BARNES' NOTES

Notes on the New Testament

Albert Barnes

Edited by
Robert Frew

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INTRODUCTION

§ 1. *The Situation of Ephesus, and the Character of its People.*

THIS epistle purports to have been written to the "Saints in Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," though, as we shall see, the fact of its having been directed to the church at Ephesus has been called in question. Assuming now that it was sent to Ephesus, it is of importance to have a general view of the situation of that city, of the character of its people, and of the time and manner in which the gospel was introduced there, in order to a correct understanding of the epistle. Ephesus was a celebrated city of Ionia in Asia Minor, and was about 40 miles south of Smyrna, and near the mouth of the river Cayster. The river, though inferior in beauty to the Meander which flows south of it, waters a fertile vale of the ancient Ionia. Ionia was the most beautiful and fertile part of Asia Minor; was settled almost wholly by Greek colonies; and embosomed Pergamos, Smyrna, Ephesus, and Miletus; see *Travels* of Anacharsis, i. 91, 208; vi. 192, 97, 98. The climate of Ionia is represented as remarkably mild, and the air as pure and sweet, and this region became early celebrated for everything that constitutes softness and effeminacy in life. Its people were distinguished for amiableness and refinement of manners, and also for luxury, for music and dancing, and for the seductive arts that lead to vicious indulgence. Numerous festivals occupied them at home, or attracted them to neighbouring cities, where the men appeared in magnificent habits, and the women in all the elegance of female ornament, and with all the desire of pleasure (Anachar).

Ephesus was not, like Smyrna, distinguished for commercial advantages. The consequence has been that, not having such advantage, it has fallen into total ruin, while Smyrna has retained some degree of its ancient importance. It was in a rich region of country, and seems to have risen into importance mainly because it became the favourite resort of foreigners in the worship of Diana, and owed its celebrity to its temple more than to anything else. This city was once, however, the most splendid city in Asia Minor. Stephens, the geographer, gives it the title of *Epiphanestate*, or "Most Illustrious;" Pliny styles it "the Ornament of Asia." In Roman times it was the metropolis of Asia, and unquestionably rose to a degree of splendour that was surpassed by few, if any, oriental cities.

That for which the city was most celebrated was the Temple of Diana. This temple was 425 feet in length, and 220 in breadth. It was encompassed by 127 pillars, each 60 feet in height, which were presented by as many kings. Some of those pillars, it is said, are yet to be seen in the mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, having been removed there when the church of St. Sophia was erected. These, however, were the pillars

that constituted a part of the temple after it had been burned and was repaired, though it is probable that the same pillars were retained in the second temple which had constituted the glory of the first. All the provinces of Asia Minor contributed to the erection of this splendid temple, and two hundred years were consumed in building it. This temple was set on fire by a man named Herostratus, who, when put to the torture, confessed that his only motive was to immortalize his name. The general assembly of the states of Ionia passed a decree to devote his name to oblivion; but the fact of the decree has only served to perpetuate it; Cicer. *De Nat. Deor.* 2. 27; Plutarch, *Life of Alex. comp. Anachar.* vi. 189. The whole of the edifice was consumed except the four walls and some of the columns. It was, however, rebuilt with the same magnificence as before, and was regarded as one of the wonders of the world. It is now in utter ruin. After the temple had been repeatedly pillaged by the barbarians, Justinian removed the columns to adorn the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople. The place where it stood can now be identified certainly, if at all, only by the marshy spot on which it was erected, and by the prodigious arches raised above as a foundation. The vaults formed by them compose a sort of labyrinth, and the water is knee-deep beneath. There is not an apartment entire; but thick walls, shafts of columns, and fragments of every kind are scattered around in confusion (*Ency. Geog.* ii. 273, 274).

In the reign of Tiberius Ephesus was greatly damaged by an earthquake; but it was repaired and embellished by the emperor. In the war between Mithridates and the Romans, Ephesus took part with the former, and massacred the Romans who dwelt in it. Sylla severely punished this cruelty; but Ephesus was afterwards treated with lenity, and enjoyed its own laws, with other privileges. About the end of the eleventh century it was seized by a pirate named Tangripermes, but he was routed by John Ducas, the Greek admiral, in a bloody battle. Theodorus Lascarus, a Greek, made himself master of it in 1206. The Mohammedans recovered it in 1283. In the year 1401 Tamerlane employed a whole month in plundering the city and the neighbouring country. Shortly after the city was set on fire, and was mostly burnt in a combat between the Turkish governor and the Tartars. In 1405 it was taken by Mahomet I., and has continued since that time in the possession of the Turks (Calmet).

There is now a small mean village, named Ayasaluk, near the site of the ancient town, consisting of a few cottages, which is all that now represents this city of ancient splendour. Dr. Chavolla says, "The inhabitants are a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility; the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness—some in the substructions of the glorious edifices which they raised—some beneath the vaults of the stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions—and some by the abrupt precipice in the sepulchres which received their ashes. Its streets are obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon, and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and the stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer numbered; and Christianity, which was

here nursed by apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fulness of stature, barely lingers on in an existence hardly visible" (*Travels*, p. 131, Oxford, 1775). A very full and interesting description of Ephesus, as it appeared in 1739, may be seen in Pococke's *Travels*, vol. ii. part ii. pp. 45–53, ed. Lond. 1745. Several ruins are described by him, but they have mostly now disappeared. The Temple of Diana was on the western side of the plain on which the city was built, and the site is now in the midst of a morass which renders access difficult. The ruins of several theatres and other buildings are described by Pococke.

In the year 1821 Mr. Fisk, the American missionary, visited the city of Ephesus, of which he has given the following account:—"We sent back our horses to Aisaluck, and set out on foot to survey the ruins of Ephesus. The ground was covered with high grass or grain, and a very heavy dew rendered the walking rather unpleasant. On the east side of the hill we found nothing worthy of notice; no appearance of having been occupied for buildings. On the north side was the circus or stadium. Its length from east to west is forty rods or one stadium. The north or lower side was supported by arches which still remain. The area where the races used to be performed is now a field of wheat. At the west end was the gate. The walls adjoining it are still standing, and are of considerable height and strength. North of the stadium, and separated only by a street, is a large square, inclined with fallen walls, and filled with the ruins of various edifices. A street running north and south divides this square in the centre. West of the stadium is an elevation of ground, level at the top, with an immense pedestal in the centre of it. What building stood there it is not easy to say. Between this and the stadium was a street passing from the great plain north of Ephesus, into the midst of the city.

"I found on the plains of Ephesus some Greek peasants, men and women, employed in pulling up tares and weeds from the wheat. I ascertained, however, that they all belonged to villages at a distance, and came there to labour. Tournefort says that, when he was at Ephesus, there were thirty or forty Greek families there. Chandler found only ten or twelve individuals. Now no human being lives in Ephesus; and in Aisaluck, which may be considered as Ephesus under another name, though not on precisely the same spot of ground, there are merely a few miserable Turkish huts.

"The plain of Ephesus is now very unhealthy, owing to the fogs and mists which almost continually rest upon it. The land, however, is rich, and the surrounding country is both fertile and healthy. The adjacent hills would furnish many delightful situations for villages if the difficulties were removed, which are thrown in the way by a despotic government, oppressive agas, and wandering banditti" (*Missionary Herald* for 1821, p. 319).

§ 2. *The Introduction of the Gospel at Ephesus.*

It is admitted by all that the gospel was introduced into Ephesus by the apostle Paul. He first preached there when on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem, about the year 54 (Acts xviii. 19). On this visit he went into the synagogue, as was his usual custom, and preached to his own countrymen, but he does not appear to have preached publicly to the heathen. He was

requested to remain longer with them, but he said he must by all means be in Jerusalem at the approaching feast—probably the passover, Acts xviii. 21. He promised, however, to visit them again if possible, and sailed from Ephesus to Jerusalem. Two persons had gone with Paul from Corinth—Priscilla and Aquila—whom he appears to have left at Ephesus, or who at anyrate soon returned there, Acts xviii. 18, 26. During the absence of Paul there came to Ephesus a certain Jew, born in Alexandria, named Apollos, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who had received the baptism of John, and who taught the doctrine that John had taught, Acts xviii. 24, 25. What was the precise nature of that doctrine it is difficult now to understand. It seems to have been in substance that repentance was necessary, that baptism was to be performed, and that the Messiah was about to appear. This doctrine Apollos had embraced with zeal, was ready to defend it, and was in just the state of mind to welcome the news that the Messiah had come. This zealous and talented man Priscilla and Aquila instructed more fully in the doctrines of the Christian religion, and communicated to him the views which they had received from Paul, Acts xviii. 26. Paul, having gone to Jerusalem as he purposed, returned again to Asia Minor, and taking Phrygia and Galatia in his way, revisited Ephesus, and remained there about three years, Acts xviii. 23; xix. 1, seq. It was during this time that the church was founded, which afterwards became so prominent, and to which this epistle was written. The principal events in the life of Paul there were, (1) His baptizing the twelve persons whom he found there, who were disciples of John; Notes, Acts xix. 1–7. (2) Paul went into the synagogue there and engaged in an earnest discussion with the Jews, about three months, respecting the Messiah, Acts xix. 8–10. (3) When many of the Jews opposed him he left the synagogue and obtained a place to preach in, in the school-room of a man by the name of Tyrannus. In this place he continued to preach without molestation for two years and proclaimed the gospel, so that a large portion of the inhabitants had an opportunity of hearing it. (4) The cause of religion was greatly promoted by the miracles which Paul wrought, Acts xix. 11–17. (5) Paul remained there until his preaching excited great commotion, and he was at last driven away by the tumult which was excited by Demetrius, Acts xix. 23–41. At this time the gospel had secured such a hold on the people that there was danger that the temple of Diana would be forsaken, and that all who were dependent on the worship of Diana for a livelihood would be thrown out of employment. It is not probable that Paul visited Ephesus after this, unless it was after his first imprisonment at Rome; see Intro. to 2 Timothy. On his way from Macedonia to Jerusalem he came to Miletus, and sent for the elders of Ephesus and gave them his deeply affecting parting address, expecting to see them no more, Acts xx. 16, seq.

Paul remained longer at Ephesus than he did at any other one place preaching the gospel. He seems to have set himself deliberately to work to establish a church there, which would ultimately overthrow idolatry. Several reasons may have led him to depart so far from his usual plan by labouring so long in one place. One may have been that this was the principal seat of idolatry then in the world. The evident aim of Paul in his ministry was to reach the centres of influence and power. Hence he mainly sought

to preach the gospel in large cities, and thus it was that Antioch, and Ephesus, and Corinth, and Athens, and Philippi, and Rome, shared so largely in his labours. Not ashamed of the gospel anywhere, he yet sought mainly that its power should be felt where wealth, and learning, and genius, and talent were concentrated. The very places, therefore, where the most magnificent temples were erected to the gods, and where the worship of idols was celebrated with the most splendour and pomp, and where that worship was defended most strongly by the civil arm, were those in which the apostle sought first to preach the gospel. Ephesus, therefore, as the most splendid seat of idolatry at that time in the whole Pagan world, particularly attracted the attention of the apostle, and hence it was that he was willing to spend so large a part of his public life in that place. It may have been for this reason that John afterwards made it his permanent abode, and spent so many years there as the minister of the church which had been founded by Paul; see § 3. Another reason why Paul sought Ephesus as a field of labour may have been that it was at that time not only the principal seat of idolatry, but was a place of great importance in the civil affairs of the Roman empire. It was the residence of the Roman proconsul, and the seat of the courts of justice in Asia Minor, and consequently was a place to which there would be attracted a great amount of learning and talent (Macknight). The apostle, therefore, seems to have been anxious that the full power of the gospel should be tried there, and that Ephesus should become as important as a centre of influence in the Christian world as it had been in Paganism and in civil affairs.

§ 3. *Notices of the History of the Church at Ephesus.*

The church at Ephesus was one of the seven churches of Asia, and the first one mentioned to which John was directed to address an epistle from Patmos, Rev. ii. 1–7. Little is said of it in the New Testament from the time when Paul left it until the book of Revelation was written. The *tradition* is, that Timothy was a minister at Ephesus, and was succeeded by the apostle John; but whether John came there while Timothy was living, or not until his removal or death, even *tradition* does not inform us. In the subscription to the Second Epistle to Timothy, it is said of Timothy that he was "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians;" but this is of no authority whatever. All that can be with certainty learned about the residence of Timothy at Ephesus, is what the apostle Paul says of him in his First Epistle to Timothy, ch. i. 3, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." From this it would appear that the residence of Timothy at Ephesus was a *temporary arrangement*, designed to secure a result which Paul wished particularly to secure, and to avoid an evil which he had reason to dread would follow from his own absence. That it was a temporary arrangement, is apparent from the fact that Paul soon after desired him to come to Rome, 2 Tim. iv. 9, 11. The Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy was written but a few years after the first. According to Lardner, the first was written in the year 56, and the second in the year 62; according to Hug, the first was written in the year 59, and the second in the year 61; according to the editor of the Polyglott Bible, the first was written A.D.

65, and the second A.D. 66. According to either calculation the time of the residence of Timothy in Ephesus was brief. There is not the slightest evidence from the New Testament that he was a permanent bishop of Ephesus, or indeed that he was a bishop at all in the modern sense of the term. Those who may be disposed to look further into this matter, and to examine the relation which Timothy sustained to the church of Ephesus, and the claim which is sometimes set up for his having sustained the office of *a bishop*, may find an examination in the Review of Bishop Onderdonk's Tract on Episcopacy, published in the *Quarterly Christian Spectator* in March, 1834, and March, 1835, and republished in 1843 under the title of *The Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church*, pp. 99–107.

Whatever was the relation which he sustained to the church in Ephesus, it is agreed on all hands that John the apostle spent there a considerable portion of his life. At what time he went to Ephesus, or why he did it, is not now known. The common opinion is, that he remained at or near Jerusalem for some fifteen years after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, during which time he had the special charge of Mary, the mother of the Saviour; that he then preached the gospel to the Parthians and the Indians, and that he then returned and went to Ephesus, in or near which he spent his latter days, and in which, at a very advanced age, he died. It was from Ephesus that, under the Emperor Domitian, A.D. 95, he was banished to the island of Patmos, from which he returned A.D. 97, on the accession of Nerva to the crown, who recalled all who had been banished. John is supposed at that time to have been about ninety years of age. He is said to have died at Ephesus in the third year of Trajan, A.D. 100, aged about ninety-four years. For a full and interesting biography of the apostle John, the reader may consult the *Lives of the Apostles*, by David Francis Bacon, pp. 307–376.

Of the subsequent history of the church at Ephesus, little is known, and it would not be necessary to dwell upon it in order to an exposition of the epistle before us. It is sufficient to remark, that the "candlestick is removed out of its place" (Rev. ii. 5), and that all the splendour of the temple of Diana, all the pomp of her worship, and all the glory of the Christian church there, have alike faded away.

§ 4. *The Time and Place of writing the Epistle.*

It has never been denied that the apostle Paul was the author of this epistle, though it has been made a question whether it were written to the Ephesians or to the Laodiceans; see § 5. Dr. Paley (*Horæ Paulinæ*) has shown that there is conclusive internal proof that this epistle was written by Paul. This argument is derived from the style, and is carried out by a comparison of this epistle with the other undoubted writings of the apostle. The historical evidence on this point also is undisputed.

It is generally supposed, and indeed the evidence seems to be clear, that this epistle was written during the imprisonment of the apostle at Rome; but whether it was during his first or his second imprisonment is not certain. Paul was held in custody for some two years in Cesarea (Acts xxiv. 27), but there is no evidence that during that time he addressed any epistle to the

churches which he had planted. That this was written when he was a prisoner is apparent from the epistle itself. "The two years in which Paul was imprisoned at Cesarea," says Wall, as quoted by Lardner, "seem to have been the most inactive part of St. Paul's life. There is no account of any proceedings or disputations, or of any epistles written in this space." This may have arisen, Lardner supposes, from the fact that the Jews made such an opposition that the Roman governor would not allow him to have any intercourse with the people at large, or procure any intelligence from the churches abroad. But when he was at Rome he had more liberty. He was allowed to dwell in his own hired house (Acts xxviii. 30), and had permission to address all who came to him, and to communicate freely with his friends abroad. It was during this period that he wrote at least four of his epistles—to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon. Grotius, as quoted by Lardner, says of these epistles, that though all Paul's epistles are excellent, yet he most admires those written by him when a prisoner at Rome. Of the Epistle to the Ephesians he says it surpasses all human eloquence—rerum sublimitatem adæquans verbis sublimioribus, quam ulla unquam habuit lingua humana—describing the sublimity of the things by corresponding words more sublime than are found elsewhere in human language. The evidence that it was written when Paul was a prisoner is found in the epistle itself. Thus in ch. iii. 1, he says, "I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ—*ὁ δέσμιος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*—for you Gentiles." So he alludes to his afflictions in ch. iii. 13, "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you." In ch. iv. 1, he calls himself the "prisoner of the Lord," or in the margin, "in the Lord"—*ὁ δέσμιος ἐν Κυρίῳ*. And in ch. vi. 19, 20, there is an allusion which seems to settle the inquiry beyond dispute, and to prove that it was written while he was at Rome. He there says that he was an "ambassador *in bonds*"—*ἐν ἁλύσει*—*in chains, manacles*, or *shackles;* and yet he desires (ver. 19, 20) that they would pray for him, that utterance might be given him to open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, that he might speak boldly as he ought to speak. Now this is a remarkable circumstance. A man in custody, in bonds or chains, and that too for being an "ambassador," and yet asking the aid of their prayers, that in these circumstances he might have grace to be a bold preacher of the gospel. If he was in prison this could not well be. If he was under a strict prohibition it could not well be. The circumstances of the case tally exactly with the statement in the last chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that Paul was in custody in Rome; that he was permitted to "dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him" (ver. 16); that he was permitted to call the Jews together and to debate with them freely (ver. 17-28); and that Paul dwelt in his own hired house for two years, and "received all that came in with him, preaching the kingdom of God," &c. (ver. 30, 31). So exactly do these circumstances correspond that I have no doubt that was the time when the epistle was written. And so unusual is such a train of circumstances—so unlikely would it be to occur to a man to *forge* such a coincidence, that it furnishes a striking proof that the epistle was written, as it purports to be, by Paul. An impostor would not have thought of inventing such a coincidence. If it had occurred to him to make *any* such allusion, the place and time would have been more distinctly mentioned, and not have been left as

a mere incidental allusion. The apostle Paul is supposed to have been at Rome as a prisoner twice (comp. Intro. to 2 Tim.), and to have suffered martyrdom there about A.D. 65 or 66. If the Epistle to the Ephesians was written during his second imprisonment at Rome, as is commonly supposed, then it must have been somewhere between the years 63 and 65. Lardner and Hug suppose that it was written April, 61; Macknight supposes it was in 60 or 61; the editor of the Polyglott Bible places it at 64. The exact time when it was written cannot now be ascertained, and is not material.

§ 5. *To whom was the Epistle written?*

The epistle purports to have been written to the Ephesians—"to the saints which are at Ephesus,"—i. 1. But the opinion that it was written to the Ephesians has been called in question by many expositors. Dr. Paley (*Hor. Paul.*) supposes that it was written to the Laodiceans. Wetstein also maintained the same opinion. This opinion was expressly stated also by Marcion, a "heretic" of the second century. Michaelis (*Intro.*) supposes that it was a "circular epistle," addressed not to any church in particular, but intended for the Ephesians, Laodiceans, and some other churches of Asia Minor. He supposes that the apostle had several copies taken; that he made it intentionally of a very general character so as to suit all; that he affixed with his own hand the subscription, ch. vi. 24, to each copy—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" that at the beginning of the epistle the name was inserted of the particular church to which it was to be sent—as "to the church in Ephesus"—"in Laodicea," &c. When the several works composing the New Testament were collected into a volume he supposes that it so happened that the copy of this epistle which was used was one obtained from Ephesus, containing a direction to the saints there. This is also the opinion of Archbishop Usher and Koppe. It does not comport with the design of these Notes to go into an extended examination of this question; and after all that has been written on it, and the different opinions which have been entertained, it certainly does not become any one to be very confident. It is not a question of great importance, as it involves no point of doctrine or duty; but those who wish to see it discussed at length can be satisfied by referring to Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ;* to Michaelis' *Intro.*, vol. iv. ch. xx., and to the *Prolegomena* of Koppe. The arguments which are alleged to prove that it was addressed to the church at Laodicea, or at least *not* to the church at Ephesus, are summarily the following:—(1) The testimony of Marcion, a heretic of the second century, who affirms that it was sent to the church in Laodicea, and that instead of the reading (ch. i. 1), "in Ephesus," in the copy which he had it was "in Laodicea." But the opinion of Marcion is now regarded as of little weight. It is admitted that he was in the habit of altering the Greek text to suit his own views. (2) The principal objection to the opinion that it was written to the church at Ephesus is found in certain internal marks, and particularly in the want of any allusion to the fact that Paul had ever been there, or to anything that particularly related to the church there. This difficulty comprises several particulars. (*a*) Paul spent nearly three years in Ephesus, and was engaged there in deeply interesting transactions

and occurrences. He had founded the church, ordained its elders, taught them the doctrines which they held, and had at last been persecuted there and driven away. If the epistle was written to them it is remarkable that there is in the epistle no allusion to any one of these facts or circumstances. This is the more remarkable, as it was his usual custom to allude to the events which had occurred in the churches which he had founded (see the Epistles to the Corinthians and Philippians), and as on two other occasions at least he makes direct allusion to these transactions at Ephesus; see Acts xx. 18–35; 1 Cor. xv. 32. (*b*) In the other epistles which Paul wrote it was his custom to salute a large number of persons by name; but in this epistle there is no salutation of any kind. There is a general invocation of "peace to the brethren" (ch. vi. 23), but no mention of an individual by name. There is not even an allusion to the "elders" whom, with so much affection, he had addressed at Miletus (Acts xx.), and to whom he had given so solemn a charge. This is the more remarkable, as in this place he had spent three years in preaching the gospel, and must have been acquainted with all the leading members in the church. To the church at Rome, which he had never visited when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans, he sends a large number of salutations (ch. xvi.); to the church at Ephesus, where he had spent a longer time than in any other place, he sends none. (*c*) The name of Timothy does not occur in the epistle. This is remarkable, because Paul had left him there with a special charge (1 Tim. i. 3), and if he was still there it is singular that no allusion is made to him, and no salutation sent to him. If he had left Ephesus, and had gone to Rome to meet Paul as he requested (2 Tim. iv. 9), it is remarkable that Paul did not join his name with his own in sending the epistle to the church, or at least allude to the fact that he had arrived. This is the more remarkable, because in the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians, the name of Timothy is joined with that of Paul at the commencement of the epistle. (*d*) Paul speaks of the persons to whom this epistle was sent as if he had not been with them, or at least in a manner which is hardly conceivable, on the supposition that he had been the founder of the church. Thus in ch. i. 15, 16, he says, "Wherefore also after I *heard* of your faith in Christ Jesus," &c. But this circumstance is not conclusive. Paul may have been told of the *continuance* of their faith and of their *growing* love and zeal, and he may have alluded to that in this passage. (*e*) Another circumstance on which some reliance has been placed is the statement in ch. iii. 1, 2, "For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to you-ward," &c. It is argued (see Michaelis) that this is not language which would have been employed by one who had founded the church, and with whom they were all acquainted. He would not have spoken in a manner implying any doubt whether they had ever *heard* of him and his labours in the ministry on account of the Gentiles. Such are the considerations relied on to show that the epistle could not have been written to the Ephesians.

On the other hand there is proof of a very strong character that it was written to them. That proof is the following:—

1. The common reading in ch. i. 1, "To the saints which are in Ephesus." It is true, as we have seen, that this reading has been called in question.

Mill says that it is omitted by Basil (lib. 2, *Adversus Eunomium*), as he says, "on the testimony of the fathers and of ancient copies." Griesbach marks it with the sign *om.*, denoting that it was omitted by some, but that in his judgment it is to be retained. It is found in the Vulgate, the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Ethiopic in Walton's Polyglott. Rosenmüller remarks that "most of the ancient codices, and all the ancient versions, retain the word." To my mind this fact is conclusive. The testimony of Marcion is admitted to be of almost no authority; and as to the testimony of Basil, it is only one against the testimony of all the ancients, and is at best negative in its character; see the passage from Basil, quoted in Hug's *Introduction.*

2. A slight circumstance may be adverted to as throwing light incidentally on this question. This epistle was sent by Tychicus, ch. vi. 21. The Epistle to the Colossians was also sent from Rome by the same messenger, Col. iv. 7. Now there is a strong improbability in the opinion held by Michaelis, Koppe, and others, that this was a *circular* letter, sent to the churches at large, or that different copies were prepared, and the name Ephesus inserted in one, and Laodicea in another, &c. The improbability is this, that the apostle would at the same time send such a circular letter to several of the churches, and a *special* letter to the church at Colosse. What claim had *that* church to special notice? What pre-eminence had it over the church at Ephesus? And why should he send them a letter bearing so strong a resemblance to that addressed to the other churches, when the same letter would have suited the church at Colosse as well as the one which was actually sent to them; for there is a nearer resemblance between these two epistles, than any other two portions of the Bible. Besides, in 2 Tim. iv. 12, Paul says that he had sent "Tychicus *to Ephesus;*" and what is more natural than that at that time he sent this epistle by him?

3. There is the utter want of evidence from MSS. or versions, that this epistle was sent to Laodicea, or to any other church, except Ephesus. Not a MS. has been found having the name *Laodicea* in ver. i. 1; and not one which omits the words "in Ephesus." If it had been sent to another church, or if it had been a circular letter addressed to no particular church, it is scarcely credible that this could have occurred.

These considerations make it plain to me that this epistle was addressed, as it purports to have been, to the church in Ephesus. I confess myself wholly unable, however, to explain the remarkable circumstances that Paul does not refer to his former residence there; that he alludes to none of his troubles or his triumphs; that he makes no mention of the "elders," and salutes no one by name; and that throughout he addresses them as if they were to him personally unknown. In this respect it is unlike all the other epistles which he ever wrote, and all which we should have expected from a man in such circumstances. May it not be accounted for from *this very fact*, that an attempt to specify individuals where so many were known, would protract the epistle to an unreasonable length? There is, indeed, one supposition suggested by Dr. Macknight, which may possibly explain to some extent the remarkable circumstances above referred to. It is, that a direction may have been given by Paul to Tychicus, by whom he sent the letter, to send a copy of it to the Laodiceans, with an order to them to communicate it to the Colossians. In such a case everything local would be

designedly omitted, and the epistle would be of as general a character as possible. This is, however, mere conjecture, and does not remove the whole of the difficulty.

§ 6. *The Object for which the Epistle was written.*

Very various opinions have been formed in regard to the design for which this epistle was written. Macknight supposes that it was with reference to the Eleusinian mysteries, and to various religious rites in the Temple of Diana, and that Paul intended particularly to state the "mysteries" of the gospel in contradistinction from them. But there is no clear evidence that the apostle had any such object, and it is not necessary to go into an explanation of those mysteries in order to an understanding of the epistle. The epistle is such as might be addressed to any Christians, though there are allusions to customs which then prevailed, and to opinions then held, which it is desirable to understand in order to a just view of it. That there were Jews and Judaizing Christians in Ephesus, may be learned from the epistle itself. That there were those there who supposed that the Jews were to have a more elevated rank than the Gentiles, may also be learned from the epistle; and one object was to show that all true Christians, whether of Jewish or heathen origin, were on a level, and were entitled to the same privileges. That there was the prevalence of a false and dangerous philosophy there, may also be learned from the epistle; and that there were those who attempted to cause divisions, and who had violated the unity of the faith, may also be learned from it.

The epistle is divided into two parts—I. The doctrinal part, ch. i.–iii.; and II. The practical part, or the application, ch. iv.–vi.

I. The doctrinal part comprises the following topics:—

(1.) Praise to God for the Revelation of his eternal counsels of recovering mercy, ch. i. 3–14.

(2.) A prayer of the apostle, expressing his earnest desire that the Ephesians might avail themselves fully of all the advantages of this eternal purpose of mercy, ch. i. 15–23.

(3.) The doctrine of the native character of man, as being dead in sins, illustrated by the past lives of the Ephesians, ch. ii. 1–3.

(4.) The doctrine of regeneration by the grace of God, and the advantages of it, ch. ii. 5–7.

(5.) The doctrine of salvation by grace alone without respect to our own works, ch. ii. 8, 9.

(6.) The privilege of being thus admitted to the fellowship of the saints, ch. ii. 11–22.

(7.) A full statement of the doctrine that God meant to admit the Gentiles to the privileges of his people, and to break down the barriers between the Gentiles and the Jews, ch. iii. 1–12.

(8.) The apostle prays earnestly that they might avail themselves fully of this doctrine, and be able to appreciate fully the advantages which it was intended to confer; and with this prayer he closes the doctrinal part of the epistle, ch. iii. 13–21.

II. The practical part of the epistle embraces the following topics, viz.:—

(1.) Exhortation to unity, drawn from the consideration that there was one God, one faith, &c., ch. iv. 1–16.

(2.) An exhortation to a holy life *in general*, from the fact that they differed from other Gentiles, ch. iv. 17–24.

(3.) Exhortation to exhibit *particular* virtues—*specifying* what was required by their religion, and what they should avoid—particularly to avoid the vices of anger, lying, licentiousness, and intemperance, ch. iv. 25–32; ch. v. 1–20.

(4.) The duties of husbands and wives, ch. v. 21–33.

(5.) The duties of parents and children, ch. vi. 1–3.

(6.) The duties of masters and servants, ch. vi. 4–9.

(7.) An exhortation to fidelity in the Christian warfare, ch. vi. 10–20.

(8.) Conclusion, ch. vi. 21–24.

The style of this epistle is exceedingly animated. The apostle is cheered by the intelligence which he had received of their deportment in the gospel, and is warmed by the grandeur of his principal theme—the eternal purposes of divine mercy. Into the discussion of that subject he throws his whole soul, and there is probably no part of Paul's writings where there is more ardour, elevation, and *soul* evinced, than in this epistle. The great doctrine of predestination he approaches as a most important and vital doctrine; states it freely and fully, and urges it as the basis of the Christian's hope, and the foundation of eternal gratitude and praise. Perhaps nowhere is there a better illustration of the power of that doctrine to elevate the soul and fill it with grand conceptions of the character of God, and to excite grateful emotions, than in this epistle; and the Christian, therefore, may study it as a portion of the sacred writings eminently fitted to excite his gratitude, and to fill him with adoring views of God.

THE EPISTLE OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the [a]saints which are at [b]Ephesus, and to the [c]faithful in Christ Jesus:

a Ro.1.7. b Ac.19. & 20. c Col.1.2.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

(1) The salutation; ver. 1, 2.

(2) The doctrine of predestination, and its bearing and design; ver. 3–14.

(*a*) It is the foundation of praise to God, and is a source of gratitude; ver. 3.

(*b*) Christians have been chosen before the foundation of the world; ver. 4.

(*c*) The object was that they should be holy and blameless; ver. 4.

(*d*) They were predestinated to be the children of God; ver. 5.

(*e*) The cause of this was the good pleasure of God, or he did it according to the purpose of his will; ver. 5.

(*f*) The object of this was his own glory; ver. 6.

(3) The benefits of the plan of predestination to those who are thus chosen; ver. 7–14.

(*a*) They have redemption and the forgiveness of sins; ver. 7, 8.

(*b*) They are made acquainted with the mystery of the divine will; ver. 9, 10.

(*c*) They have obtained an inheritance in Christ; ver. 11.

(*d*) The object of this was the praise of the glory of God; ver. 12.

(*e*) As the result of this, or in the execution of this purpose, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; ver. 13, 14.

(4) An earnest prayer that they might have a full understanding of the great and glorious plan of redemption; ver. 15–23.

(*a*) Paul says that he had been informed of their faith; ver. 15.

(*b*) He always remembered them in his prayers; ver. 16.

(*c*) His special desire was that they might see the glory of the Lord Jesus, whom God had exalted to his own right hand in heaven; ver. 17–23.

1. *Paul, an apostle;* see Notes on Rom. i. 1. ¶ *By the will of God;* see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 1. ¶ *To the saints.* A name often given to Christians because they are holy; see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 2. ¶ *In Ephesus;* see the Introduction, § 1, 5. ¶ *And to the faithful in Christ Jesus.* This evidently refers to others than to those who were in Ephesus, and it is clear that Paul expected that this epistle would be read by others. He gives it a *general* character, as if he supposed that it might be transcribed, and become the property of the church at large. It was not uncommon for him thus to give a general character to the epistles which he addressed to particular churches, and so to write that others than those to whom they were particularly directed, might feel that they were addressed to them. Thus the first epistle to the Corinthians was addressed to "the church of God in Corinth—with all that in every place call upon the name of Christ Jesus our Lord." The second epistle to the Corinthians in like manner was addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." Perhaps, in the epistle before us, the apostle referred particularly to the churches of Asia Minor which he had not visited, but there is no reason for confining the address to them. All who are "faithful in Christ Jesus" may regard the epistle as addressed by the Holy Spirit to them, and may feel that they are as much interested in the doctrines, promises, and duties set forth

2 Grace [d]*be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed [e]*be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [1]*places* in Christ:

[d] Ga.1.3; Tit.1.4. [e] 2 Co.1.3; 1 Pe.1.3.

[1] or, things, He.9.23.

in this epistle, as were the ancient Christians of Ephesus. The word "faithful" here is not used in the sense of *trustworthy*, or in the sense of *fidelity*, as it is often employed, but in the sense of *believing*, or *having faith* in the Lord Jesus. The apostle addresses those who were firm in the faith—another name for true Christians. The epistle contains great doctrines about the divine purposes and decrees in which they, as Christians, were particularly concerned; important "mysteries" (ver. 9), of importance for them to understand, and which the apostle proceeds to communicate to them as such. The fact that the letter was designed to be published, shows that he was not unwilling that those high doctrines should be made known to the world at large; still they pertained particularly to the church, and they are doctrines which should be particularly addressed to the church. They are rather fitted to comfort the hearts of *Christians*, than to bring *sinners* to repentance. These doctrines may be addressed to the *church* with more prospect of securing a happy effect than to the world. In the church they will excite gratitude, and produce the hope which results from assured promises and eternal purposes; in the minds of sinners they may arouse envy, and hatred, and opposition to God.

2. *Grace to you*, &c.; see Notes, Rom. i. 7.

3. *Blessed* be *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This commences a sentence which continues to the close of ver. 12. The length of the periods in the writings of Paul, is one cause of the obscurity of his style, and renders an explanation often difficult. The meaning of this phrase is, that God has laid a foundation for gratitude for what he has done. The ground or reason of the praise here referred to, is that which is stated in the following verses. The leading thing on which the apostle dwells is God's eternal purpose—his everlasting counsel in regard to the salvation of man. Paul breaks out into the exclamation that God is worthy of praise for such a plan, and that his eternal purposes, now manifest to men, give exalted views of the character and glory of God. Most persons suppose the contrary. They feel that the plans of God are dark, and stern, and forbidding, and such as to render his character anything but amiable. They speak of him, when he is referred to as a sovereign, as if he were tyrannical and unjust, and they never connect the idea of that which is amiable and lovely with the doctrine of eternal purposes. There is no doctrine that is usually so unpopular; none that is so much reproached; none that is so much abused. There is none that men desire so much to disbelieve or avoid; none that they are so unwilling to have preached; and none that they are so reluctant to find in the Scriptures. Even many Christians turn away from it with dread; or if they *tolerate* it, they yet feel that there is something about it that is peculiarly dark and forbidding. Not so felt Paul. He felt that it laid the foundation for eternal praise; that it presented glorious views of God; that it was the ground of confidence and hope; and that it was desirable that Christians should dwell upon it and praise God for it. Let us feel, therefore, as we enter upon the exposition of this chapter, that God is to be praised for ALL his plans, and that it is *possible* for Christians to have such views of the doctrine of *eternal predestination* as to give them most elevated conceptions of the glory of the divine character. And let us also be *willing* to know the truth. Let us approach word after word, and phrase after phrase, and verse after verse, in this

chapter, willing to know *all* that God teaches; to believe all that he has revealed; and ready to say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for all that he has done." ¶ *Who hath blessed us.* Who does Paul mean here by "*us?*" Does he mean all the world? This cannot be, for all the world are not thus blessed with *all* spiritual blessings. Does he mean *nations?* For the same reason this cannot be. Does he mean the Gentiles in contradistinction from the Jews? Why then does he use the word *us*, including himself, who was a Jew? Does he mean to say that they were blessed with external privileges, and that this was the only object of the eternal purposes of God? This cannot be, for he speaks of "spiritual blessings;" he speaks of the persons referred to as having "redemption" and "the forgiveness of sins;" as having "obtained an inheritance," and as being sealed with the "Holy Spirit of promise." These appertain not to nations, or to external privileges, or the mere offers of the gospel, but to true Christians; to persons who have been redeemed. The persons referred to by the word "*us*," are those who are mentioned in ver. 1, as "*saints*,"—ἁγίοις—*holy;* and "faithful"—πιστοῖς—*believing*, or *believers.* This observation is important, because it shows that the plan or decree of God had reference to individuals, and not merely to nations. Many have supposed (see Whitby, Dr. A. Clarke, Bloomfield, and others) that the apostle here refers to the *Gentiles*, and that his object is to show that they were now admitted to the same privileges as the ancient Jews, and that the whole doctrine of predestination here referred to, has relation to that fact. But, I would ask, were there no *Jews* in the church at Ephesus? See Acts xviii. 20, 24; xix. 1—8. The matter of fact seems to have been, that Paul was uncommonly successful there among his own countrymen, and that his chief difficulty there arose, not from the Jews, but from the influence of the heathen; Acts xix. 24. Besides, what evidence is there that the apostle speaks in this chapter peculiarly of the Gentiles, or that he was writing to that portion of the church at Ephesus which was of Gentile origin? And if he was, why did he name himself among them as one on whom this blessing had been bestowed? The fact is, that this is a mere supposition, resorted to without evidence, and in the face of every fair principle of interpretation, to avoid an unpleasant doctrine. Nothing can be clearer than that Paul meant to write to *Christians as such;* to speak of privileges which they enjoyed as peculiar to themselves; and that he had no particular reference to *nations*, and did not design merely to refer to external privileges. ¶ *With all spiritual blessings.* Pardon, peace, redemption, adoption, the earnest of the Spirit, &c., referred to in the following verses — blessings which *individual Christians* enjoy, and not external privileges conferred on nations. ¶ *In heavenly* places *in Christ.* The word *places* is here understood, and is not in the original. It may mean heavenly *places*, or heavenly *things.* The word *places* does not express the best sense. The idea seems to be, that God has blessed us in Christ in regard to heavenly subjects or matters. In ver. 20, the word "places" seems to be inserted with more propriety. The same phrase occurs again in ch. ii. 6; iii. 10; and it is remarkable that it should occur in the same elliptical form four times in this one epistle, and, I believe, in no other part of the writings of Paul. Our translators have in each instance supplied the word "places," as denoting the rank or station of Christians, of the angels, and of the Saviour, to each of whom it is applied. The phrase probably means, in things pertaining to heaven; fitted to prepare us for heaven; and tending toward heaven. It probably refers here to every thing that was heavenly in its nature, or that had relation to heaven, whether gifts or graces. As the apostle is speaking, however, of the mass of Christians on whom these things had been bestowed, I rather suppose that he refers to what are called Christian

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

[a] 1 Pe.1.2.

[b] Lu.1.75; Col.1.22.

graces, than to the extraordinary endowments bestowed on the few. The sense is, that *in* Christ, *i. e.* through Christ, or by means of him, God had bestowed all spiritual blessings that were fitted to prepare for heaven—such as pardon, adoption, the illumination of the Spirit, &c.

4. *According as.* The importance of this verse will render proper a somewhat minute examination of the words and phrases of which it is composed. The general sense of the passage is, that these blessings pertaining to heaven were bestowed upon Christians in accordance with an eternal purpose. They were not conferred by chance or hap-hazard. They were the result of intention and design on the part of God. Their value was greatly enhanced from the fact that God had designed from all eternity to bestow them, and that they come to us as the result of his everlasting plan. It was not a recent plan; it was not an after-thought; it was not by mere chance; it was not by caprice; it was the fruit of an eternal counsel. Those blessings had all the value, and all the assurance of *permanency*, which must result from that fact. The phrase "according as"—καθὼς—implies that these blessings were in conformity with that eternal plan, and have flowed to us as the expression of that plan. They are limited by that purpose, for it marks and measures all. It was *as* God had chosen that it should be, and had appointed in his eternal purpose. ¶ *He hath chosen us.* The word "*us*" here shows that the apostle had reference to individuals, and not to communities. It includes Paul himself as one of the "chosen," and those whom he addressed—the mingled Gentile and Jewish converts in Ephesus. That it must refer to individuals is clear. Of no *community* as such can it be said that it was "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy." It is not true of the Gentile world as such, nor of any one of the nations making up the Gentile world. The word rendered here "hath chosen"—ἐξελίξατο—is from a word meaning *to lay out together*, (Passow,) to choose out, to select. It has the idea of making a choice or selection among different objects or things. It is applied to things, as in Luke x. 42, Mary "*hath chosen* that good part;"—she has made a choice, or selection of it, or has shown a *preference* for it. 1 Cor. i. 27, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world;" he has *preferred* to make use of them among all the conceivable things which might have been employed "to confound the wise;" comp. Acts i. 2, 24; vi. 5; xv. 22, 25. It denotes *to choose out*, with the accessary idea of kindness or favour. Mark xiii. 20, "For the elect's sake whom *he hath chosen*, he hath shortened the days." John xiii. 18, "I know whom I have chosen." Acts xiii. 17, "The God of this people of Israel *chose* our fathers;" that is, selected them from the nations to accomplish important purposes. This is evidently the sense of the word in the passage before us. It means to make a selection or choice with the idea of favour or love, and with a view to impart important benefits on those whom he chose. The idea of making some *distinction* between them and others, is essential to a correct understanding of the passage—since there can be no choice where no such distinction is made. He who chooses one out of many things makes a difference, or evinces a preference—no matter what the ground or reason of his doing it may be. Whether this refers to communities and nations, or to individuals, still it is true that a distinction is made or a preference given of one over another. It may be added, that so far as *justice* is concerned, it makes no difference whether it refers to nations or to individuals

If there is injustice in choosing an *individual* to favour, there cannot be less in choosing *a nation*—for a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals. Every objection which has ever been made to the doctrine of election as it relates to individuals, will apply with equal force to the choice of a nation to peculiar privileges. If a distinction is made, it may be made with as much propriety in respect to individuals as to nations. ¶ *In him.* In Christ. The choice was not without reference to any means of saving them; it was not a mere purpose to bring a certain number to heaven; it was with reference to the mediation of the Redeemer, and his work. It was a purpose that they should be saved *by* him, and share the benefits of the atonement. The whole choice and purpose of salvation had reference to him, and *out* of him no one was chosen to life, and no one out of him will be saved. ¶ *Before the foundation of the world.* This is a very important phrase in determining the time when the choice was made. It was not an *after-thought.* It was not commenced in time. The purpose was far back in the ages of eternity. But what is the meaning of the phrase "before the foundation of the world?" Dr. Clarke supposes that it means "from the commencement *of the religious system of the Jews*, which," says he, "the phrase sometimes means." *Such* principles of interpretation are they compelled to resort to who endeavour to show that this refers to a national election to privileges, and who deny that it refers to individuals. On such principles the Bible may be made to signify any thing and every thing. Dr. Chandler, who also supposes that it refers to nations, admits, however, that the word "foundation" means the beginning of any thing; and that the phrase here means, "before the world began" There is scarcely any phrase in the New Testament which is more clear in its signification than this. The word rendered "foundation"—καταβολή—means properly a laying down, a founding, a foundation—as where the foundation of a building is laid—and the phrase "before the foundation of the world" clearly means before the world was made, or before the work of creation; see Matt. xiii. 35; xxv. 34; Luke xi. 50; Heb. ix. 26; Rev. xiii. 8, in all which places the phrase "the foundation of the world" means the beginning of human affairs; the beginning of the world; the beginning of history, &c. Thus in John xvii. 24, the Lord Jesus says, "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," *i. e.* from eternity, or before the work of creation commenced. Thus Peter says (1 Epis. i. 20) of the Saviour, "who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." It was the purpose of God before the worlds were made, to send him to save lost men; comp. Rev. xvii. 8. Nothing can be clearer than that the phrase before us must refer to a purpose that was formed before the world was made. It is not a temporary arrangement; it has not grown up under the influence of vacillating purposes; it is not a plan newly formed, or changed with each coming generation, or variable like the plans of men. It has all the importance, dignity, and assurances of stability which necessarily result from a purpose that has been eternal in the mind of God. It may be observed here, (1.) that if the plan was formed "before the foundation of the world," all objections to the doctrine of an *eternal* plan are removed. If the plan was formed *before* the world, no matter whether a moment, an hour, a year, or millions of years, the plan is equally fixed, and the event equally necessary. All the objections which will lie against an *eternal* plan, will lie against a plan formed a day or an hour before the event. The one interferes with our freedom of action as much as the other. (2.) If the plan was formed "before the foundation of the world," it *was eternal.* God has no new plan. He forms no new schemes. He is not changing and vacillating. If we can ascertain what is the plan of God at any time, we can ascertain what his eternal plan was with reference to the event. It has always been the same

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

a Ro.8.29,30. b John 1.12. c Lu.12.32.

—for "he is of ONE MIND, and who can turn him?" Job xxiii. 13. In reference to the plans and purposes of the Most High, there is nothing better settled than that WHAT HE ACTUALLY DOES, HE ALWAYS MEANT TO DO—which is the doctrine of eternal decrees—*and the whole of it.* ¶ *That we should be holy.* Paul proceeds to state the *object* for which God had chosen his people. It is not merely that they should enter into heaven. It is not that they may live in sin. It is not that they may flatter themselves that they are safe, and then live as they please. The tendency among men has always been to abuse the doctrine of predestination and election; to lead men to say that if all things are fixed there is no need of effort; that if God has an eternal plan, no matter how men live, they will be saved if he has elected them, and that at all events they cannot change that plan, and they may as well enjoy life by indulgence in sin. The apostle Paul held no such view of the doctrine of predestination. In his apprehension it is a doctrine fitted to excite the gratitude of Christians, and the whole tendency and design of the doctrine, according to him, is to make men holy, and without blame before God in love. ¶ *And without blame before him in love.* The expression "in love," is probably to be taken in connection with the following verse, and should be rendered "*In love*, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children." It is all to be traced to the love of God. (1.) It was love for us which prompted to it. (2.) It is the highest expression of love *to be* ordained to eternal life—for what higher love could God show us? (3.) It is love on his part, because we had no claim to it, and had not deserved it. If this be the correct view, then the doctrine of predestination is not inconsistent with the highest moral excellence in the divine character, and should never be represented as the offspring of partiality and injustice. Then too we should give thanks that "God *has, in love,* predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will."

5. *Having predestinated us.* On the meaning of the word here used, see Notes on Rom. i. 4; viii. 29. The word used (προορίζω) means properly *to set bounds before;* and then to *predetermine.* There is the essential idea of setting bounds or limits, and of doing this beforehand. It is not that God determined to do it when it was actually done, but that he intended to do it beforehand. No language could express this more clearly, and I suppose this interpretation is generally admitted. Even by those who deny the doctrine of particular election, it is not denied that the word here used means to *pre-determine;* and they maintain that the sense is, that God had pre-determined to admit the Gentiles to the privileges of his people. Admitting then that the meaning is to predestinate in the proper sense, the only question is, *who* are predestinated? To whom does the expression apply? Is it to nations or to individuals? In reply to this, in addition to the remarks already made, I would observe, (1.) that there is no specification of *nations* here as such, no mention of the Gentiles in contradistinction from the Jews. (2.) Those referred to were those included in the word "*us,*" among whom Paul was one—but Paul was not a heathen. (3.) The same objection will lie against the doctrine of predestinating *nations* which will lie against predestinating *individuals.* (4.) Nations are made up of individuals, and the pre-determination must have had some reference to individuals. What is a nation but a collection of individuals? There is no such abstract being or thing as a nation; and if there was any purpose in regard to a nation, it must have had some reference to the individuals composing it. He that would act on the ocean, must act on the

drops of water that make up the ocean; for besides the collection of drops of water there is no ocean. He that would remove a mountain, must act on the particles of matter that compose that mountain; for there is no such thing as an abstract mountain. Perhaps there was never a greater illusion than to suppose that all difficulty is removed in regard to the doctrine of election and predestination, by saying that it refers to *nations*. What difficulty is lessened? What is gained by it? How does it make God appear more amiable and good? Does it render him less *partial* to suppose that he has made a difference among nations, than to suppose that he has made a difference among individuals? Does it remove any difficulty about the offer of salvation, to suppose that he has granted the knowledge of his truth to some *nations*, and withheld it from others? The truth is, that all the reasoning which has been founded on this supposition, has been merely throwing dust in the eyes. If there is *any* well-founded objection to the doctrine of decrees or predestination, it is to the doctrine *at all*, alike in regard to nations and individuals, and there are just the same difficulties in the one case as in the other. But there is no real difficulty in either. Who could worship or honour a God who had no plan, or purpose, or intention in what he did? Who can believe that the universe was formed and is governed without design? Who can doubt that what God *does* he always meant to do? When, therefore, he converts and saves a soul, it is clear that he always intended to do it. He has no new plan. It is not an after-thought. It is not the work of chance. If I can find out any thing that God has *done*, I have the most certain conviction that he *always meant* to do it—and this is all that is intended by the doctrine of election or predestination. What God does, he always meant to do. What he permits, he always meant to permit. I may add further, that if it is right to *do* it, it was right to *intend* to do it. If there is no injustice or partiality in the act itself, there is no injustice or partiality in the intention to perform it. If it is right to save a soul, it was also right to intend to save it. If it is right to condemn a sinner to wo, it was right to intend to do it. Let us then look *at the thing itself*, and if that is not wrong, we should not blame the purpose to do it, however long it has been cherished. ¶ *Unto the adoption, &c.*; see Notes, John i. 12. Rom. viii. 15. ¶ *According to the good pleasure of his will.* The word rendered "good pleasure"—(εὐδοκία)—means *a being well pleased;* delight in any thing, favour, good-will, Luke ii. 14; Phil. i. 15; comp. Luke xii. 32. Then it denotes purpose, or will, the idea of benevolence being included. *Robinson.* Rosenmüller renders the phrase, "from his most benignant decree." The evident object of the apostle is to state why God chose the heirs of salvation. It was done as it seemed good to him in the circumstances of the case. It was not that man had any control over him, or that man was consulted in the determination, or that it was based on the good works of man, real or foreseen. But we are not to suppose that there were no good reasons for what he has thus done. Convicts are frequently pardoned by an executive. He does it according to his own will, or as seems good in his sight. He is to be the judge, and no one has a right to control him in doing it. It may *seem* to be entirely arbitrary. The executive may not have communicated the reasons why he did it, either to those who are pardoned, or to the other prisoners, or to any one else. But we are not to infer that there was no *reason* for doing it. If he is a wise magistrate, and worthy of his station, it is to be presumed that there were reasons which, if known, would be satisfactory to all. But those reasons he is under no obligations to make known. Indeed, it might be improper that they should be known. Of that he is the best judge. Meantime, however, we may see what would be the effect in those who were not forgiven. It would excite, very likely,

6 To the praise [a] of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted [b] in the Beloved :

[a] 1Pe.2.9. [b] 1Pe.2.5.

their hatred, and they would charge him with partiality or with tyranny. But they should remember that whoever might be pardoned, and on whatever ground it might be done, they could not complain. They would suffer no more than they deserve. But what if, when the act of pardon was made known to one part, it was offered to the others also on certain plain and easy conditions? Suppose it should appear that while the executive meant, for wise but concealed reasons, to forgive a part, he had also determined to offer forgiveness to all. And suppose that they were in fact disposed in the highest degree to neglect it, and that no inducements or arguments could prevail on them to accept of it. Who then could blame the executive? Now this is about the case in regard to God, and the doctrine of election. All men were guilty and condemned. For wise reasons, which God has not communicated to us, he determined to bring a portion at least of the human race to salvation. This he did not intend to leave to chance and hap-hazard. He saw that all would of themselves reject the offer, and that unless some efficient means were used, the blood of the atonement would be shed in vain. He did not make known to men who they were that he meant to save, nor the reason why *they* particularly were to be brought to heaven. Meantime he meant to make the offer universal; to make the terms as easy as possible, and thus to take away every ground of complaint. If men *will not* accept of pardon; if they prefer their sins; if nothing can induce them to come and be saved, why should they complain? If the doors of a prison are open, and the chains of the prisoners are knocked off, and they *will not* come out, why should they complain that others are in fact *willing* to come out and be saved? Let it be borne in mind that the purposes of God correspond exactly to *facts* as they actually occur, and much of the difficulty is taken away. If in the *facts* there is no just ground of complaint, there can be none, because it was the *intention of God that the facts should be so*.

6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace.* This is a Hebraism, and means the same as "to his glorious grace." The object was to excite thanksgiving for his glorious grace manifested in electing love. The real tendency of the doctrine in minds that are properly affected, is not to excite opposition to God, or to lead to the charge of partiality, tyranny, or severity; it is to excite thankfulness and praise. In accordance with this, Paul introduced the statement (ver. 3) by saying that God was to be regarded as "blessed" for forming and executing this plan. The meaning is, that the doctrine of predestination and election lays the foundation of adoring gratitude and praise. This will appear plain by a few considerations. (1.) It is the only foundation of hope for man. If he were left to himself, all the race would reject the offers of mercy and would perish. History, experience, and the Bible alike demonstrate this. (2.) All the joys which any of the human race have, are to be traced to the purpose of God to bestow them. Man has no power of originating any of them, and if God had not intended to confer them, none of them would have been possessed. (3.) All these favours are conferred on those who had no claim on God. The Christian who is pardoned had no claim on God for pardon; he who is admitted to heaven could urge no claim for such a privilege and honour; he who enjoys comfort and peace in the hour of death, enjoys it only through the glorious grace of God. (4.) *All* that is done by election is fitted to excite praise. Election is to life, and pardon, and holiness, and heaven. But why should not a man praise God for these things? God chooses men to be holy, not sinful; to be happy, not miserable; to

7 In whom [a] we have redemption through his blood, the forgive

[a] He.9.12;1Pe.1.18,19.

be pure, not impure; to be saved, not to be lost. For these things he should be praised. He should be praised that he has not left the whole race to wander away and die. Had he chosen but one to eternal life, that one should praise him, and all the holy universe should join in the praise. Should he now see it to be consistent to choose but one of the fallen spirits, and to make him pure, and to readmit him to heaven, that one spirit would have occasion for eternal thanks, and all heaven might join in his praises. How much more is praise due to him, when the number chosen is not one, or a few, but when millions which no man can number, shall be found to be chosen to life; Rev. vii. 9. (5.) The doctrine of predestination to life has added no pang of sorrow to any one of the human race. It has made millions happy who would not otherwise have been, but not one miserable. It is not a choice to sorrow, it is a choice to joy and peace. (6.) No one has a right to complain of it. Those who are chosen assuredly should not complain of the grace which has made them what they are, and which is the foundation of all their hopes. And they who are *not* chosen, have no right to complain; for (*a*) they have no claim to life. (*b*) They are *in fact* unwilling to come. They have no desire to be Christians and to be saved. Nothing can induce them to forsake their sins and come to the Saviour. Why then should they complain if others are *in fact* willing to be saved? Why should a man complain for being left to take his own course, and to walk in his own way? Mysterious, therefore, as is the doctrine of predestination; and fearful and inscrutable as it is in some of its aspects, yet, in a just view of it, it is fitted to excite the highest expressions of thanksgiving, and to exalt God in the apprehension of man. He who has been redeemed and saved by the love of God; who has been pardoned and made pure by mercy; on whom the eye of compassion has been tenderly fixed, and for whom the Son of God has died, has abundant cause for thanksgiving and praise. ¶ *Wherein he hath made us accepted.* Has regarded us as the objects of favour and complacency. ¶ *In the Beloved.* In the Lord Jesus Christ, the well-beloved Son of God; Notes, Matt. iii. 17. He has chosen us in him, and it is through him that these mercies have been conferred on us.

7. *In whom we have redemption.* On the meaning of the word here rendered redemption—(ἀπολύτρωσις)—see Notes on Rom. iii. 24. The word here, as there, denotes that deliverance from sin and from the evil consequences of sin, which has been procured by the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ. This verse is one of the passages which prove conclusively that the apostle here does not refer to *nations* and to *national privileges.* Of what *nation* could it be said that it had "redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins?" ¶ *Through his blood.* By means of the atonement which he has made; see this phrase fully explained in the Notes on Rom. iii. 25. ¶ *The forgiveness of sins.* We obtain through his blood, or through the atonement which he has made, the forgiveness of sins. We are not to suppose that this is *all* the benefit which we receive from his death, or that this is *all* that constitutes redemption. It is the main, and perhaps the most important thing. But we also obtain the hope of heaven, the influences of the Holy Spirit, grace to guide us and to support us in trial, peace in death, and perhaps many more benefits. Still *forgiveness* is so prominent and important, that the apostle has mentioned that as if it were all. ¶ *According to the riches of his grace.* According to his rich grace; see a similar phrase explained in the Notes on Rom. ii. 4. The word *riches*, in the form in which it is used here, occurs also in several other places in this epistle; chap. i. 18; ii. 7; iii. 8, 16. It is what Paley

ness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

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

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath [a] purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of

[a] 2Ti.1.9.

(*Horæ Paul.*) calls "a *cant* phrase," and occurs often in the writings of Paul; see Rom. ii. 4; ix. 23; xi. 12, 33; Phil. iv. 19; Col. i. 27; ii. 2. It is not found in any of the other writings of the New Testament, except once in a sense somewhat similar, in James (ii. 5), "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world *rich* in faith," and Dr. Paley from this fact has constructed an argument to prove that this epistle was written by Paul. It is peculiar to him, and marks his style in a manner which cannot be mistaken. An impostor, or a forger of the epistle, would not have thought of introducing it, and yet it is just such a phrase as would naturally be used by Paul.

8. *Wherein he hath abounded.* Which he has liberally manifested to us. This grace has not been stinted and confined, but has been liberal and abundant. ¶ *In all wisdom.* That is, he has evinced great wisdom in the plan of salvation; wisdom in so saving men as to secure the honour of his own law, and in devising a scheme that was eminently adapted to save men; see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 24. ¶ *And prudence.* The word here used (φρονήσις) means understanding, thinking, prudence. The meaning here is, that, so to speak, God had evinced great *intelligence* in the plan of salvation. There was ample proof of *mind* and of *thought.* It was adapted to the end in view. It was far-seeing; skilfully arranged; and carefully formed. The sense of the whole is, that there was a wise design running through the whole plan, and abounding in it in an eminent degree.

