillars of fire, the one foot set on the sea, and the other on the earth; by having a little book open in his hand, and by the loud cry he made, like the roaring of a lion, ver. 1, 2, 3. upon which seven thunders uttered their voices, which John was going to write, but was forbid, ver. 4. next follows a solemn oath of the angel's; the gesture he used, lifting up his hand to heaven; the person by whom he swore, the living God; what he swore to, that time should be no more, and that the mystery of God would be finished at the beginning of the seventh trumpet, ver. 5, 6, 7. then several orders are given to John, as to take the open book in the hand of the angel, which he did, to eat it, as he accordingly did; when he found it to be as it was told him it would be, namely, sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly; and then to prophesy again before people, nations, tongues, and kings, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 1. *And I saw another mighty angel, &c.*] Not any mere man, as Justin the emperor, as some have thought, who sent letters abroad in favour of the orthodox doctrine, against the Arians, which they suppose is meant by the little book open in his right hand; and still less the pope of Rome, whether in the sense of Papists or Protestants, which latter represent him as a tyrant, treading upon men both in the islands and in the continent, and holding forth the book of canons and decrees; rather, as Mr. Daubuz thinks, Luther, with the rest of the reformers, is intended, and especially since the prophecy of this chapter respects the Reformation, which began before

the end of the sixth trumpet; and the epithets given to this angel may denote his strength and courage, his divine authority, the protection of him, and the clear doctrine of peace and reconciliation he brought: however, a created angel is not intended: not the angel that made proclamation for the opening of the book, and unsealing it, ch. v. 2. between which, and having the book in his right hand open, is a wide difference; nor any other, though the epithet *mighty* belongs to angels in common; and though this angel swears by the living God; and though it was an angel by whom Christ signified the things contained in this book to John; but the increated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, seems rather designed, as appears both by comparing this with Dan. xii. 7. and x. 5, 6. and from the power he gave to the two witnesses, ch. xi. 3. which can't agree with a created angel; and besides, who so proper to hold the book open as he who unloosed the seals, and opened it, and to whom the epithet *mighty* may be applied in the highest sense, as God; and who as man may be said to swear by the living God, and to whom the whole description well agrees? he is sometimes called an Angel simply, Gen. xlviii. 16. Exod. xxiii. 20. Acts vii. 35, 38. sometimes the Angel of the Lord, and who appears to be Jehovah himself, the second Person, Gen. xvi. 7, 10. and xviii. 1, 2. compared with xix. 1. and xxiii. 11, 12. and sometimes the Angel of God's presence, Isa. lxiii. 9. and the Angel of the great council in the Septuagint on Isa. ix. 6. and the Angel, or messenger, of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1. and may be so called, because he is a messenger from God as man and Mediator, being sent by him to declare his will and redeem his people: and he is a *mighty* one; not only as God, being the mighty God, the Almighty, which appears by his creation of all things, and upholding them in their beings; but as Mediator, having all power in heaven and in earth, and being far above all principality, power, and might; and, as man, made

strong by God for himself, and for his people: he appears now as *another* angel, distinct from the seven angels who had trumpets given them to sound, and six of which had already sounded; and particularly from the angel of the sixth trumpet, who had just sounded; though some copies, and the Complutensian edition, leave out the word *ἄλλος*, *another*; and very opportunely does he appear for the comfort of his church, when the trumpets that had been blown had brought such desolations upon the empire, western and eastern, and when both the western and eastern antichrists had appeared, and before the seventh trumpet sounds, and brings in the last and greatest woe: and he is said to *come down from heaven*; which does not design his incarnation, that was long before this time; nor his spiritual presence with his people, which is common to them in all ages; nor his second coming to judgment, which will be by a descent from heaven, and in the clouds of heaven, for that is yet future; but in a visionary way, his appearance to and for his church and people in the dark times of antichrist, when afflicted by the Turk on the one hand, and the pope on the other: *clothed with a cloud*ⁿ; which is expressive not of the human nature of Christ, with which his divinity was veiled in his state of humiliation, so that few saw the glory of his divine Person, and the greater part esteemed him a mere man; but rather of the obscurity of him, his person, offices, and grace, in those times of antichristian darkness, and even of the dim light and knowledge which his true and faithful followers had of him in those times; it was a dark and cloudy day with them, as well as the whole earth was covered with the gross darkness of Popery and Mahometanism; though it seems best of all to interpret this phrase of the majestic presence of Christ in his appearances to his people, who went before the people of Israel in a cloud by day in the wilderness, descended in one on Mount Sinai, dwelt in one both in the tabernacle and temple, was overshadowed by one on the Mount when transfigured, ascended in one to heaven, and will return in one, or more: moreover, the cloud may denote the power and protection of God attending the Reformation; see Psal. lxxviii. 34. Isa. iv. 5. *and a rainbow was upon his head*; which was a token of the covenant; see ch. iv. 3. and the note there: this, with its blessings, is upon the head of Christ, the antitypical Joseph, and who is the head of his church and people; and Christ appearing in this form at this time, when the world was overflowed with Popery and Mahometanism, shews that God was still mindful of his covenant, even in those worst of times, and would not suffer his church to be overwhelmed, and sunk in the general deluge of antichristianism, or the gates of hell to prevail against it; Christ, at such a time as this, very seasonably appears with the rainbow of the covenant on his head, as a messenger of peace, and bringer of good tidings, to let his people know that ere long it would be halcyon days with them, and there would be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, who was ever mindful of his covenant with them; and that the Gospel of peace and reconciliation would be preached unto them: *and his*

face was as it were the sun; or looked like the sun, as it did at the time of his transfiguration on the mount, and as he is described in ch. i. 16. and may denote the clearness and purity of Christ; both as God, who is the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person; and as man, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled; and is also expressive of that light of nature, grace, and glory, which he imparts unto the sons of men; as well as of that beauty, loveliness, and amiableness in his person, which renders him as the sun, delightful to behold; and of the majesty of his person, and the manifestations of himself, to the great comfort, pleasure, and refreshment of his saints: *and his feet as pillars of fire*; which may refer to the state of the church of Christ at this time, which was in the *fire* of afflictions, when many of its members were called to the stake, and burnt there for the sake of the Gospel, and yet were like *pillars*, firm and unshaken; the church was like the bush that Moses saw, which was on fire, but not consumed; Christ was with his people as they passed through it, that it could not kindle upon them so as to destroy them; and their faith, which was tried by it, was found to be much more precious than of gold that perisheth: or this may shew what Christ then was, both to his people and to his enemies; to his people his feet were as *pillars* of brass and marble, to bear them up, and support them under all their trials and afflictions; his goings forth towards them in a way both of providence and grace, were in such a manner, as to strengthen and confirm them in the faith of him against all the powers of hell and earth; and they were like *fire*, to consume his and their enemies; with his feet he trod upon them, and subdued them under him, who were as *stubble*, briars and thorns, easily consumed by him, when at the same time he was a wall of fire to his people, and the glory in the midst of them.

Ver. 2. *And he had in his hand a little book open, &c.*] By which is meant not the Bible, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; or the book of the Gospel, the substance of which lies in a little room, and is no other than the preaching of Christ, and him crucified, as God's way of salvation; and which is now more open and manifest, and more clearly made known unto the sons of men, under the Gospel dispensation, than it was before, and especially since the time of the Reformation, to which this book, and the prophecies of it, may have respect; but the same book is here designed, which in ch. v. 1. is represented as in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, as shut and sealed; but the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, having taken it out of his hand, unloosed its seals, and opened it; and whereas we never read of his laying this book down, or of his delivering it to any other, he may be well supposed to be this mighty angel, who held it open in his hand: it may be said to be a *little book*, because now not only many of the scenes and visions in it were exhibited, upon the opening of the seals; but because, at the time this vision refers to, many of its prophecies were accomplished, so that the bulk of it was greatly reduced; and it may be represented as

ⁿ Εὐχέλαιου τοῦ φελοῦ, Philo de Vita Moysis, l. 1. p. 638.

open, because the seals of it were unloosed, and the things in it revealed; and it is to be observed, that as the several seals of this book, and the opening of them, refer to the state of the empire, both as Pagan and as Christian, as has been seen; so the little book itself, clear of these seals, sets forth the state and condition of the church in the empire, under its different revolutions and appearances: *and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth*; which signifies that he was Lord and possessor of both, of the whole terraqueous globe, being the Maker and supporter of it; and that his Gospel should be spread all over the world, both on the continent and in the islands of the sea; and that his kingdom should be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; that the abundance of the sea should be converted to him, or the maritime parts of the world should be subject to the sceptre of his grace and government; and that the earth, and the uttermost parts of it, should be his possession, though it was now almost wholly in the hands of the Turk and pope; and it may be observed, that he set his foot upon both earth and sea, out of which the two beasts arise, ch. xiii. 1, 11. which shall be destroyed by him.

Ver. 3. *And cried with a loud voice, &c.*] That all might hear, and to shew earnestness and affection, and that it was a matter of great importance, as well as to denote the certainty of it; what he said is not expressed, but seems to be the book-prophecy, or what regarded the state of his church and kingdom, in the several periods of time to the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become his: and this voice of his was as when a lion roareth; loud and terrible; and indeed it was the voice of the lion of the tribe of Judah, which was heard far and near, throughout the whole world, by his people, and is terrible to his enemies: *and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices*; which some understand of the ministers of the Gospel in the times of the Reformation, who were *Boanergeses*, sons of thunder, and think that they are the same with the angels in ch. xiv. 6, &c. or rather these may signify the denunciations of God's judgments, and of his wrath, both upon the eastern and western antichrist, the Turk and pope, signified by the seven vials, hereafter to be poured out, mentioned in ch. xvi.

Ver. 4. *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, &c.*] Or declared all they had to denounce upon the enemies of Christ and his church: *I was about to write*: John taking particular notice of what they said, and believing it might be for the advantage, comfort, and support of the church of Christ under its suffering circumstances, to be informed of what God had in reserve among the treasures of his wrath for their adversaries, was going to put it down in writing, that he might retain it, and the better communicate it, and in obedience to the order given him, ch. i. 19. *and I heard a voice from heaven*: from God the Father, for the Son of God in a visionary way was come down from heaven, in the form before described; and this voice answers to the Bath Kol of the Jews, and is the same which ordered John to write, ch. xiv.

13. though it here forbade him: *saying unto me, seal up those things*; treasure them up in thy mind, keep them within thy breast, hide them from men, for the present, and say nothing of them: *which the seven thunders have uttered, and write them not*; that they may not be seen and read at present, because the same things were to be exhibited in another form, and at another time, under the seven vials; only it was thought proper that John should have some intimations of them for his own advantage, and to prepare him for the following vision, for the eating of the book, and for his prophesying before people, nations, tongues, and kings. Mr. Daubuz is of opinion, that by these *seven thunders* are meant seven kingdoms which have received the Reformation, and established it by law within their several dominions, whereby the doctrine and worship of the reformers are become the established religion there; and the laws by which it is established are *the voices* uttered by those supreme authorities; and they are these, 1. The German princes, making one republic. 2. The Swiss cantons. 3. Sweden. 4. Denmark, with Norway. 5. England and Ireland. 6. Scotland. 7. The United Provinces of the Netherlands. And whereas John, who represents the first reformers, and other faithful men, was for writing what these thunders uttered, this denotes the zeal and earnest desires of these good men to push the Reformation further, and make a thorough work of it, as well as their expectation that now was the time in which the mystery of God was to be fulfilled, in which they were mistaken; wherefore John is bid to seal up these things, and not write them, which shews that the progress of the Reformation was to be stopped from doing fully what the first reformers were prompted to by the supreme powers which encouraged them, and that by the opposition of other temporal princes; it not being the will of God that the glorious state of the church should arise from these thunders, and be built on their laws and establishments; and suggests, that this is not the time in which, nor these the ways and means by which the mystery of God will be finished, which will not be until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, ver. 7. whereas this period of time, to which the Reformation belongs, is an event of the sixth trumpet: and this exposition bids very fair to be the right one.

Ver. 5. *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, &c.*] His right foot being on the one, and his left foot upon the other, as described in ver. 2. *lifted up his hand to heaven*; the Oriental versions read, *his right hand*; and so some copies, and the Complutensian edition: the man clothed in linen, Dan. xii. 6, 7. who is the same with the angel here, held up both his hands; the lifting up of the hand was a gesture used in swearing: see Gen. xiv. 22. so the Jews say^o, *the right hand*, or by the right hand, *וּשְׁבִיעָה*, *this is an oath*, according to Dan. xii. 7. or whether the right hand or the left, is an oath, according to Isa. lxii. 8.

Ver. 6. *And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, &c.*] That is, by the living God, who is the true God: and is so described to distinguish him from idol-

^o T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 58. 1.

gods, who have no life nor breath in them; and to assert the excellency and perfection of his nature, who has life in himself originally, and independently, is the fountain of life to all creatures living, and who are supported in their life and being by him; and so he always was, is, and ever will be; this is the same as swearing by Ancúialus^p: *who created heaven, and the things that therein are*; the airy, starry, and third heavens, and the inhabitants of them, the fowls of the air, the sun, moon, and stars, and the angels of heaven, as well as the souls of departed saints, and the bodies of as many as are there: *and the earth, and the things that therein are*; men, beasts, and creeping things, trees, herbs, minerals, &c. *and the sea, and the things which are therein*; the several sorts of fishes in it: this is also said to distinguish the great God from all false gods, who made not the heavens and the earth, who alone is, and ought to be the object of an oath, or by whom an oath is to be made, and not any creature whatsoever; and since the Angel that here swears is the Lord Jesus Christ, this may be understood of him either as man, swearing by God the father, in which respect the father is greater than he; or as a divine person, and so swears by himself, Heb. vi. 13. for to himself do these characters belong of living for ever and ever, and of having made the heaven, earth, and sea, and all in them: the thing he swears to is, *that there should be time no longer*; which is not to be understood of the cessation of time, and the swallowing of it up in eternity, at the end of all things, when it will be no more measured out by the revolutions of the sun and moon, which will then be no more; for this did not take place upon the angel's oath, or at the time this vision refers to; for after this, there is to be time for the seventh angel to sound his trumpet in, though perhaps that is excepted in the next verse; and after the sounding of that, there will be the space of a thousand years, in which Christ will reign with his people on earth; and after that there will be some space of time for the Gog and Magog army to attack the beloved city; all which will be before the end of all things, or before eternity, properly speaking, takes place; and besides, such an illustrious appearing of Christ as before described, and so solemn an oath as is here made, do not seem necessary to ascertain a truth which nobody doubts of; and every one knows that after this world, and all things in it are at an end, time will be no more. The true key to this passage is Dan. xii. 7. where the man clothed in linen swears, that to the end of wonders should be a time, times, and a half, and here the angel swears that time should be no longer; that is, that these time, and times, and half a time, should be no longer; that these dates would be up, and the events affixed to them be accomplished, when the seventh angel should begin to sound his trumpet: the same divisions of time are made in Rev. xii. 14. and are the same exactly with the 1260 days, or years, and the forty-two months of years, so often mentioned in this book: for a time is a prophetic year, that is, 360 years; and times are two prophetic years, or 720 years, and half a time is half a prophetic year, or 180 years,

in all 1260 years: now add the several events to be accomplished in this period of time, and it will give the full sense of this passage thus; the angel swears that the time of antichrist's reign, his tyranny over the saints, his persecution of them, which was to last forty-two months, Rev. xiii. 5. should be no longer; nor of the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles, the Papists, which bears the same date, Rev. xi. 2. and is called the times of the Gentiles, Luke xxi. 24. nor of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which has just the same measure of duration, Rev. xi. 3. nor of the church's retirement, and being hid in the wilderness, Rev. xii. 14. in short, the time of the four monarchies, and of the last of them, the Roman, and of the last branch of that, the Papal, should be no more than till the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; Rev. xi. 15. the words will bear to be rendered, as some have observed, *that there should be delay no longer*: that is, of the coming and kingdom of Christ; though the bridegroom has tarried, he will come, and will not tarry beyond the time the angel swears to; every seal of the sealed book is a delay of, and a stop upon, the open appearance of Christ's kingdom; and the opening of every seal is an advance to it; and when the sixth seal was opened, and Paganism destroyed, and Christianity spread throughout the empire, the kingdom of Christ might have been expected to have appeared; but there was a seventh seal to be opened, which was a stop upon it, and which when opened brought ruin and destruction upon the Christian empire, both western and eastern, under the six first trumpets; and till the seventh sounds there will be a delay of Christ's kingdom, but when that sounds there will be no more a delay.

Ver. 7. *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, &c.*] This is an exception to what the angel had said and swore to, that time should be no longer; *but, or unless, or except the time of the voice of the seventh angel*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; when a new period and sort of time should begin, very different from the former, which then should be no more; for now will be the time of Christ's kingdom on earth, which shall last a thousand years; this time will not be like the former, a time of darkness and ignorance, as was in some periods, partly through the errors and heresies which were propagated in early times, and through that barbarity and ignorance which the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, spread over the empire, when they broke into it, and chiefly through the smoke of the bottomless pit, the false doctrine and worship of the Papists and Mahometans; but in the time of the seventh angel, all this gross darkness will be removed, and it will be a time of unspeakable and everlasting light, so that there will be no need of the sun and moon, of Gospel ministrations and ordinances: nor will it be a time of affliction and persecution; time in that sense will be no more, as it has been under the ten Pagan emperors, and under the Arian emperors, and under the Papal hierarchy; for in this period there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, pain, and tears; though there

will be time, it will be another sort of time, quite different from the former, which will be no more when the seventh angel once begins; and as soon as he begins to sound, this will put an end to antichristian time; and at the end of his sounding will begin the time of Christ, or the thousand-years' reign: and then *the mystery of God should be finished*; that is, the angel not only swears that time shall be no longer, but that also then shall be finished the mystery of God; by which is meant, not the resurrection of the dead, and the change of the living, which is called a mystery, 1 Cor. xv. 51. for though when this angel sounds, and has done sounding, and Christ comes, the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the dead in Christ, will be finished, yet not the whole resurrection; for the rest of the dead will not live again till the end of the thousand years: but rather the Gospel is designed, which is often called the mystery, and the mystery of the Gospel, and contains many mysteries in it, which are styled the mysteries of God; which respect him, his being, persons, operations, and grace; and are revealed and made known by him; and the finishing of this may respect the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, which will be before the end of the world, and whereby the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes of souls converted; wherefore it may be best of all to understand this of the church of God, the general assembly and church of the first-born, even all the elect of God, whose number will now be finished and completed in the conversion of the Jews, and in the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, both which are called *mysteries*, Rom. xi. 25, 26. Eph. iii. 4, 5, 6. and now as the antichristian church is called *mystery, Babylon*, Rev. xvii. 5. and *the mystery of iniquity*, 2 Thess. ii. 7. so the true Christian church, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, may bear the name of *the mystery of God*; and this may also take in the mystery of all God's providences and promises, and prophecies, respecting the state of his church and people on earth: *as he hath declared to his servants and prophets*; as to Isaiah in ch. lx. 3, 4, 5, &c. and lxvi. 8. and to Daniel, in ch. ii. 44. and vii. 25. and xii. 6, 7. and to Zechariah, in ch. xiv. 9. and others; and which was a Gospel declaration, as the word signifies; it was good news and glad tidings; glorious things were declared to them, and spoken by them, concerning the city and church of God, its happy state on earth, and Christ's reign in it.

Ver. 8. *And the voice which I heard from heaven, &c.]*

In ver. 4. *spake to me again, and said, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth*; as John was to prophesy, ver. 11. it was necessary that he should have a mission and a commission from heaven; and that he should have the open book of prophecy to prophesy out of; and that he should receive this from the angel's hands, who had unloosed its seals, and opened it: and just so to ordinary prophesying, or preaching, it is necessary that men should have their commission from heaven, should be called of God, and sent by him; and that they should have the book of

the Scriptures before them, and open to them, and speak according to these oracles, agreeably to the law and to the testimony, which are profitable for doctrine; and that they should also receive the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, with gifts, and a commission to preach it, from the Angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, who has all power both in heaven and in earth; see ver. 2.

Ver. 9. *And I went to the angel, &c.]* According to the order given him; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; and, indeed, whither should any go for knowledge but to him who has the words of eternal life, and is the great prophet of the church? and to whom should John go to qualify him for prophesying, but to him, who, as man and Mediator, had this revelation of future things given him? ch. i. 1. *and said unto him, give me the little book*; he did not take it without his leave, but in a modest and humble manner asks him to give it him, that he might deliver out the prophecies in it to others: so ordinary prophets and ministers of the word should go to Christ, to have their eyes opened, their understandings enlightened, that they may understand the Scriptures, and explain them to others: *and he said unto me, take it, and eat it up*; which must be understood not literally, but mystically; and the sense is this, take the book, and diligently peruse it, and with as much eagerness as an hungry man would eat a meal; so greedy are some persons of reading, and as it were of devouring books; hence Cicero called *Cato helleo librorum*, a glutton at books: and in such manner John is bid to take and eat this book, and look into it, and read it over diligently, and consider what was in it, and meditate upon it, and digest the things contained in it, and lay them up in his mind and memory; and for the present hide and conceal them, in like manner as he was bid to seal, and not write what the seven thunders uttered; and so, though this book is represented to him as open in the angel's hand, yet he must take it and eat it, and hide it in his belly, because the things in it as yet were not to be accomplished: so for ordinary prophesying, or preaching, the ministers of the word should diligently read the Scriptures, constantly meditate on them, digest the truths of the Gospel in their own minds, and lay them up in the treasury of their hearts, and bring them forth from thence in due season: *and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey*; as Ezekiel's roll was to him when he ate it, Ezek. iii. 1, 2, 3. the Alexandrian copy, instead of *thy belly*, reads *thy heart*.

Ver. 10. *And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up, &c.]* As he was bid to do: *and it was in my mouth sweet as honey*; so is the Gospel in the mouth of a faithful minister of it, who has a spiritual knowledge, and a savoury experience of it; and so it is in the mouth of an understanding hearer, who finds it, and eats it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and so this little book of prophecy being looked into, read, and considered by John, the first taste and knowledge he had of the things contained in it were exceeding grateful and delightful; the view it gave him of the glorious state of the church, and kingdom of

Christ on earth, filled with unspeakable pleasure: *and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter*; so the ministration of the Gospel occasions bitterness, grief, and sorrow, to the preachers and professors of it, through the persecutions that attend it, the obstinacy and hardness of men's hearts against it, and its being the savour of death unto death to many that hear it; and so the little book of prophecy, upon a perusal of it, giving to John a view of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of their bodies being killed, and lying exposed in the street of the great city, and of the church's flying into the wilderness, and continuing there for a time and times, and half a time, and of the barbarities and cruelties exercised on the saints by the whore of Rome, whom he saw made drunk with their blood, made his belly bitter, or filled him with sorrow, grief, and pain.

Ver. 11. *And he said unto me, &c.*] That is, the angel, from whom John received the little book; the Alexandrian copy reads, *they said unto me*: both the voice of God the father from heaven, that bid him take the book, and the angel that bid him eat it: *thou must prophesy again before many people, and nations, and tongues,*

and kings; which is to be understood not of John's preaching again to many people, and nations, after his return from his exile at Patmos, as he had done before his banishment thither; and much less of his prophesying along with Enoch and Elias, towards the end of the world, grounded upon two fabulous notions, the one that Enoch and Elias will appear in person before the coming of Christ, and the other, that John died not, but is still alive somewhere, and will continue till Christ's second coming; but rather of his delivering more prophecies out of the open little book; not *before*, as we render it, but either *concerning* many people, nations, tongues, and kings, as the Syriac version renders it: or *against* them, that is, those people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, over which the whore of Babylon reigns, or has reigned, and the ten kings, and kings of the earth she rules over, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 15, 18. Moreover, this may not so much design John's prophesying in person, as the prophesying of the witnesses or ministers of the word in the several periods of time, whom John personated and represented; and of whom mention is made in the next chapter, to which this seems to be a transition.

C H A P. XI.

THIS chapter contains the order to measure the temple of God; an account of the two witnesses, their prophesying and power, their slaying, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, with what followed upon it; and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the effects of that. A measuring-rod is given to John, with an order to rise and measure the temple, altar, and worshippers, and to leave out the outer court, which was to be given to the Gentiles, who tread the holy city under foot forty and two months, ver. 1, 2. the same date with the 1260 days the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, ver. 3. who are compared to two olive-trees and to two candlesticks, and are said to stand before God, ver. 4. and who are further described by their power to destroy those that hurt them, with fire that proceeds out of their mouths; to shut the heaven, that it rain not during their prophecy; to turn water into blood, and smite the earth with all manner of plagues at pleasure, ver. 5, 6. but when the time of their prophecy and testimony is expired, their enemies will have the advantage of them; the antichristian beast of Rome, described by the place of his ascent, the bottomless pit, will fight against them, overcome, and kill them; their dead bodies will be exposed publicly within the Roman jurisdiction, and not suffered to be interred; and their enemies will make a public and general rejoicing over them, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. but after a short space of time they will revive, and stand upon their feet, to the surprise of all spectators; and being invited by a voice from heaven, will ascend thither, in the sight of their enemies; upon which will be an earthquake, in which the tenth part of the city of Rome will fall, and seven thousand men be slain; which will cause consternation in the rest, and put them upon giving glory to God, ver. 11, 12, 13. and this will put an end to the second woe, and the third

will quickly follow, ver. 14. which is the sounding of the seventh trumpet; the effects of which are, voices heard in heaven, declaring that the kingdoms of the world are become Christ's, and that he shall reign for ever and ever, ver. 15. upon which the four-and-twenty elders, that sat on their seats before God, congratulate him, worship, and give thanks unto him, as the Lord God Almighty and eternal; partly because of his visible power and kingdom he now takes to himself; and partly because the time of avenging his people that had suffered for him upon the nations, which makes them angry, was now come; as also because now would be given rewards to all his prophets, saints, and those that feared him, as well as antichrist and his followers would be destroyed, ver. 16, 17, 18. and other effects of this trumpet are, the opening of the temple of God in heaven, a sight of the ark of the testament, lightnings, voices, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail, ver. 9.

Ver. 1. *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod, &c.*] A measuring-rod, which with the Jews was six cubits long, Ezek. xl. 5. with the Greeks and Romans ten feet long; the Ethiopic version here calls it a *golden reed*, as in ch. xxi. 15. This was given unto John very likely by the same angel that gave him the little book, since he afterwards bids him arise and measure with it; and by it seems to be designed the holy Scripture, or the word of God, which is sometimes called a line, a rule, and rod, Psal. xix. 4. and cx. 2. Gal. vi. 16. and which is the rule and measure of doctrine and faith; and by it all doctrine is to be tried and measured, and whatsoever is not agreeably to it is not of God, nor to be received, but rejected; and it is the rule and measure of all discipline, worship, and practice; it lays down the plan of a Gospel church, which should be gathered out of the world, and se-

pared from it; it shews who are the proper materials of it, what officers are to be constituted in it, and what ordinances are to be administered, and what laws and rules should be observed in receiving and rejecting of members, and according to which the whole community should walk; in short, it directs to all the forms, laws, and ordinances of God's house; and this is the use John, or those whom he personates, were to make of it: *and the angel stood*; the same that stood with his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and gave to John the little book, ch. x. 1, 2, 9. though it may be not in the same place and situation, but rather at the gate of the temple, as in Ezek. xl. 3. This clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, but is in the Syriac version and Complutensian edition, and is rightly retained, or otherwise it would seem as if the reed spoke: *saying, rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein*; the allusion is to the temple of Jerusalem, with its appurtenances; there were the most holy place, and the holy place, which was the inner court of the priests, into which they only entered, which was strictly speaking the temple, and is referred to here; and there was the altar of burnt-offering, which was in the court of the priests, and the altar of incense, which was before the veil that divided between the holy and holy of holies; and then there was the outer court for all the Israelites to worship in, referred to in the next verse: and by *the temple of God* is here meant the church, of which the temple was a type; and so particular congregated churches are called temples, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21. Solomon, a man of peace, was the builder of the one, and Christ, the Prince of peace, the builder of the other; Solomon's temple was built of hewn stones, made ready before they were brought thither, and a true church of Christ consists of lively stones, hewed and fitted for this spiritual building by the spirit of God; the temple at Jerusalem was built on a high mountain, and on the north of the city, the church is built upon the rock Christ Jesus, and the Gospel church, or churches, in the times of the sixth trumpet, which this vision refers to, and to the close of it, are in the northern parts of Europe; and as the temple was for religious use and service, for the worship of God and sacrifices, so is the Gospel church, and so are Gospel churches, for the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, and for the offering up the sacrifices of prayer and praise; and as in the most holy place were the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat, and as it was the place of the divine Presence, where God granted communion to his people, so in the church are held forth the mysteries of the covenant, Christ as the mercy-seat and the propitiatory, in whom the displays of grace are made, and through whom the saints have fellowship with God, and enjoy his presence: *the altar* may design Christ himself, by whom the saints draw nigh to God, offer up their sacrifices, and are accepted with him; or the whole of Gospel worship and ordinances, as prayer, preaching, singing of praise, and the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper: and they *that worship therein, or thereat*, are the royal priesthood, or such who are made kings and priests unto God, for

none went into the inner court, or served at the altar, but priests; and who make use of Christ, the altar, of his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in their approaches to God; and who are praying souls, wait at the altar of incense, and draw nigh to the throne of grace with a true heart, and worship God in spirit and in truth: now *measuring* of these respects not the primitive church for the first three or four hundred years, and the formation of that according to the rule of God's word, and as a pattern to other churches; for though the apostolical church, or the church as it was in the apostles' time, and as described in their writings, was such a church; yet the church for such a space of time as above was not; there were great departures both from doctrine and discipline, the mystery of iniquity began to work, and way was made for the man of sin; and it was far from being a pattern to be imitated; and besides, this measuring refers to the times of the sixth trumpet, and the close of it: nor does it respect the sealing of the 144,000 between the sixth seal and the opening of the seventh seal, which was for the protection and security of them during the times of the six trumpets, which brought desolation into the empire, and apostacy into the church; though measuring sometimes may seem to denote protection, as in Zech. ii. 1, 2, 5. and though the outer court is, and will be, a protection to spiritual worshippers, so long as it is not in the hands of the Gentiles, yet this is not the sense, at least not the whole of it: nor does this refer to the hiding of the church in the wilderness, during the reign of antichrist; which might seem to be signified by the internal worshippers retiring to the altar, and to the holy and the most holy place, and being concealed there; and especially since the opening of the temple in ver. 19. may seem to be opposed to this; but that takes in too large a compass of time, this being an affair relating only to the close of the sixth trumpet, and which was to be before the seventh trumpet sounded: it seems rather to respect the times of the Reformation by Luther, Calvin, and others, when the measuring-rod of the word was taken in hand, and used; but then it was used chiefly for the restoration of pure doctrine, and with good success, but not so much for the regulating and orderly discipline of the churches, for the purity of Gospel worship and ordinances; most, if not all the reformed churches, set out upon too broad a bottom, being national, provincial, or parochial; there was a temple, and an altar erected for God, and there were internal and spiritual worshippers; but then they took in the outward court, which should not have been measured in, and circumscribed with them, but should have been left out; but the time for this was not yet come, but now is: in short, I take it that this measuring refers to what was done in the last age, particularly in our nation; and that it has respect to the separation from the national church, when churches, more or less, were gathered and formed according to the Gospel plan and the primitive institution; a work which never was set about and so effectually done before since the age of the apostles: the baptized and congregational churches are the temple, altar, and worshippers measured, who have both the true doctrine, worship, and discipline of God's house among them; a set of men in the last

age were raised up, who drew a plan of churches, and of church-discipline, according to the ancient model; gathered churches out of the world, and constituted them according to the order of the Gospel; circumscribed them, and enclosed them according to the rules of God's word, admitting none but such into communion who were judged by the churches subjects of the grace of God; and rejected and excluded from among them such as were wicked and scandalous; and so reduced the pure members of churches to a small number, a little flock, a few names in Sardis: and I am of opinion that the measuring-reed must be used again; we have got of late, through negligence, or a want of a spirit of discerning, too many of the outward court among us; who must be left out, in order to be given up to other hands, as follows.

Ver. 2. *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not, &c.*] The allusion is to the court of the Israelites, where was the great crowd and company of worshippers, even the national church of the Jews, called by Ezekiel the outer court, ch. xlii. 14. and xli. 21. and which was measured in Ezek. xlii. 20. but this must not be measured: this designs not the visible church apostatized, as succeeding the pure, primitive, and apostolical church, or the apostate church of Rome, antichrist and his followers, for these are meant by the Gentiles, to whom this outward court is given; this outward court, or the worshippers in it, intend a distinct set of worshippers from the internal worshippers, the priests of God in the temple, altar, and inner court, and from the Gentiles, the Papists; and are no other than carnal Protestants, the bulk of the reformed churches, who have only the name, but not the nature of living Christians, have a form of godliness, but deny its power, are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly, and worship only in an external manner, attend to outward forms and ceremonies, but know nothing of true doctrine, pure worship, or spiritual religion; and which are very numerous, as the worshippers in the outward court were: now these, upon a new measuring and regulating of the churches, are ordered to be left, or cast out, and not taken into the dimensions of the Gospel church; these were to be separated from, and have been, and not to be admitted members of regular and orderly constituted churches, and which is here reckoned a sort of casting of them out; the reason of which follows: *for it is given unto the Gentiles*; by whom are meant the Papists, who are no other than Paganized Christians, having introduced a great deal of Gentilism into the divine service; as the worshipping of the virgin Mary, angels, and saints departed, which is in imitation of the demon-worship of the Heathens; as also the dedication of their churches to saints, their saints' days, divers festivals, and many other rites and ceremonies, are plainly of Pagan original; and therefore they may very well be called by this name: now it seems by these words that the bulk of the reformed churches, the crowd of outward-court worshippers, will be gained, over to the Popish party, and fall off to the church of Rome, to which their doctrines and practices are plainly verging; the pope of Rome, as low a condition as he now is in, will be set *in statu quo*, before his utter destruction; he will regain all his former domi-

nions, and be in possession of them at the time of his ruin; the whore of Rome, the antichristian Babylon, will sit as a queen, and promise herself a great deal of peace and pleasure, the inward-court worshippers and witnesses being slain, and she restored to all her former power and grandeur; when in one day, on a sudden, her destruction will come upon her, when the term of the beast's reign will be expired, mentioned in the next clause: *and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months*; by the holy city is meant all the kingdoms of Europe, or what has been called Christendom, the western empire as Christian, the main seat of the Christian religion, or all the churches styled Christian, and so called in allusion to Jerusalem, which bears this name, Matt. iv. 5. and which was still of a far larger extent than the outward court: the treading of this under foot does not barely design possessing of it, or worshipping in the same place, as the phrase of treading in the courts does in Isa. i. 12. but a tyrannical power over it, and a wasting, spoiling, and destroying it, in allusion to Jerusalem being trodden under foot, wasted, and destroyed by the Gentiles or the Romans, Luke xxi. 24. and the duration of this tyrannical and oppressive reign will be *forty and two months*; see Rev. xiii. 5. which being reduced to years, make just three years and a half: but then this date can't be understood strictly and literally; for such a term can never be sufficient for the whore's reign, who was to rule over the kings of the earth, and all nations were to drink of the wine of her fornication: this is too short a time for her to gain so much power, honour, and riches in, as the 13th, 17th, and 18th chapters of this book shew, as well as too short for the afflictions and persecutions of the saints by her; wherefore this must be understood prophetically of so many months of years; and a month with the Chaldeans consisting of thirty days, and a year of 360 days, which account Daniel used, and John after him, forty-two months, reckoning a day for a year, after the prophetic style, make 1260 years; which is the exact time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, of the church's being hid and nourished in the wilderness, and of the beast's reign, and so of the holy city being trodden under foot. Now this date is not to be reckoned from the outer court being given to the Gentiles, but from the first of antichrist's reign, when the pope of Rome was declared universal bishop; and is only here mentioned to shew, that the giving of the outward court to his Gentiles will be towards the expiration of this date.

Ver. 3. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, &c.*] By whom are meant, not Enoch and Elias, as some of the ancient fathers thought, who, they supposed, would come before the appearance of Christ, and oppose antichrist, and be slain by him, which sense the Papists greedily catch at; nor are the Scriptures, the two Testaments, Old and New, designed, though their name and number agree, and also their office, which is to testify of Christ; but then to be clothed in sackcloth, to be killed, and rise again, and ascend to heaven, are things that can't so well be accommodated to them: but these witnesses intend the ministers of the Gospel and churches of Christ, who have bore testimony for Christ, and against antichrist,

ever since he appeared in the world; and particularly the churches and ministers in Piedmont bid fair for this character; who were upon the spot when antichrist arose, always bore their protest against him, and were ever independent of the church of Rome, and subsisted in the midst of the darkness of the apostacy; and suffered much, and very great persecutions, from the Papists; and have stood their ground, and continue to this day; and have been like olive-trees and candlesticks, imparting oil and light to others. Though they ought not to be considered exclusive of other ministers and churches, who also have bore, and still do bear a witness for Christ, and against the idolatries of the church of Rome: no two individual persons can be meant, since these witnesses were to prophesy 1260 days, that is, so many years, but a succession of ministers and churches; and these are called *two*, both on account of the fewness of them, and because the testimony of two is sufficient to confirm any matter; and it may be in allusion to the various instances of two eminent persons being raised up at certain periods of time, as Moses and Aaron, at the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; Caleb and Joshua, at their entrance into Canaan; Elijah and Elisha in the idolatrous times of Ahab; and Joshua and Zerubbabel at the rebuilding and finishing of the second temple. Now the Angel, and who is Christ, here promises that he will give something to these witnesses: some supply the words, *I will give it*; that is, the holy city, or the church, to them, to be taken care of and defended; others, *I will give them a mouth and wisdom*, which their adversaries shall not be able to resist, according to the promise in Luke xxi. 15. We supply the words, *I will give power*; that is, authority to preach the Gospel, and strength to profess it, and to continue to bear a testimony to it, signified by prophesying; see 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 3. *And they shall prophesy*; that is, that they may prophesy; which is supported by the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, the former rendering the words, *I will give to my two witnesses to prophesy*, and the latter, *I will give in command to my two witnesses that they may prophesy*; the sense is, that Christ will give to them a mission and commission, sufficient authority, all needful gifts and grace, courage and presence of mind to preach his Gospel, to hold forth his word, and bear a testimony for him during the whole time of the apostacy, even a thousand two hundred and threescore days; that is, so many years, which, as before observed, is the date of the beast's reign, of the holy city being trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and of the church's retirement into the wilderness: it is observable, that the date of the beast's reign and tyranny is expressed by months, and the date of the church's being in the wilderness, and the prophesying of the witnesses, is signified by days; and the reason which some give is not despicable, as that the beast and his followers are the children of darkness and of the night, over which the moon presides, from whence months are numbered; and the church and the witnesses are children of the day, over which the sun rules. The habit of these witnesses during their time of prophesying follows, *clothed in sackcloth*; expressive either of their outward state and condition, being poor, mean, and abject, whilst the

followers of the beast are clad in silks, and live deliriously; or else of the inward frame of their minds, as mourning for the sad estate of the church of Christ, groaning under the tyranny and persecutions of antichrist.

Ver. 4. *These are the two olive-trees, &c.*] Or represented by the two olive-trees in Zech. iv. 3, 11, 12, 13, 14. which there design Joshua and Zerubbabel; and who in laying out themselves, their gifts and wealth, in rebuilding and finishing the temple, were types of these witnesses, the ministers of the Gospel, in the successive ages of the apostacy; who may be compared to olive-trees, because of the oil of grace, and the truth of it in them; and because of the gifts of the spirit of God bestowed on them, or their having that anointing which teacheth all things; and because they freely impart their gifts, and the golden oil of the Gospel unto others, and also bring the good tidings of peace and salvation by Christ, of which the olive-leaf is a symbol; and because they are like the olive-tree, fat, flourishing, and fruitful in spiritual things; they are sons of oil, and God's anointed ones: *and the two candlesticks*; which hold forth the light of the word, in the midst of Popish darkness: this shews that churches, as well as ministers, are designed by the witnesses, since the candlesticks are explained of the churches, ch. i. 20. though the simile well agrees with ministers of the word, who are the lights of the world, or hold forth the light of the Gospel, which is put into them by Christ: and these olive-trees and candlesticks are represented as *standing before the God of the earth*; ministering unto him, enjoying his presence, and having his assistance, and being under his protection. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *the Lord of the earth*; and so the Complutensian edition; see Zech. iv. 14. and vi. 5.

Ver. 5. *And if any man will hurt them, &c.*] Do any injury to their persons, or properties, oppose their writings, blaspheme their doctrines, and hinder their ministrations; whoever they be, whether they be any that live among them, or in other parts; whether they be secret or open enemies; or whether they be of the outward court, or be really Gentiles or Papists; and especially if they do them any injustice, if they wrong, oppress, afflict, and distress them knowingly and willingly: *fire proceedeth out of their mouth*; by which may be meant the word of God, which they preach and hold forth, which is comparable to fire, Jer. xxiii. 29. both for light, it being a means of enlightening sinners, who are darkness itself; and of directing saints in their walk and conversation; and of detecting the errors, immoralities, idolatry, and superstition of men, and particularly of the church of Rome, who can't bear the light of this word, and therefore forbid the reading of it to the laity, and keep it locked up from them in the Latin tongue: and also for the heat of it, it being the means of quickening, or of conveying a vital heat to dead sinners; and of warming and comforting the saints, causing their hearts to burn within them, whilst they hear or read it, or meditate upon it; and of scorching and tormenting reprobate sinners, and filling them with wrath, pain, and anguish, especially the followers of antichrist; and this

is greatly designed, for this has a particular reference to the pouring out of the fourth vial, Rev. xvi. 9. Likewise, the word of God may be compared to fire for its purity in itself, for every word of his is pure; and for its purifying nature, when faithfully preached, and powerfully applied, it penetrates deep, it searches, and discovers, and purges from the dross of profaneness, false doctrine, and will-worship; and for its consuming nature, as follows, it pronouncing damnation to unbelievers and impenitent sinners, and it being the savour of death unto death to such: or else the prayers of these witnesses are intended by the fire that proceeds out of their mouth, for vengeance on their enemies, who hinder their ministrations, blaspheme the truth, and shed their blood; which do not arise from a passionate and revengeful spirit, but from a pure zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his name, and truth; and which prayers are heard by God, who will avenge his elect, that cry unto him day and night: the allusion is to the fire, which, at the request of Moses, came forth from the Lord, and destroyed two hundred and fifty persons, that opposed him and Aaron; and to the fire which Elias called for from heaven, upon the captains, and the fifties, that came to take him, who were types of these witnesses; see Numb. xvi. 3, 29, 35. 2 Kings i. 9, 10, 11, 12. And also this fire may denote the denunciations of God's wrath by them upon the antichristian party, these being as wood, and their words as fire, to consume them; see Jer. v. 14, Rev. xix. 9, 10, 11, 18. *And devoureth their enemies*: whether open or secret; just as the fire devoured Nadab and Abihu, the offerers of strange fire, which the Lord commanded not; so the fire out of the mouth of God's faithful servants devours such who introduce divers and strange doctrines, and the inventions of men, into the church of God; the light of God's word convinces and confounds them, though it may not convert them; it flashes in their consciences, and distresses them, so that they gnaw their tongues for pain; there being nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour and destroy them, though not corporeally, yet spiritually and eternally; for even these shall afterwards make war against them, conquer them, and slay them, and shall see them ascend to heaven, ver. 7, 12. *And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed*: this is repeated, partly to shew the certainty of this destruction; and partly to point out the manner of it, which will be not by the use of carnal weapons: these enemies of the witnesses will not be killed by the sword, or any other weapon, but by the word of God, and through the prayers of the saints, and by the denunciations of God's judgments on them. The Jews express the doctrines and traditions of their Rabbins, delivered from one to another, by fire, proceeding out of their mouths; who say, "Rab sat before Rabbi, and there went forth מפימיה דנור מפימיה דנור, sparks of fire from the mouth of Rab, into the mouth of Rabbi, and from the mouth of Rabbi, into the mouth of Rab;" which the gloss explains of their communicating their doctrines and traditions to one another.

Ver. 6. *These have power to shut heaven, &c.*] For these have the keys of the kingdom of heaven given them, and whatever they bind or loos on earth is bound or loosed in heaven; or in other words, having the true key of knowledge in matters, both of doctrine and discipline, given them, whatever they declare, according to the word of God, to be doctrines fit to be received or rejected, and to be the ordinances of God, and matters of worship to be attended to, and what are not, should be so: and in particular, *that it rain not in the days of their prophecy*; that is, on their enemies, the antichristian party; for otherwise it must rain on those to whom they minister, their prophecy itself being rain in a spiritual sense: so rain is explained of prophecy in the Targum on Isa. v. 6. which paraphrases the words thus; "I will command the prophets that they do not prophesy upon them" "prophecy:" for this is to be understood not literally, since the days of their prophecy, or preaching in sackcloth, are 1260, that is, 1260 years, and which is the term and duration of antichrist's reign: wherefore, if this was the case, there must be a famine and great distress, during this long space of time; but as this is not matter of fact, so it would not comport with that plenty, luxury, and deliciousness, in which the whore of Babylon is said to live: but the words are to be taken in a spiritual sense, and to be understood of the Gospel, and doctrines of it, or the word of God, which is sometimes compared to rain, Deut. xxxiii. 2. Isa. lv. 10, 11. God is the author and giver of rain, and he only; none of the vanities, or idols of the Gentiles, can give it; has the rain a father? it has, but not on earth, only God who is in heaven; and so the Gospel is of God, and it is he only that can make men able ministers of it; the rain comes down from above, from heaven, and of the same original and descent is the Gospel, it is the voice speaking from heaven; the rain falls, according to divine direction, in one place, and not another, on one city, and not another; and so the Gospel is sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; it is forbid here, and ordered there. Showers of rain moisten and soften the earth, and make it susceptible of seed; and the Gospel is the means of softening hard hearts, and of making them capable of receiving suitable impressions: rain refreshes the earth, revives the plants and trees, and makes them fruitful; and so the Gospel, attended with a divine blessing, refreshes drooping saints, revives the work of God in them, and is the means of filling them with all the fruits of righteousness. Now the withholding of this rain denotes a famine, not of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; and as it is a judgment on a nation, or on a city, not to be rained upon, so it is a spiritual judgment upon a people, when God commands his clouds, his ministers, to rain no rain of the Gospel on them; and it is one of the judgments upon the antichristian party, that they have not the Gospel preached unto them, nor any dew of powerful and efficacious grace distilled on them, but are left to their blindness, darkness, and hardness of heart: and these witnesses carrying the Gospel along with them,

where they prophesy and preach, is called a shutting up heaven, so that it rain not on the followers of antichrist, from whom they separate themselves, or by whom they are cast out; and this is ascribed to them, and is owing to their removal or ejection; much in the same sense as the night and darkness are to the sun's remove; that is, these follow upon it. The allusion is to the withholding of rain in the times of Elijah, one of the types of these witnesses, because of the idolatries of Ahab and Jezabel, 1 Kings xvii. 1. and xviii. 1, 41, 45. In like manner is the rain of the Gospel withheld during the reign of antichrist, because of the idolatry and superstition of the apostasy. *And have power over waters to turn them to blood*; by waters are meant people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, and particularly those over whom antichrist reigns, Rev. xvii. 15. and turning of them into blood designs the confusions and wars raised among them on account of the prophesying of these witnesses, and the persecutions and bloodshed which followed upon it; which eventually are the end and issue of preaching the Gospel; see Matt. x. 34, 35. The allusion is to one of the plagues of Egypt, and to Moses and Aaron, who were types of these witnesses turning the waters of Egypt into blood, Exod. vii. 20. and answers to the second and third vials, Rev. xvi. 3, 4. *And to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will*; alluding to the plagues of Egypt, one of the names of Rome, or the Roman jurisdiction, in a following verse, and which is meant by the earth here; and referring to the rest of the seven vials poured out by these witnesses, signified by seven angels; and their having power so to do as often as they will, is to be understood of these plagues being inflicted on the inhabitants of the earth, or followers of antichrist, in answer to their prophecies and prayers, which are made according to the will of God, and so always have their effect, being such.

Ver. 7. *And when they shall have finished their testimony, &c.*] For Christ, his truths and ordinances; when they are about to finish it, and almost concluded it, even towards the close of the 1260 days or years, in which they must prophesy in sackcloth: or else their testimony and their prophesying may be considered as two distinct things, and the one be finished before the other; their open public testimony, as witnesses, so as to be heard, attended to, and received, will be finished before the last war of the beast against them, in which they'll be killed; but their prophesying will continue to the end of the beast's reign, these two being cotemporary, of equal date, beginning and ending together; for they'll prophesy when they are dead; being dead they'll yet speak, and their very death will be a prophesying or foretelling that the ruin of antichrist is at hand; and upon their resurrection and ascension, that will immediately come on. But when their testimony is finished, by a free and open publication of the Gospel, *the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit*; the same with that in ch. xiii. 11. with which compare ch. xvii. 8. and which is no other than the Romish antichrist; called a beast for his filthiness and cruelty; and said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, out of hell, because his coming is after the working of Satan: he is raised

up, influenced, and supported by him; he is a creature of his, and has his power, seat, and authority from him, the great dragon, the old serpent, called the devil and Satan; his original and rise are the same with those of his doctrine and worship, the smoke of the bottomless pit; they all come out of it, and they'll return thither again. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, *the fourth beast that ascendeth, &c.* as if it was the same with Daniel's fourth beast, Dan. vii. 7, 19. as it doubtless is. Now this filthy and savage beast *shall make war against them*; the witnesses; a war he has been making against the saints ever since he was in power, by his decrees, his counsels, his anathemas, and by sword, fire, and faggot, ch. xiii. 7. but this will be his last war, and it will be a dreadful one; it will be the last struggle of the beast; and though it will be attended with the conquest and slaughter of the witnesses, yet it will lead on to, and issue in his own ruin; this is *the hour of temptation*, in ch. iii. 10. *and shall overcome them*; not by arguments taken out of the word of God, by which their mouths will be stopped, so as to be confounded, and have nothing to say, or so as to yield to him, and give up the truths and ordinances of the Gospel; but by outward force and tyranny, so as that they shall be obliged to give way, and he'll take possession of the kingdoms and nations in which they have prophesied: he will first attack the outward court, the bulk of formal professors, and will prevail over them; and then, the outworks being taken, he will more easily come at the inner-court worshippers within the temple. *And kill them*; not corporally, but civilly; for as their dead bodies lying three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, unburied, and their resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, cannot be understood literally, so neither the killing of them; not but that in this war there may be a great slaughter, and much blood shed, in a literal sense: but the killing spoken of seems to regard them, not as men, but as witnesses; they'll not be suffered to bear an open testimony any longer; they'll be silenced; they will be banished, or removed into corners; and they will not only be under the censures, excommunications, and anathemas of the Romish antichrist, but they will lose all credit and esteem among those, who once pretended to be their friends; who will be ashamed of them, and will join in reproaching and rejecting them; so that their ministrations will be quite shut up, and at an end.

Ver. 8. *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, &c.*] Not Jerusalem, which was destroyed when John had this vision, and which will not be rebuilt at the time it refers to; nor is it ever called the great city, though the city of the great King; however, not in this book, though the new Jerusalem is so called, ch. xxi. 10. but that can never be designed here; but the city of Rome, or the Roman jurisdiction, the whole empire of the Romish antichrist, which is often called the great city in this book; see ch. xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10, 16, 18, 21. The city of Rome itself was very large, and the Roman empire still larger, so as to be called the whole world; and the antichristian see of Rome has been of great extent. Now as the *street* of a city denotes a public open

place in it, a place of concourse and resort, Prov. i. 20, 21. the dead bodies of those witnesses being said to lie here, may design the publicness of their silence, disgrace, and contempt; and that the silencing and degrading them, and depriving them of all privileges, will be known all over the antichristian empire; and that they will be exposed to public ignominy and shame, their persons, their characters, their testimony, their doctrines, their writings, their churches, and families, and all that belong to them: or else this *street* may design some part of the Romish jurisdiction, and it may be Great-Britain may be particularly designed; for where should the dead bodies of the witnesses lie, but where they are slain? and where can they be slain, but where they are? and where are they, at least where are there so many as in these islands? It may be objected, that Great-Britain is not a part of the see of Rome, does not belong to the jurisdiction of it; to this it may be replied, that in this last war of the beast, the outer court will be given to the Gentiles, the bulk of the reformed churches will fall off to Popery, and their countries again fall into the hands of the pope, and, among the rest, Great-Britain. The fears of Dr. Goodwin seem to be too just, and well-grounded, that the prophecy in Dan. xi. 45. respects our island, which speaks of antichrist planting the *tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain, or the mountain of delight, of holiness*. Now where has God such a mountain of delight, or a people that are the darling of his soul, as here? where in all the globe is there such a spot where God has so many saints, so many holy ones, as in this island? it may have been truly called a glorious holy mountain, or a mountain of delight; and what place between the seas is there to which these characters can agree, but Great-Britain? Here then antichrist will plant the tabernacles of his palace; but it will be but a tabernacle, or tent; it will be but for a short time, as it follows, *yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him*. Now this great city, in the street of which the bodies of the witnesses will lie exposed, is that *which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt*; that is, it is called so in a mystic and allegoric sense, in distinction from the literal sense; see 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. it is called Sodom because of the fulness of bread, plenty and abundance of all outward good things in it; as well as for the pride and idleness of the priests, monks, and friars which swarm in it; and also for the open profaneness and contempt of true and serious religion in it; and particularly for the sin of sodomy, so frequently committed here, with impunity, yea with allowance, and even with commendation. This sin was extolled with praises, as Brightman observes, by John a Casa, archbishop of Beneventum; and was defended in a book, published for that purpose, by one Mutius; and which was allowed by the bulls and letters patent of Pope Julius the Third; and it is called Egypt, because of its tyranny and oppression; as the Egyptians kept the Israelites in bondage, and made them to serve with rigour, and embittered their lives, so the pope, and his Gentiles, or Egyptians, have in a most oppressive and rigorous manner tyrannised over the souls, bodies, and estates of men; and also because of its great idolatry, Egypt being very remarkable for the

number of its deities, and the meanness of them; by which the idols and idolatries of the church of Rome may be fitly expressed: *where also our Lord was crucified*; that is, in the great city, which is fitly compared to Sodom and Egypt; for Christ was crucified actually in Judea, which was then become a Roman province, and under Pontius Pilate, a Roman governor, and by his order, and suffered a Roman kind of death, crucifixion, and for a crime he was charged with, though a false one, against Cæsar the Roman emperor; and Christ has been crucified at Rome itself in his members, who have suffered persecution and death, and even the death of the cross there; and he has been crucified afresh, both by the sins and immoralities of those who have bore the Christian name there, and by the frequent sacrifices of him in the Mass. Moreover, by this periphrasis may be meant Jerusalem; and the sense be, that as the great city, or jurisdiction of Rome, may be spiritually or mystically called Sodom and Egypt, so likewise the place where our Lord was crucified, that is, Jerusalem; and that for this reason, because that as Jerusalem stoned and killed the prophets of the Lord, and upon the inhabitants of it were found all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, so in Rome, in mystical Babylon, will be found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon earth, Matt. xxiii. 35, 37. Rev. xviii. 24. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *where also their Lord was crucified*; and the Arabic version more expressly, *the Lord of these two*, i. e. the two witnesses.

Ver. 9. *And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, &c.*] These are either the enemies of the witnesses, who consisted of the people, kindred, tongues, and nations, out from among whom they were chosen, redeemed, and called; and before or against whom John, personating these witnesses, prophesied; and over whom the Romish antichrist sits and rules, ch. v. 9. and x. 11. and xiii. 7. and xvii. 15. or else their friends, either real or pretended; since it is not said *the people*, nor *all the people*, *kindred, tongues, and nations*, as it is when the antichristian party are spoken of; and seeing *they that dwell upon the earth*, in the following verse, are mentioned as a distinct company from these; and these are said to be some of, or out of the people, &c. and accordingly the following words will admit of different senses: *shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves*. Now, though this is not literally to be understood, yet it may have some reference to the usages of the witnesses' enemies, who sometimes have not allowed them a burial: so the bodies of John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, were burnt, and their ashes cast into the Rhine; the body of Peter Ramus was cast about the streets, thrown into ponds and ditches, then dragged out, and beat with rods; and some have had their bones dug up again, after they had been buried many years, and then burnt, and their ashes scattered abroad, as Wickliff and Bucer here in England: but as this is to be understood in a mystical and allusive sense, the meaning is, as it may refer to enemies, that they shall see, and look upon with joy and pleasure,

and with scorn and contempt, and insult over the witnesses, being silenced and deprived of power and opportunity of prophesying, and as quite dispirited, cast down, and trodden under foot; and whereas not to have a burial granted is always reckoned a piece of the greatest barbarity and inhumanity, as well as of ignominy and reproach, and is expressive of a most unhappy and miserable condition; see Psal. lxxix. 2, 3. Jer. xxii. 19. Eccl. vi. 3. so it here signifies, that the enemies of the witnesses having obtained power over them, will not only insult them, but treat them in a very cruel and inhuman manner, and expose them to scorn and contempt; and it represents their case as being very uncomfortable, and deplorable: or as it may respect friends, real or pretended, such as had been, or were, the sense is, that they shall see them in their unhappy condition, and look upon them with pity and compassion; and shall thoroughly consider, and lay to heart, their case and circumstances; and shall remember them, their doctrine and testimony, and their godly lives, and not suffer them to be buried in oblivion; and shall also call to mind this prediction concerning them, that they should continue in this state but three days and a half, and then revive; and therefore they shall entertain hopes of them, as persons sometimes do of their friends, when they are in doubt whether they are dead or no, and therefore keep them above ground for some time, and will not suffer them to be buried; for when put into the grave, there's no more hope, or when a person has been dead, as in the case of Lazarus, four days; so that this conduct may express the kindness and hope of these friends: or it may be, the meaning is, that they will not look at them but very shyly, and at a distance, as being ashamed of them, and having no heart to succour, relieve, and encourage them; but act as did the priest and the Levite towards the man that fell among thieves, and was left half dead, looked upon him, and turned from him, to the otherside of the way; as also, that they will not entertain them, or give them any shelter and refuge among them, when, in this their distress, they shall apply to them: the grave is a resting-place; there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest, Job iii. 17. Such resting-places the witnesses in former times have found, as the English in Queen Mary's days found at Frankfort and Geneva, and other places, and since in Holland; and as now the French refugees here, who being killed in a civil sense in their own country, are put into graves, or are allowed places of rest and security here: but now these witnesses will find none; those who pretended to be their friends will look shy upon them, and not harbour them, yea, will not suffer any to do it; they will by some public act, through fear of the Popish party, forbid the reception and entertainment of them. The time that this will last will be *three days and a half*: after which, as in ver. 11. they'll live again, which cannot be understood literally of so many precise days; for it will not be possible, that, in so short a time, the news of the slaying of the witnesses should be spread among the inhabitants of the earth, and they be able to express their general joy and rejoicing, and to send their gifts to one another upon his occasion, as is signified in the following verse;

nor does this design so long a time, as the time and times, and half a time, elsewhere mentioned; or that it is a period of the same date and duration with the forty-two months, in which the holy city is trodden under foot, and the 1260 days, or years, in which the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; for during that time they will prophesy, and hold forth their testimony, though in sackcloth; but now they will be killed, and during this space will lie dead, and in entire silence: besides, it will be when they shall have finished their testimony, or towards the close of the 1260 days or years, that this war and slaughter will be, and when these three days and a half will take place, which are to be understood of three years and a half, according to the prophetic style, a day for a year; and seems intended for the comfort of the saints, that this most afflictive and distressed condition of the witnesses should last but for a little while. It is made a question, whether this war with the witnesses, and the slaughter of them, and their lying unburied, are over or no: some have thought that these things had their accomplishment in the council of Constance, held about the year 1414, and which lasted three years and a half exactly, when those two witnesses, John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, were killed, insulted, and triumphed over by this council, which was made up of almost all nations. Brightman refers it to the Smalcaldic war in Germany in 1547, when the Protestant army was beaten, and John Frederick, elector of Saxony, and Ernest, the son of the landgrave, and after that the landgrave himself, were taken prisoners; which was a grievous blow to the Protestant cause, and occasioned great rejoicing in the Popish party; but in the year 1550, just three years and a half after that defeat, the men of Magdeburgh rose up with great spirit and courage, and revived the cause. About this time was the council of Trent, to which also the same writer accommodates these things, which consisted of men of all nations, and continued three years and a half; when the authority of the Scriptures was destroyed, which he supposes are the witnesses; when they were suppressed and silenced, and lay as a mere carcass, a dead letter, without any life in them: and it is easy to observe, that there have been several periods of time, in which there has been a seeming fulfilment of these things; the persecution under Queen Mary, and the burning of the martyrs in her time, continued about three years and a half; the massacre in France, in 1572, threatened an utter extirpation of the Protestant religion there, which yet revived in 1576, much about the same space of time here mentioned; and there are several others that have been observed by writers; but what seems most remarkable of all is the case of the Protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, commonly called the Vaudois. The duke of Savoy, their sovereign, by an edict, dated January 31, 1685-6, N. S. forbade the exercise of their religion on pain of death, ordered their churches to be demolished, and their ministers to be banished; which was published in the valleys April the 11th, and was put in execution on the 22d of the same month, by Savoy and French troops, who killed great numbers of them, took others, and put them into prisons, whom they released about the beginning of December, 1686, and suffered them

to depart into other countries, where they were kindly received, relieved, and preserved, particularly by the kingdoms and states of England, Holland, Brandenburg, Geneva, and Switzerland, while the Popish party were rejoicing at their ruin: and toward the latter end of the year 1689, about three years and a half after the publishing of the edict, these people were inspired on a sudden with a spirit of resolution and courage; and, contrary to the advice of their friends, who thought their case desperate, secretly passed the lake of Geneva, and entered Savoy with sword in hand, and recovered their ancient possessions; and by the month of April, A. D. 1690, established themselves in it, notwithstanding the troops of France and Savoy, to whom they were comparatively few, and whom they slew in great numbers, with little loss to themselves; when the duke perceiving they were encouraged and assisted by foreign princes, and he having left the French interest, recalled the rest of them, and re-established them by an edict, signed June 4, 1690, just three years and a half after their total dissipation, and gave leave to the French refugees to return with them. Now I take it, that these several things which have happened at certain times, in particular places, are so many hints and pledges of what hereafter will be universal to the witnesses in all places where they are. It would be very desirable if it could be ascertained, and concluded upon a good foundation, that this affair of the killing of the witnesses was over; but because of the following things it cannot be; for the outward court is not yet given to the Gentiles, at least not the whole of it, which must be, ere they can come at the witnesses in the inner court to slay them: they have indeed attacked it, and have taken some part of it, as in Germany, Poland, &c. but as yet not in Great Britain, Holland, &c. at least not thoroughly, though it is plain they are getting ground. Moreover, the witnesses have not finished their testimony, they are still prophesying in sackcloth; whereas it will be when they have finished it, and towards the close of the 1260 days or years, that they will be killed: to which add, that the ruin of antichrist will quickly follow their rising and ascension; so that if any of the above instances had been the fulfilling of these things relating to the witnesses, antichrist must have been destroyed before now. And it may be further observed, that the second woe, which is the Turkish woe, will, upon the fulfilment of these things, pass away; and the third woe, or the sounding of the seventh trumpet, will immediately take place, which brings on the kingdom of Christ; whereas the Turkish government is still in being, and in great power; and there is no appearance, as yet, of the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ. There may be an allusion, in this space of time, to the time that Antiochus, called Epiphanes, held Jerusalem in his hands, after he had conquered it, which was just three years and six months¹, during which time he spoiled the temple, and caused the daily sacrifice to cease: this term of time is much spoken of by the

Jews; so long they say Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, and likewise Vespasian, and also three years and a half Adrian besieged Bithur².

Ver. 10. *And they that dwell upon the earth, &c.*] Out of which the beast arose, and over which he reigns, even the inhabitants of the Roman empire, often in this book called the earth, the followers of antichrist, men that mind nothing but earth, and earthly things: *shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another*; as is usual with persons, and was with the Jews, to do in times of public rejoicing; see Esther ix. 18, 19. Neh. viii. 10, 11. *Because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth*; not because they were tormented by them, but because they were now freed from their tormenting ministry; they had tormented them by the preaching of the Gospel, which is foolishness, and the savour of death to natural men, and gives them pain, and fills them with vexation and wrath; by their testimony which they had bore for Christ, and against antichrist; by their sharp reproof of them for their false doctrine and will-worship, and their impure lives and conversations; by their own holy lives, which would sometimes flash light into their consciences, and make them uneasy; and by their foretelling the calamities and ruin, temporal and eternal, that would come upon them; but now they are silenced, and they hear and see no more of these things at which they rejoice.

Ver. 11. *And after three days and a half, &c.*] When it was certain they were dead, and all hope of reviving was over; see John xi. 39. that is, three years and a half: *the spirit of life from God entered into them*; this phrase is expressive of a resurrection. The Jews frequently call the general resurrection תרומית, a *quicken- ing*, and have the very phrase here used; for, speaking of the resurrection, they say³, רוחא דחיי, *the spirit of life* does not dwell but in the holy land. This resurrection of the witnesses is not to be understood of a corporeal resurrection; for there is no reason to believe that there will be a resurrection of any particular saints until the general resurrection, which will be at the personal coming of Christ, and at the beginning of the thousand years, and after the sounding of the seventh trumpet; whereas this will be before that, and towards the close of the sixth trumpet: and besides, the death of these witnesses is not corporeal, as has been observed: nor is a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace intended, which is owing to the spirit of life from Christ; for these witnesses were such who had been quickened, and raised in this sense antecedent to their prophesying and killing; but a civil resurrection of them, or a resurrection of them as witnesses, when their spirits will revive, and they'll take heart and courage again to appear for Christ: and this may be understood of the same individual persons that were silenced, or of those that succeeded such that corporeally died in the war of the beast, or during this interval; and so these witnesses may be said to rise in them, they appearing in the same spirit they did; just as John the Baptist

¹ Joseph de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 7.

² Echa Rabbati, fol. 43. 4. & 46. 3. & 48. 1. & 52. 2. & 58. 3. T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 4. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 93. 1.

³ Zohar in Gen. fol. 79. 3.

came in the spirit and power of Elias : and this will be owing to the spirit of life from God entering into them ; which is said in allusion to the living soul of man, which returns to God, and at the resurrection, whether particular or general, comes from him, and re-enters the body ; and which also is owing to the spirit of God, by whom mortal bodies will be quickened ; and in allusion to the breathing on the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, Ezek. xxxvii. and the sense is, that the spirit of God will inspire these witnesses with fresh life and vigour, zeal and resolution ; so that though they have been so long silent, lifeless, and dispirited, they shall now rise in high spirits, and bravely exert themselves in the cause of Christ ; and this will not be by any worldly power and authority, or by any secular arm, that shall encourage them, but by the spirit of God, who shall breathe upon them, and afresh quicken them, and fill them with resolution and courage : *and they stood upon their feet ; in great numbers, like the army in Ezekiel's vision ; and will reassume their former station, and be in a position and a state of readiness to serve the Lord, and to defend his truths, and discharge their duty with boldness and courage, fearing the face of none : and great fear fell upon them which saw them ; in this posture ; either on their enemies, who may fear that they should be tormented with them again ; that the things which they had foretold concerning their ruin are now coming upon them ; that they shall be turned out of their places of profit, and lose all their worldly advantages, and carnal pleasures now, and be miserable to all eternity : or upon their friends, either their false-hearted ones, that would not succour them when in distress, who may fear that God, whose finger they will see in this matter, will by them resent their conduct towards them ; or else their real friends, who may be filled with reverence and awe of the divine Majesty, as the church was upon the business of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 11.*

Ver. 12. *And they heard a great voice from heaven, &c.]* The Complutensian edition reads, *I heard*, i. e. *John* ; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions ; but the copies in general read *they* ; not the enemies, but the witnesses : and this seems not to come from any Christian civil magistrate in the church, but from Christ himself ; not but that Christ may make use of such for the bringing of his people into a more glorious and comfortable state in this world : *saying unto them, come up hither* ; as the angel said to John, ch. iv. 1. and Christ will say to his people, though on another account, Matt. xxv. 34. *And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud ;* which is to be understood not literally, for no man hath ascended to heaven, nor will any, until the thousand years are ended, when the saints will, in a body, ascend thither ; but mystically, of a more glorious state of the church ; so to ascend to heaven signifies a more exalted state in a prince, or a kingdom, Isa. xiv. 13. and here intends a state of comfortable communion of the saints one with another, of great purity and holiness, of large enjoyments of blessings and privileges, and of great security from enemies, and of great glory, and honour, and power, that shall be bestowed upon them ; they now dwelling on high, and their place of defence being the munition

of rocks. This will be the beginning of the spiritual reign of Christ ; and this ascension of the witnesses will be in a cloud, in allusion to our Lord's ascension to heaven, and as expressive of that glory and majesty which will be put upon these risen witnesses, and in which they shall enter into this happy state of things ; or it may be, that this may denote that the first appearance of these happy times, and of Christ's spiritual reign in his church, and their more comfortable enjoyment, will be at first but dim and obscure, and yet such as, in comparison of their former state, will be visible to, and be taken notice of, even by their very enemies : *and their enemies beheld them ;* going up to heaven, or entering into a purer, and more glorious, and spiritual state ; for the mountain of the Lord's house will be established upon the top of the mountains, and Jerusalem shall be made the praise of the whole earth, an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations ; and this shall be seen and known of all, though to their grief and sorrow.

Ver. 13. *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, &c.]* Or *the same day*, as the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read ; that is, at the time of the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses, as there was at the resurrection of Christ ; and is to be understood of a very great commotion in the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations within the Roman jurisdiction, as there was when Rome Pagan was near its ruin, ch. vi. 12. *And the tenth part of the city fell.* Mr. Daubuz interprets the earthquake of the irruption of the Ottomans upon the Grecian empire, and the tenth part of the city, of the Greek church, and the falling of it, of its loss of liberty, and falling into slavery ; but something yet to come is here intended. By *the city* is meant the city of Rome, the great city, mentioned in ver. 8. and by *the tenth part* of it may be designed either Rome itself, which as it now is, according to the observation of some, is but a tenth part of what it was once ; so that the same thing is meant as when it is said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen : or it may design the tithes and profits which arise from the several kingdoms belonging to the jurisdiction and see of Rome, which now will fall off from those who used to share them, upon this new and spiritual state of things ; the Gospel daily gaining ground, and enlightening the minds of men, and freeing them from the slavery they were held in : or else the ten-fold government of the Roman empire, or the ten kings that gave their kingdoms to the whore of Rome, and are the ten horns of the beast, on which she sits, who will now hate her, and burn her flesh with fire ; or rather one of the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman western empire was divided. Dr. Goodwin seems inclined to think that Great Britain is intended, which having been gained over to the Popish party, will now fall off again : but I rather think the kingdom of France is meant, the last of the ten kingdoms, which rose up out of the ruins of the Roman empire, which will be conquered, and which will be the means of its reformation from Popery. *And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand ;* the meaning is, that in the commotions, massacres, tumults, and wars which will be throughout the empire, such a number of men will be slain ; which is either put for a greater number, a

certain for an uncertain, as in Rom. xi. 4. and perhaps in reference to the account there; otherwise seven thousand is but a small number to be slain in battle; or as it is in the original text, *the names of men seven thousand*. Now it is observed by some, that the smallest name of number belonging to men is a centurion, or captain of an hundred men; and supposing that to be meant, then seven thousand names of men will imply, that in an hour, or about a fortnight's time, may be slain throughout all Europe, in battles and massacres, about seven hundred thousand men, which is a very large number: or names of men may signify men of name, of great renown, as in Numb. xvi. 2. and then if seven thousand men of name, officers in armies, should be slain, how great must be the number of the common soldiers? Some have thought, that ecclesiastical dignities, or men distinguished by names and titles, such as cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, &c. and the whole rabble of the antichristian hierarchy, which will now fall, and be utterly demolished, are intended: *and the remnant were affrighted*; who were not slain in this earthquake; these will be affected with the judgments of God upon others, and be made sensible of their danger, and of their deliverance, which will so work upon them, as to reform them from Popery: *and gave glory to the God of heaven*; will acknowledge the justice of God, and the righteousness of his judgments upon those that were slain, and his goodness to them who are spared; will confess their transgressions and sins they have been guilty of; and give the glory of their deliverance, not to their idols and images, but to the true God, whose religion they now embrace; for this respects the large conversions among the Popish party to the true religion, under the influence of the grace of God, through the preaching of the Gospel, which will now be spread throughout the world.