9. *Having made known to us the mystery of his will.* The word *mystery* (μυστήριον) means literally something into which one must be *initiated* before it is fully known (from μυέω, to initiate, to instruct); and then any thing which is concealed or hidden. We commonly use the word to denote that which is above our comprehension or unintelligible. But this is never the meaning of the word in the New Testament. It means there some doctrine or fact which has been concealed, or which has not before been fully revealed, or which has been set forth only by figures and symbols. When the doctrine is made known, it may be as clear and plain as any other. Such was the doctrine that God meant to call the Gentiles, which was long concealed, at least in part, and which was not fully made known until the Saviour came, and which had been till that time *a mystery—a concealed truth*—though when it was revealed, there was nothing incomprehensible in it. Thus in Col. i. 26, "The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." So it was in regard to the doctrine of election. It was a mystery until it was made known by the actual conversion of those whom God had chosen. So in regard to the incarnation of the Redeemer; the atonement; the whole plan of salvation. Over all these great points there was a veil thrown, and men did not understand them until God revealed them. When they were revealed, the mystery was removed, and men were able to see clearly the manifestation of the will of God. ¶ *Which he hath purposed in himself.* Without foreign aid or counsel. His purposes originated in his own mind, and were concealed until he chose to make them known; see 2 Tim. i. 9.

10. *That in the dispensation.* The word here rendered "dispensation," οἰκονομία, means properly *the management of household affairs.* Then it means stewardship or administration; a dispensation or arrangement of things: a scheme or plan. The meaning here is, that

the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in

this plan was formed in order (εἰς) or *unto* this end, that in the full arrangement of times, or in the arrangements completing the filling up of the times, God might gather together in one all things. Tindal renders it, "to have it declared when the time was full come," &c. ¶ *The fulness of times.* When the times were fully completed; when all the periods should have passed by which he had prescribed, or judged necessary to the completion of the object. The period referred to here is that when all things shall be gathered together in the Redeemer at the winding up of human affairs, or the consummation of all things. The arrangement was made with reference to that, and embraced all things which conduced to that. The plan stretched from before "the foundation of the world" to the period when all times should be completed; and of course all the events occurring in that intermediate period were embraced in the plan. ¶ *He might gather together in one.* The word here used—ἀνακεφαλαιόω—means literally, to sum up, to recapitulate, as an orator does at the close of his discourse. It is from κεφαλή, the head; or κεφάλαιον, the sum, the chief thing, the main point. In the New Testament, the word means to collect under one head, or to comprehend several things under one; Rom. xiii. 9. "It is *briefly comprehended*, i. e. summed up under this one precept," sc., *love*. In the passage before us, it means that God would sum up, or comprehend all things in heaven and earth through the Christian dispensation; he would make one empire, under one head, with common feelings, and under the same laws. The reference is to the unity which will hereafter exist in the kingdom of God, when all his friends on earth and in heaven shall be united, and all shall have a common head. Now there is alienation. The earth has been separated from other worlds by rebellion. It has gone off into apostasy and sin. It refuses to acknowledge the Great Head to which other worlds are subject, and the object is to restore it to its proper place, so that there shall be one great and united kingdom. ¶ *All things.* τὰ πάντα. It is remarkable that Paul has here used a word which is in the neuter gender. It is not all *persons*, all angels, or all men, or all the elect, but all *things*. Bloomfield and others suppose that *persons* are meant, and that the phrase is used for τοὺς πάντας. But it seems to me that Paul did not use this word without design. All *things* are placed under Christ, (ver. 22; Matt. xxviii. 18,) and the design of God is to restore harmony in the universe. Sin has produced disorder not not only in *mind*, but in *matter*. The world is disarranged. The effects of transgression are seen everywhere; and the object of the plan of redemption is to put things on their pristine footing, and restore them as they were at first. Every thing is, therefore, put under the Lord Jesus, and all things are to be brought under his control, so as to constitute one vast harmonious empire. The amount of the declaration here is, that there is hereafter to be one kingdom, in which there shall be no jar or alienation; that the now separated kingdoms of heaven and earth shall be united under one head, and that henceforward all shall be harmony and love. The things which are to be united in Christ, are those which are "in heaven and which are on earth." Nothing is said of *hell*. Of course this passage cannot teach the doctrine of universal salvation, since there is *one* world which is not to have a part in this ultimate union. ¶ *In Christ.* By means of Christ, or under him, as the great head and king. He is to be the great agent in effecting this, and he is to preside over this united kingdom. In accordance with this view the heavenly inhabitants, the angels as well as the redeemed, are uniformly represented as uniting in the same worship, and as acknowledging the Redeemer as their common head and king; Rev. v. 9, 10, 11, 12. ¶ *Both which are in heaven.* Marg.

Christ, both which are in [1] heaven and which are on earth: *even* in him,

[1] *the heavens.*

11 In whom also we have ob-

as in Gr., *in the heavens.* Many different opinions have been formed of the meaning of this expression. Some suppose it to mean the saints in heaven, who died before the coming of the Saviour; and some that it refers to the Jews, designated as *the heavenly people*, in contradistinction from the Gentiles, as having nothing divine and heavenly in them, and as being of the *earth*. The more simple and obvious interpretation is, however, without doubt, the correct one, and this is to suppose that it refers to the holy inhabitants of other worlds. The object of the plan of salvation is to produce a harmony between them and the redeemed on earth, or to produce out of all, one great and united kingdom. In doing this, it is not necessary to suppose that any change is to be produced in the inhabitants of heaven. All the change is to occur among those on earth, and the object is to make out of all, one harmonious and glorious empire. ¶ *And which are on earth.* The redeemed on earth. The object is to bring them into harmony with the inhabitants of heaven. This is the great object proposed by the plan of salvation. It is to found one glorious and eternal kingdom, that shall comprehend all holy beings on earth and all in heaven. There is now discord and disunion. Man is separated from God, and from all holy beings. Between him and every holy being there is by nature discord and alienation. Unrenewed man has no sympathy with the feelings and work of the angels; no love for their employment; no desire to be associated with them. Nothing can be more unlike than the customs, feelings, laws, and habits which prevail on earth, from those which prevail in heaven. But the object of the plan of salvation is to restore harmony to those alienated communities, and produce eternal concord and love. Learn hence, (1.) The greatness and glory of the plan of salvation. It is no trifling undertaking to *reconcile worlds*, and of such discordant materials to found one great and glorious and eternal empire. (2.) The reason of the interest which angels feel in the plan of redemption; 1 Peter i. 12. They are deeply concerned in the redemption of those who, with them, are to constitute that great kingdom which is to be eternal. Without envy at the happiness of others; without any feeling that the accession of others will diminish *their* felicity or glory, they wait to hail the coming of others, and rejoice to receive even one who comes to be united to their number. (3.) This plan was worthy of the efforts of the Son of God. To restore harmony in heaven and earth; to prevent the evils of alienation and discord; to rear one immense and glorious kingdom, was an object worthy the incarnation of the Son of God. (4.) The glory of the Redeemer. He is to be exalted as the Head of this united and ever-glorious kingdom, and all the redeemed on earth and the angelic hosts shall acknowledge him as their common Sovereign and Head. (5.) This is the greatest and most important enterprise on earth. It should engage every heart, and enlist the powers of every soul. It should be the earnest desire of all to swell the numbers of those who shall constitute this united and ever-glorious kingdom, and to bring as many as possible of the human race into union with the holy inhabitants of the other world.

11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.* We who are Christians. Most commentators suppose that by the word "*we*" the Jews particularly are intended, and that it stands in contradistinction from "ye," as referring to the Gentiles, in ver. 13. This construction, they suppose, is demanded by the nature of the passage. The meaning may then be, that the Jews who were believers had *first* obtained a part in the plan of redemption, as the offer was first made

tained an inheritance, [a] being predestinated according to the purpose

[a] Ac.20.32.

of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;

to them, and then that the same favour was conferred also on the Gentiles. Or it may refer to those who had been first converted, without particular reference to the fact that they were Jews; and the reference may be to the apostle and his fellow-labourers. This seems to me to be the correct interpretation. "*We* the ministers of religion first believed, and have obtained an inheritance in the hopes of Christians, that we should be to the praise of God's glory; and *you* also, after hearing the word of truth, believed;" ver. 13. The word which is rendered "obtained our inheritance" — κληρόω — means literally *to acquire by lot*, and then to obtain, to receive. Here it means that they had received the favour of being to the praise of his glory for having first trusted in the Lord Jesus. ¶ *Being predestinated;* ver. 5. ¶ *According to the purpose.* On the meaning of the word *purpose*, see Notes, Rom. viii. 28. ¶ *Of him who worketh all things.* Of God, the universal agent. The affirmation here is not merely that God accomplishes the designs of salvation according to the counsel of his own will, but that *he does everything.* His agency is not confined to one thing, or to one class of objects. Every object and event is under his control, and is in accordance with his eternal plan. The word rendered *worketh* — ἐνεργέω — means to work, to be active, to produce; Eph. i. 20; Gal. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 13. A universal agency is ascribed to him. "The same God which *worketh* all in all;" 1 Cor. xii. 6. He has an agency in causing the emotions of our hearts. "God, who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" Phil. ii. 13. He has an agency in distributing to men their various allotments and endowments. "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will;" 1 Cor. xii. 11. The agency of God is seen everywhere. Every leaf, flower, rosebud, spire of grass; every sun-beam, and every flash of lightning; every cataract and every torrent, all declare his agency; and there is not an object that we see that does not bespeak the control of an All-present God. It would be impossible to affirm more explicitly that God's agency is universal, than Paul does in the passage before us. He does not attempt to prove it. It is one of those points on which he does not deem it necessary to pause and reason, but which may be regarded as a conceded point in the discussion of other topics, and which may be employed without hesitation in their illustration. Paul does not state the *mode* in which this is done. He affirms merely the fact. He does not say that he *compels* men, or that he overbears them by mere physical force. His agency he affirms to be universal; but it is undoubtedly in accordance with the nature of the object, and with the laws which he has impressed on them. His agency in the work of creation was absolute and entire; for there was nothing to act on, and no established laws to be observed. Over the mineral kingdom his control must also be entire, yet in accordance with the laws which he has impressed on matter. The crystal and the snow are formed by his agency; but it is in accordance with the laws which he has been pleased to appoint. So in the vegetable world his agency is everywhere seen; but the lily and the rose blossom in accordance with uniform laws, and not in an arbitrary manner. So in the animal kingdom. God gives sensibility to the nerve, and excitability and power to the muscle. He causes the lungs to heave, and the arteries and veins to bear the blood along the channels of life; but it is not in an arbitrary manner. It is in accordance with the laws which he has ordained and he never disregards in his agency over these kingdoms. So in his government of mind. He "works" everywhere. But he does it in accordance

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory who first [1] trusted in Christ.

[1] or, *hoped.*

with the laws of mind. His agency is not exactly of the same kind on the rose-bud that it is on the diamond, nor on the nerve that it is on the rose-bud, nor on the heart and will that it is on the nerve. In all these things he consults the laws which he has impressed on them; and as he chooses that the nerve should be affected in accordance with its laws and properties, so it is with mind. God does not violate its laws. Mind is free. It is influenced by truth and motives. It has a sense of right and wrong. And there is no more reason to suppose that God disregards these laws of mind in controlling the intellect and the heart, than there is that he disregards the laws of crystallization in the formation of the ice, or of gravitation in the movements of the heavenly bodies. The general doctrine is, that God works in all things, and controls all; but that *his agency everywhere is in accordance with the laws and nature of that part of his kingdom where it is exerted.* By this simple principle we may secure the two great points which it is desirable to secure on this subject, (1.) the doctrine of the universal agency of God; and (2.) the doctrine of the freedom and responsibility of man. ¶ *After the counsel of his own will.* Not by consulting his creatures, or conforming to their views, but by his own views of what is proper and right. We are not to suppose that this is by *mere* will, as if it were arbitrary, or that he determines anything without good reason. The meaning is, that his purpose is determined by what *he* views to be right, and without consulting his creatures or conforming to their views. His dealings often seem to us to be arbitrary. We are incapable of perceiving the reasons of what he does. He makes those his friends who we should have supposed would have been the last to have become Christians. He leaves those who seem to us to be on the borders of the kingdom, and they remain unmoved and unaffected. But we are not thence to suppose that he is arbitrary. In every instance, we are to believe that there is a good reason for what he does, and one which we may be permitted yet to see, and in which we shall wholly acquiesce. The phrase "counsel of his own will" is remarkable. It is designed to express in the strongest manner the fact that it is not by human counsel or advice. The word "counsel" — βουλή — means *a council* or *senate;* then a determination, purpose, or decree; see Rob. Lex. Here it means that his determination was formed by his own will, and not by human reasoning. Still, his will in the case may not have been arbitrary. When it is said of man that he forms his own purposes, and acts according to his own will, we are not to infer that he acts without reason. He may have the highest and best reasons for what he does, but he does not choose to make them known to others, or to consult others. So it may be of God, and so we should presume it to be. It may be added, that we ought to have such confidence in him as to believe that he will do all things well. The best possible evidence that anything is done in perfect wisdom and goodness, is the fact that God does it. When we have ascertained that, we should be satisfied that all is right.

12. *That we should be to the praise of his glory.* Should be the occasion or the means of celebrating his glory; or that praise should be ascribed to him as the result of our salvation. ¶ *Who first trusted in Christ.* Marg., *hoped.* This is in accordance with the original. The foundation of their *hope* was the Saviour. Some suppose that the apostle here refers to the Jews who were converted before the gospel was preached extensively to the Gentiles. The reason for this opinion is, that in the following verse he contrasts those to whom he here refers with others whom he was addressing. But it may be that by the word "we" in ver. 11, 12, he refers to himself and

In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard [a] the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed [b] with that holy Spirit of promise,

a Ro.10.17. *b* 2Co.1.22.

14 Which is the earnest [c] of our inheritance, until the redemption [d] of the purchased [e] possession, unto the [f] praise of his glory.

c 2Co.5.5. *d* Ro.8.23. *e* Ac.20.28. *f* ver.6,12.

to his fellow-labourers who had *first* hoped in the Saviour, and had then gone and proclaimed the message to others; see Notes on ver. 11. They *first* believed, and then preached to others; and they also believed, and became partakers of the same privileges.

13. *In whom ye also* trusted. This stands in contrast with those who had *first* embraced the gospel.—¶ *Heard the word of truth.* The gospel; called the *word* or message of truth, the word of God, &c. See Rom. x. 17. The phrase "the word of truth" means "the true word or message." It was a message unmixed with Jewish traditions or Gentile philosophy. ¶ *The gospel of your salvation.* The gospel bringing salvation to you. ¶ *In whom also.* In the Lord Jesus. A little different translation of this verse will convey more clearly its meaning. "In whom also, ye, having heard the word of truth, (the gospel of your salvation,) in whom having also believed, ye were sealed," &c. The sealing was the result of believing, and that was the result of hearing the gospel; comp. Rom. x. 14, 15. ¶ *Ye were sealed.* On the meaning of the word *seal*, see Notes on John iii. 33; vi. 27. On the phrase "ye were sealed," see Notes on 2 Cor. i. 22. ¶ *With that holy Spirit of promise.* With the Holy Spirit that was promised; see John xvi. 7—11, 13; xv. 26; xiv. 16, 17. It is not improbable, I think, that the apostle here refers particularly to the occurrence of which we have a record in Acts xix. 1—6. Paul, it is there said, having passed through the upper provinces of Asia Minor, came to Ephesus. He found certain persons who were the disciples of John, and he asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they "believed," ver. 2. They replied that they had not heard whether there was any Holy Ghost, and that they had been baptized unto John's baptism. Paul taught them the true nature of the baptism of John; explained to them the Christian system; and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and "the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." They were thus sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, "*after* they had believed" (Eph. i. 13); they had the full evidence of the favour of God in the descent of the promised Holy Spirit, and in his miraculous influences. If this be the true interpretation, it constitutes a striking coincidence between the epistle and the Acts, of such a nature as constitute the arguments in Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ* (though he has not referred to this), which shows that the epistle was not forged. The circumstance is such that it would not have been alluded to in this manner by one who should forge the epistle; and the mention of it in the epistle is so slight, that no one, from the account there, would think of forging the account in the Acts. The coincidence is just such as would occur on the supposition that the transaction actually occurred, and that both the Acts and the epistle are genuine. At the same time, there *is* a sealing of the Holy Spirit which is common to all Christians; see the Notes referred to on 2 Cor. i. 22.

14. *Which is the earnest of our inheritance.* On the meaning of this, see Notes on 2 Cor. i. 22. ¶ *Until the redemption;* see Notes on Rom. viii. 23. The meaning here is, we have the Holy Spirit as the pledge that that shall be ours, and the Holy Spirit will be imparted to

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

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

17 That the God [a] of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,

[a] John 20.17.

us until we enter on that inheritance. ¶ *Of the purchased possession.* Heaven, purchased for us by the death of the Redeemer. The word here used —περιποίησις—occurs in the following places in the New Testament: 1 Thess. v. 9, rendered "to *obtain* salvation;" 2 Thess. ii. 14, "to the *obtaining* of the glory of the Lord;" Heb. x. 39, "to the *saving* of the soul;" 1 Pet. ii. 9, "a *peculiar* people;" literally, a people of *acquirement* to himself; and in the passage before us. It properly means, an acquisition, an obtaining, a laying up. Here it means, the complete deliverance from sin, and the eternal salvation *acquired* for us by Christ. The influence of the Holy Spirit, renewing and sanctifying us, comforting us in trials, and sustaining us in afflictions, is the pledge that the redemption is yet to be wholly ours. ¶ *Unto the praise of his glory;* see ver. 6.

15. *Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus.* This is one of the passages usually relied on by those who suppose that this epistle was not written to the Ephesians. The argument is, that he writes to them as if they were strangers to him, and that it is not language such as would be used in addressing a people among whom he had spent three years; see the Intro. § 5. But this inference is not conclusive. Paul had been some years absent from Ephesus when this epistle was written. In the difficult communication in those times between distant places, it is not to be supposed that he would hear often from them. Perhaps he had heard nothing after the time when he bade farewell to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus (Acts xx.), until the time here referred to. It would be, therefore, a matter of great interest with him to hear from them; and when in some way intelligence was brought to him at Rome of a very gratifying character about their growth in piety, he says that his anxiety was relieved, and that he did not cease to give thanks for what he had heard, and to commend them to God in prayer.

16. *Cease not to give thanks for you.* In the prosperity of the church at Ephesus he could not but feel the deepest interest, and their welfare he never forgot. ¶ *Making mention of you in my prayers.* Paul was far distant from them, and expected to see them no more. But he had faith in prayer, and he sought that they might advance in knowledge and in grace. What was the particular subject of his prayers, he mentions in the following verses.

17. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The God who has sent the Lord Jesus into the world, and appointed him as the Mediator between himself and man. The particular reason why Paul here speaks of him as "the God of the Lord Jesus" is, that he prays that they might be further acquainted with the Redeemer, and be enlightened in regard to the great work which he came to do. ¶ *The Father of glory.* The glorious Father, that is, the Father who is worthy to be praised and honoured. ¶ *May give unto you the Spirit of wisdom.* May make you wise to understand the great doctrines of the religion of the Redeemer. ¶ *And revelation.* That is, revealing to you more and more of the character of the Redeemer, and of the nature and results of his work. It is probable here that by the word "Spirit" the apostle refers to the Holy Spirit as the author of all wisdom, and the revealer of all truth. His prayer is, that God would grant to them the Holy Spirit to make them wise, and to reveal his will to them. ¶ *In the knowledge of him.* Marg. *for the acknowledgment.* That is, in order that you may more fully acknowledge him, or know him more intimately and thoroughly. They had already made high attainments (ver.

may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom [b] and revelation [1] in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes [c] of your understanding being enlightened; that

b Col.1.9. c Is.42.7.
1 or, *for the acknowledgment.*

ye may know what is the hope [d] of his calling, and what the riches [e] of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what *is* the exceeding

d ch.4.4. e ch.3.16.

15), but Paul felt that they might make still higher; and the idea here is, that however far Christians may have advanced in knowledge and in love, there is an unfathomed depth of knowledge which they may still explore, and which they should be exhorted still to attempt to fathom. How far was Paul from supposing that the Ephesians had attained to perfection!

18. *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened.* The *construction* here in the Greek is, probably, "that he may give you (δῷη, ver. 17) the Spirit of wisdom, &c.—eyes of the understanding enlightened," &c. Or the phrase, "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened," may be in the accusative absolute, which Koppe and Bloomfield prefer. The phrase, "the eyes of the understanding," is a figure that is common in all languages. Thus Philo says, "What the eye is to the body, that is the mind to the soul;" comp. Matth. vi. 22. The eye is the instrument by which we see; and in like manner the understanding is that by which we perceive truth. The idea here is, that Paul not only wished their *hearts* to be right, but he wished their *understanding* to be right also. Religion has much to do in enlightening the mind. Indeed, its effect there is not less striking and decisive than it is on the heart. The understanding has been blinded by sin. The views which men entertain of themselves and of God are narrow and wrong. The understanding is enfeebled and perverted by the practice of sin. It is limited in its operations by the necessity of the case, and by the impossibility of fully comprehending the great truths which pertain to the divine administration. One of the first effects of true religion is on the understanding. It enlarges its views of truth; gives it more exalted conceptions of God; corrects its errors; raises it up towards the great Fountain of love. And nowhere is the effect of the true religion more apparent than in shedding light on the intellect of the world, and restoring the weak and perverted mind to a just view of the proportion of things, and to the true knowledge of God. ¶ *That ye may know what is the hope of his calling.* What is the full import of that hope to which he has called and invited you by his Spirit and his promises. The meaning here is, that it would be an inestimable privilege to be made fully acquainted with the benefits of the Christian hope, and to be permitted to understand fully what Christians have a right to expect in the world of glory. This is the *first* thing which the apostle desires they should fully understand. ¶ *And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance.* This is the *second* thing which Paul wishes them to understand. There is a force in this language which can be found perhaps nowhere else than in the writings of Paul. His mind is full, and language is burdened and borne down under the weight of his thoughts; see Notes on 2 Cor. iv. 17. On the word "riches" here used, see Notes on ver. 7. The phrase "riches of glory" means *glorious wealth;* or, as we would say, "how rich and glorious!" The meaning is, that there is an abundance—an infinitude of wealth. It is not such a possession as man may be heir to in this world, which is always limited from the necessity of the case, and which cannot be enjoyed long; it is infinite and inexhaustible; comp. Notes, Rom. ii. 4. The "inheritance" here referred to is eternal life. Notes, Rom. viii. 17. ¶ *In the saints.* Among the saints. Note, 1 Cor. i. 2.

19. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power.* On the language here used, comp. Notes on 2 Cor. iv.

greatness of his power [a] to us-ward who believe, according to the working [1] of his mighty power,

a Ps.110.3.
1 *the might of his power.*

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

a Ac.2.24,33.

17. There is much emphasis and energy of expression here, as if the apostle were labouring under the greatness of his theme, and wanted words to express the magnitude of his conception. This is the *third* thing which he was particularly desirous they should know—that they should be fully acquainted with the *power* of God in the salvation of men. He refers not merely to the power which he *had* evinced in their salvation, but also to what the gospel was *able* to accomplish, and which they *might* yet experience. The "power" referred to here as exercised towards believers does not refer to one thing merely. It is the whole *series* of the acts of power towards Christians which results from the work of the Redeemer. There was power exerted in their conversion. There would be power exerted in keeping them. There would be power in raising them up from the dead, and exalting them with Christ to heaven. The religion which they professed was a religion of *power*. In all the forms and stages of it the power of God was manifested towards them, and would be until they reached their final inheritance. ¶ *To us-ward.* Towards us, or in relation to us. ¶ *Who believe.* Who are Christians. ¶ *According to the working of his mighty power.* Marg., *The might of his power.* This should be taken with the clause in the following verse, "which he wrought in Christ;" and the meaning is, that the power which God has exerted in us is in accordance with the power which was shown in raising up the Lord Jesus. It was the proper result of that, and was power of a similar kind. The same power is requisite to convert a sinner which is demanded in raising the dead. Neither will be accomplished but by omnipotence (see Notes, ch. ii. 5); and the apostle wished that they should be fully apprised of this fact, and of the vast *power* which God had put forth in raising them up from the death of sin. To illustrate this sentiment is one of his designs in the following verses; and hence he goes on to show that men before their conversion were "dead in trespasses and sins;" that they had no spiritual life; that they were the "children of wrath;" that they were raised up from their death in sin by the same power which raised the Lord Jesus from the grave, and that they were wholly saved by grace; ch. ii. 1—10. In order to set this idea of the *power* which God had put forth in their regeneration in the strongest light, he goes into a magnificent description of the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus, and shows how that was connected with the renewing of Christians. God had set him over all things. He had put all things under his feet, and had made principalities and dominions everywhere subject to him. In this whole passage (ch. i. 19—23; ii. 1—10), the *main thing* to be illustrated is the POWER which God has shown in renewing and saving his people; and the leading sentiment is, that the SAME power is evinced in that which was required to raise up the Lord Jesus from the dead, and to exalt him over the universe.

20. *Which he wrought in Christ.* Which he exerted in relation to the Lord Jesus when he was dead. The *power* which was then exerted was as great as that of creation. It was imparting life to a cold and "mangled" frame. It was to open again the arteries and veins, and teach the heart to beat and the lungs to heave. It was to diffuse vital warmth through the rigid muscles, and to communicate to the body the active functions of life. It is impossible to conceive of a more direct exertion of *power* than in raising up the dead; and there is no more striking illustration of the nature of conversion than in such a resurrection. ¶ *And set* him *at his*

21 Far [b] above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ;

[b] Ph. 2.9; Col.2.10.

22 And hath put [a] all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,

[a] Ps.8.6; Mat.28.18.

own right hand. The idea is, that great *power* was displayed by this, and that a similar exhibition is made when man is renewed and exalted to the high honour of being made an heir of God. On the *fact* that Jesus was received to the right hand of God, see Notes on Mark xvi. 19; comp. Notes on Acts ii. 33. ¶ *In the heavenly* places; see Notes on ver. 3. The phrase here evidently means in heaven itself.

21. *Far above all principality.* The general sense in this verse is, that the Lord Jesus was exalted to the highest conceivable dignity and honour; comp. Phil. ii. 9; Col. ii. 10. In this beautiful and most important passage, the apostle labours for words to convey the greatness of his conceptions, and uses those which denote the highest conceivable dignity and glory. The *main* idea is, that God had manifested great *power* in thus exalting the Lord Jesus, and that similar power was exhibited in raising up the sinner from the death of sin to the life and honour of believing. The work of religion throughout was a work of power; a work of exalting and honouring *the dead,* whether dead in sin or in the grave; and Christians ought to know the extent and glory of the power thus put forth in their salvation. The word rendered "far above"—ὑπεράνω—is a compound word, meaning *high above,* or greatly exalted. He was not merely *above* the ranks of the heavenly beings, as the head; he was not one of their own rank, placed by office a little above them, but he was infinitely exalted over them, as of different rank and dignity. How could this be if he were a mere man; or if he were an angel? The word rendered "*principality*"—ἀρχή—means properly, *the beginning;* and then the first, the first place, power, dominion, pre-eminence, rulers, magistrates, &c. It may refer here to any rank and power, whether among men or angels, and the sense is, that Christ is exalted above all. ¶ *And power.* It is not easy to distinguish between the exact meaning of the words which the apostle here uses. The general idea is, that Christ is elevated above all ranks of creatures, however exalted, and by whatever name they may be known. As in this he refers to the "world that is to come," as well as this world, it is clear that there is a reference here to the ranks of the angels, and probably he means to allude to the prevailing opinion among the Jews, that the angels are of different orders. Some of the Jewish Rabbies reckon four, others ten orders of angels, and they presume to give them names according to their different ranks and power. But all this is evidently the result of mere fancy. The Scriptures hint in several places at a difference of rank among the angels, but the sacred writers do not go into detail. It may be added that there is no improbability in such a subordination, but it is rather to be presumed to be true. The creatures of God are not made alike; and difference of degree and rank, as far as our observation extends, everywhere prevails. On this verse comp. Notes on Rom. viii. 38. ¶ *Dominion.* Gr. *Lordship.* ¶ *And every name that is named.* Every creature of every rank. ¶ *Not only in this world.* Not only above all kings, and princes, and rulers of every grade and rank on earth. ¶ *But also in that which is to come.* This refers undoubtedly to heaven. The meaning is, that he is supreme over all.

22. *And hath put all* things *under his feet;* see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 27. ¶ *And gave him* to be *the head over all* things. Appointed him to be the supreme ruler. ¶ *To the church.* With reference to the church, or for its benefit and welfare; see Notes on

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

[a] 1 Co.12.12; Col.1.18,24.

John xvii. 2. The universe is under his control and direction for the welfare of his people. (1.) All the elements—the physical works of God—the winds and waves—the seas and rivers—all are under him, and all are to be made tributary to the welfare of the church. (2.) Earthly kings and rulers; kingdoms and nations are under his control. Thus far Christ has controlled all the wicked rulers of the earth, and they have not been able to destroy that church which he redeemed with his own blood. (3.) Angels in heaven, with all their ranks and orders, are under his control with reference to the church; see Notes on Heb. i. 14; comp. Matt. xxvi. 53. (4.) Fallen angels are under his control, and shall not be able to injure or destroy the church. See Notes on Matt. xvi. 18. The church, therefore, is safe. All the great powers of heaven, earth, and hell, are made subject to its Head and King; and no weapon that is formed against it shall prosper.

23. *Which is his body.* This comparison of the church with *a person* or body, of which the Lord Jesus is the head, is not uncommon in the New Testament; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. xi. 3; xii. 27; Eph. iv. 15, 16. ¶ *The fulness of him.* The word here rendered *fulness*—πλήρωμα—means properly, that with which any thing is filled; the filling up; the contents; Notes, Rom. xi. 12. The exact idea here, however, is not very clear, and interpreters have been by no means united in their opinions of the meaning. It seems probable that the sense is, that the church is the *completion* or *filling up* of his power and glory. It is that without which his dominion would not be complete. He has control over the angels and over distant worlds, but his dominion would not be complete without the control over his church, and that is so glorious, that it *fills up* the honour of the universal dominion, and makes his empire complete. According to Rosenmüller, the word *fulness* here means a *great number* or multitude; a multitude, says he, which, not confined to its own territory, spreads afar, and fills various regions. Koppe also regards it as synonymous with *multitude* or *many*, and supposes it to mean *all* the dominion of the Redeemer over the body—the church. He proposes to translate the whole verse, "He has made him the Head over his church, that he might rule it as his own body—the whole wide state of his universal kingdom." "This," says Calvin (*in loc.*), "is the highest honour of the church, that the Son of God regards himself as in a certain sense imperfect unless he is joined to us." The church constitutes the *complete body* of the Redeemer. A body is complete when it has all its members and limbs in proper proportions, and those members might be said to be the *completion*, or the filling-up, or the *fulness*—πλήρωμα—of the body or the person. This language would not, indeed, be such as would usually be adopted to express the idea now; but this is evidently the sense in which Paul uses it here. The meaning is, that the church sustains the same relation to Christ, which the body does to the head. It helps to form the entire person. There is a close and necessary union. The one is not complete without the other. And one is dependent on the other. When the body has all its members in due proportion, and is in sound and vigorous health, the whole person then is complete and entire. So it is to be in the kingdom of the Redeemer. He is the head; and that redeemed Church is the body, the fulness, the completion, the filling-up of the entire empire over which he presides, and which he rules. On the meaning of the word *fulness*—πλήρωμα—the reader may consult Storr's Opuscula, vol. i. pp. 144—187, particularly pp. 169—183. Storr understands the word in the sense of full or abundant mercy, and supposes that it refers to the great benignity which

God has shown to his people, and renders it, "The great benignity of him who filleth all things with good, as he called Jesus from the dead to life and placed him in heaven, so even you, sprung from the heathen, who were dead in sin on account of your many offences in which you formerly lived, &c.—hath he called to life by Christ." This verse, therefore, he would connect with the following chapter, and he regards it all as designed to illustrate the great power and goodness of God Mr. Locke renders it, "Which is his body, which is completed by him alone," and supposes it means, that Christ is the head, who perfects the church by supplying all things to all its members which they need. Chandler gives an interpretation in accordance with that which I have first suggested, as meaning that the church is the full "complement" of the body of Christ; and refers to Ælian and Dionysius Halicarnassus, who use the word "fulness" or πλήρωμα as referring to the rowers of a ship. Thus also we say that the ship's crew is its "complement," or that a ship or an army has its *complement* of men; that is, the ranks are filled up or complete. In like manner, the church will be the filling-up, or the complement, of the great kingdom of the Redeemer—that which will give *completion* or perfectness to his universal dominion. ¶ *Of him.* Of the Redeemer. ¶ *That filleth all in all.* That fills all things, or who pervades all things; see Notes, 1 Cor. xii. 6; xv. 28; comp. Col. iii. 11. The idea is, that there is no place where he is not, and which he does not fill; and that he is the source of all the holy and happy influences that are abroad in the works of God. It would not be easy to conçeive of an expression more certainly denoting omnipresence and universal agency than this; and if it refers to the Lord Jesus, as seems to be indisputable, the passage teaches not only his supremacy, but demonstrates his universal agency, and his omnipresence—things that pertain only to God. From this passage we may observe, (1.) That just views of the exaltation of the Redeemer are to be obtained only by the influence of the Spirit of God on the heart; ver. 17—19. Man, by nature, has no just conceptions of the Saviour, and has no desire to have. It is only as the knowledge of that great doctrine is imparted to the mind by the Spirit of God, that we have any practical and saving acquaintance with such an exaltation. The Christian sees him, by faith, exalted to the right hand of God, and cheerfully commits himself and his all to him, and feels that all his interests are safe in his hands. (2.) It is very desirable to have such views of an exalted Saviour. So Paul felt when he earnestly prayed that God would give such views to the Ephesians, ver. 17—20. It was desirable in order that they might have a right understanding of their privileges; in order that they might know the extent of the power which had been manifested in their redemption; in order that they might commit their souls with confidence to him. In my conscious weakness and helplessness; when I am borne down by the labours and exposed to the temptations of life; when I contemplate approaching sickness and death, I desire to feel that that Saviour to whom I have committed my all is exalted far above principalities and powers, and every name that is named. When the church is persecuted and opposed; when hosts of enemies rise up against it and threaten its peace and safety, I rejoice to feel assured the Redeemer and Head of the church is over all, and that he has power to subdue all her foes and his. (3.) The church is safe. Her great Head is on the throne of the universe, and no weapon that is formed against her can prosper. He has defended it hitherto in all times of persecution, and the past is a pledge that he will continue to protect it to the end of the world. (4.) Let *us* commit our souls to this exalted Redeemer. Such a Redeemer we need—one who has all power in heaven and earth. Such a religion we need—that can restore the dead to life. Such hope and confidence we need as he can give—such peace and calmness as shall result from unwavering confidence in him who filleth all in all.

CHAPTER II.

AND you [a] *hath he quickened,*

a John 5.24; Col.2.13.

who were dead in trespasses and sins:

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS.

This chapter is closely connected in sense with the preceding, and should not have been separated from it. The great object is to illustrate the subject which was commenced in the previous chapter (ver. 19)—the greatness of the POWER of God, evinced in the salvation of his people. The *great* manifestation of his power had been in raising up the Lord Jesus from the dead. That had been connected with and followed by *their* resurrection from the death of sin; and the one had involved the exercise of a power similar to the other. In the illustration of this main idea, the apostle observes, (ver. 1) that God had quickened those who had been dead in trespasses and sins, and proceeds (ver. 2, 3) to show the condition in which they were before their conversion. He then observes (ver. 4—7), that God of his infinite mercy, when they were dead in sin, had quickened them together with Christ, and had raised them up to sit with him in heavenly places. He then states that this was not by human power, but was the work of divine power, and that they were the workmanship of God, ver. 8—10. The remainder of the chapter (ver. 11—22) is occupied with a statement of the *privileges* resulting from the mercy of God in calling them into his kingdom. The apostle endeavours to impress their minds strongly with a sense of the mercy and love and power of God in thus calling them to himself. He reminds them of their former condition when Gentiles, as being without God, and that they were now brought nigh by the blood of Christ (ver. 11—13); he states that this had been done by one great Mediator, who came to break down the wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles, and who had now made both one (ver. 14—18); and he compares them now to a temple raised for God, and to constitute the place of his dwelling on the earth; ver. 19—22. By all these considerations he endeavours to impress their minds with a sense of obligation, and to lead them to devote themselves to that God who had raised them from the dead, and had breathed into them the breath of immortal life.

1. *And you* hath he quickened. The words "hath he quickened," or *made to live*, are supplied, but not improperly, by our translators. The object of the apostle is to show the great power which God had evinced towards the people (ch. i. 19); and to show that this was put forth in connection with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and his exaltation to the right hand of God in heaven; see Notes on Rom. vi. 4—11; comp. Col. ii. 12, 13; iii. 1. The words "hath he quickened" mean, hath he made alive, or made to live; John v. 21; Rom. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 36. ¶ *Who were dead in trespasses and sins.* On the meaning of the word *dead*, see Notes on Rom. v. 12; vi. 2. It is affirmed here of those to whom Paul wrote at Ephesus, that before they were converted, they were "dead in sins." There is not anywhere a more explicit proof of depravity than this, and no stronger language can be used. They were *dead* in relation to that to which they afterwards became alive—*i. e.*, to holiness. Of course, this does not mean that they were in all respects dead. It does not mean that they had no animal life, or that they did not breathe, and walk, and act. Nor can it mean that they had no living intellect or mental powers, which would not have been true. Nor does it settle any question as to their ability or power while in that state. It simply affirms a fact—that in relation to real spiritual life they were, in consequence of sin, like a dead man in regard to the objects which are around him. A corpse is insensible. It sees not, and hears not, and feels not. The sound of music, and the voice of friendship and of alarm, do not arouse it. The rose and the lily

2 Wherein [a] in time past ye walked according to the course

[a] Ac. 19.35.

breathe forth their fragrance around it, but the corpse perceives it not. The world is busy and active around it, but it is unconscious of it all. It sees no beauty in the landscape; hears not the voice of a friend; looks not upon the glorious sun and stars; and is unaffected by the running stream and the rolling ocean. So with the sinner in regard to the spiritual and eternal world. He sees no beauty in religion; he hears not the call of God; he is unaffected by the dying love of the Saviour; and he has no interest in eternal realities. In all these he feels no more concern, and sees no more beauty, than a dead man does in the world around him. Such is, *in fact*, the condition of a sinful world. There *is*, indeed, life, and energy, and motion. There are vast plans and projects, and the world is intensely active. But in regard to religion, all is dead. The sinner sees no beauty there; and no human power can arouse him to act for God, any more than human power can rouse the sleeping dead, or open the sightless eye-balls on the light of day. The same power is needed in the conversion of a sinner which is needed in raising the dead; and one and the other alike demonstrate the omnipotence of him who can do it.*

2. *Wherein.* In which sins, or in the practice of which transgressions. ¶ *Ye walked.* You lived, life being often compared to a journey or a race. Note, Rom. vi. 4. ¶ *According to the course of this world.* In conformity with the customs and manners of the world at large. The word here rendered *world*—αἰων—means properly *age*, but is often used to denote the present world, with its cares, temptations, and desires; and here denotes particularly the men of this world. The meaning is, that they had lived formerly as other men lived, and the idea is strongly conveyed that the course of the men of this world is to walk in trespasses and sins. The

* See Supplementary Note on Rom. viii. 7 also on Gal. v. 17, where the author's views on this subject are canvassed.

sense is, that there was by nature no difference between them and others, and that all the difference which now existed had been made by grace. ¶ *According to the prince of the power of the air;* see ch. vi. 12; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. iv. 4. There can be no doubt that Satan is here intended, and that Paul means to say that they were under his control as their leader and prince. The phrase, "the prince of the power," may mean either "the powerful prince," or it may mean that this prince had power over the air, and lived and reigned there particularly. The word "prince"—ἄρχοντα—*Archon*, means one first in authority and power, and is then applied to any one who has the pre-eminence or rule. It is applied to Satan, or the chief of the fallen angels, as where he is called "the prince—ἄρχων—of the devils," Matth. ix. 34; xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15; "the prince of this world," John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11. But *why* he is here called the prince having power *over the air*, it is not easy to determine. Robinson *(Lex.)* supposes it to be because he is lord of the powers of the air; that is, of the demons who dwell and rule in the atmosphere. So Doddridge supposes that it means that he controls the fallen spirits who are permitted to range the regions of the atmosphere. It is generally admitted that the apostle here refers to the prevailing opinions both among the Jews and heathen, that the air was thickly peopled with spirits or demons. That this was a current opinion, may be seen fully proved in Wetstein; comp. Bloomfield, Grotius, and particularly Koppe. Why the region of the *air* was supposed to be the dwelling-place of such spirits, is now unknown. The opinion may have been either that such spirits *dwelt* in the air, or that they had control over it, according to the later Jewish belief. Cocceius and some others explain the word *air* here as meaning the same as *darkness*, as in profane writers. It is evident to my mind that Paul does not speak of

of this world, according to the prince [a] of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children [b] of disobedience:

[a] ch.6.12. [b] Col.3.6.

3 Among whom also we [c] all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the [1] desires of the flesh and of

[c] 1 Pe.4.3. [1] *wills.*

this as a mere tradition, opinion, or vagary of the fancy, or as a superstitious belief: but that he refers to it as a thing which he regarded as true. In this opinion I see no absurdity that should make it impossible to believe it. For, (1.) the Scriptures abundantly teach that there are fallen, wicked spirits; and the existence of fallen angels is no more improbable than the existence of fallen men. (2.) The Bible teaches that they have much to do with this world. They tempted man; they inflicted disease in the time of the Saviour; they are represented as alluring and deceiving the race. (3.) They must have *some* locality—some part of the universe where they dwell. That they were not confined down to hell in the time of the Redeemer, is clear from the New Testament; for they are often represented as having afflicted and tortured men. (4.) Why is there any improbability in the belief that their residence should have been in the regions of the air? That while they were suffered to be on earth to tempt and afflict men, they should have been permitted peculiarly to occupy these regions? Who can tell what may be in the invisible world, and what spirits may be permitted to fill up the vast space that now composes the universe? And who can tell what control may have been given to such fallen spirits over the regions of the atmosphere—over clouds, and storms, and pestilential air? *Men* have control over the earth, and pervert and abuse the powers of nature to their own ruin and the ruin of each other. The elements they employ for the purposes of ruin and of temptation. Fruit and grain they convert to poison; minerals, to the destruction caused by war. In itself considered, there is nothing more improbable that spirits of darkness may have had control over the regions of the air, than that fallen man has over the earth; and no more improbability that that power has been abused to ruin men, than that the power of men is abused to destroy each other. No one can *prove* that the sentiment here referred to by Paul is *not* true; and no one can show how the doctrine that fallen spirits may do mischief in any part of the works of God, is any more improbable than that wicked *men* should do the same thing. The word "*power*" here—"power of the air"—I regard as synonymous with *dominion* or *rule;* "a prince having dominion or rule over the air."—¶ *The spirit that now worketh.* That still lives, and whose energy for evil is still seen and felt among the wicked. Paul here means undoubtedly to teach that there *was* such a spirit, and that he was still active in controlling men. ¶ *The children of disobedience.* The wicked; Col. iii. 6.

3. *We all had our conversation;* see Notes on 2 Cor. i. 12; comp. 1 Pet. iv. 3. ¶ *In the lusts of our flesh.* Living to gratify the flesh, or the propensities of a corrupt nature. It is observable here that the apostle changes the form of the address from "*ye*" to "*we*," thus including himself with others, and saying that this was true of *all* before their conversion. He means undoubtedly to say, that whatever might have been the place of their birth, or the differences of religion under which they had been trained, they were substantially alike by nature. It was a characteristic of all that they lived to fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind. The *design* of the apostle in thus grouping himself with them was, to show that he did not claim to be any better by nature than they were, and that all which any of them had of value was to be traced to the grace of God. There is much delicacy here on the part of the apostle. His object was to remind them of the former grossness of their life, and their exposure to the wrath

the mind; and were by nature [a]
[a] Ps.51.5.
the children of wrath, even as others.

of God. Yet he does not do it harshly. He includes himself in their number. He says that what he affirms of them was substantially true of himself—of all—that they were under condemnation, and exposed to the divine wrath. ¶ *Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.* Marg. as in Greek, *wills.* Complying with the wishes of a depraved nature. The "will of the flesh" is that to which the flesh, or the unrenewed nature of man, prompts; and Paul says that all had been engaged in fulfilling those fleshly propensities. This was clearly true of the heathen, and it was no less true of the unconverted Jew that he lived for himself, and sought to gratify the purposes of a depraved nature, though it might manifest itself in a way different from the heathen. The "will of the mind" referred to here relates to the wicked *thoughts* and *purposes* of the unrenewed nature—the sins which relate rather to the *intellect* than to the gross passions. Such, for instance, are the sins of pride, envy, ambition, covetousness, &c.; and Paul means to say, that before conversion they lived to gratify these propensities, and to accomplish these desires of the soul. ¶ *And were by nature.* Φύσει. By birth, or before we were converted By conversion and adoption they became the children of God; before that, they were all the children of wrath. This is, I think, the fair meaning of this important declaration. It does not affirm *when* they began to be such, or that they were such as soon as they were born, or that they were such before they became moral agents, or that they became such in virtue of their connection with Adam—whatever may be the truth on these points; but it affirms that before they were renewed, they were the children of wrath. So far as *this* text is concerned, this might have been true at their very birth; but it does not directly and certainly prove that. It proves that at no time before their conversion were they the children of God, but that their whole condition before

that was one of exposure to wrath; comp. Rom. ii. 14, 27; 1 Cor. xi. 14; Gal. ii. 15. Some men are born Jews, and some heathen; some free, and some slaves; some white, and some black; some are born to poverty, and some to wealth; some are the children of kings, and some of beggars; but, whatever their rank or condition, they are born exposed to wrath, or in a situation which would render them liable to wrath. But *why* this is, the apostle does not say. Whether for their own sins or for the sins of another; whether by a corrupted soul, or by imputed guilt; whether they act as moral agents as soon as born, or at a certain period of childhood, Paul does not say.*

* What is the import of the expression "children of wrath"? It is allowed on all hands that it intimates *obnoxiousness to punishment*, that the persons to whom it is applied are worthy of wrath and punishment, or, as our author has it, are exposed or liable to wrath.

But whence comes this obnoxiousness or liability to punishment? Is it because of personal transgression, because of the practice or habit of sin, in which men indulge from the time they become moral agents? On account of these things, indeed, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience. But such is not the cause assigned here. Men are obnoxious to punishment in another way than by personal transgression, than by acts or habits of sin. How? Φύσει, by birth, by original constitution, by nature, in consequence of something that is coeval with one's very being. That this is the true meaning has been triumphantly established. Several commentators, indeed, have attempted to prove, by citation from the classics, that φυσις may be explained of confirmed habit or practice, which is sometimes styled a second nature. In most, however, if not in all the places cited by them, the idea of *natural*, in opposition to *acquired*, distinctly enough appears. Bloomfield speaks most emphatically on the point. "My own experience," says he, "of the classical writers enables me to confirm the remark of Mr. Scott, that the word was *never* used of any other customs than such as resulted from innate propensities."

It may be alleged, however, that the text, properly speaking, *does not* assign a cause for the liability or obnoxiousness to punishment.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

It simply states the fact that men are *born so liable*, that they come into the world in this condition. But the *inference* is not far to seek, that if the punishment come not in consequence of *personal* sin, as from the nature of the case it cannot, it must come in consequence of the sin of Adam imputed to us—unless we allow, that such obnoxiousness to punishment might arise without sin of any kind, which is repugnant to all our views of God's character. To say that this obnoxiousness arises from our innate depravity, or is its "regular result," assigns as a cause that which is merely a consequence. The depraved *nature* itself is penal, and a consequence of our union with Adam.

The author maintains, that the text proves no more than that men are "born exposed to wrath, or in a situation which would render them liable to wrath, and says nothing about the time *when they began* to be children of wrath. It may be at birth, or farther on, for any thing this text affirms." Without doubt, however, the *natural* and just interpretation of the words teaches, that men are obnoxious to wrath from the moment of their birth, or as Calvin has it, in a note on the place, "in ipso utero maledicti essent." And so the passage has been explained by the general consent of evangelical Christians. Nor can this universal condition of the race be otherwise accounted for, than by reference to our connection with the first Adam, as our head and representative. Even on the modified view, that men are born in a situation that, at one time or other, *ultimately* brings them to be children of wrath, how shall we account for such situation? Why should God place men in it? It is impossible to escape the conclusion stated above. See the Supplementary Notes on Rom. v. 12, *et seq.*, for a full discussion of the question of imputation.

¶ *The children of wrath.* Exposed to wrath, or liable to wrath. They did not by nature inherit holiness; they inherited that which would subject them to wrath. The meaning has been well expressed by Doddridge, who refers it "to the original apostasy and corruption, in consequence of which men do, according to the course of nature, fall early into personal guilt, and so become obnoxious to the divine displeasure." Many modern expositors have supposed that this has no reference to any original tendency of our fallen nature to sin, or to native corruption, but that it refers to the *habit* of sin, or to the fact of their having been the slaves of appetite and passion. I admit that the direct and immediate sense of the passage is that they were, when without the gospel, and before they were renewed, the children of wrath; but still the fair interpretation is, that they were born to that state, and that that condition was the regular result of their native depravity; and I do not know a more strong or positive declaration that can be made to show that men are by nature destitute of holiness, and exposed to perdition. ¶ *Even as others.* That is, "do not suppose that you stand alone, or that you are the worst of the species. You are indeed, by nature, the children of wrath; but not you alone. All others were the same. You have a common inheritance with them. I do not mean to charge you with being the worst of sinners, or as being alone transgressors. It is the common lot of man—the sad, gloomy inheritance to which we all are born." The Greek is, οἱ λοιποί—"*the remainder*, or *the* others,"—including all; comp. Notes on Rom. v. 19. This doctrine that men without the gospel are the children of wrath, Paul had fully defended in Rom. i., ii., iii. No truth, perhaps, is more frequently stated in the Bible; none is more fearful and awful in its character. What a declaration, that we "are by nature the children of wrath!" Who should not inquire what it means? Who should not make an effort to escape from the wrath to come, and become a child of glory and an heir of life?

4. *But God, who is rich in mercy.* On the use of the word *rich* by Paul, see Notes on ch. i. 7. It is a beautiful expression. "God is *rich* in mercy;" overflowing, abundant. Mercy is the riches or the wealth of God. Men are often rich in gold, and silver, and diamonds, and they pride themselves in these possessions; but God is *rich in mercy*. In that he abounds: and he is so rich in it that he is will-

5 Even [a] when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by [1] grace [b] ye are saved;)

a Ro.5.6,8,10. 1 *by whose.*

6 And hath raised [c] *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus;

b Ro.3.24. c Col.2.12.

ing to impart it to others; so rich that he can make all blessed. ¶ *For his great love.* That is, his great love was the reason why he had compassion upon us. It is not that we had any claim or deserved his favour; but it is, that God had for man original and eternal love, and that love led to the gift of a Saviour, and to the bestowment of salvation.

5. *Even when we were dead in sins.* Notes, ver. 1; comp. Rom. v. 8. The construction here is, "God, who is rich in mercy, on account of the great love which he bare unto us, even being dead in sin, hath quickened us," &c. It does not mean that he quickened us when we were dead in sin, but that he loved us then, and made provision for our salvation. It was love to the children of wrath; love to those who had no love to return to him; love to the alienated and the lost. That is true love—the sincerest and the purest benevolence—love, not like that of men, but such only as God bestows. Man loves his friend, his benefactor, his kindred—God loves his foes, and seeks to do them good. ¶ *Hath quickened us.* Hath made us alive; see ver. 1. ¶ *Together with Christ.* In connection with him; or in virtue of his being raised up from the grave. The meaning is, that there was such a connection between Christ and those whom the Father hath given to him, that his resurrection from the grave involved their resurrection to spiritual life. It was like raising up the head and the members—the whole body together; comp. Notes on Rom. vi. 5. Everywhere in the New Testament, the close connection of the believer with Christ is affirmed. We are crucified with him. We die with him. We rise with him. We live with him. We reign with him. We are joint heirs with him. We share his sufferings on earth (1 Pet. iv. 13), and we share his glory with him on his throne; Rev. iii. 21. ¶ *By grace ye are saved.* Marg., *by whose;* see Notes on Rom. iii. 42. Paul's mind was full of the subject of salvation by grace, and he throws it in here, even in an argument, as a point which he would never have them lose sight of. The subject before him was one eminently adapted to bring this truth to mind, and though, in the train of his arguments, he had no time now to dwell on it, yet he would not suffer any opportunity to pass without referring to it.

6. *And hath raised* us *up together.* That is, we are raised from the death of sin to the life of religion, in connection with the resurrection of Jesus, and in virtue of that. So close is the connection between him and his people, that his resurrection made theirs certain; comp. Col. ii. 12; Notes, Rom. vi. 5. ¶ *And made* us *sit together.* Together with him. That is, we share his honours. So close is our connection with him, that we shall partake of his glory, and in some measure do now; comp. Notes on Matt. xix. 28, and Rom. viii. 17. ¶ *In heavenly* places; see Notes on ch. i. 3. The meaning is, that he has gone to the heavenly world as our Head and Representative. His entrance there is a pledge that we shall also enter there. Even here we have the anticipation of glory, and are admitted to exalted honours, as if we sat in heavenly places, in virtue of our connection with him. ¶ *In Christ Jesus.* It is in connection with him that we are thus exalted, and thus filled with joy and peace. The meaning of the whole is, "We are united to Christ. We die with him, and live with him. We share his sufferings, and we share his joys. We become dead to the world in virtue of his death; we become alive unto God in virtue of his resurrection. On earth we are exalted to honour, peace, and hope, in virtue of his resurrection; in heaven we shall share his glory and partake of his triumphs."

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in *his* kindness [a] toward us through Christ Jesus.

[a] Tit.3.4.

8 For by grace [b] are ye saved through faith; [c] and that not [d] of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God:

[b] 2 Ti.1.9. [c] Ro.4.16. [d] John 6.44,65

7. *That in the ages to come.* In all future times. The sense is, that the riches of divine grace, and the divine benignity, would be shown in the conversion of Christians and their salvation, to all future times. Such was his love to those who were lost, that it would be an everlasting monument of his mercy, a perpetual and unchanging proof that he was good. The sense is, we are raised up with Christ, and are made to partake of his honour and glory in order that others may forever be impressed with a sense of the divine goodness and mercy to us. ¶ *The exceeding riches of his grace.* The *abounding, overflowing* riches of grace; comp. Notes, ch. i. 7. This is Paul's favourite expression—an expression so beautiful and so full of meaning that it will bear often to be repeated. We may learn from this verse, (1.) That one object of the conversion and salvation of sinners, is to furnish a *proof* of the mercy and goodness of God. (2.) Another object is, that their conversion may be an *encouragement* to others. The fact that such sinners as the Ephesians had been, were pardoned and saved, affords encouragement also to others to come and lay hold on life. And so of all other sinners who are saved. Their conversion is a standing encouragement to all others to come in like manner; and now the history of the church for more than eighteen hundred years furnishes all the encouragement which we could desire. (3.) The conversion of *great* sinners is a special proof of the divine benignity. So Paul argues in the case before us; and so he often argued from his own case; comp. Notes on 1 Tim. i. 16. (4.) Heaven, the home of the redeemed, will exhibit the most impressive proof of the goodness of God that the universe furnishes. There will be a countless host who were once polluted and lost; who were dead in sins; who were under the power of Satan, and who have been saved by the riches of the divine grace—a host now happy and pure, and free from sin, sorrow, and death—the living and eternal monuments of the grace of God.

8. *For by grace are ye saved.* By mere favour. It is not by your own merit; it is not because you have any claim. This is a favourite doctrine with Paul, as it is with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity; comp. Notes on Rom. i. 7; iii. 24. ¶ *Through faith.* Grace bestowed through faith, or in connection with believing; see Notes on Rom. i. 17; iv. 16. ¶ *And that not of yourselves.* That is, salvation does not proceed from yourselves. The word rendered *that*—τοῦτο—is in the neuter gender, and the word *faith*—πίστις—is in the feminine. The word "that," therefore, does not refer particularly to faith, as being the gift of God, but to *the salvation by grace* of which he had been speaking. This is the interpretation of the passage which is the most obvious, and which is now generally conceded to be the true one; see Bloomfield. Many critics, however, as Doddridge, Beza, Piscator, and Chrysostom, maintain that the word "*that*" (τοῦτο) refers to "*faith*" (πίστις); and Doddridge maintains that such a use is common in the New Testament. As a matter of *grammar* this opinion is certainly doubtful, if not untenable; but as a matter of *theology* it is a question of very little importance. Whether this passage proves it or not, it is certainly true that faith is the gift of God. It exists in the mind only when the Holy Ghost produces it there, and is, in common with every other Christian excellence, to be traced to his agency on the heart. This opinion, however, does not militate at all with the doctrine that man himself *believes*. It is not God that *believes* for him, for that is impossible. It is *his own mind* that actually believes, or that exercises faith; see Notes on Rom.

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good

a ch. 1. 4.

works, which [a] God hath before [1] ordained that we should walk in them.

11 Wherefore remember, that ye

1 or, *prepared.*

iv. 3. In the same manner *repentance* is to be traced to God. It is one of the fruits of the operation of the Holy Spirit on the soul. But the Holy Ghost does not *repent* for us. It is *our own mind* that repents; our own heart that feels; our own eyes that weep—and without this there can be no true repentance. No one can repent for another; and God neither can nor ought to repent for us. He has done no wrong, and if repentance is ever exercised, therefore, it must be exercised by our own minds. So of faith. God cannot believe for us. *We* must believe, or *we* shall be damned. Still this does not conflict at all with the opinion, that if we exercise faith, the inclination to do it is to be traced to the agency of God on the heart. I would not contend, therefore, about the grammatical construction of this passage, with respect to the point of the theology contained in it; still it accords better with the obvious grammatical construction, and with the design of the passage to understand the word "that" as referring not to *faith* only, but to *salvation by grace.* So Calvin understands it, and so it is understood by Storr, Locke, Clarke, Koppe, Grotius, and others. ¶ *It is the gift of God.* Salvation by grace is his gift. It is not of merit; it is wholly by favour.

9. *Not of works;* see Notes on Rom. iii. 20, 27.

10. *For we are his workmanship.* We are his *making*—ποίημα. That is, we are *created* or *formed* by him, not only in the general sense in which all things are made by him, but in that peculiar sense which is denoted by the new creation; see Notes on 2 Cor. v. 17. Whatever of peace, or hope, or purity we have, has been produced by his agency on the soul. There cannot be conceived to be a stronger expression to denote the agency of God in the conversion of men, or the fact that salvation is wholly of grace. ¶ *Created in Christ Jesus.* On the word created, see Notes on 2 Cor. v. 17. ¶ *Unto good works.* With reference to a holy life; or, the design for which we have been created in Christ is, that we should lead a holy life. The primary object was not to bring us to heaven. It was that we should be *holy.* Paul held perhaps more firmly than any other man, to the position that men are saved by the mere grace of God, and by a divine agency on the soul; but it is certain that no man ever held more firmly that men must lead holy lives, or they could have no evidence that they were the children of God. ¶ *Which God hath before ordained.* Marg., *prepared.* The word here used means to *prepare beforehand,* then to predestinate, or appoint before. The proper meaning of this passage is, "to which (εἰς) good works God has predestinated us, or appointed us beforehand, that we should walk in them." The word here used—προετοιμάζω—occurs in the New Testament nowhere else except in Rom. ix. 23, where it is rendered "had afore prepared." It involves the idea of a previous determination, or an arrangement beforehand for securing a certain result. The previous preparation here referred to was, the divine intention; and the meaning is, that God had predetermined that we should lead holy lives. It accords, therefore, with the declaration in ch. i. 4, that he had chosen his people before the foundation of the world that they should be holy; see Notes on that verse. ¶ *That we should walk in them.* That we should live holy lives. The word *walk* is often used in the Scriptures to denote the course of life; Notes on Rom. vi. 4.

11. *Wherefore remember.* The design of this evidently is, to excite a sense of gratitude in their bosoms for that mercy which had called them from the errors and sins of their former

being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were

lives, to the privileges of Christians. It is a good thing for Christians to "*remember*" what they were. No faculty of the mind can be better employed to produce humility, penitence, gratitude, and love, than the *memory*. It is well to recall the recollection of our former sins; to dwell upon our hardness of heart, our alienation, and our unbelief; and to remember our wanderings and our guilt, until the heart be affected, and we are made to feel. The converted Ephesians had much guilt to recollect and to mourn over in their former life; and so have all who are converted to the Christian faith. ¶ *That ye* being *in time past.* Formerly—(ποτε.) ¶ *Gentiles in the flesh.* You were Gentiles *in the flesh, i. e.* under the dominion of the flesh, subject to the control of carnal appetites and pleasures. ¶ *Who are called Uncircumcision.* That is, who are called "the uncircumcised." This was a term similar to that which we use when we speak of "the unbaptized." It meant that they were without the pale of the people of God; that they enjoyed none of the ordinances and privileges of the true religion; and was commonly a term of reproach; comp. Judges xiv. 3; xv. 18; 1 Sam. xiv. 6; xvii. 26; xxxi. 4; Ezek. xxxi. 18. ¶ *By that which is called the Circumcision.* By those who are circumcised, *i. e.* by the Jews. ¶ *In the flesh made by hands.* In contradistinction from the circumcision of the heart; see Notes on Rom. ii. 28, 29. They had externally adopted the rites of the true religion, though it did not follow that they had the circumcision of the heart, or that they were the true children of God.

12. *Ye were without Christ.* You were without the knowledge of the Messiah. You had not heard of him; of course you had not embraced him. You were living without any of the hopes and consolations which you now have, from having embraced him. The object of the apostle is to remind them of the deplorable condition in which they were by nature; and nothing would better express it than to say they were "without Christ," or that they had no knowledge of a Saviour. They knew of no atonement for sin. They had no assurance of pardon. They had no well-founded hope of eternal life. They were in a state of darkness and condemnation, from which nothing but a knowledge of Christ could deliver them. All Christians may in like manner be reminded of the fact that, before their conversion, they were "without Christ." Though they had heard of him, and were constantly under the instruction which reminded them of him, yet they were without any true knowledge of him, and without any of the hopes which result from having embraced him. Many were infidels. Many were scoffers. Many were profane, sensual, corrupt. Many rejected Christ with scorn; many, by simple neglect. *All* were without any true knowledge of him; all were destitute of the peace and hope which result from a saving acquaintance with him. We may add, that there is no more affecting description of the state of man by nature than to say, he is without a Saviour. Sad would be the condition of the world without a Redeemer—sad *is* the state of that portion of mankind who reject him. Reader, are *you* without Christ? ¶ *Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.* This is the second characteristic of their state before their conversion to Christianity. This means more than that they were not *Jews.* It means that they were strangers to that *polity*—πολιτεία—or arrangement by which the worship of the true God had been kept up in the world, and of course were strangers to the true religion The arrangements for the public worship of JEHOVAH were made among the Jews. They had his law, his temple, his Sabbaths, and the ordinances of his religion; see Notes on Rom. iii. 2. To all these the heathens had been

without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, [a] having no hope, and without God in the world:

[a] 1 Thes. 4. 13.

strangers, and of course they were deprived of all the privileges which resulted from having the true religion. The word here rendered *commonwealth*—πολιτεία—means properly citizenship, or the right of citizenship, and then a community, or state. It means here that arrangement or organization by which the worship of the true God was maintained. The word *aliens*—ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι—here means merely that they were *strangers to*. It does not denote, of necessity, that they were *hostile* to it; but that they were ignorant of it, and were, therefore, deprived of the benefits which they might have derived from it, if they had been acquainted with it. ¶ *And strangers.* This word—ξένοι—means properly a guest, or a stranger, who is hospitably entertained; then a foreigner, or one from a distant country; and here means that they did not belong to the community where the covenants of promise were enjoyed; that is, they were strangers to the privileges of the people of God. ¶ *The covenants of promise;* see Notes on Rom. ix. 4. The covenants of promise were those various arrangements which God made with his people, by which he promised them future blessings, and especially by which he promised that the Messiah should come. To be in possession of them was regarded as a high honour and privilege; and Paul refers to it here to show that, though the Ephesians had been by nature without these, yet they had now been brought to enjoy all the benefits of them. On the word covenant, see Notes on Gal. iii. 15. It may be remarked, that Walton (Polyglott) and Rosenmüller unite the word "*promise*" here with the word "*hope*"—*having no hope of the promise.* But the more obvious and usual interpretation is that in our common version, meaning that they were not by nature favoured with the covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c., by which there was a promise of future blessings under the Messiah. ¶ *Having no hope.* The apostle does not mean to affirm that they did not cherish *any* hope, for this is scarcely true of any man; but that they were without any proper ground of hope. It is true of perhaps nearly all men that they cherish *some* hope of future happiness. But the ground on which they do this is not well understood by themselves, nor do they in general regard it as a matter worth particular inquiry. Some rely on morality; some on forms of religion; some on the doctrine of universal salvation; all who are impenitent believe that they do not *deserve* eternal death, and expect to be saved by *justice.* Such hopes, however, must be unfounded. No hope of life in a future world can be founded on a proper basis which does not rest on some promise of God, or some assurance that he will save us; and these hopes, therefore, which men take up they know not why, are delusive and vain. ¶ *And without God in the world.* Gr. ἄθεοι—*atheists;* that is, those who had no knowledge of the true God. This is the last specification of their miserable condition before they were converted; and it is an appropriate crowning of the climax. What an expression! To be without God—without God in his own world, and where he is all around us! To have no evidence of his favour, no assurance of his love, no hope of dwelling with him! The meaning, as applied to the heathen Ephesians, was, that they had no knowledge of the true God. This was true of the heathen, and in an important sense also it is true of all impenitent sinners, and was once true of all who are now Christians. They had no God. They did not worship him, or love him, or serve him, or seek his favours, or act with reference to him and his glory. Nothing can be a more appropriate and striking description of a sinner now than to say that he is "without God in the world." He lives, and feels, and acts, as if there were no

13 But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood [a] of Christ.

a He.9.12.

14 For he [b] is our peace, who hath made both [c] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us;*

b Mi.5.5. c John 10.16; Ga.3.28.

God. He neither worships him in secret, nor in his family, nor in public. He acts with no reference to his will. He puts no confidence in his promises, and fears not when he threatens; and were it announced to him that there *is no God*, it would produce no change in his plan of life, or in his emotions. The announcement that the emperor of China, or the king of Siam, or the sultan of Constantinople, was dead, would produce *some* emotion, and *might* change some of his commercial arrangements; but the announcement that there is no God would interfere with none of his plans, and demand no change of life. And, if so, what is man in this beautiful world without a God? A traveller to eternity without a God! Standing over the grave without a God! An immortal being without a God! A man—fallen, sunk, ruined, with no God to praise, to love, to confide in; with no altar, no sacrifice, no worship, no hope; with no Father in trial, no counsellor in perplexity, no support in death! Such is the state of man by nature. Such are the effects of sin.

13. *But now, in Christ Jesus.* By the coming and atonement of the Lord Jesus, and by the gospel which he preached. ¶ *Ye who sometimes were afar off.* Who were *formerly*—ποτὲ. Tindal translates it, *a whyle ago*. The phrase *afar off*—μακρὰν—means that they were formerly far off from God and his people. The expression is derived from the custom of speaking among the Hebrews. God was supposed to reside in the temple. It was a privilege to be near the temple. Those who were remote from Jerusalem and the temple were regarded as far off from God, and hence as peculiarly irreligious and wicked; see Notes on Isa. lvii. 19. ¶ *Are made nigh.* Are admitted to the favour of God, and permitted to approach him as his worshippers. ¶ *By the blood of Christ.* The Jews came near to the mercy-seat on which the symbol of the divine presence rested (Notes on Rom. iii. 25), by the blood that was offered in sacrifice; that is, the High Priest approached that mercy-seat with blood and sprinkled it before God. Now we are permitted to approach him with the blood of the atonement. The shedding of that blood has prepared the way by which Gentiles as well as Jews may approach God, and it is by that offering that we are led to seek God.

14. *For he is our peace.* There is evident allusion here to Isa. lvii. 19. See Notes on that verse. The *peace* here referred to is that by which a *union* in worship and in feeling has been produced between the Jews and the Gentiles. Formerly they were alienated and separate. They had different objects of worship; different religious rites; different views and feelings. The Jews regarded the Gentiles with hatred, and the Gentiles the Jews with scorn. Now, says the apostle, they are at peace. They worship the same God. They have the same Saviour. They depend on the same atonement. They have the same hope. They look forward to the same heaven. They belong to the same redeemed family. Reconciliation has not only taken place with God, but with each other. *The best way to produce peace between alienated minds is to bring them to the same Saviour.* That will do more to silence contentions, and to heal alienations, than any or all other means. Bring men around the same cross; fill them with love to the same Redeemer, and give them the same hope of heaven, and you put a period to alienation and strife. The love of Christ is so absorbing, and the dependence in his blood so entire, that they will lay aside these alienations, and cease their contentions. The work of the atonement is thus designed

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

[a] Col.2.14.

not only to produce peace with God, but peace between alienated and contending minds. The feeling that we are redeemed by the same blood, and that we have the same Saviour, will unite the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the high and the low, in the ties of brotherhood, and make them feel that they are one. This great work of the atonement is thus designed to produce peace in alienated minds every where, and to diffuse abroad the feeling of universal brotherhood. ¶ *Who hath made both one.* Both Gentiles and Jews. He has united them in one society. ¶ *Having broken down the middle wall.* There is an allusion here undoubtedly to the wall of partition in the temple by which the court of the Gentiles was separated from that of the Jews; see Notes and the plan of the temple, in Matt. xxi. 12. The idea here is, that that was now broken down, and that the Gentiles had the same access to the temple as the Jews. The sense is, that in virtue of the sacrifice of the Redeemer they were admitted to the same privileges and hopes.

15. *Having abolished.* Having brought to naught, or put an end to it—καταργήσας. ¶ *In his flesh.* By the sacrifice of his body on the cross. It was not by instruction merely; it was not by communicating the knowledge of God; it was not as a teacher; it was not by the mere exertion of power; it was by his flesh—his human nature—and this can mean only that he did it by his sacrifice of himself. It is such language as is appropriate to the doctrine of the atonement—not indeed teaching it directly—but still such as one would use who believed that doctrine, and such as no other one would employ. Who would now say of a moral teacher that he accomplished an important result by *his flesh?* Who would say of a man that was instrumental in reconciling his contending neighbours, that he did it *by his flesh?* Who would say of Dr. Priestley that he established Unitarianism *in his flesh?* No man would have ever used this language who did not believe that Jesus died as a sacrifice for sin. ¶ *The enmity.* Between the Jew and the Gentile. Tindal renders this, "the cause of hatred, that is to say, the law of commandments contained in the law written." This is expressive of the true sense. The idea is, that the ceremonial law of the Jews, on which they so much prided themselves, was the cause of the hostility existing between them. That made them different people, and laid the foundation for the alienation which existed between them. They had different laws; different institutions; a different religion. The Jews looked upon themselves as the favourites of Heaven, and as in possession of the knowledge of the only way of salvation; the Gentiles regarded their laws with contempt, and looked upon the peculiar institutions with scorn. When Christ came and abolished by his death their peculiar ceremonial laws, of course the cause of this alienation ceased. ¶ Even *the law of commandments.* The law of positive commandments. This does not refer to the *moral* law, which was not the cause of the alienation, and which was not abolished by the death of Christ, but to the laws commanding sacrifices, festivals, fasts, &c., which constituted the peculiarity of the Jewish system. These were the occasion of the enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles, and these were abolished by the great sacrifice which the Redeemer made; and of course when that was made, the purpose for which these laws were instituted was accomplished, and they ceased to be of value and to be binding. ¶ Contained *in ordinances.* In the Mosaic commandments. The word *ordinance* means, decree, edict, law; Luke ii. 1; Acts xvi. 4; xvii.

16 And that he might reconcile [a] both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity [1] thereby;

17 And came and preached peace to you [b] which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through [c] him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

a Col.1.20—22. 1 or, *in himself.*

b Ac.2.39. c John14.6; 1 Pe.3..8.

7; Col. ii. 14. ¶ *For to make in himself.* By virtue of his death, or under him as the head. ¶ *Of twain one new man.* Of the two—Jews and Gentiles—one new spiritual person; that they might be united. The idea is, that as two persons who had been at enmity, might become reconciled and be one in aim and pursuit, so it was in the effect of the work of Christ on the Jews and Gentiles. When they were converted they would be united and harmonious.

16. *And that he might reconcile both unto God.* This was another of the effects of the work of redemption, and indeed the main effect. It was not merely to make them harmonious, but it was that both, who had been alienated from God, should be reconciled to *him.* This was a different effect from that of producing peace between themselves, though in some sense the one grew out of the other. They who are reconciled to God will be at peace with each other. They will feel that they are of the same family, and are all brethren. On the subject of reconciliation, see Notes on 2 Cor. v. 18. ¶ *In one body.* One spiritual personage — the church; see Notes on chap. i. 23. ¶ *By the cross.* By the atonement which he made on the cross; see Col. i. 20; comp. Notes on Rom. iii. 25. It is by the atonement only that men ever become reconciled to God. ¶ *Having slain the enmity.* Not only the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but the enmity between the sinner and God. He has by that death removed all the obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God and on the part of man. It is made efficacious in removing the enmity of the sinner against God, and producing peace. ¶ *Thereby.* Marg., *in himself.* The meaning is, in his cross, or by means of his cross.

17. *And came and preached peace.* That is, the system of religion which he proclaimed, was adapted to produce peace with God. This he preached personally to those who "were nigh," that is, the Jews; to those who were "afar off"—the Gentiles—he preached it by his apostles. He was the author of the system which proclaimed salvation to both.

The word *peace* here refers to reconciliation with God. ¶ *To you which were afar off,* &c.; see Notes on ver. 13; comp. Notes on Acts ii. 39.

18. *For through him.* That is, he has secured this result that we have access to God. This he did by his death — reconciling us to God; by the doctrines which he taught — acquainting us with God; and by his intercession in heaven—by which our "prayers gain acceptance" with him. ¶ *We both have access.* Both Jews and Gentiles; see Notes on Rom. v. 2. We are permitted to approach God through him, or in his name. The Greek word here — προσαγωγή—relates properly to the introduction to, or audience which we are permitted to have with a prince or other person of high rank. This must be effected through an officer of court to whom the duty is intrusted. *Rosenmüller,* Alt und neu Morgenland, in loc. ¶ *By one Spirit* By the aid of the same Spirit—the Holy Ghost; see Notes, 1 Cor. xii. 4. ¶ *Unto the Father.* We are permitted to come and address God as our Father; see Notes on Rom. viii. 15, 26.

19. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners.* You are reckoned with the people of God. You are entitled to their privileges, and are not to be regarded as outcasts and aliens. The meaning is, that they belonged to the same community—the same family—as the people of God. The word rendered

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

a He.12.22.23. b chap.3.15. c 1 Co.3.9.10.

20 And are built [c] upon [d] the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief [e] corner-*stone*;

d Mat.16.18; Re.21.14. e Is.28.16.

strangers—ξένοι—means *foreigners in a state*, as opposed to citizens. The word rendered *foreigners*—πάροικοι—means *guests in a private family*, as opposed to the members of the family. *Rosenmüller*. Strangers and such as proposed to reside for a short time in Athens, were permitted to reside in the city, and to pursue their business undisturbed, but they could perform no public duty; they had no voice in the public deliberations, and they had no part in the management of the state. They could only look on as spectators, without mingling in the scenes of state, or interfering in any way in the affairs of the government. They were bound humbly to submit to all the enactments of the citizens, and observe all the laws and usages of the republic. It was not even allowed them to transact any business in their own name, but they were bound to choose from among the citizens one to whose care they committed themselves as a patron, and whose duty it was to guard them against all injustice and wrong. Potter's Gr. Ant. i. 55. Proselytes, who united themselves to the Jews, were also called in the Jewish writings, *strangers*. All foreigners were regarded as "strangers," and Jews only were supposed to have near access to God. But now, says the apostle, this distinction is taken away, and the believing heathen, as well as the Jew, has the right of citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and one, as well as another, is a member of the family of God. *Burder*, Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, in loc. The meaning here is, that they had not come to *sojourn* merely as guests or foreigners, but were a part of the family itself, and entitled to all the privileges and hopes which others had. ¶ *But fellow-citizens with the saints.* Belonging to the same community with the people of God. ¶ *And of the household of God.* Of the same family. Entitled to the same privileges, and regarded by him as his children; see chap. iii. 15.

20. *And are built upon the foundation.* The comparison of the church with a building, is common in the Scriptures; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10. The comparison was probably taken from the temple, and as that was an edifice of great beauty, expense, and sacredness, it was natural to compare the church with it. Besides, the temple was the sacred place where God dwelt on the earth; and as the church was the place where he delighted now to abide, it became natural to speak of his church as the temple, or the residence of God; see Notes on Isa. liv. 11, 12. That building, says Paul, was permanently founded, and was rising with great beauty of proportion, and with great majesty and splendour. ¶ *Of the apostles.* The doctrines which they taught are the basis on which the church rests. It is *possible* that Paul referred here to a splendid edifice, particularly because the Ephesians were distinguished for their skill in architecture, and because the celebrated temple of Diana was among them. An allusion to a building, however, as an illustration of the church, occurs several times in his other epistles, and was an allusion which would be everywhere understood. ¶ *And prophets.* The prophets of the Old Testament, using the word, probably, to denote the Old Testament in general. That is, the doctrines of divine revelation, whether communicated by prophets or apostles, were laid at the foundation of the Christian church. It was not founded on philosophy, or tradition, or on human laws, or on a venerable antiquity, but on the great truths which God had revealed. Paul does not say that it was founded on *Peter*, as the Papists do, but on the prophets and apostles in general. If Peter had been the "vicegerent of Christ," and the head of the church, it is incredi-

21 In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy[a] temple in the Lord :

22 In whom ye also are [b] builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

a 1 Co. 3.17 ; 2 Co.6.16.

b 1 Pe.2.4,5.

ble that his brother Paul should not have given him some honourable notice in this place. Why did he not allude to so important a fact ? Would one who believed it have omitted it ? Would a Papist now omit it ? Learn here, (1.) That no reliance is to be placed on philosophy as a basis of religious doctrine. (2.) That the traditions of men have no authority in the church, and constitute no part of the foundation. (3.) That nothing is to be regarded as a fundamental part of the Christian system, or as binding on the conscience, which cannot be found in the "prophets and apostles;" that is, as it means here, in the Holy Scriptures. No decrees of councils ; no ordinances of synods ; no "standard" of doctrines ; no creed or confession, is to be urged as authority in forming the opinions of men. They may be valuable for some purposes, but not for this ; they may be referred to as interesting parts of history, but not to form the faith of Christians ; they may be used in the church to *express* its belief, but not to *form* it. What is based on the authority of apostles and prophets is true, and always true, and only true ; what may be found elsewhere, may be valuable and true, or not, but, at any rate, is not to be used to control the faith of men. ¶ *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner*-stone ; see Notes on Isa. xxviii. 16 ; Rom. ix. 33. The corner-stone is the most important in the building. (1.) Because the edifice rests mainly on the corner-stones. If they are small, and unstable, and settle down, the whole building is insecure ; and hence care is taken to place a large stone firmly at each corner of an edifice. (2.) Because it occupies a conspicuous and honourable place. If documents or valuable articles are deposited at the foundation of a building it is within the corner-stone. The Lord Jesus is called the "corner-stone," because the whole edifice rests on him, or he occupies a place relatively as important as the corner-stone of an edifice. Were it not for him, the edifice could not be sustained for a moment. Neither prophets nor apostles alone could sustain it ; see Notes on 1 Cor. iii. 11 ; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

21. *In whom.* That is, *by* whom, or *upon* whom. It was in connection with him, or by being reared on him as a foundation. ¶ *All the building.* The whole church of Christ. ¶ *Fitly framed together.* The word here used means *to joint together*, as a carpenter does the frame-work of a building. The materials are accurately and carefully united by mortises and tenons, so that the building shall be firm. Different materials may be used, and different kinds of timber may be employed, but one part shall be worked into another, so as to constitute a durable and beautiful edifice. So in the church. The different materials of the Jews and Gentiles ; the people of various nations, though heretofore separated and discordant, become now united, and form an harmonious society. They believe the same doctrines ; worship the same God ; practise the same holiness ; and look forward to the same heaven. ¶ *Groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord;* see Notes on 1 Cor. iii. 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16.

22. *In whom.* In Christ, or on Christ, as the solid and precious foundation. ¶ *Ye also are builded together.* You are built *into* that, or constitute a part of it. You are not merely *added* to it, but you constitute *a part* of the building. ¶ *For an habitation of God.* For the indwelling, or the dwelling-place, of God. Formerly he dwelt in the temple. Now he dwells in the church, and in the hearts of his people ; see Notes on 2 Cor. vi. 16.

REMARKS.

1. We were by nature dead in sin ; ver. 1. We had no spiritual life. We were insensible to the calls of God, to the beauty of religion, to the

claims of the Creator. We were like corpses in the tomb in reference to the gay and busy and happy world around them.—There we should have remained, had not the grace of God given us life, just as the dead will remain in their graves for ever, unless God shall raise them up. How humble should we be at the remembrance of this fact! how grateful that God has not left us to sleep that sleep of death for ever!

2. Parents should feel deep solicitude for their children; ver. 3. They, in common with all others, are "children of wrath." They have a nature prone to evil; and that nature will develope itself in evil for ever, unless it is changed—just as the young thorn-bush will be a thorn-bush, and will put forth thorns and not roses; and the Bohon Upas will be a Bohon Upas, and not an olive or an orange; and as the lion will be a lion, and the panther a panther, and not a lamb, a kid, or a gazelle. They will act out their nature, unless they are changed; and they will not be changed, but by the grace of God. I do not mean that their nature is in every sense like that of the lion or the asp; but I mean that they will be as certainly *wicked*, if unrenewed, as the lion will be ferocious, and the asp poisonous. And if so, what deep anxiety should parents feel for the salvation of their children! How solicitous should they be that, by the grace of God, the evil propensities of their nature may be eradicated, and that they become the adopted children of God!

3. The salvation of sinners involves all the exercise of power that is put forth in the resurrection of the dead; ver. 5. It is not a work to be performed by man; it is not a work of angelic might. None can impart spiritual life to the soul but he who gave it life at first. On that great Source of life we are dependent for our resurrection from spiritual death; and to God we must look for the grace by which we are to live.—It is true that though we are by nature "dead in sins," we are not in all respects like the dead. Let not this doctrine be abused to make us secure in sin, or to prevent effort. The dead in the grave are dead in all respects. We by nature are dead only in sin. We are active in other things; and indeed the powers of man are not less active than they would be if he were holy. But it is a tremendous activity for evil, and for evil only. The dead in their graves hear nothing, see nothing, and feel nothing. Sinners hear, and see, and feel; but they hear not God, and they see not his glory, any more than if they were dead. To the dead in the grave, no command could with propriety be addressed; on them, no entreaty could be urged to rise to life. But the sinner may be commanded and entreated; for he *has* power, though it is misdirected; and what is needful is, that he should put forth his power in a proper manner. While, therefore, we admit, with deep humiliation, that we, our children, and friends, are by nature dead in sin, let us not abuse this doctrine as though we could be required to do nothing. It is with us wilful death. It is death because we do not choose to live. It is a voluntary closing our eyes, and stopping our ears, *as if* we were dead; and it is a voluntary remaining in this state, when we have all the requisite power to put forth the energies of life. Let a sinner be as active in the service of God as he is in the service of the devil and the world, and he would be an eminent Christian. Indeed, all that is required is, that the misdirected and abused energy of this world should be employed in the service of the Creator. Then all would be well.

[See Supplementary Notes, Rom. viii. 7, Gal. v. 17. Whenever it is said the sinner *has* power, the kind of power should be defined. Certainly he *has not* moral power. This, indeed, the author allows, but for want of distinct definition of what he understands by "power," both here and elsewhere, the reader is apt to misapprehend him.]

4. Let us remember our former course of life; ver. 11, 12. Nothing is more profitable for a Christian than to sit down and reflect on his former life—on his childhood, with its numerous follies and vanities; on his youth, with its errors, and passions, and sins; and on the ingratitude and faults of riper years. Had God left us in that

state, what would be now our condition? Had he cut us off, where had been our abode? Should he now treat us as we deserve, what would be our doom? When the Christian is in danger of becoming proud and self-confident, let him REMEMBER what he was. Let him take some period of his life—some year, some month, or even some one day—and think it all over, and he will find enough to humble him. These are the uses which should be made of the past. (1.) It should make us humble. If a man had before his mind a vivid sense of all the past in his own life, he would never be lifted up with pride. (2.) It should make us grateful. God cut off the companions of my childhood—why did he spare me? He cut down many of the associates of my youth in their sins—why did he preserve me? He has suffered many to live on in their sins, and they are in the "broad road"—why am I not with them, treading the path to death and hell? (3.) The recollection of the past should lead us to devote ourselves to God. Professing Christian, "*remember*" how much of thy life is gone to waste. *Remember* thy days of folly and vanity. *Remember* the injury thou hast done by an evil example. *Remember* how many have been corrupted by thy conversation; perverted by thy opinions; led into sin by thy example; perhaps ruined in body and soul for ever by the errors and follies of thy past life. And then REMEMBER how much thou dost owe to God, and how solemnly thou art bound to endeavour to repair the evils of thy life, and to save *at least as many* as thou hast ruined.

5. Sinners are by nature without any well-founded hope of salvation; ver. 12. They are living without Christ, having no belief in him, and no hope of salvation through him. They are "aliens" from all the privileges of the friends of God. They have no "hope." They have no well-founded expectation of happiness beyond the grave. They have a dim and shadowy expectation that *possibly* they may be happy; but it is founded on no evidence of the divine favour, and no promise of God. *They could not tell on what it is founded, if they were asked;* and what is such a hope worth? These false and delusive hopes do not sustain the soul in trial; they flee away in death. And what a description is this! In a world like this, to be without hope! Subject to trial; exposed to death; and yet destitute of any well-founded prospect of happiness beyond the tomb! They are "without God" also. They worship no God; they confide in none. They have no altar in their families; no place of secret prayer. They form their plans with no reference to the will of God; they desire not to please him. There are multitudes who are living just as if there were no God. Their plans, their lives, their conversation, would not be different if they had the assurance that there was no God. All that they have ever asked of God, or that they would now ask of him, is, *that he would let them alone.* There are multitudes whose plans would be in no respect different, if it were announced to them that there was no God in heaven. The only effect might be to produce a more hearty merriment, and a deeper plunge into sin. What a world! How strange that in God's own world it should thus be! How sad the view of a world of atheists—a race that is endeavouring to feel that the universe is without a Father and a God! How wicked the plans which can be accomplished only by labouring to forget that there is a God; and how melancholy that state of the soul in which happiness can be found only in proportion as it believes that the universe is without a Creator, and moves on without the superintending care of a God!

6. The gospel produces peace; ver. 14—17. (1.) It produces peace in the heart of the individual, reconciling him to God. (2.) It produces peace and harmony between different ranks and classes and complexions of men, causing them to love each other, and removing their alienations and antipathies. The best way of producing friendship between nations and tribes of men; between those of different

complexions, pursuits, and laws, is, to preach to them the gospel. The best way to produce harmony between the oppressor and the oppressed, is to preach to both of them the gospel of peace, and make them feel that they have a common Saviour. (3.) It is fitted to produce peace among the nations. Let it spread, and wars will cease; right and justice will universally prevail, and harmony and concord will spread over the world; see Notes on Isa. ii. 4.

7. Let us rejoice in the privileges which we now have as Christians. We have access to the Father; ver. 18. None are so poor, so ignorant, so down-trodden that they may not come to God. In all times of affliction, poverty, and oppression, we may approach the father of mercies. Chains may bind the body, but no chain can fetter the soul in its intercourse with God. We may be thrown into a dungeon, but communion with God may be maintained there. We may be cast out and despised by men, but we may come at once unto God, and he will not cast us away. Further. We are not now strangers and foreigners. We belong to the family of God. We are fellow-citizens with the saints; ver. 19. We are participants of the hope of the redeemed, and we share their honours and their joys. It is right that true Christians should rejoice, and their joy is of such a character that no man can take it from them.

8. Let us make our appeal on all doctrines and duties to the Bible—to the prophets and the apostles; ver. 20. On them and their doctrine we can build. On them the church is reared. It is not on the opinion of philosophers and lawgivers; not on creeds, symbols, traditions, and the decisions of councils; it is on the authority of the inspired book of God. The church is in its most healthy state when it appeals for its doctrines most directly to the Bible. Individual Christians grow most in grace when they appeal most to this "book of books." The church is in great danger of error when it goes off from this pure "standard" and makes its appeal to other standards—to creeds and symbols of doctrine. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants;" and the church will be kept pure from error, and will advance in holiness, just as this is made the great principle which shall always govern and control it. If a doctrine is not found in the "apostles and prophets"—in some part of the Bible, it is not to be imposed on the conscience. It may, or may not be true; it may, or may not be fitted to edify a people; but it is not to be an article of faith, or imposed on the consciences of men.

9. Let us evince always special regard for the Lord Jesus; ver. 20. He is the precious corner-stone on which the whole spiritual temple is reared. On him the church rests. How important, then, that the church should have correct views of the Redeemer! How important that the true doctrine respecting his divine nature; his atonement; his incarnation; his resurrection, should be maintained. It is not a matter of indifference whether he be God or man; whether he died as an atoning sacrifice or as a martyr; whether he be the equal of God, or whether he be an archangel. Every thing depends on the view which is held of that Redeemer—and as men entertain different opinions about him, they go off into different systems as wide from each other as the poles. Every thing in the welfare of the church, and in the individual peace of its members, depends on proper views of the Lord Jesus.

10. The church is designed as the place of the special residence of the Holy Spirit on earth; ver. 21, 22. It is the beautiful temple where he dwells; the edifice which is reared for his abode. How holy should that church be; how pure should be each Christian to be an appropriate habitation for such a guest! Holy should be the heart where that Spirit dwells. With what anxious care should we cherish the presence of such a guest; with what solicitude should we guard our conduct that we may not grieve him away! How anxious we are so to live that we may not grieve away

CHAPTER III.

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

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

a Col.1.25. *b* Ro.12.3.

our friends from our dwellings! Should an illustrious guest become an inmate in our abode, how anxious should we be to do all that we can to please him, and to retain him with us! How much more anxious should we be to secure the indwelling of the eternal Spirit! How desirous that he should make our hearts and the church his constant abode!

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS.

This chapter consists properly of three parts :—

I. A statement that the Gentiles were to be made partakers of the gospel, and that the work of proclaiming this was especially intrusted to Paul; ver. 1--12. In illustrating this, Paul observes,

(1) That he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ in behalf of the Gentiles; ver. 1. He was in bonds for maintaining that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, and for endeavouring to convey it to them.

(2.) He reminds them all of the fact that he was called by special revelation to make known this truth, and to convey to the Gentiles this gospel—supposing that they had heard of the manner of his conversion; ver. 2, 3.

(3.) He refers them to what he had said before in few words on this point as proof of his acquaintance with this great plan of the gospel; ver. 3, 4.

(4.) He speaks of this great truth as a "mystery"—the "mystery of Christ;" the great and important truth which was concealed until Christ came, and which was fully made known by him; ver. 4, 5, 6. This had been hidden for ages. But now it had been fully revealed by the Spirit of God to the apostles and prophets in the Christian church that the great wall of partition was to be broken down, and the gospel proclaimed alike to all.

(5.) The apostle says, that to him especially was this office committed to proclaim among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; ver. 8, 9.

(6.) The *design* of this was to illustrate, in view of all worlds, the great wisdom of God in the plan of salvation; ver. 10—12. It was intended to show to other intelligent beings the glory of the divine perfections, and to make manifestations of the divine character which could be perceived nowhere else.

II. Paul expresses an earnest wish that they should comprehend the glory of this plan of salvation; ver. 13 — 19. Particularly he desires them not to faint on account of his afflictions in their behalf; declares that he bows his knees in prayer before the Great Father of the redeemed family, that God would be pleased to strengthen them, and enlighten them, and give them clear views of the glorious plan.

III. The chapter concludes with an ascription of praise to God, in view of the great goodness which he had manifested, and of the glory of the plan of salvation; ver. 20, 21.

1. *For this cause.* On account of preaching this doctrine; that is, the doctrine that the gospel was to be proclaimed to the Gentiles. ¶ *I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.* A prisoner in the service of the Lord Jesus; or made a prisoner in his cause. Not a prisoner for crime, or debt, or as a captive in war, but a captive in the service of the Redeemer. This proves that at the time of writing this, Paul was in bonds, and there can be no question that he was in Rome. This would be more correctly rendered, "For this cause I, Paul, am the prisoner," &c. So Tindal renders it, "For this cause I, Paul, the servant of Jesus, am in bonds." So also Locke, Rosenmüller, Doddridge, Whitby, Koppe, and others understand it. By this construction the abruptness now manifest in our common version is avoided. ¶ *For you Gentiles.* Made a prisoner at Rome on your behalf, because I maintained that the gospel was to be preached to

3 How that by revelation [a] he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore [1] in few words,

a Ga.1.12.

1 or, *a little before.*

the Gentiles; see Acts xxii. 21—23. He was taken first to Cesarea, and then to Rome. The cause of his imprisonment and of all his difficulties was, that he maintained that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles; that when the Jews rejected it God rejected them; and that he was specially called to carry the message of salvation to the heathen world.

2. *If ye have heard.* Εἴγε. "*If at least, if indeed, if so be,* spoken of what is taken for granted." *Robinson;* comp. 2 Cor. v. 3; Gal. iii. 4; Eph. iv. 21; Col. i. 23, for the use of the particle. The particle here is not designed to express a doubt whether they had heard of it or not, for he takes it for granted that they had. Doddridge renders it, "since I well know you have heard," &c. He had informed them of his being called to be the minister to the Gentiles (ver. 3), but still there was a possibility that they had not received the letter containing the information, and he goes, therefore, into another statement on the subject, that they might fully comprehend it. Hence this long parenthetical sentence — one of the longest that occurs in the writings of Paul, and expressed under the impulse of a mind full of the subject; so full, as we would say, that he did not know what to say first. Hence it is exceedingly difficult to understand the exact state of mind in which he was. It seems to me that the whole of this long statement grew out of the incidental mention (ver. 1) of the fact that he was a prisoner for the Gentiles. Instantly he seems to have reflected that they would be grieved at the intelligence that he was suffering on their account. He goes, therefore, into this long account, to show them how it happened; that it was by the appointment of God; that it was in the evolving of a great and glorious mystery; that it was in a cause adapted to promote, in an eminent degree, the glory of God; that it was according to an eternal purpose; and he, therefore (ver. 13), says, that he desires that they would not "faint" or be unduly distressed on account of his sufferings for them, since his sufferings were designed to promote their "glory." *He* was comforted in the belief that he was making known the glorious and eternal plan of God, and in the belief that it was for the welfare of mankind; and he, therefore, entreated them also not to be troubled inordinately at his sufferings. ¶ *The dispensation.* Gr. *economy;* rendered *stewardship,* Luke xvi. 2, 3, 4; and *dispensation,* Eph. i. 10; iii. 2; Col. i. 25; see Notes on chap. i. 10. It means here that this arrangement was made that he should be the apostle to the Gentiles. In the assignment of the different parts of the work of preaching the gospel, the office had been committed to him of making it known to the heathen. ¶ *Of the grace of God.* In the arrangements of his grace. ¶ *Which is given me to you-ward.* Toward you who are Gentiles. Not to the Ephesians particularly, but to the nations at large; see Notes on Gal. ii. 7.

3. *How that by revelation;* see Notes on Gal. i. 12. He refers to the revelation which was made to him when he was called to the apostolic office, that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, and that he was converted for the special purpose of carrying it to them; see Acts ix. 15; xxii. 21. ¶ *Unto me the mystery.* The hitherto concealed truth that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles; see Notes, chap. i. 9, on the meaning of the word *mystery.* ¶ *As I wrote afore in few words.* Marg., *a little before.* To what this refers commentators are not agreed. Bloomfield, Doddridge, Rosenmüller, Erasmus, Grotius, Locke, and others, suppose that he refers to what he had written in the two previous chapters respecting the plan of God to call the Gentiles to his kingdom. Calvin supposes that he refers to some former epistle which he had written to

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the [a] mystery of Christ;

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

6 That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel;

[a] chap.1.9.

[b] Mat.13.17; Ro.16.25;1Pe.1.10-12.

them, but which is now lost. He remarks in regard to this, "If the solicitude of Paul be rightly considered; if his vigilance and assiduity; if his zeal and studious habits; if his kindness and promptitude in assisting his brethren, it is easy to suppose that he wrote many epistles publicly and privately to this place and to that place. But those only which the Lord saw necessary to the welfare of his church has he taken care to have preserved." In this opinion there is nothing in itself improbable (comp. Introduction to Isaiah, § 5, (1.)), but it may be doubted whether Paul here refers to any such epistle. The addition which he makes, "whereby, when ye read," &c., seems rather to imply that he refers to what he had just written.

4. *Whereby, when ye read.* By the bare reading of which you may understand the view which I entertain of the plan of salvation, and the knowledge which I have of God's method of saving men, particularly of his intention in regard to the salvation of the Gentiles. ¶ *In the mystery of Christ.* This does not refer to any thing *mysterious* in the person of Christ; or the union of the divine and human nature in him; or to any thing difficult of apprehension in the work of the atonement. It means the hitherto concealed doctrine that through the Messiah, the Gentiles were to be received to the same privileges as the Jews, and that the plan of salvation was to be made equally free for all. This great truth had been hitherto concealed, or but partially understood, and Paul says that he was appointed to make it known to the world. His *knowledge* on the subject, he says, could be understood by what he had said, and from that they could judge whether he was qualified to state and defend the doctrines of the gospel. Paul evidently supposed that the knowledge which he had on that subject was of eminent value; that it was possessed by few; that it was important to understand it. Hence he dwells upon it. He speaks of the glory of that truth. He traces it back to the counsels of God. He shows that it entered into his eternal plans; and he evidently felt that the truth which he had communicated in the former part of this epistle, was among the most important that could come before the mind.

5. *Which in other ages.* The great purposes of God in regard to the salvation of mankind were not revealed; see Notes on Rom. xvi. 25. ¶ *And prophets.* Those who exercised the office of a prophet or inspired teacher in the Christian church; see Notes on 1 Cor. xii. 1. ¶ *By the Spirit.* This proves that those who exercised the office of prophet in the Christian church were inspired. They were persons endowed in this manner for the purpose of imparting to the newly formed churches the doctrines of the Christian system. There is no evidence that this was designed to be a permanent order of men in the church. They were necessary for settling the church on a permanent basis, in the absence of a full written revelation, and when the apostles were away. When the volume of revelation was finished, and the doctrines of the gospel were fully understood, the functions of the office ceased.

6. *That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs.* Fellow-heirs with the ancient people of God—the Jews—and entitled to the same privileges; see Notes on Rom. viii. 17, and Eph ii. 13—18.

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual [a] working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less [b] than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches [c] of Christ;

9 And to make all *men* see, what *is* the fellowship of the [d] mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by [e] Jesus Christ:

a Is.43.13; chap.1.19. *b* 1Co.15.9. *c* Co.1.27.

d ver.4,5; 1Ti.3.16. *e* Ps.33.6; John1.3; Co.1.16; He.1.2.

7. *Whereof I was made a minister;* see Notes on ver. 2. ¶ *According to the gift of the grace of God.* It was not by my own seeking or merit; it was a free gift. ¶ *Of the grace of God.* The sentiment is, that throughout it was a mere matter of grace that he was called into the ministry, and that so important an office was intrusted to him as that of bearing the gospel to the Gentiles. ¶ *By the effectual working of his power.* Not by any native inclination which *I* had to the gospel, and not by any power which I have put forth. It is by "the *energy* of his power;" comp. Notes, Gal. ii. 8. Locke understands this of the energy or power which God put forth in converting the Gentiles under his ministry. But it seems to me that it refers rather to the power which God put forth in the conversion of Paul himself, and putting him into the ministry. This is clear from the following verse. The meaning is, that such was his opposition to the gospel by nature, that nothing but the "energy of God" could overcome it, and that his conversion was to be traced to that alone.

8. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.* This is one of the class of expressions peculiar to Paul. The ordinary terms of language do not express the idea which he wishes to convey, and a word is therefore *coined* to convey an idea more emphatically; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. iv. 17. The word here used—ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is a comparative made from the superlative. Similar expressions are found, however, in later Greek writers; see Bloomfield and Rosenmüller for examples. The word means here, "who am *incomparably* the least of all the saints; or who am not worthy to be reckoned among the saints." It is expressive of the deep sense which he had of the sinfulness of his past life; of his guilt in persecuting the church and the Saviour; and perhaps of his sense of his low attainments in piety; see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 9. Paul never could forget the guilt of his former life; never forget the time when he was engaged in persecuting the church of God. ¶ *The unsearchable riches of Christ.* On the word *riches*, as used by Paul, see Notes on ch. i. 7. The word rendered *unsearchable*, ἀνεξιχνίαστον, occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament (Rom. xi. 33), where it is rendered *past finding out;* see Notes on that verse. It means that which cannot be *traced out*, or explored; which is inscrutable, or incomprehensible. The meaning here is, that there was a *sufficiency* in Christ which could not be traced out or explored. It was wholly incomprehensible. The fulness of the riches in him could not be appreciated. There is no more emphatic expression in the New Testament than this. It shows that the heart of the apostle was full of admiration of the sufficiency and glory that was in the Saviour; that he wanted words to express it; and that he considered it the highest honour to be permitted to tell the world that there *were* such riches in the Redeemer.

9. *And to make all* men *see.* In order that the whole human family might see the glory of God in the plan of salvation. Hitherto the revelation of his character and plans had been confined to the Jews. Now it was his design that all the race should be made acquainted with it.

¶ *What* is *the fellowship of the mystery.* Instead of *fellowship* here—κοινωνία—most MSS. and versions read οἰκονομία — *dispensation;* see Mill. This reading is adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, Rosenmüller, Koppe, and is regarded by most critics as being the genuine reading. The mistake might easily have been made by a transcriber. The meaning then would be, "to enlighten all in respect to the dispensation of this mystery;" that is, to cause all to understand the manner in which this great truth of the plan of salvation is communicated to men. If the word *fellowship* is to be retained, it means that this doctrine, or secret counsel of God, was now *common* to all believers. It was not to be confined to any class or rank of men. Locke renders it, "and to make all men perceive how this mystery comes now to be communicated to the world." Archbishop Whately (Errors of Romanism, ch. ii. § 1) renders it, the common participation of the mystery;" that is, of truths formerly unknown, and which could not be known by man's unaided powers, but which were now laid open by the gracious dispensation of Divine Providence; no longer concealed, or confined to a few, but to be partaken of by all. The allusion, according to him, is to the mysteries of the ancient pagan religions; and he supposes that the apostle designs to contrast those "mysteries" with Christianity. In those "mysteries" there was a distinction between the initiated and uninitiated. There was a revelation to some of the worshippers, of certain holy secrets from which others were excluded. There were in some of the mysteries, as the Eleusinian, *great* and *lesser* doctrines in which different persons were initiated. In strong contrast with these, the "great mystery" in Christianity was made known to all. It was concealed from none, and there was no distinction made among those who were initiated. No truths which God had revealed were held back from any part, but there was a common participation by all. Christianity has no hidden truths for a part only of its friends; it has no "*reserved*" doctrines; it has no truths to be intrusted only to a sacred priesthood. Its doctrines are to be published to the wide world, and every follower of Christ is to be a partaker of all the benefits of the truths which Christ has revealed. It is difficult to determine which is the true reading, and it is not very important. The general sense is, that Paul felt himself called into the ministry in order that all men might understand now that salvation was free for all—a truth that had been concealed for ages. Bearing this great truth, he felt that he had a message of incalculable value to mankind, and he was desirous to go and proclaim it to the wide world. On the word *mystery*, see Notes, ch. i. 9. ¶ *Had been hid in God.* With God. It has been concealed in his bosom. The plan was formed, but it had not before been made known. ¶ *Who created all things.* This is plain enough; but it is not quite so plain why the declaration is introduced in this place. Locke and Rosenmüller suppose that it refers to the new creation, and that the sense is, that God frames and manages this new creation wholly by Jesus Christ. But the expression contains a truth of larger import, and naturally conveys the idea that *all* things were made by God, and that this was only a part of his great and universal agency. The meaning is, that God formed all things, and that this purpose of extending salvation to the world was a part of his great plan, and was under his control. ¶ *By Jesus Christ.* As this stands in our common Greek text, as well as in our English version, there is a striking resemblance between the passage and that in Col. i. 15, 16. But the phrase is wanting in the Vulgate, the Syriac, the Coptic, and in several of the ancient MSS. Mill remarks that it was probably inserted here by some transcriber from the parallel passage in Col. i. 16; and it is rejected as an interpolation by Griesbach. It is not *very* material whether it be retained in this place or not, as the same sentiment is else-

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

11 According to the [b] eternal

[a] Ro.11.33; 1Co.2.7.

[b] chap.1.9.

where abundantly taught; see John i. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2. If it is to be retained, the sentiment is that the Son of God—the second person of the Trinity—was the great and immediate agent in the creation of the universe.

10. *To the intent.* Greek, "*that*"—"Ινα. The sense is, that it was with this design, or that this was the purpose for which all things were made. One grand purpose in the creation of the universe was, that the wisdom of God might be clearly shown by the church. It was not enough to evince it by the formation of the sun, the stars, the earth, the seas, the mountains, the floods. It was not enough to show it by the creation of intelligent beings, the formation of immortal minds on earth, and the various ranks of the angelic world. There were views of the divine character which could be obtained only in connection with the redemption of the world. Hence the universe was created, and man was made upon the earth, not merely to illustrate the divine perfections in the work of creation, but in a still more illustrious manner in the work of redemption. And hence the deep interest which the angelic hosts have ever evinced in the salvation of man. ¶ *That now.* The word *now*—νυν—is wanting in the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic; and is omitted by many of the Fathers; see Koppe. If it is to be retained, it means that this display is to be made under the gospel. "Now, since the Messiah is come; now, under the Christian dispensation, this revelation is to be made to distant worlds." ¶ *Unto the principalities and powers.* To the angelic hosts—the intelligent beings that surround the throne of God; see Notes on chap. i. 21. ¶ *By the church.* By the incarnation of the Redeemer to save it; by the mercy shown to it; by the wise arrangement made to recover his people from the fall; and by all the graces and beauties which that redeemed church will evince on earth and in heaven.—¶ *The manifold wisdom of God.* Literally, *much-variegated.* It means the *greatly-diversified* wisdom. It does not mean merely that there was *great* wisdom, but that the wisdom shown was diversified and varied; like changing, variegated colours. There was a "beautiful and well-ordered variety of dispensations" towards that church, all of which tended to evince the wisdom of God. It is like a landscape, or a panoramic view passing before the mind, with a great variety of phases and aspects, all tending to excite admiration. In the redemption of the church, there is not merely one form or one phase of wisdom. It is wisdom, ever-varying, ever-beautiful. There was wisdom manifested when the plan was formed; wisdom in the selection of the Redeemer; wisdom in the incarnation; wisdom in the atonement; wisdom in the means of renewing the heart, and sanctifying the soul; wisdom in the various dispensations by which the church is sanctified, guided, and brought to glory. The wisdom thus shown is like the ever-varying beauty of changing clouds, when the sun is reflected on them at evening. Each aspect is full of beauty. One bright cloud differs in appearance from others; yet all tend to fill the mind with elevated views of God.

11. *According to the eternal purpose;* see Note chap. i. 4. Literally, "the purpose of ages," or of eternity. Locke, Chandler, and Whitby render this, "according to that disposition or arrangement of the ages which he made in Jesus Christ, or through him." The object of such an interpretation seems to be to avoid the doctrine that God had a purpose or plan in the salvation of men, and hence such expositors suppose it refers to the arrangement of the *ages* of the world by which the plan of re-

purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

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

13 Wherefore I desire that ye

[a] He.4.16.

demption was introduced. On the word here rendered *purpose*—προθέσις—see Notes on Rom. viii. 28; comp. Eph. i. 11. It is rendered *shewbread*—"the bread of *setting before*," Matt. xii. 4; Mark ii. 26; Luke vi. 4; Heb. ix. 2; *purpose*, Acts xi. 23; xxvii. 13; Rom. viii. 28; ix. 11; Eph. i. 11; iii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; iii. 10. It does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. In most of these cases it refers to the *purpose* or *intention* of God; in not a single case does it mean *arrangement* or *disposition* in any sense like that of making an arrangement of *ages* or periods of the world; and the interpretation proposed by Whitby, Locke, Clarke, and others, is wholly at variance with the settled use of the word. The word rendered *eternal*—αἰώνων—*may* mean ages; but it also most usually means eternity; see ver. 9. Here it *may* mean "the purpose of *ages*;" *i. e.* the purpose formed in past ages; but the word is most commonly used in the New Testament in the sense of *ever*, and *for ever*; comp. the following places, where it is so rendered in our common version, and beyond a doubt correctly; Matt. vi. 13; xxi. 19; Mark iii. 29; xi. 14; Luke i. 33, 55; John iv. 14; vi. 51, 58; viii. 35; xiv. 16; Rom. i. 25; ix. 5; xi. 36; xvi. 27; 2 Cor. ix. 9; xi. 31; Gal. i. 5. The fair meaning of the passage here is, that God had formed a plan which was *eternal* in reference to the salvation of men; that that plan had reference to the Lord Jesus; and that it was now executed by the gospel. It is impossible to get away from the idea that God has *a plan*. It is too often affirmed in the Scriptures, and is too consonant with our reason, to be disputed. It is as *undesirable* as it is impossible to escape from that idea. Who could respect or honour an intelligent being that had no plan, no purpose, no intention, and that did all things by caprice and hap-hazard? If God has any plan, it must be eternal. He has no *new* schemes; he has no intentions which he did not always have. ¶ *Which he purposed.* Literally, "which he *made*." ¶ *In Christ Jesus.* With reference to him; or which were to be executed through him. The eternal plan had respect to him, and was to be executed by his coming and work.

12. *We have boldness.* The word here used — παῤῥησίαν—means, properly, boldness of speaking; 2 Cor. vii. 4; John vii. 26; Acts iv. 13, 29, 31. Here it seems to mean "freedom of utterance;" and the idea is, that we may come to God now in prayer with confidence through the Lord Jesus; see Heb. iv. 16. ¶ *And access;* see Notes chap. ii. 18. ¶ *By the faith of him.* By faith in him. The sense is, that we may now come confidently and boldly to the throne of grace for mercy in the name of the Redeemer. Boldness is not rashness; and faith is not presumption; but we may come without hesitating, and with an assurance that our prayers will be heard.

13. *Wherefore I desire that ye faint not.* The connection here is this. Paul was then a prisoner at Rome. He had been made such in consequence of his efforts to diffuse the Christian religion among the Gentiles; see Notes on ver. 1. His zeal in this cause, and the opinions which he held on this subject, had roused the wrath of the Jews, and led to all the calamities which he was now suffering. Of that the Ephesians, he supposes, were aware. It was natural that they should be distressed at his sufferings, for all his privations were endured on their account. But here he tells them not to be troubled and disheartened. He was indeed suffering; but he was reconciled to it, and they should be also, since it was promoting their welfare. The word rendered "faint" — ἐγκακέω — means literally, to turn out a coward, or to

faint not at my tribulations for you, which [a] is your glory.

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

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

[a] 2Co.1.6.

lose one's courage; then to be faint-hearted, &c.; Notes, 2 Cor. iv. 1. It is rendered *faint* in Luke xviii. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 1, 16; Eph. iii. 13, and *weary* in Gal. vi. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 13. It does not elsewhere occur. It is rendered here by Locke *dismayed*. Koppe supposes it means that they should not suppose that the Christian religion was vain and false because he was suffering so much from his countrymen on account of it. But it rather means that they might be in danger of being discouraged by the fact that *he* was enduring so much. They might become disheartened in their attachment to a system of religion which exposed its friends to such calamities. Paul tells them that this ought not to follow. They were to be profited by all *his* sufferings, and they should, therefore, hold fast to a religion which was attended with so many benefits to *them*—though *he* should suffer. ¶ *Which is your glory.* Which tends to your honour and welfare. You have occasion to rejoice that you have a friend who is willing thus to suffer for you; you have occasion to rejoice in all the benefits which will result to you from his trials in your behalf.

14. *For this cause.* Some suppose that this is a resumption of what he had commenced saying in ver. 1, but which had been interrupted by a long parenthesis. So Bloomfield explains it. But it seems to me more probable that he refers to what immediately precedes. "Wherefore, that the great work may be carried on, and that the purposes of these my sufferings may be answered in your benefit and glory, I bow my knees to God, and pray to him." ¶ *I bow my knees.* I pray. The usual, and the proper posture of prayer is to kneel; Comp. 2 Chron. vi. 13; Dan. vi. 10; Luke xxii. 21; Acts vii. 60; ix. 40; xx. 26; xxi. 5. It is a posture which indicates reverence, and should, therefore, be assumed when we come before God. It has been an unhappy thing that the custom of kneeling in public worship has ever been departed from in the Christian churches. ¶ *Unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* To whom, undoubtedly, prayer should ordinarily be addressed. But this does not make it improper to address the Lord Jesus in prayer; see Notes on Acts i. 24; vii. 59, 60.

15. *Of whom the whole family.* This expression "of whom," may refer either to "the Father," or to the Lord Jesus. Commentators have been divided in opinion in regard to it. Bloomfield, Chandler, Erasmus, Koppe, and some others, refer it to the Father. Locke, Doddridge, Calvin, and some others, refer it to the Lord Jesus. This is the more natural interpretation. The whole "family of God," means all his children; and the idea is, that they all bear the same name, derived from the Redeemer; all are Christians. No matter where they are, in heaven or in earth; no matter from what nation they are converted, whether Jews or Gentiles, they all have one name, and one Redeemer, and all belong to one family; see chap. iv. 4—6. ¶ *In heaven.* Spirits of just men made perfect. It does not properly refer to angels, for he is not speaking of them, but of the family of the redeemed. If the phrase "in heaven," could *ever* be taken to denote the Jews as contradistinguished from the Gentiles, I should think that this was one of the places. Many expositors have supposed that it is frequently so used in this epistle, but I see no clear evidence of it, and no instance where it seems very probable, unless this should be one. And it is not necessary here, for it may mean *all* the redeemed, whether in heaven or earth, though the connection would seem rather to have suggested a reference to the Jews and the Gentiles. An expression similar to this occurs in Col. i. 20. "To reconcile all things to him-

16 That he would grant you according to the riches [a] of his glory, to be [b] strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; [c]

17 That Christ may dwell [d] in your hearts by faith; that ye being [e] rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints, what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

[a] Ph.4.19. [b] chap.6.10; Col.1.11. [c] Ro.7.22. [d] John14.23; chap.2.22. [e] Co.2.7.

self, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." The passage before us is one that is commonly explained by a reference to Jewish opinions. The Jews were accustomed to call the angels in heaven God's *upper family*, and his people on earth his *lower family*. See the passages cited from the Rabbinical writers in Wetstein. ¶ *Is named.* This means substantially the same as *is*. They are all of one family. They all have one father, and are all of one community. The expression is taken from the custom in a family, where all bear the name of the *head* of the family; and the meaning is, that all in heaven and on earth are united under one head, and constitute one community. It does not mean that all are *called* by the same name, or that the name *Christian* is given to the angels, but that they all pertain to the same community, and constitute the same great and glorious brotherhood. Part are in heaven, near his throne; part in distant worlds; part are angels of light; part redeemed and happy spirits; part are in the church on earth; but they are all united as one family, and have one head and Father. This glorious family will yet be gathered together in heaven, and will encompass the throne of their common Father rejoicing.

16. *According to the riches of his glory.* According to the glorious abundance of his mercy; see Phil. iv. 19. Out of those stores of rich grace which can never be exhausted. The word *riches*, so often used by Paul, denotes *abundance*, and the idea here is, that his grace was inexhaustible and ample for all their wants. ¶ *To be strengthened with might.* To be powerfully strengthened. That is, to give you abundant strength to bear trials; to perform your duties; to glorify his name. ¶ *In the inner man.* In the heart, the mind, the soul; see Notes on Rom. vii. 22. The *body* needs to be strengthened every day. In like manner the soul needs constant supplies of grace. Piety needs to be constantly invigorated, or it withers and decays. Every Christian needs grace given each day to enable him to bear trials, to resist temptation, to discharge his duty, to live a life of faith.

17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*; see Notes, chap. ii. 22. Expressions like this often occur in the Scriptures, where God is said to dwell in us, and we are said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost; see Notes on John xiv. 23; 1 Cor. vi. 19. ¶ *That ye being rooted.* Firmly established—as a tree is whose roots strike deep, and extend afar. The meaning is, that his love should be as firm in our hearts, as a tree is in the soil, whose roots strike deep into the earth. ¶ *And grounded.* τεθεμελιωμένοι —*founded*—as a building is on a foundation. The word is taken from architecture, where a firm foundation is laid, and the meaning is, that he wished them to be as firm in the love of Christ, as a building is that rests on a solid basis. ¶ *In love.* In love to the Redeemer—perhaps also in love to each other—and to all. Love was the great principle of the true religion, and the apostle wished that they might be fully settled in that.

18. *May be able to comprehend with all saints.* That all others with you may be able to understand this. It was his desire that others, as well as they, might appreciate the wonders of redemption. ¶ *What is the breadth, and length,* &c. It has been doubted to what this refers. Locke says it refers to the mystery of calling the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Chandler supposes there is an allusion in all this to the temple at Ephesus. It

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness [a] of God.

[a] John 1. 6.

was one of the wonders of the world—exciting admiration by its length, and height, and dimensions in every way, as well as by its extraordinary riches and splendour. In allusion to this, the object of so much admiration and pride to the Ephesians, he supposes that Paul desires that they should become fully acquainted with the extent and beauty of the spiritual temple. But I do not see that there is clear evidence that there is allusion here to the temple at Ephesus. It seems rather to be the language of a heart that was full of the subject, and impressed with its greatness; and the words are employed to denote the *dimensions* of that love, and are similar to what would be meant if he had said, "that you may know how *large*, or how *great* is that love." The apostle evidently meant to express the strongest sense of the greatness of the love of the Redeemer, and to show in the most emphatic manner how much he wished that they should fully understand it. On the phrase "depth and height," comp. Notes on Rom. viii. 39.