Ver. 14. *The second woe is past, &c.*] Not in John's time, only in a visionary way; the meaning is, that the second woe-trumpet, which is the sixth, will now have done sounding, when the four angels, bound in the river Euphrates, shall have been loosed, and they, with their horsemen, shall have done what they were designed to do; when the two witnesses shall have been slain, and are raised again, and ascended to heaven; and the things attending, or following thereon, as the earthquake, and slaughter, and the conversions of men, are accomplished. *And behold the third woe cometh quickly*; immediately, upon the passing of the other; namely, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And the seventh angel sounded, &c.*] The last of the seven angels, who had trumpets given them to sound, ch. viii. 2, 6. The days of the voice of this angel, as in ch. x. 7. can't refer to the times of Constantine; for though there was then a strange turn of affairs in favour of the kingdom of Christ, when there was a great spread of the Gospel, and large conversions in many places, and many churches were raised and formed in several countries, and the whole empire became Christian; yet this, as we have seen, came to pass under the sixth seal, before any of the trumpets were sounded, and much less this seventh and last; nor do they belong to the times of the Reformation in

Germany. Brightman fixes the sounding of this trumpet to the year 1558, when the kings of Sweden and Denmark set up the Gospel in their kingdoms, and reformed them from Popery; and when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne of England, and rooted out great part of the Romish superstition: but it is certain that this angel has not yet sounded his trumpet, and therefore can't refer to any thing past, but to what is to come; we are yet under the sixth trumpet; the outward court is not yet given to the Gentiles; the witnesses are not slain, and much less risen and ascended; the earthquake, the fall of the tenth part of the city, and the slaughter of seven thousand names of men, with what will follow thereon, are things yet to come; the Turkish woe is not over, and antichrist still reigns, and the kingdoms of this world are far from appearing to be the kingdoms of Christ. Some think, and indeed the generality of interpreters, that this respects the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, the last trump, which will sound at the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment; but none of these appear in the account of things under this trumpet; but rather the whole has a view to the spiritual reign of Christ, when both the eastern and western antichrist will be destroyed; the Gospel will be carried all over the world, and there will be large conversions both among Jews and Gentiles, and Christ will reign in a spiritual manner over all the earth. Hence it follows, *and there were great voices in heaven*; these are either the voices of the angels in heaven, who rejoice at every appearance, and breaking forth of Christ's kingdom and glory, as in ch. v. 11, 12. and vii. 11, 12. and indeed, if they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner, at a single addition to Christ's interest, then much more will they, when the kingdoms of this world become his; or rather these may be the voices of the multitude of the saints in the churches, the same company with those in ch. xix. 1—7. who express their joy at the judgment of the great whore, and at the marriage of the Lamb; and who, as here, are attended with the thanksgivings and hallelujahs of the four-and-twenty elders: and it may be, that these are also the voices of the four living creatures, the ministers of the word, since the four-and-twenty elders generally follow them, ch. iv. 9, 10. and v. 14. they may be the witnesses, who were silenced, but are now raised up, and are ascended into heaven, and their mouths are opened, and their voices heard again: *saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*; by the kingdoms of this world are meant worldly kingdoms, which are set up by worldly power, and are supported by worldly policy, and subsist upon worldly principles and maxims; the government of which proceeds upon worldly ends and views; in distinction from the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, and is not supported by any such methods; and they are the kingdoms, into which the world is divided, which, and the glory of them, Satan shewed to Christ, and insolently offered to give him them, if he would worship him; but these were to come to Christ in another way, and at another time. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental versions, read in the sin-

gular number, *the kingdom of this world*; the whole government of it, which is his by right of nature, and will be overturned, and overturned again and again, till he comes, whose right it is; and then all power, rule, and authority, will be put down, and his kingdom, which will fill the face of the whole earth, will take place: all the antichristian states and kingdoms are here intended, particularly the kingdoms into which the Roman empire, sometimes called the whole world, Luke ii. 1. is divided, which are ten; one of the ten, a tenth part of the city or jurisdiction of Rome, will fall at the close of the sixth trumpet, and the other nine, or the other nine parts, will fall at the sounding of the seventh; the ten kings, that have given their kingdoms to the beast, will have an aversion to the whore, hate her, and burn her flesh, will fall off from her, and into the hands of Christ; there will be a general and thorough reformation from Popery in all the kingdoms of the Roman empire: but though these are greatly intended, yet not only they, but the Mahometan nations also, as the Turkish woe will now be over, and the great river Euphrates dried up, to make way for the kings of the east, those large kingdoms and countries of China, Tartary, and Persia; and these now under the power of the Turk will embrace the Christian faith; and also all the Pagan nations are to be taken into the account, and who will now enjoy the light of the Gospel: and all, and every one of those Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan kingdoms, will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; by our Lord may be designed God the Father, who is the Lord of the whole earth, the Lord God Almighty, and is acknowledged as such by angels and men; and by his Christ, his Son Jesus Christ, who is equal with him; and what belongs to the one belongs to the other; and who, as Mediator, is his anointed One; anointed to be prophet, priest, and King; anointed with the oil of gladness, the Holy Ghost; see Psal. ii. 2. where the same distinction is. In the Targum on Isa. iv. 2. mention is made of משיח דיי, the Messiah; or Christ of Jehovah: and in the same Targum on Isa. liii. 10. it is said, they shall look במלכות משיחיהן, upon the kingdom of their Messiah; though it may be rather that Christ is designed by both these phrases, and the words be rendered, our Lord, even his Christ; since the phrase, our Lord, as well as Christ, is generally understood of Jesus Christ in the New Testament; and who is Lord of all, of angels, and of men, and the Christ of God. Now these kingdoms will become his, not merely by right, for so they are his already, by right of nature, and creation, and preservation; but these have shaken off his government, and have refused to have him to reign over them, and have fallen into the hands of usurpers, as Satan, the god of this world, the Romish antichrist, that reigns over the kings of the earth, and Mahomet the king of the locusts; but now these will, in fact, come into his hands, and be under his government; they will acknowledge him as their Lord and Sovereign, and fear and worship him, as King of saints: and this will be brought about, not by force of arms, as Mahomet got his dominions; nor by policy and fraud, by imposture and lying wonders, by which the pope of Rome has obtained his authority over the nations; but partly by

the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon the seat of the beast, and upon the river Euphrates, that is, both upon the pope and Turk, which will weaken and destroy their power and authority, and make way for Christ to set up his kingdom; and partly, and chiefly, by the preaching of the Gospel: now will an open door be set, which none can shut; many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased; the earth will be covered with it, as the sea with waters; multitudes of souls everywhere will be converted; a nation will be born at once; churches will be set up in every place, which are Christ's kingdom, where he reigns, and where his subjects are, and his laws are put in execution; where his word will be now faithfully preached, his ordinances purely administered, and he, in his person, office, and grace, will be alone exalted: the consequence of which will be, and he shall reign for ever and ever; no usurper will ever start up more, or obtain, neither Satan, nor the beast, nor the false prophet, shall ever regain their power and authority any more; neither Paganism, nor Judaism, nor antichristianism, either Papal or Mahometan, shall ever have place more: Christ will reign in this spiritual way, more or less, until he comes personally, and then he'll reign with his people on earth a thousand years; and when they are ended, he'll reign with them in heaven to all eternity; for though, at the end of these years, he shall deliver up the kingdom to the father, yet he will not cease to reign; indeed he'll not reign in the same manner, but he'll reign with equal power and authority, and over, and with the same persons. The Vulgate Latin version adds, Amen.

Ver. 16. *And the four-and-twenty elders, &c.*] The same with those in ch. iv. 4. which sat before God on their seats; as they are also there described; and which may be expressive of their enjoyment of the divine Presence; and also of their quiet and undisturbed situation, being restored to their former places, which they now possess without molestation and interruption; for as these are the representatives of Gospel churches in all ages, they were with the church in the wilderness during the 1260 days, or years: hence we hear nothing of them from the time of the sealing of the hundred and forty and four thousand, and during the sounding of the trumpets; but now they are restored to their former seats, and upon this wonderful change of things in the world, they fell upon their faces and worshipped God; in a very humble and reverential posture, and in a way of praise and thanksgiving.

Ver. 17. *Saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, &c.*] The person addressed is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose the kingdoms are become, and who now reigns in great power and authority; he is Lord of all, and truly and properly God, and the Almighty, as his works of creation, preservation, redemption, raising himself from the dead, &c. declare; and each of these titles exceedingly well suit him, when his visible kingdom on earth will be so greatly enlarged: which art, and wast, and art to come; the everlasting I am, the unchangeable Jehovah: the phrase is expressive of the eternity and immutability of Christ; see the note on ch. i. 8. and it may be observed, that whereas in this description of him it is said, and he

to come, this therefore does not belong to his personal, but to his spiritual reign; he will not be as yet come in person, to raise the dead, and judge the world, when these voices shall be in heaven, and these congratulations of the elders be made: the reason of their praise and thanksgiving follows, *because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned*; power always belonged to him, as God; he always was the mighty God, and, as such, help for his people was laid upon him, he being mighty to save, and able to bear the government of them, laid on his shoulders; and, as Mediator, all power in heaven, and in earth, was given to him at his resurrection; and he had a name given him above every name, when exalted at the right hand of God, and was made, or declared, Lord and Christ; and from that time he has, in some measure, exerted his power and reigned: he endured his apostles with power from on high; and he went forth in the ministry of the Gospel conquering, and to conquer; and has ever since reigned in the hearts of his people; but now he'll manifest and display his great power; he will shew it more openly, and use it more extensively; his kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; he shall be King over all the earth; his power has been seen in ages past, but now the greatness of his power will be made manifest; he has always had a kingdom on earth, but now the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, will be his.

Ver. 18. *And the nations were angry, &c.*] See Psal. xcix. 1. which the Septuagint render, *the Lord reigns, let the nations be angry.* This refers not to the times of the dragon, or the Pagan Roman emperors, who were wroth with the woman, the church, and made war with her seed; but Rome Papal, and its Gentiles, are intended; these are the nations that antichrist reigns over: and it does not so much design their anger against Christ, and his people, expressed by their anathemas, excommunications, murders, and massacres, and bloody persecutions, which could not be cause of thanksgiving to the elders; but their anger and resentment at his power and reign, at having the outward court taken from them, said to be given them, ver. 2. and at their loss of power, profit, pleasure, and plenty, through the fall of Babylon, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom; and though these things will make the Gentiles, the followers of antichrist, gnash their teeth, it will occasion joy and thanksgiving among the saints: *and thy wrath is come*: the time is come to make Babylon, or the Romish antichrist, to drink of the wine of the fierceness of divine wrath; as the time of the Lamb's wrath and vengeance upon Rome Pagan was come at the opening of the sixth seal, so the time of his wrath and vengeance on Rome Papal will be come at the sounding of the seventh trumpet: *and the time of the dead, that they should be judged*; not the time of the wicked, who are dead in sins, while they live, and who die in their sins, not their time to be raised from the dead, in order to be judged, for they will not rise till after the thousand years are ended; nor the time of the dead in Christ, who will rise upon Christ's personal coming, at the beginning of the thousand years; but this trumpet respects not the personal coming of Christ to raise the dead, and judge the world, but his

spiritual coming to reign in his churches, and judge their enemies: the time of those that were dead for Christ, whose blood had been shed in his cause, the time for the vindication of them, and avenging their blood, is now come; the souls of those under the altar had been a long time crying to God to avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth; and now the time will be come, when God will judge his people, vindicate their cause; and when he, to whom vengeance belongs, will repay it, by pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian party, by giving them blood to drink, because they are worthy; this judgment will issue in the fall and ruin both of the western and eastern antichrist. *And that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants*; not a reward of debt, but of grace; not the recompense of reward, or the reward of the inheritance in heaven; but some marks of honour and respect; some measure of happiness, peace, and joy, which Christ of his rich grace will give to his ministers and churches, and all that love him in this glorious period of time; and who are distinguished in the following manner, *the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great*; by the prophets are meant, not the prophets of the Old Testament, but the prophets of the New; and not those extraordinary persons, who are distinguished on the one hand from apostles and evangelists, and on the other from pastors and teachers, who had an extraordinary gift of interpreting the Scriptures, and of foretelling things to come; but the ministers of the word, the two prophets or witnesses, who had prophesied in sackcloth, but shall now be clothed with salvation: and by the saints are designed such as were set apart by God the Father from eternity, and whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and who are internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, and externally separated from the rest of mankind, and incorporated into a Gospel church-state, and are in holy fellowship one with another: and they that fear the name of God are such as truly love and reverence him, and worship him in spirit and in truth, but are not members of any particular church; who yet will be taken notice of by the Lord, and a book of remembrance be written for them; so the proselytes from among the Gentiles are distinguished from the Israelites by the same character; see the note on Acts xiii. 16. or rather this is a general character of both ministers and churches, since to fear the name of the Lord is a phrase that includes all religious worship, internal and external. And now all these, *small and great*, whether greater or lesser believers, whether men of larger or meaner gifts and abilities, will all have the same reward, enjoy the same church-privileges, partake of the same ordinances, in the purity of them, have the same communion with God, and fellowship with Christ, and one another, and share in the same common peace, and liberty, and security from enemies: the last thing taken notice of by these elders, as matter of thanksgiving, is the destruction of antichrist. *And shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth*; or corrupt it; meaning antichrist and his followers; who destroy the bodies, souls, and estates of men, and not only the inhabitants of the earth, but even the earth itself; for through that laziness and

idleness which they spread wherever they come, a fruitful country is turned into barrenness; who corrupt the minds of men with false doctrine, idolatry, and superstition, and the bodies of women and men with all uncleanness and filthiness, with fornication, sodomy, &c. ch. xix. 2. and are the cause of their own destruction, and the destruction of others; which, upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, will come swiftly and irrecoverably. Now will Babylon sink as a millstone into the sea, never to be seen more; both the western and eastern antichrists are intended; the former is called the son of perdition, because of his destroying others, and going into perdition himself; and the latter is called *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, which both signify a destroyer, 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. ix. 11.

Ver. 19. *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, &c.*] The temple at Jerusalem, to which the allusion is, was the place of public worship; this, in times of idolatry, was shut up, and fell to decay; and when there was a reformation its doors were opened, and that repaired; and to this the reference seems to be; and the sense is, that at this time the pure worship of God will be restored, and there will be a free and uninterrupted exercise of it; the temple will be open to all; here every one may come, and sit, and worship without fear; churches will now be formed according to the original plan, and primitive order and institution of them; the laws of Christ concerning the admission, regulation, and exclusion of members, will be carefully and punctually observed; the ordinances of Christ will be kept, as they were first delivered, and be purged from all the corruptions introduced by Papists or retained by Protestants; the ordinance of the Lord's supper will be freed from the senseless notions of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, and from all vain and impertinent rites and ceremonies that attend it; and the ordinance of baptism will be administered, both as to mode and subject, according to the word of God, as well as be cleared from the superstitious rites of the sign of the cross, chrism, spittle, &c. in short, all external worship will be pure, plain, and evangelical; hence it appears, that by this temple is not meant the church triumphant, and the happiness of the saints in heaven, as becoming visible, not even the new Jerusalem church-state, or the personal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years; for in that state there will be no temple at all, nor will the saints then need the sun, or moon of Gospel ordinances, ch. xxi. 22, 23. and *there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament*: the ark was a chest, in which the covenant or tables of the law were put; upon it was the mercy-seat, and over that the cherubim of glory, shadowing it; between which were the seat of the divine Majesty; this ark stood in the holy of holies, and was seen only by the high-priest once a year,

and was covered with a covering veil, Numb. iv. 5. it was wanting in the second temple; to this the allusion is here; see the note on Heb. ix. 4. Now in this spiritual Gospel church-state, through the pure ministry of the word, and the faithful administration of ordinances, the mysteries of the Gospel, into which angels desire to look, signified by the cherubim over the mercy-seat, will be clearly revealed to all Christians, Jews and Gentiles; particularly to the former, from whom they have been hid; the veil that is over their hearts will then be done away, when they shall be turned to the Lord; and indeed the veil which is over all people will then be removed; and those truths which have been so much obscured by antichrist will be clearly seen; and especially the Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of the ark, in whom are hid the treasures of wisdom; by whom the law, and the two tables of it, are fulfilled; and in whom they are pure and perfect; and by whom the covenant of grace is ratified and confirmed; and in whom it is sure; and through whom God is propitious to his people, and grants them communion with him; he will be visibly held forth in the ministry of the word; and be seen in the glory of his person, and offices, and grace; who has been so long and greatly hid, and kept out of sight by Popish and Mahometan darkness; and *there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail*; which may be understood of the vials of God's wrath, that will be poured out upon the pope and Turk; which though mentioned last, will be first, and make way for this spiritual state; particularly the things here spoken of may be compared with what will be at the pouring out of the seventh vial, ch. xvi. 18, 21. or this may design the powerful *voices*, and clear ministrations of the Gospel, and the efficacy of them at this time; which, like *thunders*, will awaken the consciences of men, and, like *earthquakes*, will make them shake and tremble, and cry out, what shall we do to be saved? and as *lightnings* illuminate their understandings, and give them a clear discerning of divine things; and as *hail* beat down all self-righteousness and self-confidence, and all errors, heresies, superstition, and will-worship. Though I suspect, that these several things are expressive of the change and revolution that will be made after a time, in this happy and comfortable state; and that the cold, which generally attends an hail-storm, represents that coldness and lukewarmness, into which the churches of Christ will again sink, expressed in the Laodicean church-state, in which condition Christ will find them when he personally appears; so that the seven seals, with the seven trumpets, bring us exactly to the same period of time as the seven churches do.

C H A P. XII.

THIS chapter contains a vision of two wonders or signs seen in heaven, a woman and a dragon, and an account of what followed thereon, war both in heaven and earth. The vision of the woman is in ver. 1, 2.

who is described by her being clothed with the sun; by her having the moon under her feet; by a crown of twelve stars on her head; and by her pregnancy, travail, pains, and cry. The vision of the dragon is in ver. 3, 4. who is described by his bigness, a great one; by his colour, red; by the number of his heads and horns, and the crowns on the former; by the force and strength of his tail, drawing and casting down to the earth the third part of the stars of heaven; and by his position, standing before the woman, in order to devour her child when born. Next follows an account of the birth of her child, and what became of that and her: the child is said to be a man-child, is described as a monarch, and as advanced to great honour and dignity; but she flies into the wilderness, where a place is prepared for her of God, and where she is hid for the space of 1260 days, ver. 5, 6. upon this ensues a war in heaven; the combatants on one side were Michael and his angels, and on the other the dragon and his; the issue of which was, that the latter were conquered, and cast out into the earth, ver. 7, 8, 9. on account of which victory a triumphant song is sung by the inhabitants of heaven, because of salvation and strength that were come to them; and because of the kingdom and power of Christ, which now took place; and because of the ejection of Satan, the accuser of their brethren; in which song also notice is taken of the manner in which Satan was overcome by those he accused, by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by their death; and it is concluded with an apostrophe to those that dwell in heaven, calling on them to rejoice, and to the inhabitants of the earth denouncing woe to them, because the devil was among them, whose wrath was great, his time being short, ver. 10, 11, 12. Next follow the dragon's persecution of the woman, and her flight into the wilderness, and the care took of her there, as before described, ver. 13, 14. then the method the serpent took to annoy her, the help she received from the earth, and the wrath of the dragon upon that; which put him upon making war with the remnant of her seed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, &c.] This vision begins a new account of things, and represents the church in the apostles' times, and purer ages of Christianity, and under the Heathen and Arian persecutions; after which an account is given of the beast, mentioned in ch. xi. 7. of his rise, power, and reign, and then of the victories of the saints over him; and of the vials of God's wrath upon him, and of his utter ruin and destruction; when comes on the marriage of the Lamb, and after that the first resurrection, and the thousand-years' reign; and the whole is closed with a most beautiful description of the new Jerusalem state, which is the grand point and utmost period this prophetic book leads unto. This vision was seen in heaven, whither John was called up to, ch. iv. 1. and where the various scenes, in a visionary way, were acted, both before, and after this; and which was an emblem of the state of the church on earth: what was seen is called a *wonder* or *sign*, it being very amazing to behold, and very significative of persons and things; and a *great* one, be-

cause it respects great affairs, and wonderful events relating to the state of the church in future times, as well as present: and the first thing seen and observed was a *woman*; by whom is meant, not the virgin Mary, as highly-favoured of God, and big with her first-born son Jesus; though there may be an allusion to her, and in some things there is a likeness, as is by some observed; as Mary brought forth Christ corporally, and God in the fulness of time sent forth his son, made of a woman, so this woman brings forth Christ spiritually, or the manly birth of his kingdom in the world, or one that should be the instrument of enlarging his kingdom; and as Herod sought to destroy Christ in his infancy, and as soon as born, so the dragon here stands watching to destroy the manly birth as soon as brought forth; and as Joseph, with Mary, and her son, by a divine direction, fled into Egypt, where they continued during the reign of Herod, so to this woman are given two wings of an eagle, to flee into the wilderness, where she abides, and is nourished, during the reign of antichrist; and as Herod, after the flight of Mary, killed all the infants of Bethlehem, of two years of age, and under that he might destroy her son, so the dragon casts out a flood of water after the woman, to carry her away, and makes war with the remnant of her seed; and as the son of Mary, after he had done his work, was taken up to heaven, and made Lord and Christ, so the man-child, this woman brings forth, is caught up to God, and his throne, to rule all nations with a rod of iron. But Mary, and the birth of Christ, can never be intended in this vision, that affair being past and over, and would never be represented to John in this manner, who was well acquainted with it: nor is the church of God, among the Jews of the former dispensation, designed; who were highly honoured of God, on whom he shone forth at the giving of the law to them; who had his word and ordinances, to be a light unto them, and had the priests and prophets of the Lord among them; and whose crown and glory it was to descend from the twelve patriarchs; and who were in great expectation of, and most earnestly desired, and longed for, and were, as it were, in pain for the coming of the Messiah; but to what purpose could such a representation of them be made to John now? much less is the church of the Jews, or the Jewish synagogue, as it was at the coming and birth of Christ, here designed, which was an evil, wicked, and adulterous generation, and so bad as not to be declared by the tongue and pen of man, and therefore far from answering the description here; but the pure apostolic church is meant, or the church of Christ, as it was in the times of the apostles, and the first ages of Christianity: the description answers to the first of the seven churches, the church at Ephesus, and to the opening of the first seal; and the church apostolical is here called a *woman*, because the church was not now in its infancy, in nonage, as under the former dispensation, but grown up, mature, and at full age; and because espoused and married to Christ her husband, to whom she now brought forth many children, in a spiritual sense, as she hereafter will bring forth many more; and because of her beauty in the eyes of her Lord and husband, which is greatly desired, and highly commended

by him; as also because of her weakness in herself, her ministers and members, not being able to do any thing without her husband, Christ, through whom she can do all things. And who is further described by her habit and attire, *clothed with the sun*; which does not point at her future state in glory; see Matt. xiii. 47. but to her then present state on earth; and is expressive of that clear light of Gospel doctrine, which shone out upon her, like the sun in its meridian glory, and of the heat of love to God, Christ, and his people, and zeal for his truths, ordinances, worship, and discipline, which appeared in her; and of that inward holiness of heart which made her all glorious within; and of the outward purity of life and conversation, which greatly adorned her; but, above all, of the righteousness of Christ, who is the sun of righteousness, and the Lord her righteousness; which righteousness, as it was doctrinally held forth by her in the clearest manner, was also as a garment on her, to cover, preserve, and beautify her; and is comparable to the sun for its glory and excellency, outshining that of angels and men; and for its spotless purity, being without any blemish or deficiency; and for its perpetuity, being an everlasting one, and even exceeding the sun in duration. *And the moon under her feet*: the church is sometimes compared to the moon herself, because, as the moon receives its light from the sun, so she receives her light from Christ; and as the moon often changes, and has its various *phases* and appearances, so the church sometimes is in the exercise of grace, and sometimes not; sometimes under trials and persecutions, and at other times in rest and peace; one while retaining the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel in their power and purity, and anon almost overrun with errors and superstition; but this cannot be the sense here. The common interpretation is, that it signifies the church's contempt of, and trampling upon all worldly things, which are changeable, perishing, and passing away; and which very well suits with the primitive saints, who did not set their affections on things in earth, but on things in heaven, who sold their worldly possessions, and laid them at the apostles' feet. Brightman thinks, that, as the moon is a luminary, it may denote the light derived from the word of God, which was a lamp to her feet, and a lantern to her paths, by which her discipline and public worship were directed, and all the private actions of life were squared; which is no contemptible sense of the words: but I rather think the ceremonial law is intended, which is very fitly represented by the moon; it consisted much in the observation of new moons, and its solemn festivals were governed and regulated by them; see 2 Chron. viii. 12, 13. Isa. i. 13. Amos viii. 5. There was some light in it, and it gave light to the saints in the night of Jewish darkness; it pointed out Christ to them, and was their schoolmaster to teach and lead them to him; yet, like the moon, it was the lesser light, the light it gave was inferior to that which the Gospel now gives; and as the moon has its spots, so had that its imperfections; had it been faultless, there had been no need of another, and a new dispensation, but that could make nothing perfect; and, as the moon, it was variable and changeable; it was but for a time, and is now done away; it is not only waxen old, like the moon in the wane, but

is entirely vanished away: and yet, though it was abolished by the death of Christ, it was kept up and maintained by many of the Jews, even of them that believed: persons are naturally fond of ceremonies; and many had rather part with a doctrine of the Gospel than with an old custom, or an useless ceremony; and this was, in a great measure, the case of the Jews; see Acts xxi. 20. so that it was one of the greatest difficulties the Christian church had to grapple with, to get the ceremonial law under foot; for though it was under the feet of Christ, it was a long time ere it was under the feet of the church; and a wonder it was when it was accomplished. Mr. Daubuz has given a new interpretation of this clause; and by *the moon* he understands the Holy Ghost, the Governor of the church, next to Christ, his successor and Vicar, and the minister of him, the sun of righteousness; who is said to be *under the feet* of the church, to assist her in her labour, and in the bringing forth of her man-child; and to support and sustain her followers and members; and to be a luminary to them, to guide them in their ways. *And upon her head a crown of twelve stars*; by *stars* are meant the ministers of the Gospel, which Christ holds in his right hand, and the church here bears on her head, ch. i. 20. And these *twelve* have respect to the twelve apostles of Christ; and the *crown*, which was composed of these stars, designs the doctrine which they preached; and this being on her *head*, shews that it was in the beginning of this church-state that the pure apostolic doctrine was embraced, professed, and held forth; for in the latter part of it there was a great decline, and falling off from it; in the times of the Apostle Paul, the mystery of iniquity began to work; and in John's time many antichrists were come into the world: and also this signifies, that the church openly owned the doctrine of the apostles, and was not ashamed of it before men, and publicly preached, and held it forth in her ministers, to all the world; and that this was her crown and glory, so long as she held it in its power, purity, and was both what she gloried in, and was a glory, an ornament to her: and this was also an emblem of her victory over her enemies, and of her future happiness, and pointed at the means of both; that it was by a faithful and steadfast adherence to the doctrine of the apostles that she overcame Satan, and all her spiritual enemies, and came to the possession of the crown of life and glory.

Ver. 2. *And she being big with child, &c.*] Which may be expressive of the fruitfulness of the church in bearing and bringing forth many souls to Christ, and which were very numerous in this period of time, when it was said of Zion that this and that man was born in her; and particularly of her pregnancy with the Kingdom of Christ, to be brought forth, and set up in the Roman empire, under the influence of a Roman emperor: and this being her case, she *cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered*: which are metaphors taken from a woman in travail; and may either denote the earnest cries and fervent prayers of the members of the church, and the laborious and painful ministrations of the preachers of the Gospel for the conversion of souls, and especially for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the empire of Rome; or else the sore and grievous persecutions which attended the

apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers of the word, throughout the times of the ten Roman emperors, and especially under Dioclesian; when the church was big, and laboured in great pain, and the time was drawing on apace that a Christian emperor should be brought forth, who should be a means of spreading the Gospel, and the kingdom of Christ, all over the empire; see Jer. xxx. 6, 7. Matt. xxiv. 8. so the Targumist frequently explains the pains of a woman in travail in the prophets by *סָפָר*, tribulation; see the Targum on Isa. xiii. 8. xxvi. 18. and lxvi. 7.

Ver. 3. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven, &c.*] Or *sign*; which represents the woman, or the church's adversary, Satan; not that he was in heaven, in the third heaven, the place of glory and happiness, for out of that he had been cast long ago; but in his great power and authority here on earth, particularly in the Roman empire, where the church was labouring to bring forth her man-child: *and behold a great red dragon*; the devil, as it is explained in ver. 9. though not he in person, but the Heathen Roman empire, or the Heathen Roman emperors, acted, influenced, directed, and presided over by him; so Pharaoh king of Egypt, and other cruel and persecuting monarchs and states, are called dragons in Scripture, Isa. xxvii. 1. and li. 9. Ezek. xxix. 3. all which places the Targum interprets of *מֶלֶךְ*, a king, and particularly of Pharaoh king of Egypt; who is like to a great and mighty dragon: and the Roman Pagan empire, as under the influence of Satan, the god of this world, is fitly compared to a dragon, for its policy and cunning in circumventing and ensnaring the professors of Christianity; and for its cruelty and inhumanity in persecuting of them; and for its poison of idolatry, will-worship, and superstition: and it may be called a great one, for its strength and power, which lay in its immense treasure and riches, in numbers of men, in powerful armies, in strong cities, castles, &c. and for its large extent and jurisdiction; and a red one, because of the blood of the saints shed in it, by which it became of this colour; suitable to the character and bloody practices of the old serpent the devil, by whom it was influenced, who was a murderer from the beginning; and agreeably to one of the names by which the Jews frequently call the Roman empire Edom, the name Esau had from the red pottage he sold his birth-right for, and who himself was born red, Gen. xxv. 29, 30. it seems there were red dragons; Homer says of the dragon, that it is red upon its back: *having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads*; the seven heads of the Roman empire either design the seven mountains, or hills, on which Rome, the metropolis of the empire, was built, as the seven heads of the beast on which the woman drunk with the blood of the saints sat, are explained in ch. xvii. 9. or rather the seven forms of government which successively should obtain in the empire, as kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, tribunes, emperors, and popes; hence these heads are said to have seven crowns upon them, as expressive of

the imperial power and dignity which were in them, and exercised by them: Mr. Daubuz thinks seven capital cities in the Roman empire are meant, as Rome, Carthage, Æge, Antiochia, Augustodunum, Alexandria, and Constantinople; and nothing is more common than to call chief cities the heads of the countries they belong unto, as Damascus the head of Syria, and Samaria the head of Ephraim, Isa. vii. 8, 9. Pliny calls Babylon the head of Chaldea; and Cornelius Nepos says^a of Thebes, that it was the head of all Greece; and Syracuse is by Florus^b called the head of Sicily, as Rome is in Livy^c, and other writers, the head of the world: and by the ten horns are meant either the ten kingdoms which should hereafter arise out of the Roman empire, and whose kings should give their kingdoms to the beast; or the ten Roman emperors, the persecutors of the Christians; or rather the ten provinces, or jurisdictions, which the empire was divided into whilst Pagan: Brightman out of Strabo has shewn, that in the times of Augustus Caesar the Roman empire was distributed into two parts, the one was more immediately under the care of the emperor, and the other was governed by deputies; and each were divided into ten provinces; that which the emperor held consisted of Africa, France, Britain, Germany, Dacia with Mysia and Thracia, Cappadocia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine with Judea and Egypt, in all ten; and that part which was governed by deputies were the outermost Spain, and the isles by it, the innermost Spain, &c. Sardinia with Corsica, Sicily, Illyricum with Epirus, Macedonia, Achaia, Crete with Cyreniaca, Cyprus, Bithynia with Propontis; so that the Roman Pagan empire, as under the dominion of Satan, is manifestly designed by the dragon thus described. The Jews^d speak of ten horns which the Israelites had, which when they sinned were taken from them, as it is written, Lam. ii. 3. and were given to the nations of the world, according to Dan. vii. 20. *and of the ten horns that were in his head, &c.*

Ver. 4. *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth, &c.*] So Solinus^e speaks of dragons that have power not only in their teeth, but in their tails, and do more hurt by striking than by biting; and the great serpent, which Attilius Regulus and his army fought with, not only destroyed many of his soldiers with its vast mouth, but dashed many to pieces with its tail^f; which serpent, Pliny^g says, was a hundred and twenty foot long: this is said in allusion to Antiochus Epiphanes, in Dan. viii. 10. and designs either the subduing of the third part of the principalities, states, and kingdoms of the known world, to the Roman empire, through its great power and strength; which lay in its tail, in its train of armies which attended it, whereby such a number of nations were drawn into subjection to it, inasmuch that the empire was called all the world, Luke ii. 1. or else the influence the dragon should have upon the ministers of the word, who are compared to stars, ch. i. 20. by causing them to relinquish their ministry,

^a Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. in voce *דָּרָגָן*.

^b Iliad. 2. l. 308.

^c Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 26.

^d In Vita Epaminond. l. 15. c. 10.

^e Hist. Roman. l. 2. c. 6.

^a Hist. l. 21. c. 20.

^b Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 2, 3.

^c Polyhist. c. 43.

^d Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 6.

^e Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 14.

and drop their heavenly employment, and fall from that high and honourable state in which they were, into a carnal, earthly, and worldly religion; and that either through policy, cunning, and flattery, or through sorcery, magic art, lying oracles, and prophecy; see Isa. ix. 15. or through the violence of persecution they had not power to withstand; of which falling stars there are many instances, as the ecclesiastical histories of those times shew: *and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born*; just as the dragon Pharaoh lay in the midst of his rivers, in the river Nile, Ezek. xxix. 3. to slay the male children of Israel as soon as born; and as the dragon Herod sought to take away the life of Jesus quickly after his birth; and as Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, so the Pagan empire, or the Pagan emperors, took every opportunity to stifle the kingdom of Christ in embryo, and to prevent the bringing forth of any illustrious person; and sought to destroy him as soon as he appeared, who might be thought, or suspected to be an instrument of encouraging and establishing the kingdom of Christ in the empire: the instances Brightman produces are apposite, and to the purpose; as of Maximinus destroying Alexander the son of Mamea, who he saw was inclined to the Christians; and of Decius taking off the two Philips, father and son, who were favourable to their cause; but especially the watchfulness of the dragon to destroy the man-child was very manifest in the Roman emperors towards Constantine; Dioclesian and Galerius, observing his virtuous disposition in his youth, left nothing unattempted to cut him off privately; he was sent against the Sarmatians, a cruel and savage people, in hopes he would have been destroyed by them; and was set to fight with a lion in the theatre, under a pretence of exercising and shewing his valour; and many other methods were used to take away his life, but none succeeded.

Ver. 5. And she brought forth a man-child, &c.] Not Christ, literally and personally considered, or Christ in his human nature, as made of a woman, and born of a virgin, which was a fact that had been years ago; but Christ mystically, or Christ in his members, who are called by his name, because he is formed in them, and they are the seed of the woman, the church; and many of these were brought forth to Christ by the church in the primitive times, who were a manly birth, hale, strong, and robust Christians; or rather this manly birth may design a more glorious appearing and breaking forth of the kingdom of Christ in the Roman empire; for though Christ came as a King, yet his kingdom was not with observation in the days of his flesh; and though, upon his ascension to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Christ, and had a kingdom and interest in the world, and even in the Roman empire, during the first three centuries, yet this was attended with the cross and persecution; but now, towards the close of that period, Constantine, a Christian emperor, was born, under whose influence and encouragement the Gospel was spread, and the kingdom of Christ set up and established in the em-

pire; and this seems to be the thing intended here, he being of a generous, heroic, and manly disposition: *who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron*; this has a manifest reference to Psal. ii. 9. which psalm, and the passage referred to in it, evidently belong to Christ; and as this is represented as something future, what should be hereafter, and not what would immediately take place, it may regard the kingdom of Christ in the last times, of which the present breaking forth of it in Constantine's time was an emblem and pledge; and may denote the universality of it, it reaching to all the kingdoms of the world, and the manner in which Christ will rule, especially over his enemies, antichrist and his followers, whom he'll destroy with the breath of his mouth, and break in pieces with his rod of iron, and order all that would not have him to reign over them slain before him; and as this may be applied to Christ mystical, the seed of the church, and members of Christ, as it is in Rev. ii. 26, 27. it may relate to their reign with Christ on earth, when they shall sit on thrones, and judge the world, when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to them; but since this is expressly said of the man-child in the text, it may be expressive even of the temporal government of Constantine, who was an heroic and victorious prince, and extended his dominions to the several parts of the world; as far as Britain to the west, and all Scythia to the north, Ethiopia to the south, and the remote parts of India to the east, even to the ultimate parts of the whole world, as Eusebius affirms, making his kingdom to be three times larger than that of Alexander the great: and more especially it may describe the kingdom of Christ in his times; which was spread throughout all the nations of the empire; when Paganism was demolished, both in the continent and in the isles of the sea, and the strong holds of Satan were pulled down, not by carnal, but spiritual weapons; when multitudes of souls were converted by the word, the rod of Christ's strength, and when the saints were guided, directed, fed, and comforted by it; for the allusion seems to be to the shepherd's rod, with which he leads and feeds his sheep; the same word signifies both to rule and feed: *and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne*: which is to be understood not of Christ's ascent to heaven in human nature, when he was set down on the same throne with his father; nor of Christ mystical, or of the saints being caught up into the air, to meet the Lord and be for ever with him, and sit down with him on the same throne; but rather of some glorious advance of the church and kingdom of Christ on earth; for as to fall from heaven is expressive of debasement and meanness, and of a low estate that a person is brought into, Isa. xiv. 12. so an ascending up to heaven, as the two witnesses in the preceding chapter are said to do, denotes exaltation, or a rise to some more glorious state and condition, which was the case of the church in Constantine's time: and this may also take in the accession of Constantine himself to the imperial throne, which was the throne of God; for kings have their sceptres, thrones, and kingdoms from him, they are

his vicegerents, and in some measure represent him, and are therefore called gods, and the children of the most high; yea, since Constantine, as advanced to the empire, was such an instrument in Christ's hand for the setting up and establishing his kingdom in it, Christ himself may be here represented as reigning over the Roman empire, as a presage and prelude of his reigning over all the earth another day.

Ver. 6. *And the woman fled into the wilderness, &c.*] Not as soon as she was delivered of her child, which is not reasonable to suppose, and would have been improper, if not impracticable; nor indeed was this flight until after the war was over, mentioned in the next verses; nor until the dragon and his angels were conquered and cast out; nor until a fresh persecution was raised by the dragon against the woman, as appears from ver. 14. where this account stands in its proper place, and is here only introduced by way of prolepsis, or anticipation, and that with this view, to shew what care was taken of the woman, as well as of her son: and this does not design the flight of the Christians from Jerusalem to Pella, a little before the destruction of the former; nor the expulsion of the Jews or Christians from Rome, either by Claudius or by Nero; but the disappearance of the true church, and its obscure state and condition quickly after the above advance of it; for through the riches and honours which Constantine bestowed upon the Christians, they became vain, proud, ambitious, and careless; false doctrine and superstition obtained; the antichristian apostasy came on apace, and prevailed and increased, and so obscured the true church, that in process of time it became invisible, was in the cleft of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs, or like persons in a wood or wilderness, not to be seen, as well as desolate and uncomfortable: *where she hath a place prepared of God*: for God has had, and will have a church in the worst of times; as he reserved a number in Elijah's time, so he did in the times of the antichristian apostasy, who bowed not the knee to idolatry; this woman, the church, and her case, are the same with the 144,000 sealed ones in ch. vii. whom God distinguished, hid, and preserved; for the wilderness is a place of retirement and safety, Ezek. xxxiv. 25. as well as of obscurity; and if any particular place is pointed at, I should think the valleys of Piedmont, which lie between France and Italy, are intended, where God has preserved, and continued a set of witnesses to the truth, in a succession, from the beginning of the apostasy to the present time, living in obscurity, and in safety, so far as not to be utterly destroyed: *that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days*; in allusion to the children of Israel in the wilderness, where they were fed with manna forty years; so the overcomers, or true Christians in the Pergamos church-state, have hidden manna given them to eat, the food of the wilderness, with which church-state the church in the wilderness must be considered as contemporary, as also with the Thyatirian and Sardinian church-states; for though, at the Reformation, which the Sardinian church-state introduces, the church ap-

peared again, and has been ever since coming up out of the wilderness, yet she is still in it; where she is fed and nourished with the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, by the faithful ministers of the word, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth; the time of whose prophesying is exactly of the same date with the woman's being in the wilderness, and with the reign of antichrist, namely, forty-two months, or 1260 days, that is, so many years, ch. xi. 2, 3. and xiii. 5.

Ver. 7. *And there was war in heaven, &c.*] Not in the third heaven, the habitation of God, the seat of the angels and glorified saints, there is no discord, jars, and contentions there, nothing but peace, love, and joy; but in the church below, which is militant, and has in it as it were a company of two armies; or rather in the Roman empire, which was the heaven of Satan, the god of this world, and of his angels; and this war refers not to the dispute between Michael the archangel and the devil about the body of Moses; nor to the fall of the angels when they rebelled against God, left their first estate, and were cast down to hell; nor to that ancient and stated enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, which has appeared in all ages of time, more or less, since the fall of Adam; nor to the combats which Christ personally had with Satan and his powers won here on earth, as in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism, and in the garden, a little before his death, and on the cross, when he spoiled principalities and powers, and destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil; but rather to the conflict which Christ and his people had with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with the Roman powers, and with false teachers, during the three first centuries; though it seems best to understand it of the war commenced by Constantine against Paganism, and which was finished by Theodosius, by whom Heathenism received its death-wound, and was never restored since: the phrase of war in heaven is not unknown to the Jews; they say¹, when Pharaoh pursued after Israel, there was war above and below, and there was a very fierce war *בשמים*, in heaven: *Michael and his angels fought against the dragon*; by whom is meant not a created angel, with whom his name does not agree, it signifying *who is as God*; nor does it appear that there is any one created angel that presides over the rest, and has them at his command; though the Jews seem to imagine as if the angels were ranged under several heads and governors, of whom they make Michael to be one; for they say², "when the holy blessed God descended on Mount Sinai, several companies of angels descended with him, *מיכאל ותורתו*, Michael and his company, and Gabriel and his company:" so *kings of armies*, in Psal. lxxviii. 12. are by them interpreted of *kings of angels*; and it is asked who are these? and the answer is, Michael and Gabriel¹. Lord Napier thinks that the Holy Ghost is designed, who is equally and truly God as the Father and the Son, and who in the hearts of the saints opposes Satan and his temptations; but it seems best to interpret it of Jesus Christ, who is equal with God, is his fellow, is one with the father,

¹ Shaare Ora, fol. 26. 4.

² Debarim Rabba, fol. 237. 4.

¹ Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 14. 3. & 26. 3.

and in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily: he is the Archangel, the first of the chief princes, the head of all principality and power, who is on the side of the Lord's people, pleads their cause, defends their persons, and saves them; see Jude 9. Dan. x. 18. and xii. 1. and by *his angels* may be meant either the good angels, literally understood, who are his creatures, his ministers, and whom he employs under him, in protecting his people, and in destroying his enemies; or else the ministers of the Gospel, who are called angels in this book, and who, under Christ, fight the good fight of faith, contend earnestly for it, being valiant for the truth upon earth; or rather the Christian emperors, particularly Constantine and Theodosius, and the Christians with them, who opposed Paganism in the empire, and at last subdued, and cast it out: *and the dragon fought, and his angels*; there is such an order among the evil angels, as to have one of their own at the head of them, they having cast off their allegiance to God and Christ, who is styled the prince of devils, and his name is Beelzebub: hence we read of the devil and his angels; see Matt. xii. 24. and xxv. 41. and these may be intended here, unless false teachers, who transform themselves into angels of light, as their leader sometimes does, should be thought to be meant, who resist the truth, and oppose themselves to the ministers of it; though rather Satan as presiding over, and influencing the Roman Pagan empire, and the Roman emperors, who acted under him, are here designed; with whom Constantine and Theodosius, under Christ, combated, such as Maximianus, Maxentius, Licinius, Arbogastes, and Eugenius, and those that were with them. The Arabic version renders it, *the serpent with his soldiers*.

Ver. 8. *And prevailed not, &c.*] That is, the dragon, or the devil, and his angels, prevailed not against Michael and his angels; but, on the other hand, were conquered by them, as the above tyrants were by Constantine and Theodosius: some copies read in the singular number, *and he prevailed not*, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and other copies in the plural number, *they prevailed not*: and as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions: *neither was their place found any more in heaven*. in the Roman empire; or *his place*, as some copies and versions: this was the time of the judgment of the world, or of the empire as Pagan; Satan the prince of the world, who had long governed in it, was now cast out of all power and authority in it, and all the idol-gods in whom he was worshipped, with all the idolatrous priests; nor were there any more any Heathen emperors, for after Constantine's time there was only Julian the apostate, and who reigned but a little while; and after Theodosius, who cleared the empire of Paganism, there never was any, and there is reason to believe there never will be.

Ver. 9. *And the great dragon was cast out, &c.*] From heaven, or from power and authority in the Roman empire, namely, the devil, where he had long presided; it is observable that Constantine himself

speaks of the *dragon* being removed from the government of the commonwealth by the providence of God, and by the ministry, or means of him^m; and he had his own effigies on a table placed before the porch of his palace, with the cross over his head, and a dragon under his feet thrust through with darts, and falling headlongⁿ: *the old serpent*: who is so called, because, of old, from the beginning, almost as soon as the world was, he appeared in the form of a serpent, or rather made use of it as an instrument and means, by which he seduced Eve, and so brought on the ruin of mankind, it is very usual with the Jews to call the devil הקרמוןי *the old serpent*^o; wherefore John uses this phrase as a known one, to explain who was meant by the great dragon: *called the devil and Satan*; the first of these names signifies an accuser, and a forger of calumnies, and such is the old serpent; he accuses God to men, as if he was envious of their happiness, as in the case of our first parents, and of men to God, of which there is an instance in the case of Job; and hence he is in the following verse called the accuser of the brethren; and the latter of them signifies an enemy, one that is filled with hatred and enmity to God and Christ, and to his church and people, whose adversary he is said to be, and at whose right hand he stands to resist, as he did Joshua the high-priest: *which deceiveth the whole world*; which he did by deceiving our first parents, from whom all mankind spring, and in whose loins they were when they were deceived; so the Jews say^p of the old serpent, that *כשעה לכל העולם, he deceives the whole world*: and so he deceived and corrupted the old world before the flood; and so he seduces every age and generation of men in the world; but here the Roman empire, sometimes called all the world, as in Luke ii. 1. is meant, whom Satan deceived by drawing it into idolatry and superstition: *he was cast out into the earth*; he was cast out of the Roman empire, from the rule of it, and worship in it, the Heathen gods and Heathen emperors being no more; when he possessed and instigated, and influenced the Huns, Goths, and Vandals, a meaner and baser sort of people, hereafter in this chapter called the earth, which is said to help the woman, contrary to the intention of Satan; the phrase denotes the greatness of the fall of Satan, his loss of power, and the meanness and low estate of the persons he afterwards had the power of, both the savage people before mentioned, and the antichristian party: *and his angels were cast out with him*; the Heathen emperors, magistrates, priests, and other votaries of his, which he made use of as instruments to do his will.

Ver. 10. *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, &c.*] Which was a song of praise on account of the victory obtained by Michael and his angels over the dragon and his, or for the overthrow and downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire; for by *heaven* is meant the empire, now become Christian, or the Christian church-state in it; and the *loud voice* heard in it by John shews that there was a great number in

^m Euseb. de Vita Constantini, l. 2. c. 46.

ⁿ Ib. l. 3. c. 3.

^o T. Bab. Sota, fol. 9. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. Imre Binah in Zohar in Gen. fol. 3. 1. & 15. 2. & passim, Raya Mehimna in Zohar ni

Exod. fol. 50. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 9. 2. & 26. 3. & 46. 1. & Caph'or, fol. 101. 2.

^p Tzeror Hammor, fol. 13. 3.

it, who rejoiced on this occasion, and that they were full of affection and fervency, and therefore expressed themselves in such manner, and in form following: *now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; salvation was come when Christ obtained it by his sufferings and death, and comes to particular persons in effectual vocation, and it will only be fully come when it is perfectly enjoyed in heaven: but here it designs a deliverance from Satan, as the god of this world, who was now dethroned, and cast down from his power, authority, and influence in the empire; and from Pagan idolatry and superstition, and from the ten days of tribulation, the cruel and bloody persecutions under the Heathen emperors; and denotes that safety and security, comfort, peace, and happiness, the churches enjoyed under the government of a Christian emperor: and now was come strength: not the strength of Christ personal, displayed in the redemption of his people; but rather of Christ mystical, of his church and interest, which had been very weak and low, and under oppression and persecution, but was now exalted, and in a flourishing condition, and was become strong and mighty; or it may design the strength and power of Christ, shewn in destroying his enemies, in casting the dragon out of heaven down to the earth, and in bringing to confusion and destruction the Heathen emperors, princes, and others, who fled to the rocks and mountains for fear of him, and because of his great wrath: also now came the kingdom of our God, the Gospel of the kingdom was preached everywhere and Gospel churches were set up in all parts of the empire, both which are sometimes signified by the kingdom of God; here was now an illustrious appearance of the kingdom of God in the world, such as had never been before; and which was a pledge and pre-
 sage of the greatness of the kingdom, or of that everlasting kingdom which will be set up hereafter, when all other kingdoms will be at an end: to which is added the power of his Christ; or his authority as Lord and Christ, which took place at his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God, and which will more fully appear at the last day, when he shall come in glory, and exercise his authority in judging the quick and dead, of which there was some resemblance at this time, in dethroning Satan, destroying Paganism, and putting an end to the power of the Heathen emperors and empire; and which is expressed in such language as the day of judgment is, ch. vi. 12—17. for to the opening of the sixth seal does this passage belong: a further account is given of the matter of this song, and the reason of it: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down: hence it appears that this is not a song of the angels in heaven, since the saints are never called their brethren, nor the angels theirs, but their fellow-servants; rather it may be thought to be the song of the saints in heaven, acknowledging those on earth to be their brethren, as they are, for there is but one family in heaven, and in earth, and the saints on earth are called the brethren of the souls under the altar, ch. vi. 9, 11. but as this*

refers to the state of the church in Constantine's time, it must be the song of the saints in that state, who call the martyrs, that had been slain under the former persecutions, their brethren; for that they are the persons meant is clear from the following verse, whom Satan is an accuser of, for he is designed here; the word rendered *devil* signifies an accuser, and a false one, and is so translated Tit. ii. 3. this is a name frequently given to Satan by the Jews, and have adopted into their language the very Greek word ^δ that is here used; and often say of him that he accuses Israel, and particularly that he accuses Israel above, that is, in heaven; and that he stands and *מְקַטְרֵי הַיָּמִיד*, continually accuses them, the very phrase used in the next clause: when Israel came out of Egypt, they say ^ל, the angel Samael (the devil) stood and accused them; the first day of the month Tisri, according to them ^ל, is appointed a day for blowing of trumpets, to confound Satan, who comes to accuse at that time; so they say ^ל that Satan stood and accused Abraham, and others; and indeed he was an accuser from the beginning, both of God to men, and of men to God; we have instances in Job. and Joshua the high-priest, Job. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. Zech. iii. 1. but here it refers to the accusations brought against the Christians in the primitive times, during the ten persecutions, which were very horrid ones indeed; as that they had their private suppers, at which they ate their own infants, and their night y meetings, for the gratifying of their lusts, in which they committed adultery, incest, and all manner of uncleanness; if ever a fire happened in a city, they were charged with it; and whenever there were any famine, or pestilence, or wars, or any public calamity, they were accused as the cause and occasion of it; as appears from the apologies for them written by Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius Felix, &c. so that Satan at this time was remarkably the accuser of the brethren; but now this father of lies was cast down, he was cast out of heaven, and deprived of that power and authority he had in the empire, and lost his influence over men, and could not spread his lies, and get his false charges and accusations credited and received as before; he was not indeed wholly destroyed, nor even shut up in the bottomless pit, but he was cast down to the earth; he was in a low condition, his power was greatly diminished, and he was conquered by Christ, and cast down and bruised under the feet of the saints, which accused them before our God day and night; so the evil spirit in Ahab's time, and Satan in Job's time, are said to stand before the Lord: and this shews the malice, and also the insolence of the devil, that he should stand and accuse the saints before God, who he knew was their God, and was on their side, and therefore his accusations could be of no avail; and though Christ appears in the presence of God for them, and is their advocate with the father, yet he is constant and indefatigable in going about, and picking up charges against them, and carrying them to God.

Ver. 11. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, &c.*] The Lord Jesus Christ, by whose blood they were redeemed and ransomed out of the hands of

⁹ Pirke Ahot, c. 4. sect. 11. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

⁹ Shaars Ora, fol. 81. 4. & 24. 2.

⁹ Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 4.

⁹ Targum Jon. in Numb. xxix. 1.

⁹ Zohar in Numb. fol. 107. 2.

Satan, that was stronger than they; and by which they were justified from all sin, and so all charges and condemnation were of no avail against them, whether of Satan or the world; and by which they were cleansed from all pollution, both internal and external; and by which even their conversation-garments were washed and made white; by this they also drew nigh to God with boldness, as to their own God, notwithstanding the accusations of Satan; and this they could, and did make use of as a shield to defend them against all his charges; and this being sprinkled upon them, as it gave them an inward conscience-peace amidst all, so it was their security from the destroying angel; and under this purple covering they went triumphantly to glory, having through it obtained an entire conquest over Satan: as also *and by the word of their testimony*; either by Christ, the essential Word, they bore record of, who is sharper than any two-edged sword, and through whom they were made more than conquerors; or rather by the use they made of the Scriptures of truth, the sword of the spirit, the word of God, to which they bore a faithful testimony, and to which they adhered, and by so doing gained the victory over Satan and his instruments, whether false teachers or persecutors; and particularly by the Gospel, which they embraced, professed, and preached with constancy and courage, and by their last testimony they bore to it at their death, on the account of it, as it follows: *and they loved not their lives unto the death*; they did not value them; they made no account of them; they were not anxiously careful to preserve them; they chose to lose them; they ran to the stake, and willingly and cheerfully laid them down; they did not count them dear unto them, as said the Apostle Paul, that they might finish their course with joy, and testify the Gospel of the grace of God, or bear a testimony to it, Acts xx. 24. yea, as Christ has directed, Luke xiv. 26. they hated their lives in comparison of him, and when in competition with him and his Gospel; and by dying thus they conquered Satan; had they loved their lives, and saved them by denying Christ and his truths, Satan would have conquered them; but dying in the cause of Christ, and for it, they got the victory over him.

Ver. 12. *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them, &c.*] So in the prophetic language, at times, and upon occasions of rejoicing, the heavens are called upon to join, and bear a part therein, Psal. xcvi. 10, 11. Isa. xlv. 23. and by these may be meant here the angels of heaven, who rejoice at every advance of Christ's kingdom and interest; they rejoiced at his incarnation, and so they do at the conversion of every single sinner; and much more may they be thought to do so at such a time as this, when there were such multitudes of conversions, and the churches and interest of Christ in so flourishing a condition, and Satan's kingdom so much weakened; and to these may be joined the souls of the saints departed, who might be made acquainted with this wonderful change of things in the empire; and it may also be understood of the saints, the members of the several churches, even all heavenly-minded persons, who were born from above, and were partakers of the heavenly calling, and

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whose conversations were in heaven; these are called upon to take their part in this song of praise and thanksgiving: *woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea*; such as are of the earth, earthly, sensual, and earthly-minded persons; and who are like the troubled waters, and raging waves of the sea, cannot rest, but cast up mire and dirt, and foam out their own shame; the barbarous nations of the Goths and Vandals, carnal professors of religion, and the anti-christian party, which quickly upon this sprung up, may be intended, on whom this woe is denounced; the reason of which follows: *for the devil is come down unto you*; and a greater woe can't be upon men on earth, than to have the devil among them, who always brings mischief with him, and breathes nothing but ruin and destruction to men; he having lost his power in the Roman empire, possessed the above persons, and took up his residence among them; he came down, but not willingly, he was forced to it, he was cast down: *having great wrath*; because he was conquered, and cast out of heaven, and was deprived of the worship that had been long given him, as the god of the world, and of that authority and influence which he had over men: and this his great wrath was seen in stirring up the Arians to persecute the Christians; and in the times of Julian, when he endeavoured to regain his lost power; and in bringing in the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the empire, to waste and destroy it; and in moving the antichristian party, which soon prevailed, to make war against the saints: *because he knoweth he hath but a short time*; ere he should be shut up in the bottomless pit, or be confined in the place of torment, and ere his full punishment should be inflicted on him; which time of his to tempt, deceive, disturb, and distress men, is to be no longer than during the forty-two months of antichrist's reign, and the 1260 days, or years, of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of the church's being in the wilderness, and no longer than till the thousand-years' reign of Christ with his saints begins, which, in comparison of his long reign in the Gentile world, is but a short time; and though, after the thousand years are ended, he will be let loose, yet it will be but for a season, a very small time, when he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and be tormented night and day, for ever and ever.

Ver. 13. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, &c.*] When the devil perceived he had not the power in the Roman empire he formerly had; and that his influence was only over the common and meaner sort of people, or over the earthly part of the church, and the barbarous nations in the world: *he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child*; he was enraged at the church, and pursued her with great wrath, who had brought forth a Christian emperor, by whom the kingdom of Christ was encouraged and supported in the empire; and because he could not come at this child to destroy it, that being caught up to God and to his throne, he attacks the woman, the church, in a new way, by stirring up earthly-minded professors of Christianity, the Arians, against her, and by bringing in an inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, now become Christian; for this persecution cannot be understood of the

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persecution raised by the Jews, under the instigation of Satan, against the Christian church, quickly after the ascension of Christ to heaven, for then the dragon had his place and power in the Roman empire, whereas this persecution was not till after the downfall of Paganism in it; and for the same reason it cannot design the persecution against the Christians begun by Nero, and carried on under succeeding emperors, which were the ten days of tribulation under the Sinyrnæan church-state, and were now over; these were the pains and birth-throes of the woman, the church, antecedent to, and which brought on, the birth of the man-child; and the persons that endured them were those that overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and their death, which were all previous to these times: nor does it respect so much the persecution under Julian, which was carried on not by open force and violence, but by subtlety; he abstained from corporeal punishments and shedding of blood, observing that these methods in former times had given the Christians an opportunity of shewing their faith, patience, and fortitude, which had been the means of increasing their number; wherefore he betook himself to more private and artful methods, as to content himself with taking away the revenues of the ministers of the word, not suffering any Christians to be in military employments, denying their children the use of schools, encouraging the Jews, their sworn enemies, and tolerating all sorts of heresies among themselves, that so they might destroy one another; to which may be added, that his reign was but one year and seven or eight months, and therefore can scarcely be thought to be pointed at here; but inasmuch as the Arian persecution was the first after the fall of Paganism, and the principal one before the rise of antichrist, this may most reasonably be concluded to be meant here; and this began even in Constantine's time, for by means of an Arian presbyter that belonged to his sister Constantia, he was prevailed upon, towards the close of his days, to believe that Arius was not the man he was said to be, and that he had had hard measure; insomuch that he was recalled, and received into communion, and Athanasius was driven from his church, and banished to Trier in France: and the historian says^v, that Constantine exercised *vim persecutionis*, the force of persecution, or a violent one; bishops were exiled, the clergy were severely handled, and laymen taken notice of, who separated themselves from the communion of the Arians. Under Constantius, his son, the persecution raged much, Athanasius being gone from Alexandria, and one Gregory put in his room; and the people being uneasy at it, some were banished, others cast into prison, and others had their goods confiscated; women were dragged by the hair of their heads to the tribunals, and used very ignominiously; three thousand soldiers entered a church on an Easter-day, and killed many women and children; virgins were stripped naked, and the bodies of those who died of their wounds were denied a burial, and cast to the dogs; and the persecution did not stop here, but went

through Egypt, where the bishops, some of them, were beaten with rods, others were laid in bonds, and others were banished: in Egypt and Lybia ninety bishops were forced away, sixteen were banished, whose churches were delivered to the Arians. Lucius of Adrianople was bound in chains, cast into prison, and there perished; Paul of Constantinople was first expelled, after that murdered, and Macedonius, an Arian, put in his room; and such who refused to commune with him suffered stripes, bonds, imprisonment, and other tortures, of which they died, and others were banished, where they perished; women that refused had their breasts cut off, or burnt, either with red-hot irons, or with eggs roasted at the fire to a very great heat^x; with other instances too many to recite. Under Valens the emperor things were still worse, who became an Arian at the persuasion of his wife, and was baptized by Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, who, at his baptism, obliged him to swear that he would defend Arianism, and persecute those of a contrary opinion; and accordingly he moved an irreconcilable war against them; at one time he expelled Melesius from Antioch, Eusebius from Samosata, Pelagius from Laodicea, and Barsis from Edessa; and all the rest that would not communicate with Euzoius, an Arian, he punished, either with pecuniary fines, or with stripes; and he is said to drown many in the river Orontes. This persecution went through the churches of Thrace, Dacia, and Pannonia; but what is most shocking of all is, that some chosen ecclesiastical men, to the number of four score and one, were sent to him from Constantinople to Nicomedia, with a supplication to redress some injuries and grievances; at which he being angry, ordered Modestus, the governor, to take them and put them to death; but the governor fearing to do it openly, lest there should be an insurrection, ordered a ship to be got ready, pretending to carry them into exile, but directed the mariners to go in a fisher's boat behind, and set fire to the ship, which they accordingly did when at sea, where all the above worthy men perished at once^y. It would be endless to rehearse all the instances of cruelty under this persecution; it need only be observed, that this was at the instigation of the devil, as all persecution is; and that Satan herein acted like himself, as the great dragon, as he was when Rome Pagan was in power: these were Christian emperors in name, but they exercised all the cruelties of the Heathen ones, if they did not exceed them; and a greater regard was shewn to Paganism than to the orthodox religion. Valens tolerated all religions but that, especially Heathenism; all his reign the fire burned upon the altars, images were honoured with libations and sacrifices, the public festivals of the Heathens were kept, and the rites of Bacchus were performed in the streets^z; and this persecution was followed by the inundation of the barbarous nations, of which hereafter.

Ver. 14. *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, &c.*] By which are meant, not the two testaments, by which she was supported under afflic-

^v Sulpitii Sever. Hist. Sacr. l. 2.

^x Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 50, 56.

^y Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 73, 74.

^z Ib. p. 73. & c. 7. p. 304.

tions, trials, and persecutions, and against Satan and all his efforts; nor the two graces of faith and hope, by which she rose, and dwelt on high, in the view of invisible things, and with contempt of the world, its frowns or flatteries; nor, as others think, prayer and good works, by the former of which she flew to God for supplies of grace and protection, and by the latter was useful and profitable to men, and gave glory to God, and escaped the just censures of the world; nor are two powerful kingdoms, within the dominions of the dragon, intended, as others have thought, who take them to be France and Spain, to which Britain was an appendix; when they were in the possession of Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the great, where the Christians had refuge in the persecution under Dioclesian; but this was before the war in heaven, and the downfall of Paganism in the empire, and before the above persecution; rather these two wings of the eagle design the eastern and western divisions of the Roman empire: it is not unusual in Scripture for a monarchy, or monarch, as the Assyrian king and kingdom, to be signified by an eagle, and the wings of eagles, Ezek. xvii. 3, 12. Dan. vii. 4. and it is well known that the eagle is the ensign of the Roman empire, to which the allusion is in Matt. xxiv. 28. and at the death of Theodosius the empire was divided, as has been observed before, into two parts; the eastern empire was given to one of his sons, and the western to another; and this was between the Arian persecution, and the irruption of the Goths and Vandals, when the church was fleeing and gradually disappearing; and these two empires both went under the Christian name, and supported the outward visible church, though much corrupted, and still more and more corrupting; by which means the pure members of the church, though few, and very obscure, were preserved. In a word, these wings may denote the swiftness in which the church proceeded to disappear, having lost her former simplicity and glory, for which eagles' wings are famous, Prov. xxiii. 5. and more especially that divine strength and support by which she was bore up, and carried through, and delivered out of sore afflictions and persecutions; see Isa. xl. 31. The allusion is to God's deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt, when he bore them as on eagles' wings, and carried them through the wilderness, Exod. xix. 4. Deut. xxxii. 10, 11, 12. so here it follows, *that she might fly into the wilderness*; a place desolate, and full of serpents and scorpions, uncomfortable, and destitute of provisions, and yet a place of safety as well as of solitariness and retirement; and chiefly designs the obscure and invisible state of the pure church in the times of the antichristian apostacy; see the note on ver. 6. *Into her place*; which was prepared of God for her, as in ver. 6. *where she is nourished* by the ministers of the word, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth, who feed the church with knowledge and understanding; with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are sweet, comfortable, and nutritive; and with the ordinances of the Gospel, the entertainment of Wisdom's house, the feast of fat things, and the breasts of consolation; and with Christ the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness: and that

for a time, and times, and half a time; that is, all the times of antichrist, the forty-two months of his reign; during which time the holy city is trodden under foot, and in a desolate and afflicted condition outwardly, as may be learnt by comparing together Dan. vii. 25. Rev. xiii. 5. and xi. 2. and until the end of wonders, or when time shall be no longer, or till the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, as appears from Dan. xii. 7. and Rev. x. 6, 7. This date is the same with 1260 days in ver. 6. for *time* signifies a prophetic year, or 360 years; and *times* two years, or 720 years; and half a time, half a year, or 180 years, in all 1260 years; and which are to be reckoned, not from the beginning of the church's flight in Constantine's time, or from the Arian persecution, but from her entering into her wilderness-state, or entire disappearance upon the prevalence of the antichristian apostacy; which might be when the bishop of Rome took upon him the title of universal bishop: and here, and during this time she is hid *from the face of the serpent*; that is, from his wrath, so as that he cannot utterly destroy her, God having reserved a sealed number for himself; see ch. vi. 16. or from the sight of the serpent, as the Arabic version renders it, so as that he could not discern, with all his quick sight, where the church was.

Ver. 15. *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, &c.* Which cannot design any persecution before the fall of Paganism, either of the Jews, or of the Romans; nor indeed the Arian persecution, since the casting out of this flood is distinguished from the above persecution, and was after the church began to flee upon that persecution; though it is not unusual for wicked persecutors, and violent persecutions, to be expressed by waters, and they are called proud waters, Psal. cxxiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. and these may be said to be cast out of the mouth of the serpent, the devil, who was a persecutor and a murderer from the beginning, and by whom all persecutors and persecutions are instigated, moved, and carried on; but rather, as the words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, Prov. xviii. 4. and doctrines, good or bad, may be so called; that flood of errors and heresies, which were poured in between the times of Constantine and the rise of antichrist may be here intended; such as the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ; the Nestorian heresy, which divided his person; and the Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures in him; and the Macedonian heresy, which took away the deity of the Holy Ghost; and the Pelagian heresy, which destroyed the grace of God, and set up the power of man's free will: and this flood of errors and heresies may be truly said to be cast out of the serpent's mouth; since the old serpent, the devil, is the father of all lies, and errors: and the above heresies are the doctrines of devils, and damnable ones; and were designed by Satan to destroy the souls of men, and ruin the church: though since this flood followed upon the Arian persecution, and was after the church began to flee, being supported and secured by the two divisions of the empire, eastern and western, the wings of the Roman eagle, it seems best by this flood to understand the irruption of the barbarous nations, which quickly followed that division; the Goths, Huns, Vandals, Heruli, Alans, and Lombards, who were

poured into the western empire, and overran, and at last destroyed it; so that this flood is cotemporary with the first four trumpets; after which followed the swarms of locusts, the Saracens, which infested, teased, and tormented the eastern empire; and after them the Turks, the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates, were let loose, and like a mighty torrent overflowed, and utterly destroyed it; and all this was done at the instigation of Satan, he being filled with wrath, because the empire was become Christian, and his view was to destroy the church in it: for this flood was cast after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood: along with the empire, and be no more; but his designs were frustrated, and he disappointed; so people, nations, and tongues, are compared to waters in ch. xvii. 15. see Isa. viii. 7. and xxviii. 2. which the Targum interprets of the armies of much people.

Ver. 16. *And the earth helped the woman, &c.*] By opening itself, and taking in what the serpent cast out, so that it could not reach the woman, and annoy her, as follows: *and the earth opened her mouth*: as it did when it swallowed up Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, Numb. xvi. 30. to which history this may have some respect: *and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth*: if the flood refers to the Arian persecution, then the earth helping the woman, the church, and swallowing up this flood, may respect the Goths, who broke into the Roman provinces, under their king, Athanaricus, and fell upon the Arians, with great rage and cruelty, and infested the Roman provinces, which were nearer; they seized upon Thrace, which was the occasion of tranquillity to the orthodox; for Valens being moved by these things, desisted from persecuting them, and, leaving Antioch, he went to Constantinople to form measures for the carrying on of the war against the Goths^a; and thus the earth helped the woman. But if, by the flood, the errors and heresies of those times are meant, then the councils may be intended by the earth; which, though they consisted of men that were earthly, and greatly apostatized in other things, yet opposed, refuted, and condemned these heresies and errors, and so were the means of preserving the church from them, as some think; though others are of opinion that the barbarous nations are in this also designed, who embracing Arianism, and the corrupt religion, where they came, by which they were, in some measure, mollified and reconciled to the Christians, did not seek to root them out, and destroy them, as Satan hoped they would; but since they themselves, with the Mahometans, are meant by the flood, the earth must be interpreted of the corrupt and antichristian church, the idolaters which sustained the force of this inundation, and for some time repelled it, and so secured the true church; and when the western empire was overrun by it, as by the Goths, &c. idolaters, earthly-minded men, and carnal professors, were the sufferers, and bore the shock of it; and when the eastern empire was

overrun by the Saracens, the tormenting locusts, the green things, grass and trees, were not hurt by them; none of the sealed ones, only those who were not sealed, ch. ix. 4. and the Turkish inundation was a scourge upon the antichristian party: so that it was the earth, or earthly part of professors, the idolaters, that bore the fury and force of this flood, and broke it off from the church. And so sometimes wicked men are helpful to the saints, as the Philistines were serviceable to David, to screen him from the fury of Saul; and Lysias, the chief captain, and Felix and Festus, Roman governors, were instruments of preserving the Apostle Paul from falling into the hands of the Jews, his enemies; and the Christians that were scattered by the persecution at Jerusalem found refuge and safety among the Gentiles.