19. *And to know the love of Christ.* The love of Christ towards us; the immensity of redeeming love. It is not merely the love which he showed for the Gentiles in calling them into his kingdom, which is here referred to; it is the love which is shown for the lost world in giving himself to die. This love is often referred to in the New Testament, and is declared to surpass all other which has ever been evinced; see Notes on Rom. v. 7, 8; John xv. 13. To know this; to feel this; to have a lively sense of it, is one of the highest privileges of the Christian. Nothing will so much excite gratitude in our hearts; nothing will prompt us so much to a life of self-denial; nothing will make us so benevolent and so dead to the world; see Notes on 2 Cor. v. 14. ¶ *Which passeth knowledge.* There *seems* to be a slight contradiction here in expressing a wish to know what cannot be known, or in a desire that they should understand that which cannot be understood. But it is the language of a man whose heart was full to overflowing. He had a deep sense of the love of Christ, and he expressed a wish that they should understand it. Suddenly he has such an apprehension of it, that he says it is indeed infinite. No one can attain to a full view of it. It had no limit. It was unlike any thing which had ever been evinced before. It was love which led the Son of God to become incarnate; to leave the heavens: to be a man of sorrows; to be reviled and persecuted; to be put to death in the most shameful manner—ON A CROSS. Who could understand that? Where else had there been any thing like that? What was there with which to compare it? What was there by which it could be illustrated? And how could it be fully understood? Yet *something* of it might be seen, known, felt; and the apostle desired that as far as possible they should understand that great love which the Lord Jesus had manifested for a dying world. ¶ *That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* What an expression! How rich and glorious! Who can comprehend all that it implies? Let us inquire into its meaning. There *may* be here in these verses an allusion to the *temple*. The apostle had spoken of their being founded in love, and of surveying the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of that love, as of a vast and splendid edifice, and he now desires that those whom he addressed might be pervaded or filled with the indwelling of God. The language here is cumulative, and is full of meaning and richness. (1.) They were to be *full of God.* That is, he would dwell in them. (2.) They were to be filled with *the fulness of God*—τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ. On the word rendered *fulness*, see Notes on chap. i. 10, 23. It is a favourite word with Paul. Thus he speaks of the *fulness* of the Gentiles,

20 Now [a] unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in *us*,

[a] Ro.16.25; He.13.20,21; Jude 24.

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Rom. xi. 25; the *fulness* of time, Gal. iv. 4; the *fulness* of him that filleth all in all, Eph. i. 23; the *fulness* of Christ, Eph. iv. 13; the *fulness* of the Godhead in Christ, Col. i. 19; ii. 9. It means here, "that you may have the richest measures of divine consolation and of the divine presence; that you may partake of the entire enjoyment of God in the most ample measure in which he bestows his favours on his people." (3.) It was to be with *all* the fulness of God; not with partial and stinted measures of his gracious presence, but with *all* which he ever bestows. Religion is not a name. It is not a matter of form. It is not a trifle. It is the richest, best gift of God to man. It ennobles our nature. It more clearly teaches us our true dignity than all the profound discoveries which men can make in science; for none of them will ever fill us with the fulness of God. Religion is spiritual, elevating, pure, Godlike. We dwell with God; walk with God; live with God; commune with God; are like God. We become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4); in rank we are associated with angels; in happiness and purity we are associated with God!

20. *Now unto him.* It is not uncommon for Paul to utter an ascription of praise in the midst of an argument; see Rom. ix. 5; xi. 36; Gal. i. 5. Here his mind is full of the subject; and in view of the fact that God communicates to his people such blessings—that they may become filled with all his fulness, he desires that praise should be given to him. ¶ *That is able to do;* see Notes, Rom. xvi. 25. ¶ *Exceeding abundantly.* The compound word here used occurs only in this place, and in 1 Thess. iii. 10; v. 13. It means, to an extent which we cannot express. ¶ *Above all that we ask or think.* More than all that we can desire in our prayers; more than all that we can conceive; see Notes on 1 Cor. ii. 9. ¶ *According to the power that worketh in us.* The exertion of that same power can accomplish for us more than we can now conceive.

21. *Unto him be glory;* see Notes, Rom. xvi. 27. ¶ *In the church.* Or, *by* the church; ver. 10. The church was to be the instrument by which the glory of God would be shown; and it was *by* the church that his praise would be celebrated. ¶ *Throughout all ages, world without end.* There is a richness and amplification of language here which shows that his heart was full of the subject, and that it was difficult to find words to express his conceptions. It means, in the strongest sense, FOR EVER. It is one of "the apostle's self-invented phrases" *(Bloomfield);* and Blackwall says that no version can fully express the meaning. It is literally, "Unto all generations of the age of ages," or "unto all the generations of the eternity of eternities, or the eternity of ages." It is the language of a heart FULL of the love of God, and desiring that he might be praised without ceasing for ever and ever.

REMARKS.

1. It is a great and glorious truth that the offers of the gospel are made to us, who are by nature Gentiles; and that those offers are confined to no class or condition of men—to no nation or tribe; ver. 1—6. This truth had been concealed for ages. The Jews regarded themselves as a peculiar people, and as exclusively the favourites of Heaven. The great effort has been made everywhere to show that there was a favoured class of men—a class whom God regarded with peculiar affection, on account of their birth, or rank, or nation, or wealth, or complexion. In one nation, there has been a distinction of *caste* carefully kept up from age to age, and

sustained by all the power of the priesthood and the laws; and it has been held that that one class was the favourite of Heaven, and that every other was overlooked or despised. In another nation, it has been held that the services of an illustrious ancestry made a difference among men, and that this fact was to be regarded, even in religion. In another, complexion has made a difference; and the feeling has insensibly grown up that one class were the favourites of Heaven, because they had a skin not coloured like others, and that those not thus favoured might be doomed to hopeless toil and servitude. In another, the attempt is made to create such a distinction by wealth; and it is felt that the rich are the favourites of Heaven. In all these cases, there is the secret feeling that in virtue of rank, or blood, or property, one class are the objects of divine interest, more than others; and that the same plan of salvation is not needed for them which is required for the poor, for the ignorant, and for the slave. The gospel regards all men as on a level; offers the same salvation to all; and offers it on the same terms. This is one of its glories; and for this we should love it. It meets man as he is—as everywhere a fallen and a ruined being—and provides a plan adapted to raise *all* to the glories of the same heaven.

2. Humility becomes us; ver. 8. Paul felt that he was the least of all saints. He remembered his former life. He recalled the time when he persecuted the church. He felt that he was not worthy to be enrolled in that society which he had so greatly injured. If Paul was humble, who should not be? Who, since his time, has equalled his ardour, his zeal, his attainments in the divine life? Yet the remembrance of his former life served always to keep him humble, and operated as a check on all the tendencies to pride in his bosom. So it should be with us—with all Christians. There has been enough in our past lives to make us humble, if we would recall it, and to make us feel that we are not worthy to be enrolled among the saints. One has been an infidel; one licentious; one intemperate; one rash, revengeful, passionate; one has been proud and ambitious; one has been false, dishonest, faithless; all have had hearts opposed to God, alienated from good, and prone to evil; and there is not a Christian in the world who will not find enough in his past life to make him humble, if he will examine himself—enough to make him feel that he deserves not even the lowest place among the saints. So we shall feel if we look over our lives *since* we made a profession of religion. The painful conviction will come over our souls, that we have lived so far from God, and done so little in his cause, that we are not worthy of the lowest place among the blessed.

3. It is a privilege to preach the gospel; ver. 8. So Paul felt. It was an honour of which he felt that he was by no means worthy. It was proof of the favour of God towards him that he was permitted to do it. It *is* a privilege—an honour—to preach the gospel, anywhere and to any class of men. It is an honour to be permitted to preach in Christian lands; it is an honour to preach among the heathen. It is an honour far above that of conquerors; and he who does it will win a brighter and more glorious crown than he who goes forth to obtain glory by dethroning kings, and laying nations waste. The warrior goes with the sword in one hand, and the torch in the other. His path is marked with blood, and with smouldering ruins. He treads among the slain; and the music of his march is made up of dying groans, and the shrieks of widows and orphans. Yet he is honoured, and his name is blazoned abroad; he is crowned with the laurel, and triumphal arches are reared, and monuments are erected to perpetuate his fame. The man who carries the gospel goes for a different purpose. He is the minister of peace. He goes to tell of salvation. He fires no city; lays waste no field; robs no one of a home, no wife of a husband, no child of a father, no sister of a brother;—he goes to elevate the intellect, to mould the heart to virtue,

to establish schools and colleges; to promote temperance, industry, and chastity; to wipe away tears, and to tell of heaven. *His* course is marked by intelligence and order; by peace and purity; by the joy of the domestic circle, and the happiness of a virtuous fire-side; by consolation on the bed of pain, and by the hope of heaven that cheers the dying. Who would not rather be a preacher of the gospel than a blood-stained warrior? Who would not rather have the wreath that shall encircle the brows of Paul, and Schwartz, and Martin, and Brainerd, than the laurels of Alexander and Cæsar?

4. There is ample fulness in the plan of salvation by the Redeemer; ver. 8. In Christ there is unsearchable riches. None can understand the fulness that there is in him; none can exhaust it. Millions, and hundreds of millions, have been saved by the fulness of his merits; and still those merits are as ample as ever. The sun in the heavens has shone for six thousand years, and has shed light and comfort on countless millions; but his beams are not exhausted or diminished in splendour. To-day, while I write—this beautiful, calm, sweet day—(June 24, 1840) his beams are as bright, as rich, as full, as they were when they were shed on Eden. So of the Sun of righteousness. Millions have been enlightened by his beams; but to-day they are as full, and rich, and glorious, as they were when the first ray from that sun reached the benighted mind of a penitent sinner. And that fulness is not *to be* exhausted. No matter how many partake of his abundance; no matter how many darkened minds are enlightened; no matter though nation after nation comes and partakes of his fulness, yet there is no approach to exhaustion. The sun in the heavens may waste his fires and burn out, and become a dark orb, diffusing horror over a cold and cheerless world; but not so with the Sun of righteousness. That will shine on in glory for ever and ever; and the last penitent sinner on earth who comes to partake of the riches of the grace of Christ, shall find it as full and as free as did the first who sought pardon through his blood. Oh, the UNSEARCHABLE RICHES of Christ! Who can understand this? Who can grow weary in its contemplation?

5. There is no good reason why any sinner should be lost; ver. 8. If the merits of the Saviour were limited; if his arm were a feeble human arm; if he died only for a part, and if his merit were already well-nigh exhausted, we might begin to despair. But it is not so. The riches of his grace are unbounded and inexhaustible. And why then does the sinner die? I can answer. He does like the man who expires of thirst while fountains bubble and streams flow all around him; like him who is starving amidst trees loaded with fruit; like him who is dying of fever in the midst of medicines that would at once restore him; like him who holds his breath and dies while the balmy air of heaven—pure, full, and free—floats all around him. If a man thus dies, who is to blame? If a man goes down to hell from lands where the gospel is preached, whose is the fault? It is not because the merits of Christ are limited; it is not because they are exhausted.

6. The church is designed to accomplish a most important purpose in the manifestation of the divine glory and perfections; ver. 10. It is by that that his great wisdom is shown. It is by that entirely that his *mercy* is displayed; chap. ii. 7. His power is shown in the creation and support of the worlds; his goodness in the works of creation and Providence; his truth in his promises and threatenings; his greatness and majesty are everywhere displayed in the universe which he has brought into being. His mercy is shown in the church; and there alone. Angels in heaven not having sinned, have had no occasion for its exercise; and angels that are fallen have had no offer of pardon. Throughout the wide universe there has been so far as we know, no exercise of mercy but in the church. Hence the interest which the angelic beings feel in the work of redemption.

Hence they desire to look into these things, and to see more of the heighth and depth and length and breadth of the love of God evinced in the work of redemption. Hence the church is to be honoured for ever as the means of making known to distant worlds the way in which God shows mercy to rebellious creatures. It is honour enough for one world thus to be the sole means of making known to the universe one of the attributes of God; and while other worlds may contain more proofs of his power and greatness, it is enough for ours that it shows to distant worlds how he can exercise compassion.

7. All tribulation and affliction may be intended to do some good, and may benefit others; ver. 13. Paul felt that *his* sufferings were for the "glory"—the welfare and honour of the Gentiles, in whose cause he was suffering. He was then a prisoner at Rome. He was permitted no longer to go abroad from land to land to preach the gospel. How natural would it have been for him to be desponding, and to feel that he was leading a useless life. But he did not feel thus. He felt that in some way he might be doing good. He was suffering in a good cause, and his trials had been brought on him by the appointment of God. He gave himself to writing letters; he talked with all who would come to him (Acts xxviii. 30, 31), and he expected to accomplish something by his example in his sufferings. The sick, the afflicted, and the imprisoned often feel that they are useless. They are laid aside from public and active life, and they feel that they are living in vain. But it is not so. The long imprisonment of John Bunyan—so mysterious to him and to his friends—was the means of producing the Pilgrim's Progress, now translated into more than twenty languages, and already blessed to the salvation of thousands. The meekness, and patience, and kindness of a Christian on a bed of pain, may do more for the honour of religion than he could do in a life of health. It shows the sustaining power of the gospel; and this is much. It is *worth* much suffering to show to a world what the gospel can do in supporting the soul in times of trial; and he who is imprisoned or persecuted; he who lies month after month or year after year on a bed of languishing, may do more for the honour of religion than by many years of active life.

8. There is but one family among the friends of God; ver. 15. They all have one Father, and all are brethren. In heaven and on earth they belong to the same family, and worship the same God. Let Christians, therefore, first love one another. Let them lay aside all contention and strife. Let them feel that they are brethren—that though they belong to different denominations, and are called by different names, yet they belong to the same family, and are united under the same glorious head. Let them, secondly, realize how highly they are honoured. They belong to the same family as the angels of light and the spirits of just men made perfect. It is an honour to belong to such a family; an honour to be a Christian. Oh, if we saw this in its true light, how much more honourable would it be to belong to this "family" than to belong to the families of the great on earth, and to have our names enrolled with nobles and with kings!

9. Let us seek to know more of the love of Christ in our redemption—to understand more of the extent of that love which he evinced for us; ver. 16—19. It is worth our study. It will reward our efforts. There are few Christians—if there are any—who understand the richness and fulness of the gospel of Christ; few who have such elevated views as they might have and should have of the glory of that gospel. It is wonderful that they who profess to love the Lord Jesus do not study that system more, and desire more to know the heighth, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ. True, it passes knowledge. We cannot hope fully to fathom it in this world. But we may know more of it than we do. We may aspire to being filled with all the fulness of God. We may long for it; pant for it; strive for it; pray for it

CHAPTER IV

1 THEREFORE, the prisoner [1] of the Lord,) beseech you that ye walk [a] worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

1 or, *in*. a Col. 1. 10.

—and we shall not strive in vain. Though we shall not attain all we wish; though there will be an infinity beyond what we can understand in this world, yet there will be enough attained to reward all our efforts, and to fill us with love and joy and peace. The love of God our Saviour is indeed an illimitable ocean; but we may see enough of it in this world to lead us to adore and praise God with overflowing hearts.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is the commencement of the *practical* part of the epistle. and is made up, like the remaining chapters, of various exhortations. It is in accordance with the usual habit of Paul to conduct an *argument* in his epistles, and then to enforce various practical duties, either growing out of the argument which he had maintained, or, more commonly, adapted to some particular state of things in the church to which he wrote. The points of exhortation in this chapter are, in general, the following:

I. An exhortation to *unity;* ver. 1—6. He entreats them to walk worthy of their vocation (ver. 1); shows them how it could be done, or what he meant; and that, in order to that, they should show meekness and kindness (ver. 3), and particularly exhorts them to unity (ver. 3); for they had one God, one Saviour, one baptism, one religion; ver. 4—6.

II. He shows them that God had made ample provision for his people, that they might be sound in the faith, and in unity of life and of doctrine, and need not be driven about with every wind of opinion; ver. 7—16. He assures them that to every Christian is given grace in the Redeemer adapted to his circumstances (ver. 7); that the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven to obtain gifts for his people (ver. 8—10); that he had given apostles, prophets, and evangelists, for the very purpose of imparting instruction, and confirming them in the faith of the gospel (ver. 11, 12); that this was in order that they might attain to the highest elevation in Christian knowledge and piety (ver. 13); and particularly that they might not be driven to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; ver. 14—16.

III. Having these arrangements made for their knowledge and piety, he exhorts them not to live as the heathen around them lived, but to show that they were under a better influence; ver. 17—24. Their understanding was darkened, and they were alienated from the life of God, or true religion (ver. 18); they were past feeling, and were given over to every form of sensuality; ver. 19. The Ephesians, however, had been taught a different thing (ver. 20, 21), and the apostle exhorts them to lay aside everything pertaining to their former course of life, and to become wholly conformed to the principles of the new man; ver. 22—24.

IV. He exhorts them to perform particular Christian duties, and to put away certain evils, of which they and all others were in danger; ver. 25—32. In particular, he entreats them to avoid lying (ver. 25); anger (ver. 26); theft (ver. 28); corrupt and corrupting conversation (ver. 29); grieving the Holy Spirit (ver. 30); bitterness, evil-speaking, and malice (ver. 31); and entreats them to manifest in their intercourse with each other a spirit of kindness and forgiveness; ver. 32.

1. *I, therefore.* In view of the great and glorious truths which God has revealed, and of the grace which he has manifested towards you who are Gentiles. See the previous chapters. The sense of the word "therefore"—οὖν—in this place, is, "Such being your exalted privileges; since God has done so much for you; since he has revealed for you such a glorious system; since he has bestowed on you the honour of calling you into his kingdom, and making you partakers

of his mercy, I entreat you to live in accordance with these elevated privileges, and to show your sense of his goodness by devoting your all to his service." The force of the word "*I*," they would all feel. It was the appeal and exhortation of the founder of their church—of their spiritual father—of one who had endured much for them, and who was now in bonds on account of his devotion to the welfare of the Gentile world.—¶ *The prisoner of the Lord.* Marg., *in.* It means, that he was now a prisoner, or in confinement *in the cause* of the Lord; and he regarded himself as having been made a prisoner because the Lord had so willed and ordered it. He did not feel particularly that he was the prisoner of Nero; he was bound and kept because the *Lord* willed it, and because it was in his service; see Notes on chap. iii. 1. ¶ *Beseech you that ye walk worthy.* That you live as becomes those who have been called in this manner into the kingdom of God. The word *walk* is often used to denote *life, conduct,* &c.; see Notes on Rom. iv. 12; vi. 4; 2 Cor. v. 7. ¶ *Of the vocation.* Of the *calling*—*τῆς κλήσεως.* This word properly means *a call,* or *an invitation*—as to a banquet. Hence it means that divine invitation or calling by which Christians are introduced into the privileges of the gospel. The word is translated *calling* in Rom. xi. 29; 1 Cor. i. 26; vii. 20; Eph. i. 18; iv. 1, 4; Phil. iii. 14; 2 Thess. i. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; Heb. iii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 10. It does not elsewhere occur. The sense of the word, and the agency employed in calling us, are well expressed in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel." This *calling* or *vocation* is through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and is his appropriate work on the human heart. It consists essentially in influencing the mind to turn to God, or to enter into his kingdom. It is the exertion of *so much* influence on the mind as is necessary to secure the turning of the sinner to God. In this all Christians are agreed, though there have been almost endless disputes about the actual influence exerted, and the mode in which the Spirit acts on the mind. Some suppose it is by "moral suasion;" some by physical power; some by an act of creation; some by inclining the mind to exert its proper powers in a right way, and to turn to God. What is the precise agency employed perhaps we are not to expect to be able to decide; see John iii. 8. The great, the essential point is held, if it be maintained that it is by the agency of the Holy Spirit that the result is secured —and this I suppose to be held by all evangelical Christians. But though it is by the agency of the Holy Spirit, we are not to suppose that it is without the employment of *means.* It is not literally like the act of creation. It is preceded and attended with *means* adapted to the end; means which are almost as various as the individuals who are *called* into the kingdom of God. Among those means are the following. (1.) *Preaching.* Probably more are called into the kingdom by this means than any other. It is "God's great ordinance for the salvation of men." It is eminently fitted for it. The *pulpit* has higher advantages for acting on the mind than any other means of affecting men. The truths that are dispensed; the sacredness of the place; the peace and quietness of the sanctuary; and the appeals to the reason, the conscience, and the heart —all are fitted to affect men, and to bring them to reflection. The Spirit makes use of the word preached, but in a great variety of ways. Sometimes many are impressed simultaneously; sometimes the same truth affects one mind while others are unmoved; and sometimes truth reaches the heart of a sinner which he has heard a hundred times before, without being interested. The Spirit acts with sovereign power, and by laws which have never yet been traced

out. (2.) The events of Providence are used to call men into his kingdom. God appeals to men by laying them on a bed of pain, or by requiring them to follow a friend in the still and mournful procession to the grave. They feel that they must die, and they are led to ask the question whether they are prepared. Much fewer are affected in this way than we should suppose would be the case; but still there are many, in the aggregate, who can trace their hope of heaven to a fit of sickness, or to the death of a friend. (3.) Conversation is one of the means by which sinners are called into the kingdom of God. In some states of mind, where the Spirit has prepared the soul like mellow ground prepared for the seed, a few moments' conversation, or a single remark, will do more to arrest the attention than much preaching. (4.) Reading is often the means of calling men into the kingdom. The Bible is the great means—and if we can get men to read that, we have very cheering indications that they will be converted. The profligate Earl of Rochester was awakened and led to the Saviour by reading a chapter in Isaiah. And who can estimate the number of those who have been converted by reading Baxter's Call to the Unconverted; Alleine's Alarm; the Dairyman's Daughter; or the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain? He does good who places a good book in the way of a sinner. That mother or sister is doing good, and making the conversion of a son or brother *probable*, who puts a Bible in his chest when he goes to sea, or in his trunk when he goes on a journey. Never should a son be allowed to go from home without one. The time will come when, far away from home, he will read it. He will read it when his mind is pensive and tender, and the Spirit may bear the truth to his heart for his conversion. (5.) The Spirit calls men into the kingdom of Christ by presiding over, and directing in some unseen manner their own reflections, or the operations of their own minds. In some way unknown to us, he turns the thoughts to the past life; recalls forgotten deeds and plans; makes long past sins rise to remembrance; and overwhelms the mind with conscious guilt from the memory of crime. He holds this power over the soul; and it is among the most mighty and mysterious of all the influences that he has on the heart. *Sometimes*—a man can hardly tell how—the mind will be pensive, sad, melancholy; then conscious of guilt; then alarmed at the future. Often, by sudden transitions, it will be changed from the gay to the grave, and from the pleasant to the sad; and often, unexpectedly to himself, and by associations which he cannot trace out, the sinner will find himself reflecting on death, judgment, and eternity. It is the Spirit of God that leads the mind along. It is not by force; not by the violation of its laws, but in accordance with those laws, that the mind is thus led along to the eternal world. In such ways, and by such means, are men "*called*" into the kingdom of God. To "walk worthy of that calling," is to live as becomes a Christian, an heir of glory; to live as Christ did. It is, (1.) To bear our religion with us to all places, companies, employments. Not merely to be a Christian on the Sabbath, and at the communion table, and in our own land, but every day, and everywhere, and in any land where we may be placed. We are to *live* religion, and not merely to *profess* it. We are to be Christians in the counting-room, as well as in the closet; on the farm as well as at the communion table; among strangers, and in a foreign land, as well as in our own country and in the sanctuary. (2.) It is to do nothing inconsistent with the most elevated Christian character. In temper, feeling, plan, we are to give expression to no emotion, and use no language, and perform no deed, that shall be inconsistent with the most elevated Christian character. (3.) It is to do *right always:* to be just to all; to tell the simple truth; to defraud no one; to maintain a correct standard of morals; to be known to be honest. There *is* a correct standard of character and conduct; and a Christian should be

2. With all lowliness [a] and meek-

[a] Mat. 11. 29.

ness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

a man so living, that we may always know *exactly where to find him.* He should so live, that we shall have no doubts that, however others may act, we shall find *him* to be the unflinching advocate of temperance, chastity, honesty, and of every good work—of every plan that is really fitted to alleviate human woe, and benefit a dying world. (4.) It is to live as one should who expects soon to be *in heaven.* Such a man will feel that the earth is not his home; that he is a stranger and a pilgrim here; that riches, honours, and pleasures are of comparatively little importance; that he ought to watch and pray, and that he ought to be holy. A man who feels that he may die at any moment, will watch and pray. A man who realizes that *to-morrow* he may be in heaven, will feel that he ought to be holy. He who begins a day on earth, feeling that at its close he *may* be among the angels of God, and the spirits of just men made perfect; that before its close he *may* have seen the Saviour glorified, and the burning throne of God, will feel the importance of living a holy life, and of being wholly devoted to the service of God. Pure should be the eyes that are soon to look on the throne of God; pure the hands that are soon to strike the harps of praise in heaven; pure the feet that are to walk the "golden streets above."

2. *With all lowliness.* Humility; see Notes on Acts xx. 19, where the same Greek word is used; comp. also the following places, where the same Greek word occurs: Phil. ii. 3, "in *lowliness* of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves;" Col. ii. 18, "in a voluntary *humility;*" Col. ii. 23; iii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 5. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The idea is, that humility of mind becomes those who are "called" (ver. 1.), and that we walk worthy of that calling when we evince it. ¶ *And meekness;* see Notes on Matt. v. 5. Meekness relates to the manner in which we receive injuries. We are to bear them patiently, and not to retaliate, or seek revenge. The meaning here is, that we adorn the gospel when we show its power in enabling us to bear injuries without anger or a desire of revenge, or with a mild and forgiving spirit; see 2 Cor. x. 1; Gal. v. 23; vi. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 25; Titus iii. 2; where the same Greek word occurs. ¶ *With long-suffering,* &c. Bearing patiently with the foibles, faults, and infirmities of others; see Notes on 1 Cor. xiii. 4. The virtue here required is that which is to be manifested in our manner of receiving the provocations which we meet with from our brethren. No virtue, perhaps, is more frequently demanded in our intercourse with others. We do not go far with any fellow-traveller on the journey of life, before we find there is great occasion for its exercise. He has a temperament different from our own. He may be sanguine, or choleric, or melancholy; while we may be just the reverse. He has peculiarities of taste, and habits, and disposition, which differ much from ours. He has his own plans and purposes of life, and his own way and time of doing things. He may be naturally irritable, or he may have been so trained that his modes of speech and conduct differ much from ours. Neighbours have occasion to remark this in their neighbours; friends in their friends; kindred in their kindred; one church-member in another. A husband and wife—such is the imperfection of human nature—can find enough in each other to embitter life, if they choose to magnify imperfections, and to become irritated at trifles; and there is no friendship that may not be marred in this way, if we will allow it. Hence, if we would have life move on smoothly, we must learn to bear and forbear. We must indulge the friend that we love in the little peculiarities of saying and doing things which may be important to him, but which may be of little moment to us. Like chil-

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

dren, we must suffer each one to build his play-house in his own way, and not quarrel with him because he does not think our way the best. All usefulness, and all comfort, may be prevented by an unkind, a sour, a crabbed temper of mind—a mind that can bear with no difference of opinion or temperament. A spirit of fault-finding; an unsatisfied temper; a constant irritability; little inequalities in the look, the temper, or the manner; a brow cloudy and dissatisfied—your husband or your wife cannot tell why—will more than neutralize all the good you can do, and render life anything but a blessing. It is in such gentle and quiet virtues as meekness and forbearance, that the happiness and usefulness of life consist, far more than in brilliant eloquence, in splendid talent, or illustrious deeds, that shall send the name to future times. It is the bubbling spring which flows gently; the little rivulet which glides through the meadow, and which runs along day and night by the farm-house, that is useful, rather than the swollen flood or the roaring cataract. Niagara excites our wonder; and we stand amazed at the power and greatness of God there, as he "pours it from his hollow hand." But one Niagara is enough for a continent or a world; while that same world needs thousands and tens of thousands of silver fountains, and gently flowing rivulets, that shall water every farm, and every meadow, and every garden, and that shall flow on, every day and every night, with their gentle and quiet beauty. So with the acts of our lives. It is not by great deeds only, like those of Howard—not by great sufferings only, like those of the martyrs—that good is to be done; it is by the daily and quiet virtues of life—the Christian temper, the meek forbearance, the spirit of forgiveness in the husband, the wife, the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the friend, the neighbour—that good is to be done; and in this all may be useful.

3. *The unity of the Spirit.* A united spirit, or oneness of spirit. This does not refer to the fact that there is one Holy Spirit; but it refers to unity of affection, of confidence, of love. It means that Christians should be united in temper and affection, and not be split up into factions and parties. It may be implied here, as is undoubtedly true, that such a unity would be produced only by the Holy Spirit; and that, as there was but one Spirit which had acted on their hearts to renew them, they ought to evince the same feelings and views. There was occasion among the Ephesians for this exhortation; for they were composed of Jews and Gentiles, and there might be danger of divisions and strifes, as there had been in other churches. There is *always* occasion for such an exhortation; for (1.) *unity* of feeling is eminently desirable to honour the gospel (see Notes on John xvii. 21); and (2.) there is always danger of discord where men are brought together in one society. There are so many different tastes and habits; there is such a variety of intellect and feeling; the modes of education have been so various, and the temperament may be so different, that there is constant danger of division. Hence the subject is so often dwelt on in the Scriptures (see Notes on 1 Cor. ii. seq.), and hence there is so much need of caution and of care in the churches. ¶ *In the bond of peace.* This was to be by the cultivation of that peaceful temper which binds all together. The American Indians usually spoke of peace as a "chain of friendship" which was to be kept bright. The meaning here is, that they should be bound or united together in the sentiments and affections of peace. It is not mere *external* unity; it is not a mere unity of creed; it is not a mere unity in the forms of public worship; it is such as the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of Christians, when it fills them all with the same love, and joy, and peace in believing. The following verses contain the reasons for this.

4. There is *one body.* One church—for so the word *body* means here—

4 [a] *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

[a] Rom. 12. 5.

denoting the body of Christ; see Notes on Rom. xii. 5; comp. Notes on Eph. i. 23. The meaning here is, that as there is really but one church on earth, there ought to be unity. The church is, at present, divided into many denominations. It has different forms of worship, and different rites and ceremonies. It embraces those of different complexions and ranks in life, and it cannot be denied that there are often unhappy contentions and jealousies in different parts of that church. Still, there is but one—"one holy, catholic (*i. e., universal*) church;" and that church should feel that it is one. Christ did not come to redeem and save different churches, and to give them a different place in heaven. He did not come to save the Episcopal communion merely, or the Presbyterian or the Methodist communions only; nor did he leave the world to fit up for them different mansions in heaven. He did not come to save merely the black man, or the red, or the white man; nor did he leave the world to set up for them separate mansions in the skies. He came that he might collect into one community a multitude of every complexion, and from every land, and unite them in one great brotherhood on earth, and ultimately assemble them in the same heaven. The church is one. Every sincere Christian is a brother in that church, and has an equal right with all others to its privileges. Being one by the design of the Saviour, they should be one in feeling; and every Christian, no matter what his rank, should be ready to hail every other Christian as a fellow-heir of heaven. ¶ *One Spirit.* The Holy Spirit. There is one and the self-same Spirit that dwells in the church. The same Spirit has awakened all; enlightened all; convicted all; converted all. Wherever they may be, and whoever, yet there has been substantially the same work of the Spirit on the heart of every Christian. There are circumstantial differences arising from diversities of temperament, disposition, and education; there may be a difference in the depth and power of his operations on the soul; there may be a difference in the degree of conviction for sin and in the evidence of conversion, but still there are the same operations on the heart essentially produced by the same Spirit; see Notes on 1 Cor. xii. 6—11. All the gifts of prayer, and of preaching; all the zeal, the ardour, the love, the self-denial in the church, are produced by the same Spirit. There should be, therefore, *unity.* The church is united in the agency by which it is saved; it should be united in the feelings which influence its members. ¶ *Even as ye are called;* see ver. 1. The sense is, "there is one body and one spirit, *in like manner* as there is one hope resulting from your calling." The same notion of *oneness* is found in relation to each of these things. ¶ *In one hope of your calling.* In one hope *resulting from* your being called into his kingdom. On the meaning of the word *hope,* see Notes on chap. ii. 12. The meaning here is, that Christians have the same hope, and they should therefore be one. They are looking forward to the same heaven; they hope for the same happiness beyond the grave. It is not as on earth among the people of the world, where there is a variety of hopes—where one hopes for pleasure, and another for honour, and another for gain; but there is the prospect of the same inexhaustible joy. This *hope* is fitted to promote union. There is no rivalry—for there is enough for all. *Hope* on earth does not always produce union and harmony. Two men hope to obtain the same office; two students hope to obtain the same honour in college; two rivals hope to obtain the same hand in marriage—and the consequence is jealousy, contention, and strife. The reason is, that but *one* can obtain the object. Not so with the crown of life—with the rewards of heaven. All may obtain *that* crown;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all,

all may share those rewards. How *can* Christians contend in an angry manner with each other, when the hope of dwelling in the same heaven swells their bosoms and animates their hearts?

5. *One Lord.* This evidently refers to the Lord Jesus. The "Spirit" is mentioned in the previous verse; the Father in the verse following. On the application of the word "Lord" to the Saviour, see Notes on Acts i. 24. The argument here is, that there ought to be *unity* among Christians, because they have one Lord and Saviour. They have not different Saviours adapted to different classes; not one for the Jew and another for the Greek; not one for the rich and another for the poor; not one for the bond and another for the free. There is but one. He belongs in common to all as their Saviour; and he has a right to rule over one as much as over another. There is no better way of promoting unity among Christians than by reminding them that they have the same Saviour. And when jealousies and heart-burnings arise; or when they are disposed to contend about trifles; when they magnify unimportant matters until they are in danger of rending the church asunder, let them feel that they have one Lord and Saviour, and they will lay aside their contentions and be one again. Let two men who have never seen each other before, meet in a distant land, and feel that they have the same Redeemer, and their hearts will mingle into one. They are not aliens, but friends. A cord of sympathy is struck more tender than that which binds them to country or home; and though of different nations, complexions, or habits, they will feel that they are one. Why should contentions ever arise between those who have the same Redeemer? ¶ *One faith.* The same belief. That is, either the belief of the same doctrines, or faith of the same nature in the heart. The word may be taken in either sense. I see no reason why it should not include *both* here, or be used in the widest sense. If so used, it means that Christians should be united because they hold the same great doctrines; and also, because they have the same confidence in the Redeemer in their hearts. They hold the same system as distinguished from Judaism, Paganism, Mohammedanism, Deism; and they should, therefore, be one. They have the same trust in Christ, as a living, practical principle—and they should, therefore, be one. They may differ in other attachments; in temperament; in pursuit; in professions in life—but they have a common faith—and they should be ONE. ¶ *One baptism.* This does not affirm that there is one *mode* of baptism, but it refers to *the thing itself.* They are all baptized in the name of the same Father, Saviour, Sanctifier. They have all in this manner been consecrated unto God, and devoted to his service. Whether by immersion, or by pouring, or by sprinkling, they have all been baptized with water; whether it is done in adult years, or in infancy, the same solemn act has been performed on all—the act of consecration to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This passage cannot be adduced to prove that only one *mode* of baptism is lawful, unless it can be shown that the thing referred to here was the *mode* and not *the thing itself;* and unless it can be proved that Paul meant to build his argument for the *unity* of Christians on the fact that the same *form* was used in their baptism. But this is evidently not the point of his argument. The argument is, that there was really but *one baptism*—not that there was but one *mode* of baptism. I could not use this argument in this form, "Christians should be one because they have been all baptized *by sprinkling;*" and yet the argument would be just as forcible as to use it in this form, "Christians should be one because they have all been baptized by *immersion.*" There is one *baptism*, not one *mode* of baptism; and no man has a right to *assume* that there can be but one mode, and then apply this

who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure [a] of the gift of Christ.

a Ro.12.3.

passage to that. The *essential thing* in the argument before us is, that there has been a consecration to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by the application of water. Thus understood, the argument is one that will be *felt* by all who have been devoted to God by baptism. They have taken the same vows upon them. They have consecrated themselves to the same God. They have made the same solemn profession of religion. Water has been applied to one and all as the emblem of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit; and having been thus initiated in a solemn manner into the same profession of religion, they should be one.

6. *One God.* The same God; therefore there should be unity. Were there *many* gods to be worshipped, there could be no more hope of unity than there is among the worshippers of Mammon and Bacchus, and the various other idols that men set up. Men who have different pursuits, and different objects of supreme affection, can be expected to have no union. Men who worship many gods, cannot hope to be united. Their affections are directed to different objects, and there is no harmony or sympathy of feeling. But where there is one supreme object of attachment, there may be expected to be unity. The children of a family that are devoted to a parent, will be united among themselves; and the fact that all Christians have the same great object of worship, should constitute a strong bond of union among themselves—a chain always kept bright. ¶ *The Father of all.* One God who is the Father of all; that is, who is a common Father to all who believe. That this refers to the Father, in contradistinction from the Son and the Holy Spirit, seems evident. The Spirit and the Son are mentioned in the previous verses. But the fact that the "Father of all" is mentioned as "God," does not prove that the Spirit and the Son are not also endowed with divine attributes. That question is to be determined by the attributes ascribed to the Son and the Holy Spirit in other places. All sincere Christians worship *one* God, and *but* one. But they suppose that this one God subsists as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, united in a mysterious manner, and constituting THE one God, and that there is no other God. That the Father is divine, they all hold, as Paul affirms here; that the Son and the Holy Spirit are also divine, they also hold; see Notes on John i.; Heb. i.; Phil. ii. 6; Rom. ix. 5. The meaning here is, that God is the common Father of *all* his people —of the rich and the poor; the bond and the free; the learned and the unlearned. He is no respecter of persons. Nothing would tend more to overcome the prejudices of colour, rank, and wealth, than to feel that we all have one Father; and that we are all equally the objects of his favour; comp. Notes on Acts xvii. 26. ¶ *Who is above all.* Who is supreme; who presides over all things. ¶ *And through all.* He pervades universal nature, and his agency is seen everywhere. ¶ *And in you all.* There is no one in whose heart he does not dwell. You are his temple, and he abides in you; see chap. ii. 22; Notes, 1 Cor. vi. 19. The argument here is, that as the same God dwelt in every heart, they ought to be one. See this argument beautifully expressed in the Saviour's prayer, John xvii 21; comp. John xiv. 23.

7. *But unto every one of us* Every Christian. ¶ *Is given grace* The favour of God; meaning here that God had bestowed upon each sincere Christian the means of living as he ought to do, and had in his gospel made ample provision that they might walk worthy of their vocation. What *are* the endowments thus given, the apostle states in the following verses. The *grace* referred to here, most probably means *the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit,* or his

8 Wherefore he saith, [a] When he ascended up on high, he led [1] captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

[a] Ps.68.18.

[1] or, *a multitude of captives.*

operations on the heart in connection with the use of the means which God has appointed. ¶ *According to the measure of the gift of Christ.* Grace is bestowed upon all true Christians, and all have enough to enable them to live a life of holiness. Yet we are taught here, (1.) That it is a *gift.* It is *bestowed* on us. It is not what is originated by ourselves. (2.) It is by a certain *measure.* It is not unlimited, and without rule. There is a wise adaptation; an imparting it by a certain rule. The same grace is not given to all, but to all is given enough to enable them to live as they ought to live. (3.) That measure is the gift of Christ, or what is given in Christ. It comes through him. It is what he has purchased; what he has obtained by his merits. All have enough for the purposes for which God has called them into his kingdom, but there are not the same endowments conferred on all. Some have grace given them to qualify them for the ministry; some to be apostles; some to be martyrs; some to make them eminent as public benefactors. All this has been obtained by Christ; and one should not complain that another has more distinguished endowments than he has; comp. Notes on Rom. xii. 3; John i. 16.

8. *Wherefore he saith.* The word "he" is not in the original; and it may mean "the Scripture saith," or "God saith." The *point* of the argument here is, that Christ, when he ascended to heaven, obtained certain *gifts* for men, and that those gifts are bestowed upon his people in accordance with this. To *prove* that, he adduces this passage from Ps. lxviii. 18. Much perplexity has been felt in regard to the *principle* on which Paul quotes this Psalm, and applies it to the ascension of the Redeemer. The Psalm seems to have been composed on the occasion of removing the ark of the covenant from Kirjath-jearim to Mount Zion; 2 Sam. vi. 1, seq. It is a song of triumph, celebrating the victories of JEHOVAH, and particularly the victories which had been achieved when the *ark* was at the head of the army. It *appears* to have no relation to the Messiah; nor would it probably occur to any one on reading it, that it referred to his ascension, unless it had been so quoted by the apostle. Great difficulty has been felt, therefore, in determining on what principle Paul applied it to the ascension of the Redeemer. Some have supposed that the Psalm had a primary reference to the Messiah; some that it referred to him in only a secondary sense; some that it is applied to him by way of "accommodation;" and some that he merely uses the words as adapted to express his idea, as a man adopts words which are familiar to him, and which will express his thoughts, though not meaning to say that the words had any such reference originally. Storr supposes that the words were used by the Ephesian Christians in their *hymns*, and that Paul quoted them as containing a sentiment which was admitted among them. This is *possible;* but it is mere conjecture. It has been also supposed that the tabernacle was a type of Christ; and that the whole Psalm, therefore, having original reference to the tabernacle, might be applied to Christ as the antitype. But this is both conjectural and fanciful. On the various modes adopted to account for the difficulty, the reader may consult Rosenmüller *in loc.* To me it seems plain that the Psalm had original reference to the bringing up the ark to Mount Zion, and is a triumphal song. In the song or Psalm, the poet shows why God was to be praised—on account of his greatness and his benignity to men; ver. 1—6. He then recounts the doings of God in former times—particularly his conducting his people through the wilderness, and the fact that his enemies were discomfited before him; ver. 7—12. All this refers to the God, the symbols of whose presence were on the tabernacle, and accompanying

the ark. He then speaks of the various fortunes that had befallen the ark of the covenant. It had lain among the pots, ver. 13, yet it had formerly been white as snow when God scattered kings by it; ver. 14. He then speaks of the hill of God — the Mount Zion to which the ark was about to be removed, and says that it is an "high hill"—"high as the hills of Bashan," the hill where God desired to dwell for ever; ver. 16. God is then introduced as ascending that hill, encompassed with thousands of angels, as in Mount Sinai; and the poet says that, in doing it, he had triumphed over his enemies, and had led captivity captive; ver. 18. The fact that the ark of God thus ascended the hill of Zion, the place of rest; that it was to remain there as its permanent abode, no more to be carried about at the head of armies; was the proof of its triumph. It had made every thing captive. It had subdued every foe; and its ascent there would be the means of obtaining invaluable gifts for men. Mercy and truth would go forth from that mountain; and the true religion would spread abroad, even to the rebellious, as the results of the triumph of God, whose symbol was over the tabernacle and the ark. The placing the ark there was the proof of permanent victory, and would be connected with most important benefits to men. The "ascending on high,' therefore, in the Psalm, refers, as it seems to me, to the ascent of the symbol of the Divine presence accompanying the ark on Mount Zion, or to the placing it "on high" above all its foes. The remainder of the Psalm corresponds with this view. This ascent of the ark on Mount Zion; this evidence of its triumph over all the foes of God; this permanent residence of the ark there; and this fact, that its being established there would be followed with the bestowment of invaluable gifts to men, might be regarded as a BEAUTIFUL EMBLEM of the ascension of the Redeemer to heaven. There were strong points of resemblance. He also ascended on high. His ascent was the proof of victory over his foes. He went there for a permanent abode. And his ascension was connected with the bestowment of important blessings to men. It is as such emblematic language, I suppose, that the apostle makes the quotation. It did not originally refer to this; but the events were so similar in many points, that the one would suggest the other, and the same language would describe both. It was language familiar to the apostle; language that would aptly express his thoughts, and language that was not improbably applied to the ascension of the Redeemer by Christians at that time. The phrase, therefore, "he saith"—λέγει—or "it saith," or "the Scripture saith," means, "it is said;" or, "this language will properly express the fact under consideration, to wit, that there is grace given to each one of us, or that the means are furnished by the Redeemer for us to lead holy lives."

[For remarks on the subject of accommodation, in connection with quotations from the Old Testament into the New, see the Supplementary Notes, Heb. i. 5. and ii. 6. The principle of accommodation, if admitted at all, should be used with great caution. Doubtless it is sanctioned by great names both in Europe and America. Yet it must be allowed, that the apostles understood the mind of the Spirit, in the Old Testament, that their inspiration preserved them from every error. When, therefore, they tell us that certain passages have an ultimate reference to the Messiah and his times, though we should never have discovered such reference without their aid, nothing of the kind, it may be, *appearing* in the original places, yet we are bound to receive it *on their testimony*. It is alleged, indeed, that the apostles sometimes use the ordinary forms of quotation, without intending to intimate thereby any prophetic reference in the passages thus introduced, nay, when such reference is obviously inadmissible. This, in the opinion of many, is a very hazardous statement, and introduces into the apostolic writings, and especially into the argumentative part of them, where so great use is made of the Old Testament, no small measure of uncertainty. Let the reader examine the passages in question, keeping in view, at the same time, the typical nature of the ancient economy, and he will have little difficulty in admitting the prophetic reference in most, if not in all of them. See Haldane on Rom. i. 17, for a very masterly view of this subject, with remarks on Mat. ii. 15, and other passages sup-

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

posed to demand the accommodation theory. Nothing can be more dishonourable," says that prince of English commentators, on the epistle to the Romans, "to the character of divine revelation, and injurious to the edification of believers, than this method of explaining the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, not as predictions or interpretations, but as mere illustrations, by way of accommodation. In this way, many of the prophecies referred to in the epistles are set aside from their proper application, and Christians are taught that they do not prove what the apostles adduced them to establish." In reference to the quotation in this place, there seems little difficulty in connection with the view, that though the primary reference be to the bringing up of the ark to Mount Zion, the ultimate one is to the glorious ascension of Jesus into the highest heavens. The Jews rightly interpret part of this psalm (68) of the Messiah. Nor is it to be believed that the apostle would have applied it to the ascension of Christ unless that application had been admitted by the Jews in his time, and unless himself were persuaded of its propriety.]

¶ *When he ascended up on high.* To heaven. The Psalm is, "Thou hast ascended on high;" comp. Eph. i. 22, 23. ¶ *He led captivity captive.* The meaning of this in the Psalm is, that he triumphed over his foes. The margin is, "*a multitude of captives.*" But this, I think, is not quite the idea. It is language derived from a conqueror, who not only makes captives, but who makes captives of those who were then prisoners, and who conducts them as a part of his triumphal procession. He not only subdues his enemy, but he leads his captives in triumph. The allusion is to the public triumphs of conquerors, especially as celebrated among the Romans, in which captives were led in chains (Tacitus, Ann. xii. 38), and to the custom in such triumphs of distributing presents among the soldiers; comp. also Judges v. 30, where it appears that this was also an early custom in other nations. *Burder*, in Rcs. Alt u. neu Morgenland, *in loc.* When Christ ascended to heaven, he triumphed over all his foes. It was a complete victory over the malice of the great enemy of God, and over those who had sought his life. But he did more. He rescued those who were the captives of Satan, and led them in triumph. Man was held by Satan as a prisoner. His chains were around him. Christ rescued the captive prisoner, and designed to make him a part of his triumphal procession into heaven, that thus the victory might be complete—triumphing not only over the great foe himself, but swelling his procession with the attending hosts of those who *had been* the captives of Satan, now rescued and redeemed. ¶ *And gave gifts unto men.* Such as he specifies in ver. 11.

9. *Now that he ascended.* That is, it is affirmed in the Psalm that he *ascended*—"Thou hast ascended on high." This implies that there must have been a previous *descent;* or, as applicable to the Messiah, "*it is a truth* that he previously descended." It is by no means certain that Paul meant to say that the *word* "ascended" demonstrated that there must have been a previous descent; but he probably means that in the case of Christ there was, *in fact*, a descent into the lower parts of the earth first. The language here used will appropriately express his descent to earth. ¶ *Into the lower parts of the earth.* To the lowest state of humiliation. This seems to be the fair meaning of the words. Heaven stands opposed to earth. One is above; the other is beneath. From the one Christ descended to the other; and he came not only *to* the earth, but he stooped to the most humble condition of humanity here; see Phil. ii. 6—8; comp. Notes on Isa. xliv. 23. Some have understood this of the grave; others of the region of departed spirits; but these interpretations do not seem to be necessary. It is the *earth itself* that stands in contrast with the heavens; and the idea is, that the Redeemer descended from his lofty eminence in heaven, and became a man of humble rank and condition; comp. Ps. cxxxix. 15.

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might [1] fill all things.)

11 And [a] he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers:

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

1 or, *fulfil.*

a 1 Co. 12. 8.

10. *He that descended is the same also that ascended.* The same Redeemer came down from God, and returned to him. It was not a different being, but the same. ¶ *Far above all heavens*; see Notes on chap. i. 20–23; comp. Heb. vii. 26. He is gone above the visible heavens, and has ascended into the highest abodes of bliss; see Notes on 2 Cor. xii. 2. ¶ *That he might fill all things.* Marg., *fulfil.* The meaning is, "that he might fill all things by his influence, and direct and overrule all by his wisdom and power." *Doddridge.* See Notes on chap. i. 23.

11. *And he gave some, apostles.* He gave some to be apostles. The *object* here is to show that he has made ample provision for the extension and edification of his church. On the meaning of the word *apostles*, and on their appointment by the Saviour, see Notes on Matt. x. 1. ¶ *And some, prophets.* He appointed some to be prophets; see Notes on Rom. xii. 7; 1 Cor. xii. 28; xiv. 1. ¶ *And some, evangelists;* see Notes on Acts xxi. 8; comp. 2 Tim. iv. 5. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. What was the precise office of the evangelist in the primitive church, it is now impossible to determine. The evangelist *may* have been one whose main business was *preaching*, and who was not particularly engaged in the *government* of the church. The word properly means "a messenger of good tidings;" and Robinson (Lex.) supposes that it denotes a minister of the gospel who was not located in any place, but who travelled as a missionary to preach the gospel, and to found churches. The word is so used now by many Christians; but it cannot be proved that it is so used in the New Testament. An explanation of the words which here occur may be found in Neander on the Primitive Church, in the Biblical Repository, vol. iv. p. 258, seq. The office was distinct from that of the *pastor*, the *teacher*, and the *prophet:* and was manifestly an office in which *preaching* was the main thing. ¶ *And some pastors.* Literally *shepherds* — ποιμένας; comp. Matt. ix. 36; xxv. 32; xxvi. 31; Mark vi. 34; xiv. 27; Luke ii. 8, 15, 18, 20; John x. 2, 11, 12, 14, 16, where it is rendered *shepherd* and *shepherds;* also Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25; in Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25, it is applied to the Lord Jesus as the *great shepherd* of the flock—the church. It is rendered *pastors* only in the place before us. The word is given to ministers of the gospel with obvious propriety, and with great beauty. They are to exercise the same watchfulness and care over the people of their charge which a shepherd does over his flock; comp. Notes on John xxi. 15, 16. The meaning here is, that Christ exercised a special care for his church by appointing *pastors* who would watch over it as a shepherd does over his flock. ¶ *And teachers;* see Notes on Rom. xii. 7.

12. *For the perfecting of the saints.* On the meaning of the word here rendered *perfecting* — καταρτισμὸν — see Notes on 2 Cor. xiii. 9. It properly refers to *the restoring of anything to its place;* then putting in order, making complete, &c. Here it means that these various officers were appointed in order that everything in the church might be well arranged, or put into its proper place; or that the church might be *complete.* It is that Christians may have every possible advantage for becoming complete in love, and knowledge, and order. ¶ *For the work of the ministry.* All these are engaged in the work of the *ministry*, though in different depart-

13 Till we all come [1] in the unity of [a] the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, [b] unto the measure of the stature [2] of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we *henceforth* be no

1 or, *into*. a Col.2.2. b 1 Co.14.20. 2 or, *age*.

ments. Together they constituted THE *ministry* by which Christ meant to establish and edify the church. All these offices had an existence at that time, and all were proper; though it is clear that they were not all designed to be permanent. The apostolic office was of course to cease with the death of those who were *the witnesses* of the life and doctrines of Jesus (comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 1); the office of *prophets* was to cease with the cessation of inspiration; and in like manner it is possible that the office of teacher or evangelist might be suspended, as circumstances might demand. But is it not clear from this that Christ did not appoint *merely* three orders of clergy to be permanent in the church? Here are *five* orders enumerated, and in 1 Cor. xii. 28, there are *eight* mentioned; and how can it be demonstrated that the Saviour intended that there should be *three* only, and that they should be permanent? The presumption is rather that he meant that there should be but one permanent order of ministers, though the departments of their labour might be varied according to circumstances, and though there might be helpers, as occasion should demand. In founding churches among the heathen, and in instructing and governing them there, there is need of reviving nearly all the offices of teacher, helper, evangelist, &c., which Paul has enumerated as actually existing in his time. ¶ *For the edifying.* For building it up; that is, in the knowledge of the truth and in piety; see Notes on Rom. xiv. 19. ¶ *The body of Christ.* The Church; see Notes on chap. i. 23.

13. *Till we all come.* Till all Christians arrive at a state of complete unity, and to entire perfection. ¶ *In the unity of the faith.* Marg., *into.* The meaning is, till we all hold the same truths, and have the same confidence in the Son of God; see Notes on John xvii. 21–23. ¶ *And of the knowledge of the Son of God* That they might attain to the same practical acquaintance with the Son of God, and might thus come to the maturity of Christian piety; see Notes on chap. iii. 19. ¶ *Unto a perfect man.* Unto a complete man. This figure is obvious. The apostle compares their condition then to a state of childhood. The perfect man here refers to the man *grown up*, the man of mature life. He says that Christ had appointed pastors and teachers that the infant church might be conducted to *maturity;* or become strong—like a man. He does not refer to the doctrine of *sinless perfection*—but to the state of manhood as compared with that of childhood—a state of strength, vigour, wisdom, when the full growth should be attained; see 1 Cor. xiv. 20. ¶ *Unto the measure of the stature.* Marg., or *age.* The word *stature* expresses the idea. It refers to the growth of a man. The stature to be attained to was that of Christ. He was the standard—not in size, not in age—but in moral character. The measure to be reached was Christ; or we are to grow till we become like him. ¶ *Of the fulness of Christ;* see Notes on chap. i. 23. The phrase "the measure of the fulness," means, probably, the "full measure"—by a form of construction that is common in the Hebrew writings, where two nouns are so used that one is to be rendered as an adjective—as *trees of greatness*—meaning great trees. Here it means, that they should so advance in piety and knowledge as to become wholly like him.

14, *That we* henceforth *be no more children.* In some respects Christians *are* to be like children. They are to be docile, gentle, mild, and free from ambition, pride, and haughtiness; see Notes on Matt. xviii. 2, 3. But children have other characteristics besides simplicity and docility. They are often changeable (Matt. xi. 17); they are credulous, and are influenced easily

more children, tossed to and fro, and carried [a] about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and*

[a] Ja. 1. 6.

cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But, [1] speaking the truth [b]

[1] or, *being sincere.* [b] 2 Co. 4. 2.

by others, and led astray. In these respects, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to be no longer children, but urges them to put on the characteristics of manhood; and especially to put on the *firmness* in religious opinion which became maturity of life. ¶ *Tossed to and fro.* κλυδωνιζόμενοι. This word is taken from waves or billows that are constantly tossed about—in all ages an image of instability of character and purpose. ¶ *And carried about with every wind of doctrine.* With no firmness; no settled course; no helm. The idea is that of a vessel on the restless ocean, that is tossed about with every varying wind, and that has no settled line of sailing. So many persons are in regard to religious doctrines. They have no fixed views and principles. They hold no doctrines that are settled in their minds by careful and patient examination, and the consequence is, that they yield to every new opinion, and submit to the guidance of every new teacher. The *doctrine* taught here is, that we should have settled religious opinions. We should carefully examine what is truth, and having found it, should adhere to it, and not yield on the coming of every new teacher. We should not, indeed, close our minds against conviction. We should be open to argument, and be willing to follow *the truth* wherever it will lead us. But this state of mind is not inconsistent with having settled opinions, and with being firm in holding them until we are convinced that we are wrong. No man can be useful who has not settled principles. No one who has not such principles can inspire confidence or be happy, and the first aim of every young convert should be to acquire settled views of the truth, and to become firmly grounded in the *doctrines* of the gospel. ¶ *By the sleight of men.* The cunning, skill, *trickery* of men. The word used here—κυβεία—is from a word (κύβος) meaning a cube, a die, and properly means a game at dice. Hence it means game, gambling; and then any thing that turns out by mere chance or hap-hazard—as a game at dice does. It *may* possibly also denote the trick or fraud that is sometimes used in such games; but it seems rather to denote a man's forming his religious opinions by *the throw of a die;* or, in other words, it describes a man whose opinions seem to be the result of mere chance. Any thing like casting a die, or like opening the Bible at random to determine a point of duty or doctrine, may come under the description of the apostle here, and would all be opposed to the true mode, that by calm examination of the Bible, and by prayer. A man who forms his religious principles by chance, can *unform* them in the same way; and he who has determined his faith by one cast of the die, will be likely to throw them into another form by another. The phrase "*the sleight of* men" therefore, I would render "by the mere chance of men, or as you may happen to find men, one holding this opinion, and the next that, and allowing yourself to be influenced by them without any settled principles." ¶ *Cunning craftiness.* Deceit, trick, art; see 2 Cor. xii. 16; Luke xx. 23; 1 Cor. iii. 19; Notes, 2 Cor iv. 2; xi. 3. ¶ *Whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Literally, "Unto the method of deceit;" that is, in the usual way of deceit. Doddridge, "In every method of deceit." This is the true idea. The meaning is, that men would use plausible pretences, and would, if possible, deceive the professed friends of Christ. Against such we should be on our guard; and not by their arts should our opinion be formed, but by the word of God.

15. *But speaking the truth in love.* Marg., *being sincere.* The translation in the text is correct—literally, *truthing in love*—ἀληθεύοντες. Two things are here to be noted. (1.) The truth is *to be spoken*—the simple, un-

in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [a] *even* Christ:

a Co.1.18,19.

16 From whom [b] the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,

b John 15.5.

varnished truth. This is the way to avoid error, and this is the way to preserve others from error. In opposition to all trick, and art, and cunning, and fraud, and deception, Christians are to speak the simple truth, and nothing but the truth. Every statement which they make should be unvarnished truth; every promise which they make should be true; every representation which they make of the sentiments of others should be simple truth. *Truth is the representation of things as they are;* and there is no virtue that is more valuable in a Christian than the love of simple truth. (2.) The second thing is, that the truth should be spoken *in love.* There *are* other ways of speaking truth. It is sometimes spoken in a harsh, crabbed, sour manner, which does nothing but disgust and offend. When we state truth to others, it should be with love to their souls, and with a sincere desire to do them good. When we admonish a brother of his faults, it should not be in a harsh and unfeeling manner, but in love. Where a minister pronounces the awful truth of God about depravity, death, the judgment, and future woe, it should be in love. It should not be done in a harsh and repulsive manner; it should not be done as if he rejoiced that men were in danger of hell, or as if he would like to pass the final sentence; it should not be with indifference, or in a tone of superiority. And in like manner, if we go to convince one who is in error, we should approach him in love. We should not dogmatize, or denounce, or deal out anathemas. Such things only repel. *He has done about half his work in convincing another of* ERROR *who has first convinced him that he* LOVES *him;* and if he does not do that, he may argue to the hour of his death and make no progress in convincing him. ¶ *May grow up into him.* Into Christ; that is, to the stature of a complete man in him. ¶ *Which is the head;* Notes, ch. i. 22; 1 Cor. xi. 3.

16. *From whom the whole body.* The church, compared with the human body. The idea is, that as the *head* in the human frame conveys vital influence, vigour, motion, &c., to every part of the body; so Christ is the source of life, and vigour, and energy, and increase to the church. The sense is, "The whole human body is admirably arranged for growth and vigour. Every member and joint contribute to its healthful and harmonious action. One part lends vigour and beauty to another, so that the whole is finely proportioned and admirably sustained. All depend on the head with reference to the most important functions of life, and all derive their vigour from that. So it is in the church. It is as well arranged for growth and vigour as the body is. It is as beautifully organized in its various members and officers as the body is. Everything is designed to be in its proper place, and nothing by the divine arrangement is wanting in its organization, to its perfection. Its officers and its members are, in their places, what the various parts of the body are with reference to the human frame. The church depends on Christ, as the head, to sustain, invigorate, and guide it, as the body is dependent on the head." See this figure carried out to greater length in 1 Cor. xii. 12—26. ¶ *Fitly joined together.* The body, whose members are properly united so as to produce the most beauty and vigour. Each member is in the best place, and is properly united to the other members. Let any one read Paley's Natural Theology, or any work on anatomy, and he will find innumerable instances of the truth of this remark; not only in the proper adjustment and placing of the members, but in the manner in which it is united to the other parts of the body. The foot, for instance, is in its proper

according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

place. It should not be where the head or the hand is. The eye is in its proper place. It should not be in the knee or the heel. The mouth, the tongue, the teeth, the lungs, the heart, are in their proper places. No other places would answer the purpose so well. The brain is in its proper place. Anywhere else in the body, it would be subject to compressions and injuries which would soon destroy life. And these parts are as admirably united to the other parts of the body, as they are admirably located. Let any one examine, for instance, the tendons, nerves, muscles, and bones, by which the *foot* is secured to the body, and by which easy and graceful motion is obtained, and he will be satisfied of the wisdom by which the body is "joined together." How far the *knowledge* of the apostle extended on this point, we have not the means of ascertaining; but all the investigations of anatomists only serve to give increased beauty and force to the general terms which he uses here. All that he says here of the human frame is strictly accurate, and is such language as may be used by an anatomist now. The *word* which is here used (συναρμολογέω) means properly to sew together; to fit together; to unite, to make one. It is applied often to musicians, who produce *harmony* of various parts of music. *Passow.* The idea of harmony, or appropriate union, is that in the word. ¶ *And compacted.* συμβιβαζόμενον. Tindal renders this, "knit together in every joint." The word properly means, to make to come together; to join or knit together. It means here that the different parts of the body are *united* and sustained in this manner. ¶ *By that which every joint supplieth.* Literally, "through every joint of supply;" that is, which affords or ministers mutual aid. The word *joint* here—αφή—(from ἅπτω to fit)—means anything which *binds, fastens, secures;* and does not refer to the *joint* in the sense in which we commonly use it, as denoting *the articulation* of the limbs, or the joining of two or more bones; but rather that which *unites* or *fastens* together the different parts of the frame—the blood-vessels, cords, tendons, and muscles. The meaning is, that every such *means of connecting one part of the body with another* ministers nourishment, and that thus the body is sustained. One part is dependent on another; one part derives nourishment from another; and thus all become mutually useful as contributing to the support and harmony of the whole. Thus it furnishes an illustration of the *connection* in the members of the church, and of the aid which one can render to another. ¶ *According to the effectual working.* Gr., "According to the energy in the measure of each one part." Tindal, "According to the operation as every part has its measure." The meaning is, that each part contributes to the production of the whole result, or *labours* for this. This is in proportion to the "measure" of each part; that is, in proportion to its power. Every part labours to produce the great result. No one is idle; none is useless. But none are overtaxed or overworked. The support demanded and furnished by every part is in exact proportion to its strength. This is a beautiful account of the anatomy of the human frame. (1.) Nothing is useless. Every part contributes to the general result—the health, and beauty, and vigour of the system. Not a muscle is useless; not a nerve, not an artery, not a vein. All are employed, and all have an important place, and all contribute *something* to the health and beauty of the whole. So numerous are the blood-vessels, that you cannot perforate the skin anywhere without piercing one; so numerous are the pores of the skin, that a grain of sand will cover thousands of them; so minute the ramifications of the nerves, that wherever the point of a needle penetrates, we feel it; and so numerous the absorbents, that millions of them are employed in taking up the chyme of the food, and conveying it to the veins.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

And yet all are employed—all are useful—all minister life and strength to the whole. (2.) None are overtaxed. They all work according to the "measure" of their strength. Nothing is required of the minutest nerve or blood-vessel which it is not fitted to perform; and it will work on for years without exhaustion or decay. So of the church. There is no member so obscure and feeble that he may not contribute something to the welfare of the whole; and no one is required to labour beyond his strength in order to secure the great object. Each one *in his place*, and labouring as he should there, will contribute to the general strength and welfare; *out of his place*—like nerves and arteries out of their place, and crossing and recrossing others—he will only embarrass the whole, and disarrange the harmony of the system. ¶ *Maketh increase of the body.* The body grows in this manner. ¶ *Unto the edifying of itself.* To building itself up that is, it grows up to a complete stature. ¶ *In love.* In mutual harmony. This refers to the *body*. The meaning is, that it seems to be made on the principle of *love*. There is no jar, no collision, no disturbance of one part with another. A great number of parts, composed of different substances, and with different functions — bones, and nerves, and muscles, and blood-vessels — are united in one, and live together without collision; and so it should be in the church. Learn, hence, (1.) That no member of the church need be useless, any more than a minute nerve or blood-vessel in the body need be useless. No matter how obscure the individual may be, he may contribute to the harmony and vigour of the whole. (2.) Every member of the church should contribute something to the prosperity of the whole. He should no more be idle and unemployed than a nerve or a blood-vessel should be in the human system. What would be the effect if the minutest nerves and arteries of the body should refuse to perform their office? Langour, disease, and death. So it is in the church. The obscurest member may do *something* to destroy the healthful action of the church, and to make its piety languish and die. (3.) There should be *union* in the church. It is made up of materials which differ much from each other, as the body is made up of bones, and nerves, and muscles. Yet, in the body these are united; and so it should be in the church. There need be no more jarring in the church than in the body; and a jar in the church produces the same effect as would be produced in the body if the nerves and muscles should resist the action of each other, or as if one should be out of its place, and impede the healthful functions of the other. (4.) Every member in the church should keep his place, just as every bone, and nerve, and muscle in the human frame should. Every member of the body should be in its right position; the heart, the lungs, the eye, the tongue, should occupy their right place; and every nerve in the system should be laid down just where it is designed to be. If so, all is well. If not so, all is deformity, or disorder; just as it is often in the church.

17. *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord.* I bear witness in the name of the Lord Jesus, or ministering by his authority. The object of this is, to exhort them to walk worthy of their high calling, and to adorn the doctrine of the Saviour. With this view, he reminds them of what they were before they were converted, and of the manner in which the heathen around them lived. ¶ *That ye henceforth walk not.* That you do not henceforth *live* — the Christian life being often in the Scriptures compared to a journey. ¶ *As other Gentiles walk.* This shows that probably the mass of converts in the church at Ephesus were from among the heathen, and Paul regarded them as Gentile converts. Or it may be that he here addressed himself more particularly to that portion of the church, as

18 Having the understanding [a] darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the [1] blindness of their heart;

a Ac.26.18. *1* or, *hardness.*

especially needing his admonition and care. ¶ *In the vanity of their mind.* In the way of folly, or in mental folly. What he means by this he specifies in the following verses. The word "vanity" in the Scriptures means more than mere *emptiness*. It denotes moral wrong, being applied usually to those who worshipped *vain* idols, and then those who were alienated from the *true* God.

18. *Having the understanding darkened.* That is, because they were alienated from the true God, and particularly because of "the blindness of their hearts." The apostle does not say that this was a "judicial" darkening of the understanding; or that they might not have perceived the truth; or that they had no ability to understand it. He speaks of a simple and well-known fact—a fact that is seen now as well as then—that the understanding becomes darkened by indulgence in sin. A man who is intemperate, has no just views of the government of the appetites. A man who is unchaste, has no perception of the loveliness of purity. A man who is avaricious or covetous, has no just views of the beauty of benevolence. A man who indulges in low vices, will weaken his mental powers, and render himself incapable of intellectual effort. Indulgence in vice destroys the intellect as well as the body, and unfits a man to appreciate the truth of a proposition in morals, or in mathematics, or the beauty of a poem, as well as the truth and beauty of religion. Nothing is more obvious than that indulgence in sin weakens the mental powers, and renders them unfit for high intellectual effort. This is seen all over the heathen world now—in the stolid, stupid mind; the perverted moral sense; the incapacity for profound or protracted mental effort, as really as it was among the heathens to whom Paul preached. The missionary who goes among the heathen has almost to create an *intellect* as well as a *conscience*, before the gospel will make an impression. It is seen, too, in all the intellect of the bar, the senate, the pulpit, and the medical profession, that is ruined by intemperance, and in the intellect of multitudes of young men wasted by licentiousness and drunkenness. I know that under the influence of ambition and stimulating drinks, the intellect may seem to put forth unnatural efforts, and to glow with an intensity nowhere else seen. But it *soon burns out*—and the wastes of such an intellect become soon like the hardened scoriæ of the volcano, or the cinders of the over-heated furnace. Learn hence, that if a man wishes to be blessed with a clear understanding, he should be a *good man*. He who wishes a mind well balanced and clear, should fear and love God; and had Christianity done no other good on earth than to elevate the *intellect* of mankind, it would have been the richest blessing which has ever been vouchsafed to the race. It follows, too, that as man has debased his *understanding* by sin, it is needful to make an exertion to elevate it again; and hence a large part of the efforts to save men must consist in patient *instruction*. Hence the necessity of *schools* at missionary stations. ¶ *Being alienated*; see Notes on chap. ii. 12. ¶ *From the life of God.* From a life *like* that of God, or a life of which he is the source and author. The meaning is, that they lived a life which was *unlike* God, or which he could not approve. Of the truth of this in regard to the heathen everywhere, there can be no doubt; see Notes on Rom. i. ¶ *Through the ignorance that is in them.* The ignorance of the true God, and of what constituted virtue; comp. Notes on Rom. i. 20—23. ¶ *Because of the blindness of their hearts.* Marg. *hardness.* Hardness is a better word. It is a better translation of the Greek; and it better accords with the design of the apostle. Here the reason is stated

19 Who being past feeling, have [a] given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus;

22 That ye put [b] off, concerning the former conversation, the old [c] man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

a Ro.1.24,26. *b* Co.3.8,9. *c* Ro.6.6.

why they lived and acted as they did, and why the *understanding* was blinded. It is not that God has enfeebled the human intellect by a judicial sentence on account of the sin of Adam, and made it incapable of perceiving the truth. It is not that there is any deficiency or incapacity of natural powers. It is not that the truths of religion are so exalted that man has no natural ability to understand them, for they may be as well understood as any other truth; see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 14. The simple reason is, "*the hardness* OF THE HEART." That is the solution given by an inspired apostle, and that is enough. A man who has a blind and hard heart sees no beauty in truth, and feels not its force, and is insensible to all its appeals. Learn, then, (1.) That men are to blame for the blindness of their understanding. Whatever proceeds from a *wicked heart* they are responsible for. But for mere *inferiority of intellect* they would not be to blame. (2.) They are under obligation to repent and love God. If it was required of them to enlarge their intellects, or create additional faculties of mind, they could not be bound to do it. But where the whole thing required is to have a *better heart*, they may be held responsible. (3.) The way to elevate the understandings of mankind is to purify the heart. The approach must be made through the affections. Let men *feel* right towards God, and they will soon *think* right; let the heart be pure, and the understanding will be clear.

[Doubtless there is a reciprocal influence between the dark mind and depraved heart. The one acts on the other. Admitting that the understanding is affected *first*, through the will or heart, and that it is a bad heart which makes a spiritually dark mind, still the *fact* remains the same, that *in consequence of our union with Adam, in consequence of the fall*, ALL our faculties, understanding, will, affections, have been corrupted. See Supplementary Notes, Rom. v.]

19. *Who being past feeling.* Wholly hardened in sin. There is a *total want* of all emotion on moral subjects. This is an accurate description of the state of a sinner. He has no *feeling*, no *emotion*. He often gives an intellectual assent to the truth, but it is without *emotion* of any kind. The heart is insensible as the hard rock. ¶ *Have given themselves over.* They have done it voluntarily. In Rom. i. 24, it is said that "*God* gave them up." There is no inconsistency. Whatever was the agency of God in it, they preferred it; comp. Notes on Rom. i. 21. ¶ *Unto lasciviousness;* see Notes on Rom. i. 24—26.

20. *But ye have not so learned Christ.* You have been taught a different thing by Christ; you have been taught that his religion requires you to abandon such a course of life.

21. *If so be that ye have heard him.* If you have listened attentively to his instructions, and learned the true nature of his religion. There may be a slight and delicate *doubt* implied here whether they had attentively listened to his instructions. Doddridge, however, renders it, "Seeing ye have heard him;" comp. Notes on chap. iii. 2. ¶ *And have been taught by him.* By his Spirit, or by the ministers whom he had appointed. ¶ *As the truth is in Jesus.* If you have learned the true nature of his religion as he himself taught it. What the truth was which the Lord Jesus taught, or what his principles implied, the apostle proceeds to state in the following verses.

22. *That ye put off.* That you lay aside, or renounce. The manner in which the apostle states these duties, renders it not improbable that there had been some instruction among

23 And be renewed [a] in the spirit of your mind ;

[a] Ro.12.2

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created [b]

[b] Ga.6. 15; chap.2.10.

them of a contrary character, and that it is possible there had been some teachers there who had not enforced, as they should have done, the duties of practical religion. ¶ *Concerning the former conversation.* The word *conversation* here means *conduct*—as it commonly does in the Bible ; see Notes, 2 Cor. i. 12. The meaning here is, " with respect to your former conduct or habits of life, lay aside all that pertained to a corrupt and fallen nature." You are not to lay *every thing* aside that formerly pertained to you. Your dress, and manners, and modes of speech and intercourse, might have been in many respects correct. But every thing that proceeded from sin ; every habit, and custom, and mode of speech and of conduct that was the result of depravity, is to be laid aside. The peculiar characteristics of an unconverted man you are to put off, and are to assume those which are the proper fruits of a renewed heart ¶ *The old man ;* see Notes on Rom. vi. 6. ¶ *Which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.* The meaning is, (1.) That the unrenewed man is not under the direction of reason and sound sense, but is controlled by his *passions* and *desires.* The word *lusts,* has a more limited signification with us than the original word. That word we now confine to one class of sensual appetites ; but the original word denotes any passion or propensity of the heart. It may include avarice, ambition, the love of pleasure, or of gratification in any way ; and the meaning here is, that the heart is by nature under the control of such desires. (2.) Those passions are deceitful. They lead us astray. They plunge us into ruin. All the passions and pleasures of the world are illusive. They promise more than they perform ; and they leave their deluded votaries to disappointment and to tears. Nothing is more "deceitful" than the promised pleasures of this world ; and all who yield to them find at last that they " flatter but to betray."

23. *And be renewed.* That is, it is necessary that a man who has been following these should become a new man ; see Notes on John iii. 3, seq., comp. Notes on 2 Cor. iv. 16. The word here used—ἀνανιόω—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament ; but it has the same meaning as the word used in 2 Cor. iv. 16, and Col. iii. 10. It means to make new, and is descriptive of the work of regeneration. This was addressed to the church, and to those whom Paul regarded as Christians ; and we learn from this, (1.) That it is necessary that man should be *renewed* in order to be saved. (2.) That it is proper to exhort Christians to be renewed. They need renovated strength every day. (3.) That it is a matter of *obligation* to be renewed. Men are *bound* thus to be renovated. And (4.) That they have sufficient natural ability to change from the condition of the old to that of the *new* man, or they could not be exhorted to it.

[See Supplementary Notes Rom. viii. 7 ; Gal. v. 17.]

¶ *In the spirit of your mind.* In your temper ; your heart ; your nature.

24. *And that ye put on the new man.* The new man refers to the renovated nature. This is called, in other places, the " new creature, or the new creation" (see Notes on 2 Cor. v. 17), and refers to the condition after the heart is changed. The change is so great, that there is no impropriety in speaking of one who has experienced it as "a new man." He has new feelings, principles, and desires. He has laid aside his old principles and practices, and, in everything that pertains to moral character, he is new. His body is indeed the same ; the intellectual structure of his mind the same ; but there has been a change in his principles and feelings which make him, in all the great purposes of life, a new being. Learn, that regeneration is not a trifling change. It is not a mere change of relations, or of the outward condition. It is not merely being

in righteousness and [1] true holiness.

1 or, *holiness of truth*, John 17.17.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth [a] with

a Zec.8.16.

brought from the world into the church, and being baptized, though by the most holy hands; it is much more. None of these things would make proper the declaration, "he is a new man." Regeneration by the Spirit of God *does*. ¶ *After God*, κατὰ Θεὸν. In respect to God. The idea is, evidently, that man is so renewed as to become *like God*, or the divine image is restored to the soul. In the parallel passage in Colossians (iii. 9), the idea is expressed more fully, "renewed in knowledge after *the image* of him that created him." Man, by regeneration, is restored to the lost image of God; comp. Gen. i. 26. ¶ *Is created*. A word that is often used to denote the new birth, from its strong resemblance to the first act of creation; see it explained in the Notes on 2 Cor. v. 17. ¶ *In righteousness*. That is, the renewed man is made to resemble God in righteousness. This *proves* that man, when he was made, was righteous; or that righteousness constituted a part of the image of God in which he was created. The object of the work of redemption is to restore to man the lost image of God, or to bring him back to the condition in which he was before he fell. ¶ *And true holiness*. Marg. as in Greek, *holiness of truth*—standing in contrast with "lusts of deceit" (*Greek*), in ver. 22. *Holiness* properly refers to purity towards God, and *righteousness* to integrity towards men; but it is not certain that this distinction is observed here. The general idea is, that the renovated man is made an upright and a pious man; and that, therefore, he should avoid the vices which are practised by the heathen, and which the apostle proceeds to specify. This phrase also proves that, when man was created, he was a *holy* being.

25. *Wherefore putting away lying*. It may seem strange that the apostle should seriously exhort Christians to put away *lying*, implying that they were in the habit of indulging in falsehood. But we are to remember, (1.) that lying is the universal vice of the heathen world. Among the ancient heathens, as among the moderns, it was almost universally practised. It has been remarked by a distinguished jurist who had spent much time in India, that he would not believe a Hindoo on his oath. The same testimony is borne by almost all the missionaries, of the character of heathens everywhere. No confidence can be placed in their statements; and, where there is the slightest temptation to falsehood, they practise it without remorse. (2.) The Ephesians had been recently converted, and were, to a great extent, ignorant of the requirements of the gospel. A conscience has to be *created* when heathens are converted, and it is long before they see the evils of many things which appear to us to be palpably wrong. (3.) The effects of former habits abide long, often, after a man is converted. He who has been in the habit of profane swearing, finds it difficult to avoid it; and he who has been all his life practising deception, will find himself tempted to practise it still. It was for reasons such as these, probably, that the apostle exhorted the Ephesians to put away *lying*, and to speak the truth only. Nor is the exhortation now inappropriate to Christians, and there are many classes to whom it would now be proper—such as the following: (1.) He who is in the habit of concealing the defects of an article in trade, or of commending it for more than its real value—*let him put away lying*. (2.) He, or she, who instructs a servant to say that they are not at home, when they are at home: or that they are sick, when they are not sick: or that they are engaged, when they are not engaged—*let them put away lying*. (3.) He that is in the habit of giving a colouring to his narratives; of conveying a false impression by the introduction or the suppression of circumstances that are important to the right understanding of an account—*let him put away lying*. 4.) He

his neighbour: for we [a] are members one of another.

[a] Ro.12.5. [b] Ec.7.9.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not; [b] let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

that is at no pains to ascertain the exact truth in regard to any facts that may affect his neighbour; that catches up flying rumours without investigating them, and that circulates them as undoubted truth, though they may seriously affect the character and peace of another—*let him put away lying.* (5.) He that is in the habit of making promises only to disregard them—*let him put away lying.* The community is full of falsehoods of that kind, and they are not *all* confined to the people of the world. Nothing is more important in a community than simple *truth*—and yet, it is to be feared that nothing is more habitually disregarded. No professing Christian can do any good who has not an unimpeachable character for integrity and truth—and yet who can lay his hand on his breast and say before God that he is in all cases a man that speaks the simple and unvarnished TRUTH? ¶ *For we are members one of another.* We belong to one body—the church—which is the body of Christ; see Notes Rom. v. 12. The idea is, that falsehood tends to loosen the bonds of brotherhood. In the *human body* harmony is observed. The eye never deceives the hand, nor the hand the foot, nor the heart the lungs. The whole move harmoniously *as if* the one could put the utmost confidence in the other—and falsehood in the church is as ruinous to its interests as it would be to the body if one member was perpetually practising a deception on another.

26. *Be ye angry and sin not.* It has been remarked that the direction here is conformable to the usage of the Pythagoreans, who were bound, when there were any differences among them, to furnish some token of reconciliation before the sun set. *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc.* It is implied here (1.) that there *may* be anger without sin; and (2.) that there is special danger in *all* cases where there is anger that it will be accompanied with sin. *Anger* is a passion too common to need any description. It is an excitement or agitation of mind, of more or less violence, produced by the reception of a real or supposed injury, and attended commonly with a desire or purpose of revenge. The desire of revenge, however, is not essential to the existence of the passion, though it is probably always attended with a disposition to express displeasure, to chide, rebuke, or punish; comp. Mark iii. 5. To a great extent the sudden excitement on the reception of an injury is involuntary, and consequently innocent. Anger is excited when a horse kicks us; when a serpent hisses; when we dash our foot against a stone—and so when a man raises his hand to strike us. The *object*, or *final cause* of implanting this passion in the mind of man is, to rouse him to an immediate defence of himself when suddenly attacked, and before his reason would have time to suggest the proper means of defence. It prompts at once to self-protection; and when that is done its proper office ceases. If persevered in, it becomes sinful malignity, or revenge—always wrong. Anger may be excited against a *thing* as well as a *person*; as well against an *act* as a *man*. We are suddenly excited by a wrong *thing*, without any malignancy against the *man*; we may wish to rebuke or chide *that*, without injuring *him*. Anger is sinful in the following circumstances. (1.) When it is excited without any sufficient cause—when we are in no danger, and do not need it for a protection. We should be safe without it. (2.) When it transcends the cause, if any cause really exists. All that is beyond the necessity of immediate self-protection, is apart from its design, and is wrong (3.) When it is against *the person* rather than the *offence*. The object is not to injure another; it is to protect ourselves. (4.) When it is attended with the desire of *revenge*. That is always wrong; Rom. xii. 17. 19. (5.) When it is cherished and

27 Neither [a] give place to the devil.

[a] Ja.4.7.

28 Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let [b] him labour,

[b] Ac.20.35.

heightened by reflection. And (6.) When there is an unforgiving spirit; a determination to exact the utmost satisfaction for the injury which has been done. If men were perfectly holy, that sudden *arousing of the mind* in danger, or on the reception of an injury, which would serve to prompt us to save ourselves from danger, would exist, and would be an important principle of our nature. As it is now, it is violent; excessive; incontrollable; persevered in—and is almost always wrong. If men were holy, this excitement of the mind would obey the first injunctions of *reason*, and be wholly under its control; as it is now, it seldom obeys reason at all—and is wholly wrong. Moreover, if *all* men were holy; if there were none *disposed* to do an injury, it would exist only in the form of a sudden arousing of the mind against immediate danger—which would all be right. Now, it is excited not only in view of *physical* dangers, but in view of the *wrongs* done by others—and hence it terminates on the *person* and not the *thing*, and becomes often wholly evil. ¶ *Let not the sun go down.* Do not cherish anger. Do not sleep upon it. Do not harbour a purpose of revenge; do not cherish ill-will against another. *When the sun sets on a man's anger, he may be sure it is wrong.* The meaning of the whole of this verse then is, "*If* you be angry, which may be the case, and which may be unavoidable, see that the sudden excitement does not become sin. Do not let it overleap its proper bounds; do not cherish it; do not let it remain in your bosom even to the setting of the sun. Though the sun be sinking in the west, let not the passion linger in the bosom, but let his last rays find you always peaceful and calm."

27. *Neither give place to the devil.* This has respect probably to the exhortation in the former verse. "Do not yield to the suggestions and temptations of Satan, who would take every opportunity to persuade you to cherish unkind and angry feelings, and to keep up a spirit of resentment among brethren." Many of our feelings, when we suppose we are merely defending our rights, and securing what is our own, are produced by the temptations of the devil. The heart is deceitful; and seldom more deceitful in any case than when a man is attempting to vindicate himself from injuries done to his person and reputation. The devil is always busy when we are angry, and in some way, if possible, will lead us into sin; and the best way to avoid his wiles is to curb the temper, and restrain even sudden anger. No man sins by *restraining* his anger: no man is certain that he will *not* who indulges it for a moment.

28. *Let him that stole steal no more.* Theft, like lying, was, and is, almost a universal vice among the heathen. The practice of pilfering prevails in, probably, every pagan community, and no property is safe which is not guarded, or so locked up as to be inaccessible. Hence, as the Christian converts at Ephesus had been long addicted to it, there was danger that they would fall into it again; and hence the necessity of special cautions on that head. We are not to suppose that *pilfering* was a common vice in the church, but the cautions on this point proceed on the principle that, where a man has been long in the habit of a particular sin, he is in great danger of falling into it again. Hence we caution the man who has been intemperate against the least indulgence in intoxicating drinks; we exhort him not to touch that which would be so strong a temptation to him. The object of the apostle was to show that the gospel requires holy living in all its friends, and to entreat Christians at Ephesus in a special manner to avoid the vices of the surrounding heathen. ¶ *But rather let him labour.* Let him seek the means of living in an honest manner, by hi-

working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to [1] give to him that needeth.

[1] or, *distribute.*

own industry, rather than by wronging others. ¶ *Working with* his *hands.* Pursuing some honest employment. Paul was not ashamed to labour with "*his* own hands" (Acts xx. 35); and no man is dishonoured by labour. God made man for toil (Gen. ii. 15); and employment is essential to the happiness of the race. No man, who is *able* to support himself, has a *right* to depend on others; see Notes on Rom. xii. 11. ¶ *That he may have to give to him that needeth.* Marg., *distribute.* Not merely that he may have the means of support, but that he may have it in his power to aid others. The reason and propriety of this is obvious. The human race is one great brotherhood. A considerable part *cannot* labour to support themselves. They are too old, or too young; or they are crippled, or feeble, or laid on beds of sickness. If others do not divide with them the avails of their labours, they will perish. We are required to labour in order that we may have the privilege of contributing to their comfort. Learn from this verse, (1.) That every Christian should have some calling, business, or profession, by which he may support himself. The Saviour was a carpenter; Paul a tentmaker; and no man is disgraced by being able to build a house or to construct a tent. (2.) Christianity promotes industry. It is rare that an idle man becomes a Christian; but if he does, religion makes him industrious just in proportion as it has influence over his mind. To talk of a *lazy Christian,* is about the same as to talk of burning water or freezing fire. (3.) Christians should have some *useful* and *honest* employment. They should work "*that which is good.*" They should not pursue an employment which will necessarily injure others. No man has a right to place a nuisance under the window of his neighbour; nor has he any *more* right to pursue an employment that shall lead his neighbour into sin or ruin him. An *honest* employment benefits everybody. A good farmer is a benefit to his neighbourhood and country; and a good shoemaker, blacksmith, weaver, cabinetmaker, watchmaker, machinist, is a blessing to the community. He injures no one; he benefits all. How is it with the distiller, and the vender of alcoholic drinks? He benefits no one; he injures every body. Every quart of intoxicating drink that is taken from his house does evil somewhere—evil, and only evil, and that continually. No one is made better, or richer; no one is made more moral or industrious; no one is helped on the way to heaven by it. Thousands are helped on the way to hell by it, who are already in the path; and thousands are *induced* to walk in the way to death who, *but* for that distillery, store, or tavern, might have walked in the way to heaven. Is this then "working that WHICH IS GOOD?" Would Paul have done it? Would Jesus do it? Strange, that by a professing Christian it was ever done! See a striking instance of the way in which the Ephesian Christians acted when they were first converted, in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. xix. 19; comp. Notes on that place. (4.) The main business of a Christian is not *to make money,* and to become rich. It is that he may have the means of benefiting others. Beyond what he needs for himself, his poor, and sick, and aged, and afflicted brother and friend has a claim on his earnings—and they should be liberally bestowed. (5.) We should labour *in order* that we may have the means of doing good to others. It should be just as much a matter of plan and purpose to do this, as it is to labour *in order* to buy a coat, or to build a house, or to live comfortably, or to have the means of a decent burial. Yet how few are those who have any such end in view, or who pursue their daily toil definitely, *that they may have something to give away!* The world will be soon converted when all Christians make that the purpose of life; see Notes on Rom. xii. 11

29 Let [a] no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good [1] to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve [b] not the holy

a Col. 4. 6. 1 or, *to edify profitably.*

b Is. 63. 10.

29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed;* see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 33. The word rendered *corrupt* (σαπρὸς) means *bad, decayed, rotten,* and is applied to putrid vegetable or animal substances. Then it is applied to a tree that is of a useless character, that produces no good fruit; Matt. vii. 17. Then it is used in a moral sense, as our word "corrupt" is, to denote that which is depraved, evil, contaminating, and may denote here any thing that is obscene, offensive, or that tends to corrupt others. The importance of this admonition will be appreciated when it is remembered, (1.) that such obscene and filthy conversation prevailed everywhere, and does still among the heathen. So general is this, that at almost every missionary station it has been found that the common conversation is so corrupt and defiling that missionaries have felt it necessary to send their children home to be educated, in order to secure them from the contaminating influence of those around them. (2.) Those who have had the misfortune to be familiar with the common conversation of the lower classes in any community, and especially with the conversation of young men, will see the importance of this admonition. Scarcely anything can be conceived more corrupt or corrupting, than that which often prevails among young men—and even young men in the academies and colleges of this land. (3.) Its importance will be seen from the *influence* of such corrupt communications. "The passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it;" the expression of such a thought deepens the pollution on the soul, and corrupts others. It is like retaining an offensive carcase above ground, to pollute the air, and to diffuse pestilence and death, which should at once be buried out of sight. A Christian should be PURE in his conversation. His Master was pure. His God is pure. The heaven to which he goes is pure. The religion which he professes is pure. NEVER should he indulge himself in an obscene allusion; never should he retail anecdotes of an obscene character, or smile when they are retailed by others. Never should he indulge in a jest having a double meaning; never should he listen to a song of this character. If those with whom he associates have not sufficient respect for themselves and him to abstain from such corrupt and corrupting allusions, *he should at once leave them.* ¶ *But that which is good to the use of edifying.* Marg., *to edify profitably.* Greek, "to useful edification;" that is, adapted to instruct, counsel, and comfort others; to promote their intelligence and purity. Speech is an invaluable gift; a blessing of inestimable worth. We may *so* speak as *always* to do good to others. We may give them some information which they have not; impart some consolation which they need; elicit some truth by friendly discussion which we did not know before, or recall by friendly admonition those who are in danger of going astray. He who talks for the mere sake of talking will say many foolish things; he whose great aim in life is to benefit others, will not be likely to say that which he will have occasion to regret; comp. Matt. xii. 36; Eccl. v. 2; Prov. x. 19; James i. 19.

30. *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God.* This is addressed to *Christians,* and it proves that it is possible for them to grieve the Holy Spirit. The word here used—λυπεῖτε—means properly to afflict with sorrow; to make sad or sorrowful. It is rendered to make sorry, or sorrowful, Matt. xiv. 9; xvii. 23; xviii. 31; xix. 22; xxvi. 22, 37; Mark xiv. 19; John xvi. 20; 2 Cor. ii. 2; vi. 10; vii. 8, 9, 11; 1 Thess. iv. 13. It is rendered *grieved,* Mark x. 22; John xxi 17; Rom. xiv. 15; 2 Cor. ii. 4, 5; Eph. iv. 20: and once, "*in heaviness,*" 1

Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed [a] unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness,[b] and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and [c] evil-

a chap.1.13,14. *b* Col.3.8. *c* Tit.3.2.

speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving [d]

d Mar.11.25,26.

Pet. i. 6. The verb does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The common meaning is, to treat others so as to cause grief. We are not to suppose that the Holy Spirit literally endures *grief*, or *pain*, at the conduct of men. The language is such as is fitted to describe what *men* endure, and is applied to him to denote that kind of conduct which is *fitted* to cause grief; and the meaning here is, "do not pursue such a course as is *fitted* in its own nature, to pain the benevolent heart of a holy being. Do not act towards the Holy Spirit in a manner which would produce pain in the bosom of a friend who loves you. There is a course of conduct which will drive that Spirit from the mind *as if* he were grieved and pained—as a course of ingratitude and sin would pain the heart of an earthly friend, and cause him to leave you." If asked what that conduct is, we may reply (1.) Open and gross sins. They are particularly referred to here; and the meaning of Paul is, that theft, falsehood, anger, and kindred vices, would grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause him to depart. (2.) Anger, in all its forms. Nothing is more fitted to drive away all serious and tender impressions from the mind, than the indulgence of anger. (3.) Licentious thoughts and desires. The Spirit of God is pure, and he dwells not in a soul that is filled with corrupt imaginings. (4.) Ingratitude. *We* feel ingratitude more than almost anything else; and why should we suppose that the Holy Spirit would not feel it also? (5.) Neglect. The Spirit of God is grieved by that. Often he prompts us to pray; he disposes the mind to seriousness, to the perusal of the Bible, to tenderness and penitence. We neglect those favoured moments of our piety, and lose those happy seasons for becoming like God. (6.) Resistance. Christians often resist the Holy Ghost. He would lead them to be dead to the world; yet they drive on their plans of gain. He would teach them the folly of fashion and vanity; yet they deck themselves in the gayest apparel. He would keep them from the splendid party, the theatre, and the ball-room; yet they go there. All that is needful for a Christian to do in order to be eminent in piety, is to yield to the gentle influences which would draw him to prayer and to heaven. ¶ *Whereby ye are sealed;* see Notes on 2 Cor. i. 22. ¶ *Unto the day of redemption;* see Notes on chap. i. 14.

31. *Let all bitterness;* see Notes on ver. 2 of this chapter. ¶ *And wrath.* The word here does not differ essentially from anger. ¶ *Anger;* see Note on ver. 26. All cherished, unreasonable anger. ¶ *And clamour.* Noise, disorder, high words; such as men use in a brawl, or when they are excited. Christians are to be calm and serious. Harsh contentions and strifes; hoarse brawls and tumults, are to be unknown among them. ¶ *And evil-speaking.* Slander, backbiting, angry expressions, tale-bearing, reproaches, &c. ¶ *With all malice.* Rather, "with all *evil*"—κακίᾳ. Every kind and sort of evil is to be put away, and you are to manifest only that which is good.

32. *And be ye kind one to another.* Benignant, mild, courteous, *polite*—χρηστοὶ. 1 Pet. iii. 8. Christianity produces true courteousness, or politeness. It does not make one rough, crabbed, sour; nor does it dispose its followers to violate the proper rules of social intercourse. The secret of true politeness is *benevolence*, or a desire to make others happy; and a Christian *should* be the most polite of men. There is no religion in a sour, misanthropic temper; none in rudeness, stiffness, and repulsiveness; none in violating the rules of good

[a] one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

a Mat.6.14.

CHAPTER V.

BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

breeding. There is a hollow-hearted politeness, indeed, which the Christian is not to aim at or copy. His politeness is to be based on *kindness;* Col. iii. 12. His courtesy is to be the result of love, good-will, and a desire of the happiness of all others; and this will prompt to the kind of conduct that will render his intercourse with others agreeable and profitable. ¶ *Tender-hearted.* Having a heart disposed to pity and compassion, and especially disposed to show kindness to the faults of erring brethren; for so the connection demands. ¶ *Forgiving one another;* see Notes on Matt. vi. 12. ¶ *As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* As God, on account of what Christ has suffered and done, has pardoned you. He has done it, (1.) *freely*—without merit on your part—when we were confessedly in the wrong. (2.) *Fully;* he has forgiven *every* offence. (3.) *Liberally;* he has forgiven *many* offences, for our sins have been innumerable. This is to be the rule which we are to observe in forgiving others. We are to do it *freely, fully, liberally.* The forgiveness is to be entire, cordial, constant. We are not to *rake up* old offences, and charge them again upon them; we are to treat them as though they had not offended, for *so* God treats us. Learn, (1.) That the forgiveness of an offending brother is a DUTY which we are not at libery to neglect. (2.) The peace and happiness of the church depend on it. All are liable to offend their brethren, as all are liable to offend God; all need forgiveness of one another, as we all need it of God. (3.) There is no danger of carrying it too far. Let the rule be observed, "*As God has forgiven you, so do you forgive others.*" Let a man recollect his own sins and follies; let him look over his life, and see how often he has offended God; let him remember that *all* has been forgiven; and then, fresh with this feeling, let him go and meet an offending brother, and say, "My brother, I forgive you. I do it frankly, fully, wholly. So Christ has forgiven me; so I forgive you. The offence shall be no more remembered. It shall not be referred to in our intercourse to harrow up your feelings; it shall not diminish my love for you; it shall not prevent my uniting with you in doing good. Christ treats me, a poor sinner, as a friend; and *so* I will treat you."

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is a continuation of the practical exhortations commenced in chap. iv. It comprises the following points, or subjects:

1. The exhortation to be followers of God, and to walk in love; ver. 1, 2.

2 The duty of avoiding the impure practices of the surrounding heathen, and of wholly breaking off from the vices in which even they themselves had indulged, before their conversion to Christianity; ver. 3—17.

3. The apostle cautions them particularly against the use of wine, and the revelry which attends its use, and exhorts them rather to engage in the exercises to which the Holy Spirit would prompt them, and to the services of praise and thanksgiving; ver. 18—20.

4. He exhorts them to mutual subjection; and particularly enjoins on wives the duty of being subject to their husbands; ver. 21—24.

5. The chapter closes with a statement of the duty of husbands to love their wives, illustrated by that which Christ showed for the church; ver. 25—33.

1. *Be ye therefore followers of God.* Gr., "Be *imitators*—μιμηταὶ—of God." The idea is not that they were to be the friends of God, or numbered among his followers, but that they were to *imitate* him in the particular thing under consideration. The word "therefore"—οὖν—connects this with the previous chapter, where he had

2 And walk in love, [a] as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a [a] sweet-smelling savour.

[a] John 13. 34. 1 Jo. 4. 9.

been exhorting them to kindness, and to a spirit of forgiveness, and he here entreats them to imitate God, who was always kind and ready to forgive; comp. Matt. v. 44—47. As he forgives us (chap. iv. 32), we should be ready to forgive others; as he has borne with our faults, we should bear with theirs; as he is ever ready to hear our cry when we ask for mercy, we should be ready to hear others when they desire to be forgiven; and as he is never weary with doing us good, we should never be weary in benefiting them. ¶ *As dear children.* The meaning is, "as those children which are beloved follow the example of a father, so we, who are beloved of God, should follow his example." What a simple rule this is! And how much contention and strife would be avoided if it were followed! If every Christian who is angry, unforgiving, and unkind, would just ask himself the question, "How does God treat me?" it would save all the trouble and heart-burning which ever exists in the church.

2. *And walk in love.* That is, let your lives be characterized by love; let that be evinced in all your deportment and conversation; see Notes on John xiii. 34. ¶ *As Christ also hath loved us.* We are to evince the same love for one another which he has done for us. He showed *his* love by giving himself to die for us, and we should evince similar love to one another; 1 John iii. 16 ¶ *And hath given himself for us.* This is evidently added by the apostle to show what he meant by saying that Christ loved us, and what we ought to do to evince our love for each other. The strength of *his* love was so great that he was willing to give himself up to death on our account; our love for our brethren should be such that we would be willing to do the same thing for them; 1 John iii. 16. ¶ *An offering.* The word here used—προσφορά—means properly that which is *offered to God* in any way, or whatever it may be It is, however, in the Scriptures, commonly used to denote an offering without blood—a thank-offering—and thus is distinguished from a sacrifice or a bloody oblation. The word occurs only in Acts xxi 26; xxiv. 17: Rom. xv. 16; Eph. v. 2; Heb. x. 5, 8, 10, 14, 18. It means here that he regarded himself as an offering to God. ¶ *And a sacrifice.* θυσίαν. Christ is here expressly called a *Sacrifice*—the usual word in the Scriptures to denote a proper sacrifice. A sacrifice was an offering made to God by killing an animal and burning it on an altar, designed to make atonement for sin. It always implied the *killing* of the animal as an acknowledgment of the sinner that *he* deserved to die. It was the giving up of *life*, which was supposed to reside in the *blood* (see Notes on Rom. iii. 25), and hence it was necessary that *blood* should be shed. Christ was such a sacrifice; and his love was shown in his being willing that his blood should be shed to save men. ¶ *For a sweet-smelling savour*; see Notes on 2 Cor. ii. 15, where the word *savour* is explained. The meaning here is, that the offering which Christ made of himself to God, was like the grateful and pleasant smell of *incense*, that is, it was acceptable to him. It was an exhibition of benevolence with which he was pleased, and it gave him the opportunity of evincing his own benevolence in the salvation of men. The meaning of this in the connection here is that the offering which Christ made was one of *love*. So, says Paul, do you love one another. Christ sacrificed himself by *love*, and that sacrifice was acceptable to God. So do you show love one to another. Sacrifice every thing which opposes it, and it will be acceptable to God. He will approve all which is designed to promote love, as he approved the sacrifice which was made, under the influence of love, by his Son.

3 But fornication, [a] and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named [b] among you, as becometh saints;

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish

[a] 1Cor.6.18; 1Thes.4.3.

[b] chap.5.12.

3. *But fornication.* A *common* vice among the heathen then as it is now, and one into which they were in special danger of falling; see Notes on Rom. i. 29; 1 Cor. vi. 18. ¶ *And all uncleanness.* Impurity of life; see Notes on Rom. i 24; comp. Rom. vi. 19; Gal. v. 19; Eph. iv. 19; Col. iii. 5. ¶ *Or covetousness.* The *connection* in which this word is found is remarkable. It is associated with the lowest and most debasing vices, and this, as well as those vices, was not once to be *named* among them. What was Paul's estimate then of covetousness? He considered it as an odious and abominable vice; a vice to be regarded in the same light as the most gross sin, and as wholly to be abhorred by all who bore the Christian name; see ver. 5. The covetous man, according to Paul, is to be ranked with the sensual, and with idolaters (ver. 5), and with those who are entirely excluded from the kingdom of God. Is this the estimate in which the vice is held now? Is it the view which professing Christians take of it? Do we not feel that there is a *great* difference between a covetous man and a man of impure and licentious life? Why is this? Because, (1) it is so common; (2.) because it is found among those who make pretensions to refinement and even religion; (3.) because it is not so easy to define what is covetousness, as it is to define impurity of life; and (4.) because the public conscience is seared, and the mind blinded to the low and grovelling character of the sin. Yet is not the view of Paul the right view? Who is a covetous man? A man who, in the pursuit of gold, neglects his soul, his intellect, and his heart. A man who, in this insatiable pursuit, is regardless of justice, truth, charity, faith, prayer, peace, comfort, usefulness, conscience; and who shall say that there is *any* vice more debasing or degrading than this? The time *may* come, therefore, when the covetous man will be regarded as deserving the same rank in the public estimation with the most vicious, and when TO COVET will be considered as much opposed to the spirit of the gospel as any of the vices here named. When that time shall come, the world's conversion will probably be not a distant event. ¶ *Let it not be once named among you.* That is, let it not exist; let there be no occasion for mentioning such a thing among you; let it be wholly unknown. This cannot mean that it is wrong to *mention* these vices for the purpose of rebuking them, or cautioning those in danger of committing them—for Paul himself in this manner mentions them here, and frequently elsewhere—but that they should not *exist* among them. ¶ *As becometh saints.* As befits the character of Christians, who are regarded as holy. Literally, "as becometh *holy ones*" — *ἁγίοις*.

4. *Neither filthiness.* That is, obscene, or indecent conversation. Literally, that which is shameful, or deformed—*αἰσχρότης*. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. ¶ *Nor foolish talking.* This word—*μωρολογία*—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means that kind of talk which is insipid, senseless, stupid, foolish; which is not fitted to instruct, edify, profit—the idle *chitchat* which is so common in the world. The meaning is, that Christians should aim to have their conversation sensible, serious, sincere — remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;" Matt. xii. 36. ¶ *Nor jesting.* *εὐτραπελία*. This word occurs also nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, that which is *well-turned* (*εὖ* —*well*, and *τρέπω*—*to turn*); and then that which is sportive, refined, courteous; and then *urbanity, humour, wit;* and then *jesting, levity*—which is evidently the meaning here. The apostle would not forbid

talking, nor jesting, which [a] are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, that [b] no whoremonger, nor unclean person

[a] Ro. 1. 28. [b] He. 13. 4; Re. 22. 15.

courteousness, or refinement of manners (comp. 1 Pet. iii. 8), and the reference, therefore, must be to that which is light and trifling in conversation; to that which is known among us as jesting. It may be observed, (1.) that *courteousness* is not forbidden in the Scriptures, but is positively required; 1 Pet. iii. 8. (2.) *Cheerfulness* is not forbidden—for if any thing can make cheerful, it is the hope of heaven. (3.) *Pleasantry* cannot be forbidden. I mean that quiet and gentle humour that arises from good-nature, and that makes one good-natured in spite of himself. Such are many of the poems of Cowper, and many of the essays of Addison in the "Spectator"—a benevolent humour which disposes us to smile, but not to be malignant; to be good-natured, but not to inspire levity. But levity and jesting, though often manifested by ministers and other Christians, are as inconsistent with true dignity as with the gospel. Where were they seen in the conversation of the Redeemer? Where in the writings of Paul? ¶ *Which are not convenient.* That is, which are not *fit* or *proper;* which do not become the character of Christians; Notes, Rom. i. 28. Christians should be grave and serious—though cheerful and pleasant. They should feel that they have great interests at stake, and that the world has too. They are redeemed—not to make sport; purchased with precious blood—for other purposes than to make men laugh. They are soon to be in heaven—and a man who has any impressive sense of that will habitually feel that he has much else to do than to make men laugh. The true course of life is midway between moroseness and levity; sourness and lightness; harshness and jesting. Be benevolent, kind, cheerful, bland, courteous, but serious. Be solemn, thoughtful, deeply impressed with the presence of God and with eternal things, but pleasant, affable, and benignant. Think not a smile sinful; but think not levity and jesting harmless. ¶ *But rather giving of thanks.* Thanks to God, or praises are more becoming Christians than jesting. The idea here seems to be, that such employment would be far more appropriate to the character of Christians, than idle, trifling, and indelicate conversation. Instead, therefore, of meeting together for low wit and jesting; for singing songs, and for the vulgar discourse which often attends such "gatherings" of friends, Paul would have them come together for the purpose of praising God, and engaging in his service. Men are social in their nature; and if they do not assemble for good purposes, they will for bad ones. It is much more appropriate to the character of Christians to come together to sing praises to God, than to sing songs; to pray than to jest; to converse of the things of redemption than to tell anecdotes, and to devote the time to a contemplation of the world to come, than to trifles and nonsense.

5. *For this know.* Be assured of this. The object here is, to deter from indulgence in those vices by the solemn assurance that no one who committed them could possibly be saved. ¶ *Nor unclean person.* No one of corrupt and licentious life can be saved; see Rev. xxii. 15. ¶ *Nor covetous man, who is an idolater.* That is, he bestows on money the affections due to God; see Col. iii. 5. To worship money is as real idolatry as to worship a block of stone. If this be so, what an idolatrous world is this! How many idolatrous are there in professedly Christian lands! How many, it is to be feared, in the church itself! And since *every* covetous man is certainly to be excluded from the kingdom of God, how anxious should we be to examine our hearts, and to know whether this sin may not lie at our door! ¶ *Hath any inheritance,* &c. Such an one shall never enter heaven. This settles the inquiry about the final destiny of a large portion of the world; and this

nor covetous man, who [a] is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive [b] you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of [1] disobedience.

a Co.3.5. b Je.29.8,9.

1 or, *unbelief.*

solemn sentence our conscience and all our views of heaven approve. Let us learn hence, (1.) that heaven will be *pure*. (2.) That it will be a *desirable* place – for who would wish to live always with the licentious and the impure? (3.) It is right to reprove these vices and to preach against them. Shall we not be allowed to preach against those sins which will certainly exclude men from heaven? (4.) A large part of the world is exposed to the wrath of God. What numbers are covetous! What multitudes are licentious! In how many places is licentiousness openly and unblushingly practised! In how many more places in secret! And in how many more is the *heart* polluted, while the external conduct is moral; the soul *corrupt*, while the individual moves in respectable society! (5.) What a world of shame will hell be! How dishonourable and disgraceful to be damned for ever, and to linger on in eternal fires, because the man was TOO POLLUTED to be admitted into pure society! Here, perhaps, he moved in fashionable life, and was rich and honoured, and flattered; there he will be sent down to hell because his whole soul was corrupt, and because God would not suffer heaven to be contaminated by his presence! (6.) What doom awaits the *covetous* man! He, like the sensualist, is to be excluded from the kingdom of God. And what is to be his doom? Will he have a place apart from the common damned—a golden palace and a bed of down in hell? No. It will be no small part of his aggravation that he will be doomed to spend an eternity with those in comparison with whom on earth, perhaps, he thought himself to be pure as an angel of light. (7.) With this multitude of the licentious and the covetous, will sink to hell *all* who are not renewed and sanctified. What a prospect for the gay, the fashionable, the moral, the amiable, and the lovely, who have no religion! For all the impenitent and the unbelieving, there is but one home in eternity. Hell is less terrible from its penal fires and its smoke of torment, than from its being made up of the profane, the sensual, and the vile; and its supremest horrors arise from its being the place where shall be gathered all the corrupt and unholy dwellers in a fallen world; all who are so impure that they cannot be admitted into heaven. Why then will the refined, the moral, and the amiable not be persuaded to seek the society of a pure heaven? to be prepared for the world where holy beings dwell?

6. *Let no man deceive you.* Let no one by artful pleas persuade you that there will be no danger from practising these vices. We may suppose that they would be under strong temptations to mingle in the gay and festive scenes where these vices were not frowned on, or where they were practised; or that they might be tempted to commit them by some of the plausible arguments which were then used for their indulgence. Many of their friends may have been in these circles; and they would endeavour to convince them that such were the customs which had been long practised, and that there could be no harm still in their indulgence. Not a few philosophers endeavoured, as is well known, to defend some of these practices, and even practised them themselves; see Notes on Rom. i. It required, therefore, all the authority of an apostle to convince them, that however plausible were the arguments in defence of them, they certainly exposed those who practised them to the wrath of God. ¶ *For because of these things cometh the wrath of God;* see Notes on Rom. i. 18; ii. 8, 9. ¶ *Upon the children of disobedience;* see Notes on Matt. i. 1; Rom. ii. 8.

7. *Be not ye therefore partakers*

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 For [a] ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light [b] in the Lord: walk as children [c] of light;

9 (For the fruit [d] of the Spirit *s* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10 Proving [e] what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have [f] no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [g] *them*.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

[a] chap.2.11,12. [b] 1 Th.5.5. [c] John 12.36. [d] Ga.5.22,&c. [e] Ro.12.2. [f] 1 Co.5.9,11. [g] 1 Ti.5.20.

with them. Since these things displease God and expose to his wrath, avoid them.

8. *For ye were sometimes darkness;* see Notes on chap. ii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. vi. 11. The meaning here is, that they were themselves formerly sunk in the same ignorance, and practised the same abominations. ¶ *But now* are ye *light in the Lord.* Light is the emblem of happiness, knowledge, holiness. The meaning is, that they had been enlightened by the Lord to see the evil of these practices, and that they ought, therefore, to forsake them. ¶ *Walk as children of light;* see Notes on Matt. i. 1, on the use of the word *son*, or *children.* The meaning here is, that they should live as became those who had been enlightened to see the evil of sin, and the beauty of virtue and religion; comp. John xii. 36, where the same phrase occurs.

9. *For the fruit of the Spirit.* That is, since the Holy Spirit through the gospel produces goodness, righteousness, and truth, see that you exhibit these in your lives, and thus show that you are the children of light. On the fruits of the Spirit, see Notes on Gal. v. 22, 23. ¶ Is *in all goodness.* Is seen in producing all kinds of goodness. He who is not *good* is not a Christian.

10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.* That is, "Walk as children of light (ver. 8), thus showing what is acceptable to the Lord." Rosenmüller supposes that the participle is used here instead of the imperative. The meaning is, that by so living you will make a fair trial of what is acceptable to the Lord. The result on your happiness in this life and the next, will be such as to show that such a course is pleasing in his sight. Dr. Chandler, however, renders it as meaning that by this course they would show that they discerned and approved of what was acceptable to the Lord. See Notes on Rom. xii. 2, where a similar form of expression occurs.

11. *And have no fellowship.* See the sentiment here expressed fully explained in the Notes on 2 Cor. vi. 14—18. ¶ *The unfruitful works.* The deeds of darkness that produce no *benefit* to the body or the soul. The word *unfruitful* is here used in contrast with the "fruit of the Spirit," ver. 9. ¶ *But rather reprove* them. By your life, your conversation, and all your influence. This is the business of Christians. Their lives should be a standing rebuke of a sinful world, and they should be ever ready to express their disapprobation of its wickedness in every form.

12. *For it is a shame even to speak,* &c.; comp. Notes, Rom. i. 24—32. It is still a shame to speak of the practices of the heathen. Missionaries tell us that they *cannot* describe the images on the car of Juggernaut, or tell us what is done in the idol temples. All over the world the same thing is true. The cheek of modesty and virtue would be suffused with shame at the very mention of what is done by the worshippers of idols; and the same is true of what is done by multitudes in Christian lands, who are not worshippers of idols. Their deeds cannot be described in the circles of the refined and the delicate; they cannot be told in the presence of mothers and sisters. Is there not emphasis here in the words "even to SPEAK of these things!" If the apostle would not allow them to *name*

13 But all things that are [1] reproved are made manifest [a] by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

1 or, *discovered.*

a John 3.20,21.

those things, or to *speak* of them, is it wise or safe for Christians now to be familiar with the accounts of those practices of pollution, and for ministers to portray them in the pulpit, and for the friends of "moral reform" to describe them before the world? The very *naming* of those abominations often produces improper associations in the mind; the description creates polluting images before the imagination; the exhibition of pictures, even for the purpose of condemning them, defiles the soul. There are some vices which, from the corruptions of the human heart, cannot be safely described, and it is to be feared that, under the plea of faithfulness, many have done evil by exciting improper feelings, where they should have only alluded to the crime, and then spoken in thunder. Paul did not *describe* these vices, he denounced them; he did not dwell upon them long enough for the imagination to find employment, and to corrupt the soul. He mentioned the vice — and then he mentioned the wrath of God; he alluded to the sin, and then he spoke of the exclusion from heaven; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. vi. 18. ¶ *Which are done of them in secret.* Many have supposed that there is an allusion here to the "*mysteries*" which were celebrated in Greece, usually at night, and far from the public eye. Many of these were indeed impure and abominable, but there is no necessity for supposing that there is such an allusion here. The reference may be to the vices which were secretly practised then as now; the abominations which flee from the eye of day, and which are performed far from the public gaze.

13. *But all things that are reproved.* Marg., *discovered.* The word here used properly means proved, demonstrated, reproved, or convicted (see Notes on John xvi. 8); but it seems here to be used in the sense of disclosed, or discovered. The sense is, that *its true nature is demonstrated;* that is, it is made known. ¶ *Are made manifest by the light.* The sense is, "light is the means of seeing what things are. We discern their form, nature, appearance, by it. So it is with the gospel—the light of the world. It enables us to see the true nature of actions. They are done in darkness, and are like objects *in* the dark. Their form and nature cannot then be known; but, when the light shines, we see what they are;" comp. Notes on John iii. 20, 21. ¶ *For whatsoever doth make manifest is light.* "Anything which will show the real form and nature of an object, deserves to be called *light.*" Of the *truth* of this, no one can doubt. The meaning in this connection is, that that system which discloses the true nature of what is done by the heathen, deserves to be considered as *light;* and that the gospel which does this, should be regarded as a system of light and truth. It discloses their odiousness and vileness, and it stands thus in strong contrast with all the false and abominable systems which have upheld or produced those vices.

14. *Wherefore he saith.* Marg., or *it.* Διὸ λέγει. The meaning may be, either that the Lord says, or the Scripture. Much difficulty has been experienced in endeavouring to ascertain *where* this is said. It is agreed on all hands that it is not found, in so many words, in the Old Testament. Some have supposed that the allusion is to Isa. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live — awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs," &c. But the objections to this are obvious and conclusive. (1.) This is *not* a quotation of that place, nor has it a *resemblance* to it, except in the word "awake." (2.) The passage in Isaiah refers to a different matter, and has a different sense altogether; see Notes on the passage. To make it refer to those to whom the gospel comes, is most forced and

14 Wherefore [1] he saith, [a] Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

1 or, *it.*

[a] Is. 60. 1.

unnatural. Others have supposed that the reference is to Isa. lx. 1—3, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come," &c. But the objection to this is not less decisive. (1.) It is *not* a quotation of that passage, and the resemblance is very remote, if it can be seen at all. (2.) *That* is addressed to the church, calling on her to let her light shine; *this*, to awake and arise from the dead, with the assurance that Christ would give them light. The exhortation here is to Christians, to *avoid the vices of the heathen around them;* the exhortation in Isaiah is to the church, to *rejoice* and *exult* in view of the fact that the day of triumph had come, and that the heathen were to be converted, and to come in multitudes and devote themselves to God. In the *design* of the two passages there is no resemblance. Some have supposed that the words are taken from some book among the Hebrews which is now lost. Epiphanius supposed that it was a quotation from a prophecy of Elijah; Syncellus and Euthalius, from some writing of Jeremiah; Hippolytus, from the writing of some now unknown prophet. Jerome supposed it was taken from some apocryphal writings. Grotius supposes that it refers to the word *light* in ver. 13, and that the sense is, "That light says; that is, that a man who is pervaded by that light, let him so say to another." Heumann, and after him Storr, Michaelis, and Jennings (Jewish Ant. ii. 252), suppose that the reference is to a song or hymn that was sung by the early Christians, beginning in this manner, and that the meaning is, "Wherefore, as it is said in the hymns which we sing,

> 'Awake, thou that sleepest;
> Arise from the dead;
> Christ shall give thee light.'"