Ver. 17. *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, &c.*] The devil was very angry with the church, because he could not destroy her by the Arian persecution he had raised; and because he could not carry her away with the flood, either of errors and heresies, or of the barbarous nations; and because he could not, by any means, come at her, and indeed did not well know where she was, a place being prepared for her of God in the wilderness, where she was taken care of: wherefore he took another method, as follows, *and went to make war with the remnant of her seed*; which refers to the war the beast, to whom he gave his power, seat, and authority, is said to make with the saints; and which was entered into and carried on by his instigation, of which there is an account in the following chapter: the persons with whom he went to make war are described as *her seed*: the seed of the church, her spiritual offspring, the sons and daughters she brought forth to Christ; between which seed, and Satan and his seed, there always was an enmity: and these are *the remnant of her seed*, a few persons scattered up and down, a remnant according to the election of grace; who were not in bodies, or in church-states, regularly formed, as heretofore, but in private families, and some here, and some there; and who were called out to bear a testimony for Christ in corrupt times: and these are further described as *such who keep the commandments of God*: and not the traditions of men: nor are the commands of the moral law of God so much designed, though it is true that these were kept by the seed of the church; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, the commands of God our Saviour, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; which were kept by these faithful ones, as they had been delivered, when they began now to be sadly corrupted by the antichristian party: *and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*; the Gospel, which is a testimony concerning him; see the note on ch. i. 2. This they had in their hearts, a spiritual knowledge and saving experience of it; and this they had in their hands, they made a profession of it, they held it forth, and held it fast; all which was the reason of Satan's enmity against them, and war with them.

^a Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 80.

C H A P. XIII.

THIS chapter contains a description of the Romish antichrist, under the figure of two beasts, the one representing him in his civil power, the other in his ecclesiastical power. The first beast is described by its original, the sea, and by the monstrous shape of its several parts; its heads seven, in which were the name of blasphemy; its horns ten, on which were crowns; its skin like a leopard, its feet as a bear, and its mouth as a lion; and by its state and condition, having power, a throne, and great authority; and having one of its heads wounded, and healed; and by the great regard had unto him, being wondered at, and worshipped by all the world, and declared to be more powerful than any, and none to be like them, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. Next an account is given of what he was suffered to have, a blaspheming mouth, and power to continue forty-two months, ver. 5. and of what he said or uttered, his blasphemy against God, his name, tabernacle, and the inhabitants of heaven, ver. 6. and of what he did by permission, made war with the saints, overcame them, and had power over all people, ver. 7. and of the worship given him by the reprobate part of the world, ver. 8. and the whole is concluded with an exhortation exciting attention to what had been said, with a threatening to the beast, and a word of comfort to the saints, ver. 9, 10. And then follows the description of the second beast, by its original the earth; by its likeness to a lamb, and a dragon; to the former for its two horns, and to the latter for its speech, ver. 11. and by the actions ascribed to it, which are many; as exercising all the power of the first beast; causing all the inhabitants of the earth to worship that; doing miracles, of which one is mentioned, thereby deceiving the men of the world; ordering them to make an image to the wounded beast; giving life to it, so that it could speak; putting to death all that refused to worship it; obliging men of all ranks and degrees to have a mark in their right hands or foreheads, and forbidding such that had not to buy or sell, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. And the chapter is concluded with an epiphonema, exciting men of understanding to search out, and count the number of the beast's name, since it is possible to be done, being the number of a man, and easy to be done, consisting of three Greek letters, $\chi \xi \varsigma$, which are numerically 666, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, *and he stood, &c.* and so the Alexandrian copy; meaning the dragon, said to be wroth with the woman, and to go forth to make war with her seed, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, where some versions place this clause; and the Arabic version reads expressly, *and the serpent stood, &c.* And this is thought by some to be the better reading, because of the connexion with what goes before, and because there is no mention of the name of John, nor of his being called or removed from heaven, where he was beholding sights, and

continuing the account of them, ch. iv. 1. and xii. 1. and xv. 1. as there is when he is shewn sights elsewhere; see ch. xvii. 3. and xxi. 10. And besides, as the dragon was contriving a new way of persecuting the saints, and about to raise up a beast out of the sea, by which he might do it, to whom he would give his power, seat, and authority, he is represented as standing in a proper place for this purpose; it was upon the sand, which may signify a multitude of people employed by him, and also may denote the weakness and unsuccessfulness of his efforts in the issue; yet the Greek copies in general agree in the common reading, and refer it to John, who stood on the shore of the isle of Patmos, and in a fit place, in a visionary way, to behold the following sight: for that the next clause belongs to him is without doubt, *and saw a beast rise up out of the sea:* by which is meant, not the devil, because it is in ver. 2. distinguished from the dragon, who is the devil and Satan, as also elsewhere, ch. xvi. 13. and xx. 10. nor the old Roman empire, though there are many things which seem to agree; the Roman monarchy is called a *beast*; it is one of the four beasts in Dan. vii. 2, 4. which rose up out of the sea, from a multitude of people and nations, which were gathered to it and composed it. Rome Pagan had, as this beast has, seven heads and ten horns, ch. xii. 3. and had power over all nations, and is therefore sometimes called the whole world, and exercised great cruelty upon the Christians; but then this is signified by the *red dragon* itself, in the preceding chapter, and, besides, had risen up before the times of John, whereas this is one of the things shewn him, which should be hereafter: this beast then was not, but was to come, ch. iv. 1. and xvii. 11. and was not to arise, nor did it arise till after the downfall of Rome Pagan, and after the Arian persecution, after the woman's flight into the wilderness, and after, and upon the inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, as appears from the preceding chapter; nor will the time of this beast's duration agree with the old Roman empire, for this beast is to continue forty-two months, ver. 5. which is the whole time of the holy city being trodden under foot, and of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth; whereas the Roman monarchy, governed by emperors, did not last four hundred years. Moreover, as this beast is distinguished from the dragon, so it is said to have its power from him; whereas the Roman empire was of God, and obedience and subjection to it are always recommended to the saints in the Scriptures, Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13. much less can the empire, as become truly Christian, be intended; nor are either the eastern or the Turkish empires designed, for neither of these had their seat at Rome, which the dragon gave to this beast, but at Constantinople: it remains then, that by it is meant the Roman empire, when divided into ten kingdoms, and united in the Papacy; or it designs antichrist in his secular power, with the ten kings, that re-

ceive power with him as such one hour, and give their kingdom to him : now this beast is said to *rise up out of the sea* : either out of the abyss, the bottomless pit of hell, see ch. xi. 7. and xvii. 8. or out of the sea of this world, and the wicked in it, who are like a troubled sea that cannot rest ; or out of the floods of errors and heresies, by which this man of sin was conceived and cherished, and a way was paved for his open rising and appearance in the world ; or rather, since waters design, in this book, nations, people, and tongues, see ch. xvii. 15. and the four beasts in Daniel are said to rise out of the sea, ch. vii. 2. and a multitude of people are compared to the waves of the sea, Ezek. xxvi. 3. see also Isa. xvii. 12. and lvii. 20. where the Jewish writers say^b, the nations are compared to the sea, as Israel to the sand, the inundation of the barbarous nations, the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the empire, seem to be intended, which made great commotions and changes in it : these set up ten kingdoms in it, upon which antichrist arose, and placed himself at the head of them ; these gave their kingdoms to the beast ; and so may be said to give rise unto him, especially as to his secular power. *Having seven heads* : which some understand of his perfect wisdom and knowledge, the head being the seat of knowledge, and seven a number of perfection ; and so may refer to those boasted treasures of wisdom and knowledge which antichrist pretends to have, as being the judge of controversies, and the infallible interpreter of the Scriptures : or else the sevenfold form of government among the Romans is intended, as in ch. xii. 3. or rather as it is interpreted in ch. xvii. 9. the seven mountains on which Rome was built, and so design the city itself built on them, that being the metropolis of the empire ; or the seven capital cities of the empire, as Mr. Daubuz thinks ; the whole is meant, for it is the same Roman monarchy as before, only in a different form : *and ten horns* ; the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided upon its being wasted and vanquished by the Goths, and the ten kings of them, which reigned with the beast, and gave their kingdoms to him ; so horns signify kingdoms in Zech. i. 18. *And upon his horns ten crowns* ; which distinguishes Rome Papal from Rome Pagan ; the crowns in Rome Pagan were upon the heads, or upon the emperors, that resided at Rome ; and though it had ten horns, as here ; and was divided into so many provinces, which were governed by deputies, pro-consuls, &c. yet they were not kings, they had no crowns ; but here the horns have crowns on them, because the governors of these ten kingdoms are crowned kings : *and upon his heads the name of blasphemy* ; which refers not to Rome Pagan being called the eternal city, and Rome the goddess, and the like ; but to Rome Papal, or antichrist, who elsewhere is said to have the name *Mystery* written upon the forehead, and to have blasphemy on his heads ; and is called blasphemy in the abstract, as being a most blasphemous creature against God, Christ, and his people, and so his name is suitable to his character, mouth, and language, ver. 5. 6. assuming that to himself which only belongs to God and Christ, as power over the conscience, to forgive sin, &c. and even deity itself ; see 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xvii.

3. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *names of blasphemy*.

Ver. 2. *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, &c.*] To which the Grecian kingdom is compared in Dan. vii. 6. because of that rapidity and swiftness with which Alexander overran the world, and set up this monarchy ; and to which the Roman Papal monarchy bears some resemblance ; for as the Grecian monarchy was divided into several parts, which the leopard's spots may also point out, so the Roman empire was divided into ten parts, and united under the pope, as the head of them ; and may be, in this form, compared to a leopard for its swiftness, Hab. i. 8. because this beast, as soon as he arose and got power, quickly, and in a very short time, extended it over all emperors, kings, princes, bishops, and over all kingdoms and churches ; and for its spots, Jer. xiii. 23. which may be expressive both of the spots of sin and immorality of every kind, and of errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry, with which antichrist and his followers abound ; and for its insidiousness and cruelty, Jer. v. 6. Hos. xiii. 7. It lies in wait for its prey, and suddenly falls upon it, and devours it ; and is a lively picture of the cunning sleight of the antichristian party, who lie in wait to deceive, and of their blood-thirstiness and barbarity. It is reported^c of the leopard, that it is of a sweet smell, and by its odour it draws the fawns, does, &c. near it, and then makes a prey of them ; so antichrist, by outward riches and preferments, by the external pomp and splendour of his religion, by his lying wonders and miracles, and by his great pretensions to holiness, and the like, allures multitudes unto him, and destroys them. *And his feet were as the feet of a bear* : to which the Persian monarchy is compared, Dan. vii. 5. And this, as some think, may denote the strength and stability of the kingdom of antichrist, it having already endured a great while, and will be thought to be very firm and stable when its ruin is near ; or rather the wars and fightings of antichrist against the saints, the fore feet of the bear being what that creature fights with, and tears and destroys such as oppose it, or fall a prey to it ; and may also, as before, express the voraciousness and cruelty of antichrist, with respect to the bodies and souls of men : *and his mouth, as the mouth of a lion* : to which creature the Babylonian monarchy is compared, Dan. vii. 4. uttering out blasphemies against God, threatening ruin and destruction to men, and injecting fear into them, as the roaring of a lion does, and seizing upon, and devouring their estates and possessions, as well as butchering their persons. This beast has all the properties of the several beasts in Daniel's prophecy, wherefore all the figures there made use of to describe them are put together, to point unto us this monster of iniquity. *And the dragon gave him his power* : for the coming of antichrist is after the working of Satan, 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. he gave him his cunning and subtlety, as the old serpent, and taught him his arts and tricks to deceive mankind ; and gave him a power to do signs and lying wonders, as well as communicated his malice and cruelty to persecute and oppress the saints ; or an

^b Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4. & 55. 2. & 63. 3.

^c Elian. de Animal. l. 5. c. 40.

army of ecclesiastics to fight under him, and for him: *and his seat*; at Rome, for there Satan's seat was, ch. ii. 13. in the time of the Pagan Roman empire, which was quitted by Dioclesian and Maximian, when they resigned the government of it, the one being at Nicomedia, and the other at Milan; and when Constantine came to the throne, he removed to Byzantium, and rebuilt it, and called it after his name Constantinople, and had his residence there, as had all the eastern emperors afterwards; and as for the western emperors, they chiefly resided either at Milan or Ravenna, to which last place Odoacer, Theodoric, and other Gothic kings retired, when the government was in their hands; so that hereby this seat was empty, and way was made for antichrist to take it, as he did. *And great authority*; over the Roman empire, and the kings and kingdoms in it; he gave him his authority as the god of this world; what Christ refused at the hands of Satan, that his pretended vicar took, even the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; yea, assumed to himself all power in heaven, earth, and hell, signified by his triple crown, at the instigation of the devil; so that it appears that he is not the vicar of Christ, but the vicar of the devil; and not the successor of Peter, but the successor of Satan; and that he holds his possessions, not by the donation of Constantine, but by the gift of the dragon.

Ver. 3. *And I saw one of his heads, &c.*] Not the Capitoline mountain, or the Capitol, the temple of Jupiter, built on that hill, which was burnt by lightning in the times of Titus, and magnificently rebuilt by Domitian, which was a thing past, and of no such moment as to be taken notice of here; nor any one of the Roman emperors particularly, as Julius Cæsar, at whose death the empire received a wound, upon its first erection in him, but was healed by the settlement of Augustus in it; nor Nero, at whose death the family of the Cæsars ceased, when the empire was threatened with ruin in the following reigns, but was restored and re-established in Vespasian, for these were before the times of John: but this is to be understood of the sixth head, or form of government, which obtained in the empire; namely, that of emperors, and of the destruction of Rome itself, the head of the empire, and which was built on seven mountains, designed by the seven heads of this beast: and this head was as it were wounded to death; when the Roman empire was like a burning mountain cast into the sea; when Rome itself was taken, sacked, and burnt, more than once, particularly by Totilas; when Augustulus, the last of the emperors, was obliged to abdicate the throne; when Odoacer called himself, not emperor of Rome, but king of Italy, and retired from Rome to Ravenna; and when Adolphus, another Gothic king, thought to have changed the name of Rome, and given it that of Gothia: this seemed to be a deadly wound to Rome, to the empire and emperors. *And this deadly wound was healed*: by the setting up of ten kingdoms in it, the kings of which gave them to the beast, to antichrist, the pope of Rome, and so the empire came to have an head again, a governor, though of another kind: some choose to understand this of the wound which antichrist received at the Reformation, by Luther, Calvin, and others, which has since been healing, Popery re-

covering itself again in some countries where it was driven out, and which, it is thought, will be entirely healed before his destruction: *and all the world wondered after the beast*; which expresses the large extent of antichrist's dominion, which reached to all the Roman empire, Luke ii. 1. yea, to all kindreds, tongues, and nations, ver. 7. so that the universality the Papists boast of, as a note of the true church, is manifestly a mark of the beast, or of antichrist; and also the great esteem he is had in by his followers, who admire his power and authority, his grandeur, pomp, and riches, his signs and lying wonders, his pretended infallibility and holiness, his stock of merits and unwritten traditions, his skill to interpret Scripture, and his power to forgive sins, and the like: they went after him, obeyed him, embraced his doctrines, attended his religion and worship with wonder and amazement.

Ver. 4. *And they worshipped the dragon, &c.*] The devil, in the idols, images, angels, and saints departed, to whom they give adoration, as did the Gentiles, whose successors they are, and whose name they bear; see 1 Cor. x. 20. *which gave power unto the beast*, as in ver. 2. *and they worshipped the beast*; not only in a civil way, being subject to him as their temporal lord, to whom they give homage, obedience, and tribute, but in a religious way; for antichrist sits in the temple to be worshipped as God, shewing himself that he is God, and receives adorations from his creatures, the cardinals, and others; but woe to them that worship this beast; see ch. xiv. 9, 10, 11. *Saying, who is like unto the beast?* using such expressions as are used of God himself, implying that there is none like him, Exod. xv. 11. Psal. cxlii. 5. Isa. xl. 18, 25, yea, they ascribe deity to him, calling him our Lord God the pope, God, and a God on earth; see the note on 2 Thess. ii. 4. *Who is able to make war with him?* And indeed, such was his power and strength once, that he was an overmatch for emperors and kings; and those were badly off that engaged in a war with him, when his power was such, that he could depose one, and set up another, kick the crowns of kings, tread upon the necks of emperors, oblige them to hold his stirrup, whilst he mounted his horse, and keep them barefoot at his gate for days together, waiting for admittance; of all which there are instances.

Ver. 5. *And there was given unto him a mouth, &c.*] The beast is said to have a mouth before, like the mouth of a lion, ver. 2. but now he was moved and stirred up by the dragon, the devil, to open it, not only in a cruel and voracious way, but in a haughty, lying, and blasphemous manner: and this was given him, it was at the instigation of Satan, and by divine permission; his coming, speaking, and acting, were after the working of Satan, but not without the will of God; who, as he gave up many to a judicial blindness, to believe his lies and blasphemies, gave up him to speak them, as follows: *speaking great things, and blasphemies*; great swelling words of vanity; calling himself by high and lofty titles, as Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, head of the church, universal bishop, &c. promising great things to his followers, riches, honours, pleasures, parlours, and heaven itself; and uttering things of a blasphemous kind, or great blasphemies, the particulars of which are men-

tioned in the next verse; so the little horn, who is the same with the Romish antichrist, is said to have a mouth speaking great things, very great things, and his look more stout than his fellows, Dan. vii. 8, 20. *And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months;* to continue in being, or to continue blaspheming and speaking great things; and indeed, as long as he continues, he'll continue blaspheming; as soon as he arose he had a name of blasphemy on his heads, and his mouth was immediately opened in blasphemy, and so it continues, and will to the end of this date. The Ethiopic version reads it, *and power was given to him to do signs, whatsoever he would.* miracles, lying signs and wonders; see ver. 13, 14. Some copies read, and so the Arabic version, *and power was given him to make war;* but he did not make war as soon as he arose, and so not all the time that is here allotted him; and the word *war* seems to be transcribed from ver. 7. The phrase rather intends his being, and the continuance and duration of it; which is the same period of time in which the holy city is trodden under foot by this beast, and the same with the 1260 days or years, in which the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and the woman, the church, is in the wilderness, ch. xi. 2, 3. and xii. 6, 14. for forty-two months, reckoning thirty days to a month, as the eastern people did, make just 1260 days, for these things are all cotemporary: hence it appears, that 1260 prophetic days, that is, years, contain the whole period of antichrist's reign and continuance; so that could we tell where they began, it might be exactly known when his reign will end; but for want of knowing the former, the best of calculators have failed in the latter: but seeing the time when he was made universal bishop by Phocas bids fair for the time of his open appearance, and the beginning of his reign, and of his blasphemy, which was in the year 606, to which, if we add 1260, the expiration of his reign will fall in the year 1866; so that he may have upwards of an hundred and twenty years yet to continue; but of this we can't be certain; however, the conjecture is not improbable.

Ver. 6. *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, &c.*] By sitting as God in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God; by suffering himself to be called by the name of God, God on earth, Lord God the pope, and to be worshipped as God; and by assuming infallibility, giving out that he cannot err, which only belongs to the God of truth; and by his idolatrous practices commanded by him, as the worshipping of idols of gold, silver, wood, and stone, which is in Scripture called blaspheming God, Isa. lxxv. 7. Ezek. xx. 27. see Dan. xi. 36. *To blaspheme his name;* his authority, by arrogating to himself all power in heaven, earth, and hell; by taking upon him to bind and loose the consciences of men, and to dispense with the laws of God, and make them void by his own traditions; and to dispose of the kingdoms of this world, by removing kings, and setting up kings at pleasure, which is the prerogative of the King of kings; and by pretending to forgive sin, which none but God can do; and by granting indulgences, pardons, &c. Moreover, by the *name* of God may be meant the Scriptures, which are the means

by which God reveals and makes known himself; and these the man of sin blasphemeth, by making them a nose of wax, by imposing on them what senses he pleases; by assuming a right of being the sole interpreter of them, and the judge of all controversies; and by setting up his own unwritten traditions upon an equal foot with them, and above them, and by denying the common people the use of them, in their own language; and particularly the Gospel, which is sometimes called the name of the Lord, Acts ix. 15. may be intended, which is sadly blasphemed, and evil-spoken of by antichrist; as the doctrines of justification by Christ's righteousness, of peace and pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, through the antichristian notions of merit, works of supererogation, pardons, penance, purgatory, and the like; *and his tabernacle;* meaning either the human nature of Christ, which God pitched, and not man, the temple of his body, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, and where the eternal Word dwelt, or tabernacled among men; this is blasphemed by pretending to transubstantiate the bread and wine in the supper of the Lord into the very body and blood of Christ, and to offer him up again in the sacrifice of the Mass, every time that blasphemous piece of service is performed: or else the church of God, which is the temple of the living God, where he chooses, desires, and delights to dwell; this is blasphemed by antichrist, by sitting in it as if he was God; asserting himself to be the head of the church which solely belongs to Christ; taking upon him to coin new doctrines, and make new laws and orders, and impose them on it, and to change and alter the ordinances and discipline of it as he pleases; and by persecuting and destroying all such who will not submit to his decrees and prescripts: or else heaven itself, the habitation of God, and where his throne is, may be designed, which the pope blasphemously affirms to have the keys of; and that he can open and shut it, let persons into it, or exclude from it, at pleasure; and that he can dispose of it, and sell it for money, and make and canonize new saints in it, as often as he thinks fit. *And them that dwell in heaven;* either saints below, members of a Gospel church, who are born from above, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversation is in heaven, who are by antichrist stigmatized and persecuted as schismatics and heretics; or rather angels and saints departed, who are in heaven, and dwell there, and who are worshipped and prayed to as Mediators and intercessors, whose names are used in a very ridiculous and blasphemous manner, to their great dishonour and reproach, as well as to the injury of Christ, the only Mediator between God and men.

Ver. 7. *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, &c.*] The remnant of the woman's seed, ch. xii. 17. whom God has set apart for himself, Christ has cleansed from sin by his blood, and the Holy Spirit has sanctified by his grace; and who under the influence of it live holy lives and conversations; against such Satan always bore an enmity; and it is an aggravation of the wickedness of the Romish antichrist, that he makes war with such, which he is stirred up to by Satan, with a malicious intent, and is permitted by

God for the trial of the faith and patience of his people: this war of antichrist, with the saints, may be understood not merely spiritually, of his anathemas, excommunications, bulls, and the like, but literally, of his drawing the temporal sword against them; see ver. 10. and bringing of armies against them, and fighting pitched battles; and it is thought there may be a special regard had to his war with the Waldenses and Albigenses, in which war 'tis said that ten hundred thousand men were slain; and may take in all his ways and methods of destroying the saints, by the bloody Inquisition, murders, massacres, and punishments of all sorts; and also his last war with the two witnesses, in which they will be slain, which is yet to come, ch. xi. 7. *and to overcome them*: not so as to submit to him, and to forsake the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, but by killing them; and who, by dying in the faith and cause of Christ, overcome Satan, get the victory over the world, and antichrist, and are more than conquerors through him that has loved them. *And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*: in the Roman empire, which wondered after him, and worshipped him, and over whom he has reigned, and has exercised both a temporal and spiritual jurisdiction; see ch. xvii. 15, 18.

Ver. 8. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, &c.*] The inhabitants of the Roman empire, the idolatrous part of it, the men of the world, earthly-minded men; who are as they came into the world, and are of the earth, earthly, and seek only after earthly honours, pleasures, and profits; these are the admirers and adorers of the beast: *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; by which book is meant God's predestination of men to eternal life, or his decree of election; why this is called the *book of life*, see the note on ch. iii. 5. and their names being written therein *from the foundation of the world*, for such a construction the words will bear, denotes that election is eternal, and is not an act of time, nor dependent upon any thing done in time; and that it is of particular persons, and not of bodies of men, of nations and churches, and still less of propositions, or of persons so and so qualified, or under such conditions and circumstances; and that it is perfectly well known to God, and is sure and certain in its effects, and is unchangeable and irrevocable; for what is written in it, is written, and will always stand, not upon the foot of works, but of the sovereign grace of God; and this is called the Lamb's book; that is, Christ, who is compared to a Lamb for its harmlessness, meekness, and patience, and was typified by the lambs in the legal sacrifices; and this book is called his, because he was present at the making of it, and was concerned in putting down the names in it, John xiii. 18. and he himself stands first in it as the elect of God, and the head of all the elect, who, as members, were chosen in him: the act of election was made in him, and stands sure in him; and he is the author and giver of that life, which men are chosen unto both here and hereafter: and he may be said to be slain *from the*

foundation of the world; in the decree and purpose of God, by which he was set forth, or fore-appointed to be the propitiation for sin, and was fore-ordained, before the foundation of the world, to redeem his people by his blood, and in the promise of God immediately after the fall of man, that the seed of the woman should have his heel bruised, and he himself should bruise the serpent's head, which made it as sure as if it was then done; and in the sacrifices, which were immediately upon this offered up, and were types of the death and sacrifice of Christ; and in the faith of the saints, which brings distant things near, and considers them as if present; and also in his members, in Abel, and others, in whom he suffered, as he still does in his people; to which may be added, that such is the efficacy of the bloodshed and death of Christ, that it reached to all the saints from the beginning of the world, for the justification of their persons, the atonement of their sins, and cleansing from them; for the remission of sins, that are past, and for the redemption of transgressions under the first testament; for Old-Testament saints from the beginning are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, as New-Testament ones are. Something like this the Jews say of the Messiah upon Gen. xlix. 11. "he washed *מִיּוֹמַת דְּתַנְבָּר* עִלְמָה, from the day that the world was created; who is he? this is the King Messiah.—It is written Gen. i. 2. *and the spirit of God, &c.* This is the spirit of the King Messiah; and from the day that the world was created; he washed his garments in wine;" which the Jewish writers understand of blood, which for its redness is like to wine; though they interpret it of the blood of the slain, with which the garments of the Messiah will be stained. Now such whose names are not written in this book of the Lamb, who have no interest in electing grace, nor in redemption by Christ, the slain Lamb of God, nor any right unto eternal life, who are reprobate persons, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, who are fore-ordained to condemnation, and are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, these are the followers and worshippers of antichrist.

Ver. 9. *If any man have an ear, let him hear.*] And diligently attend to this mystical description of antichrist, as being matter of some difficulty to understand, as well as of great moment and importance, and seriously consider it, that he may know him, and his followers, and avoid them; see the note on ch. ii. 7.

Ver. 10. *He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity, &c.*] As the devil, by whom men are led captive at his will, and the Romish antichrist, who leads multitudes of souls to hell; these shall be taken and cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The Jews^a have a saying, that "captivity comes into the world for idolatry, uncleanness, and murder;" which three things are notorious in the Romish antichrist: and in the same treatise they say^b, that the sword, the next judgment mentioned, comes into the world for delay of justice, and the perversion of it. *He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword*: the design of the phrase is to shew, that

^a Zohar in Gen. fol. 128. 2. 3.

^b Targum Jon. & Jerus. & Aben Ezra in Gen. xlix. 11.

^a Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 9.

^b lb. sect. 9.

there will be a just retaliation made to the antichristian beast, for all his cruelty to the saints, and the murders of them; and that because he has shed much blood of the saints, blood shall be given him to drink, and he shall be used in like manner he has used others; see Gen. ix. 6. Matt. xxvi. 52. *Here is the patience and the faith of the saints*; meaning either that hereby, through the cruelties and barbarities of the Romish antichrist, the patience and faith of the saints are tried; and that they have great need of them, and of the exercise of them, under such usages; and that these being tried, and continue, will receive much commendation, honour, and praise; or else the sense is, that it requires both faith and patience in the saints, to believe that antichrist will be thus destroyed, and to wait quietly till the time comes. The Arabic version reads, *here is the patience and prayers of the saints*; who cry, how long will it be ere our blood is avenged? and have need of patience to rest a while, till their prayers are answered.

Ver. 11. *And I beheld another beast, &c.*] The same with the first, only in another form; the same for being and person, but under a different consideration; the same antichrist, but appearing in another light and view: the first beast is the pope of Rome, at the head of the ten kingdoms, of which the Roman empire consisted; this other beast is the same pope of Rome, with his clergy, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, &c. before he is described as a temporal monarch, now as a spiritual lord; there he is represented in his secular character, as having the seat, power, and authority of the dragon, of Rome Pagan, engaging the attention and wonder of the whole world, and striking terror into them, and as making war with the saints, and ruling over all nations and tongues; here in his ecclesiastic character, pretending great humility and holiness, shewing signs and lying wonders, obliging to idolatry, and exercising tyranny and cruelty on all that will not profess his religion: that this is the same beast with the first in substance, though not in shew, appears from his exercising the same power, causing all to worship the first beast, or himself as a temporal lord, by which he is supported in his spiritual dignity; and by mention being made only of one beast, at the close of this account, and of his mark, name, and number being but one; nor is there any other but one hereafter spoken of in this book, either as ruling, or as conquered, and as taken, and as going into perdition, and as cast into the lake: this beast is described by his original, *coming up out of the earth*; either from under it, out of the bottomless pit, from hell; or out of a low condition, a poor crawling earth-worm; the extracts of many of the popes, cardinals, and religious orders, have been very mean: or this may represent the secret and private manner, and slow degrees by which this monster of iniquity rose; as things gradually rise up out of the earth unobserved; this man of sin was springing up in the apostles' time, and by degrees rose up to the power and authority he is here said to have: or rather, as this beast, in his other form, rose up out of the sea, out of the commotions raised in the empire by the barbarous nations, by whom he was lifted up to his imperial dignity; so he is described in this form, and is represented as

rising up out of the earth, out of the earthly part of the church, or out of the apostacy which the visible church was sunk into, through the outward riches and honours bestowed on it by the Christian emperors, which made way for the rising of this beast; and this shews the nature of his kingdom, which is worldly and earthly, and so truly antichristian, being diametrically opposite to the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world: *and he had two horns like a lamb; or like to the Lamb*; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God; though he has seven horns, denoting fulness of power, this but two; he stands on Mount Zion, with the 144,000, having his father's name on their foreheads, this upon the earth, with his followers, having his own mark and name upon them. The Ethiopic version renders it, *and he had two horns, and he seemed as a lamb*; he affected a lamb-like disposition, pretended to great humility and meekness, calling himself *servus servorum*, the servant of servants, to cover his pride, ambition, and tyranny; and would be thought to be a lamb without spot and blemish, ascribing to himself infallibility, and suffering himself to be called his Holiness, when he is the man of sin, and mystery of iniquity: by his *two horns* some understand his two-fold power, secular and ecclesiastic; but as these are separately represented by two beasts, rather these two horns intend the two parts of the empire, eastern and western, into which it was divided, when this beast arose, and by which the Papacy was raised to its power, and supported in it; and the two supreme pontiffs, the bishop of Rome, and the bishop of Constantinople; or else the beast's power of binding and loosing, of dispensing with the laws of God, and of imposing his own laws on the consciences of men. *And he spake as a dragon*; like the devil himself, affirming as he did, Luke iv. 6. that the power of disposing of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, was delivered to him, and he could give it to whom he would: he spake arrogantly, as if he was above all that is called God, and as if he was God himself; and he spake like a dragon cruelly, like the great red dragon, like the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, breathing out slaughter, and threatenings against the saints, as Rome Pagan; and he spake lies in hypocrisy, blasphemies, idolaties, and doctrines of devils.

Ver. 12. *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, &c.*] Sitting in the same seat, having the same power and authority from the dragon, making war with the saints by preaching and writing against them, by anathemas, excommunications, and bulls, and so overcame and silenced them, or delivered them over to the secular arm to be put to death, ruling over the consciences of men in a tyrannical way, in all nations, kindreds, and tongues, in the empire; and all this before, in the presence, and under the influence of the secular power, of the Papacy, signified by the first beast, and with his good liking, and for his credit and support: *and causeth the earth, and them that dwell therein*: the Roman empire, and the inhabitants of it, especially the carnal and earthly part of them: *to worship the first beast*: to be subject to the temporal power of the Papacy, or to submit to the pope as a temporal lord, to give homage and tribute to him, and

the like, in order to support his worldly power and grandeur; and this was caused or brought about by his emissaries, his spiritual vassals, his legates, cardinals, priests, &c. by their exhortations, persuasions, and commands, delivered both in writing and preaching: *whose deadly wound was healed*; which deadly wound was given the Roman empire under its sixth head, the emperors, when they ceased, and was healed by the pope, the seventh head, being set as a temporal monarch over the ten kingdoms in it.

Ver. 13. *And he doeth great wonders, &c.*] Or miracles; not real, but pretended ones, lying wonders, which the Popish legends are full of the accounts of, as done by the priests, or by this or the other saint: *so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men*; in imitation of Elijah; and this single instance is put instead of all others, it being usual with the Jews to express all wonderful and miraculous operations by this miracle of Elijah's: and this may be understood mystically, of the pretensions of the Papacy to confer the Holy Ghost, and his gifts upon men, by breathing on them, which on the day of Pentecost were represented by cloven tongues, as of fire, coming down from heaven; or of their anathemas, curses, and excommunications, at which time burning torches and candles are cast up, and fall down, as emblems of divine wrath, which is called cursing men with bell, book, and candle; or else of the fire of persecution: *from heaven*; the secular powers of the empire: *upon the earth*; the common people: or this may be understood literally; so they tell us, that Pope Zachary, once on a journey to Ravenna, had in the day-time a cloud to protect him from the heat, and in the night-time *armies of fire* appeared in the clouds to go before him; and as Pope Innocent was at Mass, a golden crown was seen, and on it a dove, and under it a smoking censer, and hard by them two burning fire-brands: and it is reported of Pope Hildebrand, that, whenever he pleased, he could shake his sleeves, and sparks of fire would come out; and by these miracles deluded the eyes of the simple with a shew of holiness, which, with other instances, are taken notice of by Napier, Brightman, and other writers: and so here this is said to be done *in the sight of men*; to their apprehension, seemingly, in their view; they being cheated and deluded with an appearance and shew of things which were not real.

Ver. 14. *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, &c.*] The Complutensian edition, and two of Stephens's copies, read *mine*, instead of *them*; creatures of God, and professors of Christ, carnal and unregenerate men; not the elect of God, and true believers in Christ, these cannot be deceived by the signs and wonders of false Christs and false prophets; antichrist's deceivableness of unrighteousness only operates in them that perish: *by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast*: the secular power of the Papacy encouraging, confirming, and giving a sanction to those lying miracles, and obliging all to believe them, and come into the things, doctrines, or practices, they are designed to promote: *saying to them that dwell on the earth*: the apostate church, or the carnal inhabitants of the empire: ordering and commanding them *that they should make an*

image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live; meaning the Roman empire, which had received a deadly wound in its sixth head, the emperors, by the sword of the Goths, Huns, &c. but now revived in its seventh head, the pope of Rome, to whom the ten kings gave their kingdoms: the image made to this beast some understand of the translation of the empire to Charles the great, and his successors the emperors, by the pope of Rome, he ordaining so many electors to chose a king of the Romans, and elect an emperor when one was wanting; and this was an image to the first beast, a shadow, an appearance of the Roman empire, and but a shadow; for the power of inaugurating and crowning these emperors, and of setting up and deposing them when the pope pleased, he reserved to himself: but rather this designs the image-worship, or the worshipping of idols of gold and silver, of wood and stone, which he caused the inhabitants of the earth to make, and give adoration to; or else the whole Papal religion, and the Papacy itself, for the beast, and the image of the beast, are all along in this book afterwards mentioned together as being the same, ch. xiv. 9. and xv. 2. and xvi. 2. and xix. 20. and xx. 4. which is an image of the Gentile religion, in their high-priest, priests, temples, idols, offerings, garments, worshipping of angels, and saints departed, with a numerous train of rites and ceremonies, borrowed from the old Pagan religion; hence the Papists are called Gentiles, ch. xi. 2. the Roman empire, represented by these two beasts, and this image, had now one head, the pope, as before an emperor, and a religion in it much resembling its ancient one; but, before that was set up, this image was in being.

Ver. 15. *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, &c.*] Or *breath*; he breathed into it, and animated it; he gave this new religion a sanction, he confirmed and established it, and obliged all in his dominions to embrace and acknowledge it; and this he did by his decrees and canons, and those that refused were delivered over to the secular power, which he also exercised under another consideration: *that the image of the beast should both speak*: so that it was not like Nebuchadnezzar's golden image that he set up, which required another to speak for it and demand adoration to it; and should seem to be preferable to the dumb idols of the Gentiles, which have mouths, but speak not; and may be understood either of the images of the virgin Mary, and other saints, which 'tis pretended, and the people are made to believe, that they do at times actually speak, and really weep and laugh, as it may serve their different purposes; or this image may be said to speak by the decrees, canons, anathemas, curses, threatenings, persuasions, doctrines, and blasphemies of the pope and his clergy; so that this image is like both the first and second beast; it has a mouth speaking blasphemies, as the first, and it speaks like a dragon, as the second; *and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed*; which, according to the generality of copies, refers to the image itself, that that has a power from the beast as to speak, so to put to death those that refuse to worship it; but the Complutensian edition reads *causes*, and *causes*; that is, the beast causes, or orders all those that will not worship the image, to

be killed; that is, that as many as will not embrace and profess the Popish religion shall be put to death; and these are the known orders and decrees of the Papacy, which have been executed by the Inquisition, and other hands, in innumerable instances; the blood of all the saints and prophets is found in Rome Papal, and will be avenged; these are the martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood the whore on the scarlet-coloured beast has been made drunk; and this sense is confirmed by the eastern versions.

Ver. 16. *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, &c.*] Men of all ranks and degrees, states and conditions, within his jurisdiction; this refers to the beast, and not to the image: *to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; or that they might give themselves marks,* as the Complutensian edition reads; which is an allusion either to the custom among the Romans of imprinting marks upon their servants and soldiers, by which they might be known to whom they belonged; servants had them in their foreheads¹, and soldiers in their hands²; or to the usages of the Jews in binding their phylacteries upon their arms and foreheads, to put them in mind of the law of God, and their obedience to it; or to the practices of the Heathens, in putting the mark of the god they worshipped upon their bodies; Maimonides¹ says, it was a custom with the Gentiles to mark themselves with their idols, shewing that they were their bought servants, and were marked for their service: the sense is, that some received the mark in one place, and some in another: those who were obliged to receive the mark in the right hand seem to be the clergy, such who entered into holy orders; who lifted up their right hand, and swore and vowed allegiance to the pope, and testified they were ready to defend and support his religion and interest; and who in their ordination are said to have an indelible character impressed on them: and those who received the mark in their foreheads are the common people in general, who one and all have the same impress upon them; which may intend either the sign of the cross in baptism, or rather their open confession of the Popish religion, which they as publicly avow and declare as if it had been written on their foreheads.

Ver. 17. *And that no man might buy or sell, &c.*] Either in an ecclesiastical sense, as to be in any church-office, or perform any such service, to say Mass, hear confession, give absolution, sell pardons and indulgences, &c. or in a civil sense, as to trade, and exercise merchandise, and this was forbidden by several Popish councils and synods; the Lateran council, under Pope Alexander, decreed against the Waldenses and Albigenses, that no one should presume to retain or encourage them in their houses or countries, or trade with them; and the synod of Tours in France forbid any reception of heretics, or protection, and that any communion should be had with them *in buying and selling*, as Mr. Mede has observed; and it was ordered by a bull of Pope Martin the Fifth, that no contract should be made with such, and that they should not follow

any business and merchandise: *save he that had the mark; took the oath to be true to the pope, or made a public profession of the Popish religion: or the name of the beast; Papists, so called from the pope; thus the antichristians are called from antichrist, as the Christians from Christ: or the number of his name; which is either the same with the number of the beast, in the following verse, or is something distinct from it; and those who have it may be such persons who neither have the indelible character of the Romish clergy, nor are open professors of the Popish religion, but are in heart inclined to it, and privately and secretly promote it, by their doctrines and practices; and so are numbered, reckoned, esteemed, and accounted of by the Papists, and receive favours from them; or rather such who openly furnish the drink-offering in the Mass, mixed with wine and water, לכני, for that number, Isa. lxxv. 11.*

Ver. 18. *Here is wisdom, &c.*] Not only in the above description of the two beasts, but in what follows as to the number of the beast, these two now coalescing in one, and have one and the same number; and to wrap it up, and conceal it in such an obscure manner, shews great wisdom in God, as it requires much in men, and serves greatly to exercise all his intellectual powers to find it out: *let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; whoever has skill in numbers, let him make use of it, that he may know the name and nature of the antichristian beast, and the numerical letters of his name, or the number of him, and of the time when he arose, and when he will expire: for it is the number of a man; either a number that may be reckoned by man, or which is in common use among men; see ch. xxi. 17. or that which is contained in the name of a man: and his number is six hundred threescore and six; which some think refers to the time of the rise of antichrist, in the year 666; but that seems rather to be in the year 606, when the bishop of Rome obtained the name of universal bishop; others have been of opinion that it refers to the expiration of the beast, which they thought would have been in the year 1666, the number of the thousand being dropped, as it is in our common way of speaking; as when we say the Spanish invasion was in 88, meaning 1588, and the civil wars began in 41, that is, 1641; but time has shewn that this was a mistaken sense; the more prevailing opinion is that of Mr. Potter, who has wrote a peculiar and learned treatise upon this passage, who makes the counting of this number to be no other than the extracting of its root, which is the number 25, which when multiplied into itself, and the fraction in working it 41 is added, makes up the square number 666; and now 25 being added to A. D. 33, make 58, which was the time of the beast's conception, to which if 606 is added, it brings us to the year 724, when he arrived to his age of manhood, and when the war about the worshipping of images broke out: but others think that the numeral letters in some man's name which amount to this date, and which agrees with antichrist, are intended; and here various conjectures are made; some have observed, that in ge-*

¹ Apulei Metamorph. l. 9. Ausonii Epigram. l. 15. Seneca de Ira, l. 2. c. 3.

² Actius apud Turnebi Advers. l. 23. c. 12.

¹ Hilchot Obede Cochab. c. 12. sect. 11.

neological arithmetic the number of Adonikam's posterity is 666, Ezra ii. 13. whose name signifies a *lord rising up, or risen*; and suits very well with antichrist, who is risen up, and assumes a lordly domination over the kings of the earth; and it is further observed, that the Hebrew word רומית, which signifies *Roman*, and, having the word *beast* or *kingdom* joined to it, designs the Roman *beast*, or *kingdom*, consists of numeral letters, which make up this sum; and so the Hebrew word סתור, *Sethur*, which is the name of a man, Numb. xiii. 13. and signifies *mystery*, in its numeral letters comes just to this number, and one of the names of the whore of Babylon is *mystery*, Rev. xvii. 5. but the name *Latinos* bids as fair as any, which is mentioned by so ancient a writer as Irenæus, who was a hearer of Polycarp, a disciple of John, the writer of this book; now the numeral value of the letters of this word makes up exactly 666, thus; λ. 30. α. 1. ρ. 300. ι. 5. υ. 10. ρ. 50. α. 70. ε. 200. in all 666; and it is well known that the

church of Rome is called the Latin church, and the pope of Rome the head of the Latin church, and his seat is in the Latin empire, and the service of the *beast* is in the Latin tongue, and the Bible is kept in that language, from the reading of the common people: it has been observed that the numeral letters in Ludovicus, or Lewis, which is a common name of the French kings, and is the name of the present French king, make up this same number; and may denote the destruction of antichrist, which will quickly follow the downfall of the kingdom of France, under a king of this name; and the rather, since this was the last of the ten kingdoms that was set up, and in which the primitive *beast* subsists, and the only one that has not yet been conquered, or in which a revolution has not been; and since this is the tenth part of the city which shall fall a little before the third woe comes on: and that it may fall under Ludovicus, or Lewis, the present French king*, may be hoped for, and is desirable.

C H A P. XIV.

THIS chapter contains three visions; one of the Lamb on Mount Zion, another of the three angels preaching against Babylon, and the third of the harvest and vintage. The vision of the Lamb is in ver. 1. which is no other than Christ, described by his similitude, as a Lamb; by the place where he was, Mount Zion; by his position there, standing, and by the company that were with him, whose number were 144,000, and their character, his father's name written on their foreheads; at the same time a voice was heard from heaven, comparable to the sound of many waters, of thunders, and of harps, and a song sung which none could learn but the above number with the Lamb, ver. 2, 3. who are described by their purity, chastity, and strict adherence to Christ; by their redemption through him; by their being the first-fruits of God and of the Lamb, and by their integrity and unblemished character, ver. 4, 5. next follows the account of the three angels; the first comes with the everlasting Gospel, to preach it to all men, loudly calling upon all to fear and worship God, and give glory to him, since he is the Creator of all, and the hour of his judgment is come, ver. 6, 7. the second proclaims the fall of Babylon, with the reason of it, ver. 8. and the third denounces the wrath of God upon the worshippers of the *beast* in the most public manner, and that for ever, ver. 9, 10, 11. and this vision is closed with some expressions, shewing that, till this was done, the patience of the saints would be tried, and the true worshippers of the Lamb be discovered, and comforting them with an assurance of that rest that remains after death for the faithful followers of Christ, ver. 12, 13. after this is the vision of the harvest and vintage of the earth. The reaper is described by his form, like the son of man; by his seat, a white cloud; by a golden crown on his head, and by a sharp sickle in his hand, ver. 14. who is called upon by an angel out of the temple to make use of his

sickle, and reap, because the time of reaping was come, the harvest being ripe, ver. 15. upon which he thrusts in his sickle, and reaps the earth, ver. 16. after this, another angel appears out of the temple, with a sharp sickle, to whom another angel from the altar, that had power over fire, calls to make use of his sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine, since the grapes were fully ripe, ver. 17, 18. upon which he thrusts in his sickle, and gathers them, and casts them into the wine-press of divine wrath, which being trodden, blood comes out of it to the horses' bridles for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb, &c.*] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read *the Lamb*; the same that had been seen before in the midst of the throne, ch. v. 6. and all the Oriental versions have the same article also; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for mention is made of his Father in a following clause; the King of Zion, where he is seen standing, and the Redeemer of his people, who are at large described; it is the same Lamb who is so often spoken of in this book before: in the two preceding chapters an account is given of the state of the church, as oppressed under Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, and here of its more glorious and victorious condition, with Christ at the head of it; in the last chapter antichrist is described, with his followers and worshippers, and as exercising tyranny and cruelty upon the saints, and here Christ and his followers are represented in vision, and some hints given of the fall of Babylon, and of the wrath of God upon the worshippers of the *beast*, and of the happiness of those who belong to the Lamb: and of him it is here said, that he *stood on the Mount Zion*; by which is meant not heaven, but the church on earth; why that is called Mount Zion, see the note on Heb. xii. 22. here Christ the Lamb *stood*, as presiding

* The reader will bear in mind that the original edition of this work was published in the year 1747.—Ed.

over it, being King of Zion, or the church; where he stood and fed, or ruled, in the name of the Lord, and in the majesty of his God; and where he appeared in the defence of his church and people, oppressed by antichrist; for he is Michael that standeth for the children of his people, and who stands with courage, and in the greatness of his strength, and is invincible; nor does he stand here alone: *and with him an hundred forty and four thousand*; the same with those in ch. vii. 3, 4. though all the world wondered after the beast, and all that dwelt upon the earth worshipped him, yet there was a number preserved that did not bow the knee to him; a remnant according to the election of grace, who were called out of the world, and brought to Zion, and were on the side of the Lamb, and abode by him, and cleaved unto him: *having his father's name written in their foreheads*; not baptism, administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as some think; nor eternal election, as others, though as their names were written in the Lamb's book of life, so this was manifest to themselves and others, as if his name and his father's had been written in their foreheads; but rather adoption, the new name of a child of God, they having the spirit of adoption, whereby they cried, *Abba, Father*, and being openly and manifestatively the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus; unless it should be thought there is an allusion to the inscription in the mitre on the forehead of the high-priest, *holiness to the Lord*, and so be expressive of that visible holiness which will be on the saints in the spiritual reign of Christ, which this vision respects; see Zech. xiv. 20. or to the frontlets between the eyes of the people of Israel, to put them in mind of the law, and their obedience to it, Deut. vi. 8. and so may here denote the engagements of those saints in the service of God; though perhaps no more is intended than their open and hearty profession of their faith, and that they were not ashamed of appearing in the cause of God and truth, nor of Christ and his words, his Gospel and ordinances: the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *having his name, (the Lamb's,) and his father's name written in their foreheads*; and the Ethiopic version adds, *and of his Holy Spirit*. Mr. Daubuz thinks this vision refers to the times of Constantine, and to the Christians then, and particularly the council of Nice, and as cotemporary with that in ch. vii.

Ver. 2. *And I heard a voice from heaven, &c.*] The same with the voices heard in heaven upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet, ch. xi. 15. *as the voice of many waters*; very loud, and uttered by a great multitude of people, signified by waters in this book, ch. xvii. 15. the same with those that praise the Lord for the destruction of antichrist, and for the marriage of the Lamb, ch. xix. 1—7. *and as the voice of a great thunder*; to which the Gospel may be compared for its open, loud publication, being heard far and near, as thunder is: *and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps*; that is, singing the praises of God, for the fall of Babylon, the happy state and condition of the church, and the blessings of grace; the harp

being a musical instrument, used under the Old Testament in singing praise: Brightman thinks that these different sounds represent the course of Gospel doctrine, and the church's voice throughout the reign of antichrist; that when the church first went into the wilderness, her voice was like the murmuring of waters, confused and indistinct; when she began to revive under the Waldenses and Albigenes, Wickliff, Huss, &c. her voice was like thunder, loud and terrible; and at the Reformation, it was as the voice of harpers, when confessions of faith were published with sweet harmony and consent. Others have thought that the different properties and efficacy of the Gospel are designed; as its rapidity and irresistible force, by the many waters; its striking and shaking the consciences of men, by the thunder, Christ's ministers being sometimes *Boanergeses*, sons of thunder; and its harmonious music, pleasant sound, peace, joy, and comfort it brings, by the voice of harpers. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, *the voice which I heard was as harpers, &c.*

Ver. 3. *And they sung as it were a new song, &c.*] The song of redeeming grace; the same with that in ch. v. 9. see the note there: this is to be understood of the 144,000, who sung it *before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders*; that is, publicly in the church, the ministers and members being present; of these see the notes on ch. iv. 4, 6. *and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth*; out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; from among the men of the earth, and out of the apostate church, called the earth, in opposition to the pure church, which so often goes by the name of heaven in this book; and these, in consequence of being redeemed by the blood of Christ, were called by grace out of the world; and such only can sing the song of redemption with application to themselves; and say he has redeemed us, and loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood; to none but these is it given to know spiritually and experimentally the mysteries of electing and redeeming grace; the natural and carnal man neither knows nor receives the things of the spirit of God; nor can he learn them by hearing, reading, study, and conversation, unless it be only in a notional and speculative way. The Jews speak of a new song, which the angels have never used^m; "it is said, "Psal. xcvi. 1. *sing unto the Lord a new song*; a new "song, for there is an old song; but this song is what "the angels never praised him with, and therefore it "is new;" and indeed the song of redeeming love is peculiar to men.

Ver. 4. *These are they which were not defiled with women, &c.*] With the whore of Rome, and her harlots, she is the mother of; whilst the kings and inhabitants of the earth were drunk with the wine of their fornication, or committed idolatry with them, which is spiritual fornication, and is here meant by being defiled with them, these were free from such pollutions, or idolatrous practices: *for they are virgins*; for their beauty and comeliness in Christ, chaas-

tity, sincerity of their love, incorruptness in doctrine and worship, and for the uprightness of conversation; see the note on Matt. xxv. 1. *these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*; as the sheep follow the shepherd of the flock, and which is a character of Christ's sheep, John x. 4, 5, 27. These follow Christ in the exercise of the graces of humility, patience, and love; and in the performance of the several duties of religion, and subjection to ordinances, and in the path of sufferings; and in every way in which Christ the Lamb has gone before them, or in his word and providence leads and directs them to, whether it be grateful to the flesh or not; particularly they follow where he is preached, and his word and ordinances are faithfully administered; and they follow him to heaven, where he is: it was part of the oath taken by the Roman soldiers, *τοῖς ῥηάτοροις ακολουθεῖν ὅπου ποῖ ἂν ἀγῶσι*, to follow the generals wherever they should lead*, to which it is thought there is an allusion here; see 2 Sam. xv. 21. *these were redeemed from among men*; by Jesus, as the Syriac and Arabic versions add, and so the Complutensian edition; by the blood of Christ, for all men are not redeemed by it; and in consequence of this they were called, and delivered from this present evil world, and the men of it, and from a vain, wicked, and idolatrous conversation with it: being *the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb*; in allusion to the first-fruits under the law, which represented and sanctified the lump, and shewed that harvest was coming; so these persons are called the first-fruits to God, and to the Lamb, being called by grace, and consecrated to their worship and service, with reference to the harvest of souls, or that large number of them which will be gathered in during the spiritual reign of Christ, which these persons will be at the beginning of; and as those who are first called and converted in a country or nation are said to be the first-fruits of it, Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 15. so these being the first, in the period of time to which respect is had, bear this name; and as the converted Jews received the first-fruits of the spirit, on the day of Pentecost, and at other times, so these will receive the first-fruits of the far greater pouring forth of the spirit in the latter day, which will begin, and usher in the kingdom of Christ; see Rom. viii. 23.

Ver. 5. *And in their mouth was found no guile, &c.] Or a lie*, as the Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read; by which may be meant idolatry, for idols and idolatrous practices are often called lies, and lying vanities; see Jer. xvi. 19. Amos ii. 4. Jon. ii. 8. Rom. i. 25. and the sense is, that the superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome were not among them; or it may design false doctrine, and the meaning be, that they did not speak lies in hypocrisy, as the followers of antichrist do; nor were they given up to believe a lie, as they are: the generality of copies read, *no guile*; which is expressive of the sincerity of their words; there was no deceit nor hypocrisy in them; they did not speak with flattering lips to men, nor did they draw nigh to God with their mouths, when their hearts were far from him; they were Isra-

elites indeed, like Nathaniel, in whom was no guile; though not in so strict a sense, in which this phrase is used of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 22. *for they are without fault before the throne of God*; not as considered in themselves, as if they were entirely free from sin, and never committed any; though it might be true of them, that in general they were of unblemished lives and conversations, that is, not guilty of any notorious and scandalous crimes; but rather the sense is, that they were without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, as being washed in the blood of Christ, and so cleansed from all sin, and as being justified by his righteousness from all iniquity; and so were before the throne of God, and in the sight of divine justice, unblamable and irrefragable; see Jude 24. Col. i. 22. the phrase, *before the throne of God*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Complutensian edition.

Ver. 6. *And I saw another angel, &c.]* This is to be understood not of one of the ministering spirits so called; for though wings are sometimes ascribed to angels, and Gabriel is said to fly swiftly; and though they desire to look into the mysteries of the everlasting Gospel, yet the preaching of that is not committed to any of them; but a minister of the Gospel is intended, who is the angel of the church, for in this book pastors of churches are so called, ch. i. 20. and not a single minister of the Gospel is meant, but a set of Gospel ministers; and some think that those are designed who appeared in the eighth and ninth centuries, both in the eastern and western empire, against the worshipping of images; since this angel calls upon the inhabitants of the earth to fear God, give glory to him, and worship him, and not images; but there was little of the everlasting Gospel preached in those times. Others are of opinion that those who preceded, and led on to the Reformation, are pointed at by this angel, such as Wickliff in England, Franciscus Petrarca in Italy, John Huss and Jerom of Prague in Bohemia, with others; but these also had not the everlasting Gospel in its clearness and purity, nor did they preach it to all the inhabitants of the earth; rather I think a set of Gospel preachers are intended, who will appear at the beginning of the spiritual reign of Christ, and will be a means of ushering it in; and these are the watchmen of Zion, who will give the Lord no rest till he has made Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth; and who will then see eye to eye in Gospel mysteries, and will publish good tidings of peace and salvation, and proclaim Zion's King reigning, Isa. lxii. 6, 7. and lii. 7, 8. this angel is called *another*, being distinct from the voice heard in ver. 2. though he is the first with respect to the following angels, as appears from ver. 9. the place where John saw this angel, and the position he was in, follow: *fly in the midst of heaven*; the church, the great congregation, the several congregations of the saints; in the midst of which these ministers will preach righteousness, salvation, loving kindness, and truth, as Christ has done before them; and from hence the word of the Lord will go forth to all parts of the world: they will preach the Gospel openly and pub-

* Vid. Lydii Dissert. de Jurament. c. 2. p. 256.

licly, with great freedom, boldness, and intrepidity, in the view of all men, not fearing the faces of any; and the Gospel ministered by them will have a swift, sudden, and universal spread; they themselves will run to and fro, and the Gospel will run and be glorified, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes will flock to Christ, who in that day will be alone exalted; for these ministers will come forth publicly: *having the everlasting Gospel*; the Gospel in its fulness and purity; the Gospel of the grace of God, of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, of peace and pardon by his blood, and of complete salvation by him; called *everlasting*, because the substance of it was settled from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace; it was ordained before the world was, and was hid in God from the beginning; and the revelation of it was of old; it was made to our first parents immediately after the fall, and was spoken of by all God's holy prophets which have been since the world began; it was preached before unto Abraham, and in the times of Isaiah, and by other prophets, and so is no new upstart doctrine: besides, the matter of it is everlasting; it treats of everlasting things; of the eternal election of persons to salvation; of God's everlasting love to them; of an everlasting covenant he made with Christ on their account; of blessings, promises, and grace given to them in him, before the world began; and of his being set up so early as a Mediator, and of his going forth in a way of grace from everlasting; as well as it reveals an everlasting righteousness, and brings life and immortality, or eternal life to light, or shews the way to everlasting life and happiness; to which may be added, that it will abide for ever, it will always remain, and that inexpugnable, maugre all the opposition of hell and earth; it will continue till all the elect of God are gathered in, notwithstanding the violence of persecutors, or the craft of seducers; nor will it be antiquated and made void by another Gospel succeeding it, for there will be no other: now this the ministers of those times will have; not in their heads only, by knowledge, but in their hearts, by experience, and will have it in their mouths, and speak it out freely and openly, and will have a commission from Christ to preach it, and gifts qualifying them for it: *to preach to them that dwell on the earth*; that are in the apostate church, carnal, unregenerate, and earthly persons. The Complutensian edition reads, *that sit on the earth*; as persons abject, mean, and distressed, to whom the Gospel is acceptable: *and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people*; whether Jews, Turks, or Pagans; for the Gospel, as before observed, will now have an universal spread all the world over.

Ver. 7. *Saying with a loud voice, &c.*] These ministers shall lift up their voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud, and deliver out the Gospel fully and faithfully, with great authority and power, and with much vehemence, zeal, and fervency: *fear God*; or *the Lord*, as some copies, the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, read: not the antichristian beast and his followers, as men formerly had done; but God the Lord, and him not with a servile fear, or a fear of punishment, of wrath, hell, and damnation; nor with a distrust of his

grace, love, power, and providence, much less with an hypocritical fear; but with a godly fear, which has the goodness of God for its object, and springs from a sense of the love of God, and is a reverential affection for him, and is attended with faith and spiritual joy, and includes all worship of him, both internal and external; hence the Syriac version renders it, *serve God*: and this shews that the duties of religion are to be inculcated by Gospel ministers; and that they will be urged by them when the everlasting Gospel is preached in its greatest purity: *and give glory to him*; and not to graven images, which he will not allow of; and glory is to be given to him, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; and is given when men ascribe greatness to him, praise his works of creation, and acquiesce in those of Providence, acknowledging the power, goodness, and wisdom of God in all; and when they give thanks for all his mercies, temporal and spiritual, and especially for Jesus Christ; and when they exercise faith on him as their God in Christ, and ascribe their salvation to him and to the Lamb, and not to the works of their hands; and when they attend his worship, and the duties of religion, and so glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his: *for the hour of his judgment is come*; not of the great and last judgment, but of the government of the Lord Christ, committed to him by God the father; in which sense the word is used in John v. 22. for now will the time be come, when the kingdoms of this world will be his; and he will take to himself his great power, and reign, in a spiritual manner, in the world; and now also will be his time of judging the dead, or of avenging his people, whose blood has been shed for him, and of his judging the great whore, or of inflicting his judgments upon antichrist and his followers; all which will be under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, to which this vision is cotemporary; see. ch. xi. 15, 17, 18. and xvii. 1. and xix. 2. *and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters*; God, the Creator of all things, and not the beasts, nor idols, the works of men's hands.

Ver. 8. *And there followed another angel, &c.*] A second, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac version add; and the Arabic version reads, *and the second angel followed*; another set of Gospel ministers, who will immediately follow upon the former, proclaiming the fall of Babylon, which will be brought about through the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. Some think the Waldenses and Albigenes are here designed, who gave a great blow to Babylon, and laid a foundation for her ruin. Others have thought that Luther, and the reformers of his times, are intended, who gave a deadly blow to Babylon, and she has been falling ever since: but to me it appears, that a set of ministers in the spiritual reign of Christ are meant, who will not only signify the fall of Babylon to be certain, and near at hand, but will live to see and declare her actual fall, as follows: *saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city*; which is to be understood not of the world in general, which will not now be come to an end, for all nations of the world are distinguished from this Babylon in the next clause, and is only represented as a city, though a great one; nor of Babylon in Chaldea, which was fallen

many hundreds of years before this vision; nor is there any likelihood of its being restored, nor any reason to believe that it will ever more be the seat of empire over all the nations and kings of the earth, as the Babylon mentioned in this book is, ch. xvii. 5, 18. though undoubtedly the allusion is to that Babylon, and the very words are used which express the fall of it, and are taken from it; see Isa. xxi. 9. but this is to be understood of Rome, which all along in this book is called the great city; see ch. xi. 8. and xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and not of Rome Pagan, for that is fallen already; and the account of the fall of that is given before, at the opening of the sixth seal, and the casting the dragon out of heaven, upon the war there, between Michael and him, though Mr. Danub is of opinion that this is here meant; but of Rome Papal, called *Babylon the great*, ch. xvii. 5. and xviii. 2. and so the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, read here; and the Romish antichrist is so called, because that city was famous for its pride and haughtiness, for its tyranny and cruelty, and for its idolatry; and indeed its name, which signifies *confusion*, well agrees with the Papacy, which is a confuted mixture of Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity: so Rome is called Babel in some ancient writings of the Jews^o, where some copies read *Babel*, others read *Rome*; and Tertullian, who wrote long before the appearance of the Romish antichrist, says^p, with our John, Babylon is a figure of the Roman city: and of this it is said, that it *is fallen, is fallen*: which words are repeated for the certain confirmation of it, as matter of fact; for the fall of antichrist will certainly be in the spiritual reign of Christ, in the Philadelphian church-state; see the note on ch. iii. 9. now will Babylon come in remembrance before God, and he will pour out the vials of his wrath upon her, and will give men an aversion to her; and through the preaching of the Gospel she will fall, just as the walls of Jericho fell at the sounding of the ram's horns: the reason of which fall will be, *because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*: by her *fornication* is meant the idolatry of the church of Rome; so the idolatry of Israel and Judah is often expressed in the Old Testament by fornication and whoredoms; see Jer. iii. 6. Ezek. xxiii. 2, 3. and the *wine* of it designs the alluring methods used to draw into it; such as the riches and honours, and pleasures of this world, promised to men, and the great appearances of holiness and religion, the deceivableness of unrighteousness, the miracles, signs, and lying wonders done by them, by which men are made sottish and stupid, and induced to believe a lie; just as wine intoxicates, and inclines and excites to lust: and by the *wrath* of it is meant either the heat of lust unto it, or the wrath of God against them which is stirred up by it; and now the aggravation of her sin is, that she not only drinks of this wine herself, or commits idolatry, being instigated to it by the allurements of it, though she hereby incurs the displeasure and wrath of God, but she draws all nations into the same idolatrous practices.

Ver. 9. *And the third angel followed them, &c.*] The

two preceding ones, and that very quickly; by whom is meant not Luther, and his associates in the Reformation, as some think; nor his successors, or the ministers of the Gospel in general from his time till Christ's second coming, as others have thought; but a set of Gospel ministers in the spiritual reign of Christ: the first set of them publish the everlasting Gospel, which leads on to the ruin of antichrist; the second set proclaim the downfall of Rome, and this third set denounce the wrath of God upon all that have professed the Popish religion: *saying with a loud voice*; as the first angel did, with like authority and vehemence, in order to strike terror, and express indignation: *if any man worship the beast and his image*; give in to the idolatries of the church of Rome, and embrace, maintain, and defend the Popish religion, which bears a resemblance to the worship of the Heathens, and is the very image of Rome Pagan; see ch. xiii. 4, 12, 15. *and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand*; openly profess Popery, and swear allegiance to the man of sin, and do all they can to support his interest; see ch. xiii. 16, 17.

Ver. 10. *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, &c.*] Which is a just punishment for their sin; that as such have drank of the wine of the wrath of Rome's fornication, ver. 8. so they shall now drink of the wine of God's wrath; it is usual in Scripture to express the punishment God inflicts upon wicked men by his wrath. and by the wine-cup of his fury; and their suffering such punishment, by their drinking of it; see Jer. xxv. 15. Job xxi. 20. so יין דרורוּתָא, *the wine of wrath*, is a phrase used by the Jews^q: *which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation*: sometimes called a cup of fury and of trembling, Isa. li. 17, 22. and is sometimes said to be full of mixture, Psal. lxxv. 8. of various ingredients of wrath and fury; and the words may be rendered here, *which is mixed without mixture*; and though it seems to carry in it a contradiction, yet is true in different senses; it may be said to be mixed as wine with various sorts, which is the stronger, and sooner inebriates and intoxicates; or in allusion to the cup the Jews gave to malefactors, to stupefy them, when going to execution, which had various things put in it for that purpose; see the note on Mark xv. 23. and so designs the several ingredients in the cup of divine indignation, or the several ways in which God expresses his wrath; and yet it is without mixture; it is judgment without mercy, pure wrath, without the least alloy; not so much as a drop of cold water granted, or the least favour shewn, or any mitigation of fury for a moment: *and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone*: in allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which are now a burning and a sulphurous lake, called Asphaltites, and is an example, pattern, and similitude of the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7. and hence the beast and false prophet are said to be cast into such a lake, ch. xix. 20. and here their followers will be punished; which is expressive of the horrible torments of hell, and the dreadful punishment of the antichristian party there; see Psal. xi. 6. and what will aggravate

^o Zohar in Numb. fol. 103. 4. & Raya Mehimna, apud ib. in Exod. fol. 49. 3.

^p Adv. Judæos, c. 9. & Adv. Marcion. l. 3. c. 10.

^q Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 4.

their misery is, that it will be *in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb*; the latter will be their Judge, and will adjudge them to everlasting burnings, and pronounce the sentence on them; and the former will be the executioners of it; they will gather them out, and sever them from the righteous, and cast them into the furnace of fire, and will be spectators of their punishment, and rejoice at it; and the sight of their power and glory will increase the torment of the sufferers.

Ver. 11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, &c.*] That is, the smoke of that fire which torments them will for ever arise; or, in other words, there will be no end of their torment; hence their misery is called everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, and everlasting destruction, Matt. xxv. 41, 46. 2 Thess. i. 9. and smoke being very troublesome and distressing, is mentioned to set forth the very uncomfortable state of the wicked; and so it is used by Jewish writers: hence we read of *תַּנְּן נִהְיֵם*, the *smoke of hell*, with which the eyes of the wicked will be filled in the world to come: *and they have no rest, day nor night*: the fire of divine wrath which tortures them is never quenched, and the worm of conscience which gnaws them never dies: this is directly contrary to a notion of the Jews, that the wicked in hell have rest sometimes; they talk of angels blowing away the smoke from them, so that they have rest an hour and a half; and which they say they have three times a day, and whenever Israel says Amen, let his great name be blessed¹; and particularly that hell-fire never burns on the sabbath-day, nor does the smoke of it ascend then, and that the wicked have always rest on that day¹; though sometimes they contradict themselves, and say they never have any rest¹, which is the truth: *who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name*; that is, whoever are the followers of antichrist, or the professors of the Popish religion; so far is salvation from being in the church of Rome, and only there, that there is none in it; and whoever live and die in the profession of Popery, shall surely be damned as this passage is true.

Ver. 12. *Here is the patience of the saints, &c.*] That which has required their patience, and about which it has been exercised, what they have been patiently waiting for, namely, the destruction of antichrist; and now it will be come, and patience will have its perfect work; see ch. xiii. 10. *here are they that keep the commandments of God*; and not the inventions of men, and the traditions of antichrist, but the ordinances of the Gospel, as they were at first delivered, without any adulteration and corruption; and who kept them because they were enjoined by God, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory: these are distinguished from the worshippers of the beast, and were preserved throughout the apostacy; these are the witnesses who will now be risen, and the remnant of the woman's seed, with whom the dragon made war by the beast: and these are the hundred and forty and four thousand who are before described; these

will be in a very glorious and comfortable church-state; the word will be purely preached, and the ordinances truly administered, and the doctrines of the Gospel will be heartily embraced and professed: it follows, *and the faith of Jesus*; meaning either the grace of faith, of which Jesus is the object, author, and finisher; and which these saints will have from him, and exercise upon him in a very strong and comfortable manner; and which, and the profession of it, they will hold fast to the end; or else the doctrine of faith, concerning the person, office, and grace of Jesus Christ, the faith once delivered to the saints, which they will have contended for, stood fast in, and now will hold in a pure conscience: these seem to be the words of John, declaring the faith, patience, and obedience of the saints of these times.

Ver. 13. *And I heard a voice from heaven, &c.*] Like that which was heard at Christ's baptism and transfiguration, certifying the truth of what follows, so that that may be depended upon as an undoubted verity: *saying unto me, write*: which is a further confirmation of the following sayings being true and faithful; see ch. i. 9. and xix. 9. and xxi. 5. *blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth*; merely to die is not an happiness, for death is common to all, good and bad; it is a disunion of soul and body, and cannot be in itself desirable; it is the fruit of sin, and has something in it awful and terrible; and though it is the privilege of believers, as it is unstung by Christ, yet not as simply and absolutely considered; but to die in the Lord is a blessedness: some render the words, *which die for the Lord*; so the Arabic version, *which die for the faith of the Lord*; and the Ethiopic version, *which die for God*: and so restrain them to the martyrs of Jesus: to suffer death for the sake of Christ and his Gospel is a gift and an honour, and what glorifies Christ; and there is a glory consequent upon it, which such shall enjoy; but then in the spiritual reign of Christ, to which this passage refers, and after the destruction of antichrist, there will be no more suffering for Christ, no more martyrdoms; wherefore this cannot be the sense of the words: nor do they mean dying in the lively exercise of faith and hope in the Lord; for though it is a happiness so to die, both to persons themselves, and to their friends and relations, yet these are not the only persons that are blessed; there are some who all their life-time are subject to bondage, and go off in the dark, and yet are happy; but to die in the Lord is to die interested in him, in union to him; which union is not dissolved by death, and which preserves from all condemnation, at death or at judgment, and secures the soul's immediate entrance into happiness, and the resurrection of the body at the last day, and therefore such must be blessed: the phrase, *from henceforth*, is differently placed; the Ethiopic version connects it with the word *write*, rendering it, *write now*; and the Vulgate Latin version reads it with the next clause, *hereafter, yea, with the spirit*: and so the Latin interpreter of the Syriac version, though that itself seems rather to place it as ours does, and which is

¹ Targum in Psal. xxxvii. 20. T. Bab. Bava Batra, fol. 75. 1. Cuphtor, fol. 109. 1.

² Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4.

³ Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 4. & in Lev. fol. 45. 9. & in Deut. fol. 115

3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 65. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 149. 1. Nishmat Chayim, fol. 59. 1.

⁴ Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 3. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2.

rightest; and is to be understood not of the time of John's writing, thenceforward to the resurrection; for those that died before his time were as happy as those who died after; nor of the time of death, though it is a truth, that from the time of the saints' death, and from the very moment of their separation, they are blessed, and are in a state of happiness until the resurrection; but of that period of time which the declarations made by the three preceding angels refer to, from thenceforward, and after the destruction of antichrist, and during the spiritual reign of Christ: and the sense is, that happy will those persons be that die in Christ within that time, and before the Laodicean church-state takes place; when coldness, lukewarmness, and carnal security will seize upon men, and Christ will come upon them at an unawares; and those sharp and severe times will commence, signified by the harvest and vintage of the earth in the following verses, and which seem to be no other than the end of the world, and the destruction of it; wherefore happy will they be that are got to heaven before that time comes; see Eccl. iv. 1, 2. Isa. lviii. 1, 2. *yea, saith the spirit*, the third witness in heaven, who sets his seal to the truth of what the voice declares, and shews wherein this blessedness will consist: *that they may rest from their labours*; both of body and soul; from all toil of body, and laborious work, from all diseases and distempers of body, and all outward sorrows and calamities men labour under, and are fatigued with in this life; and from all inward troubles, from a body of sin, from the temptations of Satan, and from all doubts and fears, from their present warfare-state, and all conflicts with their spiritual enemies: *and their works do follow them*; they don't go before them, to prepare heaven and happiness for them; nor do they take them along with them, and use them as pleas for their admission into the heavenly glory; but they will follow them, and will be found to praise, and honour, and glory, and will be taken notice of by Christ, and graciously rewarded by him, at his appearing and kingdom. This is directly opposite to the notions of the Jews, who say, that when a man departs this life, his works *go before him*, and say unto him, thou hast done so and so, in such a place, and on such a day *; and that whoever does a good work in this world, it shall *go before him* in the world to come †; and so they † represent good works as saying to a man when he is about to die, "go in peace; before thou gettest thither, אנו מקדימים אותך, *we will go before thee*, as " it is said, Isa. lviii. 8. *thy righteousness shall go before thee.*" Sometimes they say ‡ they go along with him at the time of a man's departure: neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones and pearls accompany him, but the law and good works, as it is said, Prov. vi. 22. *when thou goest it shall lead thee, &c.*

Ver. 14. *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, &c.*] In this verse is a description of the person principally concerned in the harvest of the earth, hereafter mentioned; by whom is designed not some great potentate or prince, an encourager of the Reformation among his subjects; nor an angel in a human shape; nor

Martin Luther, as others; but the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is described by his form, and by his seat, and by what he had on his head, and in his hand: *and upon the cloud one sat like unto the son of man*; so Christ is said to be, ch. i. 13. and in Dan. vii. 13. where there is a like vision of him as here, and which refers to the same time; it is a name by which the Messiah is often called, and is expressive of the truth of his human nature, who was found in fashion as a man, and was really one; for his being like to the son of man designs reality and truth, and not mere appearance; see Matt. xiv. 5. John i. 14. and besides, as this was in vision, it is very properly expressed, for Christ appeared to John in vision like to that human nature in which he is at the right hand of God: and here he is seen *sitting upon the white cloud*; which shews that he was come to judgment in the clouds of heaven, and was set on one of them, as on a throne; and a white cloud represents the purity, uprightness, and justness of his proceedings in judgment; for which reason he is said to be on a white throne, ch. xx. 11. *having on his head a golden crown*; as an ensign of royal majesty, shewing that his kingdom was now come, the time for him to reign personally with his saints on earth a thousand years; and that it was a very glorious one; and that he should now reign before his ancients gloriously; and that it was pure, solid, and durable; see Psal. cxxi. 4. *and in his hand a sharp sickle*: to reap the earth with, as hereafter, and is expressive of his power as King of saints and Judge of the world, to gather all nations before him; for the sickle is used to gather with, as well as to cut down.

Ver. 15. *And another angel came out of the temple, &c.*] Not the Holy Spirit, who, being God omniscient, knows the day and hour of judgment, which is a secret to men and angels, as Napier thinks; since though he dwells in the church as his temple, yet is never called an angel; nor does this angel represent the souls under the altar, who come out from thence, and importunately desire vengeance on the inhabitants of the earth, the worshippers of the beast, who had shed their blood; but rather the mighty angels who shall descend from heaven with Christ, and who shall be employed by him as reapers, to gather in his elect from the four winds, as well as to bind up the tares in bundles, and burn them; unless a set of Gospel ministers, as before, should be intended, who either by divine revelation, or by the signs of the time being come, and observed by them, will know that the harvest, or end of the world, is come; since this angel is said to come out of the temple, the church, which had been measured, and was now opened in heaven, and from whence angels are said to come, ch. xi. 1, 19. and xv. 5, 6. *crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud*: as the first and third angels did, ver. 7, 9. denoting great vehemence and importunity: *thrust in thy sickle, and reap*; which being spoken by an inferior angel, whether this designs the ministering spirits, or preachers of the word, must be understood not as commanding, nor even directing what should be done, but as beseeching and entreating: see Psal. cxxxii. 8. Dr.

* T. Bab. 'Iaarith, fol. 11. 1.

† T. Bab. Sota, fol. 3. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & Nishmat Chayim, fol. 21. 1.

‡ Pirke Eliezer, c. 34. & Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 55. 4.

* Pirke Abot, c. 6. sect. 9.

Lightfoot thinks, and not without reason, that there is here some allusion to the putting in of the sickle, and reaping the first corn in Judea, at the feast of the passover, by the order of the sanhedrim, which sat in the temple; nor did any reap till they had the word given them, *reap*, by the messengers of the court, called *בית דין שלוחי*, the *angels*, or messengers of the *sanhedrim*: to whom the reaper said, shall I reap? and they say to him, *קצור*, *reap*: the reasons follow: for the time is come for thee to reap; the time of the end of the world, and of the judgment of it, which is fixed by God; and of Christ's coming to judge both quick and dead, and of the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the saints: for the harvest of the earth is ripe; the measure of the sins of wicked men will now be filled up, and the afflictions of the saints will be accomplished in them, and the number of God's elect will be completed in effectual vocation; they will be all called, and so things will be ripe for the second coming of Christ. There seems to be some reference to Joel iii. 13. *put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe*: the Jewish doctors ask ^b, to whom is this said? R. Phineas, in the name of R. Hilkiah, says, *למלאכים*, to the *angels*; so the *mighty ones*, in ver. 11. are by Kimchi interpreted of the angels.

Ver. 16. *And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, &c.*] He put forth, and made use of that power which he had in his hand, in answer to the entreaty of the angel, the time being fully come which was fixed for this great event: and the earth was reaped; and the harvest of it was got in; reaping and harvest sometimes are used in an ill sense, and design the wrath of God, and his judgments inflicted upon men; see Isa. xvii. 5. Jer. li. 33. Joel iii. 13. Hence some think, that both this and the vintage following intend the judgments of God upon antichrist, and that they are cotemporary with the pouring out of the fifth and sixth vials upon the beast and his followers; and the rather, since the destruction of Babylon, literally taken, is expressed in such language, Jer. li. 33. though these seem to have respect to times after the fall of the Romish Babylon, before declared in ver. 8. and most interpreters refer the harvest to the last judgment at the end of the world; and which sense is greatly countenanced, and to be illustrated by the parable of the tares and wheat, in Mat. xiii. 30, 39, 41, 42. sometimes these phrases are used in a good sense, and intend the gathering in of souls by the preaching of the Gospel; as there are the appointed weeks of the harvest, so there is a time fixed for the calling and conversion of God's elect; and when this time is come, and especially to any number of them in any particular place, it is an harvest, as in Galilee and Samaria in the times of Christ, Mat. ix. 39. John iv. 35. the reapers are the ministers of the Gospel; such were the apostles of Christ, John iv. 36, 37, 38. and the sickle is the Gospel, by which not only men are cut to the heart, and cut down, and removed from their old bottom, and principles and practices, but are gathered to Christ, and into his churches; and when large numbers are brought in, it is an harvest-time, as in the times of Christ and his apostles; see Isa. ix. 1, 2, 3. Acts ii. 41. 2 Cor. ii.

14. hence some interpreters think that the harvest here has respect to the Reformation, which followed upon the preaching of Luther, Calvin, and others, when a large harvest of souls were gathered in, in Germany, France, England, and elsewhere; but rather it may be thought to refer to the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day, in the spiritual reign of Christ, to which the preceding visions belong, as we have seen; the earth will be reaped indeed, and a great harvest it will be, when a nation shall be born at once, and the vast multitudes of the Gentiles shall be brought in, as in Isa. lxvi. 8. and xlix. 20. and lx. 3—11. and the rather this may be judged to be the meaning of it, since the passage from whence these phrases are borrowed respects the bringing again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, Joel iii. 1, 13. though it seems best to understand it of the Lord's wheat-harvest at the end of the world, when the wheat of the earth shall be reaped, and gathered into Christ's barn, or garner, or into his and his father's kingdom; this reaping of the earth is the removing of the saints out of it, not by death, but by the resurrection of them from the dead; for when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven, and sit on the white cloud, or throne, the dead in him will rise first, and the living saints will be changed, and both will be caught up together, to meet the Lord in the air; so that the earth will be reaped, and be clear of them, and there will be none left in it but the wicked of the world; and what will become of them is declared in the following verses, under the representation of a vintage.

Ver. 17. *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, &c.*] It is a strange conceit of Mr. Brightman's, that this angel is Thomas Lord Cromwell, in the days of King Henry the Eighth, a sincere favourer of pure religion; and that the following angel is Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, a martyr, that had power over fire; and that the vintage, here spoken of, refers to the destroying of religious houses, and disposing of abbey-lands to other uses; which was done under the king's authority, by the former of these, at the instigation of the latter, when those who were set over that business made such havoc of the goods of the Papists, that their houses seemed to swim in their spoils, as in a river of pressed grapes. Dr. Goodwin much better interprets it of God's vengeance upon the carnal Protestants and professors of religion; since it is an angel out of the temple that will execute it, and another from the altar, zealot of God's worship, that will provoke to it; and since the wine-press will be trodden without the city, the church; and which began in the wars in Germany, in the last age, and will have its full accomplishment when the whole outward court is given to the Gentiles; but how these, who are but a few, when compared with the wicked of the world, should be called the vine of the earth, I see not. Mr. Daubuz thinks this vision of the vintage has had, at least in part, its fulfilment in the late wars in the times of Queen Anne, the Popish countries being then made the seat of war, in which they suffered much; rather they come nearest to the truth of the matter, who take this to be the

^a Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 3.

^b Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 92. 1.

battle of the great God Almighty, under the sixth vial, ch. xvi. 14, 16. fought by the word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who will tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, ch. xix. 15. when the beast and false prophet will both be destroyed: but inasmuch as Babylon is before declared to be fallen, ver. 8. and since the gathering in of the Lord's wheat at the first resurrection is designed by the harvest, it is best to understand this vintage of the perdition of ungodly men by fire, at the conflagration of the world, which will be at the beginning of the thousand-years' reign, and of the gathering of them in at the second resurrection, at the end of it, for the destruction of them in hell, soul and body. And by this *angel* is meant, not the saints of the most High; for though they may be said to come out of the temple, the church, and shall judge the world, yet they will not be employed in gathering together the wicked, and casting them into the lake of fire, or wine-press of God's wrath: rather the ministering spirits are intended, who are the reapers at the end of the world, and who will gather the wicked, and bind them like tares in bundles, and cast them into the furnace of fire; though it is best to interpret this of Christ himself, who is often called an Angel in Scripture, as the Angel of God's presence, and the Angel of the covenant; and frequently in this book, as in ch. vii. 2. and viii. 3. and x. 1. because, as Mediator, he is God's messenger; and he may be said to do that, which he does by others, as instruments, as to gather the vine of the earth, and cast it into the wine-press; and he may be said to *come out of the temple which is in heaven*: whether this be understood of heaven itself, which the temple, and especially the most holy place in it, was a figure of; here Christ is, and from hence he is expected to come, and will come at the last day, as Judge of all the earth; or of the church of God, for here Christ dwells, and grants his gracious and spiritual presence until his second and personal coming, with all his saints: and now he will have them all with him, both quick and dead, and will be personally in his temple, the church, in the great congregation of the righteous, and out from among them will he display his power in the destruction of the wicked; and the rather he may be thought to be intended, since none but a divine person ever trod the wine-press of God's wrath; see Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. Rev. xix. 13, 15, 16. to which may be added what follows, *he also having a sharp sickle*; the same who is described as like to the son of man, on a white cloud, with a golden crown on his head, and such a sickle in his hand, ver. 14. which is expressive of the same judiciary power and authority.

Ver. 18. *And another angel came out from the altar, &c.*] Where are the souls of the martyrs of Jesus, ch. vi. 9. and whom this angel is thought by some to represent, in his address to him that had the sharp sickle, crying for vengeance on the wicked of the earth, who had shed their blood: the allusion seems to be to the altar of burnt-offerings, where the sacrifices were slain, and on which they were burnt with fire;

and which was an emblem of the strict justice of God, shewing, that those persons, for whom these sacrifices were offered, deserved to be treated in like manner; and here the angel coming from thence signifies, that he came on the behalf of the justice of God, entreating that he, to whom vengeance belonged, would execute it upon all the ungodly, who were ripe for judgment: and hence it is further said of him, *which had power over fire*; whether the angels, as they have presided over particular kingdoms and states, Dan. x. 20, 21. preside over the elements, since this angel had power over fire, and another angel is called the angel of the waters, ch. xvi. 5. may be considered. According to the Jews^c there are *מלאכי אש*, *angels of fire*, and *מלאכי מים*, *angels of the waters*; particularly it is said^d, that Gabriel is *שר של אש*, *the prince of fire*, or *that has power over fire*, and Jurkemo is *שר הברד*, *prince of hail*, or has power over it: however, fire is to be taken here, not for the spirit, and his gifts, which not a created angel, but Christ only, has a power over, to baptize with; nor the Gospel, nor martyrdom, but rather the wrath of God, which in Scripture is often compared to fire, of which this angel was an executioner: and indeed here it may be referred, both literally to the burning of the world, and the wicked in it, in which the angels may be concerned, who will descend with Christ in flames of fire, taking vengeance on the wicked; and figuratively to hell-fire, and the destruction of the wicked in it, who will be cast into it by the angels of God. *And cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle*, as in ver. 15. expressing like vehemence and importunity, saying, *thrust in thy sharp sickle*: not commanding or directing, but entreating as before: *and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth*: not the vine of God's planting, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, the church of Christ; but the vine of the earth, of wicked and earthly men, whose *vine is the vine of Sodom*, &c. Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. and which is spread over the whole earth; a wild vine, whose grapes are gall, clusters bitter, and their wine the poison of dragons; and to such a vine the wicked are compared, for their emptiness and unfruitfulness, their uselessness and unprofitableness, and for their being fit fuel for everlasting burnings; see Ezek. xv. 2, 3, 4, 5. And the *clusters* of it may denote the great multitude of the wicked now to be cut down, gathered in, and destroyed, for the reason given, *for her grapes are fully ripe*: their wickedness very great, their iniquity full, the measure of their sins filled up, and they fitted for destruction, and ripe for ruin; see Joel iii. 13. Some understand this of the degenerate church of Rome, and the destruction of it; see Rev. xix. 15.

Ver. 19. *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, &c.*] Before upon the earth, when the harvest was gathered in, the wheat being on the earth, but not belonging to it; but here *into the earth*, the vine being the vine of the earth, rooted in it, and natural to it: *and gathered the vine of the earth*; the Arabic version reads, *of the whole earth*; in like manner as the tares in the parable are said to be gathered, and bound in bundles, and cast into the fire, which, as here, intends the destruc-

^c Sopher Raziel, fol. 99. 2. Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 11.

^d T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1.

tion of the wicked, at the end of the world; this vine may be said to be cut down at the burning of the world, and to be gathered at the second resurrection, as the wheat-harvest of the saints will be at the first resurrection: *and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God*; the same with the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, so often mentioned in this book: the torments of the wicked will lie in the wrath of God being poured forth upon them, and into them, which will be that fire that can't be quenched, and that worm that never dies; and this is signified by the squeezing of grapes in a wine-press, as God's judgments in this world sometimes are, Isa. lxiii. 3, 6. and which will be very heavy and intolerable, since this wine-press will be trod by the Lord God Almighty: and it is said to be a *great* one, as it must needs be, to hold the vine of the whole earth, or all the wicked of the world, who will be like the sand of the sea, innumerable; and this will be big enough for them all, and they will all be cast into it at once. Tophet is deep and large, Isa. xxx. 33.

Ver. 20. *And the wine-press was trodden without the city, &c.*] The beloved city, the new Jerusalem, into which none of the wicked will enter, and without which are dogs, §c. Rev. xx. 9. and xxi. 27. and xxii. 15. The allusion may be, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, to the olive-presses, which were without the city of Jerusalem, from whence Gethsemane had its name, whither our Lord went, and where his sorrows began the night he was betrayed: hell is sometimes expressed by outer darkness, and said to be far off from heaven, and between the one and the other a great gulf is fixed,

the distance is considerable; hence men are said to go forth to behold the miseries of the wicked; see Matt. xxii. 13. Luke xvi. 23, 26. Isa. lxvi. 24. *and blood came out of the wine-press*; alluding to the juice squeezed out of grapes, called the blood of grapes, Gen. xlix. 11. *Even unto the horses' bridles, for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs*; which is only an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the largeness and universality of the destruction of the wicked, and the impossibility of their escaping it. In like manner the Jews express a great slaughter of men; so of the slaughter at Bithur, by Adrian, they say^c, they went on slaying ער ששקע ברום ער-הווימו until a horse plunged in blood up to his nostrils, and the blood ran four miles into the sea; which is not to be understood literally, but as expressing a prodigious effusion of blood: and as to the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, perhaps there may be an allusion to the measure of the land of Israel, and the common notion of it among the Jews, who make it to be the square of four hundred *parsæ*^d: hence they often speak of the land of Israel shaking and moving four hundred *parsæ*, upon some extraordinary occasions^e; and a *parsæ* contained four miles^f, so that four hundred *parsæ* made a thousand and six hundred miles; and if miles and furlongs are the same, in which sense only the land of Israel could be so large, here is the exact space; for Jerom^g, who was an inhabitant of it, says, it was scarce 160 miles in length, to which agrees R. Menachem^h; and it may be observed, that the Arabic version renders the words, *by the space of a thousand and six hundred miles*. The Æthiopic version, very wrongly, reads, *sixteen furlongs*.

C H A P. XV.

THIS chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the seven vials, and contains a vision of the seven angels in heaven that should do this work, of a chorus of harpers on this occasion, and of the same seven angels coming out of the temple, and receiving the vials, in order to execute their commission. The vision of the seven angels, having the seven last plagues, so called because filled up with the wrath of God, is said to be a sign, great and marvellous, ver. 1. a sea of glass, mingled with fire, is seen, with persons standing on it, described by the victory they had got over the beast, his image, mark, and number of his name; by having the harps of God in their hands, and by the song they sung, called the song of Moses, and of the Lamb; in which they ascribe to Christ deity, dominion over the saints, omnipotence, justice, truth, and holiness; give him glory, celebrate his works, commend his ways, and suggest that he ought to be the object of the fear and worship of all, ver. 2, 3, 4. Next the temple in heaven is seen opened, out of which come the seven angels, described by the place

they came from, the temple; by what they had, the seven plagues; by their habit, clothed in pure white linen; and by their golden girdles about their breasts, ver. 5, 6. to whom one of the four living creatures, made mention of in ch. iv. delivers to them seven golden vials full of divine wrath, upon which the temple is filled with smoke from the Lord; so that it was not possible for any one to enter into it, until these seven plagues were ended, ver. 7, 8.

Ver. 1. *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, &c.*] This chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the seven vials, as ch. i. is to the sending of the seven epistles, and ch. iv. to the seven seals and seven trumpets: the vision is called a *sign*, because what was seen was significant of future events; a sign of the coming of Christ, of his kingdom, and of the destruction of antichrist; and it is said to be a sign *in heaven*, where John was clothed up, and where he had his visions; and it was *another*, a different one from that in ch. xii. 1. which represented the downfall of Paganism, but this the downfall of Popery; and it is

^c T. Hieros. Taamioth, fol. 69. 1.

^d T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 1. Gloss. in ib.

^e T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. & Menachot, fol. 64. 2.

^h T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 92. 2. Gloss. in ib.

ⁱ Ad Dardanum, fol. 22. 1. Tom. 3.

^k In Gen. fol. 60.

a very great one, it is expressive of great things, as the fall of Babylon the great, or the judgment of the great whore, and the great glory of the church and kingdom of Christ; and it is *marvellous*, for the two grand events it respects are very wonderful; as that antichrist, who was once in such power, should be destroyed, and that by such weak means, in the esteem of men, as the preaching of the Gospel, which is no less marvellous than the fall of Jericho by the sound of rams' horns; and that the church, which was in so low an estate in the wilderness, for the space of 1260 days or years, should become so glorious. The vision follows, *seven angels, having the seven last plagues*; these are not the same angels that blew the seven trumpets, for they are not cotemporary with them, but are more likely the same with those in the preceding chapter; though they seem rather to be different from them: if these were angels literally understood, their having plagues is no objection to their being good angels, since such are often the executioners of God's wrath; and that these were good ones, appears from one of them talking with John, and shewing him the judgment of antichrist, and another the bride, the Lamb's wife, and her glory, ch. xvii. 1. and xxi. 9. though they seem rather to be the ministers of the Gospel, since they are said to come out of the temple, ver. 6. and since the destruction of antichrist will be by the breath of Christ's mouth, or by the preaching of the Gospel; unless it should be thought that members of churches are designed, since these angels receive their vials from one of the four living creatures, ver. 7. or preachers of the word; and may denote some very principal men, as kings, who will now be come to Zion, and be members of Gospel churches, and will be the nursing fathers and protectors of them; and these will hate the whore, and burn her flesh with fire; but of these angels, see more on ver. 6. They are said to have *the seven last plagues*; that is, in their vials; for these seven plagues are the same with the seven vials of the wrath of God, to be poured out upon antichrist; and are no other than so many steps, ways, and means, by which God will bring on and finish his destruction: these are called the *last plagues*, because they will be in the last days: there have been plagues before, as at the destruction of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the plagues of Egypt, and the downfall of several monarchies and kingdoms, and of Paganism in the Roman empire; but these will fall upon antichrist, and will be the last upon him, for they will issue in his utter ruin; they will be the last plagues upon the earth, there will be no other after them, but the conflagration of the world, and the general destruction of the wicked in hell. These plagues are the same with the third woe, and are an explanation of it, and belong to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which brings in the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of Christ, and the time of God's wrath upon the nations, or Gentiles, the Papists, and of judging the dead, and destroying them that destroyed the earth, ch. xi. 15, 18. for these plagues don't follow upon the harvest and vintage, nor has this vision any respect to them, nor to be connected with the preceding chapter, but with ch. 11. and gives an enlarged

view, both of the glory of Christ's kingdom, and of the ruin of antichrist, by these plagues, called the last: *for in them is filled up the wrath of God*; upon the beast, and his followers.

Ver. 2. *And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire, &c.*] Not baptism, but rather the blood of Christ, which may be compared to a sea, for its abundant virtue and efficacy in cleansing from all sin; and to a sea of glass, since in it are clearly seen free justification, full pardon, peace and reconciliation; and may be said to be *mingled with fire*, being attended in the application of it with the spirit of God, whose gifts and graces are sometimes signified by fire: and so, according to others, this sea may represent the pure church of God, as washed in the blood of the Lamb; compared to a sea for the multitude of which it consists, and to a sea of glass, because of the transparency and clearness of its principles and practices, and may be said to be mingled with the fire of love and zeal: most interpreters understand it of the world, which is like a sea for the multitude of its inhabitants; and sometimes to a troubled one, because of the restlessness and inquietude of the wicked in it; but here it is like a sea of glass, for the quiet, and peace, and rest it shall be in at this time; though it is commonly said to be like such a sea, partly because all things are manifest, and open to an omniscient God; and partly because of its outward splendour, and the brittleness, frailty, and transitoriness of it; and to be mixed with fire, either because of the light of the Gospel, and the operation of the spirit in the hearts of some that are in it, or because of the afflictions and persecutions of the saints in it; though it seems best of all to understand it of the Gospel, as in ch. iv. 6. see the note there; and which may be said to be mingled with fire, either because of the powerful and clear demonstration of the spirit that attends it to the minds of many, or that heat of persecution which is raised by it; see Luke xii. 49. or rather it denotes the purity of the Gospel in those times, its general spread, and the great zeal and fervour of the professors of it, since persecution will now be at an end. *And them that had gotten the victory over the beast*: over antichrist, signified by the beast, that rose up out of the sea, and out of the earth, ch. xiii. 1, 11. and which are the same, and were but one, though in different forms, as from hence appears: the beast first overcame the saints, by slaying of them; and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, by preaching and professing the Gospel, by their close and constant adherence to it, and by dying for it: *and over his image*; caused by him to be made to the first beast; and is no other than the Popish religion, which bears a resemblance to Paganism; and which the saints may be said to get the victory over, by standing up against it, opposing and refuting it, not giving into it, but bearing their testimony against it: *and over his mark*; refusing to receive it either in their forehead, or in their right hand; that is, either to swear allegiance to him, or profess his religion. This clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: and *over the number of his name*: that is, they would not own his supremacy and authority, nor embrace his doctrines, nor obey

his orders, nor be reckoned his followers in any form or shape; see ch. xiii. 15, 16, 17, 18. These conquerors John saw *stand on the sea of glass*; which, if applied to the blood of Christ, shews that these confessors were purified by it, and were more than conquerors through it; that they were come out of great tribulation, and had washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and were just come up from the washing, and stood upon, or rather by, or *near the sea*, as the Arabic version renders it, in allusion to the priests at the molten sea, in the temple: but if the world is meant by the sea, their standing upon it designs their victory and triumph over it by faith, their having it under their feet, and their contempt of it; but rather, since the Gospel is intended, it may denote their solid standing upon the doctrines of it, the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and their steadfast continuance in them, and faithful abiding by them, whereby they got the victory over antichrist: *having the harps of God*: their hearts in an excellent frame, tuned and disposed by God, to sing his praise, and set forth his glory; having them filled with spiritual joy and gladness, and with great thankfulness, on account of their victory, the happy state of Christ's church, and the destruction of its enemies: the allusion is to the people of Israel, Moses and the men, and Miriam and the women with timbrels and dances standing on the sea-shore, when the Egyptians were destroyed, singing the praises of God; as is still more manifest from the following verse.

Ver. 3. *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, &c.*] Not that in Deut. xxxii. 1. but that in Exod. xv. 1. and the sense is, either that they observed the law of Moses, which he as a servant in the Lord's house faithfully delivered, and kept it distinct from the Gospel, and did not blend them together, as in the times before; or rather, that they sung a song like that of Moses, and on a like occasion. Pharaoh was the very picture of the pope of Rome; his oppression and cruel usage of the Israelites represent the tyranny and cruelty of the Romish antichrist; and the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the destruction of the Egyptians at the Red sea, which occasioned the song of Moses, were an emblem of God's bringing his people out of antichristian bondage, and of the ruin of antichrist, upon which this song is sung; and Rome, in this book, is called Egypt, ch. xi. 8. The Jews have a notion, that the very song of Moses itself will be sung in the world to come, in the days of the Messiah; for they say, there are in it the times of the Messiah, and of Gog and Magog, and of the resurrection of the dead, and the world to come¹. And this song was sung by the Levites in the daily service^m. *And the song of the Lamb*: the Lamb of God, who was slain for the sins of men; the same song of which mention is made, ch. v. 9. and xiv. 3. the song of redeeming love, a song of praise for the blessings of grace which come through him, and of deliverance by him: *saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty*; Christ is in this song addressed as a divine person, as Lord of all, God over all, blessed

for ever, the Almighty God, as his works declare him to be; his works of creation, providence, and redemption, which are all great and marvellous, particularly the accomplishment of the glorious things spoken of his church, and the destruction of his enemies, which are here designed: *just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints*: made so by his father, and acknowledged by all his people, and especially at this time, when his kingdom will more visibly and gloriously appear: the Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, the Complutensian edition, and Arabic version, read, *King of nations*, as in Jer. x. 7. from whence this, and the beginning of the next verse, seem to be taken; the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, *King of ages*, an everlasting King, as in Jer. x. 10. but the generality of copies read as we have it: and the ways of this King are just and true; his purposes, decrees, and counsels of old, are faithfulness and truth; all his proceedings towards his own people, his subjects, are mercy and truth; his precepts and ordinances, his worship and service, are just and true, in opposition to every false way; and all his judgments upon his enemies, which are intended, are just, being what their sins deserved, and are true, being agreeably to his word and threatenings.

Ver. 4. *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, &c.*] At this time the people of the Jews shall seek after Christ, and fear him and his goodness; the forces of the Gentiles shall be brought into Zion, whose heart shall then fear, and be enlarged; the fear of the Lord will be in all places, and in all men, both Jews and Gentiles, Hos. iii. 5. Isa. lx. 5. *and glorify thy name?* by ascribing all divine perfections to him, giving him divine worship and adoration, and attributing the whole of salvation to him, and the glory of all that is done for his church, and against its enemies: *for thou only art holy*: not only perfectly holy, as man, but infinitely and essentially holy, as God, and the fountain of holiness to his people, as Mediator: this character seems to be given in opposition to antichrist, who arrogantly assumes the title of holiness to himself, when it only belongs to Christ. *For all nations shall come and worship before thee*: the Gospel shall now be preached to all nations, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of it; the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's, and his kingdom shall be to the ends of the earth, and all people shall obey him: the words seem to be taken, with some other phrases before used, out of Psal. lxxxvi. 8, 9, 10. *for thy judgments are made manifest: or thy justifications, or righteousnesses*; the perfect righteousness of Christ, and the doctrine of justification by it, will now be most clearly revealed, and generally received, in opposition to the Popish doctrine of merits, works of supererogation, &c. or the judgments of the King of saints upon antichrist, who will now avenge their blood, which he has shed; see ch. xvii. 1. and xix. 2. and the justice and righteousness of his proceedings against the man of sin will be notorious and manifest to all, and be acknowledged, as in ch. xvi. 5, 6. and xix. 1, 2.

Ver. 5. *And after that I looked, &c.*] That is, after John had seen the above vision, he looked again, and

¹ Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 2. & 24. 3, 4. & 25. 2. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

^m Maimon. Tamidim, c. 6. sect. 9.

saw what follows: *and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened*: this does not refer to heaven itself, the antitype of the holy of holies, which is opened by the blood of Christ, by which he himself has entered, and his people have boldness to enter now by faith, and where their souls always enter upon their departure from their bodies; for of this temple can't be said what is in ver. 8. nor to the Jerusalem state, or the most glorious state of the church on earth, during the thousand-years' reign; for in that there will be no temple, ch. xxi. 22. much less to any material temple on earth; the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed before this vision was, and is never to be rebuilt; nor will there be any third temple, as the Jews vainly expect: but to the church of God in the spiritual reign of Christ, under the blowing of the seventh trumpet; and designs the same thing as in ch. xi. 19. and this is to be understood as what will be, not before, but after the seven angels have poured out their vials; for till they have fulfilled the seven plagues, there is no entering into the temple for smoke, ver. 8. and besides, it was *after these things*; after John had seen the seven angels, with the seven last plagues, ver. 1. that he beheld the temple opened. The church is called *the temple*, in allusion to Solomon's temple, because of its builder, materials, situation, magnificence, strength, holiness, and use; see the note on 2 Cor. vi. 16. and *the tabernacle*, in allusion to the tabernacle of Moses, which was before the temple, because God dwells in it, as he did in that; and because like that it is movable, and but for a while; and points at this church-state, which will not always be so, but change and sink into the Laodicean state: and it is called *the tabernacle of the testimony*, as that was; the testimony was the law, or the two tables of stone, so called, because they testified what was the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; and these being put into the ark, were a testimony of the covenant between God and the people of Israel, and were a witness against them, when they transgressed them, Deut. xxxi. 26, 27. and over these were the mercy-seat, and cherubim, as a testimony of the divine Presence; and the law being put into the ark, hence the ark was called the ark of the testimony, and that being placed in the tabernacle, that was called the tabernacle of the testimony, or of witness, Numb. i. 50. Acts vii. 44. and all these were types of, and came to signify Christ, and the covenant of grace, the Gospel, and the mysteries of it: so that by the opening of the temple, &c. is meant a free exercise of the true religion, a setting up of Gospel churches according to the original plan, a keeping of the ordinances, as they were first delivered, and a more clear discovery of Gospel truths: it is the same with the open door in the Philadelphian church-state, ch. iii. 8. as well as that at this time there will be a full manifestation of the judgments of God upon antichrist: the Alexandrian copy leaves out the word *behold*.

Ver. 6. *And the seven angels came out of the temple, &c.*] By which it appears, that they are such who

are of, or belong to the church of Christ; and are either ministers, or members of churches, who will be the executioners of God's wrath upon the beast, and his followers; some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, *out of heaven: having the seven plagues*: that is, they were appointed to inflict them, and were preparing and furnishing for it, and quickly had orders to do it: *clothed in pure and white linen*; in which habit angels have been used to appear, as at our Lord's resurrection and ascension, and is by some thought to be expressive of the purity and holiness of angels; but rather saints are meant, who appear in the habit of priests; being all made kings and priests; and denotes their being clothed with the pure and spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, which is fine linen, clean and white, and the righteousness of the saints, ch. xix. 8. and also their spiritual joy in their present situation, and in the view of the destruction of antichrist, their sackcloth being put off, in which they, the witnesses, before appeared. So the linen garment of the high-priest was, as Philo the Jew says, made of *fine linen, καθαριστατος, most pure*. The Alexandrian copy, and some copies of the Vulgate Latin version, and some exemplars mentioned by Andreas Cæsariensis, an ancient commentator on this book, read, *clothed with a stone, pure and white*; as if they were arrayed in garments of stone, which is not likely; unless reference is had to the stone asbestos, of an iron colour, found, as Pliny says, in the mountains of Arcadia, of which linen was made, called *asbestinum*, and of that garments; which were so far from being consumed by fire, that they became clean and brighter by it; or to the Carystian stone, which the inhabitants of Carystus used to comb, spin, and weave, and make carpets of. *And having their breasts girded with golden girdles*: such an one as Christ himself was girded with, ch. i. 13. and this some understand of the love, which the breasts of angels are filled with towards the saints, and their readiness to perform all good offices to them, and to execute the judgments of God upon their enemies, whenever they have orders: but since these angels come out of the temple, and members of Gospel churches seem designed, rather this is to be understood either of the grace of faith, which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, which receives the righteousness of Christ, puts it on, and girds it about the believer; or of love, the love of God and Christ, which encompass the saints about, and constrain them, and engage them in fervent love to them, and one another: or of the girdle of truth, Eph. vi. 14. which is near and close to them, and which keeps them close to Christ; nor can they depart totally and finally from him, or that; or in general, this may denote their strength and readiness for what service they shall be called to; see Luke xii. 35, 36. 1 Pet. i. 13.

Ver. 7. *And one of the four beasts, &c.*] Or living creatures: now we hear of them, as of the four-and-twenty elders, under the blowing of the seventh trumpet, ch. xi. 16. with which this vision is cotemporary; these living creatures are the ministers of the Gospel;

^a De Somniis, p. 597.

^b Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 10.

^c Paucior ref. minorab. par. 1. tit. 4. & Salmuth in ib. Plin. l. 19.

c. 1. Turneb. Adversar. l. 23. c. 1. Schotti Thaumaturg. l. 2. sect. 10. p. 118.

see the note on ch. iv. 6. and this was *one*, or the first of them, who was like a lion, for fortitude and courage, and whose voice was as the noise of thunder, ch. iv. 7. and vi. 1. and so fitly represents those ministers who shall give out the vials of God's wrath: not any particular person is designed, who shall be at this time; and much less Luke the evangelist, as Lord Napier thinks; nor Peter, who prophesied of the last time, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11. as Grotius; but a set of Gospel ministers, comparable to one of the living creatures John had before seen; of whom it is said, that they gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who lineth for ever and ever: these seven vials are for the seven last plagues to be put into, and out of which they are to be taken, or poured, and inflicted; see ch. xxi. 9. hence it appears, that the seven plagues, and the wrath of God, are the same thing, and both design God's judgments upon antichrist; and these being expressed by *vials*, which are measures, and large ones, shew the large abundance and plenteous effusion of God's wrath, and the secret, sudden, and irresistible power of it; and yet that it will be poured out in measure, according to righteous judgment, and therefore it is put into vials; and these golden ones, expressive of the purity, holiness, and justice of the divine proceedings: and it will be very terrible; it will be, not the wrath of men, but of God, and a cup of the fierceness of his wrath; it will be the wrath of the living God, of him that lives for ever, and as he is, such will his wrath be; it will continue for ever, for this wrath will issue in the everlasting destruction of antichrist: so the wrath of God is signified by a wine-cup of fury, Jer. xxv. 15. and that destruction, and those plagues which God designed to bring upon Pharaoh, are by Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum on Gen. xl. 12. called פִּילֵא דְרַחֲמֵי, a vial of wrath, which he should drink of: and in the pouring out of these seven vials, there is in some of them a manifest allusion to the plagues of Egypt. So the cup of trembling, in Isa. li. 17. is by the Targumists called פִּילֵא, a vial, and also the cup of fury, ver. 22. and that these vials were not small narrow-mouthed vessels, but large broad-mouthed ones, and more properly basins or bowls, is manifest from the use of the word with Jewish writers. The dishes on which the loaves of the shewbread were set, each of which loaves was ten hands breadth long, and five broad^q, are by the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on Exod. xxv. 29. Numb. iv. 7. called פִּילֵא, vials; and so the chargers offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, Numb. vii. 13, 84, 85. are, by the same, rendered vials, which weighed 130 shekels; and so the silver bowl they offered, is, by Josephus^r, called a vial: the bowls in Amos vi. 6. are, by the Targum there, said to be silver vials. The lordly dish brought by Jael to Sisera, Judg. v. 25. the Targum calls the vial of the mighty ones; and the earthen vessels used at the trial of the suspected wife, and at the cleansing of the leper, are both by Jewish writers said to be vials^s. Now these vials were given

to the seven angels by one of the living creatures, the ministers of the word; from whence it seems that these angels design members of churches, as distinct from ministers; and may intend civil magistrates, and very principal ones, as kings of the earth, who, in this state of things, and times, will belong to the churches, and will be the instruments of destroying antichrist: and these vials may be said to be given to them by the ministers, since they will execute this vengeance in consequence of their prayers, and the churches', called vials full of odours, ch. v. 8. and because these great men will be stirred up by the ministers of the Gospel, and by their ministrations, to do this work; see ch. xviii. 4, 5, 6.

Ver. 8. *And the temple was filled with smoke, &c.*] Not with the smoke of false doctrine and superstition; that comes out of the bottomless pit, this from God, ch. ix. 1. and besides, Gospel churches will grow purer and purer, while the seven angels are pouring out the vials: but rather this may be understood of judicial blindness and hardness of heart, upon the antichristian party, which will come upon them from God in righteous judgment; so that they will not be reformed by the plagues, and vials of wrath, nor repent of their sins; but blaspheme God, who has power over the plagues, and so shall not be able to enter into the temple: or else this may design God's powerful and gracious presence in his church, in allusion to the cloud which filled the tabernacle, so that Moses could not enter; and which filled the temple, so that the priests could not minister, Exod. xl. 34, 35. 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. since this is said to be from the glory of God, and from his power: whose presence is the glory in the midst of his church, and a covert, a protection and defence, to the saints, so that none can come into the temple to hurt them: see Isa. iv. 5, 6. or rather this intends the smoke of the anger of God, as the Ethiopic version renders it, and which is intolerable; and it may have respect not only to the wrath of God, which is insupportable, but to that great affliction which will befall the saints in those times, through the last struggle of the beast; called the earthquake, and the hour of temptation, and a time of trouble, as never the like was, and which will be shortened for the elect's sake: and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. None of the antichristian party will attempt to enter in, because of their blindness and obduracy; nor can they get in to do any mischief, because the glorious and powerful presence of God is a defence against them: and this may also have some respect to the darkness of God's judgments, which will not be clearly manifest until these seven plagues are accomplished; till that time God's judgments on antichrist will remain a great deep, and be unsearchable; there will be no entering into the temple, so as fully to understand them, which is meant by going into the sanctuary of God, Psal. lxxiii. 17. and this makes the interpretation of the pouring out of these vials, in the next chapter, very difficult.

^q Misn. Menachot, c. 11. sect. 4. 5.

^r Antiqu. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 10.

^s Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 2. Joseph Antiqu. l. 3. c. 11. sect. 6. Misn. Negaim, c. 10. sect. 1.

C H A P. XVI.

THIS chapter gives an account of the pouring out of the seven vials by the angels; their orders for it are in ver. 1. The first angel pours out his vial on the earth, the effect of which is a noisome and grievous sore upon the followers of antichrist, and the worshippers of his image, ver. 2. The second pours out his upon the sea; the events of it are, the sea became blood, and every living creature in it died, ver. 3. The third pours out his upon the rivers and fountains of water, which thereby became blood; upon which the angel of the waters applauds the justice of God, declaring the righteousness of his judgments, and giving a reason for it; and which is confirmed by another angel from the altar, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. The fourth angel pours out his vial on the sun, the effects of which are, scorching men with heat, their blasphemy against God, and impotence, ver. 8, 9. The fifth pours out his on the seat of the beast, the consequences of which are darkness in his kingdom, men gnawing their tongues because of their pains, their blasphemy of the name of God because of them, and their impotence, ver. 10, 11. The sixth angel pours out his on the river Euphrates, and what followed upon it are, the drying up of that river to make way for the kings of the east; there unclean spirits are seen, described by their original, coming out of the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet; by their form, like frogs; by their internal nature, spirits of devils; by their works, doing miracles; by the errand they are sent, and go upon, to gather the kings of the earth to the battle of God Almighty, which they succeed in; but before this is done, a declaration is made of the suddenness of Christ's coming, exciting the saints to watchfulness, and to keep their garments, that they might not be naked, and exposed to shame, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Then the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, the consequences of which are, a voice from heaven declaring it is done: other voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake; a rupture of the great city into three parts; the fall of other cities; the remembrance of Babylon before God; the flight of every island and mountain, and a great hail-storm, which causes men to blaspheme God, ver. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And I heard a great voice out of the temple, &c.*] The church, which in the preceding chapter is said to be opened; this was either the voice of God, whose temple the church is, and where he dwells, and who has power over these plagues, ver. 9. and who, when he is about to bring judgments on the earth, is said to roar out of Zion, Joel iii. 16. or of Christ, who is always in the midst of his church and people, and whose voice is as the voice of many waters; see ver. 15. or it may be of one of the four living creatures, the ministers of the word, in and by whom Christ often speaks; and the rather, since one of these gave the seven angels the golden vials of the wrath of God, they are now bid to pour out. *Saying to the seven angels, go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth;* for though these angels had the

seven last plagues to inflict, and the seven vials of God's wrath to pour out, and were in a readiness to do it, yet they did not move without an order, which is here given them; and they are bid to go their ways, from the temple, the church, where they were, and of which they were members, to the several parts of the antichristian empire; and there pour out all the wrath and vengeance of God upon his enemies, and theirs, and leave nothing behind, but give them the dregs of every cup of his fury: the earth here is to be taken in a larger sense than in the following verse, and includes the land and sea, the fountains and rivers, and even the ambient air, and also the sun in the firmament, as the pouring out of these vials upon them shew; and designs the whole apostate church, consisting of earthly men, all the inhabitants of the earth, that worship the beast. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Complutensian edition, read, *the seven vials of the wrath of God;* these seven vials are not cotemporary, much less the same with the seven trumpets; there is indeed a likeness between them in some things, especially in the first four; for as the first four trumpets affect the earth, the sea, the fountains, and rivers of water, and the sun, so the first four vials are poured out on the same, and that in the same order; first on the earth, and then on the sea, &c. and which will give some light, and be a direction to observe the several parts of the antichristian empire, which will suffer by these vials, and the order in which their ruin will proceed; and as the trumpets were so many gradual steps to the ruin of the Roman empire, eastern and western, when become Christian, so these vials are so many gradual steps to, and which issue in the ruin of, both the eastern and western antichrist; though they don't respect the same things, nor the same times: the trumpets respect the Roman empire as Christian, under the government of emperors, after the downfall of Paganism in it; and the vials respect the antichristian powers in their several branches, under the pope and Turk. Antichrist did not appear until the fifth trumpet sounded, whereas the first vial is poured out upon his followers and worshippers, ver. 2. from whence it is a clear point, that the first trumpet and the first vial cannot be cotemporary; and the same judgment may be made of the rest: and it may be further observed, that these vials are only poured out on the enemies of God and of Christ, and of his church and people; for no wrath can be poured out upon the saints, nor the least drop of it can fall upon them; this would not be consistent with God's everlasting love to them, with the satisfaction of Christ made for them, nor with the blessings of justification, pardon, adoption, &c. bestowed on them; not but that they may meet with trouble in the time of these vials, through the wars that will be in the world, and through the struggles of the beast of Rome, especially its last, which will be the hour of temptation, and that time of trouble than which never

was the like; yet all will work for, and issue in their good, and they will rejoice in God's righteous judgments; the blow will be upon antichrist, the vengeance of God will fall upon those that have the mark of the beast, and the worshippers of his image, upon the seat of the beast, even upon Babylon, and the whole Romish jurisdiction, as appears from ver. 2, 10, 19, 20. and also upon the Turkish empire, and all the nations engaged in the interest of both pope and Turk, ver. 12, 13, 14, 16. and it is easy to observe, that there is in many of these vials an allusion to the plagues of Egypt; in the first, ver. 2. to the plague of boils, Exod. ix. 8, 11. in the second and third, ver. 3, 4. to that of turning the waters of Egypt into blood, Exod. vii. 19—21. in the fourth, ver. 10. to the darkness that was over all the land of Egypt, Exod. x. 21, 23. and in the fifth there is a manifest reference to the frogs that distressed the Egyptians, Exod. viii. 5, 6. and in the seventh, to the plague of hail, Exod. ix. 23—26. and they have much the same effect, even the hardening of those on whom they fall, being far from being brought to repentance by them, ver. 9, 11. and this confirms the application of the vials to the destruction of Rome, which is spiritually called Egypt, Rev. xi. 8. and may assure that they will issue in the ruin of antichrist, and in the salvation of God's people, as the plagues of Egypt did in the destruction of Pharaoh, and in the deliverance of the children of Israel; and may also lead us to conclude, that there will be a like quick execution of the one as of the other; for as the plagues of Egypt came very quick one after another, so it seems as if the pouring out of these vials would be in like manner; the angels receive them together, and have their orders at the same time; and they go forth immediately, one after another, if not together, to the respective parts where they are to pour them forth, and which they do directly; see ch. xviii. 8. Moreover, these vials will affect antichrist both with respect to his civil and ecclesiastic capacity, or both in temporals and spirituals, and both antichrists, eastern and western: whether they are begun to be poured out or no, is a question. I am ready to think they are not, because they seem to me to refer to the seventh trumpet, which as yet has not sounded, and are the same with the wrath of God, and the time of the judging the dead, or avenging the blood of the saints, which will be come when that sounds, ch. xi. 18. Besides, the outer court is not entirely given to the Gentiles, nor the witnesses slain, which must be before this time of wrath upon antichrist; not but that there has been some manifest marks of the divine displeasure upon the whore of Rome, and she has been sinking ever since the Reformation, at which time some begin these vials, or before; and she is reduced to a low estate; yet I think not to such a degree as these vials express.

Ver. 2. *And the first went, &c.*] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, *the first angel*, and who undoubtedly is meant, who readily and cheerfully obeyed the orders given him, as did the rest; by this angel cannot be meant Pope Adrian, as Lyra, a Popish interpreter, imagines; for a pope would never hurt the worshippers of the beast, as this angel does; rather some Christian Protestant prince or magistrate is de-

signed, and Brightman applies it to Queen Elizabeth; though a set of kings and princes yet to come seem to be intended: *and poured out his vial upon the earth*; not upon the whole earth, and the inhabitants of it; not upon the temple or church of God, and the worshippers in it, which are measured, hid, and protected; nor upon the Roman Pagan empire, which was destroyed under the sixth seal, and which never had any worshippers of the beast and his image in it, for then he was not risen; nor upon the whole apostate church, only a part of it: some think the meaner and vulgar sort of Papists are meant, who were reformed by the Waldenses, Wickliff, Huss, and others before Luther; but rather the antichristian powers on the continent are designed, and particularly Germany; for as the first trumpet affected the earth, ch. viii. 7. and brought the Goths into Germany, and other inland countries on the continent; so this first vial affects the earth, and brings distress upon the Popish party in the same place: and this respects not the Reformation by Luther, as some have thought, nor the wars of the Turks here in the last age; though were it not for some things unfulfilled, which are to precede these vials, one would be tempted to think that this vial was now pouring out upon the empire; but I rather think this refers to a time of distress yet to come on those parts, and which will issue in a reformation from Popery again; for it should be observed, and it may be observed once for all, that though these vials are so many plagues upon antichrist, they are each of them so many steps to the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory: *and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image*; that is, who were professors of the Popish religion, and adherents of the pope of Rome in those parts; see ch. xiii. 15, 16, 17. who will only feel the effects of this vial, and that by a noisome and grievous sore falling on them, in allusion to the plague of boils in Egypt, Exod. ix. 8—11. by which may be meant, either literally something external, but not the plague in Dioclesian's time, for then the beast was not risen; and there were none that could have his mark or worship his image: some have thought the French disease is intended, which first appeared in the world in 1490, among the Papists, as a just judgment upon them for the horrible and unnatural lusts and uncleanness of the Romish clergy; and others understand it of a very great heat, which will be before the burning of the world, and will raise blisters and boils upon men: or rather this may design something internal, either the remorse of their consciences, reflections on their past practices, and black despair and horror of mind; and their madness, wrath, and fury, their malice and envy at the success of the preachers of the Gospel, and of Protestant states and princes against them; see Deut. xxviii. 27, 28, 34, 35. Moreover, their secret and wicked practices, both in political and ecclesiastical affairs, will be discovered, and they will appear with boils and blotches upon them all over, which will render them odious to the people, and be the means of a general reformation. Mr. Daubuz thinks the curse of wickedness in the ninth and tenth centuries, after the invocation of saints and angels, and the worship of images were settled, is meant.

Ver. 3. *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, &c.*] Not literally; and so does not design the stagnation of it, which 'tis thought will be before the general conflagration; see Amos vii. 4. nor is it to be understood of the sea of this world, and the men of it, who are like a troubled sea; but rather of Popish doctrines and councils, which are a sea of errors, and will now be confuted and put an end to. Brightman applies it to the council of Trent, and makes this angel to be Chemnitius, a German divine, who wrote a confutation of it; but as the sea is a collection of many waters, and many waters in this book signify the people and nations under the Romish yoke, sea here may design the whole jurisdiction of Rome, or mystical Babylon; see Jer. li. 36. and particularly its maritime powers, Spain and Portugal: and as the second trumpet affected the sea, ch. viii. 8. and brought the Vandals into Spain and Portugal, so this second vial affects the sea, and brings great wars, slaughter, and bloodshed into these parts, when they also will be reformed from Popery: *and it became as the blood of a dead man*; thick, clotted together, and putrid, and so never to be returned to their former state: *and every living soul died in the sea*; those that are not reformed will either die by the sword, or fly into other parts; for there will be no comfortable living for the Popish party in those countries where now they live in power, ease, and affluence. This, and the following vial, are referred by Mr. Daubuz, the one to the first crusades, or holy wars, for the regaining of the holy land, and the other to the latter of them.

Ver. 4. *And the third angel poured his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, &c.*] Which also is not to be literally understood of a stagnation of them, before the burning of the world; nor of the destruction of Popish fleets and navies, such as the Spanish armada in 1588, and others since; but rather of Popish writings, of the most learned and subtle men among them, who like rivers and fountains, which supply and fill the sea, support and keep up the Romish jurisdiction and hierarchy; and of the confutation of them by Protestant writers; and of the utter destruction of their principal orders, and chief men among them, as cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, Jesuits, &c. though it seems chiefly to design the places near to Rome, such as Italy and Savoy; for as the third trumpet affects the rivers and fountains, ch. viii. 10. and brings in the Huns into Italy, and issued in the destruction of the empire; so the third vial affects the same, and brings terrible wars, and great effusion of blood, where so much of the blood of the saints have been shed: hence it follows, *and they became blood*; these countries will be covered with blood, and a reformation will ensue upon it; the allusion is to Exod. vii. 19, 20, 21.

Ver. 5. *And I heard the angel of the waters say, &c.*] So we read in Jewish writings¹ of an angel that was *שרא דיבא*, the prince of the sea, and of angels that were over the waters, and others over fire²; though here is designed not one of the *מלאכי מים*, angels of the water, that presided over the waters, as another

over fire; see ch. xiv. 18. and the note there, but the third angel that poured out his vial upon the waters; when he had so done, he said as follows. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and that not without reason, that since these angels appeared in the garb of priests, ch. xv. 6. and since there was a priest appointed to take care of the wells, and fountains, and ditches about Jerusalem, that the people might have water at the feasts³, there is an allusion to him; and certain it is that there was such an officer; there was one Nechoniah, who was over the fountains and ditches⁴; and in the same office was Nicodemus ben Gorion⁵, thought to be the Nicodemus mentioned in the New Testament. *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be*; which may be understood either of God the father, who had power over these plagues, ver. 9. and sent them; or of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and is righteous in all his ways and works, in all his judgments on antichrist, and is the eternal I AM, which is, and was, and shall be; see ch. i. 8. The Alexandrian copy, and most others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read *holy*, instead of *shalt be*; for the purity and holiness of Christ will be seen in the judgments which he will exercise, as follows: *because thou hast judged thus*; or *these things*; or *them*, as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, has brought these judgments upon the men signified by rivers and fountains, and made great havoc and slaughter of them, expressed by their becoming blood; the justice of which appears from the following reason.

Ver. 6. *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, &c.*] Which shews that rivers and fountains can't be literally understood, but men are designed, wicked and bloody men; and it is notorious to all, how much of the blood of the saints, of the preachers of the Gospel, of the prophets and witnesses, have been shed in Italy, Savoy, and other places near Rome, as well as in Rome itself; see ch. xvii. 6. and xviii. 24. *And thou hast given them blood to drink*; sent the sword among them, making great slaughter and devastation; see Isa. xlix. 26. *for they are worthy*; or deserving, to have their blood shed by the law of retaliation.

Ver. 7. *And I heard another out of the altar say, &c.*] That is, another angel that came out of the altar; see ch. xiv. 18. and who represents the souls under the altar, whose blood had been shed by the above persons; compare with this ch. vi. 9. though, there, such whose blood had been shed by Rome Pagan are described; the Ethiopic version calls this angel as before, *the angel of the fountains of water*; and the Alexandrian copy, and Syriac and Arabic versions, read, *I heard the altar saying*: as follows, *even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments*; the same as in ch. xv. 3. and xix. 2. This angel joins the other, and approves and confirms what he says; applauding the judgments of Christ upon the worshippers of the beast, from the verity of them, being what were threatened, and from the justice of them, being what they deserved.

Ver. 8. *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon*

¹ T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 68. 3.

² Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 58. 4. par. 2. fol. 167. 4.

³ Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 15.

⁴ Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.

⁵ Abot R. Nathan, c. 6. fol. 3. 2.

the sun, &c.] Not literally; and so designs not a violent heat, which shall go before, and be a preparation for the burning of the world; nor any sore famine arising from it, which would be common to all, good and bad; but mystically: some understand this of Christ, the sun of righteousness, not of any wrath that shall be poured forth on him again, being now justified in the spirit; but either of that clear shining of Christ in the ministry of the word, in those times this vial refers to; when Zion's light will be come, and the light of the sun will be seven-fold, and Christ alone will be exalted; which clear ministration of Christ, though it will not savingly enlighten, yet will convict and confound the antichristian party; they will be scorched with the beams of heat and light, which will dart from hence; these will torture them, and fill them with envy, rage, and malice, because they will not be able to obscure this light, or stop the progress of it; they themselves will be so enlightened by it, as to see and know the truth of Christ's person, and offices, and grace, and yet will sin against it, and so be guilty of blasphemy against the spirit of God, a sin which will greatly prevail among them; and they will, like the clay, be the more hardened by this light and heat, and will not repent of their sins and errors, nor confess them, nor own the light and conviction they have received: or else of the wrath of Christ, which he will be moved by this angel to stir up against the antichristian party, and which they will be sensible of, and be fearfully looking for. Others, and which comes much to the same sense, understand this of the Scriptures, the fountain of spiritual light, and of the clear interpretation of them in those times; when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and when the day shall declare and make manifest every man's work, and the fire reveal and try it; and the same effects upon the antichristian party shall follow as before: but I rather think this refers to some part of the antichristian state, as in the other vials, or to something belonging to it; some have thought that the house of Austria, the chief family in the empire, or the king of Spain, or the emperor, who were both formerly of that house, or Germany itself, is meant; but the empire, as we have seen, seems to be designed by *the earth* in the first vial; wherefore, rather as the smiting of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, under the fourth trumpet, signifies the utter extirpation of the Roman emperor, and all other Roman magistrates, who were the sun, moon, and stars in that empire; so this vial upon the sun refers to the pope, and his creatures, the cardinals, &c. who is the sun in the antichristian kingdom; and this angel may design the kings of the earth, who will be stirred up against him, by whom he and his dependents will suffer sorely, if not destroyed. *And power was given unto him to scorch men with fire*: which may either respect the burning of Rome, and the adjacent parts; or rather the filling of the antichristian party with rage and malice, at the destruction of the pope, and his creatures; for these men are the same with those in ver. 2.

Ver. 9. *And men were scorched with great heat, &c.*] Burned with rage against the followers of Christ; were filled with envy at the success of his Gospel, and with

fury and madness at the ruinous condition of the antichristian state, being deprived of its head, and chief officers: *and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues*; plagues or judgments are from God, when and wherever they come; they are sent and inflicted by him, and he can lessen or increase them, continue or remove them, as he pleases; and these, unless sanctified, will not reform men, but harden them, and set them a-blessing the author of them. And this blasphemy may either respect the nature and perfections of God, charging him with inequality in his ways, and with injustice and unfaithfulness; or the Gospel, and the truths of it, which declare his glory, and his greatness; and which will now have a general spread, to the great mortification and confusion of the followers of antichrist: *and they repented not to give him glory*: that is, they did not repent of their wicked deeds, their idolatries, murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts, as in ch. ix. 20, 21, so as to own and confess them, which is the meaning of giving glory to God in repentance; see Josh. vii. 19. This shews that repentance is not in man's power, but in the gift of God's grace; for though he may give space, yet if he does not give grace to repent, no man will repent; nor will any means of themselves produce it; as not the most powerful and awakening ministry, as the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and of the Gospel preachers that will be in those times, this vial refers to, nor the greatest mercies and favours, so not the severest judgments; see Amos vi. 6—11. The event of this vial, or the plague of it, is applied, by Mr. Daubuz, to the wars between the emperors and the popes, and between the Guelphs and Gibelines.

Ver. 10. *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, &c.*] The beast is the same with that in ch. xiii. 1, 11, and which again shews that to be one and the same: the seat or throne of the beast is Rome, which, when the empire was Pagan, was the seat of Satan, or the dragon, ch. ii. 13. and when the beast or antichrist was risen, the dragon gave this seat, as well as his authority to him, ch. xiii. 2. and is that city which is so often called, in this book, the great city, and is manifestly pointed out by its seven mountains, on which the city of Rome stood, ch. xvii. 9. and the pouring out of this vial upon it denotes the destruction of it, when it will be burnt down, and become desolate, an habitation of devils, of every foul spirit, and hateful bird, ch. xviii. 2, 9. and this corresponds with the fifth trumpet; for as that brings in the rise of antichrist, both eastern and western, who rose much about the same time, so this vial affects him particularly; the western antichrist, his seat and kingdom. Mr. Daubuz refers this plague to the expulsion of the western and eastern emperors from their capital cities, Rome and Constantinople, and to the mischiefs caused by the antipopes in the west, and to the quarrels and schism in the Greek churches in the fourteenth century. *And his kingdom was full of darkness*; not only of the darkness of false doctrine and superstition, for so it was always, being filled with the smoke of the bottomless pit; nor only of judicial blindness and darkness, which the subjects of the antichristian state are given up unto; but

rather of a discovery of all this, with all their hidden works of darkness, which will now be brought to light; though it seems chiefly to design the great affliction and distress the antichristian state will be in at this time, which darkness sometimes signifies; see Isa. ix. 1, 2. Jer. xiii. 16. Amos. v. 18. it having lost its sun, the pope, under the preceding vial, and its seat, the city of Rome, under this: the sense is, that it will be greatly obscured in its glory and magnificence, in its traffic and riches, ch. xviii. 11—19. its power and authority will be greatly diminished, and it will be had in contempt by the princes of the earth; though it will not as yet be utterly destroyed, for its utter destruction is reserved for the seventh and last vial. The allusion is to the plague of darkness in Egypt, Exod. x. 21, 22, 23. *And they gnawed their tongues for pain*; these are the men of the antichristian party, the subjects of the antichristian kingdom, now become full of darkness, the worshippers of the beast, and his image; these will *gnaw their tongues*, which expresses their inward anguish and distress, their anger, wrath, and fury, their being filled with revenge, and yet in an incapacity to execute it, and will even be afraid to express it; and therefore will bite their tongues in madness; and this *for pain*, for the pain of their mind, at the sad and low estate of the antichristian kingdom.

Ver. 11. *And blasphemed the God of heaven, &c.*] Who made it, and dwells in it, and from whence wrath is revealed, and comes upon the seat of the beast, upon the kingdom of antichrist, and the subjects of that kingdom; they'll curse him who is of right their King, and their God, and look upwards to heaven, where he is, Isa. viii. 21, 22. and this, *because of their pains and their sores*; see ver. 2. the inward frettings and distresses of their minds, the gallings and gnawings of their consciences, the horror and terror of their souls, and their fearful looking-for of judgment, which the present face of things upon antichrist will bring upon them; just as the Egyptians, in the time of their darkness, were distressed with internal guilt, and black horror of mind, and with evil spirits, which were sent among them, and haunted them during that season; see Psal. lxxviii. 49. *and repented not of their deeds*; their antichristian works of darkness; see ch. ix. 20, 21.

Ver. 12. *And the sixth angel poured his vial on the great river Euphrates, &c.*] Which is not to be understood literally of the river Euphrates, which ran through Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and by the walls of Babylon; and of the drying of it up to make way for the Jews in the eastern parts of the world, to pass into their own land, and possess it; when a like miracle will be wrought for them as was when they came out of Egypt, by dividing the Red sea for them; and as when they entered into Canaan's land, by laying the waters of Jordan on heaps, so that they passed over as on dry land; in favour of which sense the passage in Isa. xi. 15, 16. is thought to be, which the Targum interprets of God's smiting the river Euphrates; though the river Nile in Egypt seems rather to be meant: but it does not appear that there is any number of Jews beyond the river Euphrates; the far greater number of them is in the western and northern

parts of the world; so that there will be no need for the drying up of this river for their passage into their own land; nor, if there were any in those parts, can any reason be given why they should be called the kings of the east, who, wherever they are, are a poor contemptible people, and have never had any ensigns of royalty among them for many hundreds of years; nor can that river be thought much to hinder, were all other impediments out of the way, nor the drying of it up much facilitate their passage to Judea, and much less affect their conversion: besides, this vial, as the rest, is a plague on antichrist, in some branch or other, or on some part or other, of the antichristian state; which, if not designed here, is nowhere in the account of this vial, and therefore this must be understood mystically; there is no doubt an allusion to the draining of this river at the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, according as was predicted in prophecy, Isa. xlv. 27, 28. Jer. l. 38. and li. 31, 32, 36, 37. who, making sluices and drains, turned the river another way, and marched through it with his army, and surprised and took the city at once, whilst Belshazzar and his nobles were indulging themselves in rioting and drunkenness, as Daniel relates, ch. v. 1, 2—30. Now some, because that Babylon was situated upon the river Euphrates, and Rome, or the Romish antichrist, is mystical Babylon, think that is here designed, and is the object of this vial; and that the drying up of this river designs the withdrawing of nations and kingdoms, signified by waters, ch. xvii. 15. from its jurisdiction and power, which will bring on its ruin; and also the stoppage of dues and tithes, annates, Peter's pence, and of all its traffic in indulgences, pardons, &c. whereby it will be greatly impoverished, and brought to nothing: but it should be observed, that the fifth vial affects Rome, the seat of the beast; and as for the beast himself, he will not be destroyed till the battle of Armageddon; and mystical Babylon, or the antichristian state, in the whole compass of it, will not be destroyed until the pouring out of the seventh vial; wherefore rather the eastern antichrist, the Turks are meant, in whose dominions this river is; for as the Assyrian monarch is signified by the waters of this river, when he was in his glory, and had his seat at Babylon, by which this river ran, Isa. viii. 7, 8. so may the Turks, who inhabit by this river, be intended by it; and the rather, as this sense exactly corresponds with the sixth trumpet; for as the sounding of that trumpet looses the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates, which founded the Turkish empire, as we have seen; so the pouring out of this sixth vial affects the same empire, and brings it to ruin. Mr. Daubuz is of opinion that this plague refers to the depopulation and destruction of the Grecian empire, and the bringing of the Turks into Europe, who have greatly distressed and tormented the corrupted Christians or Papists. *And the water thereof was dried up*; the Ottoman empire will be extinct, just as the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy is expressed by the drying up of its sea, Jer. li. 36. so the destruction of the Turkish empire is signified by the drying up of the water of this river, which is in the heart of it: and this is the passing away of the second woe, ch. xi. 14. *that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared*; which

some understand of Christians in general, who are made kings and priests unto God, and of Christian kings in particular, whose way will be prepared, by the declining state of antichrist, to express their hatred to the whore of Rome, and burn her flesh with fire; but the Romish antichrist is not here intended: others think, as before observed, that the Jews are designed; that the Jews will be converted in the last days seems manifest from Hos. iii. 5. Rom. xi. 25, 26. and other places; and that they will return to their own land is suggested in abundance of prophecies, particularly in Ezek. xxxvii. 21. and Amos ix. 14, 15. and it must be allowed that the eastern, as well as the western antichrist, is a stumbling to them; and especially the advantage which the Turks have gained over the powers that go under the Christian name, and their possession of their land is an hinderance to their return to it; so that the destruction of the Turkish empire will undoubtedly make way for their conversion, and restoration to their own land; but then this will be equally advantageous to the Jews in the west as to those in the east, if there be any numbers of them there, which does not appear, and therefore there seems no reason why they should be pointed at, and be called the kings of the east: rather therefore to me it seems, that, through the fall of the Ottoman empire, way will be made for the kings and princes of the east, literally understood, to have and embrace the Gospel of Christ; for, the Turks being destroyed, the Mahometan religion will decline, the Gospel will be carried into the eastern parts of the world, into those vast kingdoms and countries which lie in those parts, when they will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and the kings and princes of them will come to the brightness of Zion's rising; so that the ruin of this monarchy will pave the way for the spread of Christ's kingdom from sea to sea, and from the river, the river Euphrates, to the ends of the earth; and this also will prepare the way, and lead on for all the saints, who are kings, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years, who is said to come from the east, ch. vii. 2. or from the rising of the sun, as these are said to do, as the words may be rendered, to possess the kingdom under the whole heaven: Philo the Jew² has some expressions illustrating the literal sense of this, where he speaks of a Roman army on the banks of Euphrates, which kept the passage of the eastern kings.

Ver. 13. *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs, &c.*] Rome, the seat of antichrist, being destroyed, and the kingdom of the beast darkened, and brought into great contempt, Mahometanism greatly declining, the Gospel succeeding everywhere, the Jews being converted, and re-settled in their own land, the devil bestirs himself more than ordinary, and dispatches his, and the emissaries of antichrist, to the kings of the whole earth, that can any ways be engaged on their side, and against the saints; and these are no other than the creatures of antichrist, such as cardinals, priests, and particularly Jesuits, as their original from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, shew. Mr. Daubuz thinks these three are the monks, the religious knights, and secular clergy: and

these are called *spirits*; not because they are what are called familiar spirits, or devils themselves, for they are the spirits of devils, as in the next verse; but either because they pretend to be spiritual men, ecclesiastics, men in spiritual offices, and indeed are spiritual wickednesses in high places; or because of their agility, swiftness, and expeditiousness in going to and fro, Satan-like, to do mischief: and they are said to be *unclean*; as the evil spirits and devils are, being so by nature, and delighting in uncleanness, and giving themselves up to work it with greediness: and they are *like frogs*; the allusion is to the plague of frogs in Egypt, Exod. viii. 5, 6, and these antichristian emissaries are fitly compared to them, for their impurity, and pleasure they take in it, as frogs do in dirt and filth; and for their being talkative, impudent, and troublesome, like the noisy croaking frogs; so *rhetoricians* are by Cicero² compared to frogs; and as the frogs of Egypt got into the king's bedchamber, Exod. viii. 3. Psal. cv. 30. so these get into the private retirements of princes, into their cabinet councils, and stir them up to war and bloodshed: and as for the number, *three*, this is only used to express a sufficient number of them, or to make the account square with the dragon, beast, and false prophet, from whom they proceed; and besides, this is omitted in the king's manuscript. Now John saw these, in a visionary way, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet; by the dragon is meant the devil, ch. xii. 9. not as acting in Rome Pagan, which has been long ago destroyed, rather as in the Pagan parts of the world, and as in the Turkish empire, now ruined; who, seeing his cause declining everywhere, bestirs himself to support and revive it, though this issues in the binding of him for a thousand years, ch. xx. 2. By the *beast* is meant the first beast, in ch. xiii. 1. and so the Ethiopic version renders it; the antichristian civil state, now sadly shattered and weakened, by the pouring out of the fifth vial: and by the *false prophet* is meant, not Mahomet, or the supporters of his religion, but the second beast in ch. xiii. 11, 12, 14, 15. or the antichristian ecclesiastic state, as appears from the description of this prophet in ch. xix. 20. compared with that: so then these spirits manifestly appear to be the emissaries of antichrist, under a diabolical influence; his creatures, that are made, and sent forth by him, have their commissions and orders from him, to act for him in every shape, to support his interest, civil and religious, by lies, murders, and false doctrine; a further account is given of them in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *For they are the spirits of devils, &c.*] They are of their father the devil; they are acted and influenced by him, he works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; they do his lusts, and are murderers and liars, and false teachers, like him: *working miracles*; lying ones, to deceive men; this clearly points out who are meant, namely, the followers of antichrist, who, as they spread the doctrines of devils, endeavour to confirm them by signs and lying wonders: *which go forth unto the kings of the earth*: those

² De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1022.