Others have supposed that there is an allusion to a sentiment which prevailed among the Jews, respecting the significancy of blowing the trumpet on the first day of the month, or the feast of the new moon. Maimonides conjectures that that call of the trumpet, especially in the month Tisri, in which the great day of atonement occurred, was designed to signify a special call to repentance; meaning, "You who sleep, arouse from your slumbers; search and try yourselves; think on your Creator, repent, and attend to the salvation of the soul." *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc.* But all this is evidently conjecture. I see no evidence that Paul meant to make a quotation at all. Why may we not suppose that he speaks as an inspired man, and that he means to say, simply, that God *now* gives this command, or that God now speaks in this way? The sense then would be, "Be separate from sinners. Come out from among the heathen. Do not mingle with their abominations; do not name them. You are the children of light; and God says to you, awake from false security, rouse from the death of sin, and Christ shall enlighten you." Whatever be the origin of the sentiment in this verse, it is worthy of inspiration, and accords with all that is elsewhere said in the Scriptures.

[The grand objection to this view of our author is, that the apostle evidently introduces a citation. In the writings of Paul, the form διο λεγει is never used in any other sense. Whence then is the quotation taken? There is nothing absurd in supposing, with Scott and Guyse, that the apostle gives the general sense of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the calling of the Gentiles. But Isa. lx. 1—3, bears a sufficiently close resemblance to the passage in Ephesians, to vindicate the very commonly received opinion, that the apostle quotes *that* prophecy, in which the subject is the increase of the Church by the accession of the heathen nations. The church is called to arise and shine, and the apostle reminds the converted Ephesians of their lofty vocation. It forms no very serious objection, that between the place in Isaiah and that in Ephesians, there are certain verbal discrepancies. No

one will make much of this, who remembers, that in a multitude of cases similar variations occur, the apostles contenting themselves with giving the *sense* of the places to which they refer. "Accordingly," says Dr. Doddridge, "the sense of the passage before us is so fairly deducible from the words of Isaiah, that I do not see any necessity of having recourse to this supposition," viz., that the quotation was from an apocryphal book ascribed to Jeremiah.]

¶ *Awake thou that sleepest.* Arouse from a state of slumber and false security. *Sleep* and *death* are striking representations of the state in which men are by nature. In *sleep* we are, though living, insensible to any danger that may be near; we are unconscious of what may be going on around us; we hear not the voice of our friends; we see not the beauty of the grove or the landscape; we are forgetful of our real character and condition. So with the sinner. It is as if his faculties were locked in a deep slumber. He hears not when God calls; he has no sense of danger; he is insensible to the beauties and glories of the heavenly world; he is forgetful of his true character and condition. To see all this, he must be first awakened; and hence this solemn command is addressed to man. He must rouse from this condition, or he cannot be saved. But can he awaken himself? Is it not the work of God to awaken a sinner? Can he rouse himself to a sense of his condition and danger? How do we do in other things? The man that is sleeping on the verge of a dangerous precipice we would approach, and say, "Awake, you are in danger." The child that is sleeping quietly in its bed, while the flames are bursting into the room, we would rouse, and say, "Awake, or you will perish." Why not use the same language to the sinner slumbering on the verge of ruin, in a deep sleep, while the flames of wrath are kindling around him? We have no difficulty in calling on sleepers elsewhere to awake when in danger; how can we have any difficulty when speaking to the sinner? ¶ *And arise from the dead.* The state of the sinner is often compared to death; see Notes on chap. ii. 1. Men are by nature dead in sins; yet they must rouse from this condition, or they will perish. How singular, it may be said, to call upon the dead to rise! How *could* they raise themselves up? Yet God speak thus to men, and commands them to rise from the death of sin. Learn, then, (1.) That men are not dead in sin in any such sense that they are not moral agents, or responsible. (2.) That they are not dead in any such sense that they have no power of any kind. (3.) That it is right to call on sinners to arouse from their condition, and live. (4.) That they must put forth their efforts as if they were to *begin* the work themselves, without waiting for God to do it for them. *They* are to awake; *they* are to arise. It is not God who is to awake; it is not Christ who is to arise. It is *the sinner* who is to awake from his slumber, and arise from the state of death: nor is he to wait for God to do the work for him. ¶ *And Christ shall give thee light.* Christ is the light of the world; see Notes on John i. 4, 9; viii. 12; Heb. i. 3. The idea here is, that if they will use all the powers with which God has endowed them, and arouse from their spiritul slumber, and make an appropriate effort for salvation, then they may expect that Christ will shine upon them, and bless them in their efforts. This is just the promise that we need, and it is *all* that we need. All that man can ask is, that if he will make efforts to be saved, God will bless those efforts, so that they shall not be in vain. Faculties of mind have been given us to be employed in securing our salvation; and if we will employ them as they were intended to be employed, we may look for the divine aid; if not, we cannot expect it. "God helps those who help themselves;" and they who will make no effort for their salvation must perish as they who will make no effort to provide food must starve. This command was indeed addressed at first to Christians; but it involves a principle which is applicable to all. Indeed, the *language* here is rather descriptive of the condition of impenitent sinners, than of Christians. In a far more important sense they are "asleep," and

15 See then that ye walk [a] circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.[b]

a Co.4.5.

b Ps.37.19.

are "dead;" and with the more earnestness, therefore, should they be entreated to awake, and to rise from the dead, that Christ may give them light.

15. *See then that ye walk circumspectly.* Carefully, anxiously, solicitous lest you fall into sin. The word rendered "circumspectly"—ἀκριβῶς—means *diligently*, and the idea here is, that they were to take special pains to guard against the temptations around them, and to live as they ought to. ¶ *Not as fools, but as wise.* Not as the people of this world live, indulging in foolish pleasures and desires, but as those who have been taught to understand heavenly wisdom, and who have been made truly wise.

16. *Redeeming the time.* The word here rendered *redeeming*, means *to purchase; to buy up* from the possession or power of any one; and then to redeem, to set free—as from service or bondage; Notes, Gal. iii. 13. Here it means, to rescue or recover our time from waste; to improve it for great and important purposes. ¶ *Because the days are evil.* Because the times in which you live are evil. There are many allurements and temptations that would lead you away from the proper improvement of time, and that would draw you into sin. Such were those that would tempt them to go to places of sinful indulgence and revelry, where their time would be wasted, and worse than wasted. As these temptations abounded, they ought therefore to be more especially on their guard against a sinful and unprofitable waste of time. This exhortation may be addressed to all, and is applicable to all periods. The sentiment is, that we ought to be solicitous to improve our time to some useful purpose, because *there are, in an evil world, so many temptations to waste it.* Time is given us for most valuable purposes. There are things enough to be done to occupy it all, and no one need have it hang heavy on his hands. He that has a soul to be saved from eternal death, need not have one idle moment. He that has a heaven to win, has enough to do to occupy all his time. Man has just enough given him to accomplish all the purposes which God designs, and God has not given him more than enough. They redeem their time who employ it (1.) in gaining useful knowledge; (2.) in doing good to others; (3.) in employing it for the purpose of an honest livelihood for themselves and families; (4.) in prayer and self-examination to make the heart better; (5.) in seeking salvation, and in endeavouring to do the will of God. They are to redeem time from all that would waste and destroy it—like recovering marshes and fens to make them rich meadows and vineyards. There is *time* enough wasted by each sinner to secure the salvation of the soul; time enough wasted to do all that is needful to be done to spread religion around the world, and to save the race. We should still endeavour to redeem our time for the same reasons which are suggested by the apostle—because the days are evil. There are evil influences abroad; allurements and vices that would waste time, and from which we should endeavour to rescue it. There are evil influences tending to waste time (1.) in the allurements to pleasure and amusement in every place, and especially in cities; (2.) in the temptations to novel-reading, consuming the precious hours of probation to no valuable purpose; (3.) in the temptations of ambition, *most* of the time spent for which is wholly thrown away, for few gain the prize, and when gained, it is all a bauble, not worth the effort; (4.) in dissipation—for who can estimate the amount of valuable time that is worse than thrown away in the places of revelry and dissipation; (5.) in wild and visionary plans—temptations to which abound in all lands, and pre-eminently in our own; (6) and in luxurious indulgence—in dressing, and eating, and drinking.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what [a] the will of the Lord *is*.

[a] John 7.17.

18 And be not drunk [b] with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

[b] Lu.21.34.

17. *Be ye not unwise.* Be not fools in the employment of your time, and in your manner of life. Show true wisdom by endeavouring to understand what the will of the Lord is, and then doing it.

18. *And be not drunk with wine.* A danger to which they were exposed and a vice to which those around them were much addicted. Comp. Notes on Luke xxi. 34. It is not improbable that in this verse there is an allusion to the orgies of Bacchus, or to the festivals celebrated in honour of that heathen god. He was "the god of wine," and during those festivals, men and women regarded it as an acceptable act of worship to become intoxicated, and with wild songs and cries to run through streets, and fields, and vineyards. To these things the apostle opposes psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, as much more appropriate modes of devotion, and would have the Christian worship stand out in strong contrast with the wild and dissolute habits of the heathen. Plato says, that while those abominable ceremonies in the worship of Bacchus continued, it was difficult to find in all Attica a single sober man. *Rosenmüller*, Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc.* On the subject of *wine*, and the wines used by the ancients, see Notes on John ii. 10, 11. We may learn from this verse (1.) that it was not uncommon in those times to become intoxicated on wine; and (2.) that it was positively forbidden. *All* intoxication is prohibited in the Scriptures—no matter by what means it is produced. There is, *in fact*, but one thing that produces intoxication. It is *alcohol*—the poisonous substance produced by fermentation. This substance is neither created nor changed, increased nor diminished, by distillation. It exists in the cider, the beer, and the wine, after they are fermented, and the whole process of distillation consists in driving it off by heat, and collecting it in a concentrated form, and so that it may be preserved. But distilling does not *make* it, nor change it. Alcohol is precisely the same thing in the wine that it is in the brandy after it is distilled; in the cider or the beer that it is in the whisky or the rum; and why is it right to become intoxicated on it in one form rather than in another? Since therefore there is danger of intoxication in the use of wine, as well as in the use of ardent spirits, why should we not abstain from one as well as the other? How can a man prove that it is *right* for him to drink alcohol in the form of wine, and that it is *wrong* for me to drink it in the form of brandy or rum? ¶ *Wherein is excess.* There has been much difference of opinion about the word here rendered excess —ἀσωτία. It occurs only in two other places in the New Testament, where it is rendered *riot;* Tit. i. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 4. The *adjective* occurs once (Luke xv. 13), where it is rendered *riotous*. The word (derived, according to *Passow*, from *a*, and σάζω—*to save, deliver*) means that which is unsafe, not to be recovered; lost beyond recovery; then that which is abandoned to sensuality and lust; dissoluteness, debauchery, revelry. The meaning here is, that all this follows the use of wine. Is it proper then for Christians to be in the habit of drinking it? "Wine is so frequently the cause of this, by the ungrateful abuse of the bounty of providence in giving it, that the enormity is represented by a very strong and beautiful *figure* as contained in the *very liquor*." *Doddridge.* ¶ *But be filled with the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit. How much more appropriate to Christians than to be filled with the spirit of intoxication and revelry! Let Christians, when about to indulge in a glass of wine, think of this admonition. Let them remember that their bodies should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, rather than a receptacle for intoxicating drinks. Was any man ever made a better Christian by the use of wine? Was

19 Speaking to yourselves [a] in psalms and hymns, and spiritual

[a] Co.3.16.

any minister ever better fitted to counsel an anxious sinner, or to pray, or to preach the gospel, by the use of intoxicating drinks? Let the history of wine-drinking and intemperate clergymen answer.

19. *Speaking to yourselves.* Speaking among yourselves, that is, endeavouring to edify one another, and to promote purity of heart, by songs of praise. This has the force of a command, and it is a matter of obligation on Christians. From the beginning, praise was an important part of public worship, and is designed to be to the end of the world; see Notes on 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Nothing is more clear than that it was practised by the Saviour himself and the apostles (see Matt. xxvi. 30), and by the primitive church, as well as by the great body of Christians in all ages. ¶ *In psalms.* The Psalms of David were sung by the Jews at the temple, and by the early Christians (Notes Matt. xxvi. 30), and the singing of those psalms has constituted a delightful part of public worship in all ages. They speak the language of devotion at all times, and a large part of them are as well fitted to the services of the sanctuary now as they were when first composed. ¶ *And hymns.* It is not easy to determine precisely what is the difference in the meaning of the words here used, or to designate the kind of compositions which were used in the early churches. A *hymn* is properly a song or ode in honour of God. Among the heathen it was a song in honour of some deity. With us now it denotes a short poem, composed for religious service, and sung in praise to God. Such brief poems were common among the heathen, and it was natural that Christians should early introduce and adopt them. Whether any of them were composed by the apostles it is impossible now to determine, though the presumption is very strong that if they had been they would have been preserved with as much care as their epistles, or as the Psalms. One thing is proved clearly by this passage, that there were other compositions used in the praise of God than the Psalms of David; and if it was right then to make use of such compositions, it is now. They were not merely "Psalms" that were sung, but there were *hymns* and *odes*. ¶ *Spiritual songs.* Spiritual *odes* —ᾠδαῖς. Odes or songs relating to spiritual things in contradistinction from those which were sung in places of festivity and revelry. An *ode* is properly a short poem or song adapted to be set to music, or to be sung; a lyric poem. In what way these were sung, it is now vain to conjecture. Whether with or without instrumental accompaniments; whether by a choir or by the assembly; whether by an individual only, or whether they were by responses, it is not possible to decide from anything in the New Testament. It is probable that it would be done in the most simple manner possible. Yet as music constituted so important a part of the worship of the temple, it is evident that the early Christians would be by no means indifferent to the nature of the music which they had in their churches. And as it was so important a part of the worship of the heathen gods, and contributed so much to maintain the influence of heathenism, it is not unlikely that the early Christians would feel the importance of making *their* music attractive, and of making it tributary to the support of religion. If there is attractive music at the banquet, and in the theatre, contributing to the maintenance of amusements where God is forgotten, assuredly the music of the sanctuary should not be such as to disgust those of pure and refined taste. ¶ *Singing.* ᾄδοντες. The prevailing character of music in the worship of God should be *vocal*. If instruments are employed, they should be so subordinate that the service may be characterized as *singing*. ¶ *And making melody.* *Melody* is an agreeable succession of sounds; a succession so regulated and modulated as to please

songs, singing [a] and making melody in your [b] heart to the Lord ;

[a] Ps.147.7. [b] Ps.57.7,8.

20 Giving thanks [c] always for all things unto God and the Father

[c] Is.63.7.

the ear. It differs from *harmony*, inasmuch as melody is an agreeable succession of sounds by a single voice; harmony consists in the accordance of different sounds. It is not certain, however, that the apostle here had reference to what is properly called *melody*. The word which he uses—ψάλλω—means to touch, twitch, pluck—as the hair, the beard ; and then to twitch a string—to *twang* it—as the string of a bow, and then the string of an instrument of music. It is most frequently used in the sense of touching or playing a lyre, or a harp ; and then it denotes to make music in general, to sing—perhaps usually with the idea of being accompanied with a lyre or harp. It is used, in the New Testament, only in Rom. v. 19 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 15, where it is translated *sing ;* in James v. 13, where it is rendered *sing psalms*, and in the place before us. The idea here is, that of singing in the heart, or praising God from the heart. The psalms, and hymns, and songs were to be sung so that the heart should be engaged, and not so as to be *mere music*, or a mere external performance. On the phrase "in the heart," see Notes on 1 Cor. xiv. 15. ¶ *To the Lord.* In praise of the Lord, or addressed to him. Singing, as here meant, is a direct and solemn act of worship, and should be considered such as really as prayer. In singing we should regard ourselves as speaking directly to God, and the words, therefore, should be spoken with a solemnity and awe becoming such a direct address to the great Jehovah. So Pliny says of the early Christians, *Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem* — "and they sang among themselves hymns to Christ as God." If this be the true nature and design of public psalmody, then it follows (1.) that all should regard it as an act of solemn worship in which they should engage—in *heart* at least, if they cannot themselves sing. (2.) Public psalmody should not be intrusted wholly to the light and gay ; to the trifling and careless part of a congregation. (3.) They who conduct this part of public worship ought to be pious. The leader *ought* to be a Christian ; and they who join in it *ought* also to give their hearts to the Redeemer. Perhaps it would not be proper to say absolutely that no one who is not a professor of religion should take part in the exercises of a choir in a church; but there can be no error in saying that such persons *ought* to give themselves to Christ, and to sing from the heart. Their voices would be none the less sweet ; their music no less pure and beautiful ; nor could their own pleasure in the service be lessened. A choir of sweet singers in a church—united in the same praises here—*ought* to be prepared to join in the same praises around the throne of God.

20. *Giving thanks always.* This is probably designed to be connected with the preceding verse, and to denote that the proper subject of psalms and hymns is thanksgiving and praise. This is indeed always the main design, and should be so regarded ; and this part of worship should be so conducted as to keep up in the heart a lively sense of the mercy and goodness of God. ¶ *For all things.* ὑπὲρ πάντων— for all *things*, or all *persons*. Dr. Barrow supposes that the meaning here is, that they were to give thanks for *all persons*, and to regard themselves as under obligations to give thanks for the mercies bestowed upon *the human race*, in accordance with the idea expressed in the Liturgy of the Episcopal church, "We, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men." This idea is beautiful ; and it accords with the requirements of the Scriptures elsewhere ; 1 Tim. ii. 1. "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and *giv-*

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

ing of thanks, be made for all men." Such is the duty of Christians; and I see no departure from the fair meaning of the words here, in supposing that the apostle may have designed to express such an idea. The sense, according to this, would be, that we are to praise God for his general mercy to mankind; for all the happiness which mortals are permitted to enjoy; for the love of God to mankind in creation, in providence, and in redemption—just as a grateful child will give thanks for all the kindness shown to his brothers and sisters. One obvious effect of this would be to overcome *selfishness*, and to make us rejoice in the happiness of others as well as in our own. Another effect would be to make us feel a deeper interest in the condition of our fellow creatures. Another would be to elevate and enlarge our conceptions of the goodness of God—directing the mind to all the favours which he has bestowed on the race. Man has much for which to be grateful; and the duty of acknowledging the mercy of God to the race should not be forgotten. We are often prone so to magnify our calamities, and to contemplate the woes of the race, that we overlook the occasions for gratitude; and we should, therefore, look upon the *mercies* which we enjoy as well as the miseries which we endure, that our hearts may be right. He who looks only on his trials will soon find his mind soured and complaining; he who endeavours to find how many occasions for gratitude he has, will soon find the burden of his sorrows alleviated, and his mind tranquil and calm. Yet, if the words here are to be taken as in our translation, "for all things," they are full of force and beauty. At the close of life, and in heaven, we shall see occasion to bless God for *all* his dealings with us. We shall see that we have not suffered one pang too much, or been required to perform one duty too severe. We shall see that all our afflictions, as well as our mercies, were designed for our good, and were needful for us. Why then should we not bless God in the furnace as well as in the palace; on a bed of pain as well as on a bed of down; in want as well as when sitting down at the splendid banquet? God knows what is best for us; and the way in which he leads us, mysterious though it seem to be now, will yet be seen to have been full of goodness and mercy. ¶ *Unto God and the Father.* Or, "to God, even the Father." It cannot mean to God as distinguished from the Father, or first to God and then to the Father, as if the Father were distinct from God. The meaning is, that thanks are to be given specially to God the Father—the great Author of all mercies, and the source of all blessings. ¶ *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* That is, through his mediation, or trusting in him; see Notes on John xiv. 13. The meaning is, that we are *always* to approach God through the mediation of the Lord Jesus. When we ask for mercy, it is to be on his account, or through his merits; when we plead for strength and grace to support us in trial, it is to be in dependence on him; and when we give thanks, it is to be through him, and because it is through his intervention that we receive all blessings, and by his merits that even the gratitude of beings so sinful as we are can be accepted.

21. *Submitting yourselves one to another.* Maintaining due subordination in the various relations of life. This general principle of religion, the apostle proceeds now to illustrate in reference to wives (ver. 22—24); to children (chap. vi. 1—3); and to servants, chap. vi. 5—8. At the same time that he enforces this duty of submission, however, he enjoins on others to use their authority in a proper manner, and gives solemn injunctions that there should be no abuse of power. Particularly he enjoins on husbands the duty of loving their wives with all tenderness (ver. 25—

22 Wives, [a] submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

[a] 1Pe.3.1,&c.; Co.3.18,&c.

33); on fathers, the duty of treating their children so that they might easily obey them (chap. vi. 4); and on masters, the duty of treating their servants with kindness, remembering that they have a Master also in heaven; chap. vi. 9. The general meaning here is, that Christianity does not break up the relations of life, and produce disorder, lawlessness, and insubordination; but that it will confirm every proper authority, and make every just yoke lighter. Infidelity is always disorganizing; Christianity, never.

22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.* On this passage, comp. Notes on 1 Cor. xi. 3—9. The *duty* of the submission of the wife to her husband is everywhere enjoined in the Scriptures; see 1 Pet. iii. 1; Col. iii. 18; Titus ii. 5. While Christianity designed to elevate the character of the wife, and to make her a fit companion of an intelligent and pious husband, it did not intend to destroy all subordination and authority. Man, by the fact that he was first created; that the woman was taken from him; that he is better qualified for ruling than she is, is evidently designed to be at the head of the little community that constitutes a family. In many other things, woman may be his equal; in loveliness, and grace, and beauty, and tenderness, and gentleness, she is far his superior; but these are not the qualities adapted for government. Their place is in another sphere; and *there*, man should be as cautious about invading her prerogative, or abridging her liberty, as *she* should be about invading the prerogative that belongs to him. In every family there should be a head—some one who is to be looked up to as the counsellor and the ruler; some one to whom all should be subordinate. God has given that prerogative to man; and no family prospers where that arrangement is violated. Within proper metes and limits, therefore, it is the duty of the wife to obey, or to submit herself to her husband. Those limits are such as the following: 1. In domestic arrangements, the husband is to be regarded as the head of the family; and he has a right to direct as to the style of living, the expenses of the family, the clothing, &c. 2. In regard to the laws which are to regulate the family, he is the head. It is his to say what is to be done; in what way the children are to employ themselves, and to give directions in regard to their education, &c. 3. In business matters, the wife is to submit to the husband. She may counsel with him, if he chooses; but the affairs of business and property are under his control, and must be left at his disposal. 4. In everything, except that which relates to *conscience* and *religion*, he has authority. But there his authority ceases. He has no right to require her to commit an act of dishonesty, to connive at wrong-doing, to visit a place of amusement which her conscience tells her is wrong, nor has he a right to interfere with the proper discharge of her religious duties. He has no right to forbid her to go to church at the proper and usual time, or to make a profession of religion when she pleases. He has no right to forbid her endeavouring to exercise a religious influence over her children, or to endeavour to lead them to God. She is bound to obey God, rather than *any* man (see Notes on Acts iv. 19); and when even a husband interferes in such cases, and attempts to control her, he steps beyond his proper bounds, and invades the prerogative of God, and his authority ceases to be binding. It ought to be said, however, that in order to justify her acting independently in such a case, the following things are proper: (1.) It should be *really* a case of conscience—a case where the Lord has plainly required her to do what she proposes to do — and not a mere matter of whim, fancy, or caprice. (2.) When a husband makes opposition to the course which a wife wishes to pursue in religious duties, it should

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

lead her to re-examine the matter, to pray much over it, and to see whether she cannot, with a good conscience, comply with his wishes. (3.) If she is convinced that she is right, she should still endeavour to see whether it is not *possible* to win him to her views, and to persuade him to accord with her; see 1 Pet. iii. 1. It is *possible* that, if she does right, he may be *persuaded* to do right also. (4.) If she is constrained, however, to differ from him, it should be with mildness and gentleness. There should be no reproach, and no contention. She should simply state her reasons, and leave the event to God. (5.) She should, *after* this, be a better wife, and put forth more and more effort to make her husband and family happy. She should show that the effect of her religion has been to make her love her husband and children more; to make her more and more attentive to her domestic duties, and more and more kind in affliction. By a *life* of pure religion, she should aim to secure what she could not by her entreaties—his consent that she should live as she thinks she ought to, and and walk to heaven in the path in which she believes that her Lord calls her. While, however, it is to be conceded that the husband has *authority* over the wife, and a *right* to command in all cases that do not pertain to the conscience, it should be remarked, (1) That *his* command should be reasonable and proper. (2.) He has no right to require anything wrong, or contrary to the will of God. (3.) WHERE COMMANDS BEGIN *in this relation*, HAPPINESS USUALLY ENDS; and the moment a husband *requires* a wife to do anything, it is usually a signal of departing or departed affection and peace. When there are proper feelings in both parties in this relation, there will be no occasion either to command or to obey. There should be such mutual love and confidence, that the known *wish* of the husband should be a law to the wife: and that the known desires of the wife should be the rule which he would approve. A perfect government is that where the known wish of the lawgiver is a sufficient rule to the subject. Such is the government of heaven; and a family on earth should approximate as nearly as possible to that. ¶ *As unto the Lord.* As you would to the Lord, because the Lord requires it, and has given to the husband this authority.

23 *For the husband is the head of the wife;* see Notes on 1 Cor. xi. 3. ¶ *As Christ is the head of the church.* As Christ rules over the church, and has a right to direct and control it. ¶ *And he is the Saviour of the body.* That is, of the church, represented as *his body;* see Notes, chap. i. 23. The idea here seems to be, that as Christ gave himself to save his body, the church; as he practised self-denial and made it an object of intense solicitude to preserve that church, so ought the husband to manifest a similar solicitude to make his wife happy, and to save her from want, affliction, and pain. He ought to regard himself as her natural protector; as bound to anticipate and provide for her wants; as under obligation to comfort her in trial, even as Christ does the church. What a beautiful illustration of the spirit which a husband should manifest is the care which Christ has shown for his "bride," the church! see Notes on ver. 25—29.

24. *In every thing.* In every thing which is not contrary to the will of God; see Notes on ver. 23.

25. *Husbands, love your wives.* The duty of the wife is to obey; the right of the husband is to command. But the apostle would guard against the abuse of that right by enjoining the manifestation of such a spirit on the husband as would secure obedience on the part of the wife. He proceeds, therefore, to show, that the husband, in all his intercourse with the wife, should manifest the same spirit which

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing [a] of water by the word:

[a] Ti.3.5.

the Lord Jesus did towards the church; or, in other words, he holds up the conduct of the Redeemer towards the church, as the model for a husband to imitate. If a husband wished a rule that would be short, simple, clear, and efficacious, about the manner in which he should regard and treat his wife, he could not find a better one than that here suggested. ¶ *Even as Christ loved the church.* This was the strongest love that has ever been evinced in this world. It follows, that a husband is in no danger of loving his wife too much, provided she be not loved more than God. We are to make the love which Christ had for the church the model. ¶ *And gave himself for it.* Gave himself to die to redeem it. The meaning here is, that husbands are to imitate the Redeemer in this respect. As he gave himself to suffer on the cross to save the church, so we are to be willing to deny ourselves, and to bear toil and trial, that we may promote the happiness of the wife. It is the duty of the husband to toil for her support; to provide for her wants; to deny himself of rest and ease, if necessary, in order to attend on her in sickness; to go before her in danger; to defend her if she is in peril; and to be ready to die to save her. Why should he not be? If they are shipwrecked, and there is a single plank on which safety can be secured, should he not be willing to place her on that, and see *her* safe at all hazards to himself? But there may be more implied in this than that a man is to toil, and even to lay down his life for the welfare of his wife. Christ laid down his life to *save* the church; and a husband should feel that it should be one great object of his life to promote the salvation of his wife. He is bound so to live as not to interfere with her salvation, but so as to promote it in every way possible. He is to furnish her all the *facilities* that she may need, to enable her to attend on the worship of God; and to throw no obstacles in her way. He is to set her the example; to counsel her if she needs counsel, and to make the path of salvation as easy for her as possible. If a husband has the spirit and self-denial of the Saviour, he will regard no sacrifice too great if he may promote the salvation of his family.

26. *That he might sanctify.* The great object of the Redeemer was to purify and save the church. The meaning here is, that a husband is to manifest similar love towards his wife, and a similar desire that she should be prepared to "walk before him in white" ¶ *And cleanse it with the washing of water.* In all this there is an allusion doubtless to the various methods of purifying and cleansing those who were about to be married, and who were to be united to monarchs as their brides. In some instances this previous preparation continued for twelve months. The means of purification were various, but consisted usually in the use of costly unguents; see Esther ii. 12. "Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of women;" comp. Ps. xlv. 13, 14; Ezek. xvi. 7—14. As such a virgin was purified and prepared for her husband by washing and by anointing, so the church is to be prepared for Christ. It is to be made pure and holy. Outwardly there is to be the application of water—the symbol of purity; and within there is to be holiness of heart; see Notes on 2 Cor. xi. 2, where Paul says of the Corinthians, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." ¶ *By the word.* There has been much diversity of opinion respecting the meaning of this. Probably the sense of the expression is, that all this was to be accomplished by the instrumentality of the truth—the word of God. By that truth they were to be sanctified (John xvii. 17); and in accordance with that the whole

27 That he might present [a] it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, [b] or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

a Jude 24. b Ca. 4. 7

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and

work from the commencement to the close was to be accomplished. It was not by external ceremonies, and not by any miraculous power on the heart, but by the faithful application of truth to the heart.

27. *That he may present it to himself.* In the last day, when he shall receive the church as his spouse to heaven; Rev. xxi. 9. Perhaps the word *prepare* would better express the sense here than *present*—that he may prepare it for himself as a holy church. Tindal renders it, "to make it unto himself." ¶ *A glorious church.* A church full of honour, splendour, beauty. The idea of *shining*, or of being *bright*, would convey the sense here. Probably there is still here an allusion to a bride "adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi. 2; comp. Ps. xlv. 9—14); and the idea is, that the church will be worthy of the love of the bridegroom, to whom it will then be presented. ¶ *Not having spot.* Not having a stain, a defect, or any impurity—still retaining the allusion to a bride, and to the care taken to remove every blemish. ¶ *Or wrinkle.* In the vigour and beauty of youth; like a bride in whom there is no wrinkle of age. ¶ *Or any such thing.* Nothing to deform, disfigure, or offend. To this beautiful illustration of the final glory of the church, the apostle was led by the mention of the relation of the husband and the wife. It shows, (1.) The tendency of the thoughts of Paul. He delighted to allow the associations in his mind, no matter what the subject was, to draw him along to the Redeemer. (2.) The passage here shows us what the church will yet be. There will be a period in its history when there shall not be any imperfection; when there shall be neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. In heaven all will be pure. On earth we are preparing for that world of purity; and it cannot be denied that here there is much that is imperfect and impure. But in that future world, where the church shall be presented to Christ, clothed in the robes of salvation, there shall not be one unholy member; one deceiver or hypocrite; one covetous or avaricious man; one that shall pain the hearts of the friends of purity by an unholy life. And in all the millions that shall be gathered there out of every land, and people, and tongue, and age, there shall be no envy, malice, backbiting, pride, vanity, worldliness; there shall be no annoying and vexing conflict in the heart with evil passions, "*nor any such thing.*" How different from the church as it now is; and how we should pant for that blessed world!

28. *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.* Because they are one flesh; ver. 31. This is the subject on which Paul had been speaking, and from which he had been diverted by the allusion to the glorified church. The doctrine here is, that a husband should have the same care for the comfort of his wife which he has for himself. He should regard her as one with himself; and as he protects his own body from cold and hunger, and, when sick and suffering, endeavours to restore it to health, so he should regard and treat her. ¶ *He that loveth his wife, loveth himself.* (1.) Because she is one with him, and their interests are identified. (2.) Because, by this, he really promotes his own welfare, as much as he does when he takes care of his own body. A man's kindness to his wife will be more than repaid by the happiness which she imparts; and all the real solicitude which he shows to make her happy, will come to more than it costs. If a man wishes to promote his own happiness in the most effectual way, he had better begin by showing kindness to his wife.

29. *For no man ever yet hated his*

cherisheth it; even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members [a] of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For [b] this cause shall a man

a 1Co.12.27.

b Gen.2.24.

own flesh. This is urged as an argument why a man should love his wife and show kindness to her. As no man disregards the happiness of his own body, or himself, so he should show equal care to promote the happiness of his wife. A sentiment similar to this is found in the classic writers. Thus Curtius (lib. vii.) says, *Corporibus nostris quæ utique non odimus*—"We do not hate those things that pertain to our own bodies." So Seneca (Epis. 14), *Fateor insitam nobis esse corporis nostri charitatem*—"I confess that there is implanted in us the love of our own body." The word *nourisheth* here means properly to bring up, as e. g., children. The sense here is, that he provides for it, and guards it from exposure and want. The word *cherisheth*—θάλπει—means properly *to warm;* and may mean here that he defends it from cold by clothing—and the two expressions denote that he provides food and raiment for the body. So he is to do for his wife; and in like manner the Lord Jesus regards the church, and ministers to its spiritual necessities. But this should not be spiritualized too far. The *general* idea is all that we want—that Christ has a tender concern for the wants of the church, as a man has for his own body, and that the husband should show a similar regard for his wife.

30. *For we are members of his body.* Of the body of Christ; see Notes on 1 Cor. xi. 3; xii. 27; John xv. 1—6, and Eph. i. 23. The idea here is, that there is a close and intimate union between the Christian and the Saviour—a union *so* intimate that they may be spoken of as *one*. ¶ *Of his flesh, and of his bones.* There is an allusion here evidently to the language which Adam used respecting Eve. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;" Gen. ii. 23. It is language which is employed to denote the closeness of the marriage relation, and which Paul applies to the connection between Christ and his people. Of course, it cannot be understood *literally.* It is not true literally that our bones are a part of the bones of Christ, or our flesh of his flesh; nor should language ever be used that would imply a miraculous union. It is not a physical union, but a union of attachment; of feeling; of love. If we avoid the notion of a *physical* union, however, it is scarcely possible to use too strong language in describing the union of believers with the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures make use of language which is stronger than that employed to describe any other connection; and there is no union of affection so powerful as that which binds the Christian to the Saviour. So strong is it, that he is willing for it to forsake father, mother, and home; to leave his country, and to abandon his possessions; to go to distant lands and dwell among barbarians to make the Redeemer known; or to go to the cross or the stake from simple love to the Saviour. Account for it as men may, there has been manifested on earth nowhere else so strong an attachment as that which binds the Christian to the cross. It is stronger love than that which a man has for his own flesh and bones; for it makes him willing that his flesh should be consumed by fire, or his bones broken on the wheel rather than deny him. Can the infidel account for this strength of attachment on any other principle than that it has a divine origin?

[See Supplementary Note, Rom. viii. 10, on the union between Christ and his people, in which it is shown that a mere union of feeling and love is far beneath the truth.]

31. *For this cause.* Ἀντὶ τούτου. This verse is a quotation from Gen. ii. 24, and contains the account of the institution of marriage. The meaning of the phrase rendered "for this cause" is, "answerably to this;" or corresponding to this—that is, to

leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two [a] shall be one flesh.

[a] 1Co.6.16.

32 This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, let every one

what Paul had just said of the union of believers and the Redeemer. On the meaning of this verse, see Notes on Matt. xix. 4. There is no evidence that the marriage connection was originally designed to symbolize or typify this union, but it may be used to illustrate that connection, and to show the strength of the attachment between the Redeemer and his people. The comparison should be confined, however, strictly to the use made of it in the New Testament.

32. *This is a great mystery.* The Latin Vulgate translates this, *sacramentum hoc magnum est*—"this is a great *sacrament*"—and this is the proof, I suppose, and the only proof adduced by the Papists that marriage is *a sacrament.* But the original here conveys no such idea. The word *mystery*—μυστήριον—means something which is concealed, hidden, before unknown; something into which one must be *initiated* or instructed before he can understand it. It does not mean that it is *incomprehensible* when it is disclosed, but that hitherto it has been kept secret. When disclosed it may be as intelligible as any other truth; see the word explained in the Notes on chap. i. 9. Here it means, simply, that there was much about the union of the Redeemer with his people, resembling the marriage connection, which was not obvious, except to those who were instructed; which was obscure to those who were not initiated; which they did not understand who had not been *taught.* It does not mean that no one could understand it, but that it pertained to the class of truths into which it was necessary for one to be *initiated* in order to comprehend them. The truth that was so great a mystery was, that the eternal Son of God should form such an union with men; that he should take them into a connection with himself, implying an ardour of attachment, and a strength of affection superior to even that which exists in the marriage relation. This was a great and profound truth, to understand which, it was necessary to receive instruction. No one would have understood it without a revelation; no one understands it now except they who are taught of God. ¶ *But I speak concerning Christ and the church.* This, it seems to me, is an explicit disclaimer of any intention to be understood as affirming that the marriage contract was designed to be a *type* of the union of the Redeemer and his people. The apostle says expressly, that his remarks do not refer to *marriage at all* when he speaks of the mystery. They refer *solely* to the union of the Redeemer and his people. How strange and unwarranted, therefore, are all the comments of expositors on this passage designed to explain marriage as *a mysterious type* of the union of Christ and the church! If men would allow the apostle to speak for himself, and not force on him sentiments which he expressly disclaims, the world would be saved from such insipid allegories as Macknight and others have derived from this passage. The Bible is a book of sense; and the time will come, it is hoped, when, freed from all such allegorizing expositions, it will commend itself to the good sense of mankind. Marriage is an important, a holy, a noble, a pure institution, altogether worthy of God; but it does not thence follow that marriage was designed to be a type of the union between Christ and the church, and it is certain that the apostle Paul meant to teach no such thing.

33. *Nevertheless.* The apostle here resumes the subject which he had been discussing in ver. 21—29, and says that it was the duty of every man to love his wife as he did himself. This was the main topic, from which he had been diverted by the discus-

of you in particular, so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

sion respecting the love which the Redeemer had shown for his church. ¶ *And the wife* see *that she reverence* her *husband.* The word "*see*" is supplied by our translators. The meaning is, that it was the especial duty of the wife to show respect for her husband as the head of the family, and as set over her in the Lord; see Notes on ver. 22, 23. The word rendered *reverence*, is that which usually denotes *fear* — φοβῆται. She is to *fear; i. e.* to honour, respect, obey the will of her husband. It is, of course, not implied that it is not also her duty to love her husband, but that there should be no usurping of authority; no disregard of the arrangement which God has made; and that order and peace should be secured in a family by regarding the husband as the source of law.

From what is here said of the duties of husband and wife we may remark,

(1.) That the happiness of society depends on just views of the marriage relation. It is true the world over, that the views which prevail in regard to this relation, determine every thing in reference to all other relations of life, and to all other sources of enjoyment.

(2.) God designed that woman should occupy a subordinate, though an important place in the relations of social life. *This* arrangement is never disregarded without evils which cannot be corrected until the original intention is secured. No imaginary good that can come out of the violation of the original design; no benefits which females, individual or associated, can confer on mankind by disregarding this arrangement, can be a compensation for the evil that is done, nor can the evil be remedied unless woman occupies the place which God designed she should fill. *There* nothing else can supply her place; and when she is absent from that situation—no matter what good she may be doing elsewhere—there is a silent evil reigning, which can be removed only by her return. It is not hers to fight battles, or to command armies and navies, or to control kingdoms, or to make laws. Nor is it hers to go forward as a public leader even in enterprises of benevolence, or in associations designed to act on the public mind. Her empire is the domestic circle; her first influence is there; and in connection with that, in such scenes as she can engage in without trenching on the prerogative of man, or neglecting the duty which she owes to her own family.

(3.) It is not best that there should be the open exercise of authority in a family. When *commands* begin in the relation of husband and wife, *happiness* flies; and the moment a husband is *disposed to* COMMAND his wife, or is *under a necessity* of doing it, that moment he may bid adieu to domestic peace and joy.

(4.) A wife, therefore, should never give her husband *occasion* to command her to do any thing, or forbid any thing. His known wish, except in cases of conscience, should be law to her. The moment she can ascertain what his will is, that moment ought to settle her mind as to what is to be done.

(5.) A husband should never *wish* or *expect* any thing that it may not be perfectly proper for a wife to render. He, too, should consult *her* wishes; and when he understands what they are, he should regard what she prefers as the very thing which he would command. The known wish and preference of a wife, unless there be something wrong in it, should be allowed to influence his mind, and be that which he directs in the family.

(6.) There is no danger that a husband will love a wife too much, provided his love be subordinate to the love of God. The command is, to love her as Christ loved the church. What love has ever been like that? How can a husband exceed it? What did not Christ endure to redeem the church? So should a husband be willing to deny himself to promote

the happiness of his wife; to watch by her in sickness, and, if need be, to peril health and life to promote her welfare. Doing this, he will not go beyond what Christ did for the church. He should remember that she has a special claim of justice on him. For him she has left her father's home, forsaken the friends of her youth, endowed him with whatever property she may have, sunk her name in his, confided her honour, her character, and her happiness, to his virtue; and the least that he can do for her is to *love* her, and strive to make her happy. This was what she asked when she consented to be ome his; and a husband's love is what she still asks to sustain and cheer her in the trials of life. If she has not this, whither shall she go for comfort?

(7.) We may see, then, the guilt of those husbands who withhold their affections from their wives, and forsake those to whom they had solemnly pledged themselves at the altar; those who neglect to provide for their wants, or to minister to them in sickness; and those who become the victims of intemperance, and leave their wives to tears. There is much, much guilt of this kind on earth. There are many, many broken vows. There are many, many hearts made to bleed. There is many a pure and virtuous woman who was once the object of tender affection, now, by no fault of hers, forsaken, abused, broken-hearted, by the brutal conduct of a husband.

(8.) Wives should manifest such a character as to be worthy of love. They owe this to their husbands. They demand the confidence and affection of man; and they should show that they are worthy of that confidence and affection. It is not possible to love that which is unlovely, nor to force affection where it is undeserved; and, as a wife expects that a husband will love her more than he does any other earthly being, it is but right that she should evince such a spirit as shall make that proper. A wife may easily alienate the affections of her partner in life. If she is irritable and fault-finding; if none of his ways please her; if she takes no interest in his plans, and in what he does; if she forsakes her home when she should be there, and seeks happiness abroad; or if, at home, she never greets him with a smile; if she is wasteful of his earnings, and extravagant in her habits, it will be impossible to prevent the effects of such a course of life on his mind. And when a wife perceives the slightest evidence of alienated affection in her husband, she should inquire at once whether she has not given occasion for it, and exhibited such a spirit as tended inevitably to produce such a result.

(9.) To secure mutual love, therefore, it is necessary that there should be mutual kindness, and mutual *loveliness* of character. Whatever is seen to be offensive or painful, should be at once abandoned. All the little peculiarities of temper and modes of speech that are observed to give pain, should be forsaken; and, while one party should endeavour to tolerate them, and *not* to be offended, the other should make it a matter of conscience to remove them.

(10.) The great secret of conjugal happiness is in the cultivation of a proper temper. It is not so much in the great and trying scenes of life that the strength of virtue is tested; it is in the events that are constantly occurring; the manifestation of kindness in the things that are happening every moment; the gentleness that flows along every day, like the stream that winds through the meadow and around the farm-house, noiseless but useful, diffusing fertility by day and by night. Great deeds rarely occur. The happiness of life depends little on them, but mainly on the little acts of kindness in life. We need them everywhere; we need them always. And eminently in the marriage relation there is need of gentleness and love, returning each morning, beaming in the eye, and dwelling in the heart through the livelong day.

CHAPTER VI.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter comprises the following subjects: (1.) An exhortation to

CHAPTER VI.

CHILDREN, [a] obey your parents [b] in the Lord: for this is right.

a Pr.23.22; Co.3.20,&c.

b Ro.16.2; 1Co.15.58.

children to obey their parents, with a promise of the blessing that would follow from obedience; ver. 1—3. (2.) An exhortation to fathers to manifest such a character that children could properly obey them, and to train them up in a proper manner; ver. 4. (3.) The duty of servants; ver. 5—8. (4.) The duty of masters towards their servants; ver. 9. (5.) An exhortation to put on the whole armour of God, with a description of the Christian soldier, and of the Christian panoply; ver. 10—17. (6.) The duty of prayer, and especially of prayer for the apostle himself, that he might be enabled to speak with boldness in the cause of his Master; ver. 18—20. (7.) In the conclusion (ver. 21—24), he informs them that if they wished to make any inquiries about his condition, Tychicus, who conveyed this letter, could acquaint them with his circumstances; and then closes the epistle with the usual benedictions.

1. *Children.* τέκνα This word usually signifies those who are young; but it is here used, evidently, to denote those who were under the care and government of their parents, or those who were not of age. ¶ *Obey your parents.* This is the first great duty which God has enjoined on children. It is, to do what their parents command them to do. The God of nature indicates that this is duty; for he has impressed it on the minds of all in every age; and the Author of revelation confirms it. It is particularly important, (1.) Because the good order of a family, and hence of the community, depends on it; no community or family being prosperous where there is not due subordination in the household. (2.) Because the welfare of the child depends on it; it being of the highest importance that a child should be early taught obedience to *law*, as no one can be prosperous or happy who is not thus obedient. (3.) Because the child is not competent as yet to *reason* on what is right, or qualified to direct himself; and, while that is the case, he must be subject to the *will* of some other person. (4.) Because the parent, by his age and experience, is to be presumed to be qualified to direct and guide a child. The love which God has implanted in the heart of a parent for a child secures, in general, the administration of this domestic government in such a way as not to injure the child. A father will not, unless under strong passion or the excitement of intoxication, abuse his authority. He loves the child too much. He desires his welfare; and the placing of the child under the authority of the parent is about the same thing in regard to the welfare of the child, as it would be to endow the child at once with all the wisdom and experience of the parent himself. (5.) It is important, because the family government is designed to be an imitation of the government of God. The government of God is what a perfect family government would be; and to accustom a child to be obedient to a parent, is designed to be one method of leading him to be obedient to God. No child that is disobedient to a parent will be obedient to God; and that child that is most obedient to a father and mother will be most likely to become a Christian, and an heir of heaven. And it may be observed, in general, that no disobedient child is virtuous, prosperous, or happy. Every one foresees the ruin of such a child; and most of the cases of crime that lead to the penitentiary, or the gallows, commence by disobedience to parents. ¶ *In the Lord.* That is, as far as their commandments agree with those of God, and no farther. No parent can have a right to require a child to steal, or lie, or cheat, or assist him in committing murder, or in doing any other wrong thing. No parent has a right to forbid a child to pray, to read the Bible, to worship God, or to make a profession of religion. The duties

2 Honour [a] thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,)

[a] Ex.20.12.

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

and rights of children in such cases are similar to those of wives (see Notes on chap. v. 22); and in all cases, God is to be obeyed rather than man. When a parent, however, is opposed to a child; when he expresses an unwillingness that a child should attend a particular church, or make a profession of religion, such opposition should in all cases be a sufficient reason for the child to pause and re-examine the subject. He should pray much, and think much, and inquire much, before, in any case, he acts contrary to the will of a father or mother; and, when he *does* do it, he should state to them, with great gentleness and kindness, that he believes he *ought* to love and serve God. ¶ *For this is right.* It is right, (1.) because it is so appointed by God as a duty; (2.) because children owe a debt of gratitude to their parents for what they have done for them; (3.) because it will be for the good of the children themselves, and for the welfare of society.

2. *Honour thy father and mother;* see Ex. xx. 12; comp. Notes on Matt. xv. 4. ¶ *Which is the first commandment with promise.* With a promise annexed to it. The promise was, that their days should be long in the land which the Lord their God would give them. It is not to be supposed that the observance of the four first commandments would not be attended with a blessing, but no particular blessing is promised. It is true, indeed, that there is a *general declaration* annexed to the second commandment, that God would show mercy to thousands of generations of them that loved him and that kept his commandments. But that is rather a declaration in regard to *all* the commands of God than a promise annexed to that specific commandment. It is an assurance that obedience to the law of God would be followed with blessings to a thousand generations, and is given in view of the first and second commandments together, because they related particularly to the honour that was due to God. But the promise in the fifth commandment is a *special* promise. It does not relate to obedience to God in general, but it is a particular assurance that they who honour their parents shall have a particular blessing as the result of that obedience.

3. *That it may be well with thee.* This is found in the fifth commandment as recorded in Deut. v. 16. The whole commandment as there recorded is, "Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The meaning here is, that they would be more happy, useful, and virtuous if they obeyed their parents than if they disobeyed them. ¶ *And thou mayest live long on the earth.* In the commandment as recorded in Ex. xx. 12, the promise is, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This referred to the promised land—the land of Canaan. The meaning doubtless, is, that there would be a special providence, securing to those who were obedient to parents length of days. Long life was regarded as a great blessing; and this blessing was promised. The apostle here gives to the promise a more general form, and says that obedience to parents was connected at all times with long life. We may remark here (1.) that long life *is* a blessing. It affords a longer space to prepare for eternity; it enables a man to be more useful; and it furnishes a longer opportunity to study the works of God on earth. It is not improper to desire it; and we should make use of all the means in our power to lengthen out our days, and to preserve and protract our lives. (2.) It is still true that obedience to

4 And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

parents is conducive to length of life, and that those who are most obedient in early life, other things being equal, have the best prospect of living long. This occurs because (*a*) obedient children are saved from the vices and crimes which shorten life. No parent will command his child to be a drunkard, a gambler, a spendthrift, a pirate, or a murderer. But these vices and crimes, resulting in most cases from disobedience to parents, all shorten life; and they who early commit them are certain of an early grave. No child who disobeys a parent can have any *security* that he will not fall a victim to such vices and crimes. (*b*) Obedience to parents is connected with virtuous habits that are conducive to long life. It will make a child industrious, temperate, sober; it will lead him to restrain and govern his wild passions; it will lead him to form habits of self-government which will in future life save him from the snares of vice and temptation. (*c*) Many a life is lost early by disobeying a parent. A child disobeys a father and goes into a dramshop; or he goes to sea; or he becomes the companion of the wicked—and he may be wrecked at sea, or his character on land may be wrecked for ever. Of disobedient children there is perhaps not one in a hundred that ever reaches an honoured old age. (*d*) We may still believe that God, in his providence, will watch over those who are obedient to a father and mother. If he regards a falling sparrow (Matt. x. 29), he will not be unmindful of an obedient child; if he numbers the hairs of the head (Matt. x. 30), he will not be regardless of the little boy that honours him by obeying a father and mother.

4. *And ye fathers.* A command addressed particularly to *fathers*, because they are at the head of the family, and its government is especially committed to them. The object of the apostle here is, to show parents that their commands should be such that they can be easily obeyed, or such as are entirely reasonable and proper. If children are required to *obey*, it is but reasonable that the commands of the parent should be such that they can be obeyed, or such that the child shall not be discouraged in his attempt to obey. This statement is in accordance with what he had said (chap. v. 22—25) of the relation of husband and wife. It was the duty of the wife to obey—but it was the corresponding duty of the husband to manifest such a character that it would be pleasant to yield obedience—so to love her, that his known *wish* would be *law* to her. In like manner it is the duty of children to obey a parent; but it is the duty of a parent to exhibit such a character, and to maintain such a government, that it would be proper for the child to obey; to command nothing that is unreasonable or improper, but to train up his children in the ways of virtue and pure religion. ¶ *Provoke not your children to wrath.* That is, by unreasonable commands; by needless severity; by the manifestation of anger. So govern them, and so punish them—if punishment is necessary—that they shall not lose their confidence in you, but shall love you. The apostle here has hit on the very danger to which parents are most exposed in the government of their children. It is that of souring their temper; of making them feel that the parent is under the influence of anger, and that it is right for them to be so too. This is done (1.) when the commands of a parent are unreasonable and severe. The spirit of a child then becomes irritated, and he is "discouraged;" Col. iii. 21. (2.) When a parent is evidently *excited* when he punishes a child. The child then feels (*a*) that if his *father* is angry, it is not wrong for him to be angry; and (*b*) the very fact of anger in a parent kindles anger in his bosom—just as it does when two men are contending. If he submits in the case, it is only because the parent is the *strongest*, not because he is *right*, and the child

cherishes *anger*, while he yields to *power*. There is no principle of parental government more important than that a father should command his own temper when he inflicts punishment. He should punish a child not because he is *angry*, but because it is *right;* not because it has become a matter of *personal contest*, but because God requires that he should do it, and the welfare of the child demands it. The moment when a child sees that a parent punishes him under the influence of anger, that moment the child will be likely to be angry too —and his anger will be as proper as that of the parent. And yet, how often is punishment inflicted in this manner! And how often does the child feel that the parent punished him simply because he was the *strongest*, not because it was *right;* and how often is the mind of a child left with a strong conviction that wrong has been done him by the punishment which he has received, rather than with repentance for the wrong that he has himself done. ¶ *But bring them up.* Place them under such discipline and instruction that they shall become acquainted with the Lord. ¶ *In the nurture.* ἐν παιδείᾳ. The word here used means *training of a child;* hence education, instruction, discipline. Here it means that they are to train up their children in such a manner as the Lord approves; that is, they are to educate them for virtue and religion. ¶ *And admonition.* The word here used—νουθεσία means literally, *a putting in mind*, then warning, admonition, instruction. The sense here is, that they were to put them in mind of the Lord—of his existence, perfections, law, and claims on their hearts and lives. This command is positive, and is in accordance with all the requirements of the Bible on the subject. No one can doubt that the Bible enjoins on parents the duty of endeavouring to train up their children in the ways of religion, and of making it the grand purpose of this life to prepare them for heaven. It has been often objected that children should be left on religious subjects to form their own opinions when they are able to judge for themselves. Infidels and irreligious men always oppose or neglect the duty here enjoined; and the plea commonly is, that to teach religion to children is to make them prejudiced; to destroy their independence of mind; and to prevent their judging as impartially on so important a subject as they ought to. In reply to this, and in defence of the requirements of the Bible on the subject, we may remark, (1.) That to suffer a child to grow up without any instruction in religion, is about the same as to suffer a garden to lie without any culture. Such a garden would soon be overrun with weeds, and briars, and thorns—but not sooner, or more certainly, than the mind of a child would. (2.) Men *do* instruct their children in a great many things, and why should they not in religion? They teach them how to behave in company; the art of farming; the way to make or use tools; how to make money; how to avoid the arts of the cunning seducer. But why should it not be said that all this tends to destroy their independence, and to make them prejudiced? Why not leave their minds open and free, and suffer them to form their own judgments about farming and the mechanic arts when their minds are matured? (3.) Men *do* inculcate their own sentiments in religion. An infidel is not usually *very* anxious to conceal his views from his children. Men teach by example; by incidental remarks; by the *neglect* of that which they regard as of no value. A man who does not pray, is teaching his children not to pray; he who neglects the public worship of God, is teaching his children to neglect it; he who does not read the Bible, is teaching his children not to read it. Such is the constitution of things, that it is impossible for a parent *not* to inculcate his own religious views on his children. Since this is so, all that the Bible requires is, that his instructions should be RIGHT. (4.) To inculcate the truths of religion is *not* to make the mind narrow, prejudiced, and indisposed to perceive the truth. Religion makes the mind candid, conscientious, open

5 Servants, [a] be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.

[a] 1 Pe. 2. 18, &c.

to conviction, ready to follow the truth. Superstition, bigotry, infidelity, and *all* error and falsehood, make the mind narrow and prejudiced. (5.) If a man does not teach his children *truth*, others will teach them *error*. The young sceptic that the child meets in the street; the artful infidel; the hater of God; the unprincipled stranger; *will* teach the child. But is it not better for a parent to teach his child the *truth* than for a stranger to teach him error? (6.) Religion is the most important of all subjects, and *therefore* it is of most importance that children on that subject should be taught TRUTH. Of whom can God so properly require this as of a parent? If it be asked *in what way* a parent is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I answer, 1. By directly inculcating the doctrines and duties of religion—just as he does any thing else that he regards as of value. 2. By placing them in the Sabbath-school, where he may have a guarantee that they will be taught the truth. 3. By *conducting* them—not merely *sending* them—to the sanctuary, that they may be taught in the house of God. 4. By example—all teaching being valueless without that. 5. By prayer for the divine aid in his efforts, and for the salvation of their souls. These duties are plain, simple, easy to be performed, and are such as a man *knows* he ought to perform. If neglected, and the soul of the child be lost, a parent has a most fearful account to render to God.

5. *Servants.* Οἱ δοῦλοι. The word here used denotes one who is bound to render service to another, whether that service be free or voluntary, and may denote, therefore, either a slave, or one who binds himself to render service to another. It is often used in these senses in the New Testament, just as it is elsewhere. It cannot be demonstrated that the word here necessarily means *slaves;* though, if slavery existed among those to whom this epistle was written—as there can be little doubt that it did—it is a word which would apply to those in this condition; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. vii. 21; Gal. iii. 28. On the general subject of slavery, and the Scripture doctrine in regard to it; see Notes on Isa. lviii. 6. Whether the persons here referred to were slaves, or were those who had bound themselves to render a voluntary servitude, the directions here given were equally appropriate. It was not the design of the Christian religion to produce a rude sundering of the ties which bind man to man, but to teach all to perform their duties aright *in* the relations in which Christianity found them, and gradually to modify the customs of society, and to produce ultimately the universal prevalence of that which is right. ¶ *Be obedient to them.* This is the uniform direction in the New Testament; see 1 Pet. ii. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 1—3; Notes 1 Cor. vii. 21. The idea is that they were to show in that relation the excellence of the religion which they professed. If they could be made free, they were to prefer that condition to a state of bondage (1 Cor. vii. 21), but while the relation remained, they were to be kind, gentle, and obedient, as became Christians. In the parallel place in Colossians (iii. 22), it is said that they were to obey their masters "in all things." But evidently this is to be understood with the limitations implied in the case of wives and children (see Notes on chap. v. 24; vi. 1), and a master would have no right to command that which was morally wrong. ¶ *According to the flesh.* This is designed, evidently, to limit the obligation to obedience. The meaning is, that they had control over *the body, the flesh.* They had the power to command the service which the body could render; but they were not lords of the spirit. The soul acknowledged God as its Lord, and to the Lord they were to be subject in a higher sense than to their masters. ¶ *With fear and trembling.* With reverence and with a dread of offending

6 Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good-will doing service, [a] as to the Lord, and not to men;

[a] 1 Co. 10. 31.

them. They have authority and power over you, and you should be afraid to incur their displeasure. Whatever might be true about the propriety of slavery, and whatever might be the duty of the master about setting the slave free, it would be more to the honour of religion for the servant to perform his task with a willing mind than to be contumacious and rebellious. He could do more for the honour of religion by patiently submitting to even what he felt to be wrong, than by being punished for what would be regarded as rebellion. It may be added here, that it was presumed that servants then could *read*. These directions were addressed to *them*, not to their masters. Of what use would be directions like these addressed to American slaves—scarce any of whom can read? ¶ *In singleness of your heart.* With a simple, sincere desire to do what ought to be done. ¶ *As unto Christ.* Feeling that by rendering proper service to your masters, you are in fact serving the Lord, and that you are doing that which will be well-pleasing to him; see Notes on 1 Cor. vii. 22. Fidelity, in whatever situation we may be in life, is acceptable service to the Lord. A Christian may as acceptably serve the Lord Jesus in the condition of a servant, as if he were a minister of the gospel, or a king on a throne. Besides, it will greatly lighten the burdens of such a situation, and make the toils of an humble condition easy, to remember that we are then *serving the Lord.*

6. *Nor with eye-service.* That is, not with service rendered only under the eye of the master, or when his eye is fixed on you. The apostle has here adverted to one of the evils of involuntary servitude as it exists everywhere. It is, that the slave will usually obey only when the eye of the master is upon him. The freeman who agrees to labour for stipulated wages may be trusted when the master is out of sight; but not the slave. Hence the necessity where there are slaves of having "drivers" who shall attend them, and who shall compel them to work. This evil it is impossible to avoid, except where true religion prevails—and the extensive prevalence of true religion would set the slave at liberty. Yet as long as the relation exists, the apostle would enjoin on the servant the duty of performing his work conscientiously, as rendering service to the Lord. This direction, moreover, is one of great importance to all who are employed in the service of others. They are bound to perform their duty with as much fidelity as though the eye of the employer was always upon them, remembering that though the eye of man may be turned away, that of God never is. ¶ *As men-pleasers.* As if it were the main object to please men. The object should be rather to please and honour God. ¶ *But as the servants of Christ;* see Notes on 1 Cor. vii. 22. ¶ *Doing the will of God from the heart.* That is, God requires industry, fidelity, conscientiousness, submission, and obedience in that rank of life. We render acceptable service to God when, from regard to his will, we perform the services which are demanded of us in the situation in life where we may be placed, however humble that may be.

7. *As to the Lord, and not to men.* That is, he should regard his lot in life as having been ordered by Divine Providence for some wise and good purpose; and until he may be permitted to enjoy his liberty in a quiet and peaceable manner (Notes, 1 Cor. vii. 21), he should perform his duties with fidelity, and feel that he was rendering acceptable service to God. This would reconcile him to much of the hardships of his lot. The feeling that *God* has ordered the circumstances of our lives, and that he has some wise and good ends to answer by it, makes us contented there; though we may feel that our fellow-

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, [1] forbearing threatening: knowing that [2] your

1 *moderating.* 2 some read, *both your and their.*

man may be doing us injustice. It was this principle that made the martyrs so patient under the wrongs done them by men; and this may make even a slave patient and submissive under the wrongs of a master. But let not a master think, because a pious slave shows this spirit, that, therefore, the slave feels that the master is right in withholding his freedom; nor let him suppose, because religion requires the slave to be submissive and obedient, that, therefore, it approves of what the master does. It does this no more than it sanctioned the conduct of Nero and Mary, because religion required the martyrs to be unresisting, and to allow themselves to be led to the stake. A conscientious slave may find happiness in submitting to God, and doing his will, just as a conscientious martyr may. But this does not sanction the wrong, either of the slave-owner or of the persecutor.

8. *Knowing that whatsoever good thing.* Whatever a man does that is right, for that he shall be appropriately rewarded. No matter what his rank in life, if he discharges his duty to God and man, he will be accepted. A man in a state of servitude may so live as to honour God; and, so living, he should not be greatly solicitous about his condition. A master may fail to render suitable recompense to a slave. But, if the servant is faithful to God, he will recompense him in the future world. It is in this way that religion would make the evils of life tolerable, by teaching those who are oppressed to bear their trials in a patient spirit, and to look forward to the future world of reward. Religion does not approve of slavery. It is the friend of human rights. If it had full influence on earth, it would restore every man to freedom, and impart to each one his rights. Christianity nowhere requires its friends to make or to own a slave. No one under the proper influence of religion ever yet made a man a slave; there is no one under its proper influence who would not desire that all should be free; and just in proportion as true religion spreads over the world, will universal freedom be its attendant. But Christianity would lighten the evils of slavery even while it exists, and would comfort those who are doomed to so hard a lot, by assuring them that there they may render acceptable service to God, and that they soon will be admitted to a world where galling servitude will be known no more. If they may not have freedom here, they may have contentment if they feel that wrong is done them by men, they may feel that right will be done them by God; if their masters do not reward them for their services here, God will; and if they may not enjoy liberty here, they will soon be received into the world of perfect freedom—*heaven.*

9. *And, ye masters.* The object of this is, to secure for servants a proper treatment. It is evident, from this, that there *were* in the Christian church those who were *masters;* and the most obvious interpretation is, that they were the owners of slaves. Some such persons would be converted, as such are now. Paul did not say that they could not be Christians. He did not say that they should be excluded at once from the communion. He did not hold them up to reproach, or use harsh and severe language in regard to them. He taught them their duty towards those who were under them, and laid down principles which, if followed, would lead ultimately to universal freedom. ¶ *Do the same things unto them.* τὰ αὐτὰ. The "same things," here seem to refer to what he had said in the previous verses. They were, to evince towards their servants the same spirit which he had required servants to evince towards them—the same kindness, fidelity, and respect for the will

Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect [a] of persons with him.

[a] Ro. 2. 11.

of God. He had required servants to act conscientiously; to remember that the eye of God was upon them, and that in that condition in life they were to regard themselves as serving God, and as mainly answerable to him. The same things the apostle would have masters feel. They were to be faithful, conscientious, just, true to the interests of their servants, and to remember that they were responsible to God. They were not to take advantage of their power to oppress them, to punish them unreasonably, or to suppose that they were freed from responsibility in regard to the manner in which they treated them. In the corresponding passage in Colossians (iv, 1), this is, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal;" see Note on that place. ¶ *Forbearing threatening.* Marg., *moderating.* The Greek word means, to *relax, loosen;* and then, to *omit, cease from.* This is evidently the meaning here. The sense is, that they were to be kind, affectionate, just. It does not mean that they were to remit punishment where it was deserved; but the object is to guard against that to which they were so much exposed in their condition—a fretful, dissatisfied temper; a disposition to govern by terror rather than by love. Where this unhappy state of society exists, it would be worth the trial of those who sustain the relation of masters, to see whether it would not be *possible* to govern their servants, as the apostle here advises, by the exercise of *love.* Might not kindness, and confidence, and the fear of the Lord, be substituted for threats and stripes?—¶ *Knowing that your Master also is in heaven.* Marg., "Some read, *both your and their.*" Many MSS. have this reading; see Mill. The sense is not materially affected, further than, according to the margin, the effect would be to make the master and the servant feel that, in a most important sense, they were on an equality. According to the common reading, the sense is, that masters should remember that they were responsible to God, and this fact should be allowed to influence them in a proper manner. This it would do in two ways. (1.) By the fact that injustice towards their servants would then be punished as it deserved—since there was no respect of persons with God. (2.) It would lead them to act towards their servants as they would desire God to treat them. Nothing would be better adapted to do this than the feeling that they had a common Master, and that they were soon to stand at his bar. ¶ *Neither is there respect of persons with him;* see this expression explained in the Notes on Rom. ii. 11. The meaning here is, that God would not be influenced in the distribution of rewards and punishments, by a regard to the rank or condition of the master or the slave. He would show no favour to the one because he was a master; he would withhold none from the other because he was a slave. He would treat both according to their character. In this world they occupied different ranks and conditions; at his bar they would be called to answer before the same Judge. It follows from this, (1.) that a slave is not to be regarded as a "chattel," or a "thing," or as "property." He is a man; a redeemed man; an immortal man. He is one for whom Christ died. But Christ did not die for "chattels" and "things." (2.) The master and the servant in their great interests are on a level. Both are sinners; both will soon die; both will moulder back in the same manner to dust; both will stand at the tribunal of God; both will give up their account. The one will not be admitted to heaven because he is a master; nor will the other be thrust down to hell because he is a slave. If both are Christians, they will be admitted to a heaven where the distinctions of rank and colour are unknown. If the master is not a Christian and the servant is, he who has regarded himself as superior to

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour [a] of God, that ye may be able to

[a] Ro.13.12; 2 Co.6.7.

the servant in this life, will see *him* ascend to heaven while he himself will be thrust down to hell. (3.) Considerations like these will, if they have their proper influence, produce two effects. (*a*) They will lighten the yoke of slavery while it continues, and while it may be difficult to remove it at once. If the master and the slave were both Christians, even if the relation continued, it would be rather a relation of mutual confidence. The master would become the protector, the teacher, the guide, the friend; the servant would become the faithful helper—rendering service to one whom he loved, and to whom he felt himself bound by the obligations of gratitude and affection. (*b*) But this state of feeling would soon lead to emancipation. There is something shocking to the feelings of all, and monstrous to a Christian, in the idea of holding *a Christian brother* in bondage. So long as the slave is regarded as a "chattel" or a mere piece of "property," like a horse, so long men endeavour to content themselves with the feeling that he may be held in bondage. But the moment it is felt that he is *a Christian brother*—a redeemed fellow-traveller to eternity, a joint heir of life—that moment a Christian should feel that there is something that violates all the principles of his religion in holding him AS A SLAVE; in making a "chattel" of that for which Christ died, and in buying and selling like a horse, an ox, or an ass, a child of God, and an heir of life. Accordingly, the prevalence of Christianity soon did away the evil of slavery in the Roman empire; and if it prevailed in its purity, it would soon banish it from the face of the earth.

10. *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.* Paul had now stated to the Ephesians the duties which they were to perform. He had considered the various relations of life which they sustained, and the obligations resulting from them. He was not unaware that in the discharge of their duties they would need strength from above. He knew that they had great and mighty foes, and that to meet them, they needed to be clothed in the panoply of the Christian soldier. He closes, therefore, by exhorting them to put on all the strength which they could to meet the enemies with which they had to contend; and in the commencement of his exhortation he reminds them that it was only by the strength of the Lord that they could hope for victory. To be "strong in the Lord," is, (1.) to be strong or courageous in his cause; (2.) to feel that *he* is our strength, and to rely on him and his promises.

11. *Put on the whole armour of God.* The whole description here is derived from the weapons of an ancient soldier. The various parts of those weapons—constituting the "whole panoply"—are specified in ver. 14—17. The word rendered "whole armour" (*πανοπλίαν, panoply*), means *complete armour*, offensive and defensive; see Luke xi. 22; Notes, Rom. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 7. "The armour of *God*" is not that which God wears, but that which he has provided for the Christian soldier. The meaning here is, (1.) that we are not to provide in our warfare such weapons as men employ in their contests, but such as God provides; that we are to renounce the weapons which are carnal, and put on such as God has directed for the achievement of the victory. (2.) We are to put on the "*whole* armour." We are not to go armed partly with what God has appointed, and partly with such weapons as men use; nor are we to put on *a part* of the armour only, but the *whole* of it. A man needs *all* that armour if he is about to fight the battles of the Lord; and if he lacks *one* of the weapons which God has appointed, defeat may be the consequence. ¶ *That ye may be able to stand.* The foes are so numerous and mighty, that unless clothed with the divine armour, victory will be im-

stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against [a] flesh and blood, but against principalities, [b] against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against [c] spiritual wickedness in [d] high places.

a *blood and flesh.* b Rom.8.38.

c or, *wicked spirits.* d or, *heavenly,* as chap.1.3.

possible. ¶ *Against the wiles of the devil.* The word rendered "*wiles*" (μεθοδείας), means properly that which is traced out with *method;* that which is *methodized;* and then that which is well laid—art, skill, cunning. It occurs in the New Testament only in Eph. iv. 14, and in this place. It is appropriately here rendered *wiles,* meaning cunning devices, arts, attempts to delude and destroy us. The wiles *of the devil* are the various arts and stratagems which he employs to drag souls down to perdition. We can more easily encounter open force than we can cunning; and we need the weapons of Christian armour to meet the attempts to draw us into a snare, as much as to meet open force. The idea here is, that Satan does not carry on an open warfare. He does not meet the Christian soldier face to face. He advances covertly; makes his approaches in darkness; employs cunning rather than power, and seeks rather to delude and betray than to vanquish by mere force. Hence the necessity of being *constantly* armed to meet him whenever the attack is made. A man who has to contend with a visible enemy, may feel safe if he only prepares to meet him in the open field. But far different is the case if the enemy is invisible; if he steals upon us slyly and stealthily; if he practises war only by ambushes and by surprises. Such is the foe that *we* have to contend with—and almost all the Christian struggle is a warfare against stratagems and wiles. Satan does not openly appear. He approaches us not in repulsive forms, but comes to recommend some plausible doctrine, to lay before us some temptation that shall not immediately repel us. He presents the world in an alluring aspect; invites us to pleasures that seem to be harmless, and leads us in indulgence until we have gone so far that we cannot retreat.

12. *For we wrestle.* Gr., "The wrestling to us;" or, "There is not to us a wrestling with flesh and blood." There is undoubtedly here an allusion to the ancient games of Greece, a part of the exercises in which consisted in wrestling; see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 25—27. The Greek word here used—πάλη—denotes a *wrestling;* and then a struggle, fight, combat. Here it refers to the struggle or combat which the Christian has to maintain—the Christian warfare. ¶ *Not with flesh and blood.* Not with men; see Notes on Gal. i. 16. The apostle does not mean to say that Christians had no enemies among men that opposed them, for they were exposed often to fiery persecution; nor that they had nothing to contend with in the carnal and corrupt propensities of their nature, which was true of them then as it is now; but that their main controversy was with the invisible spirits of wickedness that sought to destroy them. They were the source and origin of all their spiritual conflicts, and with them the warfare was to be maintained. ¶ *But against principalities.* There can be no doubt whatever that the apostle alludes here to evil spirits. Like good angels, they were regarded as divided into ranks and orders, and were supposed to be under the control of one mighty leader; see Notes on chap. i. 21. It is probable that the allusion here is to the ranks and orders which they sustained before their fall, something like which they may still retain. The word *principalities* refers to principal rulers, or chieftains. ¶ *Powers.* Those who had power, or to whom the name of *powers* was given. Milton represents Satan as addressing the fallen angels in similar language:

"Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers."

¶ *Against the rulers of the darkness of this world.* The rulers that preside over the regions of ignorance and sin with which the earth abounds,

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may

comp. Notes on chap. ii. 2. *Darkness* is an emblem of ignorance, misery, and sin; and no description could be more accurate than that of representing these malignant spirits as ruling over a dark world. The earth—dark, and wretched and ignorant, and sinful—is just such a dominion as they would choose, or as they would cause; and the degradation and woe of the heathen world are just such as foul and malignant spirits would delight in. It is a wide and a powerful empire. It has been consolidated by ages. It is sustained by all the authority of law; by all the omnipotence of the perverted religious principle; by all the reverence for antiquity; by all the power of selfish, corrupt, and base passions. No empire has been so extended, or has continued so long, as that empire of darkness; and nothing on earth is so difficult to destroy. Yet the apostle says that it was on *that* kingdom they were to make war. Against that, the kingdom of the Redeemer was to be set up; and that was to be overcome by the spiritual weapons which he specifies. When he speaks of the Christian warfare here, he refers to the contest with the powers of this dark kingdom. He regards each and every Christian as a soldier to wage war on it in whatever way he could, and wherever he could attack it. The contest therefore was not primarily with *men*, or with the internal corrupt propensities of the soul; it was with this vast and dark kingdom that had been set up over mankind. I do not regard this passage, therefore, as having a primary reference to the struggle which a Christian maintains with his own corrupt propensities. It is a warfare on a large scale with the entire kingdom of darkness over the world. Yet in *maintaining* the warfare, the struggle will be with such portions of that kingdom as we come in contact with, and will actually relate (1.) to our own sinful propensities—which are a part of the kingdom of darkness; (2.) with the evil passions of others—their pride, ambition, and spirit of revenge—which are also a part of that kingdom; (3.) with the evil customs, laws, opinions, employments, pleasures of the world—which are also a part of that dark kingdom; (4.) with error, superstition, false doctrine—which are also a part of that kingdom; and (5.) with the wickedness of the heathen world—the sins of benighted nations—also a part of that kingdom. Wherever we come in contact with evil—whether in our own hearts or elsewhere—there we are to make war. ¶ *Against spiritu al wickedness;* Marg., "or *wicked spirits.*" Literally, "The spiritual things of wickedness;" but the allusion is undoubtedly to evil spirits, and to their influences on earth. ¶ *In high places.* ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις — "in celestial or heavenly places." The same phrase occurs in chap. i. 3; ii. 6, where it is translated, "in heavenly places." The word (ἐπουράνιος) is used of those that dwell in heaven, Matt. xviii. 35; Phil. ii. 10; of those who come from heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 48; Phil. iii. 21; of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, 1 Cor. xv. 40. Then the neuter plural of the word is used to denote the heavens; and then the *lower* heavens, the sky, the air, represented as the seat of evil spirits; Notes, chap. ii. 2. This is the allusion here. The evil spirits are supposed to occupy the lofty regions of the air, and thence to exert a baleful influence on the affairs of man. What was the origin of this opinion it is not needful here to inquire. No one can *prove*, however, that it is incorrect. It is against such spirits, and all their malignant influences, that Christians are called to contend. In whatever way their power is put forth—whether in the prevalence of vice and error; of superstition and magic arts; of infidelity, atheism, or antinomianism; of evil customs and laws; of pernicious fashions and opinions, or in the corruptions of our own hearts, we are to make war on all these forms of evil, and never to yield in the conflict.

13. *In the evil day.* The day of

be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, [a] to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt [b] about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

[a] or, *overcome.*

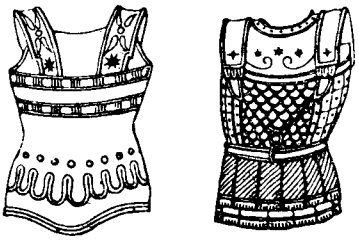
[b] Is. 11. 5.

temptation; the day when you are violently assaulted. ¶ *And having done all, to stand.* Marg. "or *overcome.*" The Greek word means, to work out, effect, or produce; and then to work up, to make an end of, to vanquish. *Robinson,* Lex. The idea seems to be, that they were to overcome or vanquish all their foes, and *thus* to stand firm. The whole language here is taken from war; and the idea is, that every foe was to be subdued—no matter how numerous or formidable they might be. Safety and triumph could be looked for only when every enemy was slain.

14. *Stand therefore.* Resist every attack—as a soldier does in battle. In what way they were to do this, and how they were to be armed, the apostle proceeds to specify; and in doing it, gives a description of the ancient armour of a soldier. ¶ *Having your loins girt about.* The *girdle,* or *sash,* was always with the ancients an important part of their dress, in war as well as in peace. They wore loose, flowing robes; and it became necessary to gird them up when they travelled, or ran, or laboured. The girdle was often highly ornamented, and was the place where they carried their money, their sword, their pipe, their writing instruments, &c.; see Notes on Matt. v. 38–41. The "girdle" seems sometimes to have been a cincture of iron or steel, and designed to keep every part of the armour in its place, and to gird the soldier on every side. The following figures will give an idea of part of the armour of an ancient soldier.

¶ *With truth.* It may not be easy to determine with entire accuracy the resemblance between the parts of the armour specified in this description, and the things with which they are compared, or to determine precisely why he compared *truth* to a girdle, and *righteousness* to a breast-plate,

rather than why he should have chosen a different order, and compared righteousness to a girdle, &c. Perhaps in themselves there may have been no special reason for this arrangement, but the object may have been merely to specify the different parts of the armour of a soldier, and to compare them with the weapons which Christians were to use, though the comparison should be made somewhat at random. In some of the cases, however, we can see a particular significancy in the comparisons which are made; and it may not be improper to make suggestions of that kind as we go along. The idea here may be, that as the girdle was the bracer up, or support of the body, so truth is fitted to brace us up, and to gird us for constancy and firmness. The girdle kept all the parts of the armour in their proper place, and preserved firmness and consistency in the dress; and so truth might serve to give consistency and firmness to our conduct. "Great," says Grotius, "is the laxity of falsehood; truth binds the man." Truth preserves a man from those lax views of morals, of duty and of religion, which leave him exposed to every assault. It makes the soul sincere, firm, constant, and always on its guard. A man who has no consistent views of truth, is just the man for the adversary successfully to assail. ¶ *And having on the breast-plate.* The word here rendered "breast-plate" (θώρᾱξ) denoted the *cuirass*, Lat., *lorica*, or coat of mail; *i. e.*, the armour that covered the body from the neck to the thighs, and consisted of two parts, one covering the front and the other the back. It was made of rings, or in the form of scales, or of plates, so fastened together that they would be flexible, and yet guard the body from a sword, spear, or arrow. It is referred to in the Scriptures as a *coat of mail* (1 Sam. xvii. 5); an *habergeon* (Neh. iv. 16), or as a *breast-plate*. We are told that Goliath's coat of mail weighed five thousand shekels of brass, or nearly one hundred and sixty pounds. It was often formed of plates of brass, laid one upon another, like the scales of a fish. The following cuts will give an idea of this ancient piece of armour.



Coats of Mail.

¶ *Of righteousness.* Integrity, holiness, purity of life, sincerity of piety. The breast-plate defended the vital parts of the body; and the idea here may be that the integrity of life, and righteousness of character, is as necessary to defend us from the assaults of Satan, as the coat of mail was to preserve the heart from the arrows of an enemy. It was the incorruptible integrity of Job, and, in a higher sense, of the Redeemer himself, that saved them from the temptations of the devil. And it is as true now that no one can successfully meet the power of temptation unless he is righteous, as that a soldier could not defend himself against a foe without such a coat of mail. A want of integrity will leave a man exposed to the assaults of the enemy, just as a man would be whose coat of mail was defective, or some part of which was wanting. The king of Israel was smitten by an arrow sent from a bow, drawn at a venture, "between the joints of his harness" or the "breast-plate" (margin), 1 Kings xxii. 34; and many a man who thinks he has on the *Christian* armour is smitten in the same manner. There is some defect of character; some want of incorruptible integrity; some point that is unguarded—and *that* will be sure to be the point of attack by the foe. So David was tempted to commit the enormous crimes that stain his memory, and Peter to deny his Lord. So Judas was assailed, for the want of the armour of righteousness, through his avarice; and so, by some want of incorruptible integrity

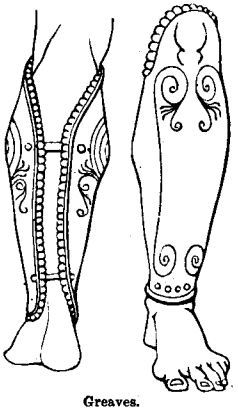
15 And your feet [a] shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

[a] Ca. 7. 1.

in a single point, many a minister of the gospel has been assailed and has fallen. It may be added here, that we need a righteousness which God alone can give; the righteousness of God our Saviour, to make us perfectly invulnerable to all the arrows of the foe.

15. *And your feet shod.* There is undoubtedly an allusion here to what was worn by the ancient soldier to guard his feet. The Greek is, literally, "having underbound the feet;" that is, having bound on the shoes, or sandals, or whatever was worn by the ancient soldier. The protection of the feet and ancles consisted of two parts. (1.) The sandals, or shoes, which were probably made so as to cover the foot, and which often were fitted with nails, or armed with spikes, to make the hold firm in the ground; or (2.) with *greaves* that were fitted to the legs, and designed to defend them from any danger. These *greaves*, or boots (1 Sam. xvii. 6), were made of brass, and were in almost universal use among the Greeks and Romans. ¶ *With the preparation.* Prepared with the gospel of peace. The sense is, that the Christian soldier is to be prepared with the gospel of peace to meet attacks similar to those against which the ancient soldier designed to guard himself by the sandals or greaves which he wore. The word rendered *preparation*—(ἑτοιμασία)—means properly readiness, fitness for, alacrity; and the idea, according to Robinson (*Lex.*), is, that they were to be ever ready to go forth to preach the gospel. Taylor (Fragments to Calmet's Dic., No. 219) supposes that it means, "Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel; not iron, not steel—but patient investigation, calm inquiry, assiduous, laborious, lasting; or with *firm footing* in the gospel of peace." Locke supposes it to mean, "with a readiness to walk in the gospel of peace." Doddridge supposes that the allusion is to *greaves*, and the spirit recommended is that peaceful and benevolent temper recommended in the gospel, and which, like the boots worn by soldiers, would bear them safe through many obstructions and trials that might be opposed to them, as a soldier might encounter sharp-pointed thorns that would oppose his progress. It is difficult to determine the exact meaning; and perhaps all expositors have erred in endeavouring to explain the reference of these parts of armour by some particular thing in the gospel. The apostle figured to himself a soldier, clad in the usual manner. Christians were to resemble him. One part of his dress or preparation consisted in the covering and defence of the foot. It was to preserve the foot from danger, and to secure the facility of his march, and perhaps to make him firm in battle. Christians were to have the principles of the gospel of peace—the peaceful and pure gospel—to facilitate them; to aid them in their marches; to make them firm in the day of conflict with their foes. They were not to be furnished with carnal weapons, but with the peaceful gospel of the Redeemer; and, sustained by this, they were to go on in their march through the world. The principles of the gospel were to do for

Sandal.



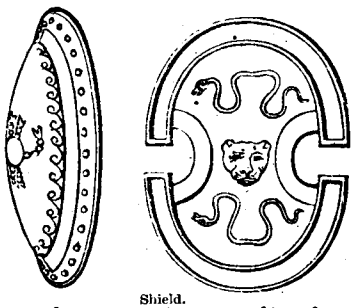
Greaves.

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, [a] wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

[a] 1 John 5.4.

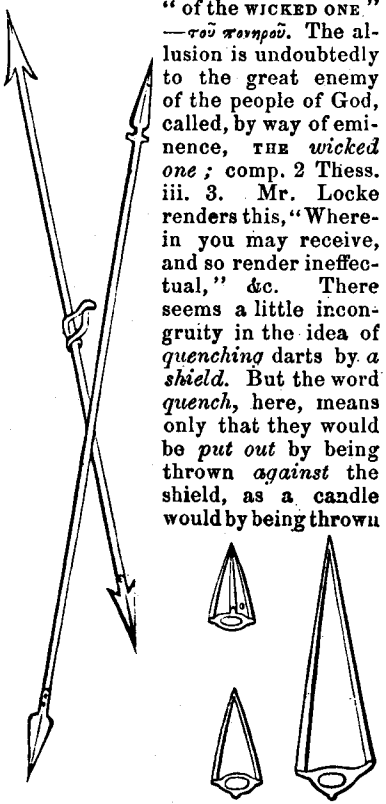
them what the greaves and iron-spiked sandals did for the soldier—to make them ready for the march, to make them firm in their foot-tread, and to be a part of their defence against their foes.

16. *Above all.* Ἐπὶ πᾶσιν. Not *above all* in point of importance or value, but *over* all, as a soldier holds his shield to defend himself. It constitutes a protection over every part of his body, as it can be turned in every direction. The idea is, that as the shield covered or protected the other parts of the armour, so faith had a similar importance in the Christian virtues. ¶ *The shield;* Note, Isa. xxi. 9. The shield was usually made of light wood, or a rim of brass, and covered with several folds or thicknesses of stout hide, which was preserved by frequent anointing. It was held by the left arm, and was secured by straps, through which the arm passed, as may be seen in the annexed figures. The outer surface of the shield



Shield.

was made more or less rounding from the centre to the edge, and was polished smooth, or anointed with oil, so that arrows or darts would glance off, or rebound. ¶ *Of faith.* On the nature of faith, see Notes on Mark xvi. 16. Faith here is made to occupy a more important place than either of the other Christian graces. It bears, to the whole Christian character, the same relation which the shield does to the other parts of the armour of a soldier. It protects all, and is indispensable to the security of all, as is the case with the shield. The shield was an ingenious device by which blows and arrows might be parried off, and the whole body defended. It could be made to protect the head, or the heart, or thrown behind to meet an attack there. As long as the soldier had his shield, he felt secure; and as long as a Christian has faith, he is safe. It comes to his aid in every attack that is made on him, no matter from what quarter; it is the defence and guardian of every other Christian grace; and it secures the protection which the Christian needs in the whole of the spiritual war. ¶ *Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* Or, rather, "of the WICKED ONE" —τοῦ πονηροῦ. The allusion is undoubtedly to the great enemy of the people of God, called, by way of eminence, THE *wicked one;* comp. 2 Thess. iii. 3. Mr. Locke renders this, "Wherein you may receive, and so render ineffectual," &c. There seems a little incongruity in the idea of *quenching* darts by *a shield.* But the word *quench,* here, means only that they would be *put out* by being thrown *against* the shield, as a candle would by being thrown



Fiery Darts.

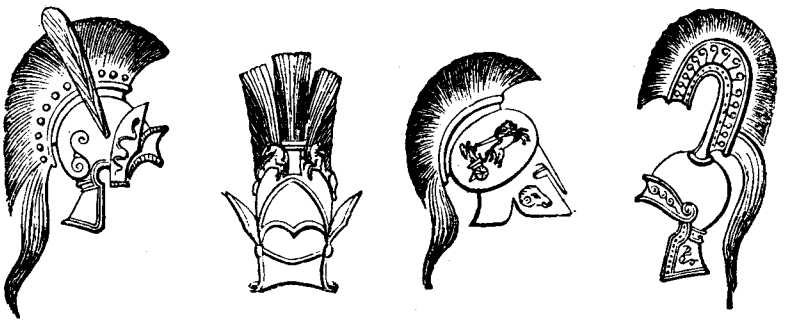
against anything. The *fiery darts*

17 And take the helmet [a] of salvation, and the sword [b] of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

[a] Is. 59. 17. [b] Heb. 4. 12.

that were used in war were small, slender pieces of cane, which were filled with combustible materials, and set on fire; or darts around which some combustible material was wound, and which were set on fire, and then shot *slowly* against a foe. The object was to make the arrow fasten in the body, and increase the danger by the burning; or, more frequently, those darts were thrown against ships, forts, tents, &c., with an intention to set them on fire. They were in common use among the ancients. Arrian (Exped. Alexan. 11) mentions the πυρφορα βελη, the fire-bearing weapons; Thucydides (ii. c. 75), the πυρφοροι ὀϊστοι, the fire-bearing arrows; and Livy refers to similar weapons as in common use in war; lib. xxi. c. 8. By the "fiery darts of the wicked," Paul here refers, probably, to the temptations of the great adversary, which are like fiery darts; or those furious suggestions of evil, and excitements to sin, which he may throw into the mind like fiery darts. They are—blasphemous thoughts, unbelief, sudden temptation to do wrong, or thoughts that wound and torment the soul. In regard to them, we may observe, (1.) that they come suddenly, like arrows sped from a bow; (2.) they come from unexpected quarters, like arrows shot suddenly from an enemy in ambush; (3.) they pierce, and penetrate, and torment the soul, as arrows would that are on fire; (4.) they set the soul on fire, and enkindle the worst passions, as fiery darts do a ship or camp against which they are sent. The only way to meet them is by the "shield of faith;" by confidence in God, and by relying on his gracious promises and aid. It is not by our own strength; and, if we have not faith in God, we are wholly defenceless. We should have a shield that we can turn in any direction, on which we may receive the arrow, and by which it may be put out.

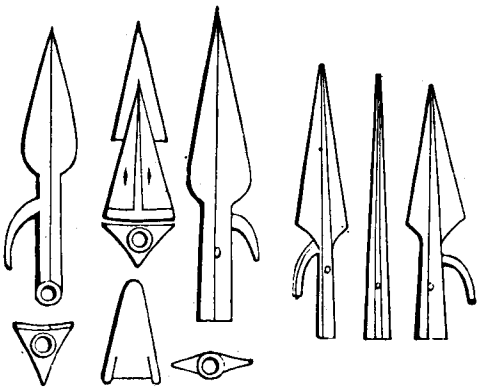
17. *And take the helmet.* The helmet was a cap made of thick leather, or brass, fitted to the head, and was usually crowned with a plume, or crest, as an ornament. Its use was to guard the head from a blow by a sword, or war-club, or battle-axe. The cuts will show its usual form. It may be seen, also, in the figure of



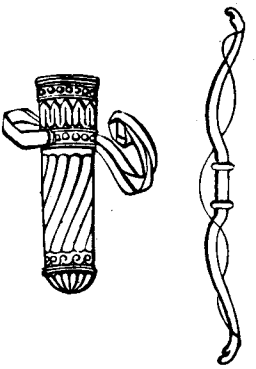
Helmets.

the "Grecian warriors," on p. 127. ¶ *Of salvation.* That is, *of the hope of salvation;* for so it is expressed in the parallel place in 1 Thess. v. 8. The idea is, that a well-founded hope of salvation will preserve us in the day of spiritual conflict, and will guard us from the blows which an enemy would strike. The helmet defended the head, a vital part; and so the hope of salvation will defend the soul, and keep it from the blows of the enemy. A soldier would not fight well without a hope of victory.

A Christian could not contend with his foes, without the hope of final salvation; but, sustained by this, what has he to dread? ¶ *And the sword.* The sword was an essential part of the armour of an ancient soldier. His other weapons were the bow, the spear, or the battle-axe.

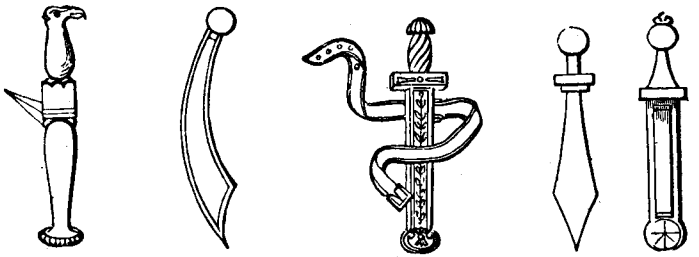


Spears.



Bow.

But, without a sword, no soldier would have regarded himself as well armed. The ancient sword was short, and usually two-edged, and resembled very much a dagger, as may be seen in the annexed engraving, representing Roman swords. ¶ *Of the Spirit.* Which the Holy Spirit furnishes; the truth which he has revealed. ¶ *Which is the word of God.* What God has spoken—his truth and promises; see Notes on Heb. iv. 12. It was with this weapon that the Saviour met the tempter in the wilderness; Matt. iv. It is only by this that Satan can now be met. Error and falsehood will not put back temptation; nor can we hope for victory, unless we are armed with truth. Learn, hence, (1.) That we should study the Bible, that we may understand what the truth is. (2.) We should have texts of Scripture at command, as the Saviour did, to meet the various forms of temptation.



Swords.

(3.) We should not depend on our own reason, or rely on our own wisdom. A single text of Scripture is better to meet a temptation, than all the philosophy which the world contains. The tempter can reason, and reason plausibly too. But he cannot resist a direct and positive command of the Almighty. Had Eve adhered simply to the word of God, and urged his command, without attempting to *reason* about it, she would have been safe. The Saviour (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10), met the tempter with the word of God, and he was foiled. So *we* shall be safe if we adhere to the simple declarations of the Bible, and oppose a temptation

18 Praying always [a] with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching [b] thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

[a] Lu.18.1 [b] Mat.26.41.

by a positive command of God. But, the moment we leave that, and begin to parley with sin, that moment we are gone. It is as if a man should throw away his sword, and use his naked hands only in meeting an adversary. Hence, (4.) we may see the importance of training up the young in the accurate study of the Bible. There is nothing which will furnish a better security to them in future life, when temptation comes upon them, than to have a pertinent text of Scripture at command. Temptation often assails us so suddenly that it checks all *reasoning;* but a text of Scripture will suffice to drive the tempter from us.

18. *Praying always.* It would be well for the soldier who goes forth to battle to pray—to pray for victory; or to pray that he may be prepared for death, should he fall. But soldiers do not often feel the necessity of this. To the Christian soldier, however, it is indispensable. Prayer crowns all lawful efforts with success, and gives a victory when nothing else would. No matter how complete the armour; no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph. This prayer is not to be intermitted. It is to be *always.* In every temptation and spiritual conflict we are to pray; see Notes on Luke xviii. 1. ¶ *With all prayer and supplication.* With all kinds of prayer; prayer in the closet, the family, the social meeting, the great assembly; prayer at the usual hours, prayer when we are specially tempted, and when we feel just like praying (see Notes, Matt. vi. 6); prayer in the form of supplication for ourselves, and in the form of intercession for others. This is, after all, the great weapon of our spiritual armour, and by this we may hope to prevail.

"Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian armour bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees
The meanest saint upon his knees."

¶ *In the Spirit.* By the aid of the Holy Spirit; or perhaps it may mean that it is not to be prayer of form merely, but when the spirit and the heart accompany it. The former idea seems, however, to be the correct one. ¶ *And watching thereunto.* Watching for opportunities to pray; watching for the spirit of prayer; watching against all those things which would hinder prayer; see Notes, Matt. xxvi. 38, 41; comp. 1 Pet. iv. 7. ¶ *With all perseverance.* Never becoming discouraged and disheartened; comp. Notes, Luke xviii. 1. ¶ *And supplication for all saints.* For all Christians. We should do this (1.) because they are our brethren—though they may have a different skin, language, or name. (2.) Because, like us, they have hearts prone to evil, and need, with us, the grace of God. (3.) Because nothing tends so much to make us love others and to forget their faults, as to pray for them. (4.) Because the condition of the church is always such that it greatly needs the grace of God. Many Christians have backslidden; many are cold or lukewarm; many are in error; many are conformed to the world; and we should pray that they may become more holy and may devote themselves more to God. (5.) Because each day many a Christian is subjected to some peculiar temptation or trial, and though he may be unknown to us, yet our prayers may benefit him. (6.) Because each day and each night many Christians die. We may reflect each night as we lie down to rest, that while we sleep, some Christians are kept awake by the prospect of death, and are now passing through the dark valley; and each morning we may reflect

19 And for [a] me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

[a] 2Th.3.1. 1 or, *a chain.*

20 For which I am an ambassador in [1] bonds; that [2] therein I may speak boldly, as I ought [b] to speak.

2 or, *thereof.* [b] Is.58.1.

that *to-day* some Christian will die, and we should remember them before God. (7.) Because *we* shall soon die, and it will be a comfort to us if we can remember then that *we* have often prayed for dying saints, and if we may feel that they are praying for us.

19. *And for me.* Paul was then a prisoner at Rome. He specially needed the prayers of Christians, (1.) that he might be sustained in his afflictions; and (2.) that he might be able to manifest the spirit which he ought, and to do good as he had opportunity. Learn hence that we should pray for the prisoner, the captive, the man in chains, the slave. There are in *this* land (the United States) about ten thousand prisoners—husbands, fathers, sons, brothers; or wives, mothers, daughters. True, they are the children of *crime*, but they are also the children of sorrow; and in either case or both they need our prayers. There are in this land not far from three millions of slaves—and they need our prayers. They are children of misfortune and of many wrongs; they are sunk in ignorance and want and wo; they are subjected to trials, and exposed to temptations to the lowest vices. But many of them, we trust, love the Redeemer; and whether they do or do not, they need an interest in the prayers of Christians. ¶ *That utterance may be given unto me.* Paul, though a prisoner, was permitted to preach the gospel; see Notes, Acts xxviii. 30, 31. ¶ *That I may open my mouth boldly.* He was in Rome. He was almost alone. He was surrounded by multitudes of the wicked. He was exposed to death. Yet he desired to speak boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to invite sinners to repentance. A Christian in chains, and surrounded by the wicked, *may* speak boldly, and *may* have hope of success—for Paul was not an unsuccessful preacher even when a captive at Rome; see Notes on Phil. iv. 22. ¶ *The mystery of the gospel.* Notes, chap. i. 9.

20. *For which I am an ambassador in bonds.* In chains (see the margin); or in confinement. There is something peculiarly touching in this. He was *an ambassador*—sent to proclaim peace to a lost world. But he was now in chains. An ambassador is a sacred character. No greater affront can be given to a nation than to put its ambassadors to death, or even to throw them into prison. But Paul says here that the unusual spectacle was witnessed of an ambassador seized, bound, confined, imprisoned; an ambassador who ought to have the privileges conceded to all such men, and to be permitted to go everywhere publishing the terms of mercy and salvation. See the word ambassador explained in the Notes on 2 Cor. v. 20. ¶ *That therein.* Marg. or *thereof.* Gr., ἐν αὐτῷ—*in it*; that is, says Rosenmüller, in the gospel. It means that in speaking the gospel he might be bold. ¶ *I may speak boldly.* Openly, plainly, without fear; see Notes on Acts iv. 13; ix. 27; xiii. 46; xiv. 3; xviii. 26; xix. 8; xxvi. 26. ¶ *As I ought to speak.* Whether in bonds or at large. Paul felt that the gospel ought always to be spoken with plainness, and without the fear of man. It is remarkable that he did not ask them to pray that he might be released. *Why* he did not we do not know; but perhaps the desire of release did not lie so near his heart as the duty of speaking the gospel with boldness. It may be of much more importance that we perform our duty aright when we are afflicted, or are in trouble, than that we should be released.

21. *But that ye may know my affairs.* May understand my condition, my feelings, and in what I am engaged. To them it could not but be a subject of deep interest. ¶ And *how I do.* Gr., "What I do; that is

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, [a] a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom [b] I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.

a Ac.20.4. *b* Co.4.7,8.

23 Peace [c] *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ [1] in sincerity. Amen.

Written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus.

c 1Pe.5.14.
1 or, *with incorruption*.

how I am employed. ¶ *Tychicus.* Tychicus was of the province of Asia, in Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital; see Acts xx. 4. It is not improbable that he was of Ephesus, and that he was well known to the church there. He also carried the letter to the Colossians (Col. iv. 7), and probably the Second Epistle to Timothy; 2 Tim. iv. 12. Paul also proposed to send him to Crete to succeed Titus; Tit. iii. 12. He was high in the confidence of Paul, but it is not known when he was converted, or why he was now at Rome. The Greeks speak of him as one of the seventy disciples, and make him bishop of Colophon, in the province of Asia.

22. *Whom I have sent unto you.* The churches where Paul had preached, would feel a great interest in his welfare. He was a prisoner at Rome, and it was doubtful what the result would be. In this situation, he felt it proper to despatch a special messenger to give information about his condition; to state what was doing in Rome; to ask the prayers of the churches; and to administer consolation to them in their various trials. The same sentiment in regard to the embassy of Tychicus, is expressed in the Epistle to the Colossians; chap. iv. 7, 8. No small part of the consolation which he would impart to them would be found in these invaluable letters which he bore to them from the apostle.

23. *Peace* be *to the brethren.* The epistle is closed with the usual salutations. The expression "*peace to you,*" was the common form of salutation in the East (Notes, Matt. x. 13; Luke xxiv. 36; Rom. xv. 33; comp Gal. vi. 16; 1 Pet. v. 14; 3 John 14), and is still the "*salam*" which is used —the word *salam* meaning *peace.* ¶ *And love with faith.* Love united with faith; not only desiring that they might have faith, but the faith which worked by love. ¶ *From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Father and the Son are regarded as equally the author of peace and love; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

24. *Grace* be, &c. Note, Rom. xvi. 20. ¶ *That love our Lord Jesus Christ;* see Notes on 1 Cor. xvi. 22. ¶ *In sincerity,* Marg., *with incorruption.* With a pure heart; without dissembling; without hypocrisy. There could not be a more appropriate close of the epistle than such a wish; there will be nothing more needful for us when we come to the close of life than the consciousness that we love the Lord Jesus Christ IN SINCERITY. To writer and reader may this be equally the inestimable consolation then! Better, far better then will be the evidence of such sincere love, than all the wealth which toil can gain, all the honours which the world can bestow —than the most splendid mansion, or the widest fame. The subscription to this epistle, like those affixed to the other epistles, is of no authority, but in this instance there is every reason to believe that it is correct. Comp. Notes at the end of the Epistle to the Romans and 1 Corinthians.

THE

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The situation of Philippi.*

PHILIPPI is mentioned in the New Testament only in the following places and connections. In Acts xvi. 11, 12, it is said that Paul and his fellow-travellers "loosed from Troas, came with a straight course to Samothraica and Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi." It was at this time that the "Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul," and that the jailer was converted under such interesting circumstances. In Acts xx. 1—6, it appears that Paul again visited Philippi after he had been to Athens and Corinth, and when on his way to Judea. From Philippi he went to Troas. In 1 Thess. ii. 2, Paul alludes to the shameful treatment which he had received at Philippi, and to the fact, that having been treated in that manner at Philippi, he had passed to Thessalonica, and preached the gospel there.

Philippi received its name from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Before his time, its history is unknown. It is said that it was founded on the site of an old Thasian settlement, and that its former name was Crenides from the circumstance of its being surrounded by numerous rivulets and springs descending from the neighbouring mountains (from κρήνη—*krene*, *a spring*). The city was also called Dathos, or Datos—Δατος; Notes, Acts xvi. 12. The Thasians, who inhabited the island of Thasus, lying off the coast in the Ægean sea, had been attracted to the place by the valuable mines of gold and silver which were found in that region. It was a city of Macedonia, to the north-east of Amphipolis, and nearly east of Thessalonica. It was not far from the borders of Thrace. It was about fifteen or twenty miles from the Ægean sea, in the neighbourhood of Mount Pangæus, and had a small river or stream running near it which emptied into the Ægean sea. Of the *size* of the city when the gospel was preached there by Paul we have no information.

This city was originally within the limits of Thrace. Philip of Macedon having turned his attention to Thrace, the situation of Crenides and Mount Pangæus naturally attracted his notice. Accordingly he invaded this country; expelled the feeble Cotys from his throne, and then proceeded to found a new city, on the site of the old Thasian colony, which he called after his own name, *Philippi*. *Anthon*, Class. Dic. When Macedonia became subject to the Romans, the advantages attending the situation of Philippi induced that people to send a colony there, and it became one of the most flourishing cities of the empire; comp. Acts xvi. 12; Pliny, iv. 10. There is a medal of this city with the following inscription. COL. JUL. AUG. PHIL; from which it

appears that there was a colony sent there by Julius Cæsar. *Michaelis.* The city derived considerable importance from the fact that it was a principal thoroughfare from Asia to Europe, as the great leading road from one continent to the other was in the vicinity. This road is described at length by Appian, De Bell. Civ. L. iv. c. 105, 106.

This city is celebrated in history from the fact that it was here that a great victory—deciding the fate of the Roman empire—was obtained by Octavianus (afterwards Augustus Cæsar) and Antony over the forces of Brutus and Cassius, by which the republican party was completely subdued. In this battle, Cassius, who was hard pressed and defeated by Antony, and who supposed that every thing was lost, slew himself in despair. Brutus deplored his loss with tears of the sincerest sorrow, calling him "the last of the Romans." After an interval of twenty days, Brutus hazarded a second battle. Where he himself fought in person he was successful; but the army everywhere else gave way, and the battle terminated in the entire defeat of the republican party. Brutus escaped with a few friends; passed a night in a cave, and seeing that all was irretrievably lost, ordered Strato, one of his attendants, to kill him. Strato for a long time refused; but seeing Brutus resolute, he turned away his face, and held his sword, and Brutus fell upon it. The city of Philippi is often mentioned by the Byzantine writers in history. Its ruins still retain the name of *Filibah.* Two American missionaries visited these ruins in May, 1834. They saw the remains of what might have been the forum or market-place, where Paul and Silas were beaten (Acts xvi. 19); and also the fragments of a splendid palace. The road by which Paul went from Neapolis to Philippi, they think is the same that is now travelled, as it is cut through the most difficult passes in the mountains. It is still paved throughout.

§ 2. *The establishment of the church in Philippi.*

Philippi was the first place in Europe where the gospel was preached; and this fact invests the place with more interest and importance than it derives from the battle fought there. The gospel was first preached here, in very interesting circumstances, by Paul and Silas. Paul had been called by a remarkable vision (Acts xvi. 9) to go into Macedonia, and the first place where he preached was Philippi—having made his way, as his custom was, directly to the capital. The first person to whom he preached was Lydia, a seller of purple, from Thyatira, in Asia Minor. She was converted, and received Paul and Silas into her house, and entertained them hospitably. In consequence of Paul's casting out an evil spirit from a "damsel possessed of a spirit of divination," by which the hope of gain by those who kept her in their employ was destroyed, the populace was excited, and Paul and Silas were thrown into the inner prison, and their feet were made fast in the stocks. Here, at midnight, God interposed in a remarkable manner. An earthquake shook the prison; their bonds were loosened; the doors of the prison were thrown open, and their keeper, who before had treated them with peculiar severity, was converted, and all his family were baptized. It was in such solemn circumstances that the gospel was first introduced into Europe. After the tumult, and the conversion of the jailer, Paul was honourably released, and soon left the city; Acts xvi. 40. He subsequently visited Macedonia before his imprisonment at Rome, and doubtless went to Philippi (Acts xx. 1, 2). It is supposed, that after his first imprisonment at Rome, he was released and again visited the churches which he had founded. In this epistle (chap. i. 25, 26; ii. 24) he expresses a confident hope that he would be released, and would be permitted to see them again; and there is a probability that his wishes in regard to this were accomplished; see Intro. to 2 Timothy.

§ 3. *The time when the epistle was written.*

It is evident that this epistle was written from Rome. This appears, (1.) because it was composed when Paul was in "bonds" (chap. i. 13, 14); (2.) because circumstances are suggested, such as to leave no doubt that the imprisonment was at Rome; thus in chap. i. 13, he says that his "bonds were manifested *in all the palace;*" a phrase which would naturally suggest the idea of the Roman capitol; and, in chap. iv. 22, he says, "all the saints salute you, chiefly they that *are of Cæsar's household.*" It is further evident that it was after he had been imprisoned for a considerable time, and, probably, not long before his release. This appears from the following circumstances: (1.) The apostle had been a prisoner so long in Rome, that the character which he had manifested in his trials had contributed considerably to the success of the gospel; chap. i. 12—14. His bonds, he says, were manifest "in all the palace;" and many of the brethren had become increasingly bold by his "bonds," and had taken occasion to preach the gospel without fear. (2.) The account given of Epaphroditus imports that, when Paul wrote this epistle, he had been a considerable time at Rome. He was with Paul in Rome, and had been sick there. The Philippians had received an account of his sickness, and he had again been informed how much they had been affected with the intelligence of his illness; chap. ii. 25, 26. The passing and repassing of this intelligence, Dr. Paley remarks, must have occupied considerable time, and must have all taken place during Paul's residence at Rome. (3.) After a residence at Rome, thus proved to have been of considerable duration, Paul, at the time of writing this epistle, regards the decision of his destiny as at hand. He anticipates that the matter would soon be determined; chap. ii. 23. "Him therefore (Timothy) I hope to send *presently*, so soon as I see how it will go with me." He had *some* expectation that he might be released, and be permitted to visit them again; chap. ii. 24. "I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly;" comp. chap. i. 25, 27. Yet he was not absolutely certain how it would go with him, and though, in one place, he speaks with great confidence that he would be released (chap. i. 25), yet in another he suggests the possibility that he might be put to death; chap. ii. 17. "Yea, and if I be *offered* upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." These circumstances concur to fix the time of writing the epistle to the period at which the imprisonment in Rome was about to terminate. From Acts xxviii. 30, we learn that Paul was in Rome "two whole years;" and it was during the latter part of this period that the epistle was written. It is commonly agreed, therefore, that it was written about A. D. 61 or 62. Hug (Intro.) places it at the end of the year 61, or the beginning of the year 62; Lardner, at the close of the year 62. It is evident that it was written before the great conflagration at Rome in the time of Nero (A. D. 64); for it is hardly credible that Paul would have omitted a reference to such an event, if it had occurred. It is certain, from the persecution of the Christians which followed that event, that he would not have been likely to have represented his condition to be so favourable as he has done in this epistle. He could hardly have looked then for a release.

§ 4. *The design and character of the epistle.*

The object of the epistle is apparent. It was sent by Epaphroditus (chap. ii. 25), who appears to have been a resident at Philippi, and a member of the church there, to express the thanks of the apostle for the favours which they had conferred on him, and to comfort them with the hope that he might be soon set at liberty. Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippians to convey their benefactions to him in the time of his imprisonment; chap. iv. 18. While

at Rome, he had been taken ill; chap. ii. 26. 27. On his recovery, Paul deemed it proper that he should return at once to Philippi. It was natural that he should give them some information about his condition and prospects. A considerable part of the epistle, therefore, is occupied in giving an account of the effects of his imprisonment in promoting the spread of the gospel, and of his own feelings in the circumstances in which he then was. He was not yet certain what the result of his imprisonment would be (chap. i. 20); but he was prepared either to live or to die, chap. i. 23. He wished to live only that he might be useful to others; and, supposing that he might be made useful, he had some expectation that he might be released from his bonds.

There is, perhaps, no one of the epistles of the apostle Paul which is so tender, and which abounds so much with expressions of kindness, as this. In relation to other churches, he was often under the necessity of using the language of reproof. The prevalence of some error, as in the churches of Galatia; the existence of divisions and strifes, or some aggravated case requiring discipline, or some gross irregularity, as in the church at Corinth; frequently demanded the language of severity. But, in the church at Philippi, there was scarcely anything which required rebuke; there was very much that demanded commendation and gratitude. Their conduct towards him, and their general deportment, had been exemplary, generous, noble. They had evinced for him the tenderest regard in his troubles; providing for his wants, sending a special messenger to supply him when no other opportunity occurred (chap. iv. 10), and sympathizing with him in his trials; and they had, in the order, peace, and harmony of the church, eminently adorned the doctrine of the Saviour. The language of the apostle, therefore, throughout the epistle, is of the most affectionate character—such as a benevolent heart would always choose to employ, and such as must have been exceedingly grateful to them. Paul never hesitated to use the language of commendation where it was deserved, as he never shrank from reproof where it was merited; and he appears to have regarded the one as a matter of duty as much as the other. We are to remember, too, the circumstances of Paul, and to ask what kind of an epistle an affectionate and grateful spiritual father would be *likely* to write to a much-beloved flock, when he felt that he was about to die; and we shall find that *this* is just such an epistle as we should suppose such a man would write. It breathes the spirit of a ripe Christian, whose piety was mellowing for the harvest; of one who felt that he was not far from heaven, and might soon "be with Christ." Though there was some expectation of a release, yet his situation was such as led him to look death in the face. He was lying under heavy accusations; he had no hope of justice from his own countrymen; the character of the sovereign, Nero, was not such as to inspire him with great confidence of having justice done; and it is possible that the fires of persecution had already begun to burn. At the mercy of such a man as Nero; a prisoner; among strangers, and with death staring him in the face, it is natural to suppose that there would be a peculiar solemnity, tenderness, pathos, and ardour of affection, breathing through the entire epistle. Such is the fact; and in none of the writings of Paul are these qualities more apparent than in this letter to the Philippians. He expresses his grateful remembrance of all their kindness; he evinces a tender regard for their welfare; and he pours forth the full-flowing language of gratitude, and utters a father's feelings toward them by tender and kind admonitions. It is important to remember these circumstances in the interpretation of this epistle. It breathes the language of a father, rather than the authority of an apostle; the entreaties of a tender friend, rather than the commands of one in authority. It expresses the affections of a man who felt that he might be near death, and who tenderly loved them; and it will be, to all ages, a model of affectionate counsel and advice.

PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

CHAPTER I.

PAUL and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, [a] with the bishops and deacons:

[a] Ac.16.12,&c.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter embraces the following points:—

I. The salutation to the church, ver. 1, 2.

II. In ver. 3—8, the apostle expresses his gratitude for the evidence which they had given of love to God, and for their fidelity in the gospel from the time when it was first proclaimed among them. He says that he was confident that this would continue, and that God, who had so mercifully imparted grace to them to be faithful, would do it to the end.

III. He expresses the earnest hope that they might abound more and more in knowledge, and be without offence to the day of Christ; ver. 9—11.

IV. In ver. 12—21, he states to them what had been the effect of his imprisonment in Rome—presuming that it would be grateful intelligence to them that even his imprisonment had been overruled for the spread of the gospel. His trials, he says, had been the means of the extension of the knowledge of Christ even in the palace, and many Christians had been emboldened by his sufferings to increased diligence in making known the truth. Some, indeed, he says, preached Christ from unworthy motives, and with a view to increase his affliction, but in the great fact that Christ was preached, he says, he rejoiced. Forgetting himself and any injury which they might design to do to him, he could sincerely rejoice that the gospel was proclaimed—no matter by whom or with what motives. The whole affair he trusted would be made conducive to his salvation. Christ was the great end and aim of his life; and if he were made known everything else was of minor importance.

V. The mention of the fact (ver. 21) that his great aim in living was "Christ," leads him to advert to the probability that he might soon be with him; ver. 22—26. So great was his wish to be with him, that he would hardly know which to choose—whether to die at once, or to live and to make him known to others. Believing, however, that his life might be still useful to them, he had an expectation of considerable confidence that his life would be spared, and that he would be released.

VI. The chapter closes, ver. 27—30, with an earnest exhortation that they would live as became the gospel of Christ. Whatever might befall him—whether he should be permitted to see them, or should hear of them, he entreated that he might know that they were living as became the gospel. They were not to be afraid of their adversaries; and if called to suffer, they were to remember that "it was given" them not only to believe on the Redeemer, but also to suffer in his cause.

1. *Paul and Timotheus.* Paul frequently unites some person with him in his epistles; see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 1. It is clear from this, that Timothy was with Paul at Rome. *Why* he was there is unknown. It is evident that he was not there as a prisoner with Paul, and the probability is, that he was one of the friends who had gone to Rome with a view to show his sympathy with him in his sufferings; comp. Notes on 2 Tim. iv. 9. There was special propriety in

the fact that Timothy was joined with the apostle in writing the epistle, for he was with him when the church was founded, and doubtless felt a deep interest in its welfare; Acts xvi. Timothy had remained in Macedonia after Paul went to Athens, and it is not improbable that he had visited them afterwards. ¶ *The servants of Jesus Christ*; Notes, Rom. i. 1. ¶ *To all the saints in Christ Jesus.* The common appellation given to the church, denoting that it was holy; Notes, Rom. i. 7. ¶ *With the bishops.* σὺν ἐπισκόποις; see Notes, Acts xx. 28. The word here used occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Acts xx. 28, translated *overseers*; and Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 25, in each of which places it is rendered *bishop*. The word properly means *an inspector, overseer,* or *guardian,* and was given to the ministers of the gospel because they exercised this care over the churches, or were appointed to *oversee* their interests. It is a term, therefore, which might be given to any of the officers of the churches, and was originally equivalent to the term *presbyter*. It is evidently used in this sense here. It cannot be used to denote a *diocesan* bishop; or a bishop having the care of the churches in a large district of country, and of a superior rank to other ministers of the gospel, for the word is here used in the plural number, and it is in the highest degree improbable that there were *dioceses* in Philippi. It is clear, moreover, that they were the only officers of the church there except "deacons;" and the persons referred to, therefore, must have been those who were invested simply with the pastoral office. Thus Jerome, one of the early Fathers, says, respecting the word bishop: "A presbyter is the same as a bishop. And until there arose divisions in religion, churches were governed by a common counsel of presbyters. But *afterwards*, it was everywhere decreed, that one person, elected from the presbyters, should be placed over the others." "Philippi," says he, "is a single city of Macedonia; and certainly there could not have been several like these who are now called bishops, at one time in the same city. But as, at that time, they called the same bishops whom they called presbyters also, the apostles spoke indifferently of bishops as of presbyters." Annotations on the Epistle to Titus, as quoted by Dr. Woods on Episcopacy, p. 63. ¶ *And deacons.* On the appointment of deacons, and their duty, see Notes on Acts vi. 1. The word *deacons* does not occur before this place in the common version of the New Testament, though the Greek word here rendered deacon frequently occurs. It is rendered *minister* and *ministers* in Matt. xx. 26; Mark x. 43; Rom. xiii. 4; xv. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6; vi. 4; xi. 15. 23; Gal. ii. 17; Eph. iii. 7; vi. 21; Col. i. 7, 23, 25; iv. 7; 1 Tim. iv. 6; *servant* and *servants*, Matt. xxii. 13; xxiii. 11; Mark ix. 25; John ii. 5, 9; xii. 26; Rom. xv. 1; and *deacon* or *deacons*, Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8. 12. The word properly means servants, and is then applied to the ministers of the gospel as being the servants of Christ, and of the churches. Hence it came especially to denote those who had charge of the alms of the church, and who were the overseers of the sick and the poor. In this sense the word is probably used in the passage before us, as the officers here referred to were distinct in some way from the bishops. The apostle here mentions but two orders of ministers in the church at Philippi, and this account is of great importance in its bearing on the question about the way in which Christian churches were at first organized, and about the officers which existed in them. In regard to this we may remark, (1.) that but two orders of ministers are mentioned. This is undeniable, whatever rank *they* may have held. (2.) There is no intimation whatever that a minister like a prelatical bishop had ever been appointed there, and that the incumbent of the office was absent, or that the office was now vacant. If the *bishop* was absent, as Bloomfield and others suppose, it is remarkable that no allusion is made to him, and that

2 Grace [a] *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

a Ro.1.7.