² Ad Atticum, l. 15. Ep. 16.

who have committed fornication with the Romish antichrist, such of them as will remain: *and of the whole world*; as many Pagan princes as they can come at, and engage by any ways and means in their interest; they will go forth to them like the lying spirit to Ahab's prophets, 1 Kings xxii. 22. *to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*; that is, they will persuade them to gather together, to fight against the saints, the Gentile Christians in the several parts of the world, and the Jewish Christians, now settled in their own land; and this will be the battle of the Lord, who is God Almighty, and it will be fighting against him; and therefore the attempt must be vain and fruitless, and issue in the ruin of those who are gathered to it, who will be deceived and drawn into it by these diabolical spirits: and this is called *the battle of that great day of God*; not of the day of judgment, for it will be before that time; but of that day of vengeance upon all the remains of his and his church's enemies, both Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, who will for this purpose be gathered together; *which*, as the Ethiopic version renders it, *God has appointed*.

Ver. 15. *Behold I come as a thief, &c.*] These are the words of Christ, inserted in a parenthesis in this account, before it is concluded, to acquaint his people with his near and sudden approach, and to give them a word of caution and exhortation in these times of difficulty; for he is the Lord God Almighty, who sent forth these angels to pour out their vials, and whose judgments are applauded as righteous, ver. 1, 5, 7, 14, and who so often in ch. xxii. 7, 12, 20. says *I come quickly*; and which is to be understood not of his spiritual coming, which will be already at this time, but of his personal coming: and which will be *as a thief*; as it is often expressed, 1 Thess. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3. not in the bad sense, to steal and kill, and to destroy, though Christ's coming will issue in the everlasting destruction of the wicked; but the phrase is designed to express the suddenness of his coming, and the surprise of it: *blessed is he that watcheth*; against sin, the lusts of the flesh, and the cares of this life, lest they bring a sleepiness upon him, and so the day of the Lord come upon him at an unawares; and against Satan and his temptations, who goes about seeking whom he may devour; and against his emissaries and false teachers, who lie in wait to deceive; and blessed is he also who is wishing and waiting for the coming of Christ, and so, being ready, will enter with him into the marriage-chamber, and partake of the supper of the Lamb: *and keepeth his garments*: either his conversation-garments, unspotted from the world, and whenever defiled washes them, and makes them white in the blood of the Lamb; and keeps them from being stripped of them, by those who would lead them into sinful ways; or that keeps and holds fast the robe of Christ's righteousness, and garments of his salvation, which are the righteousness of the saints, that fine linen clean and white, that white raiment which only can cover their nakedness,

that the shame thereof does not appear, ch. xix. 8. and iii. 18. *lest he walk naked*: עירום מן המצות^b, *naked of the commandments*, or good works, according to the Jewish phrase; having lost, or dropped his conversation-garments: *and they see his shame*; or lest, being naked, he be exposed to shame and confusion, yea, to everlasting ruin and destruction; see Matt. xxii. 12, 13. the allusion is to the burning of the garments of those priests who were found asleep when upon their watch in the temple: the account that is given is this^c; "the man of the mountain of the house (the governor of the temple) goes round all the wards (every night) with burning torches before him; and in every ward where the person does not stand upon his feet, the man of the mountain of the house says to him, peace be to thee; if he finds he is asleep, he strikes him with his staff, and he has power to burn his clothes; and they say (in Jerusalem) what voice is that in the court? (it is answered) the voice of a Levite beaten, and his clothes burnt, because he slept in the time of his watch; R. Eliezer ben Jacob says, once they found my mother's brother asleep, and they burnt his clothes:" now imagine with what shame the poor Levite so served must appear the next morning among his brethren, with his clothes burnt, and he naked; and with greater shame and confusion must he appear at the last day that is destitute of the righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 16. *And he gathered them together, &c.*] Or rather *they gathered them together*, as the Syriac version renders it; for though the verb is singular, a noun plural goes before it, as in ver. 14. and the same spirits that are there said to go forth, to gather the kings together, these will gather them together; will persuade the Papal, Pagan, and Mahometan powers, the remains of them in the several parts of the world, to join together, and make one effort for the reviving of their declining, and almost ruined interests: for which purpose they will be brought together, *into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon*; which may be the same with Har-megiddo, the mountain of Megiddo; for the Hebrew word מְגִדּוֹ is read *Ar* by the Greeks; so the city Argarize is interpreted the mountain of the most High^d: and this refers either to the slaying of Josiah in the valley of Megiddo, which occasioned such mourning, that it became proverbial for any great sorrow; see 2 Chron. xxxv. 22, 25. Zech. xii. 11. where it is called the valley of Megiddon; or rather to the slaughter of Sisera's army at the waters of Megiddo, by Barak, Judg. v. 19. suggesting that the same would be the fate of these united powers. Some derive the word from מְגִדּוֹ and מְגִדּוֹת, which signify *the destruction of their troops, or armies*; and so designs not any place, that has been or is, but which will be so called from the issue of this battle; and since it is an Hebrew name that will be given it, it may lead us to conclude it will be somewhere in Judea, and very likely no other than the valley of Jehoshaphat, where all nations will be gathered; and which is called the valley of decision, where will be the day of the Lord,

^b Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 91. 3.

^c Misna Middot, c. 1. sect. 3. T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 27. 2. & 28. 1.

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Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 8. sect. 10. & Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 4.

^d Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.

and multitudes will be slain, Joel iii. 2, 13, 14. though the name will suit any place where there will be a defeat of these enemies; but this vial only brings them together; the utter destruction of them is reserved for the next.

Ver. 17. *And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, &c.*] Or upon the air, as the Alexandrian copy, Syriac and Arabic versions, read; by which is meant the kingdom of Satan, he being the prince of the power of the air, Eph. ii. 2. not that he has power over the air, to raise or lay winds and storms in it at pleasure; but he is so called because he is the prince of that posse of devils, the principalities and powers of darkness, that have their dwelling in the air; hence the air, encompassing the whole earth, stands for the kingdom of Satan all the world over: and this vial differs from all the rest; that whereas the rest only affect some part or branch of the antichristian state, this will affect all the remains of the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan powers, gathered and united together at Armageddon; and the pouring out of this vial is the execution of divine wrath and vengeance upon them all at once; and the effects of this vial will not only reach to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, and their armies, or the united forces of the remains of Pagans, Papiets, and Mahometans, who will be slain, and their flesh given to the fowls of the air; and not only to the beast and false prophet, who will be taken in this battle, and cast alive into the lake of fire, which is expressive both of their temporal and eternal punishment, ch. xix. 17—21. but to the binding of Satan upon the second coming of Christ, of which notice is before given, ver. 15. and even to the destruction of Gog and Magog at the end of the thousand-years' reign; yea, to the casting of the devil into everlasting fire, since this vial is the last plague, in which the wrath of God is filled up, and so brings to the end of all things, ch. xx. 1—10. The first accomplishment of this vial will be the decisive battle at Armageddon, when the remains of all Christ's and his church's enemies will have a total defeat; and this will be the third and last woe, which will utterly destroy those that have destroyed the earth, Pagans, Papiets, and Mahometans, even all the open enemies of Christ, so that nothing will lie in the way of his kingdom; now will the spiritual reign of Christ, which has been gradually advancing by the pouring out of each vial, be in its full glory: but though antichrist will be no more, and Satan will have no more in form an open kingdom upon earth; yet, towards the close of this reign, great lukewarmness and coldness will seize professors of religion, and immorality and profaneness will abound again; which will bring on the times of the coming of the son of man; who, upon his personal descent from the third heaven into the air, will drive Satan and his posse of devils from their territories, and quickly will the general conflagration begin, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and which is no inconsiderable part of the pouring out of this vial into the air. *And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne:* this voice is said to come out of the temple of heaven, that is, out of the temple which is in heaven, which will now be opened, as

under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, with which this vial corresponds, and indeed is cotemporary; and which designs the church, enjoying the pure worship of God, the word and ordinances, and the free exercise of religion; and this shews that when this voice will be uttered, as yet the Jerusalem church-state will not be begun, since there will be no temple in that; see ch. xi. 19. and xiv. 17. and xv. 5. and xxi. 22. the words, *of heaven*, are left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, which read, *out of the temple from the throne*; the seat of government in the church, described in ch. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. the voice came with power, authority, and majesty; not from any of the four-and-twenty elders, or four living creatures, or angels about the throne; but either from God the Father that sits upon it; or from Christ the Lamb in the midst of it, and rather from the latter, since a like phrase was used by him on the cross, John xix. 30. and the same is expressed by him who is the Alpha and Omega, Rev. xxi. 6. and this voice is called a *great one*, being the voice of a great person, the King of kings, and coming with great power, and was spoken aloud: *saying, it is done*; what the angel swore should be in the days of the seventh angel, namely, that time, antichristian time, should be no more, and the mystery of God in his purposes and providences should be finished, and all the glorious things spoken of his church and people be accomplished; see the notes on ch. x. 6, 7. the word *γῆ* may be rendered *it has been*, or *it was*, and the sense is, but now is not; and the meaning may be, Babylon was, but is not, it is now fallen; the beast and false prophet were, but now are not; the Turk, or Mahomet, was, but is no more; all the antichristian powers are destroyed; Christ's body, the church, will be completed, the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, all the elect called, and the new Jerusalem prepared as a bride for her husband; and when the utmost effects of this vial will take place, the end of all things will be; by the same *fat* that made the heavens and the earth, they will disappear, and new heavens and earth succeed in their room.

Ver. 18. *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, &c.*] As at the giving of the law, Exod. xix. 16. and at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, see the note on ch. xi. 20. and may intend either the pure ministry of the Gospel in the spiritual reign, the voices of Christ's ministers, and the effects of them, who will be *Boanergeses*, sons of thunder, and will be the means of enlightening the minds of many, as well as of shaking the consciences of men, signified by the earthquake following; or rather, the tremendous and awful judgments of God upon the remains of the antichristian party, as the very great commotions and changes that will be made in the world are expressed in the next clause: *and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great:* for as the changes made in the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical, are signified by the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and as the fall of Paganism is expressed by an earthquake, and the fall of the tenth part of the city is the effect of another; so the destruction of all the antichristian powers, and the mutations made in the earth thereby,

are designed by this; see Heb. xii. 26, 27. Rev. vi. 12. and xi. 13. Joel iii. 16. Mr. Daubuz applies the whole of this vial to the Reformation, when such a revolution was made in a short time, as has not been known since the world was, or men became worshippers of the beast; at which time Christendom was divided into three parts, the eastern or Greek church, the western or Latin church, and the reformed churches.

Ver. 19. *And the great city was divided into three parts, &c.]* By which is meant not Christendom, distinguished into Protestants, Papists, and neutrals, which has been long the case; nor the city of Jerusalem, as inhabited by Christians, Jews, and Turks; nor the city of Rome itself, the seat of the beast, which will have suffered under the fifth vial; but the whole Romish jurisdiction, which is the great city, that reigns over the kings of the earth, as it will now be; though some think the Turkish empire is meant, which they suppose was only afflicted under the preceding vial, but will now be divided into three parts, and afterwards into six, Ezek. xxxix. 1, 2. and so come to ruin; and others are of opinion that it is included in this great city at least; and doubtless the remains of it are to be taken into this account, and probably are considered in the following clause; wherefore it is better to understand this of the Romish jurisdiction, so often called the great city in this book, ch. xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvii. 18. and its division into three parts is either in reference to the three heads of it, the dragon, beast, and false prophet, or to the three unclean spirits that come out of them, which will lead on to this ruin; though the allusion seems rather to be to the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezek. v. 2, 12. and denotes the utter ruin of the Romish antichrist, in all its branches and remains; a tenth part of this city will fall towards the close of the sixth trumpet, ch. xi. 13. and now all the other nine parts will fall, a threefold division will be made of the city, each division containing three parts: the Jews* have a prophecy, that upon an appearance of a star at Rome, which they suppose will be when the Messiah comes, the *three upper walls* of that city will fall, and the great temple, or church (St. Peter's), will fall, and the governor of that city (the pope) will die: *and the cities of the nations fell*: of the Pagans and Mahometans; or as there will be an utter extirpation of the Papacy, so of Paganism and Mahometanism, in the several nations where they have obtained, and where there will be now any remains of them; *and great Babylon came in remembrance before God*; not Constantinople, as Brightman thinks, because that Rome, the seat of the beast, is affected under the fifth vial, and the great city under this; but since no other is called Babylon in this book but the Romish antichristian state, it must be meant here; see ch. xiv. 8. and xvii. 5. and xviii. 2, 10, 21. for many hundreds of years Babylon seemed to be forgotten by God, no notice being taken of her sins and iniquities in a judicial way; but now God will remember her sins, ch. xviii. 5. and inflict deserved punishment upon her: *to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath*; as a just retaliation for the wine of her fornication, with

which she has intoxicated the kings and inhabitants of the earth; the wrath of God is sometimes signified in the Old Testament by a cup, a wine-cup, a wine-cup of fury, see Psal. lxxxv. 8. Jer. xxv. 15. and here the exceeding greatness of his wrath is expressed by the phrases used, and intends the pouring out of all his vengeance, to the utter ruin of the Romish antichrist.

Ver. 20. *And every island fled away, &c.]* This may be understood either of the dissolution of the world, the present heavens and earth, when there will be no more sea, ch. xxi. 1. and so consequently no islands: *and the mountains were not found*; for the earth and the heaven will be fled away at the appearance of Christ the Judge, and there will be no place found for them, ch. xx. 11. and new heavens, and a new earth, without sea or mountains, will succeed: or rather this may signify the utter extirpation of all the antichristian powers in every shape, whether on islands or on the continent; for this day of the Lord will be upon every high mountain and hill, to bring them low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted, Isa. ii. 14, 15, 17. and may particularly respect the dissolution of monasteries, and the plundering them of their riches and revenues.

Ver. 21. *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, &c.]* Which must be understood not as after the fall of the cities, and the flight of the islands and mountains, but at the same time; and it looks as if such men that shall escape at the battle of Armageddon, that hail-stones from heaven will fall upon them and destroy them; just as the kings of the Amorites and their men were killed by hail-stones, cast down by the Lord from heaven, as they fled before Joshua, when more were killed by the stones than were slain by the sword, Josh. x. 11. the allusion seems to be to the plague of hail in Exod. ix. 23—26. *every stone about the weight of a talent*; which is threescore pound weight, a prodigious weight indeed for a single hail-stone! such hail-stones were never known to fall; the largest I have read of is what Caspar Wesserus assured Mr. Broughton† of, at Zurich, which being brought from a field afar off, to the consul, and so must melt in carriage, yet weighed a pound. It may be said of this hail-storm, as of the earthquake in a preceding verse, that it will be such as never was since men were upon earth; and denotes the sore, heavy, and even intolerable judgments of God upon the antichristian party: God's judgments are sometimes signified by hail-storms, Isa. xxx. 26—30. and particularly the judgments upon Gog and Magog, Ezek. xxxviii. 22. which may respect the same as here: the Jews‡ now expect a great hail in the times of Gog and Magog: *and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail*; the plague of hail brought down the hard heart of Pharaoh, and humbled him, so that he acknowledged his wickedness, and the sin of his people, and owned the justice of God; but this more terrible storm will have no effect upon these men, to convince and reform them, but, on the contrary, they will break out into blasphemy against God, who caused it to fall on them; it will have the same effect as the fourth and fifth vials: *for the plague thereof was exceeding great*; it must beat down all before it,

* Zohar in Numb. fol. 86. 1.
† See his Works, p. 491.

‡ Shemot Rabba, sect. 12. fol. 99. 1.

and be intolerable: whether this hail-storm may not also have some regard to coldness and lukewarmness, as Napier suggests, and so may point at the close of the spiritual reign of Christ, or the Laodicean state,

which will bring on the second coming of Christ, and so this effect of the seventh vial will end where the seven churches and seven trumpets do, may be considered; see the note on ch. xi. 20.

C H A P. XVII.

THIS chapter contains a vision of a beast, and a woman on it, and the interpretation of it; one of the seven angels that had the seven vials proposes to John to shew him the whore of Babylon, the Jezabel before spoken of, who sits on many waters, with whom the kings and inhabitants of the earth have committed fornication, being intoxicated by her, ver. 1, 2. in order to which he carries him into the wild-ness, and there he sees a woman, who is described by the beast she sat on, of a scarlet colour, full of blasphemous names, with seven heads and ten horns; by her array, in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, pearls, and precious stones; by a cup she had in her hand, full of abominable filth; by a name written on her forehead, given at large, and by the condition she was in, drunk with the blood of the saints; which sight filled John with great wonder and admiration, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. wherefore, to remove his astonishment, the angel proposes to explain to him the mystery of the woman, and the beast she sat on, ver. 7. and first the mystery of the beast is explained, by its several states, past, present, and to come; by its original and end, ascending out of the bottomless pit, and going into perdition; by the veneration it would be had in by the reprobate part of the world, ver. 8. its seven heads are interpreted of the seven mountains on which the city of Rome, designed by the woman, stood, and of seven kings, or forms of government, five of which had ceased, and one was in being in John's time, another was to come, which should not continue long, and the beast would be an eighth, ver. 9, 10, 11. its ten horns are explained of ten kings, described by their kingdom they had not as yet received, and which they should have one hour with the beast; by their agreement in mind and conduct; and by their war with the Lamb, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and those that are with him, the called, chosen, and faithful, and the issue of it, ver. 12, 13, 14. the waters on which the whore sat are interpreted of a multitude of people, nations, and tongues, ver. 15. the hatred and destruction of her by the ten kings, and the manner of it, are declared, ver. 16. which is owing to the will of God, who put it into their hearts to agree to give their kingdom to the beast till the prophecies and promises were fulfilled respecting this matter, and now to destroy the whore that sat upon it, ver. 17. which woman is explained of the great city of Rome, that reigns over the kings of the earth, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. *And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven vials, &c.*] It may be the first of them, since one of the four beasts designs the first of them, in ch. vi. 1, 3. though Brightman thinks the fifth angel is meant, because he poured out his vial on the seat of the beast, who is by this angel described; but rather this is the seventh and last angel, concerned in the utter destruction of antichrist: and therefore proposes

to John to shew him the judgment of the great whore: *and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither; he conversed with him in a friendly manner, see Zech. i. 9. and desires him to come nearer to him, and go along with him, adding, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore; that noted and famous one, known before to John by the names of Jezabel and Babylon, who taught and caused many to commit fornication, ch. ii. 20. and xiv. 8. and is no other than Rome Papal; for that a city or state is meant is clear from ver. 18. and it is usual for idolatrous or apostate cities to be called whores or harlots, see Isa. i. 21. Ezek. xxiii. 2, 3, 4. Nahum iii. 4. and she is called a great one, because of the largeness of the Papal see; and because of the multitude of persons, the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of it, with whom the Romish antichrist has committed spiritual fornication, or idolatry: her judgment signifies either her sin and wickedness; in which sense the word is used in Rom. v. 16. and which is exposed, ver. 5, 6. namely, her idolatry and cruelty; or else her condemnation, and the execution of it, suggested in ver. 8, 16. and more largely described in the following chapter: *that sitteth upon many waters; which in ver. 15. are interpreted of people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, subject to the jurisdiction of Rome; and so several antichristian states are in the preceding chapter signified by the sea, and by rivers and fountains of water: and this is said in reference to Babylon, an emblem of the Romish harlot, which was situated upon the river Euphrates, and is therefore said to dwell upon many waters, Jer. li. 13. her sitting here may be in allusion to the posture of harlots plying of men; or may denote her ease, rest, and grandeur, sitting as a queen; and is chiefly expressive of her power and dominion over the kings and nations of the earth, ver. 18.**

Ver. 2. *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, &c.*] These are the ten kings, who being of the same mind, and of one religion, the Popish religion, gave their power, strength, and kingdom to the beast, ver. 12, 17. and have been enticed by the whore of Rome to commit spiritual fornication with her; that is, idolatry, to worship, as that church enjoins, idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood, the images of the virgin Mary, and other saints; hence this whore appears to be no mean strumpet, but one of great note, and in much vogue, being sought after, and made use of by the great men of the earth; *and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication; that is, the inhabitants of the Roman empire, or earthly-minded men, mere carnal persons, have been drawn into idolatrous practices by the allurements of the church of Rome; such as riches, honours, pleasures, lying miracles, and great pretensions to devotion and religion; whereby they*

have been intoxicated as men with wine, and have been filled with a blind zeal for that church, and the false doctrines and worship of it, and with madness and fury against the true professors of religion.

Ver. 3. *So he carried me away in the spirit, &c.*] Not in body, as if he was removed from the isle of Patmos to some other place; but in a visionary way, just as Ezekiel was carried between earth and heaven, in the visions of God, to Jerusalem, Ezek. viii. 3. It was represented to the mind of John, to his spirit, or soul, as if he had been taken up by the angel and carried through the air: *into the wilderness*; by which may be meant either the wilderness of the people, the world, the church hereafter described, being a worldly one, and consisting of worldly men; or Gentilism, the Gentile world is often in the prophecies of the Old Testament called a wilderness; the Romish church having much of Heathen worship, and Heathen customs and practices in it, hence its votaries are called Gentiles, ch. xi. 2. or this circumstance may be mentioned, and the thing so represented to John, because that a wilderness is a solitary place, and fit for retirement and meditation; and where he might, without any interruption, take a full view of the following sight, and make proper observations upon it; and it is worthy of notice, that this is the place where the true church fled and became out of sight, in the room of which this apostate church appears: or, as others have thought, John is had into the wilderness, where the true church was hid and nourished, and the false one is there shewn him, that seeing both together, he might compare them, and observe the difference between them; to all which may be added, that a wilderness is a fit place for such a beast as hereafter described to be seen in: *and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast*; the *beast* is the same with that in ch. xiii. 1. as the description shews, and is no other than the Roman empire as Papal; the *scarlet* colour is expressive of its imperial dignity, its power and authority, it received from the dragon; and also of this beast's cruelty and tyranny, and of its shedding the blood of the saints: the *woman* sitting upon it is the great city of Rome, as is manifest from ver. 18. or the Romish antichrist, the apostate church of Rome, represented by a woman, as the true church is, ch. ii. 1. but in a very different form, and is the same with the second beast in ch. xiii. 11. and the false prophet; and as the two beasts respect the same, under different considerations, namely, the Papacy, in its civil and ecclesiastic capacity, so this strange phenomenon, a woman sitting on such a beast, means one and the same thing as the horse and his rider in the seals, though in different views; the woman designs the Romish church, with the pope at the head of it, and the beast the Roman Papal empire as civil, by which the former is supported and upheld, bore up on high, and exalted in the manner it has been: moreover, as purple and scarlet are the colours of garments wore by the pope, and cardinals, hence the woman in the next verse is said to be *arrayed in purple and scarlet colour*, so even the very beasts on which they rode were covered with scarlet. Platina ^b says that Pope Paul the Second

ordered by a public decree, on pain of punishment, that no man should wear a scarlet cap but cardinals; to whom also, in the first year of his papedom, he gave cloth of the same colour, to put upon their horses and mules when they rode; and besides, would have put into the decree, that the cardinals' hats should be of scarlet silk: upon which Du Moulin ^c makes this remark; "Pope Paul the Second was the first that gave scarlet to the cardinals; as well for themselves as for their mules, to the end that this prophecy, which agreeth in general with the see of Rome, might likewise appertain particularly to every one of the pillars of the said see, which is to be set upon a *scarlet-coloured beast*." It follows, *full of names of blasphemy*: that is, the beast, or Roman Papal empire, was full of them; in ch. xiii. 1, 5. a name of blasphemy is said to be upon his head, and he to have a mouth speaking blasphemy; but here his whole body is represented as full of them, and may refer to the blasphemous doctrines of worshipping of images, of pardons and indulgences, of transubstantiation, &c. and to the multitude of images, of the virgin Mary, and other saints, in the antichristian state, in every part of it; and to those blaspheming persons, the cardinals, priests, and Jesuits, which abound in it; as well as to those blasphemous names and titles which are given to the pope, the head of it, or assumed by him; such as God on earth, the vicar of Christ, the head, and husband, and foundation of the church, with many others: *having seven heads, and ten horns*: the seven heads are the seven mountains, on which the city of Rome, the metropolis of the empire, is seated; and the seven kings, or seven forms of government, under which it has been, as appears from ver. 9, 10. see the notes on ch. xii. 3. and xiii. 1. and the *ten horns* signify the ten kings over the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided, when overrun by the Goths and Vandals; and which ten kings gave their kingdoms to the beast, the Romish antichrist; they gave their strength and power to him, being of his religion, and have been his horns, his defenders and supporters, ever since, as may be gathered from ver. 12, 13, 17.

Ver. 4. *And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, &c.*] Which may be expressive of her grandeur, authority, and power, sitting as a queen, and sovereign in the empire, ruling over kingdoms and nations in it; and also of her bloody disposition to the saints, with whose blood she is afterwards said to be drunk; *and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls*; which may denote her hypocrisy, she being gilded with these things, as the word signifies, when she was inwardly rotten, corrupt, and filthy; and may point out the things by which persons have been enticed into the communion of the church of Rome, and to comply with her idolatrous worship and practices; and may also respect the prodigious riches, which have, by various methods, been brought into the pope's coffers; these, with other things, are reckoned among the merchandise of Babylon, ch. xviii. 12. and particularly this may have reference to the adorning of their temples, or churches, and the decking of

^b De Vitis Pontificum, p. 312.

^c Defence of the Catholic Faith, &c. c. 3. p. 38.

their images, with those things; which gaudy pompous shews strike the minds of carnal men, amuse them, and engage their attention. So Philo^k the Jew describes an whore as arrayed in purple, and adorned with gold and precious stones; see Prov. vii. 10. *Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication*; in allusion to Babylon, Jer. li. 7. and also to harlots, who give philters or love-potions to men, to excite lust, and draw their affections to them; and this being a golden cup may design the external lustre and splendour of the worship of the church of Rome, by which many have been drawn into a compliance with it, which is attended with many abominable, filthy, and idolatrous practices: and perhaps some regard may be had to the golden chalice, in which, 'tis pretended, is the very blood of Christ, which the priests take as such, and worship and adore, and is no other than an abominable and filthy piece of idolatry; and such are the persons that partake of it; like the Pharisees of old, they make clean the outside of the cup and platter; glisten, and make a great shew of devotion, but within are full of extortion and excess.

Ver. 5. *And upon her forehead was a name written, &c.*] As the high-priest had on his mitre upon his forehead written, holiness to the Lord, Exod. xxviii. 36. only a different inscription from that; the allusion is thought to be to harlots, who not only used to put their names over their doors, but some of them upon their foreheads, that all might know who they were; of which Mr. Daubuz has given proofs out of Seneca, Martial, Juvenal, and Petronius; and such might be said to have an whore's forehead indeed: and this is expressive of the openness and impudence of the church of Rome, in her idolatrous worship; she openly declares it, and pleads for it, and invites and ensnares persons to join with her in it: the name follows, *mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*; her name is *mystery*; not the mystery of godliness, that she dislikes and opposes, but the mystery of iniquity; which is the name antichrist went by in the Apostle Paul's time, when he was but in embryo, 2 Thess. ii. 7. Some reference may be had to the mystery of the Mass, in which the Papists pretend are the very body and blood of Christ; to their seven sacraments, for wherever almost they find the word *mystery*, they make a sacrament of that to which it is applied; and to their unwritten traditions, and the sense of the Scriptures, which are locked up in the pope's breast: and it is very remarkable what has been observed by some, that the word *mystery* was formerly upon the frontlet of the pope's mitre, and was removed by Pope Julius the Third, when it was observed that the Protestants made use of this passage of Scripture, and applied it to the Romish antichrist. Joseph Scaliger^l affirms, that he saw mitres at Rome with this inscription on them. Though others think that this is not any part of the name, but only signifies that this woman was, in a mysterious or mystical sense, called Babylon, &c. just as the great city is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, ch. xi. 8. but to me it seems to be a part of the name, as well as

what follows, *Babylon the great*: that is, the great city, ch. xiv. 8. by which name the church of Rome may well be called, because of the signification of it, confusion, Gen. xi. 9. its doctrine and worship being a confused mixture of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity; and because of the pride and haughtiness of it, its tyranny and cruelty, and its sorceries and idolatry; see Isa. xiv. 12, 13, 14. and xlvii. 6, 7, 12, 13. Jer. l. 38. *And the mother of harlots*, of all antichristian states and kingdoms; and is different from the heavenly Jerusalem, the Gospel church, which is the mother of true believers, Gal. iv. 26. or *the mother of fornications*; as some copies read, and the Vulgate Latin and eastern versions render it; that is, the author and encourager of them, as the church of Rome has been; of corporeal fornication, by commanding celibacy, and forbidding marriage to priests, and setting up of brothel-houses; and of spiritual fornication or idolatry, everywhere required and encouraged by it: and of *the abominations of the earth*; of abominable doctrines and practices; all manner of wickedness that is to be found in the earth, as murder, adultery, sodomy, perjury, &c. these, with every thing that is vile and wicked, are practised and connived at by her.

Ver. 6. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, &c.*] To see a woman drunk is a shameful sight; but to see one drunk, not with wine, but with blood, is monstrous, cruel, and shocking; the sword, when it devours, and is satiate, is said to be drunk with blood, Jer. xli. 10. but for a woman to be so is unexampled; and not with her own blood, as she will be, Isa. xlix. 26. Rev. xvi. 6. but with the blood of others; and not with the blood of wicked men, but with the blood of saints; such as God the father has set apart from everlasting, and chosen to be holy; whom Christ has sanctified by his blood, or whose sins he has expiated, and to whom he is made sanctification; and who have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them by the spirit of God, and live holy lives and conversations: and of *the martyrs of Jesus*; the saints, whose blood is shed by antichrist, are martyrs also; but they seem to design the common people, and these the ministers of the Gospel, who are the martyrs of Jesus, both in life and death; they are his martyrs or witnesses, by their doctrine and ministry, bearing testimony to him as Jesus, a Saviour; testifying that he is the only Saviour, that there is salvation in no other, in opposition to the antichristian doctrines of merit, penance, purgatory, &c. for which they have been cruelly put to death, and in great numbers, and so have sealed their doctrine by their blood. Now the woman being drunk with their blood, denotes the blood-thirstiness of the church of Rome, her greedy and insatiable desire after the blood of the saints, and her delight in it, being exceeding mad against them; and the multitude of it shed by her, as the slaughters of the Waldenses and Albigenes, the butcheries of the duke d'Alva in the Low Countries, the massacres in France, Ireland, and other places, the burning of the martyrs in Queen Mary's days here, with numerous other in-

^k De Mercede Meretricis non recip. p. 861.

^l In Scaligeran.

stances, shew. *And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration*: not at the sight of the beast, which he had seen before, but at the sight of the woman, as upon the beast; he wondered that one of her sex, generally timorous and fearful, should ride on such a monstrous creature; he was amazed at her dress, and grand appearance, whereas the church in his time consisted of poor persons, meanly arrayed; it was astonishing to him that one bearing the name of a Christian church should rise to such grandeur; and he wondered at the name upon her forehead, what the whole of that inscription should mean; but, above all, at her drunkenness with the blood of the saints; at her inhumanity and cruelty, being as savage as the beast she rode on; and also at God's forbearance of her, that he, who is a pure and holy Being, a lover of his saints, an avenger of his elect, should suffer such a brutish, barbarous, and blood-thirsty creature, to live upon earth; see Hab. i. 13.

Ver. 7. *And the angel said unto me, &c.*] The same as in ver. 1. *wherefore didst thou marvel?* which is not said by way of reproof, as questions of this kind sometimes are, Acts iii. 12. for John did not wonder at her with a sinful admiration, so as to have her in great veneration, and to do homage and worship to her, as the inhabitants of the world wondered after the beast, ch. xiii. 3. and xvii. 8. but his admiration was an amazement, or stupefaction of mind, joined with indignation at her; and this is said by the angel to lead on to what he had to declare unto him. *I will tell thee the mystery of the woman*; that is, what is mysteriously or mystically designed by her; for till it was made known to John by the angel, it was a mystery to him; and when it was revealed, the interpretation is given in such an obscure manner, that it is only understood by the mind that has spiritual wisdom; and still remains a mystery to carnal men, just as the Gospel itself does. The hidden meaning of this woman, or the mystery of her, is told by the angel in ver. 18. *And of the beast that carried her, which hath the seven heads, and ten horns*; the mystical sense of the beast, its heads and horns, and which is also delivered in a mysterious manner, is given in ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Ver. 8. *The beast which thou sawest was, and is not, &c.*] It is added at the end of the verse where the same description is given, *and yet is*; this beast is to be understood not of the devil, who was the god of this world, *is not*, being cast out by Christ, *and yet is* in being; for he, the dragon, is distinguished from this beast, and indeed from him the beast has his seat, power, and authority, ch. xiii. 1, 2. nor any particular emperor, as Domitian, a cruel and savage one, who was in power in Vespasian's time, when he was abroad, and then was out of it upon his return, and yet afterwards was in again, being as one sent from hell, and went at last into perdition; but the Roman empire itself is intended, as we have seen, which carried and supported the Papacy; and variously may this be interpreted; as that it was in the hands of the Romans originally, and long continued with them, but now *is not*, in John's time, being in the hands of Trajan, a Spaniard, *and yet is* in being, Rome being the metropolis of it: it was a very powerful and flourishing empire, *and is not*, being destroyed by the Goths

and Vandals, *and yet is* a large empire under the jurisdiction of antichrist; it was an idolatrous empire, which encouraged the worshipping of Heathen gods; *and is not* guilty of the same idolatrous practices it was, as the worshipping of Jupiter, Mars, &c. *and yet is* much given to idolatry in another way, worshipping the virgin Mary, and other saints; it was under kings, consuls, dictators, tribunes, decemvirs, and emperors, it is *not* in such a form of government, *and yet is* under its seventh head the pope; *Rome was*, but *is not* the same it has been, in some respects, *and yet is* the same, for idolatry, cruelty, &c. it has the image of old Rome, when Pagan, and under the power of the dragon; and though antichrist was not risen up in the empire to an head, to supreme power and dignity, yet it was in being in the apostles' times, and began to work, and by degrees to shew itself. In short, the meaning is, that this beast was the Roman empire, as Pagan, described by a dragon with seven heads, and ten horns, with crowns on the heads, but *is not* as yet in the Apostle John's time, as Papal, described with seven heads, and ten horns, and crowns on the horns. *And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit*; out of hell, from whence the antichristian beast has its power; see ch. xi. 8. and xiii. 2. otherwise all civil power is from God, but not antichristian power, that is from the devil: *and go into perdition*; everlasting destruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; this will be the end of the beast, ch. xix. 20. *and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder*; the inhabitants of the Roman empire, earthly-minded men, shall have the beast in great veneration, and follow and worship him; see ch. xiii. 3, 4, 12. *whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world*; none but reprobates, not any of the elect of God, are the admirers and worshippers of antichrist; see the note on ch. xiii. 8. *when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is*; the Roman empire in glory, under the emperors, destroyed by the Goths, and revived in the Papacy. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, *and yet is*.

Ver. 9. *And here is the mind which hath wisdom, &c.*] This refers either to what goes before, concerning the beast, his various states, rise, and ruin, and his admirers; or to what follows after, concerning the meaning of his heads and horns, or to both; and the sense is, that notwithstanding the interpretation of these things by the angel, yet it requires a large share of wisdom to understand them; and here's enough to exercise the mind that is ever so well stored with knowledge and understanding; and so the Arabic version renders it, *here it is required that one should have judgment and wisdom*; for to a man that has not, the affair will still be obscure and unintelligible. The words may be rendered, *here is the mind, he that hath wisdom*; that is, let him make use of it, as in ch. xiii. 18. and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *and this is the sense, he that hath wisdom*; this is the sense of the beast, and of his heads and horns; and he that has wisdom, let him consider it, and take it in, and apply it to proper persons, things, and times; and so the Ethiopic version, *he that has wisdom and understanding, let him know this*; or take cognizance of it, it being a matter of importance, and attended with difficulty: *the seven*

heads are seven mountains: which the woman sitteth that is, they signify seven mountains, or are symbolical representations of them; just as the seven good kine, and seven good ears, in Pharaoh's dream, signified seven years of plenty, and seven thin kine, and seven empty ears, seven years of famine, Gen. xli. 26, 27. As the woman is a city, ver. 18. these seven mountains, on which she sits, must be so many mountains on which the city is built; and what city can this be but Rome, which is so famous for being built on seven hills? This is taken notice of by Virgil^m, Horaceⁿ, Ovid^o, Claudian^p, Statius^q, Martial^r, and others; and indeed there is scarce a poet that speaks of Rome but observes it: hence it has been sometimes called, by writers, the seven-hilled city, and sometimes Septiceps, the seven-headed city, which comes near to the language here: the names of the seven mountains were these, Capitulinus, Palatinus, Aventinus, Esquilinus, Caelius, Viminalis, and Quirinalis; the four first of these were taken in by Romulus, the first founder of it, and the three last by Servius Tullius, when he enlarged it; and upon the addition of the seventh mountain there was a feast kept, called Septimontium; and which was kept in seven places in the city^s; and was annually observed; and in this situation it was in John's time; for Pliny^t, who was cotemporary with him, expressly says, that in his time it took in seven mountains; and that this refers to a city in John's time, then reigning over the kings of the earth, is certain from ver. 18. Now there was no imperial city, so built in his time, but Rome: for though Constantinople is built on seven hills, yet this was not in being in John's time, but was built by Constantine many years after, in imitation of Rome; and though the situation is much altered now, being in Campus Martius, it being greatly reduced, and in a less compass, yet this hinders not but that it is the same city here designed: and this confirms that the beast before spoken of, on whom the woman sat, is the Roman empire, since she is here said to sit on the seven mountains, on which Rome, the metropolis of that empire, was built; and this shews the pope of Rome to be antichrist, the great whore, Babylon, the mother of harlots, since no other has his seat at Rome but he.

Ver. 10. *And there are seven kings, &c.*] The Arabic version renders it, *who are seven kings*; and it should be rendered, as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, *and they are seven kings*; that is, the seven heads signify seven kings also, for they have in them a double representation, first of seven mountains, and then of seven kings; by which are meant not seven ages of the world, as from Adam to Noah; from Noah to Abraham; from Abraham to David; from David to the Babylonish captivity; from the Babylonish captivity to Christ; from Christ to antichrist; and from antichrist to the end of the world; the five first of which were gone in John's time, the sixth was then in being, and when the seventh shall come it will continue for a short time: this is a foolish and absurd interpretation of the Papists, who make the beast to

be the devil, and these his seven heads; whereas he rather is the head, or god of the world: nor are seven emperors of Rome intended, which are differently reckoned, according to the different times John is supposed to have had this revelation. Grotius, who is followed by Hammond, supposes this was written in the times of Vespasian, and reckons them thus; Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus; the first five of these were dead in John's time, one was then, the sixth, Vespasian, the then reigning emperor, and the other, Titus, was yet to come to the empire; and when he came to it, continued but a short time, two years and two months: others, who more rightly judge that John wrote in Domitian's time, reckon them after this manner; Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, and Nerva; the first five of these were dead; Domitian was then living, and Nerva, the other that was to come and succeed him, reigned but a little while, not quite two years; but to this sense must be objected, that there were other emperors before either Galba or Claudius; and before John's time there were more than five fallen or dead; according to the first account, there must be nine dead, and according to the latter eleven; for before Claudius there were Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius: besides, if these were the seven heads of the beast, the beast must have been long ago without any head, and consequently must have expired; whereas it is still in being, and will be under the fifth, sixth, and seventh vials, which are yet to come; it will be at the battle of Armageddon, and will be taken then, and cast alive into the lake of fire; to which may be added, that the beast, in the form in which John now saw it, was not yet risen in the times of these emperors; but by the seven heads are meant so many forms of government which took place successively in the Roman empire, and were all of them idolatrous heads, as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, tribunes, emperors, and popes; it being usual for any sort of governors, or governments and monarchies, to be called kings, Deut. xxxiii. 5. Dan. vii. 17, 23. *Five are fallen*; or ceased, are no longer in being as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes; at least, the supreme power was not lodged in any bearing either of these names in John's time: *and one is*; the Pagan emperors; an Heathen emperor, Domitian, then reigning, when John had this vision; and these continued to the opening of the sixth seal, which put an end to that succession, as Pagan, and till the woman brought forth the man-child, or till Constantine's time: and *the other is not yet come*; which some understand of the Christian emperors, who immediately succeeded the Pagan ones, and were another, and different from them, as to religion, though the form of government was the same, and were not another head; for they were not an idolatrous head, on which were names of blasphemy, but another king; for from the following verse it appears, that there are eight kings, and but seven heads, and therefore one of them should seem not to be a head; and these, when they came, continued

^m Æneid. 6.

ⁿ In Carmine Seculari.

^o De Trist. l. 1. Eleg. 4.

^p L. 2. de Laud. Stilicon. l. 3. ver. 195.

^q Syl. l. 1. Syl. 2. ver. 191.

^r L. 4. Ep. 53.

^s Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 11.

^t Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

but a short time in comparison of the Heathen emperors that reigned before them, and of the pope, or antichrist, who was to reign after them 1260 years; for they reigned not, put them all together, more than 150 years; and especially at Rome their stay was short, for Constantine removed from thence to Constantinople, in the nineteenth year of his empire. But these emperors, though in religion they differed from the others, yet their form of government and title were the same, and therefore must be included in the sixth head: according to some, Theodoricus the Ostrogoth, and his successors, are meant, who continued about a hundred years; others have thought that the exarchs of Ravenna, who rose up upon the destruction of the western empire, are intended, and who continued but a short time; but then these had not their seat at Rome, which it seems necessary each head of this beast should have; it is better, therefore, to understand this of the popes of Rome, the seventh and last head of the Roman empire; these were not yet come, in John's time, to their supreme dignity and authority: *and when he cometh he must continue a short space*: forty-two months, or 1260 days; that is, so many years, which, though a long time in itself, and in the account of man, yet with God, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and in comparison of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, and his people, it is but a short space; and so the reign of the beast, and of the ten kings with him, is said to be one hour, ver. 12. and this is said for the comfort of the saints, and to keep up their faith and patience under their sufferings in antichristian states. Mr. Daubuz makes these seven heads, or kings, signified by seven mountains, seven capital cities, which by degrees came to belong to the Roman empire; as first Rome itself, the capital of Italy; next Carthage, the capital of Africa; then Æge, the capital of Macedonia; after that Antiochia, the capital of the east; then Augustodunum, the capital of the Gauls; and Alexandria, the capital of Egypt; five of these six, with the monarchies belonging to them, were fallen; one, or the first of them now, was the mistress of all; and the other seventh was to come, namely, Byzantium, or Constantinople, which continued not long. This passage is so interpreted, as also the seven heads, in ch. xiii. 1. by this writer.

Ver. 11. *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, &c.*] That was in embryo in John's time, and yet was not come to its power and grandeur, is the eighth king; and this is the Papacy, which takes the name of the beast, because it is the head of the beast, and the only surviving head of the beast, or Roman empire, now become Papal: *and is of the seven*: one of the seven heads, and the last of them, and is an idolatrous one, as the rest were, requiring and encouraging the worship of angels, of the virgin Mary, and saints departed: the pope of Rome is the eighth king, and seventh head, the latter with respect to his temporal power, and the former with respect to his ecclesiastical authority; for his government is quite of a different sort from the rest, being of a mixed kind, partly civil, and partly ecclesiastical, and therefore is signified by two beasts in the thirteenth chapter: *and goes into per-*

dition: being the son of perdition, and is justly deserving of it; see the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 12. *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, &c.*] Not ten Christian emperors, which are reckoned up by Brightman from Constantine to Theodosius; for these did not reign with the beast, or give their kingdoms to him, and much less did they make war with the Lamb; they are rather the angels of Michael, that fought for him, the Lamb, against the dragon, and his angels, ch. xii. 7. nor ten kings that will rise up and divide the Roman empire between them, towards the end of the world, which is a sense devised by Papists to obscure and hide from men the true meaning of the passage; but the ten kingdoms which rose up, and into which the Roman empire was divided upon its being ruined, and torn to pieces by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals. They are the same with the *ten toes* of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the *ten horns* of the fourth beast, or kingdom, in Dan. ii. 42. and vii. 7, 23, 24. These are differently reckoned up by interpreters: by Napier thus; Spain, France, Lombardy, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, and the exarchate of Ravenna: by Mr. Mede after this manner; the Britains in Britain, under Vortimer their king; the Saxons in the same place, under Hengist; the Franks in Gallia Belgica, or Celtica, under Childeric; the Burgundians in another part of France, under Gunderic; the Wisigoths in Aquitain, and part of Spain, under Theodoric; the Sueves and Alans in Gallacia and Portugal, under Riccarius; the Vandals in Spain and Africa, under Genserich; the Almans in that part of Germany called Rhetia, under Sumanus; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and after in Italy, under Theodomir; and the Greeks in the rest of the empire, under Marcianus: and by another writer they are accounted for in this way; the Almans in both the Rhetia, and in Pannonia, who rose in the year 356; the Ostrogoths, first in Pannonia, and then in Italy, in 377; the Wisigoths in Pannonia, and then in Italy, afterwards in France, and last of all in Spain, in 378; the Huns in Pannonia, and for some time throughout all Europe, in 378; the Britian-Romans in Britain, and afterwards the Saxons, in 403; the Sueves, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Alans, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Vandals, first in France, then in Spain, afterwards in Africa, in 407; the Burgundians in France, in 407; the Franks in France, in 410. And it is generally thought all these ten kingdoms were up by the year 450 at least. Though Dr. Allix makes the epocha of them A. D. 486, when the western empire was taken from the Romans, and fixes them in the following order; the Almans in Rhetia and Pannonia; the Franks in Belgica; the Anglo-Saxons in Britain; the Wisigoths in Gallia Aquitania and Hispania Tarraconensis; the Sueves and Alans in Portugal; the Vandals in Africa; the Burgundians in Gallia Sequanensis; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and afterwards in Italy; the Lombards in Pannonia, and the Heruli and Turcilingi, who conquered Augustulus: and though these kingdoms were thrown into different forms and shapes afterwards, yet it is remarkable they were

just of this number; as, 1. Italy and Germany; 2. France; 3. Spain; 4. England with Ireland; 5. Scotland; 6. Hungary; 7. Poland with Lithuania; 8. Denmark, with Sweden and Norway, Sweden being since divided; 9. Portugal; 10. The Grecian empire seized by the Ottomans. And as these kings can't be understood of single persons at the head of these kingdoms, or of so many kings succeeding one another; so neither is it necessary to consider these kingdoms as being in the same state, and made up of the same sort of people always; it is enough that they are in the same place, and within the empire; for we may observe, that different things, at different times, are ascribed to them, or at least to some. They all are at first of one mind, and give their kingdom to the beast; then they, at least some of them, hate the whore, and burn her with fire; and yet others lament the destruction and burning of Rome, ver. 16, 17, and ch. xviii. 9. *Which have received no kingdom as yet*: in John's time, when the Pagan empire was in being, and the beast was not risen, with whom they were to reign; hence these horns have no crowns on them, ch. xii. 3. *But receive power as kings one hour with the beast*; as soon as he was risen; and therefore the horns are represented with crowns upon them, ch. xiii. 1. Their rise was with the Papal beast, who rose not to his supreme power and dignity until the western emperor, which let and hindered, was removed out of the way; which was done by the barbarous nations, who set up these kingdoms, which made way for the lordly and tyrannical government of the pope of Rome; so that he and they rose up together: and this may be meant by the *one hour*: namely, that at one and the same hour or season he came to his supreme authority and grandeur, and they received their kingly power with him; or this may denote the time of their continuance in their honour and greatness; it was but for an hour, or a short time, as that phrase sometimes signifies, Philem. 15. and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *for one hour*: to which agrees the Arabic version, *and their power shall be of one hour*: and this shall be as *kings*; for they only have the title of kings, but not sovereign power; they are vassals to the beast, the pope, who reigns over them, ver. 18. and sets up kings in these kingdoms, and deposes them at pleasure; exalting himself above all that is called God, or above all civil magistrates; so that these have only the name, not the thing; they are as kings, and look like such, but are not really so; though what power they have, they receive not from the beast, but from God; the beast receives his power and authority, as well as seat, from the dragon; but civil power and magistracy is from God, who suffers these princes, and gives them up to such stupidity as to give their kingdom to the beast, and to exercise their power as he directs.

Ver. 13. *These have one mind, &c.*] The princes of these kingdoms, and their subjects, become, in time, of one religion; first they were Arians, and then Papists; and for a long series of time there was great unity between them, with respect to religious sentiments, being zealously attached to the church of Rome, its principles and practices: and *shall give their power and strength unto the beast*; the Papal antichrist, the eighth king, and seventh head; to him they have

given power to exercise all ecclesiastical authority in their kingdoms; as to ordain bishops, and deliver the pall to whom they will; to excommunicate offenders, and even lay their kingdoms under an interdict when they pleased; and have assisted and defended the popes of Rome with all their force, with all their might and main, and to the utmost of their power, and have engaged in what have been called the holy wars, at their motion; they have given their riches and wealth, which are called the forces of strength, Job xxxvi. 19. which they have, by various methods, drained them of; hence the whore of Rome came to be decked with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; yea, they have given them their kingdoms, and have received them from them, and become tributary to them.

Ver. 14. *These shall make war with the Lamb, &c.*] The Lord Jesus Christ, so often spoken of in this book under this character, ch. v. 6, 12. and vi. 1. and vii. 10. and xiv. 1. And this war is not to be understood of a war with him personally, or of that last and decisive battle at Armageddon, in which will be the kings of the earth; but of a war with his members, of their persecuting of the saints, and faithful witnesses of Christ in all ages, within their jurisdictions, being instigated to it by the beast, under whose influence they are: *and the Lamb shall overcome them*: partly through the constancy of his people, who will not love their lives to the death, but freely lay them down for him; nor can any thing separate them from the love of Christ, or prevail upon them to desert him, his truths and ordinances, cause and interest, but are more than conquerors through him, and so he overcomes in them; and partly through a reformation which he effects, as in some of those kingdoms already, as Sweden, Denmark, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and others, and will do in others hereafter; see ver. 16. *for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings*: he is so by nature, as God and Creator, to whom the kingdom of nature and providence belongs; and by office, as Mediator, being made higher than the kings of the earth; hence he is an over-matcher for them, they can't stand before him; this is a reason why he overcomes them, and it can't be thought it should be otherwise; this Lamb is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and when he rouses himself, and stirs up his wrath, and exerts his power, kings and great men flee from him; see Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17. Psal. ii. 6, 9, 10, 11, 12. This is a proof of Christ's proper deity, the same titles being given to him, the Word and Son of God, as to God himself, Rev. xix. 16. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. *And they that are with him*: his servants and his soldiers, that fight under him, and abide by him, are *called, and chosen, and faithful*: they are chosen in Christ from all eternity, to grace here, and glory hereafter, and so stand opposed to the admirers of the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life, ver. 8. for this is to be understood of their eternal election, and not of their separation by effectual vocation in time, for that is expressed by their being *called*; and though their calling is here set before election, as in 2 Pet. i. 10. yet it does not precede it; the Arabic version reads, *chosen, called, faithful*; first *chosen* by God the Father, then *called*, not with the bare external call by the ministry of the word, for, so, many are called, and not chosen; but by special

grace to special benefits, and with an holy and heavenly calling, and which is irresistible, and without repentance; and being called they remain *faithful*: the meaning is, either that they have faith, or are believers in Christ; which faith they have bestowed on them in effectual vocation, as a fruit of electing grace; and by this they overcome the world: or else, that they are persons of integrity and uprightness, that are on the side of Christ; they are the faithful in the Lord, and are made so by him; and they are faithful to him, and abide by his Gospel and ordinances, and in his cause and interest, even unto death; and so this character is expressive of the perseverance of those who are chosen and called, even unto the end.

Ver. 15. *And he saith unto me, &c.*] That is, the angel, who proposed to give John the interpretation of the vision, he went on with it as follows: *the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth*, ver. 1. see the note there, *are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*: denoting the vast multitude of people, of which the several kingdoms, of divers languages, consist, which belong to the jurisdiction of Rome Papal: it is an eastern way of speaking, and is particularly used to express the various kingdoms, and infinite number of people belonging to the Babylonish monarchy, which was an emblem of the antichristian state, Dan. iii. 4, 7, 29, and iv. 1. and these are compared to waters, to many waters; which phrase sometimes is used for the sea, Psal. cvii. 23. because of the vast numbers of them; the whole world woudered after the beast, and the kings and inhabitants of the earth have been subject to the see of Rome; and because of their overbearing force, carrying all before them; see Isa. viii. 7, 8. Jer. xlvii. 2. Rev. xiii. 3, 4. and because, like waters, they are continually upon the flux, one generation succeeding another; and because of their instability, fickleness, and inconstancy, as in religion, so in their constitution, they'll hate the whore they love; and as they frequently change and alter in their form, at last they will utterly cease: so the Jews^v interpret many waters, in Cant. viii. 7. of all people, and of the kings of the earth, and of the nations of the world; and they say, that many waters never signify any other than all the nations, and those that are appointed over them^x. So, *he drew me out of many waters*, Psal. xviii. 16. is by the Targum on the place explained, *he delivered me from many people*. And so Psal. xlv. 4. is paraphrased by the Targumist; "people, as rivers, and their streams, shall come, and make glad the city of the Lord;" see the Targum on Isa. viii. 7. and in Ezek. xxxii. 2. where it is observed kingdoms are compared to waters^y.

Ver. 16. *And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, &c.*] Ver. 3. and which are interpreted of ten kings, ver. 12. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, *and the beast*: and then the sense is, that the ten kings and states in particular, who have defended antichrist, and the whole empire in general, which has bore up and supported the whore of Rome: *these shall hate the whore*; her principles and senti-

ments, her doctrines, and with an holy and heavenly calling, and which is irresistible, and without repentance; and being called they remain *faithful*: the meaning is, either that they have faith, or are believers in Christ; which faith they have bestowed on them in effectual vocation, as a fruit of electing grace; and by this they overcome the world: or else, that they are persons of integrity and uprightness, that are on the side of Christ; they are the faithful in the Lord, and are made so by him; and they are faithful to him, and abide by his Gospel and ordinances, and in his cause and interest, even unto death; and so this character is expressive of the perseverance of those who are chosen and called, even unto the end.

ments, her doctrines, which are doctrines of devils, her wicked practices, her idolatries, adulteries, murders, and thefts; they'll repent of their fornications with her, and cease from them; their love will be turned to hatred, and the latter will be greater than ever the former was, like Amnon's to Tamar; and as it usually is with men towards harlots, when they see their follies, and how they have been deceived and abused by them: *and shall make her desolate*; leave her, quit her communion; no more commit fornication with her, or join with her in her idolatrous worship; but come out from that apostate church, and renounce all fellowship with her, and persuade and engage as many as they can influence to do the same: *and naked*: strip her of her purple, scarlet colour, gold, pearls, and precious stones; cease to give their power and strength, withhold their taxes and tribute, deprive her of her power and authority, civil and ecclesiastical, in their realms, and take away even her patrimony from her; and not only so, but expose her shame and filthiness, her abominable principles and practices, to all the world; which has been in part done already: *and shall eat her flesh*; not literally, but mystically; not out of love, but hatred; they shall take that to themselves, and make use of, which have fattened her, as bishoprics, and other benefices, lands, endowments belonging to abbeyes, and monasteries, and other religious houses; an instance and example of which we have in King Henry the Eighth's time; so some understand this phrase of devouring the substance of others, in Psal. xxvii. 2. Dan. vii. 5. So the Targumists often interpret *flesh and fatness*, by *riches, goods, or substance*; the phrase in Isa. xvii. 4. *the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean*, is paraphrased, עֵתֶר יִקְרֶיהָ, *the riches of his glory shall be carried away*; and the words in Mic. iii. 3. *who shall also eat the flesh of my people, &c.* are rendered, *and they who spoil עָמִי בְכֶסֶף, the goods, or substance of my people, and take away their precious mammon, or money, from them*. And again, Zech. xi. 9. *let the rest eat, every one the flesh of another*, is in the Targum, *let a man spoil עָמִי בְכֶסֶף, the goods or substance of his neighbour*; and in ver. 16. *he shall eat the flesh of the fat*: the paraphrase is, *he shall spoil עָמִי בְכֶסֶף, the goods or substance of the rich*. *And burn her with fire*: alluding to the law in Lev. xxi. 9. which required that the daughter of a priest, that played the whore, should be burnt with fire; and this is to be understood literally of burning the city of Rome, the seat of the whore, with fire; of which see ch. xviii. 8, 9, 18. It has been very near being burnt in times past, as by Alaricus the Goth, Attila the Hun, Genseric the Vandal, and by Totilas, and in later times by Charles the Fifth; and would have been, had they not been dissuaded or diverted from it; and which were so many preludes and warnings of its future fate: and we may learn from hence, that Rome, and the Romish antichrist, will not be destroyed by the Turks, but by the Christians; and by the same states, and kingdoms, and princes, by which the whore of Rome has been supported in her grandeur, power, and authority, who will revolt from Popery, and embrace the pure Gospel of Christ: and

^v Targum in Cant. viii. 7. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 26. 1.

^x Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3. & Raya Mehimna in ib. & in Numb. fol. 165. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 4.

^y Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 93. 2.

this shews, that the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire has been divided, will subsist in this form at the destruction of Rome; wherefore, it has been rightly observed by some, that not one of these kingdoms shall ever be able to rise to universal monarchy. France has been for many years attempting it, but in vain; and we may sit down easy and satisfied, assuring ourselves with the greatest confidence, that all attempts this way will be fruitless; there never will be another universal monarchy on earth but that of Christ's; see Dan. ii. 37, 39, 40. and vii. 3, 23, 27.

Ver. 17. *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, &c.*] By doing the preceding things to the whore of Rome, whose destruction is according to the will of God; it is his approving will, what he likes of, and will be well-pleas'd with; it is his will of command, what he will order to be done, ch. xviii. 6, 7. and it is his determining will, his will of purpose, his decree, what he has resolv'd shall be done; he has fix'd the time of her reign, and longer than that she shall not continue: and these kings, in destroying her, will not do so much their own will, as the will of God, and God will put it into their hearts to do it; he will work in them both to will and to do; he'll fill them with hatred to her; he'll incline their minds to do the above things, as it will be in the power of their hands to do them; he who has the hearts of all men, and even of kings in his hands, and can turn them as rivers of water, will move them hereunto, Prov. xxi. 1. he that turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people Israel, Psal. cv. 25. will turn the hearts of these kings to hate the whore, and do unto her as is here predicted; and the same God will do this, who has, on the other hand, already put into their hearts to do the following things: *and to agree*; this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is the same with that of having one mind, ver. 13. that is, being of the same religion; God giving them up to a reprobate mind, to believe a lie, that they might be damn'd; which must be understood not of the same individuals, but of their predecessors; unless this is to be interpreted of their agreeing together against the whore, to pull her down, and set up the pure worship and service of God; for this is a blessing of grace from God, who gives his people one heart and one way, that they may fear him, Jer. xxxii. 39. but the former sense seems best, since it follows, *and give their kingdom unto*

the beast; the eighth king, and seventh head, the pope of Rome; to whom they have given their power and strength in things civil and ecclesiastical, their wealth and riches; and have received their crowns from him, and have held their kingdoms by him, and become tributary to him: and this is done, and will be, *until the words of God shall be fulfilled*; concerning the afflictions of his church and people, and the reign of antichrist, for the space of forty and two months, ch. xi. 2. and xiii. 5. all which while they are fulfilling the secret will of God, unknown to them, and yet act against his revealed will, and break his commands; just as the Jews, ignorant of the prophecies of the Old Testament, fulfilled them in condemning Christ, Acts xiii. 27. That God should put it into the hearts of these kings to fulfil his will, in destroying the whore of Rome, is easily received; but there seems some difficulty that he should put it into their hearts to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, which was sinful: now this he did, not by infusing sin into them, which is contrary to his pure and holy nature; but by leaving them, and giving them up to their own hearts' lusts; stirring up, and moving upon their minds, and directing the motions of it, to such and such objects, which they readily and voluntarily fell in with; and yet the concern of God herein does not, nor do his decrees about sin infringe the liberty of the will in acting, or excuse the sinfulness of the action, or make God the author of sin; as the instances of selling of Joseph by his brethren, and the crucifixion of Christ by the Jews, shew.

Ver. 18. *And the woman which thou sawest, &c.*] Ver. 3. as there described, *is that great city*, often mentioned in this book; great Babylon, the city of Rome, ch. xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvi. 19. *which reigneth over the kings of the earth*: which then reigned in John's time over the kings of the earth; and this clearly points out the city of Rome, for there was no other city then, but that, which reigned over the kings of the earth; that was then the metropolis of the Roman empire, to which the whole world was subject; and therefore it is called all the world, Luke ii. 1. and since, all the kings of the empire have been under the jurisdiction of Rome Papal. It was formerly called *Urbs Regum, a city of kings*²; either for the reason in the text, or because its inhabitants looked like kings.

CH A P. XVIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the fall of Babylon, and of the lamentation of many, and of the joy of others, by reason of it; which account is published by several angels: the first that declares her fall is described by his original, descending from heaven; by the great power he had; by his resplendent glory, and by his mighty cry in publishing her destruction; which is illustrated by the desolate condition she will be in upon her fall; the reasons of which are given, because

the nations and kings of the earth had committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth were enriched by her luxury, ver. 1, 2, 3. Another voice is heard from heaven, calling upon the people of God, first to come out of her, lest partaking of her sins they should share in her plagues, seeing her iniquities had reached to heaven, and were remembered before God; and next to take full vengeance on her, because she had glorified herself, lived deliciously, and in great security,

² Justin. l. 18. c. 2.

ver. 4, 5, 6, 7. And then follows a continuation of the account of her destruction, what her plagues would be, death, mourning, famine, and fire; and which would be sudden, in one hour, and certain, from the power and justice of God, ver. 8. Next follow the lamentations of the kings, merchants, and masters of ships, because of her greatness, riches, and merchandise, which are all come to nothing, ver. 9—19. And then the church, the saints, apostles, and prophets, are called upon to rejoice at the vengeance taken on her, ver. 20. upon which a mighty angel appears, who by an action signifies the manner of her destruction, and the irrecoverableness of her state and condition, ver. 21. and declares her utter ruin, by affirming that nothing that was either delightful or profitable, or necessary or comfortable, should any more be found in her; giving the reasons of it, because of her luxury, idolatry, and bloodshed, ver. 22, 23, 24.

Ver. 1. *And after these things, &c.*] The vision of the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast, and the interpretation of both by the angel: *I saw another angel*; not the Lord Jesus Christ, though the several things said of this angel agree with him; nor one of the ministering spirits, though the characters of him will also suit with one of them, but rather a minister of the Gospel, or a set of Gospel ministers, who will arise a little before the downfall of Babylon, in the spiritual reign of Christ; though not the same with the angel of fire, ch. xiv. 18. as some have thought, because of his illustrious appearance, and the loudness of his voice; but the same with the angel, or third thundering voice in ch. xiv. 6. for not only the times of both agree, but the self-same words are expressed by one as by the other; and this angel is distinct from him that shewed John the preceding vision, and gave him the interpretation of it, and from all the seven angels that had the vials, and is described as follows: and first by the place from whence he came, John saw him *come down from heaven*; denoting the suddenness of his appearance and cry; he came down at once, and cried out immediately; the subject of his cry, the destruction of Babylon, being what will be at an unawares; and also the commission and authority of the ministers signified by him, who will have their warrant from heaven to say what they will deliver; so that this likewise expresses the truth of their message, since both that and they come from heaven: *having great power*; to do great work; to declare the fall of Babylon the great: or *having great authority*; being sent from the King of kings, in his name, as his ambassador, to proclaim what shortly will come to pass; an event of the greatest importance to the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the comfort of his people: *and the earth was lightened with his glory*; see Ezek. xliii. 2. by which is meant the glorious Gospel of Christ, the light of which will at this time be very great: these ministers will run to and fro the earth, and knowledge will be increased, and the earth will be filled with it: the Arabic version reads, *with the splendour of his countenance*; and the Ethiopic version, *with the splendour of his countenance, and his glory*; see Isa. lx. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 2. *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, &c.*] Which shews not only the vehemence and affection of

the ministers of the word, who will publish what follows, but the greatness and importance of it; and this loud voice may be, as for the sake of the whole church in general, that all may hear, so for the sake of those of the Lord's people in particular, that will be in Babylon at this time; and it may have regard to that deep sleep and spirit of slumber that Babylon itself will be in, which, notwithstanding this loud cry, will remain insensible of its ruin till it comes upon her, as was the case of old Babylon, Jer. li. 39, 40, 41. *saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*; the whole world is not designed by Babylon, for it is distinguished from all nations in the following verse; nor Babylon in Chaldea, which was fallen long before John saw this vision, but Rome Papal; see the note on ch. xiv. 8. so the woman is called in ch. xvii. 5. who sits on seven mountains, and is that great city, the city of Rome, that reigns over the kings of the earth, ver. 9, 18. this is said to be fallen, because, in a very little time after this declaration, it will fall; for as yet it was not destroyed, since after this the Lord's people are called upon to come out of her, and are bid to reward her double; and it is declared, that her plagues should come in one day, and she should be burnt with fire; and an angel after this throws a millstone into the sea, saying, that so should Babylon be thrown down, ver. 4, 6, 8, 21. and it is repeated to denote the certainty and utter destruction of her: and which is more fully expressed by what follows, *and is become the habitation of devils*; as old Babylon was of *satyrs*, Isa. xiii. 21. demons which appeared in a hairy form, like goats, and the word is rendered devils in Lev. xvii. 7. and the inhabitants of Rome now are no other; the pope and his cardinals, the priests, Jesuits, monks, and friars, are the spirits of devils, and their doctrines the doctrines of devils; see ch. xvi. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 1. *and the hold of every foul spirit*; devils are frequently called unclean spirits, and these appear in desert and desolate places, Matt. xii. 43. where they are either of choice, or rather are obliged to it; and so the word translated *hold* signifies a prison, or place of confinement; and such as are comparable to unclean spirits now haunt and abound in Rome, and its territories; see ch. xvi. 13. *and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird*; such as vultures, kites, owls, &c. which generally reside in desolate and uninhabited places; the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, add, *and the hold, or seat of every unclean and hateful beast*; and so the desolation of old Babylon is described by wild beasts and doleful creatures dwelling in it, Isa. xliii. 21, 22. Jer. l. 39. and li. 37. Some consider all this as a reason of the destruction of Babylon or Rome, because it now is the residence of persons comparable to devils, foul spirits, hateful birds, and beasts of prey; but this account rather describes its state and case in which it will be after its ruin, being never more to be inhabited by men, in allusion to old Babylon, Isa. xliii. 19, 20. Jer. li. 62.

Ver. 3. *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, &c.*] That is, all the nations of the Roman empire, the European nations, otherwise the Pagan and Mahometan nations have not; but these have, being made to drink by her, and made drunk therewith, that is, with her idolatries; see the note on

ch. xiv. 8. *And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her; joined with her in her idolatrous worship and practices, and encouraged the same, and obliged their subjects to them in their dominions; see the note on ch. xvii. 2. And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies: or luxury; which is not to be understood in a literal sense; though it is true that many merchants, in all ages, have enriched themselves by sending their commodities to Rome, where, through the vast consumption and luxuriousness of the place, they have bore a good price: but this is to be interpreted of spiritual merchants; these are such who do not merchandise by sea, but are land-merchants, the merchants of the earth, and are said to be the great men of the earth, ver. 23. such as are equal to princes, lords, and nobles; such are the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops; though the inferior clergy of the Romish church, who are under these, may be included: to which may be added, that one part of their wares is said to be the souls of men, ver. 13. which plainly shews what sort of merchants these are; they are such who make merchandise of men, and pretend to sell them heaven, and the salvation of their souls; these are they that deal in pardons and indulgences, which they sell to ignorant people, and for a sum of money say Mass to fetch souls out of purgatory: all things have been saleable at Rome, crucifixes, priests, altars, temples, prayers, heaven, Christ, yea, God himself, as the poet Mantuan expresses it; and because of these idolatries, and wicked practices, Rome will be at last destroyed.*

Ver. 4. *And I heard another voice from heaven, &c.]* Either of another, or of the same angel, or rather of God, or Christ himself, since the persons addressed are called his people: *saying, come out of her, my people;* meaning either his elect ones, till now uncalled, being such whom God had chosen for his people, and were so by virtue of the covenant of grace, were given to Christ as his people, and were redeemed by him, though, till this call, in an unconverted state; or else such who had been secretly called by the grace of God, but had not made a public profession of the Gospel, nor bore an open testimony against the Romish idolatry; for as the Lord had a righteous Lot in Sodom, and saints where Satan's seat was, Rome Pagan, so he will have a people in Rome Papal, at the time when its destruction draws near; and these will be called out, not only in a spiritual sense, to quit the communion of the church, to forsake its idolatries, and not touch the unclean thing, separate themselves from her, and bear a testimony against her doctrines and worship, but in a literal sense, locally; they shall be bid to come out of her, as Lot was ordered to go out of Sodom before its burning, and the people of the Jews out of Babylon before the taking of it, Jer. l. 8. and li. 45. to which reference is here had: and as the Christians were called out of Jerusalem before the destruction of it: this shews the particular knowledge the Lord has of his people, be they where they will, and the gracious care he takes of them, that they perish not with others; and that it is his will they should be a separate people from the rest of the world; and this call of his sufficiently justifies the Protestants in their separation from the church of Rome, and every sepa-

ration from any apostate church; *that ye be not partakers of her sins;* by conniving at them, or committing the same; and all such are partakers of them, and have fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, that are in the communion of that church; and those that dwell at Rome are in great danger of being so, and cannot well avoid it: yea, even those that only go to see it, and stay but for a time in it, and that not only through the strength and influence of example, but through the force of power and authority: *and that ye receive not of her plagues;* or punishments; the seven last plagues, which belong to her, the vials of which will be poured out upon one or other of the antichristian states, and the fifth particularly will fall upon Rome, the seat of the beast, and is what is here referred to.

Ver. 5. *For her sins have reached unto heaven, &c.]* Or *have followed unto heaven;* one after another, in one age after another, until they have been as it were heaped up together, and have reached the heavens; the phrase denotes the multitude of them, God's knowledge and notice of them, and the cry of them to him; see Gen. xviii. 20. Jon. i. 2. the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition read, *have cleaved, or glided,* and so the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to have read; her sins were as it were soldered together, and stuck fast to her, and being joined and linked together, made a long chain, and reached to heaven, and cleaved to that, and cried for vengeance: *and God hath remembered her iniquities;* and is about to punish her for them; for as forgiveness of sin is signified by a non-remembrance of it, so punishment of sin by a remembrance of it, and of the persons that commit it; see ch. xvi. 19.

Ver. 6. *Reward her even as she rewarded you, &c.]* This is spoken to the people of God, who are before called out of Babylon; and the chief of them are the seven angels with the seven last plagues of the wrath of God, and the same with the ten kings that will burn the whore with fire; these are called upon to take vengeance, by way of retaliation, for what she had done to them, in allusion to what is said of old Babylon, Jer. l. 15. and li. 24, 35. and must be understood not of what she will have done to them personally, but to their predecessors in the faith of Christ in former ages; that as she had hated them, and made war with them, so now they should hate her, and make war with her; and as she had stripped them naked of their clothes, and spoiled them of their worldly goods and substance, so now they should strip her naked of her harlot's attire, of her gold, silver, and precious stones, and make her and her territories desolate; and as she has burnt many of the precious saints in the flames, as here in England, and elsewhere, so now they shall utterly burn her with fire; and as she has shed the blood of the righteous, and drank it, and been drunk with it, they shall give her blood to drink; and as she hath killed multitudes with the sword, so now shall they kill her and her children; see ch. xiii. 12. nor is this contrary to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and the spirit of Christianity, which will not admit of revenge, Mat. v. 38, 39. Rom. xii. 17, 19, 20, 21. since this will not be private, but public revenge, inflicted by Christian princes and magistrates, who are ministers

of God, and revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil: *and double unto her double according to her works*: the meaning is not to inflict upon her a punishment doubly greater than hersins, for this would be contrary to the justice of God; nor does ever God punish men in this life more, but less, than their iniquities deserve; nor can any temporal punishment be doubly greater than sin, which deserves eternal death; and with this she will be punished hereafter, and therefore will not have her full punishment now, and much less a greater than her sins required; to which may be added, that this will be according to her works, her wicked works, and therefore will not exceed the demerit of her sins: but the sense is, that if it was possible to be done, they should use her with double severity to that she had used them with; seeing her sins deserved a severer treatment than even they had had from her; the phrase signifies an abundant and utter destruction, a punishment which was suitable and sufficient; see Isa. xl. 2. Jer. xvi. 18. and xvii. 18. and it suggests that they should not spare her, nor pity her, but use her with the greatest severity imaginable, it being not possible to exceed her due deserts, or what her works required: *in the cup which he hath filled, fill to her double*: not in the cup of her abominations, her errors, idolatries, and wickedness; but in the cup of afflictions and trouble, which she wrung out to the people of God, in that give her double portion: the sense is the same as before.

Ver. 7. *How much she hath glorified herself, &c.*] And acted the proud and haughty part in exalting herself above all emperors, kings, and princes, above all kingdoms and states, and also above all churches, assuming arrogant titles, and even blasphemous names; see ch. xiii. 1, 5. and *lived deliciously*: in a very luxuriant manner, as the popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, and friars have done; some being clothed in purple and scarlet, and in gold and silver, and all living upon the fat of the land, and in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness: *so much torment and sorrow give her*: by pulling down her pride, which goes before a fall, than which nothing could more torment and afflict her; by stripping her of her fine clothes and rich apparel; and by taking away her fat benefices from her, which will cut her to the heart; and by burning her with fire, which will be very excruciating: *for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen*; a lady of kingdoms, as in Isa. xlvii. 5. to which the reference is; having a temporal power and authority over the kings of the earth, and a spiritual jurisdiction over all churches, apostate ones, being the mother of harlots; and her *sitting* as such, as it well agrees with the whore on many waters, and the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast and seven mountains, who are all the same, and is very suitable to antichrist, who pretends to sit in Peter's chair, and does sit in the temple of God, as if he was God; so it is expressive of her empire and government over nations and churches, and of the continuance of it, as she imagines, see Isa. xlvii. 7. and so the Ethiopic version renders it, *I shall reign always*: to which she adds, *and am no widow*: nor never shall be, as she flatters herself, see Isa. xlvii. 8.

Were she the true spouse of Christ, as she boasts herself, she indeed would be no widow, for Christ is an everlasting and never-dying husband; but she is the whore of the kings of the earth, and though she fancies she shall be no widow, that is, bereft of people and power, see Lam. i. 1. because she now sits on many waters, people, multitudes, and nations and tongues; yet ere long, like old Babylon, she will have no men in her, but will be inhabited by devils, foul spirits, and hateful birds: *and shall see no sorrow*; through loss of children, power, and authority; see Isa. xlvii. 8. but in this also she will be mistaken; her children will be killed with death, as is threatened to Jezabel, ch. ii. 23. and her plagues shall come upon her at once: now these words may be considered either as spoken by her when in the height of her power and glory, as she was about three or four hundred years ago; or just before her destruction, which seems to be the case, and looks as if she would regain her power, and be in *statu quo* before her utter ruin; see the note on ch. xi. 2.

Ver. 8. *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, &c.*] The seven last plagues, which will be in a very little time executed upon her, very speedily and very quickly, one after another, if not all together; and particularly the fifth vial may be respected, as well as the plagues that follow; see Isa. xlvii. 9. *death*; not the second death, which will not be till after the decisive battle at Armageddon, when the beast will be taken, and cast alive into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death; but either the pestilence, which is called so, ch. vi. 8. or rather death by the sword, war, which will be brought upon her, and in which she and her children will be slain with the sword: *mourning*; for the loss of her children, the destruction of the city of Rome itself, the seat of the beast, and for the darkness of his kingdom, the inhabitants of which shall be in such pain, as to gnaw their tongues for it: *famine*: which generally attends war, at least sieges; and it looks as if Rome would be besieged awhile before it is destroyed, which will produce a grievous famine in it; this is opposed to her living deliciously, as well as the two former are to her notion of sitting a queen for ever, and knowing no sorrow: *and she shall be utterly burnt with fire*; the burning of Rome has been attempted several times, by different persons, and has been burnt in part, but not wholly, see the note on ch. xvii. 16. but now it will be entirely destroyed by fire; either by fire from heaven, as Sodom and Gomorrah were; or by fire breaking out of the earth, it being very manifest that there are volcanos, burning mountains, and subterraneous fires in those parts, which seem to be so many preparations in nature for the burning of that city; or rather by the ten kings, who will set fire to it; and it may be by all these ways. The Jews have a notion, that, at the coming of the Messiah, Rome will be burnt^a, as Sodom has been; you will find, say they^b, that of Sodom and of that kingdom (Rome, of which they are speaking, and which they afterwards call the fourth kingdom), it is decreed concerning them both, that they *should be burnt with fire*: of Sodom,

^a Zehar in Gen. fol. 74. 3. & in Numb. fol. 286. 1.

^b Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 48. 2.

Gen. xix. 24. and of the fourth kingdom (Rome), Isa. xxxiv. 9. for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her: the Alexandrian copy reads, that has judged: and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; that is, has purposed and determined her destruction, and therefore it is unavoidable; he that has resolved upon it, and foretold it, and has adjudged her to it, is the Lord God Almighty; and he is able to execute the sentence determined and pronounced, and it is impossible she should escape: it may be understood of Christ the mighty God, the Judge of quick and dead; see Jer. l. 34.

Ver. 9. *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, &c.*] Idolatry, ch. xvii. 2. and xviii. 3. and lived deliciously with her; ver. 3, 7. joining with her in her sensual, as well as in her idolatrous practices: shall bewail her, and lament for her: shall mourn inwardly, and by various gestures outwardly express their sorrow at her desolation; see Ezek. xxvii. 30, 31, 32. these will not be the ten kings who will burn the whore with fire, and then repent of what they have done, and weep over her, as Titus did at the destruction of Jerusalem, as some Popish writers have fancied, for they will hate the whore, and eat her flesh; but earthly and idolatrous kings, who will be in the communion of the church of Rome: when they shall see the smoke of her burning; as Abraham saw the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah go up like the smoke of a furnace; by which they will perceive that her judgment is come, and her ruin begun.

Ver. 10. *Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, &c.*] Lest they themselves should share in it, who have partook of her sins; either they will not be in a capacity to help her, or they will be dispirited, and will be in awe and dread of God's righteous judgments: saying, alas! alas! that great city Babylon! that mighty city! it will aggravate their sorrow, when they reflect upon the former grandeur, magnificence, power, and authority, of the city and see of Rome, so often called in this book the great city; and so it is by other writers; the Jews call it so: they say^c, when the Messiah comes, "the kings of the world shall be gathered to רבתא רבתא, the great city of Rome; and the holy blessed God will cast upon them fire" and hail, and great hail-stones, (with which compare "ch. xvi. 21.) and they shall perish from the world, "except those kings that do not come there." It is common with the Jewish writers to call the Roman empire Edom; and Magdiel, one of the dukes of Edom, Gen. xxxvi. 43. who has his name from greatness, is interpreted by one of their commentators^d of Rome; the reason of which, another of them says^e, is because Rome is become great above all kingdoms: the mount of Esau in Obad. ver. 21. is interpreted רבתא רבתא, that great city of Esau, which is Rome^f, and the same epithet it has in the Talmud^g; and Porphyry calls it *magnum et magnificum*, that great city, without making mention of its name, as here; so among the Latins^h, *Magna spes altera Romæ: for in one hour is thy judgment come*: the Ethiopic version reads, the hour of her judgment: the time of her punishment

fixed by God; but the sense is, that her vengeance was suddenly come upon her; this is the judgment of the great whore, which the angel proposed to shew to John, ch. xvii. 1.

Ver. 11. *And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, &c.*] Who these are, see the note on ver. 3. and what their lamentation, ver. 16. the reason of their weeping and mourning follows: for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; what their merchandise is, is expressed in the two next verses; and this shews that it is not to be understood merely in a literal sense; for such commodities in general as are there mentioned, if they go not off at one place, they will at another; and the decay of trade in one city does not put a stop to business all the world over; and often so it is, that the ruin of commerce in one place is the rise of it in another; and all the things hereafter spoken of, excepting the last article, are what will be merchandised in one place or another to the end of the world; unless the sense should be, that no man at Rome, and the parts adjacent, will buy of this merchandise any more; but though they should not, this could not be cause of such lamentation as is afterwards expressed, since their goods might be taken off elsewhere; but it looks as if this must be understood of such kind of wares as will be disused and despised all the world over, and they will meet with no customers any where to deal with them in them.

Ver. 12. *The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, &c.*] Things for treasure and ornament, and with which the great whore is said to be decked, ch. xvii. 4. and, literally understood, may denote the vast riches which these spiritual merchants, or factors for Rome, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, bring into their own coffers and the pope's, by the trade they drive in her wares with the souls of men; and may have also a regard to what their images, chalices, crowns, mitres, &c. are made of, and what some of them are adorned with; and as Tyre, to whom the reference is in the several particulars of this account, had her merchants for these things, Ezek. xxvii. 12, 16, 22. so Mr. Brightman thinks that in these, and in some following ones, Spain is Rome's merchant, which fetches them from the Indies for her: but these things, mystically taken, sometimes design the doctrines of the Gospel, 1 Cor. iii. 12. and which are to be preferred to, and more to be esteemed than thousands of gold and silver; and these Rome's merchants pretended to deliver out; but instead of them, they put off wood, hay, and stubble, yea, doctrines of devils, and lies in hypocrisy; and sometimes the grace of God is meant, Rev. iii. 18. which is more precious than gold that perisheth; and this they pretend to convey to men *ex opere operato*, in the ordinances, as baptism, &c. and to communicate the spirit, with his gifts and graces, for money, which is direct simony; yea, they pretend to sell eternal life, nay, Christ, and God himself: and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet: things which

^c Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3.

^d Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43.

^e Abarbanel in Dau. fol. 49. 5.

^f Jarchi in Obadiah, ver. 21.

^g T. Bab. Saahedin, fol. 21. 2.

^h Servius in Virgil, Eclog. 6. p. 67.

belong to apparel and dress; and, literally taken, the *fine linen* is for their copes, wore by bishops and by chanters, and sub-chanters, and for surplices wore by their priests, in imitation of the Jewish priests, and for Mass-clothes, &c. the *purple, silk, and scarlet*, were for the popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops; so the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast is said to be arrayed in purple and scarlet, ch. xvii. 4. Tyre had its merchants for these, Ezek. xxvii. 7, 16, 24. the fine linen and silk may mystically denote the holy lives, good works, and merits of the saints, those of them called works of supererogation, which become the church's stock, and they sell out for money to others that want; which is a monstrous kind of ware, and a dreadful imposition upon men, since men cannot be saved and justified by works; and the best of men are so far from having a redundancy of works, that in every thing they sin and offend, and are greatly deficient; and they are so far from helping others, that they are unprofitable servants themselves: the purple and scarlet may signify the blood of Christ, which they pretend to sell in the Mass; nay, they have pretended to have had the very liquid blood of Christ, which they have carried in a crystal glass, thick on one side, and transparent on the other; and so could not be seen by persons in a mortal sin, until they had given a good deal of money, and then the clear side was by sleight of hand turned to them; and which was no other than the blood of a duck, renewed weekly by the priest; which trick for a long time brought in vast sums of money, and was detected at Hales in Gloucestershire, in Henry the Eighth's time; or these may intend the sufferings of the saints, which likewise come into the treasure of the church, and are at its dispose for money, the virtue of which being very great for the salvation of men's souls: *and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble*: things for utensils and furniture, not so much for their houses, as for their churches; Tyre had its merchants for these, Ezek. xxvii. 5, 6, 12, 13, 15. *Thyine wood*, Pliny says¹, was very durable, and of it the rafters of ancient temples were made; and may design such-like lasting and odoriferous wood as cypress, cedar, &c. used in the Popish churches, for the embellishing of them, and for images in them; it may be the same with the wood of the *Almug*, or *Algum* trees, since these are rendered *thyine wood* in the Vulgate Latin version in 1 Kings x. 11, 12. 2 Chron. ix. 10, 11. *vessels of ivory* may be boxes made thereof, in which the host is put, and the reliques of saints are preserved: and *vessels of most precious wood, or stone*, as the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read, *and of brass, iron, and marble*, may intend various vessels used in their churches; as vessels for holy water, founts of marble, and other valuable stones, for baptism, censers of iron and brass to burn incense in. Cocceius thinks that by these vessels of different materials are meant good men; who are like sweet-smelling wood for the fragrant of their doctrines and lives; and like iron, brass, and marble, for their courage, constancy, and patience; and who have

been canonized for saints, which has brought in much money into the pope's coffers: this is a practice in imitation of the Heathens, who deified men, and set them over particular days and affairs; and the privileges of such canonization among the Papists are, that such a saint has his name set in the calendar in red letters, may have churches and altars dedicated to him, and his image set up in them, and a holiday be kept for him, and may be prayed to, and worshipped; a practice dreadfully derogatory to the glory of Christ's person and office, but is that in which these merchants have found their account; for through references, commissions, and reports, for proof of the saint's character and miracles, his friends are at very great expense before the affair is issued, especially if rich; our King Henry the Seventh was very desirous of having his kinsman Henry the Sixth canonized, and solicited the pope for it, but he would not do it under fifteen hundred ducats of gold, which the king thought was too much, and so declined it.

Ver. 13. *And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, &c.*] Things for delight and pleasure, for the gratifying of the senses; *cinnamon and odours* were used for perfuming, Prov. vii. 17. anointing with oil was used at feasts, Psal. xxiii. 5. and *frankincense*, or censings, at banquets, and for the regaling of persons after food²: these customs obtained among the eastern people. Tyre had its merchants for these things, Ezek. xxvii. 19, 22. and Mr. Brightman thinks Italy is Rome's merchant in these, which it fetches from Greece, Arabia, and Egypt; it may be these rather respect the ecclesiastical use of them; *cinnamon, odours, and frankincense*, may signify the perfumings and censings used in churches, or the burning incense in imitation of the sweet incense under the law; and *ointments* may denote their christ, or anointing with oil at baptism, imagining that Christ was anointed with material oil at his baptism, whereas it was with the Holy Ghost: moreover, these things may be mystically understood, *cinnamon* being used by harlots in perfuming their bed, Prov. vii. 17. may intend the stews and brothel-houses erected at Rome, and licensed by authority, each whore paying so much per week; the revenues of which would sometimes yearly amount to twenty thousand ducats: *ointments* may be understood of christ in baptism, and extreme unction at death: *odours and frankincense* may mean their prayers and pater-nosters, their prayers for the dead, which were never made without the pence; hence that proverbial expression, no pence, no pater-noster. *And wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep*; things for civil use; these are things which belong to food, to eating and drinking, and are the most material and necessary things of life, Psal. iv. 7. Jer. xxxi. 12. Hos. ii. 21, 22. Gen. ix. 3. Isa. xxii. 13. Tyre had her merchants for these, Ezek. xxvii. 17, 18, 21. and Mr. Brightman will have Italy to be Rome's merchant for wine and oil; Sardinia and Sicily her merchants for fine flour and wheat; Germany for beasts, and England for sheep: and with respect to the ecclesiastical use of these things, *wine* is for the chalice, used

¹ Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 16.

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² Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 6.

in daily Masses, and drank only by the priests; oil for chrism at baptism, and for the extreme unction: *fine flour* for the Mass, or to make their breaden god of; and *wheat, beasts, and sheep* for tithes for the clergy: and *horses, and chariots, and slaves*: things for splendour, equipage, and attendance; *horses and chariots* for the popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, to ride in state and grandeur, and *slaves* to wait upon them. Tyre had her merchants for these Ezek. xxvii. 14, 20. and Mr. Brightman's opinion is, that the French are Rome's merchants for horses and chariots, and the Swiss for slaves, or *bodies*, as the word may be rendered, who live by exercising their bodies, and hiring them out in war; and who are many of them the guards of the person of the pope of Rome: and last of all it is added, *and souls of men*; still in allusion to the merchandise of Tyre, some of whose merchants are said to trade in the persons of men, Ezek. xxvii. 13. which the Targum and Septuagint render, *in the souls of men*; the popes have some of them sold their own souls to the devil, to get into the chair, and, when in, have been the means of destroying of thousands of others; they assume a power over the souls of men, of binding and loosing the consciences of men, imposing new laws upon them, and freeing them from obligation to the laws of God and men, to the ruin of their souls; and it has been said by their sycophants, that if the pope should send thousands of men to hell, no one should say to him, what dost thou? The Romish priests pretend to redeem souls out of purgatory for such a sum of money, and sell pardons and indulgences, say Mass, and promise heaven itself for money; and this they get at the expense of men's souls, by their false doctrine and superstitious worship, and so make merchandise of them, as is said of the false teachers, 2 Pet. ii. 3. moreover, as by *slaves, or bodies*, in the preceding clause, are meant such who serve with their bodies, either by way of attendance, or in unnatural lust; so by *souls of men* may be meant men of soul, of great natural wit and understanding, of great parts, abilities, and learning, with which they serve the man of sin, and his interest, such as Bellarmine, and others.

Ver. 14. *And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, &c.*] Or *the autumn of the desire of thy soul*: the desirable fruits which are then in season; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it *apples*, which are ripe in autumn; and may design all such fruit as Italy abounds with, which will now be destroyed; and seems to point at the time of year when Babylon's destruction will be: but, in the mystical sense, these fruits may intend universal dominion over nations and churches, the obedience of kings and princes, riches, honours, and pleasures of all sorts; things greatly affected by the Papacy, and of which a large harvest was expected, but now all will be at an end: *and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee*: all that were palatable to the taste, and pleasant to the sight, that were excellent and desirable; as the triple crown, cardinalships, archbishoprics, bishoprics, deaneries, fat benefices, and good livings: *and thou shalt find them no*

more at all; for this will be an utter destruction; at the Reformation these desirable things were taken from her in several nations, and in some places she has recovered them again, as in Germany and other places; and the outward court, or the reformed church, sinking into an outward shew and form, will be wholly given to the Gentiles, the Papists, and they'll have these things in their hands again before Rome's utter destruction, but after that they'll no more be regained.

Ver. 15. *The merchants of these things, &c.*] Before mentioned, who have traded in them for themselves and for Rome: *which were made rich by her*, see ver. 3. *shall stand afar off for fear of her torment*; as the kings of the earth before, ver. 10. being conscious to themselves of their being partners in her crimes, and so might justly fear they should share in her punishment; and it may be, they will outwardly deny they are now of her religion, and will externally embrace the reformed religion; though they will be inwardly *weeping and wailing* for the destruction of Rome, and the loss of their merchandise and goodly things.

Ver. 16. *And saying, alas, alas! that great city, &c.*] Using the same words the kings of the earth do, ver. 10. only adding, suitable to their characters as merchants, and the things they traded in with her, *that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls*; see the notes on ver. 12. and on ch. xvii. 4. see also Ezek. xxvii. 32.

Ver. 17. *For in one hour so great riches is come to nought, &c.*] That is, in a very short time, expressing the suddenness and speediness of Rome's destruction, the quick dispatch and expedition that will be made in it, by the instruments of it, as in ver. 10. Rome was always famous for its great wealth and riches; the Jews have a saying¹, that if ten kabs of riches descend into the world, the ancient Romans take nine of them, and the other the whole world: *and every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off*; the lamentation of the kings and merchants of the earth being ended, masters of ships, sailors, and seafaring men begin theirs: by *ships* are meant dioceses, abbeys, priories, and monasteries; and by the *masters*, or governors of them, bishops, abbots, priors, the heads of monasteries, and of the several orders of the Franciscans, Dominicans, &c. and by *all the company in ships, or every shipmate*, the fellows that belong to every religious house and order; and by *sailors and traders at sea*, all such who compass sea and land to make proselytes to the Romish religion, like the Pharisees of old, and who, as they, make them two-fold more the children of hell than themselves; and, in general, these traders abroad may design the pope's legates, sent by him into various parts, to collect his revenues, and the Jesuits, who are everywhere sent abroad to sow sedition and false doctrine, and the priests that travel about to sell pardons and indulgences: these *stood afar off*; as the kings and merchants before, for fear of sharing in the condemnation and punishment of Babylon; knowing full well that

¹ T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 49. a.

they deserved it, having been associates with her in her crimes.

Ver. 18. *And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, &c.*] See the note on ver. 9. *saying, what city is like unto this great city?* as before for magnificence and grandeur, so now for sorrow, desolation, and ruin; nor was any city like it for power and authority, for pride and luxury, for idolatry and superstition, blasphemy and impenitence; the like the sailors say of Tyre, Ezek. xxvii. 32. from whence this and other expressions are borrowed in this lamentation.

Ver. 19. *And they cast dust on their heads, &c.*] As the seafaring men on account of Tyre, Ezek. xxvii. 30. this was a gesture used in mourning when persons were in afflicted and distressed circumstances, denoting disorder, confusion, and debasement; see Josh. vii. 6. Job ii. 12. *and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, alas, alas! that great city:* as in ver. 10, 16. so it was once, though now in flames: *wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea:* not only the merchants of the earth, as in ver. 3. the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, but the governors of religious houses; these accumulated great wealth to themselves, and got the best of lands into their possession for the use and support of their abbeyes and monasteries: *by reason of her costliness:* or costly things; pardons, indulgences, absolution, saying Mass, and praying souls out of purgatory, all which are costly, and hereby these traders have been enriched; and now the remembrance of these things, of which they will be deprived, will affect and grieve them, as well as the suddenness of Rome's ruin: *for in one hour is she made desolate:* her judgment come, and her riches come to nought, ver. 10, 17.

Ver. 20. *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, &c.*] This is said by the voice from heaven, ver. 4. which having called upon the saints to come out of Babylon, and to take vengeance on her, now calls upon all good men to rejoice at her ruin, whilst others were weeping and wailing; not at that, simply considered, but as the justice of God is displayed therein: *heaven* may be literally understood, which sometimes is addressed when any thing of very considerable note and moment is done or spoken of, whether it be something exceeding bad, as in Isa. i. 2. Jer. ii. 12, 13. or something exceeding great and good, as in Psal. xcvi. 11, 12, 13. or else the inhabitants of heaven, either the angels, who as they rejoice at the good and happiness of the saints, so at the confusion and destruction of their enemies; and the Syriac version reads, *heavens and angels;* or else the souls of men departed, particularly the souls under the altar, that have been long crying for vengeance on account of the shedding of their blood, ch. vi. 9. who may be made acquainted with Rome's destruction; or rather the true church of Christ upon earth, which in this book often goes by the name of heaven, in opposition to the apostate church, called the earth, because its members, doctrines, and ordinances, are from heaven, and its happiness lies there: *and ye holy apostles and prophets;* the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition read, *and the saints, and the apostles, and prophets;* making three distinct sorts of persons, of which heaven, or the church, consists: by *saints* may be meant private members of churches, who are sanctified by the spirit

of God, and live holy lives and conversations; and by *apostles*, not the twelve apostles, or persons in such an office as they were, but ordinary ministers of the word, who are sent forth to preach the Gospel, and will be upon the spot at the destruction of Babylon, and will be such as shall have preached and defended the pure apostolic doctrine; and by *prophets* are intended not the prophets of the Old Testament, nor such under the New who had the gift of foretelling things to come, but such who have a gift of interpreting the Scriptures and preaching the Gospel; the same with the two witnesses, who till this time will have prophesied in sackcloth, but shall now put it off, and put on the garments of praise and joy: *for God hath avenged you on her;* or *judged your judgment on her;* that is, has executed righteous judgment on her, for all the evils done by her to the saints in ages past, the predecessors of the persons here mentioned, as well as to themselves: vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he will avenge his elect sooner or later.

Ver. 21. *And a mighty angel, &c.*] Not Christ, nor one of the ministering spirits, but some man or set of men, perhaps the same with him in ver. 1. *took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea;* just as Jeremiah took a stone and bound it to his book after he had read it, and cast it into the river Euphrates, as a sign and token of the destruction of old Babylon, Jer. li. 63, 64. see Exod. xv. 5. Neh. ix. 11. *saying, thus with violence shall that great city be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all;* which is expressive of the utter destruction of Rome, and of the violence, force, and power with which it will be destroyed, and of the suddenness and swiftness of its destruction, and of the irrecoverableness of its state and condition.

Ver. 22. *And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, &c.*] Which were for mirth, delight, and pleasure: *shall be heard no more at all in thee;* the words seem to be taken from Isa. xxiv. 8. Ezek. xxvi. 13. and may not only regard the loss of every thing that was delightful and pleasant to the ear in private houses, at festivals, and nuptials, and the like, but the ceasing of church-music; there will be no more bells, nor organs, or any other instruments of music; no more chanters, and sub-chanters, choristers, singing-men and boys: *and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be shall be, found any more in thee;* which are very useful and necessary in cities and societies; it is threatened to Judah, that the cunning artificer should be taken from her, Isa. iii. 3. and it is reckoned as a considerable part of the distress of the Babylonish captivity that the carpenters and smiths were carried away from Jerusalem, Jer. xxiv. 1. and this judgment may fall on Rome for her worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, the works of men's hands, artificers and craftsmen, and who are employed in making other trinkets and wares for antichrist: *and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;* to grind corn with, see Jer. xxv. 10. there will be a famine at the time that Rome is besieged, ver. 8. and after it is destroyed, there will be no corn to grind, nor inhabitants to eat it, and so no use of the millstone; this is said in opposition to her luxurious and delicious living, ver. 3, 7, 9. and this may also refer to feasts and rich entertainments, for which spices were ground

and prepared by an hand-mill^m in the house; and so may signify here that there would be no more of such entertainments and rich living; with which sense agrees what follows. This clause is wanting in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 23. *And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee, &c.*] Either for common use, or at feasts, or at marriages, which being kept at night, required candles, lamps, or torches; this shews that Babylon, or Rome, shall be deprived of every thing, even of the least thing that is comfortable in life; see Jer. xxv. 10. this will be a just punishment upon her for her abuse of this blessing of life; so where wax candles in great numbers have been burning in the day-time, there will not be so much as a single candle to give light in the night; and where candles have been lighted up for the dead, there will not be one for the use of the living: *and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee:* there will be no marrying, nor giving in marriage; no procreation of children, or propagation of posterity, in this place; which denotes the utter extirpation of the inhabitants of it; the phrases are taken from Jer. vii. 34. and xvi. 19. and xxv. 10, 11. and this will be in righteous retaliation for the prohibition of marriage; which God has instituted, and is honourable, 1 Tim. iv. 2. the reasons of Babylon's destruction follow: *for thy merchants were the great men of the earth:* in allusion to the merchants of Tyre, said to be princes, Isa. xxiii. 8. for by trading and dealing in the wares and merchandise of Rome, persons of mean extract, and

of very low circumstances of life, have grown exceeding rich, and have equalled the princes of the earth; as for instance, Cardinal Wolsley here in England, a butcher's son at Ipswich; and on the other hand, the princes and great men of the earth have become Rome's merchants, and have thought it an high honour to get a cardinal's hat, as the Cardinals Albertus duke of Austria, Bourbon, Pool, and others, mentioned by Brightman: *for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived;* meaning her false doctrines, traditions, idolatry, superstition, and will-worship, with which, as another Jezabel, she has bewitched, allured, and deceived the nations of the empire, and the kings thereof, ver. 3.

Ver. 24. *And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, &c.*] Such as before mentioned, in ver. 20. this is another reason of her destruction, besides her luxury and idolatry, namely, her shedding the blood of the saints, with which she is said to be drunk, and therefore blood is now given her to drink, ch. xvii. 6. and xvi. 6. for she will now be found guilty of slaying the witnesses, who are meant by the prophets and saints, that have been from the beginning of the apostasy: *and of all that were slain upon the earth:* not only of those that have been slain in the city of Rome, but of all those that have been slain throughout the empire; they being slain by her order, or with her consent, and she conniving at it, encouraging it, and therefore will be justly chargeable with it all; see Matt. xxiii. 31, 32, 35. the Ethiopic version adds, *for the name of Christ.*

C H A P. XIX.

THIS chapter contains the triumph of the saints over Babylon, and their thanksgiving to God because of his judgments on her; the marriage of Christ and his church, and a battle between him and his and her enemies, with the success of it. The congratulations are first of a promiscuous multitude in the church, ascribing salvation, praise, honour, glory, and power to God, because of the righteousness of his judgments, and because of the perpetuity of them, ver. 1, 2, 3. and then of the four-and-twenty elders and four living creatures, who worship God, assent to what had been before said, and join in praising the Lord, ver. 4. and then another voice out of the throne is heard, calling upon all the servants of the Lord, and those that fear him, whether small or great, to praise our God, ver. 5. after which is heard the voice of a great multitude, stirring up one another to praise, because of the reign of the Lord God Almighty, and to rejoice and be glad because the time of the Lamb's marriage with his bride was come; who is described by her dress, the righteousness of the saints, comparable to fine linen, clean and white, ver. 6, 7, 8. upon which an angel bids John write those persons happy who are invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and affirms these to be the true sayings of God; wherefore John, in a transport of joy, was just going to worship the angel,

had he not been forbidden by him; from which he dissuades him, by observing that he was his fellow-servant, that God only is the object of worship, and that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, ver. 9, 10. next follows a vision of a battle between Christ and his enemies; and first he the General is described, by the horse he sat upon, a white one; by the characters he bears, faithful and true; by what he did, judging and making war in righteousness; by his eyes, which were as a flame of fire; by his having many crowns on his head; by having a name, or names unknown, and particularly one, which is the Word of God; by his habit, a vesture dipped in blood; by the armies he was at the head of, riding on white horses, and clothed in fine linen; by a sharp sword coming out of his mouth, with which he should utterly destroy the nations; and by having a name on his vesture and thigh, King of kings, and Lord of lords, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. upon which an angel is seen standing in the sun, and calling to all the fowls of the heaven to come to the supper of the great God, and to eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses and horsemen, of all ranks, and degrees, ver. 17, 18. and next an account is given of the armies of the beast, and of the kings of the earth, that came to make war with the above warrior, ver. 19. the issue and success

of which follow; the beast and false prophet are taken, and cast alive into a lake of fire and brimstone; and the rest are killed by the sword of the above General, and the fowls have a feast of their flesh, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And after these things, &c.*] After the angel had declared the fall of Babylon, a voice from heaven had called the people of God out of her, and had ordered them to take vengeance on her; after the mournful lamentation of the kings, merchants, and seafaring men; after another voice had called upon the saints to rejoice at her overthrow, and a mighty angel had described the manner of it, and had expressed her ruin in the strongest terms, with the reasons of it, John heard the songs of the righteous, as follow: *I heard a great voice of much people in heaven:* not literally taken, for these are not the innumerable company of angels, who are never called people; nor the spirits of just men made perfect, or the souls of departed saints, but men on earth; wherefore heaven designs the church, as in ch. xviii. 20. and frequently in this book; the people are the same with the 144000 seen with the Lamb on Mount Zion, ch. xiv. 1, and with those on the sea of glass, who had got the victory over the beast, ch. xv. 2. and are no other than God's covenant-people, who are given to Christ, and made willing to be his in the day of his power; and though they are but a seed, a remnant, a small company, when compared with the world and carnal professors; yet are a large body of themselves, especially they will be at this time, when the nation of the Jews shall be born at once, and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in: and their voice on this occasion, the downfall of Rome, is said to be *great*: partly on account of their number, who will join together in acclamations of praise, and partly on account of their great affection and vehemency of spirit, which will be raised hereby: *saying Alleluia*: an Hebrew word, which signifies *praise ye the Lord*. The Jews say^a, that the book of Psalms consists of ten sorts of songs, but Hallelujah is the greatest of them, because it comprehends the name (Jehovah) and praise in one word: and it is observable that this word, which is often used in the Psalms, is first used when the Psalmist desires the utter consumption and destruction of sinners and wicked men on earth, and is here taken up by the saints at the destruction of the man of sin and son of perdition; see Psal. civ. 35. and its being an Hebrew word shews that at this time the Jews will be converted, and that Jews and Gentiles will become one church-state, and will worship and praise the Lord together; for the word is a call upon the saints to join together in solemn praise and thanksgiving; who is to be praised for the perfections of his nature, for the works of his hands, both of nature and grace, and for his righteous judgments on his and his church's enemies; and this is to be done in concert: *salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God*: salvation, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is of God; *salvation* from antichristian power and tyranny, and from all enemies, and the everlasting salvation of the soul; and the *glory* of it belongs to all the three Persons; they are glorious in themselves, and deserve all glory

to be ascribed to them by man, and especially by the saints: *honour* is also their due; God the Father is to be honoured because he is the Father, and the Son is to be honoured as the Father is, and the Holy Spirit is not to be grieved, but to be highly esteemed and valued, and equally with the other two Persons: and *power* belongs to them all, and is seen in the works of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

Ver. 2. *For true and righteous are his judgments, &c.*] As in ch. xv. 3. and xvi. 7. see the notes there: this is to be understood of God's judgments in general, and is a reason of the attribution of praise and glory to him; which may be said to be *true*, because, being threatened, are now fulfilled; and to be *righteous*, because according to the demerit of sin; and particularly God's judgments on antichrist are intended: *for he hath judged the great whore*; Jezabel, Babylon, the Romish antichrist, before spoken of, ch. xvii. 1. not only by passing a sentence of condemnation on her, but by executing it, putting it into the hearts of the kings to hate and burn her, and utterly destroy her; and which is judging right, since it follows: *which did corrupt the earth with her fornication*; drew the kings and inhabitants of the Roman empire into wicked and idolatrous practices, and so corrupted and destroyed them in soul, body, and estate; see the note on ch. xi. 18. for this vision is cotemporary with the seventh trumpet: *and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand*; shed by her, ch. xviii. 20, 24. and xvi. 6. and this being done in righteous judgment, is matter of joy and praise to the saints.

Ver. 3. *And again they said, Alleluia, &c.*] Or a *second time* they said it; they began and ended their solemn worship and service with it; so some psalms begin and end with this word, as Psal. cvi. cxiii. &c. and the repeating of the word shews how hearty, earnest, and constant they were in the work of praise on this account: *and her smoke rose up for ever and ever*; they repeated their hallelujah, or gave one spiritual *huzza* more at the burning of Rome, and this followed: or the words may be rendered, *for her smoke rose, &c.* and so are a reason for the *second hallelujah*; it looks as if Rome, like another Sodom and Gomorrah, would sink into a sulphurous burning lake, and continue so: respect is had to the everlasting punishment of antichrist and his followers in hell, and to the everlasting burnings that will follow Rome's temporal destruction, which was an example and symbol of the vengeance of eternal fire; see ch. xiv. 11. so the Jews^a say of the burning of Rome, that its fire shall not be quenched for ever, and that *its smoke shall rise up for ever*.

Ver. 4. *And the four-and-twenty elders and the four beasts, &c.*] Mentioned in ch. iv. 4, 6. and who represent the churches of Christ and ministers of the Gospel in the several periods of time, these join in the chorus, and praise the Lord on the account of the destruction of Rome, and ruin of antichrist; so they are often heard of in this book, when any remarkable thing is done, or when there is any breaking forth of the kingdom and glory of Christ; see ch. v. 8, 9, 10, 14. and vii. 11. and xi. 16, 17. and xiv. 3. and xv. 7.

^a Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 1. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 117. 1.

^a Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 82. 2.

these fell down; on their faces before God, as in ch. iv. 10. and xi. 16. in great reverence of him, and of his righteous judgments: *and worshipped God that sat on the throne*; described in ch. iv. 2, 3. this refers to the public worship of God in the churches, by the ministers and members of them: *saying, Amen; Alleluia*; they said *Amen*, and signified their assent to what the much people in heaven had said, ver. 1, 2, 3. and joined in the same *hallelujah*, or expressions of praise to God, for this great appearance of his in the downfall of Babylon. Both these words are used together in Psal. cvii. 48. see ch. v. 14.

Ver. 5. *And a voice came out of the throne, &c.*] Not from God the father, that sat upon it, for the phrase, *praise our God*, could not be said by him with propriety and pertinence; but rather from Christ, the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, who as Mediator could say of him to his people, my God and your God, and my father and your father, John xx. 17. though it seems best to understand it of the voice of one of the angels about the throne, since one of these is afterwards spoken of, whom John would have worshipped, but was forbid, ver. 9, 10. and which may design either one of the ministering spirits, or a preacher of the Gospel, and a set of such, calling upon the saints to the discharge of their duty, or to return to it on this occasion: *saying, praise our God, all ye his servants*; meaning not the ministers of the Gospel only, who serve in the Gospel of Christ, by preaching and defending it, and in the administration of Gospel ordinances to the comfort of the saints, but all the people of God; for though they are sons, and no more servants to sin and Satan, and the world, yet they are servants of God and of righteousness, and serve him willingly and cheerfully in a way of duty, and without slavish fear, and with a godly one, and from principles of love and gratitude, and without mercenary views and selfish ends; and these are called upon, as a part of their service, to say *hallelujah*, or to sing the praises of God for his judgments on antichrist; see Psal. cxxxiv. 1. and cxxxv. 1, 2. *and ye that fear him, both small and great*; who fear the Lord, not with a servile, but filial fear, with the new covenant grace of fear, which springs from, and is increased by, the goodness and grace of God; whether greater or lesser believers, fathers, young men, or children; whether Jews or Gentiles, or of whatsoever nation, kindred, or people; see Psal. cxv. 13. Rev. xi. 18.

Ver. 6. *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, &c.*] Even of all the servants of the Lord, and them that fear him, small and great; a vast multitude of converted Jews and Gentiles, in the several parts of the world, who in answer to the voice out of the throne, which came with great power and energy, lift up their voices in praise to God, both for their own conversion, and for the downfall of Babylon: *and as the voice of many waters*; falling down in a descent, or in rough and rocky places, which make a great noise, and is heard afar off; and such must be the united voice of so great a multitude of converts as will be gathered together everywhere at this time: the same metaphor is used of the voice of Christ in ch. i.

15. *and as the voice of mighty thunderings*; violent claps of it, which are sometimes so loud that they rend the very heavens, and strike the inhabitants of the earth with the utmost consternation: these are the same voices which will be heard in the church when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, ch. xi. 15. *saying, Alleluia*; or praise ye the Lord; they will call upon one another to celebrate the praises of God, on account of the above things, in the same manner, and using the same word the people in heaven, and the four-and-twenty elders and four living creatures, do; and this is the fourth time the word is used in this context, and confirms the observation that has been made, that this vision refers to the conversion of the Jews, which will quickly follow the destruction of Rome: and the Jews themselves have a notion, that when Rome is destroyed the Messiah will come; and so he will in his spiritual reign. They say, "our redemption will be immediately upon the destruction of Rome." And again, "the root of our redemption depends upon the destruction of Rome." The reason for their saying *hallelujah* follows, *for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*; by whom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and God over all, blessed for ever, and is the Almighty; and though he was set up as King over the holy hill of Zion, and has reigned over the church in every age, and came as King into this world, though his kingdom was not of it, and at his resurrection was declared Lord and Christ, and his kingdom was then more manifest, and he has ever since displayed his kingly power in defending his church, and defeating the enemies of it; yet now will he reign more visibly and gloriously, his kingdom will be enlarged from one end of the earth to the other, and he will be King over all the earth, which will occasion great joy to Jews and Gentiles; see Psal. xlvii. 1, 2. and xcvi. 1. and the note on Rev. xi. 17.

Ver. 7. *Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him, &c.*] The saints particularly; the converted Jews will call upon one another to express their gladness at the glorious display of Christ's kingly power and authority, and at the destruction of his enemies, and the happy and comfortable state of his church and people; and to rejoice in him as the Lord their righteousness and strength, and to give him the honour and glory of salvation, and to return him thanks for all the benefits they shall have received from him, particularly on account of what follows: *for the marriage of the Lamb is come*; that is, of Christ, the son of God, with the Jewish church more especially; there was a secret betrothing of all the elect to Christ before the world began; and there is an open espousal of every individual of them at conversion; but the public and general solemnization of the nuptials will not be until the new Jerusalem church-state takes place in the personal reign of Christ, hereafter mentioned, ch. xxi. 1, 2, 9. but here, and as previous to that, there will be a very general and open marriage of Christ with the people of the Jews, who have long rejected and forsaken him; for if the conversion of a single person may be called a marriage with Christ, much more the conversion of such numbers; and which is often pro-

* Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 1

† Tzeror Hammor, fol. 162. 4

phesied of under this metaphor of a marriage, as in Isa. lxii. 4, 5. Hos. ii. 19. And now the time will be come for the accomplishment of it, the evidence of which follows: *and his wife hath made herself ready, or dressed herself*; by decking herself with jewels, and putting on her wedding-garment provided for her, and given to her by her husband, the Lamb, as appears from the next verse: this preparation will lie partly in the number of converts that will be brought into the Jewish church, which she will receive and clothe herself with, as with the ornament of a bride, Isa. xlix. 18. and partly by the exercise of the several graces of the spirit upon Christ, comparable to the jewels of a bride, with which she will be adorned for her husband; and also by putting on the robe of his righteousness, hereafter mentioned, which the old Jewish synagogue rejected, and therefore was cast off, Rom. x. 3. Matt. xxii. 12, 13. The Arabic version reads, *the marriage of the Lamb is now come with his spouse, prepared for him*; and the Ethiopic version, *the marriage of his Lamb is come, and the wife is prepared*; and that her preparation is not by her own merits and works of righteousness, but by the grace of her husband, is clear from the following verse. Mr. Daubuz, by *the marriage of the Lamb*, understands the first resurrection, and the state of the church at that time; and by *the fine linen*, the dress of the church, next mentioned, the incorruptible body of the saints compared to a garment, 1 Cor. xv. 53. 2 Cor. v. 2, 3, 4. and by those who are afterwards said to be *called to the marriage*, the converted nations in a mortal state; but all the saints will share in the first resurrection; besides, as yet the beast and false prophet are not destroyed, which must be before the first resurrection, as the following vision shews.

Ver. 8. *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, &c.*] Or *Byssine*: the *Byssus*, of which fine linen is made, is said to grow on a tree, in height like to a poplar, and its leaves like a willow, and to be brought out of Judea into Egypt, which the Egyptians used in most of their holy things^a. A dress neat and modest, and not like the attire of the whore of Rome, ch. xvii. 4. and this is said to be *clean and white*, and is interpreted in the next clause: *for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints, or righteousnesses*; not good works, or their own righteousness; for though these are evidences of faith, by which the saints are justified, and are what God has prepared for them, that they should walk in them; yet these are not comparable to fine linen, clean and white, but are like filthy rags, and cannot justify in the sight of God; but the righteousness of Christ is meant, and justification by that; for that is the only justifying righteousness of the saints: and though it is but one, yet it may be called *righteousnesses*, or *justifications*, in the plural number; partly because of the several seasons in which the act of justification passes, first in God's mind from eternity, next on Christ as the surety, when he rose from the dead, and on all the elect in him, and then in the consciences of the saints when they believe, and the sentence of it will be notified and de-

clared to men and angels at the last judgment; and partly because of the many persons that are justified by it, as also because of the excellency of it; so the Jews use the word in the plural number: the Targumist on Zech. iii. 4. paraphrases the text, *I will clothe thee וְכִיִּיךָ, with righteousnesses*; upon which words Jarchi has this note, "change of beautiful garments" "is all one as if it had been said וְכִיִּיךָ, righteousnesses"; and because sin is like to filthy garments, righteousness is like to garments beautiful and white." Christ's righteousness may be compared to fine linen, clean and white, because of its spotless purity; those that are arrayed with it being unblamable and irreprovable, and without spot and blemish, and without fault before the throne; with this the Jewish church will be clothed; all the Lord's people will be righteous, they will have on the best robe, and wedding-garment, which was despised by the Jews in Christ's time, who refused to come to the marriage-feast; and their being arrayed with it will be owing to the grace of Christ, who grants it; and so Christ's righteousness is called the gift of righteousness, the free gift, and gift by grace, and abundance of grace; and faith, which receives it, and puts it on, is the gift of God, Rom. v. 15, 16, 17. Eph. ii. 8. Not only the garment is a gift of grace, but the putting of it on is a grant from Christ, and what he himself does, Isa. lxi. 10. Zech. iii. 4.

Ver. 9. *And he saith unto me, write, &c.*] What follows, because of the importance of it, and to shew the certainty of it, and that it may be regarded and remembered: the person speaking is either the voice from the throne, ver. 5. or the angel that attended John all along, and shewed him this revelation, ch. i. 1. or the angel that proposed to shew him the judgment of the great whore, ch. xvii. 1. *Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb*; by which is meant the Gospel ministry and ordinances, and communion in them, to which the Jews will be called to partake of in the latter day; these at the first of the Gospel dispensation are called a *dinner*, to which the Jews were invited, but refused to come, and now a *supper*, because made in the evening of that dispensation; to which being called with an effectual calling, they will come and partake of it; on which account they are pronounced blessed, being the bride, the Lamb's wife, having on his righteousness, partaking of his benefits, and being called unto, and made meet for eternal glory and happiness; or else these may design converted Gentiles, who will be invited to join with them, and will. *And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God*: the Syriac version reads, *these my true words are of God*; being true, it is plain they are of God, and being of God, it is certain they are true; for he is the God of truth, and cannot lie, and therefore may be depended upon.

Ver. 10. *And I fell at his feet to worship him, &c.*] Being transported with the news he brought him of the marriage, or conversion of his countrymen the Jews, and struck with reverence and awe of the glory and majesty in which the angel appeared to him; and forgetting himself, that worship was only due to

^a Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 9. c. 9. Vid. Apul. Apolog. p. 225. Pausan. l. 5. sive Eliac. p. 294.

^r See Isa. lxi. 10. & Targum in Hos. x. 12.

God, he behaved in this manner; which is not to be excused nor justified, as appears from the angel's words: *and he said unto me, see thou do it not*; the words are in the original very short and concise, and are spoken in an abrupt manner, and in great haste; as fearing he would be guilty of idolatry, before he could speak all his mind, and use the arguments that were necessary to dissuade from it: *I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus*; if this was one of the ministering spirits, he was a servant of the same Lord as John; and if he was a minister of the Gospel, he was still more literally a fellow-servant of his, and of the apostles, and preachers of the Gospel; which is meant by the testimony of Jesus, that bearing testimony to the person, office, grace, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, and the glory following; and therefore being but a servant, and a servant in common with John and his brethren, was by no means to be worshipped; not the servant, but master; not the creature, but the Creator: *worship God*. and him only, even God the Father, Son, and Spirit; not the Father to the exclusion of the Son, the first-born, whom all the angels are called upon to worship; nor of the Spirit, who is equally joined with the Father and Son in baptism, a part of religious worship, and in other parts of it also; but this excludes all creatures, angels, and men, things animate or inanimate, and images of them; the worshipping of which will now be no more, or at least will be quickly at an end. *For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* that is, the testimony of Jesus, or the Gospel which John and his brethren had, is the very spirit, life, and soul of the prophecy of this book; for as all the prophets bore witness to Christ, so does the spirit of God in this; or the testimony which they had, and bore to Christ, was equal to the spirit of prophecy with which this angel was endowed; so that he and they were upon an equal foot; and he was no more a proper object of divine and religious adoration than they were.

Ver. 11. *And I saw heaven opened, &c.*] This vision refers not to the same time the first seal does, ch. vi. 2. for though a white horse, with a rider on it, is seen here, as there; that respects the first times of the Gospel, this the latter part of the dispensation of it; nor to the war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, and their angels, ch. xii. 7. that issued in the downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire, this will issue in the downfall of the Papacy in it; nor to the personal coming of Christ to the last judgment, of which an account is given in the following chapter; but to the battle at Armageddon, to which the sixth vial is a preparation, and which is finished under the seventh, ch. xvi. 13, 14, 16, 17. and what is briefly hinted at there is at large related here; in which Christ, the General, and his armies, on the one hand, and the kings of the earth, with the beast and false prophet, and their armies, on the other hand, appear to give battle to each other: and the issue of the battle is particularly represented, in order to have a view of which, *John saw heaven opened*; not literally, as at Christ's baptism, and at the stoning of Stephen, nor in a spiritual sense, by the blood of Christ, but visionally, as in ch. iv. 1. and since heaven, often in this book,

signifies the church on earth, a more glorious and comfortable state of the church may be designed; when her gates shall be opened continually, and not shut day nor night, to receive the forces of the Gentiles, and their kings, Isa. lx. 15. such a state as is referred to in ch. xi. 19. and xv. 5. to which visions this is contemporary; and it may denote a very glorious appearing of Christ, not in person, which will be after this, but in his kingdom and power, in defeating his enemies, and reigning spiritually with his saints; and it may also design the clear revelation and discerning John had of the following things: *and behold a white horse* which, as in ch. vi. 2. may be a symbol of the Gospel, and Gospel ministers, as there in the former, here in the latter part of the Gospel dispensation; signified by a horse, to denote the swift progress of the Gospel in the latter day, the majesty, power, and authority with which it will come, bearing down all opposition made against it; and by a white horse, to express the purity of the Gospel, and of its preachers and professors, and the peace it publishes, and gives, and the joy it brings, and the triumphs that will attend it. *And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True*; that Christ is here meant, is evident from the description of his eyes, ver. 12. being the same as in ch. i. 14. and from his name, ver. 13. which is the peculiar name of the son of God, John i. 1, 14. and he sits upon, and is bore by, and rides forth in the Gospel, and the ministry of it, with glory and majesty, and prosperously, Psal. xlv. 3, 4. and the characters of *faithful and true* well agree with him; see ch. iii. 7, 14. and the notes there. He is *faithful and true* to God, who appointed him a Leader and Commander of the people, and to them he is the Commander of: and these characters well suit him now, when he will accomplish all the glorious things spoken of the church, relating to her spiritual and happy state in the latter day, and serve greatly to recommend him as a General. *And in righteousness he doth judge and make war*; which is to be understood not of the last judgment, though that will be executed in righteousness, and therefore is called the righteous judgment, yet in that day there will be no war, no opposition, the wicked will at once submit: but of Christ's judging of his people, and avenging their blood on their enemies, and the remainder of them among Papists, Pagans, and Mahometans; who will be gathered together at Armageddon in battle array against them, when there will be an utter discomfiture of them in righteous judgment; for as in times past the beast made war with the saints and witnesses, and overcame them, Christ will enable his people to make war with him and his accomplices, and overcome them, as the sequel of this vision shews, Christ being at the head of them, though not in person, yet in power.

Ver. 12. *His eyes were as a flame of fire, &c.*] Which denotes the perspicuity and penetration of them, the omniscience of Christ to look into and discover the secret machinations, schemes, and devices of his enemies against his people, and his exercise of it in favour of them, his eyes, like a flame of fire, running to and fro on their behalf; and also this may signify the fierceness of his anger against the enemies of his people, the eyes of his glory being provoked by

their cruelty and wickedness; and likewise the suddenness of their destruction, and the inevitableness of it. *And on his head were many crowns*; for he has not only a crown, as the Creator and Governor of the universe, in right of nature, but he has one which his father has put upon his head, when he set him as King over his holy hill of Zion, Psal. xxi. 3. and there's another which his mother, the church, crowned him with in the day of his espousals, Cant. iii. 11. and besides these, every believer puts a crown on his head, gives him the glory of their salvation, and all of them cast their crowns at his feet: to which may be added, that the crowns of all the kings of the earth are his; they reign by him, and are accountable to him. This part of the description may be expressive of that all power in heaven and earth, given to Christ at his resurrection, and exercised by him ever since; and particularly of the extensiveness of his kingdom at the time this vision refers to, when the kingdoms of this world shall be his, ch. xi. 15. for this vision, and the seventh trumpet, are coteremporary; and it may be a symbol of the many victories obtained by him, and of the last and closing one that should now be obtained by him. *And he had a name written that no man knew but he himself*; which seems to be his name, the son of God, as the unknown name of the overcomer, in ch. ii. 17. is a child of God; and the sense is, that his divine nature, in which he is the son of God, is incomprehensible, and that the begetting or generation of him, as such, is ineffable, Prov. xxx. 4. and that without a divine revelation the name itself could not be known; or it could not be known that God had a son, and that Christ is he, and bears that name, Matt. xi. 27. and xvi. 16, 17. or else his name Immanuel. The incarnate God may be intended, which is a secret and wonderful name, and contains in it, without controversy, a great mystery, which cannot be comprehended by finite minds; or his name, מְשִׁיחַ, *wonderful, secret*, Isa. ix. 6. and Judg. xiii. 18. This name is said to be *written*; that is, in the Scriptures of truth, in which it is revealed that Christ is the son of God, and Immanuel. In ver. 16. the name of King of kings, &c. is said to be written on his vesture, and on his thigh; and the Ethiopic version makes this to be written on his crown or diadem, reading the words thus; *and upon his head a crown, and there was written in his diadem a name, and no man knew it, but he himself only*; as the high-priest had holiness to the Lord written on his mitre. The Syriac version inserts a clause between the two last, *having names written*, and then follows, *and a name written*, &c. and so the Complutensian edition.

Ver. 13. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood*, &c.] Either in his own, by which he became the Saviour of his church and people; or else in the blood of his saints, he now comes to avenge; or rather in the blood of his enemies, with which he appears as stained, before the battle is fought, the victory being sure, and their slaughter unavoidable: the metaphor is taken from persons treading in a wine-press, whose garments are stained with blood of grapes; see ver. 15. Gen. xlix. 11. and Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. Here may be

also an allusion to the Roman general's vesture, which was sometimes purple or scarlet, in which he fought, as did Lucullus*. *And his name is called the Word of God*; the name of Christ, often used by John in his Gospel, epistles, and in this book, John i. 1, 14. 1 John i. 1. and v. 7. Rev. i. 2, 9. Of the signification, reason, and import of this name, see the note on John i. 1. The reason why he is called by it here may be partly to express his greatness, glory, and majesty, this being a name which principally belongs to him, as a divine person, as the Creator of all things, and as previous to his incarnation; and partly because all the promises of God in his word, and which are all yea and amen in Christ, will be now shortly fulfilled.

Ver. 14. *And the armies which were in heaven*, &c.] Not the angels, though they are God's host, and are the armies of the heavens; they are in heaven, and dwell there, and follow Christ, attend upon him, and minister to him, and have been sometimes represented by horses and horsemen, 2 Kings ii. 11. and vi. 17. Zech. i. 8. and they are pure and holy creatures, and will come with Christ to judgment: but this vision refers not to the day of judgment; and besides, the saints are meant, as appears by their habit, for the fine linen, white and clean, is the righteousness of the saints, ver. 8. and the righteousness of angels and saints is not the same. Moreover, these are the same company described in ch. xvii. 14. The saints are in a state of warfare, have many enemies to fight with, sin, Satan, and the world; they are enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the Captain of salvation; they are provided with the whole armour of God, and are very numerous, and always more than conquerors through Christ: these are described by the place where they were, *in heaven*; not being glorified saints in heaven; with these indeed Christ will come to judgment, even with all his saints with him; but members of the church militant, said to be in heaven, because that is often called the kingdom of heaven; and because their names are written in heaven, and they are of heavenly extract; they are born from above, and are partakers of the heavenly calling; they belong to heaven, they are citizens of it, and are pressing on to it. And these *followed him*; Christ, their Leader and Commander in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; having gone on in his ways through a train of sufferings, and cleaved unto him, and now attend him; not to assist in fighting, but to add to the glorious and triumphant appearance of their General; and therefore are said to be *upon white horses*; they had served Christ in his Gospel, which some of them had preached, and all professed, and had maintained the purity of it in doctrine and practice, and now triumphed in Christ, and along with him, riding upon horses of the same colour with his, as being his princes and nobles, and whom he had made kings as well as priests; the former may be signified by their horses; see Judg. v. 10. and the latter by their following habit, *clothed in fine linen, white and clean*; not the horses, but the armies on them; which designs not their inward purity, which was very glorious; nor their outward conversation-garments, washed and made white in the blood of the

Lamb; but the robe of Christ's righteousness, which is pure and spotless: these have no armour on, for they are not to strike a blow, only their General, who has the bloody garment on, is to tread the wine-press, and destroy antichrist with the breath of his mouth, or with his sword proceeding out of it, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, &c.*] The Complutensian edition, and all the Oriental versions, with the Vulgate Latin, read, *a sharp two-edged sword*. The word of God, or the judiciary sentence of Christ according to it, and which he will fully execute, to the utter destruction of all his enemies; see the note on ch. i. 16. *that with it he should smite the nations*; the Gentiles, the Papists, the antichristian states, those that have adhered to Babylon, and have drunk of the wine of her fornication. This is predicted in Numb. xxiv. 17, 18, 19. and on account of this the nations will be angry under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, with which this vision is cotemporary, ch. xi. 18. *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron*; use them with the utmost severity; the phrase is taken out of Psal. ii. 9. a prophecy of Christ, and mentioned twice before in this book, ch. ii. 27. and xii. 5. see the notes there: *and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*; the fierce wrath of God against sinners is compared to a wine-press; and the wicked antichristian party are likened to clusters of grapes; who being ripe for destruction, are cast into it, and pressed, squeezed, and trodden down by the mighty power of Christ, the Word of God, whose vesture is therefore before said to be dipped in blood; the same metaphor is used in ch. xiv. 19, 20. the allusion seems to be to Isa. lxiii. 3. 6.

Ver. 16. *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, &c.*] This name, afterwards expressed, is said to be written on his vesture, in allusion to the custom of persons of note and eminence having their names interwoven in their garments, and which was sometimes done in letters of gold, as Zeuxis had¹; and it is expressive of the conspicuousness of Christ's kingdom, which now will come with observation; his judgments, the administrations of his kingly office, will be manifest, and he will reign before his ancients gloriously: and its being said to be written on his thigh may mean either that it was upon that part of his garment which covered his thigh; or else that it was also on his sword, which he sometimes girt upon his thigh. Mr. Daubuz has given an instance out of Victor Vitensis, of Clementianus, a monk, who had written on his thigh, "a manichee disciple of Jesus Christ." And this being done in Africa, he supposes it to be a Phœnician custom continued. It may here denote the perpetuity of Christ's name, power, and dominion, which will continue to the latest posterity, Psal. lxxii. 17. which spring from the thigh; and it may denote the subjection of his people to him, signified by the putting the hand under the thigh, Gen. xxiv. 2. And this name is *King of kings and Lord of lords*; which will well suit him now when he shall be openly King over all the earth; see the note on ch. xvii. 14.

Ver. 17. *And I saw an angel standing in the sun, &c.*] By whom is meant, not the angel of the fourth vial,

who poured it on the sun, taken in another sense than here, and therefore could not stand in it; nor the archangel with the last trumpet, for as yet the dead rise not, nor does the judgment come on; nor one of the ministering spirits; nor Christ himself, for he is the great God, to whose supper this angel invites, but a minister of the Gospel; or rather a set of Gospel ministers, such as in ch. xiv. who may be said to stand in the sun, in like manner as the woman, the church, was seen clothed with it, ch. xii. 1. and may denote the conspicuousness of Gospel preachers; for, as the church now will be established upon the top of the mountains, so her teachers shall not be removed into corners any more, but her eyes shall behold her teachers; and also the clear sight they shall have of the doctrines and mysteries of the Gospel, who shall now see eye to eye; and particularly the further breakings forth of the glory of the latter day, and the ensuing victory of Christ over all his enemies; and also shews the great strength of their sight, who, far from being like moles and bats, will be able both to look upon the sun, and to stand in it: and it may likewise signify the glory and majesty of Christ's kingdom; the comfortable influence of him, the sun of righteousness, who will now arise upon his people with healing in his wings; and the steadfastness of Christ's ministers to him, and his pure Gospel, and the glorious truths of it. *And he cried with a loud voice*; that he might be heard far and near, having something of moment and importance to publish: *saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven*; meaning not the barbarous nations, the Goths, and Vandals, and Saracens, which overrun and destroyed the western and eastern empires; these times are too late for them, they rose up under the six first trumpets; nor devils and unclean spirits, which will prey upon and torment antichrist, and his followers, in hell; nor military and avaricious men among Protestants, but Christian princes, and their people, are designed; they are such as are in heaven, the church, and of note there, who will share the spoils of the antichristian people, and possess their kingdoms, substance, and estates: these are invited by the angel, saying, *come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God*. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, read, *to the great supper of God*; and so the Complutensian edition; not the Lord's supper, where not the flesh of men, but the flesh of Christ is eat, by faith; nor the marriage-supper of the Lamb, which will be of another kind than this; nor is any spiritual repast intended, such as living by faith on Christ, and supping with him, being entertained with his promises, presence, and the discoveries of his love; but the slaughter of Christ's enemies, and his victory over them, which is his sacrifice; and these are the guests he bids, see Zeph. i. 7. and whom he calls to share in the conquest and spoils, and to express their joy on this occasion: *the great God* is no other than Christ, the general of the armies in heaven, called before the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords; who will gain this victory, and will be known to be the great God by the judgment he will execute. This is a proof of our Lord's divinity; see Tit. ii. 13.

¹ Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 9.

Ver. 18. *That ye may eat the flesh of kings, &c.*] Of the earth, and of the whole world, who will fall in the battle at Armageddon; see ch. xvi. 14. and xix. 19. and design either those antichristian kings and states, which have drunk of the wine of Rome's fornication, and will bewail the downfall of Babylon, ch. xviii. 3, 9. or those Pagan kings which will be drawn in by the pope and Turk, to aid and assist in this war, or both, when, upon the defeat of them, the Christian princes will seize upon, possess, and enjoy their kingdoms and dominions, which is meant by eating their flesh; see the note on ch. xvii. 16. *And the flesh of captains; of their generals, and officers under them: and the flesh of mighty men; the common soldiers, who are so called, Jer. xvi. 5. who will be rifled and plundered: and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them; whose rich trappings and clothes will be taken away from them: and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great; that is, the substance of all the inhabitants of the antichristian empire, both eastern and western, of whatsoever rank, state, and condition they be, ch. xiii. 16. The metaphors are taken from, and there is a manifest allusion to, Ezek. xxxix. 17—20. and the whole denotes the entire slaughter and utter ruin of the whole antichristian army, and the certainty of Christ's victory over it before-hand; and also the destruction of all that are the followers of antichrist, throughout his dominions, which will now wholly fall into the hands of the saints, and be enjoyed by them.*

Ver. 19. *And I saw the beast, &c.*] Not the devil, for after this he is taken and bound for a thousand years, and then loosed, and laid hold on again, and cast into the lake of fire; not but that this war will be by his instigation, and under his influence, ch. xvi. 14. not the Roman Pagan empire, which has been destroyed long ago, under the sixth seal, and was the issue of the battle between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his; but the antichristian civil powers, or antichrist in his civil capacity; and which, though it may chiefly regard the western antichrist, and the remains of the Latin idolatry, yet may take in the eastern antichrist, or the Mahometan powers, which may all join together in this battle; the beast will survive for a while the downfall of his seat, Babylon or Rome. *And the kings of the earth; these, as they stand distinguished from the beast, or the antichristian kings, and civil states, may design as many of the Pagan kings and princes, as the pope and Turk by their emissaries can persuade to assist them in this war; see the note on ch. xvi. 14. And their armies gathered together; at Armageddon, or in the valley of Jehoshaphat, ch. xvi. 16. Joel iii. 2, 12. to make war against him that sat on the horse; the white horse, ver. 11. as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, which must be downright folly and madness, since he is the Word of God, the great God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: and against his army, ver. 14. who, though unarmed, and only clothed in fine linen, have nothing to fear, since Christ, the Captain of their salvation, is at the head of them.*

Ver. 20. *And the beast was taken, &c.*] At the first onset, as soon as ever the battle begun, and carried away captive, as it was threatened he should, ch. xiii. 10.

and this by Christ, who will destroy him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. ii. 8. *And with him the false prophet; that is, the second beast in ch. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14. as appears by the characters by which he is here described, or antichrist in his ecclesiastic capacity; that is, the pope with his clergy: and indeed, when the antichristian princes and states are taken and destroyed, which are the support of the Papacy, that must in consequence sink, be crushed and ruined; the Alexandrian copy reads, and they that are with him, the false prophet Jezabel; the false prophetess and her children, who will now be killed with death, ch. ii. 20, 23. that wrought miracles before him: the beast, or the civil antichristian powers, even signs and lying wonders, which were approved of, and applauded by him, by which, believing them, he was confirmed in antichristian principles: with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image; the several subjects of the antichristian states; see ch. xiii. 14, 15, 16, 17. but none of God's elect, who cannot be seduced by such means, Matt. xxiv. 24. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone; which is the second death, ch. xxi. 8. The severe punishment of antichrist, considered in both his capacities, civil and ecclesiastic, is expressed by being cast into a lake of fire, not material fire, but the wrath of God, which will be poured out like fire, and will be intolerable; and by this lake burning with brimstone, which, giving a nauseous stench, aggravates the punishment. Says R. Joden, when a man smells the smell of brimstone, why does his breath draw back at it (or catch)? because he knows he shall be judged with it in the world to come. The allusion seems to be to the place where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, which is become a sulphurous lake, and is an emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 8. and these two are said to be cast alive into it, which shews that they will not only suffer a corporeal death at this battle, and in the issue of it, but will be destroyed, body and soul, in hell: the phrase denotes the awfulness, inevitableness, and severity of their punishment; there seems to be some reference to the earth's swallowing up Korah and his company alive, Numb. xi. 33. see Dan. vii. 11.*

Ver. 21. *And the remnant were slain, &c.*] Not only the kings of the earth, and their armies, that will now be gathered together, but all the remains of Papists, Pagans, and Mahometans, in the several parts of the world, even all the enemies of Christ: these will be slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse: upon the white horse, as the Ethiopic version reads; the Arabic version reads, that sat upon the throne, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth, ver. 15. and is the word of God, or the judiciary sentence of Christ according to it; and the meaning is, either that these shall be subdued, conquered, and converted by the word: and so are fitly called a remnant, a remnant according to the election of grace among the antichristian party; and which sense agrees with ch. xi. 13. or else that they will be convicted and confounded, and not be able to stand against the light and evidence of the word of God, and will be sentenced by Christ to everlasting

[†] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 45. 4.

punishment; and it may be partly one, and partly the other. *And all the fowls were filled with their flesh*; all the Christian princes and people will be satisfied with their kingdoms, riches, and wealth, and will rejoice at their destruction, and in the righteousness of God,

which will be displayed in it: and now the world being clear of all Christ's enemies, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, the way will be prepared for Christ's open and glorious kingdom in it.

C H A P. XX.

THIS chapter contains the binding of Satan, the saints' thousand-years' reign with Christ, the loosing of Satan again, the destruction of him, and the Gog and Magog army, and the last judgment: the angel that is to bind Satan is described by his descent from heaven; by his having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and by the use he made of them, laying hold on Satan, binding him, casting him into the bottomless pit, and then shutting it up, and setting a seal on him; by all which he will be prevented from deceiving the nations for the space of a thousand years, ver. 1, 2, 3. After this thrones are seen, with persons on them, to whom judgment is given; who are said to be such as had been martyrs for Jesus, and had not worshipped the beast, or professed his religion; whose happiness is represented by living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, when others will not; the second death will have no power on them; they'll be the priests of God, and Christ, and reign with him during the said term, having a part in the first resurrection, ver. 4, 5, 6. At the expiration of which term Satan will be loosed, and go out of prison, deceive the nations, and gather Gog and Magog to battle; who, being exceeding numerous, will cover the breadth of the earth, encompass the camp and city of the saints, when fire will come down from heaven and destroy them, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet are, and be tormented for ever and ever, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. And next an account is given of the general Judgment; and the judge is described by the throne he sat on, a white cloud, and by his majesty, which is such, that the heavens and the earth flee from before him, ver. 11. And next the persons judged are described by their common state, the dead; by their age or condition, great and small, and by their position, standing before God; and then an account of the procedure, or rule of judgment; the books are opened, and the execution of judgment according to what is found in the books, ver. 12. in order to which the sea, death, and the grave, give up the dead in them, and the two last are cast into the lake, and with them those who are not in the book of life, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, &c.] All Christ's enemies, and Satan's instruments being removed, the devil is left alone, and only stands in the way of Christ's kingdom; and what will be done to him, and how he will be in the issue disposed of, this vision gives an account: by the angel John saw, is not to be understood Constantine the great; for though he is the man-child that was taken up to God, and his throne, being advanced to the empire, yet he cannot, with that propriety, be said to come down from heaven; and though he vanquished the Heathen emperors, in which the dragon presided, and cast Pa-

ganism out of the empire, by which the devil ruled in it, yet the binding of Satan is another kind of work, and seems too great for him; and besides, did not take place in his time, as will be seen hereafter: nor is an apostle, or a minister of the Gospel intended; such are indeed called angels in this book, and may be said to come down from heaven, because they have their commission from thence; and particularly the apostles had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but not the key of the bottomless pit; and a chain and system of Gospel truths, which they made good use of for the establishing of Christ's kingdom, and weakening of Satan's, but not such a chain as is here meant; and they had the power of binding and loosing, or of declaring things lawful or unlawful, but not of binding and loosing of Satan; nor was he bound in the apostolic age: nor is one of the ministering spirits, or a deputation of angels designed; for though Christ will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and will make use of them, both to gather together his elect, and to cast the wicked into the lake of fire, yet not to bind Satan; but the Lord Jesus Christ himself is this angel, who is the angel of God's presence, and of the covenant; and who is in this book called an angel, ch. vii. 2. and x. 1. to whom all the characters here well agree, and to whom the work of binding Satan most properly belongs; for who so fit to do it, or so capable of it, as the seed of the woman, that has bruised the serpent's head, or as the son of God, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, yea, to destroy him himself; and who dispossessed multitudes of devils from the bodies of men, and is the strong man armed that dislodges Satan from the souls of men, and is the same with Michael, who drove him from heaven, and cast him out from thence before, ch. xii. 7, 8. And his coming down from heaven is not to be understood of his incarnation, or of his coming from thence by the assumption of human nature; for Satan was not bound by him then, as will be seen hereafter; but of his second coming, which will be from heaven, where he now is, and will be local, visible, and personal: of no other coming of his does this book speak, as seen by John, or as future; nor will the order of this vision, after the ruin of the beast and false prophet, admit of any other. *Having the key of the bottomless pit*: the abyss or deep, the same out of which the beast ascended, ch. xi. 7. and xvii. 8. And the key of this becomes no hand so well as his who has the keys of hell and death, ch. i. 18. who has all power in heaven and in earth, and has the power of hell, of opening and shutting it at his pleasure, which is signified by this phrase; see ch. ix. 1. The Ethiopic version reads, *the key of the sun*, where some have thought hell to be; and yet the same version renders the word,

the deep, in ver. 3. *And a great chain in his hand*; the key in one hand, and the chain in another; by which last is meant, not any material chain, with which spirits can't be bound, nor indeed sometimes bodies possessed by evil spirits, Mark v. 3, 4. but the almighty power of Christ, which he will now display in binding Satan faster and closer than ever.

Ver. 2. *And he laid hold on the dragon, &c.*] By whom is meant not Paganism, for that was destroyed in the Roman empire under the sixth seal, and was the consequence of the war between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his; and before this time it will be destroyed in other parts under the sixth and seventh vials, when the kings of the earth, being gathered together at Armageddon, will be slain, and the cities of the nations will fall, not only Papal, but Pagan, and Mahometan; and what will not will be converted, for before this time the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of Christ: but the devil himself is intended, so called, partly because of his great power, authority, and cruelty he has exercised in the world; and because of the venom and poison of idolatry, superstition, false doctrine, and worship, with which he has infected the inhabitants of it. *That old serpent*; so called with respect to his cunning and subtlety, as well as his antiquity, being from the beginning of the creation, and having as early beguiled our first parents; *which is the devil and Satan*; the accuser of God and men, and the adversary of them both. The Complutensian edition and Syriac version add, *which deceiveth the whole world*; and the Arabic version, *the deceiver of the whole world*; which seems to be taken out of ch. xii. 9. see the note there. *Him Christ laid hold on*, and whom he held fast, as the word signifies: Christ will now take him, apprehend him, and detain him, as his prisoner; in the wilderness, Satan only felt the dint of his sword, the written word of God, and was obliged to leave him: but now he'll feel the weight of his hand, and the lighting-down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger; in the agony or conflict with him in the garden, he was conquered by prayer; and on the cross Christ destroyed him through death, but now he'll be seized by his power, and crushed under his hand. *And bound him a thousand years*, with the great chain he had in his hand: the devil is in chains now, is under the power of divine Providence, and can do nothing without divine permission; but this chain is long, and he appears oftentimes to have great liberty, and ranges about the air and earth, and does much mischief; but now he'll be so bound by the power of Christ over him, that he'll not be able to stir hand or foot, to disturb the saints, or deceive the nations, whether with false worship, and false doctrine, or by stirring them up to persecute the saints. So of the devil, Asmodeus, it is said in Tobit viii. 8. that the angel Raphael, אסדרו, *bound him*. The space of a thousand years is not a certain number for an uncertain, or a large and indeterminate space of time, as in Psal. xc. 4. and cv. 8. these years are to be taken, not indefinitely, but definitely, for just this number of years exactly, as appears from their having the article prefixed to them; and are called afterwards, no less than four times, *אֶלֶף שָׁנִים הָאֵלֶּה*, the thousand years, or these thousand years, ver. 3, 4, 5, 7. and from the things which are attributed to

the beginning and ending of these years, which fix the epocha, and period of them; as the binding of Satan, when they begin, and the loosing of him when they end, as well as the reign of the saints with Christ during the whole time; to which may be added, the resurrection of the saints at the commencement of them, and the resurrection of the wicked at the close: but the great question is, whether they are begun or not? if they are begun, when they began; and if not, when they will. Some think that they began either at the birth of Christ, or at his resurrection, or at the destruction of Jerusalem. I put these together, because they were all in one century, within the compass of seventy years, or thereabout; so that if the thousand years began at either of them, they must end in the same century, in 1100. Now though, upon Christ's coming Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and multitudes of men, possessed with devils, were dispossessed by Christ, and he that had the power of death, the devil, was destroyed by him; and upon the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles in the Gentile world, the prince of the world was cast out, his oracles were struck dumb, multitudes were converted, and churches were set up everywhere, yet still Satan was not bound: he was not bound before the death of Christ; witness the many bodies of men possessed by him; his tempting Christ himself in the wilderness; his attacks upon him in the garden, and on the cross; his putting it into the heart of Judas to betray him, and filling the chief priests and scribes with malice and envy against him, to seek his death, which they brought about: nor was he bound, so as not to deceive the Jews, either before or after the death of Christ, nor is he to this day; they were in Christ's time under the influence of their father the devil, whose lusts they would do, and did, in putting Christ to death; and after his death, they were instigated by Satan to persecute his apostles in Judea, and elsewhere; and though after the destruction of Jerusalem they had no more power to act in this way, yet they had no less ill will and malice against the Christians, and are to this day filled with enmity against them, and are led captive by Satan, and given up to believe a lie, that the Messiah is not come, and to reject the true Messiah, and to expect a false one: and as for the Heathen world, notwithstanding the progress of the Gospel in it, yet for the first three hundred years Paganism was the established religion of the Roman empire; and Christianity was everywhere spoken against, despised, and persecuted, and sometimes triumphed over, as if it was extinct; and Satan could never be said to be bound, and in prison himself, when he cast such multitudes into prison, and caused them to have tribulation ten days, Rev. ii. 10. in which so many martyrs suffered; nor did Satan appear to be bound, with respect to the church; the mystery of iniquity began to work in the apostle's times, and there were then many antichrists in the world, deceivers, false teachers and heretics; there was a synagogue of Satan, Rev. ii. 9. and such a set of vile persons under the name of Christians, as scarce ever was in the world; to which may be added, the great decline of love, and other graces, and of the purity of doctrine and worship in the best churches, and the many contentions among themselves, in which

Satan had a great hand, and therefore could not be bound: moreover, some hundreds of years before the thousand years ended, beginning from either of the above dates, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the pope, or western antichrist, was revealed, whose coming is after the working of Satan, 2 Thess. ii. 9. and therefore surely he could not be bound then; besides, Mahomet, the eastern antichrist, sprung up, who opened the bottomless pit, and let out the smoke of it, by the Alcoran he delivered, and the false worship he set up: nor was there any thing in the eleventh century, which answered to the loosing of Satan, to the Gog and Magog army, their war with the saints, and the issue of it; nor were the nations then more deceived than they had been in some centuries past; at least they were deceived in centuries past, both by the pope and Mahomet, which they would not have been, had Satan been bound then: to which may be subjoined, that if Satan was loosed, then he can't be said to be loosed *a little season*, as in ver. 3. in comparison of the thousand years, as that must be understood; since it is now between six and seven hundred years since, which is more than half a thousand years. Others begin these years at Constantine's coming to the imperial throne; but though there was at that time a great spread of the Gospel, an enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and a weakening of Satan's, yet Satan was far from being bound; see ch. xii. 7, 8. xiii. 15. witness the flood of errors and heresies which he quickly brought in, as the Eutychian and Nestorian heresies, the one confounding the natures, the other dividing the person of Christ; the Pelagian heresy, which obscured the grace of God, and advanced the free will of man; the Macedonian heresy, which denied the divinity of the spirit: and especially the Arian heresy, which was opposed to the deity of Christ, and which introduced great contentions and confusion in the churches, and issued in a violent persecution of them, being embraced by the sons of Constantine; not to take notice of Julian, an Heathen emperor, ascending the throne, who by many devilish arts endeavoured to extirpate Christianity; nor what has been observed before, the rise of both Mahomet in the east, and the Romish antichrist in the west, which were both within this period; in process of time the western empire was overrun by the Goths and Vandals, and the eastern empire by the Saracens and Turks; to which may be added, the violent persecutions of the Waldenses and Albigenses, before the year 1300, about which time the thousand years must cease, according to this computation, for opposing the pope of Rome, and who were slain where Satan had his seat, Rev. ii. 13. and therefore not bound; nor was there any thing happened in that century which might answer to the loosing of him. Others date these thousand years from the Reformation, and so not much more than two hundred of them are yet passed; but that Satan was not bound then, and is not now, is manifest. All the Popish nations have not been reformed, but still remain under the deception; and some, that have been, have revolted again; and the devil has continued to deceive the nations with that

false worship, and to stir them up to persecute the reformed. Witness the burning of them here in Queen Mary's days, the massacres in France and Ireland, the present inquisition in Spain and Portugal, and the persecution of the Hugonots in France, and other Protestants elsewhere: and this is further evident from the decline in the reformed churches, both as to doctrine, discipline, and conversation; from the spread of errors and heresies of all kinds ever since, and especially in our age; and from the general profaneness and infidelity of the times, which, when considered, no man in his senses can ever think that Satan is bound; nor indeed will he be bound, or these thousand years begin, till after the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of all the antichristian powers, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, as appears from the order of this vision, and its connexion with the preceding chapter.

Ver. 3. *And cast him into the bottomless pit, &c.*] Or deep, into which the devils desired they might not be sent, and which they dreaded as a torment, it may be, because a place of confinement, Luke viii. 31. Matt. viii. 29. for this is called a prison, ver. 7. and is distinguished from the lake of fire, into which the devil is afterwards cast, ver. 10. *And shut him up;* that so he might not rove about in the air, nor go to and fro in the earth, nor walk about like a roaring lion, seeking to affright, disturb, or devour: *and set a seal upon him;* or upon the door of the pit, for further security, as was upon the stone at the mouth of the lion's den, Dan. vi. 17. and of Christ's sepulchre, Matt. xxvii. 66. The Jews make mention of a stone they call *Shetijah*, with which the Lord of the world *sealed the mouth of the great deep*, or bottomless pit, at the beginning; but here not that, but Satan in it, is sealed. The Alexandrian copy reads, *and sealed him firmly*, so that it was impossible for him to break out: the end of this apprehension, binding, imprisonment, and security of Satan is, *that he should deceive the nations no more*; that is, by drawing them into idolatry, false worship, and false doctrine; and by exciting them to make war against the saints, or to persecute them, as appears from ver. 8. as he had done before; and it is notorious enough that he has deceived them both these ways; he deceived the Pagan nations not only before, but since the coming of Christ, to worship the Heathen deities; and the Papists, who are called Gentiles, or nations, ch. xi. 2. to fall down to idols of gold, silver, stone, and wood; and the nation of the Jews to entertain a false and deluded notion of the Messiah; and all of them, in their turns, to persecute the people of God, as the Jews at the death of Stephen, and afterwards; the Pagan emperors for the first three hundred years after Christ; the Papists from the rise of the beast, who had power given him to make war with the saints, and overcome them; but now he'll be under such restraint, and in such close confinement, that he'll not be able to move the wicked nations to any thing of this kind, as he will when he is loosed at the end of the thousand years; nor will he be able so much as to tempt any of the saints, during this term of time, nor

give them the least molestation or uneasiness. *Till the thousand years shall be fulfilled*; or ended, the whole space of them run out: *and after that he must be loosed a little season*; a small space of time, in comparison of the thousand years; how long it will be exactly, can't be said; and this *must* be, not because he can't be held any longer, or through any weakness in Christ; but because of the decree of God, who has so appointed it, for the glorifying of himself, in the salvation of his people, and in the final destruction of the devil, and the Gog and Magog army.

Ver. 4. *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, &c.*] Besides the throne of God the Father, and the throne of glory, on which the Son of God sits, and the twelve thrones for the twelve apostles of the Lamb; there will be thrones set, or pitched, for all the saints, Dan. vii. 9. who will sit on them, in the character of kings, and as conquerors, and shall sit quiet, and undisturbed, and be in perfect ease, and peace, for they that sit on them are the same persons hereafter described in this verse; for after the binding of Satan, an account is given of the happiness and glory of the saints during that time: *and judgment was given unto them*; that is, power, dominion, regal authority, possession of a kingdom, answerable to their character as kings, and to their position, sitting on thrones, Dan. vii. 22, 27. unless it should be rather understood of justice being done them, which does not so manifestly take place in the present state of things, and of which they sometimes complain; but now righteous judgment will be given for them, and against their enemies; their persons will be openly declared righteous; their characters will be cleared of all false imputations fastened on them; and their works and sufferings for Christ will be taken notice of in a way of grace, and rewarded in a very glorious manner. And so it may respect their being judged themselves, but not their judging of others, the wicked, which is the sole work of Christ; nor will the wicked now be upon the spot to be judged; nor is that notion to be supported by Matt. xix. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. see the notes there. The Jews fancy that their chief men shall judge the world in the time to come; for so they say^w, "in future time, (or in the world to come,) the holy blessed God will sit, and kings will place thrones for the great men of Israel, and they shall sit and judge the nations of the world with the holy blessed God:" but the persons here meant are not Jews, but sufferers for the sake of Jesus, as follows: *and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God*; these, with the persons described in the next clause, are they who will sit on thrones, during the thousand years of Satan's being bound, and will have judgment given them; even such who have bore witness to the truth of Jesus being the son of God, the true Messiah, and the only Saviour of sinners, and to him as the essential Word of God, or to the written word of God, the whole Gospel, all the truths and doctrines of it; and who have been beheaded for bearing such a testimony, as John the Baptist was, the first of the witnesses of Jesus: and since this kind of punishment was a Roman one, it seems particularly to point at such per-

sons who suffered under the Roman Pagan emperors, and to design the same souls said to be under the altar, and to cry for vengeance, ch. vi. 9. This clause, in connexion with the former, is differently rendered; the Syriac version renders it thus, *and judgment was given to them, and to the souls that were beheaded, &c.* the Arabic version, *and to them was given the judgment of the souls killed, &c.* the Ethiopic version, *and then I saw a seat, and the son of man sat upon it, and he rendered to them judgment for the souls of them that were slain for the law of the Lord Jesus. And which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.* see ch. xiii. 1, 4, 14, 15, 16. This describes such who shall have made no profession of the Popish religion, nor have supported it in any way; who shall not have joined in the idolatry of the Romish antichrist, but shall have protested against it, and departed from it, and shall have adhered to Christ, and to the true worship of God; see ch. xiv. 1. and xv. 2. And so this, with the preceding character, includes all the saints that lived under Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, to the destruction of antichrist, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom; not that these martyrs and confessors, or even all the saints of their times, are the only persons that shall share in the glory and happiness of the thousand-years' reign of Christ, and binding of Satan; for all the saints will come with Christ, and all the dead in Christ will rise first, or be partakers of the first resurrection; and all that are redeemed by his blood, of whatsoever nation, or in whatsoever age of the world they have lived, even from the beginning of it, shall be kings and priests, and reign with him on earth, Zech. xiv. 5. 1 Thess. iii. 13. and iv. 14, 16. Rev. v. 9, 10. though John only takes notice of these, because the design of this book, and of the visions shewn to him, was only to give a prophetic history of the church, from his time, to the end of the world; and these particularly are observed to encourage the saints under sufferings for Christ: *and they lived*; meaning not spiritually, for so they did before, and whilst they bore their testimony to Christ, and against antichrist, and previous to their death; nor in their successors, for it would not be just and reasonable that they should be beheaded for their witness of Christ and his word, and others should live and reign with Christ in their room and stead; nor is this to be understood of their living in their souls, for so they live in their separate state; the soul never dies; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: but the sense is, that they lived again, as in ver. 5. they lived corporeally; their souls lived in their bodies, their bodies being raised again, and reunited to their souls, their whole persons lived; or the souls of them that were beheaded lived; that is, their bodies lived again, the soul being sometimes put for the body, Psal. xvi. 10. and this is called the first resurrection in the next verse: *and reigned with Christ a thousand years*; as all that suffer with him will, and as all that will live godly must, and do, 2 Tim. ii. 12. and iii. 12. Christ being descended from heaven, and having bound Satan, and the dead saints being raised, and the living ones changed, he will reign among them

personally, visibly, and gloriously, and in the fullest manner; all the antichristian powers will be destroyed; Satan will be in close confinement; death, with respect to Christ and his people, will be no more; the heavens and the earth will be made new, and all things will be subject to him; and all his saints will be with him, and they shall reign with him; they shall be glorified together; they shall sit on the throne with him, have a crown of righteousness given them, and possess the kingdom appointed for them; they'll reign over all their enemies; Satan will be bruised under their feet, being bound; the wicked will be shut up in hell, and neither will be able to give them any disturbance; and sin and death will be no more: this reign will not be in a sensual and carnal way, or lie in possessing worldly riches and honours, in eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; the saints will not be in a mortal, but in an immortal state; the children of this resurrection will be like the angels; and this reign will be on earth, ch. v. 10. the present earth will be burnt up, and a new one formed, in which these righteous persons will dwell, 2 Pet. iii. 13. of which see note on ch. xxi. 1. and it will last a *thousand years*; not distinct from, but the same with the thousand years in which Satan will be bound; for if they were distinct from them, and should commence when they are ended, the reign of Christ with his saints would be when Satan is loosed, which is utterly inconsistent with it. The Syriac version very rightly renders it, *these thousand years*, referring to those of Satan's binding. Nor are these thousand years to be understood prophetically, for as many years as there are days in a thousand years; for as this would defer the judgment of the wicked, and the ultimate glory of the saints, to a prodigious length of time, so it should be observed, that prophetic time will now be no longer, according to the angel's oath in ch. x. 6. but these are to be understood literally and definitely, as before, of just such an exact number and term of years; see 2 Pet. iii. 8. this is a perfect number, and is expressive of the perfection of this state, and is a term of years that neither Adam, nor any of his sons, arrived unto; but Christ the second Adam shall see his seed, and shall prolong his days longer than any of them, Isa. liii. 10. It is an observation of the Jewish Rabbins², that the day in Gen. ii. 17. is the day of the holy blessed God (*i. e.* a thousand years), and therefore the first Adam did not perfect, or fill up his day, for there wanted seventy years of it: and it is a notion that prevails with them, that the days of the Messiah will be a thousand years³; and so they will be at his second coming, but not at his first, which they vainly expect, it being past: and also they say⁴, that in these thousand years God will renew his world, and that then the righteous will be raised, and no more return to dust; which agrees with John's new heaven and new earth during this state, and with the first resurrection: and so Jerom, who was conversant with the Rabbins, says⁵ that the Jews expect a thousand years' reign.

Ver. 5. *But the rest of the dead, &c.*] Meaning not

the dead saints, for they'll be all raised together, but the wicked dead; and not them as morally or spiritually, but as corporeally dead: these *lived not again until the thousand years were finished*; so that there will be such an exact term of years between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of the wicked; nor will there be any wicked living upon earth, or in bodies, during that time; for the wicked dead will not be raised with the saints at Christ's coming, and the wicked living will be destroyed in the conflagration of the world, and neither of them shall live again until the end of these years. This clause is left out in the Syriac version. *This is the first resurrection*: which is not to be connected with the living again of the rest of the dead at the end of the thousand years, for that will be the second and last resurrection; but with the witnesses of Jesus, and the true worshippers of God living again, in order to reign with Christ a thousand years; for this resurrection is not meant of a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace; though the work of grace and conversion is sometimes so represented, it cannot be designed here; for such a resurrection the above witnesses and worshippers were partakers of before their sufferings, and which was antecedently necessary to their witness and worship; besides, this resurrection was future in John's time, and was what was to be done at once, and was peculiar to the commencement of the thousand years; whereas the spiritual resurrection was before his time, and has been ever since the beginning, and is successive in all ages, and not affixed to any one period of time, though there may be more instances of it in one age than in another; nor is this ever called the first resurrection, nor can any reason be given why it should; for though one man may be converted before another, his conversion can't be called the first resurrection, since there are many instances of this nature before, and many more after; besides, at this time, there will be none of God's people to be raised in this sense; they'll be all quickened and converted before; the nation of the Jews will be born again, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; to which may be added, that if the first resurrection is to be understood in a spiritual sense, then the second resurrection of the wicked dead, at the end of the thousand years, must be understood in like manner: nor is a reviving of the cause of Christ and his interest here intended, particularly through the calling of the Jews, and the numerous conversion of the Gentiles; for though the former of these especially is signified by the quickening of the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, and is expressed by bringing the Jews out of their graves, and is called life from the dead, Rom. xi. 15. yet that cannot with any propriety be called the first resurrection; for there was a great reviving of true religion in the time of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, especially after the effusion of the spirit on the day of Pentecost, both among Jews and Gentiles; and there was a revival of the Christian religion in the times of Constantine, and again at the reformation from Popery; and as for the conversion of the Jews and the Gentiles in the latter day, that will be the last reviving of the cause and in-

² Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 145. 4. vid. Jacchiad. in Dan. vii. 25.
³ Midrash Tillin, fol. 4. 2.

² T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1, 2. & Gloss. in ib. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 42. 1. & 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 159. 2.

³ Comment. in Zach. xiv. 16, 18.

terest of Christ, which will usher in his spiritual reign, and therefore should rather be called the last, than the first resurrection; besides, this affair will be over before this time; this is signified by the marriage of the Lamb in the preceding chapter; and the kingdoms of the world will become Christ's under the seventh trumpet, and both will be in the spiritual reign: moreover, this does by no means agree with the character of the persons who shall share in this resurrection, they are such who shall have lived and suffered, at least many of them, under Rome Pagan and Papal, ver. 4. and therefore can never be understood of Jews and Gentiles in the latter day, when neither one nor other shall be any more. To which may be subjoined, that if this was the sense, then this cause must revive also among the wicked at the end of the thousand years, whereas, when they are raised, they'll attempt the very reverse. It remains then, that by this first resurrection must be meant a corporeal one; for as some of those that will live again were corporeally beheaded, and all of them corporeally died, they will be corporeally raised again; and in such sense will the rest of the dead be raised at the end of these years; with respect to which this is properly called the first resurrection; it is the first in time, it will be at the beginning of the thousand years, and the second will be at the close; the dead in Christ will rise first in order of time, 1 Thess. iv. 16. see the note there; they will have the dominion in this sense over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection: Christ's resurrection is indeed first, but that is the cause and pledge of this; and there were particular resurrections both before and after his, but they were to a mortal state; and there were some saints that rose from the dead immediately after his resurrection; but these were but few, and were designed as an earnest of this; besides, though it was a resurrection, it was not the resurrection; and it may be further observed, that the resurrection of the righteous will be the first at the coming of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 22. there will be none then before theirs; theirs will be the first; the resurrection of the wicked, to which this is opposed as the first, will not be till a thousand years after: add to all which, that this resurrection will be *πρῶτη*, the first, that is, the best, as the word is used in Luke xv. 22. the chief, the principal; the resurrection of the wicked can hardly be called a resurrection in comparison of it, and in many places theirs is not taken notice of where this is, as in 1 Cor. xv. 1 Thess. iv. the righteous will be raised by virtue of union to Christ, in consequence of his having the charge both of their souls and bodies, and in conformity to his glorious body, and to eternal life, which will not be the case of the wicked.

Ver. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, &c.*] This may be considered either as descriptive of the persons that shall partake of this privilege; as that they are only such who are blessed with spiritual blessings, with a justifying righteousness, with pardon of sin, and regenerating grace, and who are sanctified by the spirit of God; these, and these only, will be first raised, and will be called to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, Matt. xxv. 34. or else as expressive of their happiness and holiness when raised; they shall be perfectly blessed in soul and body, and perfectly holy in both: they shall be

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blessed, for on such the second death hath no power; which is the lake of fire, ver. 14. and ch. xxi. 8. the sense is, they shall escape everlasting burnings, the fire of hell, the torment and misery of the wicked; they shall be delivered from wrath to come; and as their bodies will die no more, their souls will not be subject to any sense of wrath, or to any sort of punishment: and they will be holy; they will have no sin in them: but they will be priests of God and of Christ; of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, being made so to the former by the latter, ch. i. 6. or of God, even of Christ, that is, of God, who is Christ, since it follows: and shall reign with him; they will be wholly devoted to and employed in the service of God and of Christ, and will be continually offering up the sacrifices of praise, or singing the song of the Lamb, adoring the grace and goodness of God and Christ unto them, shewn them both in providence and in grace: and shall reign with him a thousand years; this is mentioned again, partly to assert the certainty of it, and partly to point at the blessedness of the risen saints.

Ver. 7. *And when the thousand years are expired, &c.*] Which are not yet expired; not in the year 1000, or 1033 or 4, reckoning from the birth or death of Christ, when Paganism, which had been destroyed in the Gentile world, was introduced into the church, which bore the Christian name, through the man of sin; for this had been bringing in by degrees more or less from the times of Constantine; whence it appears, that Satan in this respect was loose before, and therefore this was not the time of his loosing; nor in 1073, reckoning from the destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying and spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, in which year Hildebrand came to the popedom, who may be truly called the brand of hell; Damianus, a brother cardinal, who lived at the same time with him when he was archdeacon of Rome, calls him the holy devil; he was an impostor, sorcerer, and necromancer, and by wicked arts got into the Papal chair; this pope raised the Papal power over princes to a very great height, and made the see of Rome absolutely independent, and all bishops dependent on it; he forbid bishops receiving their investiture from the emperor, or any lay person, under pain of excommunication: this is the pope that made the emperor, with his empress and child, wait three days barefoot at his gates, in the depth of winter, before they could be admitted to him; that doctrine of devils, forbidding priests to marry, was established by him; and in his days that monstrous and absurd notion of transubstantiation began to prevail, though he himself used his bread God but very roughly; for taking it to be really God, he required an answer from it against the emperor; but it not speaking, he threw it into the fire, and burnt it. Now it will be allowed, that the devil was loose at this time, but then so he was before: there had been popes before this who were conjurers, necromancers, and had familiarity and confederacy with the devil; and near five hundred years before this time, the pope was declared universal bishop by Phocas; and the forbidding priests marriage was started in the council of Nice, and was approved of by Pope Siricius, long before this time, though it was now more firmly established; add to this, that if the expiration of the 1000 years and the

loosing of Satan were at this time, he must have been loosed near 700 years, which can never be called a little season, as in ver. 3. especially in comparison of the 1000 years, the time of his binding; when it is two-thirds of that time: nor did these years expire in or about 1300, reckoning from Constantine, about which time Pope Boniface the Eighth lived, of whom it is said, that he came in like a fox, ruled like a lion, and died like a dog; upon his accession to the papedom, he instituted a jubilee, and on the first day he appeared in his pontifical habit, and gave the benediction to the people, and on the next day he clothed himself with an imperial habit, and put on a rich diadem, and sat on a throne, with a naked sword bore before him, when he uttered these words, *Ecce hic duo gladii, Behold here are two swords*, referring to Luke xxii. 38. which the Papists would have understood of the temporal and spiritual power which Peter and his successors are possessed of; at the same time Ottoman was crowned emperor of the Mahometan nations, who founded the Turkish empire, and spread the Mahometan religion in Asia and Greece; and by both these, great disturbances and wars were occasioned, both in the east and west: but still this does not make it appear that now was the time of Satan's loosing; since before this time the Papal power was at its utmost height, and the Mahometan religion had been hundreds of years in the world, and had greatly prevailed; and therefore Satan must be loosed before; and indeed it is in vain to seek after the expiration of these years, and the loosing of Satan, when as yet the years are not begun, nor has Satan been bound, as has been shewn on ver. 2. but however, when they will be ended, *Satan shall be loosed out of his prison*: during the thousand years he will be in a state of confinement, being bound, shut, and sealed up in the bottomless pit, which is therefore here called a prison, as is the place of damned spirits, in 1 Pet. iii. 19. but when these will be at an end, his chain will be taken off, at least will be lengthened; the seal upon him will be broken off, the bottomless pit will be opened, and he let loose; which will be done not by himself, but by him that bound him, or by divine permission.

Ver. 8. *And shall go out, &c.*] Of his prison, the bottomless pit, and shall walk to and fro in the earth, and go about like a deceitful serpent, and roaring lion, as before: *to deceive the nations*; as he had done before the thousand years began, and from which he was restrained during that time; he had before deceived the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan nations, and now he'll go forth to deceive those at this time *which are in the four quarters of the earth*; all the world over: the names of which nations are, *Gog and Magog*; not the same which are mentioned in Ezekiel, ch. xxxviii. and xxxix. though there is an allusion to them, and from thence the names are taken, and some of the figures borrowed, and design the enemies of God's people, who will be in the world at this time; so the Jews^b speak of a Gog and Magog, that will come up against Jerusalem in the days of the Messiah, whom they still expect, by whom they shall be destroyed: *to gather*

them together to battle; not one against another, as some think, as the pope against the Turk, and the Turk against the pope, nor are they designed at all; nor to *kill them*, as the Ethiopic version renders it; but against the saints and people of God, in the beloved city and camp; herein will lie his deception of them: *the number of whom is as the sand of the sea*; that is, innumerable, in allusion to Gog and Magog in Ezek. xxxviii. 9, 15, 16. but the great question is, who are meant by these?—Not the Papists, the nations made drunk with the wine of Rome's fornication, the Gentiles, by whom the holy city is trodden under foot, and who will be angry when the time of avenging the saints is come, ch. xi. 2, 18. and xviii. 2. for these will be all destroyed, even all the remains of them, at the battle of Armageddon; nor is antichrist himself intended, who will be destroyed in the spiritual reign of Christ, with the breath of his mouth; and at the above decisive battle the beast and the false prophet will be taken alive, and cast into the lake of fire: nor are the Turks designed, the people of Magog being Scythians originally, as Josephus says^c, from whence the Turks sprung; or Tartarians, for Paulus Venetus^d says the countries of Gog and Magog are in Tartary, called Jug and Munjug; hence some think these are the same with the four angels bound at the river Euphrates, and loosed, whose armies are represented as exceeding numerous, ch. ix. 14, 16, 17. but though the Turkish dominions are very large, yet they don't extend to the four quarters of the world; and when the Turks were let loose, and came even into Europe, it was not against the true Christians, the camp of the saints, the beloved city, as here, but against the antichristian party; the Papists have suffered most by the incursions of the Turks, though it has not brought them to repentance; besides, the loosing of the four angels, or the Turkish nations, and their chiefs, is long before these thousand years begin; that is past already, under the sixth trumpet, whereas the seventh trumpet will be blown, and all the seven vials poured out, and the world cleared of all Christ's enemies, and after that a thousand years must run out, before this Gog and Magog army will appear: nor are the Americans the nations here spoken of; for they are but in one quarter of the world; nor is there any reason to believe there will be there more enemies of Christ's people than in any other part, since in the spiritual reign of Christ the earth shall be full of his knowledge, and his spiritual kingdom will be to the ends of the earth: and as for that notion that those inhabiting the other hemisphere will be saved from the general conflagration, there's no reason to believe it, since the earth, and whatsoever is therein, shall be burnt up, 2 Pet. iii. 10. Some think that the wicked living in the distant parts of the world, in the corners of the earth, are meant, who, upon Christ's coming, will flee thither, and remain in continual dread and terror to the end of the thousand years, when Satan will gather them together, and spirit them up against the saints; but this cannot be, because they'll all be destroyed at the universal conflagration of the world; nor will there be any in the new earth but

^a Targum in Cant. viii. 4. & Targum Hieros. in Numb. xi. 26.
^c Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.

^d In Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott. Col. 288.

righteous persons: but these will be all the wicked dead, the rest of the dead, who lived not again until the thousand years are ended, when will be the second resurrection, the resurrection of all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world; and these, with the posse of devils under Satan, will make up the Gog and Magog army: all the characters agree with them; these may be called *nations*, or Gentiles, being aliens from the true Israel of God, the dogs that will be without the holy city; these may be said to be in *the four quarters* of the world, since where they die and are buried, there they'll rise and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army; and as they'll die enemies to Christ and his people, they'll rise such; as they will go down to hell with their *weapons of war*, as is said of Meshech and Tubal, the people of Gog, Ezek. xxxii. 27. they'll rise with the same; the grave, the dust of the earth, will make no change in their vile bodies, nor the flames of hell any alteration in the disposition of their minds; yea, as is said in the above place, they'll *lay their swords under their heads*, and so be in a readiness, when they rise, to make use of them against the saints, and to avenge themselves; for their envy, malice, and revenge, will be heightened and increased by their confinement and punishment in hell: nor need this be wondered at, since the devils, notwithstanding they have been so long expelled the realms of light, and have been in chains of darkness, and in expectation of everlasting torment, retain the same enmity as ever; and though the deception will be very great, to attack saints in an immortal state, who are like the angels that die not, nor will these die any more, and especially since Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who rules the nations with a rod of iron, will be at the head of them; yet it need not seem strange, when they will rise as weak and feeble, and as little able to resist temptation, and as much exposed to seduction, as they were before; Satan will have as much power over them as ever; and what with their own numbers, and the posse of devils at the head of them, and especially considering the desperateness of their state, and that this is their last struggle and effort for liberty, they will animate themselves and one another to this strange undertaking. These now may be called Gog and Magog, as the one signifies *covered*, the other open, or *uncovered*; these being all the enemies of Christ and his people, both secret and open: and this sense well accounts for their number, being as the sand of the sea; and which the Arabic version seems to confirm, *and Jagog and Magog shall rise with him*. The Jews have a notion that this deception of Satan will be at the day of judgment, which agrees with this account; for immediately upon this will follow the judgment of the wicked: they say, "in the day that judgment shall be found in the world, and the holy blessed God shall sit upon the throne of judgment, Satan לעילא רותא אדשוי, shall deceive above and below (angels and men), and he shall be found to destroy the world, and to take away souls."

Ver. 9. *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, &c.*] Either the whole earth, in the several parts of

which they will be raised; or the land of Israel, where Christ and his people will be; and so the wicked being raised, will come up from the several parts of the world, and spread themselves over the holy land; just as Gog and Magog are said to cover the land of Israel, as a cloud, Ezek. xxxviii. 16. and it may be observed, that the very phrase of ררוב ארצך, *the breadth of thy land*, is used of Immanuel's land, or the land of Israel, in Isa. viii. 8. *and compassed the camp of the saints about*; these are the blessed and holy ones, who have part in the first resurrection, even all the saints; not only the martyrs under the Heathen persecutions, and the confessors of Christ under the Papacy, but all the saints from the beginning of the world; these will be all encamped together, with the tabernacle of God in the midst of them, ch. xxi. 3. and Christ their King at the head of them, Micah ii. 13. the allusion is to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness, about the tabernacle, which was in the midst of them, Numb. ii. 2. &c. afterwards the city of Jerusalem itself was called a camp, and answered in all respects to the camp in the wilderness, to which the reference is in Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13. and which serves to illustrate the passage here, since it follows: *and the beloved city*: not Constanti-nople, as some have thought, but the holy city, the new Jerusalem, ch. xxi. 2. the general assembly and church of the first-born, beloved by God and Christ, and by the holy angels, and by one another; and these very probably will be with Christ upon the same spot of ground where the Old Jerusalem stood, a city so highly favoured, and so much distinguished by God; so that where Christ suffered so much reproach and shame, and such an accursed death, he will now be glorified, and live in triumph with his saints: *and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them*; not material fire; with this the earth, and the bodies of the wicked then upon it, will be burnt at the beginning of the thousand years; but now their bodies will be raised immortal, and not capable of being consumed with such fire; but the fiery indignation of God, or his wrath, which will be poured out like fire, is here meant, which will destroy both body and soul; this is no other than the lake of fire, or second death, into which they will be cast; and which will not be until the judgment is over, though it is here related to shew what will be the event and issue of their attack upon the saints: the allusion is to the fire sent upon Gog and Magog, and to the burning of their weapons, in Ezek. xxxviii. 22. and xxxix. 6, 9, 10. and so the Jews say of their Gog and Magog, that "they shall be killed with the burning of the soul, with a flame of fire, which shall come from under the throne of glory."

Ver. 10. *And the devil that deceived them, &c.*] Both before death, in the present life, by tempting and drawing them into immorality and profaneness, or idolatry, superstition, and will-worship, or persecution of the saints; and after their resurrection, by instigating them to make this foolish attempt upon the saints of the most High: *was cast into the lake of fire*

* Zohar. in Gen. fol. 73. 1.

† T. Bab Zebachim, fol. 116. 2 Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habbechirah, c. 7. sect. 11.

* Targum Jon. in Numb. xi. 26.

and brimstone; the same with the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; this will be his full torment, in which he is not as yet; and this will not be until the judgment is finished hereafter described; though it is here mentioned to issue the account of Satan at once, and to shew what will be his final state and condition: *where the beast and false prophet are*; ch. xix. 20. who for so many years have been companions in wickedness together; the beast being the first beast that received his power, seat, and authority from the dragon, or devil; the false prophet being the second beast, or antichrist in his ecclesiastical capacity, as the beast is antichrist in his civil power, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders: *and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*; that is, not only the devil, but the beast and false prophet, for the word is in the plural number: and this will be the case of all wicked men, of all whose minds are enmity to God and Christ, and to his people; and is a proof of the eternity of hell-torments.

Ver. 11. *And I saw a great white throne, &c.*] This vision refers not to the Gospel dispensation, from the exaltation of Christ to his second coming; when he sat down on his throne at the right hand of God, and was declared Lord and Christ; when there was a shaking of the heavens and the earth, a removing of the Mosaic economy, and the ordinances of the ceremonial law in Judea, and of Paganism in the Gentile world; when the Gospel was preached to all nations, and the dead in sins were quickened, and arose and stood before the throne of grace; when the books of the Scriptures were opened and explained, and the book of life was also opened; and by the conversion of some, and not others, it was known who were written in it and who were not, and men were judged to be alive or dead in a spiritual sense, according to the influence the opening of these books had upon them; and the powers of the world, comparable to a sea, and of death and hell, were not able to hold in the dead in sin, when they were called to life, with respect to whom death and hell were destroyed; nor was the Gospel the savour of death to any but to such who were not written in the book of life. This, in other words, is the sum of Cocceius's sense of this vision; but this affair will be over, and all God's elect gathered in by the preaching of the Gospel, before this vision takes place: nor does it respect the restoration of the Jews, who now are as dead, like Ezekiel's dry bones, but will at this time be quickened, and stand upon their feet an exceeding great army, and will be gathered from the several parts where they are as dead; and when it will be known by their conduct and behaviour who are God's elect among them, and who are not; which is Brightman's interpretation of the vision: but this, as we have seen, will come to pass according to the vision in the preceding chapter, before the thousand years begin; whereas this vision will not begin to be accomplished until they are ended: it is best therefore to understand it of the general judgment at the last day, which is the common sense of ancient and modern interpreters; though it seems only to regard the judgment of the wicked, for no other are made mention of in it: the *throne* here seen is a throne of

judgment; it is called a *great* one, because a great Person sat upon it, the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, even he who is the great God, and Judge of the whole earth; and because of the great work that will be transacted upon it, the judgment of all the wicked; this will be the greatest assize that ever was held; it is called the judgment of the great day, and the great and dreadful day of the Lord, Jude 6. Mal. iv. 5. this throne is also said to be a *white* one; just as the same Person is said to sit upon a white cloud, and ride upon a white horse, ch. xiv. 14. and xix. 11. it may be in allusion either to a white and serene cloud, or to a throne of ivory, such an one as Solomon made, 2 Chron. ix. 17. and this is either expressive of the majesty and splendour of it, it being a throne of glory, or a glorious throne, Matt. xxv. 31. or else it may denote the purity and justice of him that sits on it, according to which he will proceed in judgment, and finish it; his character is the righteous judge, and the judgment he will execute will be righteous judgment: *and him that sat on it*: the throne was not empty, one sat upon it, who is no other than the son of God; to whom all judgment is committed, and who is ordained to be Judge of quick and dead; and is every way fit for it, being of great knowledge, wisdom, and sagacity, and of great integrity and faithfulness, as man and Mediator, and being, as God, both omniscient and omnipotent, and so capable both of passing a right sentence, and of executing it; to which may be added, his great majesty and glory, necessary to strike an awe, and command an attention to him: *from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them*; which is to be understood not figuratively, as in ch. vi. 14. and xvi. 20. where in the one place is described the destruction of Paganism, and in the other the destruction of the Papacy, and all antichristian powers; but literally, and not of the present earth and heaven, as they now are, for these will be burnt up with fire at the beginning of the thousand years, but of the new heaven and new earth, at the end of them; and the phrases of fleeing away, and place being found no more for them, shew the entire annihilation and utter abolition of them; after this there will be no place in being but the heaven of angels and saints, and the lake of fire, in which are the devils and damned spirits: but though this is mentioned here, it will not be till after the judgment is over; for how otherwise will the dead have a place to stand in before the throne, or hell, that is the grave, and also the sea, give up their dead, ver. 12, 13. but it is observed here, though afterwards done, to set off the majesty of the Judge upon the throne, at whose sight, and by whose power, this will be effected.

Ver. 12. *And I saw the dead, &c.*] An account being given of the Judge, next the persons to be judged are described, and in this clause, by the state and condition in which they had been; for it can't be thought they were dead when they stood before the throne, but were raised from the dead; for this character is not descriptive of them as dead in trespasses and sins, though they are such as die in their sins, and rise in them, who are meant, but as having been corporeally dead; these are the rest of the dead, the wicked, who lived not again until the thousand years were ended, ver. 5. as

for the righteous, they'll be judged upon their resurrection from the dead in the beginning of the day of the Lord; and will be declared righteous and blessed, and be called upon and introduced to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, which they shall have possessed a thousand years when these wicked dead will be raised: who are said to be *small and great*; which may refer either to their age, being children and adult persons; or to their condition, being kings and peasants, high and low, rich and poor; or to their characters, as greater or lesser sinners; and this description respects them as they are in this world, and is designed to shew that no consideration whatever, of age, condition, or character, will exempt them from the general judgment. This is a way of speaking used among the Jews^b, who say, "in the world of souls, הנדולים, *הקטנים*, the great and the small, stand before God." The disputations of the schoolmen, about the age and stature in which mankind will rise and be judged, are vain and foolish: these John saw *stand before God*; that is, Christ, who is God and Judge of all; before his judgment-seat and throne, in order to be judged; for they will stand not as ministering to him, nor as having confidence before him; in this sense they shall not stand in the judgment, Psal. i. 5. but as guilty persons, to receive their sentence of condemnation. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read, *before the throne*; the sense is the same; for if they stood before the throne, they must stand before God, that sat upon it: *and the books were opened*: the book of God's omniscience, which contains all the actions of the wicked, in which all their sins are taken notice of, and will now be brought to light; and the book of his remembrance, in which they are all written as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; and the book of the creatures, which they have abused, and which will witness against them; and the book of providence, the riches of whose goodness have been despised by them; and the book of the Scriptures, both of law and Gospel, as well as the book of nature, of the light of nature, see Rom. ii. 12. 16. to which may be added, the book of conscience; the consciences of men will be awakened, and will accuse them, and bear witness against them, and be as good as a thousand witnesses: *and another book was opened, which is the book of life*: the same that is mentioned in ch. iii. 5. and xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. the book of eternal election, see the notes there. No other use seems to be made of this book in the judgment of the wicked, than only to observe whose names were not written in it, as appears from ver. 15. reference seems to be had to Dan. vii. 10. It is a notion that has obtained among the Jews^a, that "at the beginning of the year (or every new-year's day) *ג' ספרים נפתחו*, *three books are opened*, one of the wicked perfect, another of the righteous perfect, and a third of those between both; the righteous perfect are written and sealed immediately for life; the wicked perfect are written and sealed immediately for death; the middlemost are in suspense, and continue from the beginning of the year to the day of atonement; if they are worthy, they are written for life, if not worthy, they are written

for death;" and in the same treatise^k, they represent God at the same time of the year as a "King, sitting on a throne of judgment, and the books of the living, and the books of the dead, פתוחין, *open*, before him:" this with them was a prelude and a figure of the future judgment: *and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works*; that is, they were sentenced to everlasting condemnation and death, according to the just demerit of their wicked works; for no other are done by wicked men, nor can any other be in the books, since they are without God and Christ, and destitute of the spirit, have no principle of grace to act from, nor any good end in view in any action of theirs. So the Jews say, "all the works which a man does in this world are written in a book, and they come into thought before the holy King, and they are manifest before him."

Ver. 13. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, &c.*] Which is not to be interpreted metaphorically of the world, and the men of it, who are like the troubled sea; but literally of the sea, and of all such who have been drowned in the waters of it, as were Pharaoh and his host; or have died upon the mighty waters, and have been cast into them, and devoured by the fishes; and particular regard may be had to the men of the old world, drowned by the flood; these shall be raised from thence; the sea shall deliver them up: now this, and what is expressed in the next clause, will not be done after the judgment is set, the books are opened, and the sentence passed, but before all this, and in order to it, as the last clause of this verse shews: *and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them*; death, which is here represented as a person, and elsewhere as a king, reigning and having power over men, signifies death in general, and every kind of death of which men have died, whether natural or violent, over whom it will now have no longer dominion, but will be obliged to deliver up all its subjects; and hell signifies the grave, which will now be opened, and deliver up all its prisoners, all that have been buried in the earth; see Job xxvi. 5, 6. the Ethiopic version adds, *and the earth delivered up them that were dead in it*: but this seems unnecessary after the former: *and they were judged every man according to their works*; some to greater, some to lesser punishment, as their sinful works deserved.

Ver. 14. *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, &c.*] Death cannot be taken properly, nor hell be the place of torment, for devils and damned spirits; since that is that lake of fire, for then the sense would be, hell is cast into hell; but either by these the devil is meant, who has the power of death, and is the prince of hell, were it not that the casting of him into this lake is mentioned before in ver. 10. or it denotes the destruction and abolition of death and the grave, that from henceforth they should no more have power over men, nor have any under their dominion, and in their hands; and so what has been promised will now be fully performed, Hos. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 26. see ch. xxi. 4. or rather the wicked dead, which they shall have delivered up, and will be judged and sentenced

^a Tzeror Hammor, fol. 154. 2.

^b T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 2.

^k T. Bab. Roshhasharah, fol. 32. 2. & Erachin, fol. 10. 2.

^l Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 3.

to eternal death, ver. 13. *this is the second death* : or the destruction of the soul and body in hell, which will consist in an eternal separation of both from God, and in a continual sense of his wrath and displeasure. The Alexandrian copy and the Complutensian edition read, *this second death is the lake of fire* ; and so the Arabic version, *and this is the second death, even the lake of fire* ; and not much different is the Ethiopic version, *the second death, which is the fire of hell*.

Ver. 15. *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, &c.*] Upon the opening of it, ver. 12. as all that worship the beast, and wonder after him, ch. xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. and all wicked men, every one of them : *was cast into the lake of fire* ; where are the devil, beast, and false prophet, ch. xix. 20. and xx. 10. It is a saying of R. Isaac, " woe to the wicked, who are not written בפתקא, *in the book*, for they shall perish in hell for

" ever and ever : " and in the Targum on Ezek. xiii. 9. it is said of the false prophets, " that עלימות די בכתיב די, *in the writing of eternal life* (or in the book of eternal life), which is written for the righteous of the house of Israel, they shall not be written." There seems to be some allusion in the phrase used here, and in the preceding verse, and elsewhere in this book, to the lake Asphaltites, a sulphurous lake, where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, which the Jews call the salt sea, or the bituminous lake ; and whatsoever was useless, or rejected, or abominable, or accursed, they used to say, to shew their rejection and detestation of it, let it be cast into the sea of salt, or the bituminous lake ; thus, for instance, " any vessels that had on them the image of the sun, or of the moon, or of a dragon, יליכום לים המלח, *let them cast them into the salt sea*, " or bituminous lake "

C H A P. XXI.

THIS chapter contains an account of the happy state of the church, consisting of all the elect, both Jews and Gentiles, which will take place upon the first resurrection, and will continue during the thousand-years' reign mentioned in the preceding chapter. The seat of the church in these happy times will be the new heaven and the new earth, ver. 1. the church that will dwell there is described by its names, the holy city, and new Jerusalem ; by its descent, from heaven ; and by its state and ornament, being prepared and adorned as a bride for her husband, ver. 2. and her happiness is expressed by the presence of God with her, and communion with him enjoyed by her, and by a freedom from all evils endured in the present state of things, ver. 3. 4. after which John hears the voice of him that sat on the throne, declaring himself to be the author of the new heaven and earth ; ordering him to write, that what had been said was true and faithful ; affirming that things were now done and finished ; calling himself the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end : promising grace to the thirsty soul, the inheritance of all things to the overcomer, and also divine sonship ; and threatening the second death to sinners, whose characters are given, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. next John has a vision of the bride before spoken of ; the preface to it is in ver. 9, 10. in which is signified that one of the seven angels that had the seven vials talked to him in a very free and familiar manner, and proposed to shew him the Lamb's wife ; and in order to it carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and shewed him the city before mentioned, said to be great, holy, and heavenly ; and which is described by the glory of God upon it, and the light that was in it, comparable to a crystal—jasper-stone, ver. 11. by its wall, which is great and high ; and by its gates and foundations ; its gates are in number twelve, twelve angels at them, and on them written the twelve names of the children of Israel, and these situated three at each point, east, west, north, and south ; and its foundations are also twelve, having the names of the twelve apostles on

them, ver. 12, 13, 14. by the measure of it, which the angel took with his golden reed ; of the city, which was twelve thousand furlongs, it being four square, and its length, breadth, and height equal ; and of the wall, which was a hundred forty and four cubits, ver. 15, 16, 17. and next the city is described by the matter of which it was built ; the wall of jasper ; the city of pure gold, like to clear glass ; the foundations of precious stone, each foundation being of one stone ; the gates of pearls, each gate being of one pearl ; the street of the city of pure gold, like transparent glass, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. and then by the temple in it, which is no other than the Lord God and the Lamb ; and by the light, which is the same, it having no need of sun or moon, ver. 22, 23. and next by its inhabitants, the nations of the saved ones, who walk in its light, and the kings of the earth, that bring their honour and glory to it ; by its safety and security, and by the purity of it, none but undefiled persons, and such who are written in the Lamb's book of life, being admitted into it, ver. 24, 25, 26, 27.

Ver. 1. *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, &c.*] This vision relates to a glorious state of the church, not in the times of the apostles, or first dispensation of the Gospel ; when the old Jewish church-state, with its ordinances, rites, and ceremonies, passed away, and a new church-state, a new dispensation, new ordinances, and a new people, took place ; and when saints came not to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ; and when God tabernacled and dwelt with men in particular churches and congregations ; and the curse of the law and the sting of death were taken away by Christ, and there was no condemnation to them that were in him ; which is the sense of some : but death did not then cease, it has reigned over men in common ever since, in a natural way, and immediately upon that dispensation arose persecution unto death, both by Jews and Gentiles ; and for the first three hundred years, instead of

^a Tosaphita in Zohar in Gen. fol. 78. 2.

^b T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 2. Vid. ib. fol. 49. 1. & 53. 1. & 71. 2.

& Nazir, fol. 24. 2. & 26. 1. 2. Bava Metzia, fol. 52. 2. Temura, fol. 22. 2. & Meila, fol. 9. 2. & 10. 1.

death being no more, and sorrow and sighing fleeing away, there was scarce any thing else: nor can it be said that there was no temple, or places of public worship, or that the church had no need of the sun and moon of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances then, since these have continued ever since, and will to the end of the world; nor did the kings of the earth bring their honour and glory into that church-state in any sense, but set themselves against it, and endeavoured to destroy it; nor were the churches even of that age so pure as here described, ver. 27. many persons both of bad principles and bad practices crept into them; there were tares among the wheat, goats among the sheep, and foolish virgins with the wise: nor does this vision refer to the times of Constantine, when the old Pagan idolatry was removed out of the empire, and the Christian religion was revived, and came to be in a flourishing condition, and a new face of things appeared, and Christianity was embraced and honoured by the emperor, and the great men of the earth; there was not that purity as in this state; the Christian doctrine and worship were soon corrupted, being mixed with Judaism and Paganism; a flood of errors was brought in by Arius, Eutyclus, Nestorius, Macedonius, and Pelagius, and others; yea, doctrines of devils, and which at length issued in a general apostacy, and in the revelation of the man of sin; nor was there that peace and comfort, and freedom from evils, as from death, pain, and sorrow; witness the Arian persecution, the incursions of the Goths and Vandals into the empire, and the inhuman butcheries and numerous massacres and murders of the Popish party since. Nor has this vision any thing to do with the conversion and restoration of the Jews, when they will become a new people, quit their old principles and modes of worship, and there will be no more among them the sea of corrupt doctrine, respecting the Messiah, the works of the law, &c. for this will be over before this vision takes place, as appears from the 19th chapter: nor does it belong to the spiritual reign of Christ, which will be in the present earth, whereas this glorious state of the church will be in the new heavens and new earth; that will be at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and in the Philadelphian church-state, this will not be till prophetic time and antichristian times will be no more, when the mystery of God will be finished, and after the Laodicean state is at an end; in that there will be public worship, the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, but not in this; and though there will be then great spirituality and holiness, yet not in perfection, nor will the churches be clear of hypocrites and nominal professors, and will at last sink into a Laodicean state. Nor is this vision to be interpreted of the church triumphant in heaven, or of the ultimate glory of the saints there; since the new Jerusalem here described descends from heaven, that is, to earth, where the saints will reign with Christ; and since the church is represented as a bride, prepared and adorned for her husband, but not as yet at the entrance of this state, delivered up to him; and since the tabernacle of God is said to be

with men, that is, on earth; and this dwelling of God with them is as in a tabernacle, which is movable, and seems to be distinct from the fixed state of the saints in the ultimate glory; to which may be added, that in this state, Christ, as King of saints, will be peculiarly and distinctly glorified, whereas in the ultimate one, when the kingdom is delivered to the father, God will be all in all: this therefore is to be understood of the glorious state of the church during the thousand years of Satan's binding, and the saints' living and reigning with Christ; the holy city, and new Jerusalem, is the same with the beloved city in ch. xx. 9. what is there briefly hinted, is here largely described and insisted on; this will be the time and state when the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, will first meet together, and be brought to Christ, and be presented by him to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and Christ will reign gloriously among them: the seat of this church-state will be the *new heaven* and *new earth* which John saw, and which are the same that Peter speaks of, in which dwelleth righteousness, or in which righteous persons only dwell, 2 Pet. iii. 13. for as the first heaven and earth both here and there are to be understood literally, so in like manner the new heaven and new earth; which will be new, not with respect to the substance, but their qualities; they will be renewed, or purged from every thing that is disagreeable, and is the effect of the sin of man; the first heaven and earth were made chiefly for men, but, on account of the sin of man, the earth was cursed, and brought forth thorns and thistles, and both the earth and air, or the heaven, were attended with noxious vapours, &c. and the whole creation was made subject to vanity and corruption; from all which they will be cleared at the general conflagration, and a new earth and heaven will appear, fit for the habitation of the second Adam, and his posterity, for the space of a thousand years. So the Jews speak of new heavens, as *בחדשים*, renewed ones, which are the secrets of sublime wisdom^o: and they say^p, that the holy blessed God will renew his world a thousand years, and that in the seventh millennium there will be new heavens and a new earth^q: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: not those in ch. xx. 11. but the heaven and the earth which were first made, which passed away, as Peter also says, adding, with a great noise; meaning not as to their substance, but as to their form, fashion, and qualities: and there was no more sea; which may be understood either as to the being of it; it was exhausted, as the Ethiopic version renders it, being dried up by the conflagration; see Amos vii. 4. and if Mr. Burnet's hypothesis can be supported, that the paradisaical earth, or the earth before the flood, was without a sea, that being made, with the mountains and hills, by the falling of the surface of the earth into the waters under it, there is a surprising agreement between that earth and this new one; but the Alexandrian copy reads, and I saw the sea no more; it might be in being, though John saw it not; and since, at the end of the thousand years, the sea

^o Zohar in Gen. fol. 5. 2. vid. Kimchi in Isa. lvi. 6.

^p T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Zohar in Gen. fol. 69.

1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2.

^q Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3.

will give up the dead which are in it, it must be in being, unless it can be interpreted of the place where the sea was: wherefore it seems best to understand it with respect to its use and qualities; and that as the heaven and earth will pass away, not as to their substance, but quality, so in like manner the sea will be no more used for navigation, nor may it be a tumultuous and raging one, or have its flux and reflux, or its waters be salt, as now; the schoolmen say it will no more be a fluid, but will be consolidated into the globe as the sphere; and, in a mystical sense, there will be no more wicked men; tumultuous and turbulent men are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, Isa. lviii. 20. for in the new heavens and earth only righteous persons will dwell, 2 Pet. iii. 13.

Ver. 2. *And I John saw the holy city, &c.*] The same with the beloved city in ch. xx. 9. the church of God: sometimes the church militant is called a city, of which the saints are now fellow-citizens, governed by wholesome laws, and enjoying many privileges; but here the general assembly and church of the first-born, or all the elect of God, are intended, the whole body and society of them, being as a city, compact together; called *holy*, not only because set apart to holiness by God the father, and their sins expiated by the blood of Christ, or because he is made sanctification to them, or because internally sanctified by the spirit of God, which now is but in part; but because they will be perfectly holy in themselves, without the being of sin in them, or any spot of it on them: and John, for the more strong ascertaining the truth of this vision, expresses his name, who saw it, to whom God sent his angel, and signified to him by these Apocalyptic visions what should be hereafter; though the name is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: *new Jerusalem*; the church of God, both in the Old and New Testament, is often called Jerusalem, to which its name, which signifies the vision of peace, agrees; it was the city of the great King, whether the tribes went up to worship; it was a free city, and a fortified one: the Gospel church-state in its imperfection is called the heavenly Jerusalem, and the Jerusalem above, which is free, and the mother of all; and here the church in its perfect state is called the new Jerusalem, where will be complete peace and prosperity; and which is called *new*, because it has its seat in the new heaven and new earth: the inhabitants of which will appear in their new and shining robes of immortality and glory; and to distinguish it from the old Jerusalem, and even from the former state of the church; for this will be *תליתית* the third time that Jerusalem will be built, as say the Jews, namely, in the time of the King Messiah: *coming down from God out of heaven*: which designs not the spiritual and heavenly original of the saints, being born from above, on which account the church is called the heavenly Jerusalem; but a local descent of all the saints with Christ from the third heaven into the air, where they will be met by living saints; and their bodies being raised and united to their souls, they will reign with Christ in the new earth: and this is

“ the building which the Jews say God will prepare for the Jerusalem which is above, *לנחתה*, to descend into:” prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; Christ is the husband, or bridegroom, and the church is his spouse, and bride; and in these characters they will both appear at this time, when the marriage between them will be consummated: and the church may be said to be prepared as such, when all the elect of God are gathered in, the number of the saints is perfected; when the good work of grace is finished in them all, and they are all arrayed in the righteousness of Christ: and to be adorned, when not only they are clothed with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, and are beautified with the graces of the spirit, but also with the bright robes of immortality and glory. The phrase is Jewish, and is to be read exactly as here in the book of Zohar †.

Ver. 3. *And I heard a great voice out of heaven, &c.*] Either of an angel, or rather of Christ, or God himself; since the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, *out of the throne, saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men*; in allusion to the tabernacle being with the Israelites, and the *Shechinah*, or divine Majesty, being in the midst of them, and as an accomplishment of the promise in Ezek. xxvii. 27. in the fullest sense of it; and designs something distinct from the spiritual presence of Christ in his church, as his tabernacle and temple, and in the hearts of his people; and from the heavenly glory, or ultimate state of happiness, in which they will be with him, and that not as in a tabernacle, but as in a city, which has foundations: the phrase seems to denote the personal presence of Christ with his saints in human nature, like, though different from, that in the time of his humiliation; then he dwelt or tabernacled with men on earth, but it was in the form of a servant; but now he'll appear in a glorious body, and indeed in all his personal glory, and reign among them as their King: *and he will dwell with them*; in person and not by his spirit, or by faith, as before, nor as a wayfaring man only for a night; but he will dwell with them for the space of a thousand years, and after that for ever: Christ and his church will now be come together as husband and wife: *and they shall be his people*; that is, they shall appear to be his covenant-people, that will be out of all doubt; this is made manifest in some measure in effectual vocation; but it does not yet appear neither to the saints themselves, nor to others, what they are, and shall be, but now it will be evident and unquestionable. *And God himself shall be with them*; the *Immanuel*, God with us; not by his spirit, as he was after his ascension to heaven, and since is; but in person, he himself will descend from heaven, when his church, the new Jerusalem does; the Lord their God will come in person with all the saints, and will be King over all the earth. *And be their God*, as Thomas styles him, *my Lord, and my God*, John xx. 28. The covenant of grace, with all its blessings and promises, are in him, and now will it have its full accomplishment, and the saints be in a state inexpressibly happy; see Psal. cxliv. 15.

† Zohar in Gen. fol. 196. 4.

‡ Ib. fol. 193. 4.

† Zohar in Gen. fol. 53. 2.

Ver. 4. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, &c.*] Occasioned by sin, Satan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive dispensations of Providence; for these will be no more: *and there shall be no more death*; natural or violent; there will be no more putting of the saints to death, or persecution of them unto death, as in former times; nor will they die a natural death any more; these children of the resurrection, and inhabitants of the new heaven and earth, will be like the angels, who die not; there will be no more deadness as to spiritual things among the saints; and as for the second death, that will have no power over them. So the Jews say ¹, אין מיתה לעתיד לבא, *there is no death in the world to come*; good is laid up for the righteous in the world to come, and with them is no death ²; and after the resurrection the body is perfect, and shall never after taste the taste of death ³. *Neither sorrow, nor crying*; on account of sin, or because of oppression and persecution, or through the loss of near relations and friends; sorrow and sighing will flee away, all occasions thereof being gone: *neither shall there be any more pain*; either of body or mind; there will be nothing to afflict the mind, and make that uneasy, but all the reverse; nor will there be any sickness or diseases of body, for the body will be raised glorious, powerful, incorruptible, and spiritual. *For the former things are passed away*; not only the first heaven and earth, the world, its fashion, and its lusts; but the former grievous times under Rome Pagan and Papal, and every thing which in this present life gives uneasiness and distress.

Ver. 5. *And he that sat upon the throne said, &c.*] By whom is meant, either God the father, who is often represented in this book as sitting on the throne, and as distinguished from Christ the Lamb; see ch. iv. 2. and v. 13. and vi. 16. and vii. 10. and who may seem the more to be intended, since he is by adopting grace the God and father of his people, and they are his sons and daughters; or rather Christ, who not only is set down on the same throne with his father, but has a throne of his own, called the throne of the Lamb, and was seen upon one by John in the preceding vision, ch. xx. 11. which though in order of time will be after this, yet in the order of the visions was seen before; and especially since the person on the throne speaking, calls himself the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, as Christ does in ch. i. 8. and seeing he it is that gives to thirsty souls of the water of life, John vii. 37, 38. and makes promises to the overcomer so largely and frequently in ch. ii. and iii. He addresses John, and delivers the following things to him, *behold, I make all things new*: which is to be understood not of the renovation of persons at conversion, when a new heart and spirit are given, and men are made wholly new creatures; for this is the work of the Spirit, and which is done daily, and is not peculiar to any particular period of time; nor of the renewing of the church-state at the beginning of the Gospel, when the Jewish church-state and ordinances waxed old, and vanished away, and a new covenant took place, a new and living way was opened, and new ordinances appointed, since all this was before John had this vision; nor was

there any need of it to represent it to him; but of the making of the new heaven, and the new earth, which Christ ascribes to himself, and of his forming his church anew, making it a new Jerusalem, bestowing new glories upon his people, both in soul and body, and so presenting them to himself a glorious church; and of the new administration of his kingdom in a very singular and glorious manner; so that it respects a new people, a new habitation, and a new manner of ruling over them; all which is his own doing, and is marvellous; and because it is a matter of great importance, and is wonderful and certain, therefore a *behold* is prefixed to it; see Isa. xliii. 19. The Jews say ², that the holy blessed God will make ten things new in the future state, or world to come; the first is, he will enlighten the world; (see ver. 11, 23.) the second is, he will bring living water out of Jerusalem; (see ver. 6.) the third is, he will make trees to bring forth their fruit every month; (see ch. xxii. 2.) and the fourth is, all the waste places shall be built, even Sodom and Gomorrah; the fifth is, Jerusalem shall be built with sapphire stone; (see ver. 19.) the sixth is, the cow and the bear shall feed; the seventh is, a covenant shall be made between Israel, and the beasts, fowls, and creeping things; the eighth is, there shall be no more weeping and howling in the world; the ninth is, there shall be no more death in the world; the tenth is, there shall no more be sighing, and groaning, and sorrow in the world; see ver. 4. *And he said unto me, write*; what John had seen, and Christ had said, and was about to say; and particularly what concerned the renewing of all things, the whole being a matter of moment, and worth noting and taking down in writing, that it might be on record for saints to read, and receive comfort and advantage from; and to denote the certainty of it, as well as to shew that it was a clear point, and to be known, whereas, when it was otherwise, he was bid not to write; see ch. i. 11, 19. and xiv. 13. and xix. 9. and x. 4. *for these words are true and faithful*; both what he had said, and was about to say; they were *true*, because they came from God, who cannot lie, and *faithful*, because they would be punctually and exactly fulfilled; see ch. xix. 9. The Syriac version adds, *they are God's*, and so the Arabic version.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto me, it is done, &c.*] The end of all things is come; it is all over with the first heaven and earth; these are no more, and the new heaven and earth are finished: there seems to be an allusion to the old creation, *he spake, and it was done*, Psal. xxxiii. 9. The whole election of grace is completed; every individual vessel of mercy is called by grace; all the saints are brought with Christ, and their bodies raised, and living saints changed, and all together are as a bride prepared for her husband; and the nuptials are now solemnized; all the promises and prophecies relating to the glorious state of the church are now fulfilled; the mystery of God, spoken by his servants, is finished; the kingdom of Christ is complete, and all other kingdoms are destroyed; the day of redemption is come; the salvation of the saints is perfect; what was finished on the cross, by way of

¹ Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 61. 2.

² Maimon. Teshuva, c. 8. sect. 1.

³ Midrash Hanneclam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 1.

² Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 3.

impetration, is now done as to application; all are saved with an everlasting salvation. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*; which are expressive of the primacy, perfection, and eternity of Christ; of his being the sum and substance, the first cause and last end of all things, relating both to the old and new world, to things temporal and spiritual; see the note on ch. i. 8. *I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely*: he that is athirst is one that is so not in a natural, much less in a sinful, but in a spiritual sense; who as he has thirsted after Christ, and salvation by him; after pardon of sin, and a justifying righteousness; after communion with Christ, and conformity to him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; so after the glories of his kingdom, and the happiness of a future state: to such an one Christ promises to give such large measures of grace and glory, and in such abundance, as will continue to refresh and delight, and as may be compared to a fountain of living water, namely, for refreshment, abundance, and continuance; and all this he'll give *freely*, without money, and without price; for as pardon, and righteousness, and the whole of salvation, are all of free grace, so are all the enjoyments of the kingdom-state, the riches, honours, and glories of it, and eternal life itself; also plentifully, and in great abundance, and answers to the Hebrew word **חַנּוּן**; see Numb. xi. 5.

Ver. 7. *He that overcometh, &c.*] All spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, the antichristian beast, his image, mark, and number of his name; who is more than a conqueror through Christ; one that perseveres to the end, notwithstanding all temptations, trials, and difficulties; see the note on ch. ii. 7. *shall inherit all things*; the kingdom of Christ in the new Jerusalem state, and all things in it; heaven, eternal glory and happiness, and everlasting salvation; yea, God himself, who is the portion, and exceeding great reward of his people, and will be all in all. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *these things*: the new heaven, and new earth, the presence of God with men, freedom from all evils, and divine refreshments from the fountain of living water before mentioned: *and I will be his God, and he shall be my son*; Christ is not only concerned in predestination to the adoption of children, in making way by redemption for the enjoyment of this blessing, and in the actual donation of it; but he himself, who is the mighty God, is the everlasting Father, and his people are his spiritual seed and offspring, and in his kingdom he will see his seed, and prolong his days; he will long enjoy them, and present them to himself, and afterwards to his father, saying as in Heb. ii. 13. and though they are now, in the present state of things, the sons of God, yet it does not appear so manifest that they are, or at least what they shall be; but in this new and glorious state of things, it will be abundantly manifest that they are the sons of God and seed of Christ; and it will be known how glorious they are, and shall be, when they shall see Christ in his glory, and be like him; who will now be *πατηρ τῆς πολλοῦ αἰῶνος*, the father of the world to come, as the Septuagint render the phrase in Isa. ix. 6.

Ver. 8. *But the fearful, &c.*] Not the timorous sheep and lambs of Christ, the dear children of God, who are sometimes of a fearful heart, on account of sin, temptation, and unbelief; but such who are of cowardly spirits, and are not valiant for the truth, but who, through fear of men, either make no profession of Christ and his Gospel, or having made it, drop it, lest they should be exposed to tribulation and persecution; these are they that are afraid of the beast, and live in servile bondage to him. *And unbelieving*; meaning not merely atheists, who don't believe there is a God, or deists only, that don't believe in Christ; but such who profess his name, and are called by it, and yet don't truly believe in him, nor embrace his Gospel and the truths of it, but believe a lie; these are condemned already, and on them the wrath of God abides, and they will be damned at last; though it may have a regard to such also who are infidels as to the second coming of Christ to judgment, and who are scoffers and mockers at it: *and the abominable*; every sinful man is so in the sight of God; but here it denotes such who are the worst of sinners, given up to sinning; who are abominable, and to every good work reprobate; who are addicted to the worst of crimes, as were the Sodomites and others; the Ethiopic version renders it, *who pollute themselves* with unnatural lusts. The Syriac and Arabic versions express it by two words, *sinners and polluted*, filthy sinners; the character well agrees with Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, and to all that adhere to her, and join with her in her abominable idolatries. *And murderers*; of the saints, and prophets, and martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood Babylon, or the whore of Rome, has made herself drunk, and in whom it will be found. *And whoremongers*; all unclean persons, that indulge themselves in impure lusts, in fornication, adultery, and all lewdness; as the clergy of the church of Rome, who being forbidden to marry, and being under a vow of celibacy, and making great pretensions to chastity and singular holiness, give up themselves to all lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. *And sorcerers*; conjurers, dealers with familiar spirits, necromancers, and such as use the magic art, as many of the popes did to get into the chair, and poisoners of kings and princes; whoredoms and witchcrafts go together sometimes, as they did in Jezabel, an emblem of the Romish antichrist. *And idolaters*; that worship devils, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, representing God, and Christ, and the virgin Mary, and saints departed, ch. ix. 20. *And all liars*; in common, and particularly such who speak lies in hypocrisy, as the followers of the man of sin, and who are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned; all lies being of the devil, and abominable to God. All and each of these *shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*. The Jews* speak of several distinct places in hell, for several sorts of sinners, as particularly for sabbath-breakers, adulterers, and liars; and say of the wicked, that when he is condemned he shall take חלקו, his part in hell^b; see the note on ch. xix. 20. *which is the second death*; see the note on ch. ii. 11.

* Raya Mehimua in Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2.

^b T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 1.

Ver. 9. *And there came unto me one of the seven angels, &c.*] Either the first of them, as one of the four beasts is the first of them, ch. vi. 1. or it may be the last, and very likely the same as in ch. xvii. 1. which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues; that is, the wrath of God poured out by them on the antichristian party; see ch. xv. 1, 7. and xvi. 1. *And talked with me, saying, come hither;* see ch. xvii. 1. *I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* The Lamb is Christ, who is often so called in this book; see ch. v. 6, 7, 9. and xiv. 1. and xiii. 8. and xxi. 23. and vii. 17. and xix. 7. and is the son of God, the heir of all things, the Maker and Governor of the universe, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and who, as Mediator, has all accomplishments and qualifications to recommend him as a bridegroom, such as beauty, riches, and wisdom: the bride, his wife, is not any particular believer, nor any particular church; not the Gentile church, nor the Jewish church only, but all the elect of God, consisting of the raised and living saints at the coming of Christ; who will make up one body, one general assembly, and be as a bride, prepared and adorned for her husband: these were first betrothed to Christ in eternity, and were openly espoused by him, one by one, at conversion; and now being all gathered in by effectual vocation, the dead being raised, and the living changed, and all glorified, the marriage is consummated, and they are declared publicly to be the bride, the Lamb's wife; see the note on Matt. xxii. 2. And now, though John had had a sight of her before, ver. 2. yet that was but a glimmering one, at a distance, he being in the wilderness, ch. xvii. 3. wherefore the angel calls him to him, and proposes to give him a clear, distinct, and particular view of her, in all her glory; and a glorious sight this indeed! to see the bride brought to the King in raiment of needlework, and the queen stand at his right hand in gold of Ophir. This is a sight of a quite different nature from that of the filthy strumpet, which the same angel proposed to give to John in ch. xvii. 1.

Ver. 10. *And he carried me away in the spirit, &c.*] John was in an ecstasy, as in ch. i. 10. and iv. 2. and xvii. 3. and in the thoughts and apprehensions of his mind and spirit, it seemed to him as if he was carried away from one place to another; for this was not a corporeal sight, nor were any of the visions he had, but what was represented to his mind or spirit; it being with him as it was with the Apostle Paul when he was caught up to the third heaven, who knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. The Ethiopic version renders it, *the spirit brought me;* not the evil spirit Satan, who took up our Lord corporeally, and carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of this world, and their glory, Matt. iv. 8. but either a good angel, or the spirit of God: *to a great and high mountain;* to such an one was Ezekiel brought in the visions of God, when the frame of a city and temple was shewn him, with their dimensions, Ezek. xl. 2. as here a city is shewn to John, with its wall, gates, foundations, and their measures: and he was brought to such a place, partly that he might have the more plain and full view of it; and partly to suggest unto him, that now the church of Christ was established upon the top of the mountains,

and exalted above the hills, and was a city on a hill, which could not be hid, Isa. ii. 2. *And shewed me that great city;* which is no other than the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; just as the apostate church, all along in this book before, is called the great city, ch. xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10, 16, 18. but now that being demolished, there is no other great city in being but the church of Christ, called a city before; see ver. 2. here a great one, not only because of its prodigious large dimensions, ver. 16. but because of the number of its inhabitants, being such as no man can number; and because it is the residence of the great King, the tabernacle of God will be in it; though this epithet is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and all the Oriental versions: *the holy Jerusalem;* called the new Jerusalem, ver. 2. here holy, in allusion to the city of Jerusalem, which was called the holy city, Matt. iv. 5. on account of the temple in it, the place of divine worship; but here this city is so called, because it is the residence of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, inhabited only by holy men, made perfectly so, and encompassed by holy angels. *Descending out of heaven from God;* as in ver. 2. see the note there.

Ver. 11. *Having the glory of God, &c.*] Not only upon their souls, which will lie in the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, the bride's wedding-garment being on them, in the perfect holiness which will be in them, and in that complete knowledge of all spiritual and heavenly things they will be possessed of, for they will have a glory revealed in them; but upon their bodies also, for this city, the church, the bride of Christ, will consist only of risen and changed saints, whose bodies will be freed from all dishonour; deformity, diseases, and imperfections, and will be made like unto Christ's glorious body, and will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God. Moreover, the presence of God may be intended by his glory, as the Shechinah, or the divine majesty of God in the tabernacle and temple was called, Exod. xl. 35. 1 Kings viii. 11. for the glorious presence of God will now be in this church-state, which will cast a lustre on all that are in it; for if the face of Moses, and of Stephen, shone so bright and glorious, through the presence of God with them; see 2 Cor. iii. 7. Acts vi. 15. how much more gloriously will the saints shine in this state, when they shall enjoy the presence of God in a far more illustrious manner? to which may be added, that Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his father's glory, will now appear in that, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels; and all the saints will appear with him in glory; and to see them in all this glory is a glorious sight indeed! *And her light was like unto a stone most precious;* by her light is not meant the light she will have in her, though that will be exceeding great, but the fountain of it from whence it comes; that which holds it forth to her, and supplies her with it: the word φωσφῆρ signifies an illuminator, and is used of the ministers of the Gospel, that hold forth the word of life and light to others, Phil. ii. 15, 16. but here it intends Christ, who is the sun of righteousness, the church's light or enlightener, ver. 23. not with the light of nature, as he enlightens every man, nor with the light of grace, with which the

saints are enlightened by him in the present state of things, by his spirit, through the word and ordinances, but with the light of glory: and he is comparable to the most precious stone; he is more precious than rubies; he is so now to them that believe, in his person, offices, grace, and righteousness, and will be more so in his light and glory in the new Jerusalem state: *even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*: God the father, who sits on the throne, is said to be to look upon like a *jasper*: ch. iv. 2. see the note there; and here Christ, the illuminator of his church, is said to be like one, because of the exceeding brightness of this stone, and the durability of it, expressive of the perpetuity of Christ, as the light of his church and people; he is the everlasting light of it, Isa. lx. 19, 20. and he is compared to the crystallising *jasper*. There is one sort which is called *Aerizusa*, like to air^c, and another *Crystallizusa*^d, clear as crystal. So Pliny speaks^e of a white *jasper* called *Astrios*, and which, he says, is *crystallo propinquans, near to crystal*, found in India, and on the shores of Palene. To this Christ is like, because he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all, and will cause an everlasting day; and such a clear and bright state of things, as that there will be no night, nor any more darkness, nothing but everlasting joy, peace, prosperity, and happiness; there seems to be some reference to Isa. lx. 1, 19, 20.

Ver. 12. *And had a wall great and high, &c.*] Not the spirit of God, who separates, sanctifies, and preserves the saints, as Cocceius thinks, for this account respects not the church militant; nor the eternal decree of God, the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell, which everlastingly fixes the state of men; for this regards not the ultimate state of happiness: many interpreters understand it of the doctrine of the Gospel, which, as it secures the church now from heretics, and is like a wall very strong and well-built, is durable and impregnable; and may be called *great*, because of the great Author of it, and the great things contained in it; and *high*, since it is not to be reached by carnal minds; so none but such who have embraced it shall enter into the new Jerusalem; for all liars, and forgers of doctrinal lies, and who embrace the antichristian lies, shall be without. Though rather the almighty power of God, which guards his church and people now, and will be their defence in this state, is meant; and which shews the state not to be that of the ultimate glory, which will need no wall, but this will; since an attempt will be made upon the saints in it, though it will be a foolish and fruitless one: and this wall of divine power is very great indeed, and is insuperable by men; God himself is a wall of fire about his people; though it may be best to interpret this of salvation itself, which is by Jesus Christ, if we compare with this text Isa. xxvi. 1. and lx. 18. for those, and those only, who are interested in it, will dwell in the new Jerusalem; and salvation in this state will be enjoyed in its fulness; and this is very great in its author, objects, and matter, being wrought out by the great God, for great sinners, at a great expense, and in-

cluding grace and glory, and not to be got over or enjoyed by those who have no interest in it. *And had twelve gates*; though, strictly speaking, there is but one gate, and that a strait one, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, blood, righteousness, regenerating and sanctifying grace; for as he is the only door into the sheepfold, the church, in its present state, or he only that has faith in him has a right to enter there, and is the only way to heaven and eternal happiness; so he is the only gate into the new Jerusalem, or such only will be admitted there, who are interested in him: but these gates are said to be twelve, in allusion to the twelve apostles, who pointed out to men the way of salvation by Christ; and to the twelve tribes of Israel, who represent all the elect of God, who enter in thereat; and to the twelve gates of Ezekiel's city, Ezek. xlvi. 31—35. *And at the gates twelve angels*; meaning either the ministering spirits, in allusion to the cherubim in Gen. iii. 24. who are watchers, and encamp about the saints now, and will, as it were, stand sentinels in this camp of the saints, as it is called, ch. xx. 8. and besides, will be made use of in gathering the saints from the several parts of the world, and introducing them into this state; or else the apostles and ministers of the word, often called angels in this book, who will shine with peculiar lustre now, and will appear at the head of the several companies they have been useful to, and bring them as their joy and crown of rejoicing into this glorious state: this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac version. The Jews speak of שריים, *princes*, being appointed over the gates of heaven, east, west, north, and south, with the keys in their hands, whose names they give us^f. *And names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel*; not literal, but mystical Israel, whom God has chosen to salvation, Christ has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit calls by his grace; denoting that all, and each of these, have a right to enter into the new Jerusalem, and will be admitted there, and none but they. In like manner the Jews^g make mention of a court of the Lord, "which has twelve gates, according to the computation of the tribes of Israel; on one gate is written Reuben, on another is written Simeon; and so all the tribes of Israel are written on those gates; in the time they go up to appear before the Lord of the world, whoever goes up to this gate, (on which the tribe of Reuben is written,) if he is of the tribe of Reuben they open to him, (and receive him,) if not they cast him without; and so of all whom they don't receive; they open to none but to him who is of that tribe, or whose name is written on the gate."

Ver. 13. *On the east three gates, &c.*] On which were written the names of Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan: on the north three gates; on which were written the names of Reuben, Judah, and Levi: on the south three gates; on which were written the names of Simeon, Issachar, and Zabulon: and on the west three gates; on which were written the names of Gad, Asher, and

^c K. us de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 1.

^d Dioscorides, l. 5. c. 16.

^e Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 9.

^f Raziell, fol. 35. 2.

^g Zohar in Numb. fol. 70. 4.

Naphtali; see Ezek. xlviii. 31, 32, 33, 34. This denotes the collection of the saints from all parts of the world, who shall come from east, west, north, and south, and sit down in the kingdom of God; and therefore here are gates at every point to enter in at; see Isa. xliiii. 5, 6. Luke xiii. 29.

Ver. 14. *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, &c.]* Christ is the one and only foundation of his church and people, of the covenant of grace, and of salvation; and of faith, hope, peace, and joy, and of eternal happiness, and so of this glorious state of the church; he will be the light and temple of it, the glory and safety of it; he will be all in all in it; but because he has been ministerially laid as the foundation, by the twelve apostles, for men to build their present and future happiness upon, therefore the foundations of the wall of salvation are said to be twelve; see Eph. ii. 20. Moreover, this may denote the firm and immovable state of the church at this time, it being a city which has foundations, or is well founded, Heb. xi. 10. with which compare Isa. xiv. 32. and xxviii. 16. Hence it follows, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, read, *the twelve names of the twelve apostles*; the allusion seems to be to the inscribing of the names of builders on stones laid in the foundation, in memory of them; and so these wise master-builders will be had in everlasting remembrance.

Ver. 15. *And he that talked with me, &c.]* One of the seven angels, ver. 9. for not a man is the measurer of this city, as in Ezek. xl. 3. nor John, as of the temple, ch. xi. 1. but an angel, the same that shewed to John this great sight: *had a golden reed*; not a common measuring reed, or rod, as in Ezek. xl. 4. Rev. xi. 1. but one covered with gold, denoting the present glorious state of the church, being without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: *to measure the city*; the new Jerusalem, its length and breadth; see Zech. ii. 1, 2. to shew how exactly conformable this church-state will be to the rule of God's word, even to perfection: *and the gates thereof*: to signify who had a right to enter into it, and who not? *and the wall thereof*: its height, it being exceeding high.

Ver. 16. *And the city lieth four-square, &c.]* To the four corners of the world, from whence its inhabitants come, and denotes the regularity, uniformity, perfection, and immovableness of it. *And the length is as large as the breadth*; this church-state will be all of a piece, perfect, entire, and wanting nothing. *And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs*; or fifteen hundred miles; a monstrously large city indeed! such an one as never was upon earth; see Ezek. xlviii. 35. and which shews, that this is not to be understood literally, but mystically; and intends the capaciousness of it, here being room enough for all the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, for all the elect of God; for as in Christ's father's house, so in this kingdom-state of his, there will be many mansions, or dwelling-places, enow for all his people. This city will hold them all. The Jews^h say of Jerusalem, that in time to come it shall be so enlarged, as to

reach to the gates of Damascus, yea, to the throne of glory. *The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.* A perfectly uniform state! according to the Ethiopic version, it is in length twelve thousand furlongs, and every measure equal, so that it is so many furlongs in length, breadth, and height.

Ver. 17. *And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, &c.]* The root of which is twelve, for twelve times twelve is a hundred and forty-four; which number is mystical and apostolical, and suited to the perfect state of this church: hence twelve gates, and twelve angels at them, and the names of the twelve tribes on them, and twelve foundations of the wall, and twelve thousand furlongs, the measure of the city. *According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel*; who talked with John, and measured the city, gates, and wall, and who appeared in the form of a man; and his reed might be, as some have supposed, the length of a man, six cubits, or six feet, as in Ezek. xl. 5. and may denote that this business requires the utmost wisdom and understanding of a man, and even of an angel, to look into, and find out; see ch. xiii. 18. and also may signify the angelic state of the saints at this time, when the children of the resurrection will be like the angels of God, for immortality and glory.

Ver. 18. *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, &c.]* Which is expressive of the impregnableness, duration, brightness, and glory of salvation by Christ, the jasper being a very hard, durable, and bright stone; and salvation can never be made void, and of none effect; it will last for ever, and in this state will come forth as light, and as a lamp that burneth; it is represented by the same precious stone as God and Christ themselves are; see ch. iv. 2. and xxi. 11. *And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass*; it was made or built of gold; its parts, buildings, houses, and palaces, were all of gold, and that the best; and it was like to transparent glass; that is, either the city, as most copies read, or the gold; for the Alexandrian copy reads, *ομοιωσ*, and so the Vulgate Latin version; the gold of which it was is different from common gold; and as this city, the new Jerusalem, designs the saints, the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, the inhabitants of the new earth; this denotes the solidity, excellency, and preciousness of them, the rich and happy state they will be in, as well as their purity and freedom from all sin and corruption, and the clear knowledge of things they themselves will have, and others will have of them; their hearts and actions will be open to all; nor will this gold have any rust upon it any more, or ever be changed, and become dim.

Ver. 19. *And the foundations of the wall of the city, &c.]* Which were twelve; see ver. 14. were garnished with all manner of precious stones; see Isa. liv. 11, 12. not that there were all manner of precious stones in every foundation, but in them all there were, and each foundation had its stone peculiar to it, as follows; and which are not applicable to the persons of the apostles, who were not the foundations, but on them their names only were written: and besides, the order of them,

^h Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 24. 1.

as given in the Evangelists and Acts of the Apostles, is not certain, and always the same, to which these several stones may be adjusted; though they are doubtless comparable to them for their preciousness in the sight of God, and Christ, and all the saints; and for the brightness and purity of their doctrine and lives; and for their zeal in the cause of Christ; and for their solidity, and invincible courage and constancy: much less are these precious stones applicable to a set of ministers in the latter day, who are to be useful in the conversion of the Jews in the several parts of the world, where these stones are found, as Brightman thinks, but to Jesus Christ, the one and only foundation: and without entering into the particular virtues and excellencies of these stones, in general, they set forth the worth and preciousness of Christ, who is the pearl of great price; the pleasure and delight had in viewing his excellencies and perfections; his brightness, purity, and glory, and his firmness and durability, as a foundation. There may be some allusion to the twelve stones in the breast-plate of the high-priest, on which the names of the tribes of Israel were written¹. *The first foundation was jasper*: it was laid with a jasper-stone, of which see ch. iv. 3. On this stone, in the breast-plate, Benjamin's name was written. *The second, sapphire*; its colour is azure, or sky-blue; it is transparent, and exceeding hard. Schroder says there are very good ones found in the borders of Bohemia and Silesia; but those which are brought from Pegu are most valuable: on this stone Issachar's name was engraven. *The third, a chalcodony*; it is of a misty grey colour, clouded with blue, yellow, or purple; the best is that which has a pale cast of blue; it is very much like the common agate; and the Hebrew word כרכוד, *cadcod*, is rendered *agate* in Isa. liv. 12. though it is thought to answer to the carbuncle in the breast-plate, on which was written the name of Levi. And Pliny² speaks of carbuncles, called *charcedonies*, which R. Leo Mutinensis says³ had their name in memory of the city of Carthage. There is a precious stone mentioned in the Targum of Jonathan, called כרכודין, *cadcodin*, which answers to the diamond in the breast-plate, on which Zabulon's name was written; and in the Jerusalem Targum it is called כרכודא, *cadcedana*, and answers to the emerald, which had Judah's name on it, and seems to be put for *chalcodin* and *chalcadana*, which agrees with the name of this stone. *The fourth, an emerald*; of which see ch. iv. 3. The best of this sort are the eastern ones. Schroder says^m they are found in Cyprus, Britain, and other places, but not so good as the rest. On this stone Judah's name was written.

Ver. 20. *The fifth, sardonyx, &c.*] Which is partly of the sardian, and partly of the onyx stone, which resembles a man's nail, from whence it has its name; it is reddish, bordering on white; it may be thought to answer to the onyx in the breast-plate, on which was written the name of Joseph. *The sixth, sardius*; the same with the sardine stone, ch. iv. 3. of a blood colour, and what is commonly called a cornelian: it is

found in Sardinia, from whence it has its name, and in Bohemia and Silesia, though those of Babylon are the best. This was Reuben's stone. *The seventh, chrysolite*; a stone of a dusky green colour, with a cast of yellow; by its name it should have the colour of gold. Schroder says it is found in Bohemia, and that it is the same the moderns call the topaz. Some think it answers to *tarshish* in the breast-plate, rendered *beryl*, on which was the name of Asher. *The eighth, beryl*; a stone of a pale green colour, thought to be the diamond of the ancients: it may answer to the *ligure* in the breast-plate, which the Targum on Cant. v. 14. calls *birla*, and had the name of Dan on it. *The ninth, a topaz*; a stone very hard and transparent, of a beautiful yellow, or gold colour: the topaz of Ethiopia was counted the best, Job xxviii. 19. Some say it is so called from the island *Topazus*: on this stone Simeon's name was engraven. *The tenth, a chrysoprasus*; a stone of a green colour, inclining to that of gold, from whence it has its name; for this is the agate in the breast-plate, which was Naphtali's stone. *The eleventh, a jacinth*; or *hyacinth*: a stone of a purple, or violet colour, from whence it has its name; though what the moderns so call is of a deep reddish yellow, pretty near a flame colour. Zabulon's stone was the diamond. *The twelfth, an amethyst*; a stone of a violet colour, bordering on purple: it has been thought a preservative from drunkenness, from whence it seems to have its name. On this stone was written the name of Gad. Agreeably to this account of John's, the Jews speakⁿ of the tabernacle above being built on twelve precious stones; and sometimes they say^o, that the holy blessed God will found Jerusalem with ten kind of precious stones, and which they mention, and several of which are the same with these.

Ver. 21. *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, &c.*] Denoting the purity and preciousness of Christ, by whom the saints enter, and of the saints who enter in thereat, as well as of the place into which they enter. *Every several gate was of one pearl*: the pearl of great price, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only gate, door, and way into this happy state: this shews that this account cannot be taken literally, but mystically, for no such pearl was ever known, large enough to make a gate of. "A pearl is a hard, white, shining body, usually roundish, found in a shell-fish resembling an oyster, but is three or four times the size of the common oyster; and which ordinarily yields ten or twelve pearls, and sometimes more. Those of the largest size that have been known are that of Cleopatra, valued by Pliny at centies H S, or at 80,000 pound sterling; and that brought in 1574 to Philip the Second, of the size of a pigeon's egg, worth 14,400 ducats; and that of the Emperor Rudolph, mentioned by Boetius, called *la peregrina*, or the incomparable, of the size of a muscade pear, and weighing 30 carats; and that mentioned by Tavernier, in the hands of the emperor of Persia in 1633, bought of an Arab for 32,000 tomans, which, at three pounds nine shillings the toman, amounts to 110,400

¹ Vid. Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xxviii. 17. Targum in Cant. v. 14. Shehot Rabba, sect. 38. fol. 138. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 3.

² Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 7.

³ Shilte Hagibborim, fol. 45. 4.

^m Pharmacopœia, l. 3. c. 5. p. 18.

ⁿ Zohar in Gen. fol. 17. 2. & in Exod. fol. 65. 4.

^o Abkath Roel, p. 150. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 95. a.

“pounds sterling?” But what is one of these pearls to make a gate of, for a wall which was an hundred and forty-four cubits high? ver. 17. The Jews say¹, that the holy blessed God will bring precious stones and pearls of thirty cubits by thirty, &c. and place them in the gates of Jerusalem, as it is said, Isa. liv. 12. which must be understood also not in a literal but mystical sense: and L'Empereur² makes mention of an ancient commentary on Psal. lxxxvii. 1. which says, that the holy blessed God will make a gate at the east (of the temple), and in it two doors, each of one pearl. So R. Joshua ben Levi says³, that there are in paradise two gates of agates or diamonds; some render the word rubies. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass; denoting the preciousness and delightfulness of the saints' conversation one with another; and the purity and cleanness of it, there being no mire and filth of sin in these streets; and the sincerity and openness of it, each one walking in his uprightness; which will be seen and known of all, as clearly as any thing can be held in a transparent glass. So the Jews say⁴ of paradise, that the ground is paved with precious stones, the lustre of which may be compared to the light of burning torches.

Ver. 22. And I saw no temple therein, &c.] No material temple, as was in the old Jerusalem, or such as is described in Ezekiel's vision; nor any place of public worship, as under the Gospel dispensation; for in this state there will be no such external form of worship as now, such as preaching the word and administering ordinances. The Jews expect a third temple, but in vain. For the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it; God will be immediately present with his people, whose face they shall see, and whom they will serve in the most pure and spiritual manner; and Christ in his human nature, in the temple of his body, that tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, and in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, will be the only medium of the divine Presence, and of the communications of glory to men, and of the saints' praise to God, which will be the service they will be employed in; and the Lamb being joined with the Lord God Almighty, shews his deity and his equality with his father.

Ver. 23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, &c.] Which may be understood either literally of these two luminaries, which all earthly cities need; and which, though they may be in being in the new heavens, yet will not have the use with respect to this city they now have. The Jews say⁵, the orb of the sun is in this world; and the gloss adds, but not in the future state, for the lights shall be renewed: and they further say⁶, as here, that “in the world to come, *Israel צריכין לאור הדומה*, will have no need of the light of the sun, nor of the light of the moon, neither by day nor by night,” as they say⁷, the Israelites had not in the wilderness. So they re-

present the Lord speaking to Moses, and saying⁸, “thy days shall cease, but thy light shall not cease;” for thou shalt have no need for ever of the light of the sun, nor of the light of the moon, and of the “stars.” Or else it may be understood mystically, but not of Christ, the sun of righteousness, whom the saints will always need and enjoy; but of the governors and discipline of the church in its present state; and of the written word, which is a light unto them now, and the ministration of it, and the ordinances of the Gospel, by which light and knowledge are conveyed; but in this state all will be immediately taught of God; nor shall every one teach his neighbour, but all shall know the Lord perfectly; and also of political governors, who will be no more; see 1 Cor. xv. 24. For the glory of God did lighten it; the Shekinah, or glorious presence of God, which filled the temple of Solomon, and shone round about the shepherds at the incarnation of Christ; with the presence of God, who is light itself, which will be enjoyed in a much more glorious manner, will the church now be enlightened; and this will be an everlasting light unto her: and the Lamb is the light thereof; in whose light they will see the face of God, and see God face to face; they will see Christ as he is, and behold his glory; and look upon the angels, those glorious forms of light, and all the glorified saints, and know and converse with each other; and they will look into, and clearly discern all the mysteries and doctrines of grace, and all the various scenes of Providence, which will all be opened and laid before them. And this light will be always without any change and variation; which is no small part of the commendation of this city, which is the inheritance of the saints in light. So the holy blessed God is said by the Jews⁹ to be *אורי של ירושלים*; the light of Jerusalem; he is the light of the new Jerusalem; see Isa. lx. 19, 20. and the light of the world to come is, by¹⁰ them, called the great light.

Ver. 24. And the nations of them which are saved, &c.] In distinction from them that will be deceived by Satan, ch. xx. 8. These are not all the nations of the world, which will be gathered before Christ, the Judge, for all will not be saved; there's a world that will be condemned; nor the Gentiles only, which shall come into the church-state of the Jews when called, for that state is not here designed; and besides, all Israel shall be saved then; nor the living saints at Christ's coming, who shall have escaped, and are saved from the general conflagration; for these, with the raised ones, will be caught up together to Christ, and descend and dwell together on earth, and make one church-state; but all the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles, whom God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit has called out of all the nations of the earth: these are only saved ones; such are already saved, not only are determined to be saved, and for whom salvation is wrought out by Christ, and to whom it is applied at conversion, and who are re-

¹ Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word Pearl.

² T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 100. l. & Bava Bathra, fol. 75. l. & Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 54. 1.

³ Mian. Middot, c. 4. sect. 2. Vid. Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 54. 1.

⁴ Yalkut Simconi, par. 1. fol. 7. 1.

⁵ Sepher Avedah H'akkodesh, fol. 46. 1.

⁸ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 101. 1.

⁹ Raziel, fol. 17. 2.

¹⁰ Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 57. 2.

¹¹ Petirat Moseh, fol. 93. 2.

¹² Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 57. 2. & 98. 1.

¹³ Ben Gorion apud Aben Ezram in Psal. xlix. 19.

presentatively set down in heavenly places in Christ, and are already saved by hope and faith, and with respect to the certainty of salvation; all which may be said of saints in the present state; but these will be such, who will be actually and personally saved, will be in the full possession of salvation, enjoying all the blessings of it; they'll be partakers of the first resurrection, and the glories of it: the tabernacle of God will be with them, they will be free from all sorrows and death, and will inherit all things: the Syriac version reads, *the nations that are saved*; who are redeemed and saved by Christ: this may teach us how to understand those phrases, which seem to favour general redemption, as all men, the world, the whole world; see Isa. xlv. 20. and lxvi. 19. These words, *of them which are saved*, are left out in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, but are in all the copies. These nations are the inhabitants of this city, and they *shall walk in the light of it*, which is Christ; they shall enjoy it; they shall have the light of life, and be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light, and that continually: they shall not only come to it, but continue in it, and walk at it, and by the light of it: the walk of these will be different from the walk of saints now, who walk by faith, and not by sight; but these shall walk by sight, enjoying the beatific vision of God, and the Lamb. The Jews say^b, that Jerusalem, in time to come, will be made a lamp to the nations of the world, *וְהָיָה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְאוֹר*, and they shall walk in its light, or by the light of it, which is the sense of Isa. lx. 3. *the Gentiles shall come to thy light*; see Isa. lx. 1, 3. *and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it*; by whom may be meant either mystically all the saints, who will be kings as well as priests unto God, and will reign as such with Christ in this state, will cast their crowns at his feet, and give him all the honour and glory; or literally, the kings of the earth, who shall have relinquished antichrist, hated the whore, and burnt her with fire, and who will have been nursing fathers in the spiritual reign; or rather all good kings that ever have been in the earth: not that they will be kings of the earth at this time, for now all rule, authority, and power, will be put down; nor will any worldly riches, honour, and glory, be brought by them into this state, nor will they be needed in it; but it is to be understood of such who have been kings on earth, though not of their having brought earthly riches and grandeur into the interest and churches of Christ; as David gave much towards the building of the temple, which was begun and finished by King Solomon his son, and as Constantine greatly enriched and aggrandized the church when he became emperor; but the sense seems to be this, that such who have been Christian kings on earth will prefer the happiness of this state to all their riches and greatness here; and that could all the glory of the kings of the earth be put together, it would not equal, but be greatly inferior to the glory of the new Jerusalem; Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the inhabitants of this place; see ch. xx. 6. besides, these shall do all homage, and

submit to Christ the King of kings in the midst of the church, which may be meant by *glory and honour*.

Ver. 25. *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, &c.*] Which does not design the free communication between the living saints on the new earth, and the raised ones in the new heaven, as some have thought, for these shall be together, and make up one body; but rather the universal collection, and free admission of all the saints from all parts into this city; though it seems best to interpret it of the safety of the inhabitants, see Jer. xlix. 31. who will have no enemy to fear, and therefore need never shut their gates; the beast and false prophet will have been taken, and cast into the lake of fire long ago; ungodly men will be destroyed in the general conflagration, and Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit during the thousand years: *for there shall be no night there*; this is a reason given why it is before said the gates shall not be shut by day, since it is unusual to shut gates in the day, unless in time of war, because there will be no night in this city, and so no need of ever shutting the gates; the night-time being the season for thieves and robbers, and for enemies to make their incursions, and to surprise: but here will be no night; either literally, times and seasons, as measured by the revolutions of the sun and moon, will be no more, they will not have the use they have; at least this city will stand in no need of them. The Jews say^c, that the world to come will be כְּלוֹל יוֹם, *all day*: or mystically and figuratively, there will be no night of spiritual darkness and desertion, of drowsiness, sleepiness, and inactivity, of error and heresy, or of calamity and distress of any kind; all which are sometimes signified by night in Scripture; see Cant. iii. 1. Matt. xxv. 5, 6. Isa. xxxvi. 9.

Ver. 26. *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*] The glory of the nations are the people of God, who, though they are reckoned the filth of the world, are the excellent in the earth; these will be brought into this city, and be presented to the King of it, in a glorious manner, and that by the kings of the earth; either such who have been ecclesiastical rulers over them, who will introduce them as their joy and crown of rejoicing; or who have been political governors of them, their fathers and protectors; or the sense is as before, that whatever is great and glorious in the nations of the world, will be counted as nothing in comparison of the glory and magnificence of this state, and not to be mentioned with it: the Arabic version renders it, *the nations shall bring glory and honour to it*; in the sense before given.

Ver. 27. *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, &c.*] As evil thoughts, words, and actions do; and therefore he that enters into this city must be free from all these: or *that is defiled*, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read; or *that is unclean*, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; alluding to the tabernacle and temple, into which no unclean person might come; see Isa. lii. 1. No profane sinner, whose mind and conscience are defiled, and whose conversation is defiling, may enter here; nor any self-

^b Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 56. 3.

^c Beeshit Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 79. 4.

righteous person, whose righteousness is as filthy rags, and he himself is as an unclean thing, shall be admitted here; only such who are washed in the blood of Christ, and have on his righteousness, and so are without spot or wrinkle; which shews the pure and perfect state of this church—and therefore cannot design any state of the church previous to the coming of Christ and the first resurrection: *neither whatsoever worketh abomination*; commits sin, which is abominable in the sight of God, lives—and dies in a course of wickedness; or particularly is guilty of idolatry, either makes idols, or serves them, or both, which are an abomination to the Lord; see 1 Kings xi. 7. *or maketh a lie*; any lie in general; who is a common liar, loves and invents a lie, and speaks one; delivers that which is false with an intention to deceive; or in particular,

who embraces and propagates antichristian lies, doctrinal ones, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such shall be damned; see 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. *but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*; who are predestinated to eternal life; and though they are naturally, and in themselves defiled and sinful creatures, yet they are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and sanctified by his spirit, and so are made meet and fit to enter this city; see the note on ch. xiii. 8. It is by the Jews observed^d, that “the Jerusalem of the world to come is not as the Jerusalem of this world; the Jerusalem of this world, whoever would go up to it (or enter into it) might; but that of the world to come, אַתָּן עֲלוֹן אֱלֹהֵי הַמְּוֹכְנִין לָהּ, none may go up to it (or enter into it) but those who are prepared, or appointed for it.”

C H A P. XXII.

THIS chapter contains a further account of the above city, a confirmation of the visions of this book, and the conclusion of it. The city is further described by the river that ran by it, or through it, called a river of water of life, said to be pure and clear as crystal, and to have its rise from the throne of God and the Lamb; and by the tree of life in the midst of it, situated on each side the river, bearing twelve sorts of fruit, yielded every month, the leaves of which heal the nations, ver. 1, 2. and the happiness of the inhabitants of it is set forth, by there being no curse in it; by the throne of God and the Lamb being in it; by the service of the saints in it; by the pleasure they enjoy, and the honour put upon them; by the light of the place, and the duration of the saints' reign, ver. 3, 4, 5. next follow testimonies concerning the authority of the book, and the truth of things in it; and first, the testimony of the angel that talked with John, declaring that the things in it were true and faithful; and that he was sent from the Lord God of the prophets to shew to the saints things that would quickly come to pass; and that Christ himself would quickly come; and that they were happy who kept and observed the sayings and prophecies of it, ver. 6, 7. then the testimony of John who saw and heard them, and was about to worship the angel that declared them, but was forbid by him, and dissuaded from it, by observing to him who he was, a fellow-servant of his and of his brethren, and that God only was to be worshipped, ver. 8, 9. who is ordered, as it seems by Christ, not to seal up the prophecies delivered to him, since the time of their fulfilment was at hand, when men would remain just as they were, whether ungodly and filthy, or righteous and holy, ver. 10, 11. and who declares that he should quickly come to reward every man according to his works; and that he was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and that they were happy that did his commandments, since it would appear they had a right to the tree of life, and to entrance through the gates into the city before described, when wicked

men, whose characters are given, would be without, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15. and still more clearly and fully Christ asserts himself to be the author of this revelation, and the sender of the angel, to testify it to the church, who is David's root and offspring, and the morning star, whose coming is to be wished for by the spirit and bride, and every truly gracious soul, ver. 16, 17. and to shew the perfection and authority of this book, as well as of the whole Scripture, and to deter persons from adding to it, or taking from it, he threatens to inflict on such persons the plagues herein written, and to take the names of such out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book, ver. 18, 19. and then he delivers out a fresh asseveration of his speedy coming, to which John adds his hearty *Amen*, and earnest request that he would come quickly; and the book is concluded with a benediction usual in the epistles, especially in those of the Apostle Paul, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, &c.*] Not baptism, which used to be administered in rivers and pools of water; and which engaged to purity of life; and the power and authority of administering which was from God and Christ; but in this Jerusalem-state there will be no use nor need of ordinances; for this chapter, to ver. 6. belongs to the preceding chapter, and is a continuation of the same account, this being not a new vision, but a part of the former, which the same angel, as in ch. xxi. 9. proceeds to shew to John: nor is the Holy Ghost intended by this river, whose gifts and graces are sometimes, for their plenty, purity, and quickening virtue, compared to rivers of living water; and who is a pure and holy Spirit, and proceeds from the Father and the Son: nor the doctrine of the Gospel, which comes from the blessed God, and is the Gospel of Christ; and, when purely and faithfully preached, is clear as crystal; and is the means of conveying spiritual life to men, and of supporting it in them: nor the ultimate joys of heaven, which may be called a river of pleasure, for the fulness and variety of delight; pure, and

clear as crystal, for the holiness and perfect knowledge of that state; and be said to proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb, being the free gift of God through Christ; but this state is not designed here: rather, therefore, by this river is meant the everlasting love of God, which may be compared to a river for its largeness and abundance, its height and depth, its length and breadth; and for the large displays of it in this state, when its waters will increase, and be a broad river to swim in, and be unpassable; and for the streams of it in election, redemption, vocation, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life, which make glad the city of God; and for the pleasure it yields, and the fruitfulness it gives to those who drink of it: it may be called a river of *water of life*, because in the present state of things it quickens such who are dead in trespasses and sins; revives the saints when dead and lifeless, supports their spirits, and is a cordial that preserves from fainting; it keeps and secures from dying the second death: and is the spring and source of eternal life; and that itself will last and flow for ever, it is ever-running water, it is everlasting love: and it may be said to be *pure and clear as crystal*, it being free from all hypocrisy and dissimulation, being real, hearty, and sincere, both in the Father and in Christ, of which the fullest proofs and demonstrations are given; and being clear of all motives and conditions in the creature, by which it might be influenced; and it engaging to purity and holiness of life and conversation; for the doctrine, which brings the account of it, and the inward principle of grace, which is the fruit of it, and every discovery of it, have a tendency hereunto: *proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*; not taking its rise from man's obedience, nor from his love to God, nor from his faith in Christ; for the love of God is prior to all these, and is the spring and cause of them, and therefore can't be moved and influenced by them; but it has its origin from the sovereignty of God and of Christ, signified by the throne of both, who will be gracious to whom they will be gracious; nor can any reason be given why they love any of the sons of men, but their own sovereign will and pleasure; this is the sole motive, spring, and cause of their love; and God and the Lamb being mentioned together, shews both the equal dignity of their persons, being on the same throne, and the equality of their love to the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem: and thus, as a river adds to the pleasure, use, conveniency, and wholesomeness of a city, this glorious city is commended by such a river running by it, or in the midst of it: there may be an allusion to the river which ran out of the garden of Eden, for this will be a paradisaical state, Gen. ii. 9. or rather to the waters in Ezek. xlvi. 1—5. which came from under the threshold of the sanctuary; though this river proceeds not from the temple, there being no temple in this state, but from the throne of God and the Lamb, which is instead of it.

Ver. 2. *In the midst of the street of it, &c.*] That is, of the city described in the preceding chapter, which shews that this vision belongs to that, and is a conti-

uation of it, and which street was all of pure gold, ch. xxi. 21. *and on either side of the river was there the tree of life*; not that it stood either in the midst of the street of the city, which being a pavement of gold, a tree could not well stand there; nor on both sides of the river, which is impossible, unless the tree of life is put for many trees of the same kind, as in Ezekiel's vision, to which the allusion is; and so some were on one side of the river, and some on the other, as there; see ch. xlvii. 7, 12. or unless it can be thought that such a solution of the difficulty is sufficient, that the root of it was on one side, and the branches grew over to the other; though the words may be better rendered, and the difficulty will be removed, and the sense be clear, *between the street of it, the city, and the river, on this side, and on that side*; that is, the street on one side, and the river on the other, was *the tree of life*; compare with this John xix. 18. So the Jews say^e, that the tree of life is in the midst of paradise, and its body covers all the garden; and that there is in it five hundred thousand different tastes; and that there is no likeness and smell like it. By the *tree of life* is meant not the Gospel, nor godliness, nor eternal life, nor any other of the divine Persons, but Christ, who is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; see the note on ch. ii. 7. and its situation between the street of the city, where the saints commune and converse together, and the river of God's everlasting love, which in this state will appear in its fulness and glory, shews that Christ will be seen and enjoyed by all in the most delightful and comfortable manner that can be wished for: *which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month*; not one sort of fruit one month, and another sort another month, and so on, but twelve sorts every month; which is expressive of the fruits and spiritual blessings of grace from Christ, enjoyed by saints in the present state, and of that variety of happiness and pleasures to be had in this glorious state, and of the continuance of them; they being always ever fresh and new, and will be always sufficient for the twelve tribes of the true Israel of God, and for all that have embraced the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; whose drink in this state will be the everlasting love of God, and whose food will be the fruit of the tree of life; both which they shall enjoy in great abundance: *and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations*; not for the curing of diseases, or repairing of health; which in the present state of things is done by the application of the blood of Christ for the pardon of sin, which is a healing of diseases, and by the discoveries of the love of God, through the ministration of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which might be thought to be signified by leaves; for there will be no disease either of body or mind in this state; besides, the nations that will walk in the light of this city will be saved perfectly and completely, ch. xxi. 4, 24. but these leaves will be for the preserving and continuing the health of the people of God in this state, as the tree of life in Eden's garden was for the preservation of the health and life of Adam, had he continued in a state of innocence; and it denotes that every thing in Christ will

contribute to the comfort, health, and happiness of the saints. The Jews interpret the passage in Ezek. xlvii. 12. to which this refers, of future time, or the world to come¹; and speak of various trees and herbs of great fragrantcy and medicinal virtues, which grow quite round on the sides of a laver that stands in paradise².

Ver. 3. *And there shall be no more curse, &c.*] As there was in Eden, from whence a river came, and where was a tree of life; for there the serpent was cursed for his concern in man's transgression, and the earth on account of it; but in this new earth, and paradisaical state, and on the inhabitants of it, will be no curse; here will be no sin, the cause of the curse, nor pain and sorrow, nor death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal, or the wrath of God, the several effects of sin, and parts of the curse; the curse of the law cannot here take place; for, besides the righteousness of Christ, which all in the new Jerusalem will be clothed with, and so be blessed and secure from the curse, they will be perfectly pure and holy in nature, and constant and complete in their obedience and service; they will always do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; no accursed person, or any one devoted to ruin and destruction, will be here; not the old serpent, the devil, he will be shut up in the bottomless pit; nor the blasphemous beast and false prophet, they will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire before this time comes; no cursing, or accursed men will dwell here; not such who curse themselves, or the saints, or such who will be bid to depart as cursed, these will be destroyed in the general conflagration; nor will there be any anathema denounced against any person, for here will be no introducers of another Gospel, nor any that do not love the Lord Jesus Christ; nor will any be an anathema, or accursed from Christ, excommunicated from the church of Christ, for that will have no members deserving of that; none but what are pure and undefiled; see Zech. xiv. 11. *but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it*; God himself will be here, his tabernacle will be among men; the name of this city will be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is here; the pure and spotless Lamb of God, the Son of the Blessed, will be here, whose presence will make it a happy state; these will both have their throne, or seat, here; they will sit on one throne, being the one God over all, blessed for ever; this city will be the city of the great King, where his royal glory and majesty will be most illustriously displayed, and which will greatly make for the felicity of this state, and secure it from the curse; *and his servants shall serve him*: either the angels, who are ministering spirits, and the servants of God and of the Lamb; or the ministers of the Gospel, the servants of the most high God; or rather all the true followers of Christ, who shall be where he is, and *serve him*: both God and the Lamb, who are one in nature, though two distinct persons; wherefore serving them both is not serving two masters: and the service the saints will be employed in, in this state, will not be preaching the word, or attending on the ministry of it, or subjecting to ordinances, which will now be at an end,

but celebrating the praises of God, adoring the perfections of his nature, ascribing the glory of every providence, and of all salvation to him, and magnifying the riches of his grace; and this they will perform in the most spiritual, fervent, and perfect manner, and that continually; see ch. vii. 15.

Ver. 4. *And they shall see his face, &c.*] The face of God, so as he is not to be seen now; they shall see him as he is; not only the angels, who always behold the face of God, but all the saints, risen and changed, being pure in heart, and perfectly holy; they shall see him face to face, they shall have intimate and familiar communion with him; they shall enjoy his favour, and have the freest and largest discoveries of his love; and they shall see the face of the Lamb; they shall behold Christ and his glory, both with the eyes of their understanding, and with the eyes of their bodies; and this is a very desirable sight, and will be very glorious and delightful; it will be fully satisfying, and will make the saints like unto him; it will be free from all darkness and any interruption, and will always continue. *And his name shall be in their foreheads*; they shall be known to be his servants, as if his name was written and bore on their foreheads; it will be a clear case that they are the children and people of God; now they are, but it is not known, at least not so known as it will be in this state; and they will also in the fullest and freest manner own God to be their God, and the Lamb to be their Redeemer; they will be under no fear of man, nor be under any temptation to be ashamed of Christ, or of his service; see ch. xiv. 1. Some think there is an allusion to the inscription on the mitre of the high-priest's forehead, *holiness to the Lord*, the saints being now openly, visibly, and perfectly holy.

Ver. 5. *And there shall be no night there, &c.*] This is repeated from ch. xxi. 25. to express the certainty of it, and to observe, that the happiness of this state will greatly lie in the light thereof; it will be one everlasting day, *ἡμετέρα αἰώνος*, *day of eternity*, or eternal day, as in 2 Pet. iii. 18. *and they need no candle, nor the light of the sun*; neither artificial nor natural light; neither the dimmer light of the ceremonial law, under the legal dispensation, which was like a candle lighted up in Judea; nor the more clear light of the Gospel and its ordinances, under the present dispensation, which now will be at an end: *for the Lord God giveth them light*; immediately from himself, without the use of means and ordinances; and in his light the saints will see all things clearly; who will be always communicating it to them, and will be their everlasting light; see the note on ch. xxi. 23. *and they shall reign for ever and ever*; they are made kings now, and in this state they shall reign with Christ for the space of a thousand years; and when they are ended, they shall not cease to reign; nor will Christ, when he delivers up the kingdom to the father, for his and their kingdom is an everlasting one, ch. i. 6. and v. 10. and xx. 4. Dan. vii. 27. and here ends the account of this glorious state of things; what follows is the conclusion of the whole book.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto me, &c.*] That is, the

¹ Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 1.

² Sopher Avodah Hakkodesh, fol. 46. 1.

angel that talked with him, and shewed him the above things: *these sayings are faithful and true*; not only what are delivered in particular concerning the new Jerusalem state, in which are many things new, and unheard-of before, and which may seem strange, and even incredible, but all that are written in this book, ver. 7, 18, 19, all which are *faithful*: to be believed by all that read them, and in the fulfilment of which the faithfulness of God is engaged and displayed: and they are *true*; for they come from the God of truth, that cannot lie, and are to be credited, and will have a certain accomplishment: this is said to secure the divine authority of this book against the gainsayers of it, whom the Holy Ghost foresaw would arise in the world; and which is here, and in the following part of this chapter, supported by the testimonies of Christ, of his angel, and of John his servant. *And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done*: the Lord God is the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by comparing this with ch. i. 1. and this is a very glaring proof of the deity of Christ, since he is not only called the Lord God, but the Lord God of the holy prophets; of the prophets of the Old Testament, who foretold things to come, and spake of the Messiah, his person, office, sufferings, death, and the glory that should follow; and of the prophets of the New Testament, who had a gift of explaining the prophecies of the Old, as well as some of them predicted future events; and both sorts were holy men, set apart by God for this office, and had principles of holiness wrought in them, and were moved by the Holy Ghost; these Christ inspired, and qualified with gifts suitable to their work; and he is, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and the Oriental versions read, *the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets*; see 1 Cor. xiv. 32. who had power over their spirits, could come at them, and did impress them with a sense and knowledge of divine and future things, which none but God can do: the same sent an angel of his, one of his ministering spirits he has under his command, perhaps the same that here speaks, for so reads the Syriac version, *sent me his angel*: to shew to John, and by him to all the saints, and to all the servants and followers of the Lamb, things that were in a very little time to begin to come to pass, till all were fulfilled; and even those at the greatest distance were, and are to be fulfilled within a little time, with respect to God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and in comparison of eternity, and even of the time which had elapsed from the beginning of the world; and these things were shewn in the various visions of the seals, trumpets, vials, and others; see ch. i. 1.

Ver. 7. *Behold, I come quickly, &c.*] These are the words not of the angel, but of Christ, as is manifest from ver. 12, 16, 20. and which are to be understood not of Christ's coming in his power to destroy Jerusalem, for this was past when John had these visions, and wrote this book; but of the second and personal coming of Christ to judgment, as is clear from ver. 12. which though it will not be sooner than the time appointed, yet will be as soon as that time is come, and sooner than is generally expected by men. The Ethi-

opic version adds, *as a thief*, as in ch. xvi. 15. and because the second coming of Christ is an affair of the utmost moment, and will be attended with events of the greatest consequence and importance, in which the visions of this book issue, a *behold* is prefixed to it, as a note of attention and admiration: *blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book*; this book is a *prophecy* of things to come, and therefore cannot refer to the times of Jerusalem's destruction, which some interpreters make it chiefly to concern, for then it would be a narrative of things past; the *sayings* of it are the things contained in it; to *keep* these sayings is to read them with observation, to take notice of the accomplishment of them, so far as it has taken place, to keep them in mind and memory, to meditate upon them, and through the grace of God to steer the life and conversation according to the instructions, directions, and cautions here given; and such are blessed in life, and will be in death; they'll die in the Lord, share in the first resurrection, and enter through the gates into the city.

Ver. 8. *And I John saw these things, and heard them, &c.*] He was both an eye and an ear witness; some things he saw, and others he heard; and to render his testimony the more authentic, he puts his name to it; and he being an apostle of Christ, and a man of great sincerity and probity, is to be believed. *And when I had heard and seen*: the things related in this book, being amazed at them, and filled with joy on account of many of them, and firmly believing the whole as coming from God: *I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things*. This is the second time John did so, though warned of it, and rebuked for it, which shews the proneness even of good men to fall into sin again and again; and what a propensity there is in mankind to idolatry; and very likely this might be suffered, that a second reproof might be given, and repeated instructions be on record, to prevent the worshipping of angels, introduced in the first ages of Christianity.

Ver. 9. *Then saith he unto me, &c.*] The angel at whose feet John fell down to worship: *see thou do it not*; this he said in great haste, and with much vehemence, to hinder him from doing it, as his short way of speaking shews: *for I am thy fellow-servant*; of God, and of Christ, and am no more the object of worship than thyself; and both of us are, and ought to be, the worshippers of God, whose servants we are: *and of thy brethren the prophets*; the apostles and ministers of the word; for prophesying and preaching are the same thing; these were the brethren of John in a spiritual sense, and by reason of their function: *and of them which keep the sayings of this book*; see ver. 7. and this is said to encourage the observation of them, and is the character of private Christians, and shews the great condescension of the angel to put himself, not only upon a level with John, and the ministers of the word, but with common believers: *worship God*; and him only, and that in a spiritual manner, with reverence and godly fear, in faith, and according to his revealed will; see the note on ch. xix. 10.

Ver. 10. *And he saith unto me, &c.*] Not the angel, but Christ, as is manifest from ver. 12, 13, 16, 20. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version. *Seal*

not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; as the orders are, when things are intended not to be published, but concealed, at least as yet, because of the distance of the accomplishment of them, which was not the case here; see ch. x. 4. Dan. viii. 26. and xii. 4, 9. Christ would have the things John saw and heard, written, and made public, sent in an open book, unsealed, to the churches, that they might be seen and read of all; that so the afflictions and persecutions of the people of God, both under Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, might be known, and the saints not be offended at them when they came, but be prepared for them, to endure them patiently; and that they might be apprised of the errors and heresies that were to spring up, and of the appearance and wickedness of the man of sin, and his followers, and beware of them; and that they might have some assurance of the destruction of antichrist, and of the glorious state of the church, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, and so be comforted in the midst of their tribulations, and rejoice in the faith and hope of these things. We may learn from hence, that the Scriptures in general are not to be locked up, and concealed from the common people, but lie open, and are to be read by all; and in particular, that this book is not so dark and obscure as it is thought to be: *for the time is at hand*; when the things in this book shall begin to be fulfilled; see ch. i. 1, 3.

Ver. 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, &c.*] These words are not to be considered as ironical expressions, such as in Eccl. xi. 9. Isa. l. 11. much less as an allowance to do injustice and commit filthy actions; nor even as deterring persons from these things, by tacitly suggesting, that should they continue unjust and filthy, they would be severely punished; nor as an anticipation of an objection that might be made against the publication of this book, and the sayings of it, taken from the ill use that some men might make of it, who might be provoked to injure and persecute the saints more and more, or indulge a filthy conversation; but as a prophecy of what would be at the close of time, at the second coming of Christ. The imperative is put for the future, as is usual in the Hebrew language, in which it is said, let such and such things be, when the sense is, that they shall be; see Ezek. iii. 27. Zech. xi. 9. and so the meaning of this expression is, he that is now found without a righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness, and acts unrighteously, will continue so; there will be no change made in him, no regeneration, renovation, repentance, or reformation; he'll remain the same wicked man he ever was; or he that hurts, or does injury to his fellow-creatures, will still do mischief; at least he will have the same inclination, though not the opportunity and power, but will attempt it, of which there will be an instance in the wicked dead, when raised; see ch. xx. 8. *And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still*; or he shall be filthy still: all mankind are originally, naturally, and universally filthy, or defiled with sin. Some are cleansed from it by the blood of Christ, others are not; and these will continue polluted, nor will the fire of hell fetch out the filthiness of their

hearts and nature: or the words may be rendered, *he that defileth, let him defile still*; though he'll not be able to defile the temple of God, or corrupt the good communications of the saints, yet he'll continue to defile himself; the same evil thoughts, &c. will proceed out of him as ever, which defile the man. *And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still*; a truly righteous man is one that is righteous, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; he is one, who by faith looks to Christ for righteousness, and receives it from him, and, in consequence of it, lives soberly, righteously, and godly, and such will continue righteous; not that they will be made more righteous, though they may have a clearer view of their justification, for the sentence of it will be afresh pronounced upon them; but the meaning is, they will ever remain in a justified state, and never enter into condemnation, their righteousness being an everlasting one. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, Syriac and Arabic versions, read, *and the righteous man, let him do righteousness still*; as he will do, for such will ever be before the throne of God, and serve him in his temple day and night, ch. vii. 15. and xxii. 3. *And he that is holy, let him be holy still*. They are holy who are sanctified by the spirit of God, and none but such will be admitted into the pure state of things upon Christ's second coming; and such will then be perfectly holy, and without sin, and shall continue so: hence we may learn, that justification and sanctification are two distinct things, and that both are durable. With these sayings may be compared some expressions of the Jewish doctors, as the sense of Lev. xi. 43, 44. "if a man defiles himself a little, they defile him much; the gloss on it is, they let, or suffer him to be more defiled; if below, they defile him above; if in this world, they defile him in the world to come; if a man sanctifies himself a little, they sanctify him much; if below, they sanctify him above; if in this world, they sanctify him in the world to come."

Ver. 12. *And, behold, I come quickly, &c.*] This is repeated, to confirm the truth of Christ's second coming, and the speediness of it, and to point at the time when the above shall be, and to add what follows. *And my reward is with me*; which words are taken out of Isa. xl. 10. and lxii. 11. and which being compared together, furnish out a clear proof of Christ being the true Jehovah, the eternal God. There is a reward of debt, or a due reward, a reward of punishment, which is the just recompense of reward, which shall be righteously given to wicked men for their sin, Heb. ii. 2. Isa. iii. 11. and there is a reward of grace, which is also called the recompense of reward, the reward of the inheritance, which is no other than the gift of eternal life, which God of his free grace bestows upon his people, Heb. xi. 26. Col. iii. 24. and both these are with Christ; they are in his hands, he has authority from God, as Mediator, to inflict vengeance on the wicked, and to give eternal life to his people; both which he will do, for this is with him: *to give every man according as his work shall be*: if his work is evil, and he is an unjust and filthy man, and the course of

his conversation has been vicious, the reward of debt, or just punishment, will be rendered to him; but if his work is the fruit of grace, and he has had his conversation in the world by the grace of God, and he is a righteous person, justified by the righteousness of Christ, and a holy, good man, sanctified by the spirit of God, the reward of grace, the crown of righteousness, will be given to him.

Ver. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega, &c.*] See the note on ch. i. 8. These characters are all put together here, which are before used in ch. i. 8, 11. and xxi. 6. and are very pertinently mentioned in this place, when all promises and prophecies, relating to the glorious kingdom of Christ, were just finishing, and that itself was ready to appear, in which Christ alone should be exalted, the mystery of God would be completed, and time itself be no more. The Ethiopic version adds, *the beginning and end of days*, or time. A testimony this, of the deity, eternity, infinity, and perfection of Christ.

Ver. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, &c.*] Either the commandments of God, ch. xii. 17. and xiv. 12. the precepts of the moral law, which are the whole duty of man; which are done either legally in order to obtain life, and then they must be perfectly done, which no man can do; hence none live, and are justified by the deeds of it, and consequently are not blessed, but cursed; or evangelically, when they are done in the strength of Christ, from love to God, in the exercise of faith upon him, with a view to his glory, and without dependence on them, acknowledging the imperfection of them, and looking unto Jesus for righteousness and life, in whom such find both, and so are blessed persons: or else the commandments of Jesus are intended, who is speaking in the context, ver. 12, 13, 16. and is speaking of himself, and his, as the angel does in ver. 6. Christ's commandments are his new commandment of love, and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper; which are to be observed in the same evangelical manner as the commandments of God, and to be kept exactly as they are delivered, without any alteration, addition, or diminution; and they are to be attended to immediately, and without delay; and such as regard them in a right way and manner are blessed; they have much pleasure and delight in the observance of them; these commandments are not grievous, especially when they have the presence of Christ, the discoveries of his love, and are under the gracious influences of his spirit: or it may be rather the commandments in this book are designed, for it may be rendered, *that do its commandments*: keep the sayings of this book, as in ver. 7. such as relate to the worship of God, and forbid the worship of the beast, which caution against idolatry, and exhort to come out of Babylon, and direct to follow the Lamb, and charge not to add or take from any thing written in this prophecy; and such persons as keep the words of it are pronounced blessed, ch. i. 3. The Alexandrian copy reads, *that wash their garments*; and so the Ethiopic version, and also the Vulgate Latin, which adds, *in the blood of the Lamb*, agreeably to ch. vii. 13. and such whose persons and garments are washed in the

blood of Christ are blessed indeed; they are justified by it, pardoned through it, and both they and their services are accepted on account of it. The instances of their happiness follow, *that they may have right to the tree of life; or power over the tree of life*: that is, Christ, not of government over him, but of enjoyment of him; a liberty of eating of the fruit of this tree, having interest in it, and so a right to partake of it; which right, or liberty, is not obtained by obedience to the commands of God, or Christ, or of this book, for this is what is due to God, and obligatory on men; and which, when done, is but their duty, and can merit nothing; though a cheerful and evangelical obedience to the divine will makes such appear to have a right to such a privilege, as the disciples of Christ are not made so, but appear to be such by bringing forth fruit, John xv. 8. but to have interest in Christ, the tree of life, and a right, power, and liberty to eat thereof, is a free-grace gift, ch. ii. 7. and happy are those who enjoy such a privilege! Prov. iii. 18. Cant. ii. 3. *And may enter in through the gates into the city*: the Ethiopic version reads, *into this holy city*: and which intends not entrance into a particular church of Christ, the way into which is faith in Christ, and a profession of it, and submission to the ordinance of baptism; nor entrance into heaven, which, as a Gospel church, is often called a city, and into which none shall enter, but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and are regenerated by his spirit, the gates of it are Christ and his grace; but the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is meant, and entrance into that, which is so largely described in the preceding chapter, and particularly its gates; and they must be happy persons, indeed, who enter there; and their right to it is from, and lies in Christ, his blood, righteousness, and grace, under a sense of which they yield a ready obedience to his will, which makes their right to appear. Frequent mention is made of the gates of this city in the book of Zohar; and, says R. Isaac ⁱ, “when the soul *בשער לנכס* *וכה לנכס*, *is fit* (or worthy, or “has a right) *to enter through the gates of Jerusalem* “that is above, Michael the great prince goes with it, “who anticipates for it the peace of the ministering “angels, wondering at him, and inquiring concerning “it, saying, *who is this that comes out of the wilderness*, “&c. Cant. iii. 6.”

Ver. 15. *For without are dogs, &c.*] That is, without the holy city are such persons who are comparable to dogs for their filthiness, impudence, and voraciousness, as are persecutors, heretics, and apostates, Matt. vii. 6. Phil. iii. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 22. Some think Sodomites are intended, as in Deut. xxiii. 18. So Abarbanel and others interpret the law; and who abound in the Roman jurisdiction, called therefore Sodom, ch. xi. 8. and indeed all wicked men, who will be cast out into outer darkness, may be signified hereby. The Jews say ^h, “when a man dies, if he be worthy (or righteous) he descends in the likeness of a lion to receive “his soul, but if not, in the likeness of a dog, concerning which David says, Psal. xxii. 20.” *And sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters*; characters of the antichristian party, who will have no

ⁱ Medrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 1.

^h Raya Mchimsa in Zohar in Numb. fol. 95. 2.

place in this city, or glorious kingdom of Christ; see the note on ch. xxi. 8. *And whosoever loveth and maketh a lie*; who loves both to invent and tell lies, and loves to hear them told by others; meaning more especially the doctrinal lies of antichrist, which are spoken in hypocrisy by him, and his followers are given up to believe.

Ver. 16. *I Jesus have sent mine angel, &c.*] As John, the writer of this book, sets down his own name, who was an eye and ear witness of the things contained in it, that they might be more surely believed, ver. 8. so Christ, the author of it, puts his name Jesus to it, to engage the greater attention to hear and read, and keep the words of it, as well as to make it plain and manifest, who is the person speaking of his coming, ver. 7, 12. and who that has any value for Jesus the Saviour, but will give credit, and pay a regard to this revelation of his, which he sent by his angel, one of his ministering spirits, made by him, and under his command, he being the Creator, Lord, and head of angels: this expresses the dignity of his person, and is no inconsiderable proof of his deity: and this was done, in order to testify, to bear witness to the truth of the things contained in it; to signify and shew them, to set them forth in emblems and visions: *unto you these things in the churches*; to the servants of the Lord, ver. 6. to John, and by him to others, to the pastors of the seven churches, who were *over* the churches, as it may be rendered, and to the members of the churches, to all that were in them; for the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read *in*; the Syriac version renders it, קדם, *before the churches*. What John saw he wrote in a book, and sent it to these churches, ch. i. 11. The words may be rendered, *concerning the churches*; and then the sense is, that the angel was sent to shew to John, and by him to others, even to all the saints in all ages, the things relating to the church of Christ, in the several periods of time, represented in succession by the seven churches of Asia. Christ gives a further account of himself, for the greater confirmation of the faith of his people, in the certain accomplishment of the things herein written, by saying, *I am the root and the offspring of David*. The former of these is mentioned in ch. v. 5. see the note there; and the meaning of it is, either that Christ, as God, is David's Lord and head, from whom he had his being, both in a temporal and spiritual sense, and by whom he was supported and sustained; or that, as man, he sprung from the root of David, or descended from him; and so it falls in with the latter, which may be explanative of it, *the offspring of David*: that is, the son of David, according to the flesh, a frequent name of the Messiah; see the note on Matt. i. 1. God promised that the Messiah should be of the seed of David, and according to his promise he raised up unto Israel of his seed, a Saviour Jesus, the same person here speaking, Acts xiii. 23. who adds, *and the bright and morning star*; Christ is compared to a star, as in Numb. xxiv. 17. for its light, the light of nature, and of grace, and of the new Jerusalem state being from him; and for its glory, his glory being the glory of the only-begotten of the father, and he having a

glory, as Mediator, which his saints will ever behold, and be delighted with; and for its influence, all the blessings of grace, life, and righteousness, being from him; and to a *bright star*, because he is the brightness of his father's glory, and so splendid, shining, and illustrious, that he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all; and to a bright *morning star*, which shews the night is going off, and the day is coming on, and is the phosphorus, or bringer of light; as Christ by his first coming, who was then the day-spring from on high, put an end to the night of Jewish darkness, and sprung the great Gospel day, so often spoken of by the prophets, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, and shewed the way to eternal life by himself; so by his second coming, to which this character refers, he will put an end to the night of antichristian darkness, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan; so that there shall be no more night, and shall make an everlasting day, and bring such light into the holy city, that it shall need no candle, nor light of the sun or moon. The dawn of light at the Reformation was a preage of this, ch. ii. 28. called there the morning star. With great propriety and pertinence are these titles here assumed by Christ, as *the root and offspring of David*, or David's son, when he was about to sit on the throne of his father David, and possess his kingdom in the most visible and glorious manner; and *the bright and morning star*, when he was going to usher in such light into the new Jerusalem, as would make all other light unnecessary. Aijeeth Shahar, in the title of Psal. xxii. which is a psalm that belongs to the Messiah, is, by some Jewish writers¹, interpreted, כוכב הבוקר, *the morning star*, the title of Christ here.

Ver. 17. *And the spirit and the bride say, come, &c.*] Hearing Christ say that he should come quickly, ver. 7, 12. the spirit and the bride express an earnest wish, and a most affectionate desire after his coming: by *the spirit* may be meant the spirit of God in the hearts of his people, who not only convinces them of, and acquaints with the coming of Christ to judgment, and gives them reason to expect it, but fills their souls with the love of his appearance, so that they look and long for it, and hasten in the breathings of their souls after it: and this in like manner he may be said to wish for, and desire it in them, as he is said to cry *Abba*, father, in them, Gal. iv. 6. and to make intercession for them, Rom. viii. 26, 27. Hence, some interpreters, by the spirit, understand such as have the spirit, and are spiritual men; either have spiritual gifts, the gift of prophecy, as John, who in ver. 20. expresses an ardent desire that Christ would come quickly; or regenerate men in common, who are born of the spirit, and bear his name, John iii. 5, 6. and so by an hendyadis, *the spirit and the bride* signify one and the same; namely, the spiritual bride of Christ, who is sanctified by the spirit of God; even all the elect of God, whom Christ loved from all eternity, and who are espoused to him as a chaste virgin; the new Jerusalem, who is as a bride adorned for her husband, and is the bride, the Lamb's wife: these wait for the bridegroom's coming, and most earnestly desire it, as there is good reason for

¹ Apud Kimchi in loc.

them so to do, since his appearing in itself will be a glorious one, being in his own glory, and his father's, and the holy angels; and seeing then will be the solemnization of the marriage-day between Christ and his church; it will be the saints' redemption-day; they will then possess full salvation in soul and body; complete grace will be given to them, and glory will be revealed in them, and they shall be for ever with the Lord. *And let him that heareth*; what the spirit and the bride say; or the words of this prophecy; or that has spiritual ears given him, and he hears so as to understand spiritual things, the kingdom of Christ, and the glories of it, let him join the spirit and bride, and say, *come* likewise; or express his wishes and desires in the same earnest and affectionate manner, that Christ would hasten his second coming; *and let him that is athirst come*. These seem to be the words of Christ inviting such who thirst after him, his grace and righteousness, after more knowledge of him, and communion with him, to come unto him, by faith, and partake thereof, John vii. 37. or who thirst after his second coming, and the glories and delights of the new Jerusalem state, to come into it, and eat of the tree of life, and drink of the river of water of life in it; for the character seems to design such, to speak in the language of the Jews, who use like phrases with this, who hunger, *וְצָמְאִים לְשֵׁתוֹת מַיִם חַיִּים*, and *thirst to drink living water*^m, as appears by what follows: *and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*. The *water of life* design's the free favour and love of God, and the communications and displays of it in the new Jerusalem state, even the comfort, refreshment, and glories of that state: to *take* it is to enjoy it, to partake of it, being led unto it, and that being given to them by Christ the Lamb in the midst of the throne, ch. vii. 17. and xxi. 6. and which is had *freely*, without money, and without price, as in Isa. lv. 1. which seems to be referred to; for the happiness of this state, as well as eternal life, is the free gift of God through Christ; and the persons encouraged to partake of it are *whosoever will*; that is, whoever has a will to divine and spiritual things, wrought in him by God, for no man has such a will of himself, Phil. ii. 13. though this does not so much regard the character of the person that may take of the water of life, as the free manner in which he may take it; so the Jews are wont to express themselves, when they would signify the liberty that might be used, or the free way in which any thing might be taken, particularly when speaking of the law, and the things of it, *כל חרצנה לימול יבא יפול*, *whosoever has a mind to take, let him come and take*, as it is said, Isa. lv. 1. *ho, every one that thirsteth, &c.*ⁿ, that is, he is free to take, he's welcome to it; which passage referred to, is thus paraphrased by the Targumist, " *ho, כל רצבי, whosoever will learn, let him come and learn, &c.*"

Ver. 18. *For I testify to every man, &c.*] These are not the words of a scribe, who having wrote out a copy of this book, added the following adjuration to it, to deter persons from adding to it, or diminishing it; for the book is not yet finished, and both Christ and John

speak after this; and to insert such a passage into the text would be a bold and daring action; nor are they even the words of John, the inspired writer of it, but of the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, as appears from ver. 16, 17, 20. who in a most solemn manner declares to every man, high or low, rich or poor, of whatsoever character, or however dignified, either in a civil or ecclesiastic way, *that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book read or explained, if any man shall add unto these things*. To add to the things contained in this book, is not to deliver, or write an exposition of it, in a modest manner, with a sincere view to give light into it, agreeably to the analogy of faith; for to expound Scripture, or to preach from it, consistent with it, is not to add unto it, but to give the sense of it; but then may it be said to be added unto, and so this book, when it is wrested and perverted, and a false gloss is put upon it, as the Pharisees did upon the law; and when unwritten traditions are made to be equal to it, or above it, as the same persons made the traditions of the elders, whereby they transgressed the law, and made the word of God of none effect, and so broke through the precept given, Deut. iv. 2. as do the Papists in like manner; and when men pretend to visions and revelations, and make them the rule of faith and practice, and to confirm things that are neither in this book, nor in any other part of the word of God; and when men interpolate it, and set up human fictitious writings upon equal authority with it; which shews the authenticity of this book, and of all the whole Scripture, and the perfection of it, whose canon is closed with it: the punishment of such a crime follows, *God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book*; the things threatened to the antichristian party, ch. ii. 22, 23. and xiii. 10. and xiv. 9, 10, 11. the seven last plagues in which the wrath of God is filled up, which will be inflicted on the same, ch. xvi. the lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast, the false prophet, the devil, and all wicked men will be cast, ch. xix. 20. and xx. 10. and xxi. 8. see Prov. xxx. 5, 6.

Ver. 19. *And if any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, &c.*] As he may be said to do, who denies the authority of this book, which has been done by some, and which the Holy Ghost foresaw; or takes it away from, or denies the reading of it to the people, as the Papists do with respect to the whole Scripture; and who wilfully pervert the sense of it, and will not have the things in it, relating to antichrist, to belong to him. *God shall take away his part out of the book of life*; by which is meant eternal election, which is the meaning of the phrase throughout this book, in which whoever are written shall certainly be saved. The worshippers of the beast, or the antichristian party, who are chiefly regarded here, are not written in it, ch. xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. wherefore taking away the part of such, is only taking away that which they seemed to have; see Luke viii. 18. and the sense is, that such shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, and will be the portion of all that are not written in the book of life, ch.

^m Raziell, fol. 31. 2.

ⁿ Abot R. Nathan, c. 41. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 4. & 82. 4. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 54. 3. & 140. 2.

xx. 15. The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, and the Complutensian edition, read, *the tree of life*; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; the sense is the same; see John xv. 2. *and out of the holy city*; the new Jerusalem, before described, a part in which is a right to enter into it through the gates, and possess the glories of it: what is mentioned here is only a seeming one, which wicked men may flatter themselves with; and the meaning is, that such shall never enter into it, and enjoy the happiness of it, but shall ever be without, ch. xxi. 27. and xxii. 15. *and from the things which are written in this book*; the blessings promised to the overcomers in ch. ii. and iii. which such as detract from this book shall have no share in. The Alexandrian copy, with some others, and the Syriac version, leave out the copulative *and*, and read *which are written, &c.* connecting them with the book of life, and holy city, which are written, and spoken of, in this book. The Ethiopic version connects the words with the holy city, only reading them, *which is written, &c.* The Jews say of their Talmud, that nothing is to be added to it, or diminished from it*.

Ver. 20. *He which testifieth these things, &c.*] Not the angel, ver. 16. nor John, who sometimes used this way of speaking, John xxi. 24. but Christ, as appears from what follows; for he saith, *surely I come quickly*; who not only asserts the speediness of his coming, as in ver. 7, 12. but expresses the certainty of it, so that it ought not to be doubted of by any, especially by his own people; though it may seem to be deferred, and, upon that account, be derided by ungodly men; and Christ may have some respect, in this strong repetition of it, to the certainty of the punishment that will then

be inflicted upon such who add to, or diminish from this book; for he himself will certainly come in person, and execute the vengeance threatened. John next puts his *Amen* to it, signifying his assent unto it, declaring his faith in it, and expressing his earnest desire after it, and wish for it: and in words at length adds, *even so come, Lord Jesus*; quickly, speedily as thou hast said, and in all thy glory; set up thy kingdom, let that come, introduce thy people into it, and destroy thine enemies; this he said as one that loved the appearance of Christ, longed for it, hastened to it, and was impatient at the delay of it.

Ver. 21. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*] That is, let a sense of the love of Christ, shewn in all his regards to his church and people, which is always the same in itself, though the saints have not always the same perception of it, abide upon you: may you see your interest in the redeeming grace of Christ, in all its branches, and in his justifying, pardoning, sanctifying, and persevering grace; let the fulness of grace in Christ be the object of your trust and confidence; may you have a supply from it to enable you to overcome every temptation, to exercise every grace, and discharge every duty. This shews this book was written in the form of an epistle, and sent to the seven churches of Asia, ch. i. 11. and through them to the churches in all ages. It begins with a salutation of them, ch. i. 4. and ends with one commonly used by the Apostle Paul in all his epistles, 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18. The Arabic version, instead of *you*, reads *us*; and the Complutensian edition and the Syriac version read, *with all the saints.*

* Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 34. 1.

THE END OF VOLUME 9.

FINIS

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