3 I thank my God upon every [1] remembrance of you.

1 or, *mention.*

Paul should have left the impression that there were in fact but two "orders" there. If there were a prelate there, why did not Paul refer to him with affectionate salutations? Why does he refer to the two other "orders of clergy" without the slightest allusion to the man who was set over them as "superior in ministerial rank and power?" Was Paul jealous of this prelate? But if they had a prelate, and the see was then vacant, why is there no reference to *this* fact? Why no condolence at their loss? Why no prayer that God would send them a man to enter into the vacant diocese? It is a mere assumption to suppose, as the friends of prelacy often do, that they *had* a prelatical bishop, but that he was then absent. But even granting this, it is an inquiry which has never been answered, why Paul did not make some reference to this fact, and ask their prayers for the absent prelate. (3.) The church was organized by the apostle Paul himself, and there can be no doubt that it was organized on the "truly primitive and apostolic plan." (4.) The church at Philippi was in the centre of a large territory; was the capital of Macedonia, and was not likely to be placed in subjection to the diocesan of another region. (5.) It was surrounded by other churches, as we have express mention of the church at Thessalonica, and the preaching of the gospel at Berea; Acts xvii. (6.) There is more than one *bishop* mentioned as connected with the church in Philippi. But these could not have been bishops of the Episcopal or prelatical order. If Episcopalians choose to say that they were *prelates*, then it follows (*a*) that there was a plurality of such persons in the same diocese, the same city, and the same church—which is contrary to the fundamental idea of Episcopacy. It follows also (*b*) that there was entirely wanting in the church at Philippi what the Episcopalians call the "second order" of clergy; that a church was organized by the apostles defective in one of the essential grades, with a body of prelates without presbyters—that is, an order of men of "superior" rank designated to exercise jurisdiction over "priests" who had no existence. If there *were* such presbyters or "priests" there, why did not Paul name them? If their office was one that was contemplated in the church, and was then vacant, how did this happen? And if *this* were so, why is there no allusion to so remarkable a fact? (7.) It follows, therefore, that in this church there were but two orders of officers; and further that it is right and proper to apply the term *bishop* to the ordinary ministers of the churches. As no mention is made of a prelate; as there are but two orders of men mentioned to whom the care of the church was intrusted, it follows that there was one church at least organized by the apostles without any prelate. (8.) The same thing may be observed in regard to the distinction between "teaching" elders and "ruling" elders. No such distinction is referred to here; and however useful such an office as that of ruling elder may be, and certain as it is, that such an office existed in some of the primitive churches, yet here is one church where no such officer is found, and this fact proves that such an officer is not essential to the Christian church.

2. *Grace be unto you*, &c.; see Note, Rom. i. 7.

3. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.* Marg., *mention.* The Greek word means, *recollection, remembrance.* But this recollection may have been suggested either by his own reflections on what he had seen, or by what he had heard of them by others, or by the favours which they conferred on him reminding him of them. The meaning is, that as often as he thought on them,

4 Always in every prayer [a] of mine for you all making request with joy,

[a] Ep. i. 14, &c.; 1 Th. i. 2.

5 For your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now;

from whatever cause, he had occasion of thankfulness. He says that he thanked *his* God, intimating that the conduct of the Philippians was a proof of the favour of God to him; that is, he regarded their piety as one of the tokens of the favour of God to his own soul—for in producing that piety he had been mainly instrumental.

4. *Always.* There is much emphasis in the expressions which are here used. Paul labours to show them that he never forgot them; that he always remembered them in his prayers. ¶ *In every prayer of mine.* This was a proof of particular and special affection, that while there were so many objects demanding his prayers, and so many other churches which he had founded, he never forgot *them.* The person or object that we remember in *every* prayer must be very dear to the heart. ¶ *For you all.* Not for the church in general, but for the individual members. "He industriously repeats the word *all*, that he might show that he loved them all equally well, and that he might the more successfully excite them to the manifestation of the same love and benevolence."—*Wetstein.* ¶ *Making request with joy.* With joy at your consistent walk and benevolent lives—mingling thanksgiving with my prayers in view of your holy walk.

5. *For your fellowship in the gospel.* "For your liberality towards me, a preacher of the gospel."—*Wetstein.* There has been, however, no little difference of opinion about the meaning of this phrase. Many—as Doddridge, Koppe, and others—suppose it refers to the fact that they participated in the blessings of the gospel from the first day that he preached it until the time when he wrote this epistle. Others suppose that it refers to their constancy in the Christian faith. Others—as Pierce, Michaelis, Wetstein, Bloomfield, and Storr—suppose it refers to their liberality in contributing to the support of the gospel; to their *participating* with others, or sharing what they had *in common* with others, for the maintenance of the gospel. That this is the true sense seems apparent, (1.) because it accords with the scope of the epistle, and what the apostle elsewhere says of their benefactions. He speaks particularly of their liberality, and indeed this was one of the principal occasions of his writing the epistle; chap. iv. 10—12, 15—18. (2.) It accords with a frequent meaning of the word rendered *fellowship*—κοινωνία. It denotes that which is *in common;* that of which we participate with others, *communion, fellowship;* Acts ii. 42; 1 Cor. i. 9; x. 16; Philem. 6; then it means *communication, distribution, contribution;* Rom. xv. 26; 2 Cor. ix. 13. That it cannot mean "accession to the gospel" as has been supposed (see Rob. Lex.), is apparent from what he adds—"from the first day until now." The fellowship must have been something constant, and continually manifest—and the general meaning is, that in relation to the gospel—to its support, and privileges, and spirit, they all shared in common. They felt a common interest in every thing that pertained to it, and they showed this in every suitable way, and especially in ministering to the wants of those who were appointed to preach it. ¶ *From the first day.* The time when it was first preached to them. They had been *constant.* This is honourable testimony. It is much to say of a church or of an individual Christian, that they have been constant and uniform in the requirements of the gospel. Alas, of how *few* can this be said! On these verses (3—5) we may remark, (1.) That one of the highest joys which a minister of the gospel can have, is that furnished by the holy walk of the people to whom he has ministered; comp. 3 John 4. It

6 Being confident [a] of this very thing, that he [b] which hath begun

[a] He. 10. 35.

[b] Ps. 138. 8.

is joy like that of a farmer when he sees his fields whiten for a rich harvest; like that of a teacher in the good conduct and rapid progress of his scholars; like that of a parent in the virtue, success, and piety of his sons. Yet it is superior to all that. The interests are higher and more important; the results are more far-reaching and pure; and the joy is more disinterested. Probably there is nowhere else on earth any happiness so pure, elevated, consoling, and rich, as that of a pastor in the piety, peace, benevolence, and growing zeal of his people. (2.) It is right to commend Christians when they do well. Paul never hesitated to do this, and never supposed that it would do injury. Flattery would injure—but Paul never flattered. Commendation or praise, in order to do good, and not to injure, should be (*a*) the simple statement of the truth; (*b*) it should be without exaggeration; (*c*) it should be connected with an equal readiness to rebuke when wrong; to admonish when in error, and to counsel when one goes astray. Constant fault-finding, scolding, or fretfulness, does no good in a family, a school, or a church. The tendency is to dishearten, irritate, and discourage. To commend a child when he does well, may be as important, and as much a duty, as to rebuke him when he does ill. God is as careful to commend his people when they do well, as he is to rebuke them when they do wrong—and that parent, teacher, or pastor, has much mistaken the path of wisdom, who supposes it to be his duty *always to find fault*. In this world there is nothing that goes so far in promoting happiness as a willingness to be pleased rather than displeased; to be satisfied rather than dissatisfied with the conduct of others. (3.) Our absent friends should be remembered in our prayers. On our knees before God is the best place to remember them. We know not their condition. If they are sick, we cannot minister to their wants; if in danger, we cannot run to their relief; if tempted, we cannot counsel them. But God, who is with them, can do all this; and it is an inestimable privilege thus to be *permitted* to commend them to his holy care and keeping. Besides, it is a *duty* to do it. It is one way—and the best way—to repay their kindness. A child may always be repaying the kindness of absent parents by supplicating the divine blessing on them each morning; and a brother may strengthen and continue his love for a sister, and in part repay her tender love, by seeking, when far away, the divine favour to be bestowed on her.

6. *Being confident.* This is strong language. It means to be fully and firmly persuaded or convinced; Part. Mid., voice from πείθω—to persuade; comp. Luke xvi. 31. "Neither will they be *persuaded*, though one rose from the dead;" that is, they would not be *convinced;* Acts xvii. 4; Heb. xi. 13; Acts xxviii. 24. It means here that Paul was *entirely convinced* of the truth of what he said. It is the language of a man who had no doubt on the subject. ¶ *That he which hath begun a good work in you.* The "good work" here referred to, can be no other than religion, or true piety. This is called the work of God; the work of the Lord; or the work of Christ; John vi. 29; comp. 1 Cor. xv. 58; xvi. 10; Phil. ii. 30. Paul affirms here that that work was *begun* by God. It was not by their own agency or will; comp. Notes on John i. 13. It was on the fact that it was begun by *God*, that he based his firm conviction that it would be permanent. Had it been the agency of man, he would have had no such conviction, for nothing that man does to-day can lay the foundation of a *certain* conviction that he will do the same thing to-morrow. If the perseverance of the Christian depended wholly on himself, therefore, there could be no sure evidence that he would ever reach heaven. ¶ *Will perform it.* Marg., "Or, *finish*" The Greek word—ἐπιτελέσει—means that

a good [z] work in you will [1] perform *it* until the day [b] of Jesus Christ:

a John 6.29. 1 or, *finish*. *b* 2 Pe.3.10.

he would carry it forward to *completion;* he would perfect it. It is an *intensive* form of the word, meaning that it would be carried through *to the end.* It occurs in the following places: Luke xiii. 32, "I *do* cures;" Rom. xv. 28, "when *I have performed* this;" 2 Cor. vii. 1, "*perfecting* holiness;" viii. 6, "so he would also *finish* in you;" 11, "*perform* the doing of it;" Gal iii. 3, "are ye now made *perfect* by the flesh;" Heb. viii. 5, "when he was about to *make* the tabernacle;" ix. 6, "*accomplishing* this service;" and 1 Pet. v. 9, "are *accomplished* in your brethren." The word occurs nowhere else; and here means that God would carry on the work which he had begun to *completion.* He would not leave it unfinished. It would not be commenced and then abandoned. This would or could be "performed" or "finished" only (1.) by keeping them from falling from grace, and (2.) by their ultimate entire perfection. ¶ *Until the day of Jesus Christ.* The day when Christ shall so manifest himself as to be the great attractive object, or the day when he shall appear to glorify himself, so that it may be said emphatically to be *his day.* That day is often called "*his* day," or "the day of the Lord," because it will be the day of his triumph and glory. It refers here to the day when the Lord Jesus will appear to receive his people to himself—the day of judgment. We may remark on this verse, that Paul believed in *the perseverance of saints.* It would be impossible to express a stronger conviction of the truth of that doctrine than he has done here. Language could not be clearer, and nothing can be more unequivocal than the declaration of his opinion that where God has begun a good work in the soul, it will not be finally lost. The *ground* of this belief he has not stated in full, but has merely hinted at it. It is based on the fact that *God* had begun

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because [2] I have you in my heart; inasmuch

2 or, *ye have me in your.*

the good work. That ground of belief is something like the following. (1.) It is in God alone. It is not in man in any sense. No reliance is to be placed on man in keeping himself. He is too weak; too changeable; too ready to be led astray; too much disposed to yield to temptation. (2.) The reliance, therefore, is on God; and the evidence that the renewed man will be kept is this: (*a*) God *began* the work of grace in the soul. (*b*) He had a *design* in it. It was deliberate, and intentional. It was not by chance or hap-hazard. It was because he had some object that was *worthy* of his interposition. (*c*) There is no reason why he should *begin* such a work and then abandon it. It cannot be because he has no power to complete it, or because there are more enemies to be overcome than he had supposed; or because there are difficulties which he did not foresee; or because it is not desirable that the work should be completed. Why then should he abandon it? (*d*) God abandons nothing that he undertakes. There are no unfinished worlds or systems; no half-made and forsaken works of his hands. There is no evidence in his works of creation of change of plan, or of having forsaken what he began from disgust, or disappointment, or want of power to complete them. Why should there be in the salvation of the soul? (*e*) He has *promised* to keep the renewed soul to eternal life; see John x. 27, 28, 29; Heb. vi. 17–20; comp. Rom. viii. 29, 30.

7. *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all.* "There is a reason why I should cherish this hope of you, and this confident expectation that you will be saved. That reason is found in the evidence which you have given that you are sincere Christians. Having evidence of that, it is proper that I should believe that you will finally reach heaven." ¶ *Because I have you in my heart.* Marg., *Ye have me in your.* The Greek will

as both in my bonds, and in the defence [a] and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers [1] of my grace.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound [b] yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all [2] judgment;

a ver. 17 — 1 or, *with me of grace.*

b 1 Th. 3. 12; 2 Pe. 3. 18. — 2 or, *sense.*

bear either, though the former translation is the most obvious. The meaning is, that he was warmly attached to them, and had experienced many proofs of their kindness; and that there was, therefore, a propriety in his wishing for their salvation. Their conduct towards him, moreover, in his trials, had convinced him that they were actuated by Christian principle; and it was proper that he should believe that they would be kept to eternal life. ¶ *Both in my bonds.* While I have been a prisoner – referring to the care which they had taken to minister to his wants; chap. iv. 10, 14, 18. ¶ *And in the defence.* Gr., *apology.* Probably he refers to the time when he made his defence before Nero, and vindicated himself from the charges which had been brought against him; see Notes, 2 Tim. iv. 16. Perhaps he means here, that on that occasion he was abandoned by those who should have stood by him, but that the Philippians showed him all the attention which they could. It is not impossible that they may have sent some of their number to sympathize with him in his trials, and to assure him of the unabated confidence of the church. ¶ *And confirmation of the gospel.* In my efforts to defend the gospel, and to make it known; see ver. 17. The allusion is probably to the fact that, in all his efforts to defend the gospel, he had been sure of their sympathy and co-operation. Perhaps he refers to some assistance which he had derived from them in this cause, which is now to us unknown. ¶ *Ye all are partakers of my grace.* Marg., "Or, *with me of grace.*" The meaning is, that as they had participated with him in the defence of the gospel; as in all his troubles and persecutions they had made *common cause* with him, so it followed that they would partake of the same tokens of the divine favour. He expected that the divine blessing would follow *his* efforts in the cause of the gospel, and he says that they would share in the blessing. They had shown all the sympathy which they could in his trials; they had nobly stood by him when others forsook him; and he anticipated, as a matter of course, that they would all share in the benefits which would flow to him in his efforts in the cause of the Redeemer.

8. *For God is my record.* My witness; I can solemnly appeal to him ¶ *How greatly I long after you all.* To see you; and how much I desire your welfare. ¶ *In the bowels of Jesus Christ.* The word "bowels," in the Scriptures denotes the upper viscera —the region of the heart and lungs; see Notes on Isa. xvi. 11. That region was regarded as the seat of affection, sympathy, and compassion, as the *heart* is with us. The allusion here is to the sympathy, tenderness, and love of the Redeemer; and probably the meaning is, that Paul regarded them with something of the affection which the Lord Jesus had for them. This was the tenderest and strongest expression which he could find to denote the ardour of his attachment.

9. *And this I pray.* We pray for those whom we love, and whose welfare we seek. We desire their happiness; and there is no way more appropriate of expressing that desire than of going to God, and seeking it at his hand. Paul proceeds to enumerate the blessings which he sought for them; and it is worthy of observation that he did not ask riches, or worldly prosperity, but that his supplications were confined to spiritual blessings, and he sought these as the most desirable of all favours. ¶ *That your love may abound,* &c. Love to God; love to one another; love to

10 That [a] ye may [1] approve things that are [2] excellent; that ye may be [b] sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

[a] Ro.2.18. 1 or, *try*. 2 or, *differ*.

[b] Ep.5.27.

absent Christians; love to the world. This is an appropriate subject of prayer. We cannot wish and pray for a better thing for our Christian friends, than that they may abound in *love*. Nothing will promote their welfare like this; and we had better pray for this, than that they may obtain abundant riches, and share the honours and pleasures of the world. ¶ *In knowledge.* The idea is, that he wished them to have *intelligent* affection. It should not be mere blind affection, but that intelligent love which is based on an enlarged view of divine things—on a just apprehension of the claims of God. ¶ *And in all judgment.* Marg., *sense;* comp. Notes on Heb. v. 14. The word here means, *the power of discerning;* and the meaning is, that he wished that their love should be exercised with proper *discrimination*. It should be in proportion to the relative value of objects; and the meaning of the whole is, that he wished their religion to be intelligent and discriminating; to be based on knowledge, and a proper sense of the relative value of objects, as well as to be the tender affection of the heart.

10. *That ye may approve things.* Marg., "Or, *try*." The word used here denotes the kind of trial to which metals are exposed in order to test their nature; and the sense here is, that the apostle wished them so to try the things that were of real value, as to discern that which was true and genuine. ¶ *That are excellent.* Marg., "Or, *differ*." The margin here more correctly expresses the sense of the Greek word. The idea is, that he wished them to be able to distinguish between things that differed from each other; to have an intelligent apprehension of what was right and wrong—of what was good and evil. He would not have them love and approve all things indiscriminately They should be esteemed according to their real value. It is remarkable here how anxious the apostle was, not only that they should be *Christians*, but that they should be *intelligent Christians*, and should understand the real worth and value of objects. ¶ *That ye may be sincere;* see Notes on Eph. vi. 24. The word here used —εἰλικρινής—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2 Pet. iii. 1, where it is rendered *pure*. The *noun* εἰλικρίνεια, however, occurs in 1 Cor. v. 8; 2 Cor. i. 12; ii. 17; in all which places it is rendered *sincerity*. The word properly means, that which is *judged of in sun-shine* (εἵλη κρίνω); and then that which is clear and manifest. It is that over which there are no clouds; which is not doubtful and dark; which is pure and bright. The word *sincere* means literally *without wax* (*sine cera*); that is, honey which is pure and transparent. Applied to Christian character, it means that which is not deceitful, ambiguous, hypocritical; that which is not mingled with error, worldliness, and sin; that which does not proceed from selfish and interested motives, and where there is nothing disguised. There is no more desirable appellation that can be given to a man than to say that he is *sincere*—a sincere friend, benefactor, Christian; and there is nothing more lovely in the character of a Christian than *sincerity*. It implies, (1.) that he is truly converted—that he has not *assumed* Christianity as a mask; (2.) that his motives are disinterested and pure; (3.) that his conduct is free from double-dealing, trick, and cunning; (4.) that his words express the real sentiments of his heart; (5.) that he is true to his word, and faithful to his promises; and, (6.) that he is always what he professes to be. A sincere Christian would bear to have the light let in upon him always; to have the emotions of his heart seen; to be scanned everywhere, and at all times, by men, by angels, and by God. ¶ *And without offence.* Inoffensive to others. Not injuring them in property, feelings, or reputation. This is a *nega-*

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory [a] and praise of God.

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds [1] in Christ are manifest in all [2] the palace, and [3] in all other *places;*

a John 15.8.

1 or, *for.*

2 or, *Cæsar's court*, chap. 4. 22.

3 *to all others.*

tive virtue, and is often despised by the world. But it is much to say of a man that he *injures* no one; that neither by example, nor opinions, nor conversation, he leads them astray; that he never does injustice to their motives, and never impedes their influence; that he never wounds their feelings, or gives occasion for hard thoughts; and that he so lives that all may see that his is a blameless life. ¶ *Till the day of Christ;* see Notes on ver. 6.

11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness.* That which righteousness in the heart produces. The fruits, or results, will be seen in the life; and those fruits are—honesty, truth, charity, kindness, meekness, goodness. The wish of the apostle is, that they might show abundantly by their lives that they were truly righteous. He does not refer to *liberality* merely, but to everything which true piety in the heart is fitted to produce in the life. ¶ *Which are by Jesus Christ.* (1.) Which his religion is fitted to produce. (2.) Which result from endeavouring to follow his example. (3.) Which are produced by his agency on the heart. ¶ *Unto the glory and praise of God.* His honour is never more promoted than by the eminent holiness of his friends; see Notes, John xv. 8. If we wish, therefore, to honour God, it should not be merely with the lips, or by acts of prayer and praise; it should be by a life devoted to him. It is easy to render the service of the lips; it is far more difficult to render that service which consists in a life of patient and consistent piety; and in proportion to the *difficulty* of it, is its value in his sight.

12. *But I would ye should understand.* Paul here turns to himself, and goes into a somewhat extended account of his own feelings in his trials, and of the effects of his imprisonment at Rome. He wished them to understand what his circumstances were, and what had been the effect of his imprisonment, probably, for such reasons as these: (1.) They were tenderly attached to him, and would feel an interest in all that pertained to him. (2.) It was possible that they might hear unfounded rumours about the manner of his treatment, and he wished that they should understand the exact truth. (3.) He had real intelligence to communicate to them that would be joyful to them, about the effect of his imprisonment, and his treatment there; and he wished them to rejoice with him. ¶ *That the things* which happened *unto me.* The accusations against him, and his imprisonment at Rome. He had been falsely accused, and had been constrained to appeal to Cæsar, and had been taken to Rome as a prisoner; Acts xxv.—xxviii. This arrest and imprisonment would *seem* to have been against his success as a preacher; but he now says that the contrary had been the fact. ¶ *Have fallen out.* Have resulted in. Literally, "have come." Tindal. "My business is happened." ¶ *The furtherance.* The increase, the promotion of the gospel. Instead of being a hindrance, they have been rather an advantage.

13. *So that my bonds in Christ.* Marg., *for.* The meaning is, his bonds *in the cause* of Christ. He was imprisoned *because* he preached Christ (Notes, Eph. vi. 20), and was really suffering because of his attachment to the Redeemer. It was not for crime, but for being a Christian - for had he not been a Christian, he would have escaped all this. The *manner* of Paul's imprisonment was, that he

was suffered to occupy a house by himself, though chained to a soldier who was his guard; Acts xxviii. 16. He was not in a dungeon indeed, but he was not at liberty, and this was a severe mode of confinement. Who would wish to be *chained* night and day to a living witness of all that he did; to a spy on all his movements? Who would wish to have such a man always with him, to hear all he said, and to see all that he did? Who could well bear the feeling that he could *never* be alone—and never be at liberty to do any thing without the permission of one too who probably had little disposition to be indulgent? ¶ *Are manifest.* That is, it has become known that I am imprisoned only for the sake of Christ.—*Grotius.* The true reason why I am thus accused and imprisoned begins to be understood, and this has awakened sympathy for me as an injured man. They see that it is not for *crime*, but that it is on account of my religious opinions, and the conviction of my innocence has spread abroad, and has produced a favourable impression in regard to Christianity itself. It must have been a matter of much importance for Paul to have this knowledge of the real cause why he was imprisoned go abroad. Such a knowledge would do much to prepare others to listen to what he had to say—for there is no man to whom we listen more readily than to one who is suffering wrongfully. ¶ *In all the palace.* Marg., "Or, *Cæsar's court.*" Gr., ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ—*in all the prætorium.* This word properly denotes *the general's tent in a camp;* then the house or palace of a governor of a province, then any large hall, house, or palace. It occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Matt. xxvii. 27, where it is rendered *common hall;* Mark xv. 16, rendered *Prætorium;* John xviii. 28, 33; xix. 9; Acts xxiii. 35, rendered *judgment hall;* and in Phil. i. 13. It is employed to denote (1.) the palace of Herod at Jerusalem, built with great magnificence at the northern part of the upper city, westward of the temple, and overlooking the temple; (2.) the palace of Herod at Cesarea, which was probably occupied by the Roman procurator; and (3.) in the place before us to denote either the palace of the emperor at Rome, or the pretorian camp, the head quarters of the pretorian guards or cohorts. These cohorts were a body of select troops instituted by Augustus to guard his person, and have charge of the city; see *Rob. Lex.* Bloomfield, Rosenmüller, and some others, understand this of the pretorian camp, and suppose that Paul meant to say that the cause of his imprisonment had become known to all the band of the pretorians. Grotius says that the usual word to denote the residence of the emperor at Rome was *palatium*—*palace*, but that those who resided in the provinces were accustomed to the word *prætorium*, and would use it when speaking of the palace of the emperor. Chrysostom says that the palace of the emperor was called *prætorium*, by a Latin word derived from the Greek; see Erasmus *in loc.* Calvin supposes that the palace of Nero is intended. The question about the meaning of the word is important, as it bears on the inquiry to what extent the gospel was made known at Rome in the time of Paul, and perhaps as to the question why he was released from his imprisonment. If the knowledge of his innocence had reached *the palace*, it was a ground of hope that he might be acquitted; and if that palace is here intended, it is an interesting fact, as showing that in some way the gospel had been introduced into the family of the emperor himself. That the palace or residence of the emperor is intended here, may be considered at least probable from the following considerations. (1.) It is the name which would be likely to be used by the Jews who came up from Judea and other provinces, to denote the chief place of judgment, or the principal residence of the highest magistrate. So it was used in Jerusalem, in Cesarea, and in the provinces generally, to denote the residence of the general in the camp, or the procurator in the cities—the highest representative of

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

the Roman power. (2.) If the remark of Chrysostom, above referred to, be well founded, that this was a common name given to the palace in Rome, then this goes far to determine the question. (3.) In chap. iv. 22, Paul, in the salutation of the saints at Rome to those of Philippi, mentions particularly those of "Cæsar's household." From this it would seem that some of the family of the emperor had been made acquainted with the Christian religion, and had been converted. In what way the knowledge of the true cause of Paul's imprisonment had been circulated in the "palace," is not now known. There was, however, close intimacy between the military officers and the government, and it was probably by means of some of the soldiers or officers who had the special charge of Paul, that this had been communicated. To Paul, in his bonds, it must have been a subject of great rejoicing, that the government became thus apprized of the true character of the opposition which had been excited against him; and it must have done much to reconcile him to the sorrows and privations of imprisonment, that he was thus the means of introducing religion to the very palace of the emperor. ¶ *And in all other places.* Marg., *to all others.* The Greek will bear either construction. But if, as has been supposed, the reference in the word *prætorium* is to the *palace*, then this should be rendered "all other *places*." It then means, that the knowledge of his innocence, and the consequences of that knowledge in its happy influence in spreading religion, were not confined to the palace, but were extended to other places. The subject was *generally* understood, so that it might be said that correct views of the matter pervaded the city, and the fact of his imprisonment was accomplishing extensively the most happy effects on the public mind.

14. *And many of the brethren.* Many Christians. It is evident from this, that there were already "*many*" in Rome who professed Christianity. ¶ *In the Lord.* In the Lord Jesus; that is, united to him and to each other by a professed attachment to him. This is a common phrase to designate Christians. ¶ *Waxing confident by my bonds.* Becoming increasingly bold and zealous in consequence of my being confined. This might have been either (1.) that from the *very fact* that so distinguished a champion of the truth had been imprisoned, they were excited to do all they could in the cause of the gospel. Or (2.) they were aroused by the fact that the cause of his imprisonment had become generally understood, and that there was a strong current of popular favour setting towards Christianity in consequence of it. Or (3.) they had had intercourse with Paul in his own "hired house," and had been incited and encouraged by him to put forth great efforts in the cause. Or (4.) it would seem that some had been emboldened to promulgate their views, and set themselves up as preachers, who would have been restrained if Paul had been at liberty. They were disposed to form parties, and to secure followers, and rejoiced in an opportunity to increase their own popularity, and were not unwilling thus to diminish the popularity and lessen the influence of so great a man as Paul. Had *he* been at liberty, they would have had no prospect of success; see ver. 16. To this may be added a suggestion by Theodoret. "Many of the brethren have increased boldness—θάρσος—on account of my bonds. For seeing me bear such hard things with pleasure, they announce that the gospel [which sustains me] is divine." The same sentiment occurs in Oecumen, and Theophyl.; see *Bloomfield.* In Paul himself they had an illustration of the power of religion, and being convinced of its truth, they went and proclaimed it abroad. ¶ *To speak the word without fear.* That is, they see that

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will.

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds;

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

I remain safely (comp. Acts xviii. 30), and that there is no danger of persecution, and, stimulated by my sufferings and patience, they go and make the gospel known.

15. *Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife.* What was the ground of this "envy and strife" the apostle does not mention. It would seem, however, that even in Rome there was a party which was jealous of the influence of Paul, and which supposed that this was a good opportunity to diminish his influence, and to strengthen their own cause. He was not now at large so as to be able to meet and confute them. They had access to the mass of the people. It was easy, under plausible pretences, to insinuate hints about the ambitious aims, or improper influence of Paul, or to take strong ground against him and in favour of their own views, and they availed themselves of this opportunity. It would seem most probable, though this is not mentioned, that these persons were *Judaizing teachers*, professing Christianity, and who supposed that Paul's views were derogatory to the honour of Moses and the law. ¶ *And some also of good will.* From pure motives, having no party aims to accomplish, and not intending in any way to give me trouble.

16. *The one preach Christ of contention.* So as to form parties, and to produce strifes among his professed followers. ¶ *Not sincerely.* Not *purely*—ἁγνῶς—not with pure motives or intentions. Their *real* aim is not to preach Christ, but to produce difficulty, and to stir up strife. They are ambitious men, and they have no real regard for the welfare of the church and the honour of religion. ¶ *Supposing to add affliction to my bonds.* To make my trial the greater. *How* they did this is unknown. Perhaps they were those who were strongly imbued with Jewish notions, and who felt that his course tended to diminish respect for the law of Moses, and who now took this opportunity to promote their views, knowing that this would be particularly painful to him when he was not at liberty to meet them openly, and to defend his own opinions. It is *possible* also that they may have urged that Paul himself had met with a signal reproof for the course which he had taken, and, as a consequence, was now thrown into chains. Bloomfield suggests that it was the opinion of many of the ancient expositors that they endeavoured to do this by so preaching as to excite the fury of the multitude or the rulers against Paul, and to produce increased severity in his punishment. But the *way* in which they did this is unknown, and conjecture is altogether useless.

17. *But the other of love.* From pure motives, and from sincere affection to me. ¶ *Knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.* They believe that I am an ambassador from God. They regard me as unjustly imprisoned, and while I am disabled, they are willing to aid me in the great cause to which my life is devoted. To alleviate his sorrows, and to carry forward the great cause to defend which he was particularly appointed, they engaged in the work which he could not now do, and went forth to vindicate the gospel, and to make its claims better known. Coverdale renders this, "for they know that I lie here for the defence of the gospel." So Piscator, Michaelis, and Endius render it, supposing that the meaning is, that he lay in prison for the defence of the gospel, or as a consequence of his efforts to defend it. But this is not in accordance with the usual meaning of the Greek word (κεῖμαι). It means to lie, and in the perf. pass. to be laid, set, placed. If the apostle had referred to his being in prison, he would have *added*

18 What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

that fact to the statement made. The sense is, that he was appointed to be a defender of the gospel, and that they being well convinced of this, went forth to promulgate and defend the truth. That fact was one of Paul's chief consolations while he was thus in confinement.

18. *What then?* What follows from this? What effect does it have on my mind? Does the fact that some preach from a spirit of envy and contention give me pain? ¶ *Notwithstanding every way.* No matter in what way it is done. We are not to suppose, however, that Paul was indifferent as to the way in which the gospel was preached, or the spirit with which it was done; but the meaning is, that it was a matter of rejoicing that *it was done at all*, whatever the motives might be. ¶ *Whether in pretence or in truth.* Whether as a mere pretext to cover up some other design, or from pure motives. Their pretence was that they preached the gospel because they believed it true and loved it; their real object was to build up a party, and to diminish the influence and authority of Paul. ¶ *Christ is preached.* They made known the name of the Saviour, and announced that the Messiah had come. They could not go forth under *any* pretence as preachers, without making known *some* truth about the Redeemer. So now, it is hardly possible that any persons should attempt to preach, without stating *some* truth that would not otherwise be known. The *name* of a Saviour will be announced, and that will be something. Some views of his life and work will be presented, which, though they may be far enough from full views, are yet better than none. Though there may be much *error* in what is said, yet there will be also some truth. It would be better to have preachers that were better instructed, or that were more prudent, or that had purer motives, or that held a more perfect system, yet it is much in our world *to have the name of the Redeemer announced in any way*, and even to be told, in the most stammering manner, and from whatever motives, that *man has a Saviour.* The announcement of that fact in any way *may* save a soul; but ignorance of it could save none. ¶ *And I therein do rejoice.* This is an instance of great magnanimity on the part of Paul, and nothing, perhaps, could better show his supreme love for the Saviour. Part preached to increase his afflictions, and the tendency of that preaching was, probably, as it was designed to be, to unsettle confidence in him, and to lessen his influence. Yet this did not move him. The more important matter was secured, and Christ was made known; and if this were secured, he was willing that his own name should be cast into the shade. This may furnish valuable lessons to preachers of the gospel now. When (1.) we are laid aside from preaching by sickness, we should rejoice that others are in health, and are able to make the Saviour known, though we are forgotten. (2.) When we are unpopular and unsuccessful, we should rejoice that others are more popular and successful—for Christ is preached. (3.) When we have rivals, who have better plans than we for doing good, and whose labours are crowned with success, we should not be envious or jealous—for Christ is preached. (4.) When ministers of other denominations preach what we regard as error, and their preaching becomes popular, and is attended with success, we can find occasion to rejoice—for they preach Christ. In the error we should not, we cannot rejoice; but in the fact that the great truth is held up that Christ died for men, we can always find abundant occasion for joy. Mingled as it may be with error, it may be nevertheless the means of saving souls, and though we should rejoice *more* if the truth were preached without any admixture of error, yet still the very fact that Christ is made known lays the foundation for grati-

19 For I know that this [a] shall turn to my salvation through [b] your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

[a] Ro.8.28. [b] 2 Co.1.11.

20 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, [c] but *that* with all boldness, [d] as always,

[c] Ro.5.5. [d] Ep.6.19,20.

tude and rejoicing. Had all Christians, and Christian ministers, the feelings which Paul expresses here, there would be much less envy and uncharitableness than there is now in the churches. May we not hope that the time will yet come when all who preach the gospel will have such supreme regard for the name and work of the Saviour, that they will find sincere joy in the success of a rival denomination, or a rival preacher, or in rival plans for doing good? Then, indeed, contentions would cease, and the hearts of Christians, "like kindred drops," would mingle into one.

19. *For I know that this shall turn to my salvation.* Will be a means of my salvation. Whether the effect shall be to turn public favour towards the Christian religion, and secure my release; or whether it shall be to instigate my enemies more, so as to lead to my death; I am satisfied that the result, so far as I am concerned, will be well. The word "salvation," here, does not refer to his *release* from captivity, as Koppe, Rosenmüller, Clarke, and others, suppose; for he was not absolutely certain of that, and could not expect that to be effected by "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." But the meaning is, that all these dealings, including his imprisonment, and especially the conduct of those who thought to add affliction to his bonds, would be among the means of his salvation. Trying and painful as all this was, yet trial and pain Paul reckoned *among the means of grace;* and he had no doubt that this would prove so. ¶ *Through your prayer;* see Notes on 2 Cor. i. 11. ¶ *And the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* To sustain me, and to cause those happy results to come out of these trials. He needed the same spirit which Jesus Christ had, to enable him to bear his trials with patience, and to impart to him the consolations which he required. He had no idea that these trials would produce these effects of their own accord, nor that it could be by any strength of his own.

20. *According to my earnest expectation.* The word here used occurs but in one other place in the New Testament; see it explained in the Notes on Rom.viii.19. The earnest desire and hope which Paul had was not, primarily, that he might be released; but it was that, in all circumstances, he might be able to honour the gospel, living or dying. To that he looked as a much more important matter than to save his life. Life with him was the secondary consideration; the main thing was, to stand up everywhere as the advocate of the gospel, to maintain its truth, and to exhibit its spirit. ¶ *That in nothing I shall be ashamed.* That I shall do nothing of which I shall have occasion to be ashamed. That in these heavy trials, I may not be left to deny the truth of the Christian religion; that, even before the emperor, I may maintain its principles; and that the dread of death may not lead me to do a dishonourable thing, or in any way so to shrink from an avowal of my belief, as to give me or my friends occasion of regret. ¶ *But that with all boldness.* By my speaking the truth, and maintaining my principles with all boldness; Notes, 2 Cor. vii. 4; Eph. vi. 19, 20. ¶ *Christ shall be magnified.* Shall be held up to the view of man as the true and only Saviour, whatever becomes of me. ¶ *Whether it be by life.* If I am permitted to live. He was not yet certain how the case would terminate with him. He had not been put on his trial, and, whether that trial would result in his acquittal or not, he could not certainly know. But he felt assured that, if he was acquitted, the effect would be to honour Christ. He would ascribe his deliverance to his gracious interposition; he would devote him-

so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [a] *it be* by life or by death.

21 For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die [b] *is* gain.

a Ro.14.7,8. b Re.14.13.

self with new ardour to his service; and he felt assured, from his past efforts, that he would be able to do something that would "*magnify*" Christ in the estimation of mankind. ¶ *Or by death.* If my trial shall result in my death. Then, he believed, he would be able to show such a spirit as to do honour to Christ and his cause. He was not afraid to die, and he was persuaded that he would be enabled to bear the pains of death in such a manner as to show the sustaining power of religion, and the value of Christianity. Christ is "magnified" in the death of Christians, when his gospel is seen to sustain them; when, supported by its promises, they are enabled to go calmly into the dark valley; and when, in the departing moments, they confidently commit their eternal all into his hands. The effect of this state of feeling on the mind of Paul must have been most happy. In whatever way his trial terminated, he felt assured that the great object for which he lived would be promoted. Christ would be honoured, perhaps, as much by his dying as a martyr, as by his living yet many years to proclaim his gospel. He was, therefore, reconciled to his lot. He had no anxiety. Come what might, the purpose which he had most at heart would be secured, and the name of the Saviour would be honoured.

21. *For to me to live* is *Christ.* My sole aim in living is to glorify Christ. He is the supreme End of my life, and I value it only as being devoted to his honour. *Doddridge.* His aim was not honour, learning, gold, pleasure; it was, to glorify the Lord Jesus. This was the single purpose of his soul—a purpose to which he devoted himself with as much singleness and ardour as ever did a miser to the pursuit of gold, or a devotee of pleasure to amusement, or an aspirant for fame to ambition. This implied the following things: (1.) A purpose to *know* as much of Christ as it was possible to know—to become as fully acquainted as he could with his rank, his character, his plans, with the relations which he sustained to the Father, and with the claims and influences of his religion; see Phil. iii. 10; Eph. iii. 19; comp. John xvii. 3. (2.) A purpose to *imitate* Christ—to make him the model of his life. It was a design that his Spirit should reign in his heart, that the same temper should actuate him, and that the same great end should be constantly had in view. (3.) A purpose to make his religion known, as far as possible, among mankind. To this Paul seriously gave his life, and devoted his great talents. His aim was to see on how many minds he could impress the sentiments of the Christian religion; to see to how many of the human family he could make Christ known, to whom he was unknown before. Never was there a man who gave himself with more ardour to any enterprise, than Paul did to this; and never was one more successful, in any undertaking, than he was in this. (4.) It was a purpose to *enjoy Christ.* He drew his comforts from him. His happiness he found in communion with him. It was not in the works of art; not in the pursuits of elegant literature; not in the gay and fashionable world; but it was in communion with the Saviour, and in endeavouring to please him. Remark, (1.) Paul never had occasion to regret this course. It produced no sadness when he looked over his life. He never felt that he had had an unworthy aim of living; he did not wish that his purpose had been different when he came to die. (2.) If it was Paul's duty thus to live, it is no less that of every Christian. What was there in *his* case that made it his duty to "live unto Christ," which does not exist in the case of every sincere Christian on earth? No believer, when he comes to die, will regret that he has lived unto Christ; but how many, alas! regret that this has *not* been the aim and purpose of their souls! ¶ *And to die* is *gain*;

22 But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour : yet what I shall choose I wot not.

comp. Rev. xiv. 13. A sentiment similar to this occurs frequently in the Greek and Latin classic writers. See Wetstein, *in loc.*, who has collected numerous such passages. With them, the sentiment had its origin in the belief that they would be freed from suffering, and admitted to some happy world beyond the grave. To them, however, all this was conjecture and uncertainty. The word *gain*, here, means *profit, advantage ;* and the meaning is, there would be an *advantage* in dying above that of living. Important benefits would result to him *personally*, should he die ; and the only reason why he should wish at all to live was, that he might be the means of benefiting others ; ver. 24, 25. But how would it be gain to die ? What advantage would there be in Paul's circumstances ? What in ours ? It may be answered, that it will be gain for a Christian to die in the following respects : (1.) He will be then freed from sin. Here it is the source of perpetual humiliation and sorrow ; in heaven he will sin no more. (2.) He will be freed from doubts about his condition. Here the best are liable to doubts about their personal piety, and often experience many an anxious hour in reference to this point ; in heaven, doubt will be known no more. (3.) He will be freed from temptation. Here, no one knows when he may be tempted, nor how powerful the temptation may be ; in heaven, there will be no allurement to lead him astray ; no artful, cunning, and skilful votaries of pleasure to place inducements before him to sin ; and no *heart* to yield to them, if there were. (4.) He will be delivered from all his enemies—from the slanderer, the calumniator, the persecutor. Here the Christian is constantly liable to have his motives called in question, or to be met with detraction and slander ; there, there will be none to do him injustice ; all will rejoice in the belief that he is pure. (5.) He will be delivered from suffering. Here he is constantly liable to it. His health fails, his friends die, his mind is sad. There, there shall be no separation of friends, no sickness, and no tears. (6.) He will be delivered from death. Here, death is ever nigh—dreadful, alarming, terrible to our nature. There, death will be known no more. No face will ever turn pale, and no knees tremble, at his approach ; in all heaven there will never be seen a funeral procession, nor will the soil there ever open its bosom to furnish a grave. (7.) To all this may be added the fact, that the Christian will be surrounded by his best friends ; that he will be reunited with those whom he loved on earth ; that he will be associated with the angels of light ; and that he will be admitted to the immediate presence of his Saviour and his God ! Why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die ? And why should he not hail that hour, when it comes, as the hour of his deliverance, and rejoice that he is going home ? Does the prisoner, long confined in a dungeon, dread the hour which is to open his prison, and permit him to return to his family and friends ? Does the man in a foreign land, long an exile, dread the hour when he shall embark on the ocean to be conveyed where he may embrace the friends of his youth ? Does the sick man dread the hour which restores him to health ; the afflicted, the hour of comfort ? the wanderer at night, the cheering light of returning day ? And why then should the Christian dread the hour which will restore him to immortal vigour ; which shall remove all his sorrows ; which shall introduce him to everlasting day ?

Death is the crown of life :
Were death denied, poor man would live in vain :
Were death denied, to live would not be life ;
Were death denied, even fools would wish to die.
Death wounds to cure ; we fall ; we rise ; we reign !
Spring from our fetters ; fasten in the skies ;
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost.
The king of terrors is the prince of peace.
Night Thoughts, iii.

22. *But if I live in the flesh.* If I

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire [a] to depart,

[a] 2 Co.5.8.

and to be with Christ; which is far better: [b]

[b] Ps.16.11.

continue to live; if I am not condemned and make a martyr at my approaching trial. ¶ *This* is *the fruit of my labour*. The meaning of this passage, which has given much perplexity to commentators, it seems to me is, "If I live in the flesh, it will *cost* me labour; it will be attended, as it has been, with much effort and anxious care, and I know not which to prefer—whether to remain on the earth with these cares and the hope of doing good, or to go at once to a world of rest." A more literal version of the Greek will show that this is the meaning. τοῦτό μοι καρποῦ ἔργου—"this to me is [or would be] the fruit of labour." Coverdale, however, renders it, "Inasmuch as to live in the flesh is fruitful to me for the work, I wot not what I shall choose." So Luther, "But since to live in the flesh serves to produce more fruit." And so Bloomfield, "But if my life in the flesh be of use to the gospel (be it so, I say no more), verily what I shall choose I see and know not." See also Koppe, Rosenmüller, and Calvin, who give the same sense. According to this, the meaning is, that if his life were of value to the gospel, he was willing to live; or that it was a valuable object—*operæ pretium*—worth an effort thus to live. This sense accords well with the connection, and the thought is a valuable one, but it is somewhat doubtful whether it can be made out from the Greek. To do it, it is necessary to suppose that μοι—*my*—is expletive (Koppe), and that καὶ—*and*—is used in an unusual sense. See *Erasmus*. According to the interpretation first suggested, it means, that Paul felt that it would be gain to die, and that he was entirely willing; that he felt that if he continued to live it would involve toil and fatigue, and that, therefore, great as was the natural love of life, and desirous as he was to do good, he did not know which to choose—an immediate departure to the world of rest, or a prolonged life of toil and pain, attended even with the hope that he might do good. There was an intense desire to be with Christ, joined with the belief that his life here must be attended with toil and anxiety; and on the other hand an earnest wish to live in order to do good, and he knew not which to prefer. ¶ *Yet*. The sense has been obscured by this translation. The Greek word (καὶ) means *and*, and should have been so rendered here, in its usual sense. "To die would be gain; my life here would be one of toil, AND I know not which to choose." ¶ *What I shall choose I wot not*. I do not know which I should prefer, if it were left to me. On each side there were important considerations, and he knew not which overbalanced the other. Are not Christians often in this state, that if it were left to themselves they would not know which to choose, whether to live or to die?

23. *For I am in a strait betwixt two*. Two things, each of which I desire. I earnestly long to be with Christ; and I desire to remain to be useful to the world. The word rendered "I am in a strait"—συνέχομαι—means to be pressed on or constrained, as in a crowd; to feel one's self pressed or pent up so as not to know what to do; and it here means that he was in perplexity and doubt, and did not know what to choose. "The words of the original are very emphatic. They appear to be derived from a ship when lying at anchor, and when violent winds blow upon it that would drive it out to sea. The apostle represents himself as in a similar condition. His strong affection for them bound his heart to them—as an anchor holds a ship to its moorings—and yet there was a heavenly influence bearing upon him—like the gale upon the vessel—which would bear him away to heaven." *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc*. ¶ *Having a desire to depart*. To die—to leave this world for a better. Men, as they are by nature, usually

dread to die. Few are even made *willing* to die. Almost none *desire* to die—and even then they wish it only as the least of two evils. Pressed down by pain and sorrow; or sick and weary of the world, the mind *may* be wrought up into a *desire* to be away. But this with the world is, in all cases, the result of misanthropy, or morbid feeling, or disappointed ambition, or an accumulation of many sorrows. Wetstein has adduced on this verse several most beautiful passages from the classic writers, in which men expressed a desire to depart—but all of them probably could be traced to disappointed ambition, or to mental or bodily sorrows, or to dissatisfaction with the world. It was from no such wish that Paul desired to die. It was not because he hated man,—for he ardently loved him. It was not because he had been disappointed about wealth and honour—for he had sought neither. It was not because he had not been sucessful—for no man had been more so. It was not because he had been subjected to pains and imprisonments—for he was willing to bear them. It was not because he was old, and infirm, and a burden to the world—for, from any thing that appears, he was in the vigour of life, and in the fulness of his strength. It was from a purer, higher motive than any of these—the strength of attachment which bound him to the Saviour, and which made him long to be with him. ¶ *And to be with Christ.* We may remark on this expression, (1.) That this was the true reason why he wished to be away. It was his strong love to Christ; his anxious wish to be with him; his firm belief that in his presence was "fulness of joy." (2.) Paul believed that the soul of the Christian would be immediately with the Saviour at death. It was evidently his expectation that he would at once pass to his presence, and not that he would remain in an intermediate state to some far distant period. (3.) The soul does not *sleep* at death. Paul expected to be *with* Christ, and to be conscious of the fact—to see him, and to partake of his glory. (4.) The soul of the believer is made happy at death. To be with Christ is synonymous with being in heaven—for Christ is in heaven, and is its glory. We may add, (*a*) that this wish to be with Christ constitutes a marked difference between a Christian and other men. Other men may be willing to die; perhaps be desirous to die, because their sorrows are so great that they feel that they cannot be borne. But the Christian desires to depart from a different motive altogether. It is *to be with Christ*—and this constitutes a broad line of distinction between him and other men. (*b*) A mere *willingness* to die, or even a *desire* to die, is no certain evidence of preparation for death. If this willingness or desire is caused by mere intensity of suffering; if it is produced by disgust at the world or by disappointment; if it arises from some view of fancied Elysian fields beyond the grave, it constitutes no evidence whatever of a preparation for death. I have seen not a few persons who were not professed Christians on a bed of death, and not a few *willing* to die, nay, not a few who *wished* to depart. But in the vast majority of instances it was because they were sick of life, or because their pain made them sigh for relief, or *because they were so wretched that they did not care what happened*—and this they and their friends construed into an evidence that they were prepared to die! In most instances this is a miserable delusion; in *no* case is a mere willingness to die an evidence of preparation for death. ¶ *Which is far better.* Would be attended with more happiness; and would be a higher, holier state than to remain on earth. This proves also that the soul of the Christian at death is made at once happy—for a state of insensibility can in no way be said to be a better condition than to remain in this present world. The Greek phrase here—πολλῷ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον—is very emphatic, and the apostle seems to labour for language which will fully convey his idea. It means, "by much more, or rather better," and the sense is, "better beyond all expression."

24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.

27 Only [a] let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of

[a] Ep.4.1; chap.3.20.

Doddridge. See numerous examples illustrating the phrase in Wetstein. Paul did not mean to say that he was merely *willing* to die, or that he *acquiesced* in its necessity, but that the fact of being with Christ was a condition *greatly to be preferred* to remaining on earth. This is the true feeling of Christian piety; and having this feeling, death to us will have no terrors.

24. *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh.* To live. All this is language derived from the belief that the soul will be separate from the body at death, and will occupy a separate state of existence. ¶ Is *more needful for you.* Another object that was dear to the heart of Paul. He never supposed that his life was useless; or that it was a matter of no importance to the cause of religion whether he lived or died. He knew that God works by means; and that the life of a minister of the gospel is of real value to the church and the world. His experience, his influence, his paternal counsels, he felt assured would be of value to the church, and he had, therefore, a desire to live — and it was no part of his religion affectedly to undervalue or despise himself.

25. *And having this confidence.* "Being persuaded of this, that my continuance on earth is desirable for your welfare, and that the Lord has a work for me to do, I confidently expect that I shall be permitted to live." The "confidence" here referred to was, that his life was needful for them, and hence that God would spare him. A literal translation would be, "And being persuaded as to this, or of this"—τουτο πεποιθως— "I know," &c. The foundation of his expectation that he should live does not appear to have been any revelation to that effect, as Doddridge supposes; or any intimation which he had from the palace of the intentions of the government, as some others suppose, but the fact that he believed his life to be necessary for them, and that therefore God would preserve it. ¶ *I know that I shall abide.* The word *know*, however, (οιδα) is not to be *pressed* as denoting absolute necessity —for it appears from ver. 27, and chap. ii. 17, that there was *some* ground for doubt whether he would live— but is to be taken in a *popular* sense, as denoting good courage, and an earnest hope that he would be permitted to live and visit them. *Heinrichs.* ¶ *And continue with you all.* That is, that he would be permitted not only to live, but to enjoy their society. ¶ *For your furtherance and joy of faith.* For the increase of your faith, and the promotion of that joy which is the consequence of faith. Wetstein has quoted a beautiful passage from Seneca (Epis. 104) which strikingly resembles this sentiment of Paul. He says that when a man had meditated death, and when on his own account he would be willing to die, yet that he ought to be willing to live —to come back again to life—for the sake of his friends. He then adds, "It pertains to a great mind to be willing to come back to life for the sake of others; which distinguished men often do."

26. *That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus.* Through the mercy and grace of Christ. If he was spared, his deliverance would be traced to Christ, and they would rejoice together in one who had so mercifully delivered him. ¶ *For me by my coming to you again.* Their joy would not only be that he was delivered, but that he was permitted to see them again.

27. *Only let your conversation*

Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye [a] stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving [b] together for the faith of the gospel;

[a] chap. 4. 1.

[b] Jude 3.

The word *conversation* we now apply almost exclusively to oral discourse, or to *talking*. But it was not formerly confined to that, and is never so used in the Scriptures. It means conduct in general — including, of course, our manner of speaking, but not limited to that—and should be so understood in every place where it occurs in the Bible. The original word here used—πολιτεύω—*politeuo*, means properly *to administer the state; to live as a citizen; to conduct oneself according to the laws and customs of a state;* see Acts xxiii. 1; compare examples in Wetstein. It would not be improperly rendered, "let your conduct as a citizen be as becomes the gospel;" and might without impropriety, though not exclusively, be referred to our deportment as members of a community, or citizens of a state. It undoubtedly implies that, *as* citizens, we should act, in all the duties which that relation involves — in maintaining the laws, in submission to authority, in the choice of rulers, &c., as well as in other relations—on the principles of the gospel; for the believer is bound to perform every duty on Christian principles. But the direction here should not be confined to that. It doubtless includes our conduct in all relations in life, and refers to our deportment in general; not merely as citizens of the state, but as members of the church, and in all other relations. In our manner of speech, our plans of living, our dealings with others, our conduct and walk *in* the church and out of it—all should be done as becomes the gospel. The direction, therefore, in this place, is to be understood of everything pertaining to *conduct*. ¶ *As it becometh the gospel of Christ.* (1.) The rules of the gospel are to be applied to all our conduct—to our conversation, business transactions, modes of dress, style of living, entertainments, &c. There is nothing which we do, or say, or purpose, that is to be excepted from those rules. (2.) There *is* a way of living which is *appropriate to the gospel*, or which is such as the gospel requires. There is something which the gospel would secure as *its proper fruits* in all our conduct, and by which our lives should be regulated. It would distinguish us from the gay, and from those who seek honour and wealth as their supreme object. If all Christians were under the influence of the gospel, there would be *something* in their dress, temper, conversation, and aims, which would distinguish them from others; The gospel is not a thing of naught; nor is it intended that it should exert *no* influence on its friends. (3.) It is very important that Christians should frame their lives by the rules of the gospel, and, to this end, should *study* them and know what they are. This is important, (*a*) because they are the *best* and *wisest* of all rules; (*b*) because it is only in this way that Christians can do good; (*c*) because they have solemnly covenanted with the Lord to take his laws as their guide; (*d*) because it is only in this way that they can enjoy religion; and (*e*) because it is only by this that they can have peace on a dying bed. If men live as "becometh the gospel," they live well. Their lives are honest and honourable; they are men of truth and uprightness; they will have no sources of regret when they die, and they will not give occasion to their friends to hang their heads with shame in the remembrance of them. No man on a dying bed ever yet regretted that he had framed his life by the rules of the gospel, or felt that his conduct had been conformed too much to it. ¶ *That whether I come and see you.* Alluding to the possibility that he might be released, and be permitted to visit them again. ¶ *Or else be absent.* Either at Rome, still confined, or released, and permitted to go abroad. ¶ *I may*

28 And in nothing terrified [a] by your adversaries: which [b] is to them an evident token of perdition,

[a] Is.51.7,12; Mat.10.28. [b] 2Th.1.5.

but [c] to you of salvation, and that of God.

29 For unto you it is given [d] in

[c] Ro.8.17. [d] Ac.5.41.

hear of your affairs, &c. I may hear always respecting you that you are united, and that you are vigorously striving to promote the interests of the gospel.

28. *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries.* Adversaries, or opponents, they had, like most of the other early Christians. There were Jews there who would be likely to oppose them (comp. Acts xvii. 5), and they were exposed to persecution by the heathen. In that city, Paul had himself suffered much (Acts xvi.); and it would not be strange if the same scenes should be repeated. It is evident from this passage, as well as from some other parts of the epistle, that the Philippians were at this time experiencing some form of severe suffering. But in what way, or why, the opposition to them was excited, is nowhere stated. The meaning here is, "do not be alarmed at anything which they can do. Maintain your Christian integrity, notwithstanding all the opposition which they can make. They will, in the end, certainly be destroyed, and you will be saved." ¶ *Which is to them an evident token of perdition. What*, it may be asked, would be the token of their perdition? What is the evidence to which Paul refers that they will be destroyed? The relative "which"—ἥτις—is probably used as referring to the *persecution* which had been commenced, and to the *constancy* which the apostle supposed the Philippians would evince. The sentence is elliptical; but it is manifest that the apostle refers either to the circumstance then occurring, that they were persecuted, and that they evinced constancy; or to the constancy which he *wished* them to evince in their persecutions. He says that *this circumstance of persecution, if they evinced such a spirit as he wished*, would be to them an evidence of two things: (1.) Of the destruction of those who were engaged in the persecution. This would be, because they knew that such persecutors could not ultimately prevail. Persecution of the church would be a certain indication that they who did it would be finally destroyed. (2.) It would be a proof of their own salvation, because it would show that they were the friends of the Redeemer; and they had the assurance that all those who were persecuted for his sake would be saved. The gender of the Greek relative here is determined by the following noun (ἔνδειξις), in a manner that is not uncommon in Greek; see Wetstein, *in loc.*, and Koppe. ¶ *And that of God.* That is, their persecution is a proof that God will interpose in due time and save you. The hostility of the wicked to us is one evidence that we are the friends of God, and shall be saved.

29. *For unto you.* Unto you as Christians. This favour is granted unto you in your present circumstances. ¶ *It is given.* God concedes to you this privilege or advantage. ¶ *In the behalf of Christ.* In the cause of Christ, or with a view to honour Christ. Or, these things are brought on you in consequence of your being Christians. ¶ *Not only to believe on him.* It is represented here as a *privilege* to be permitted to believe on Christ. It is so. (1.) It is an honour to a man to believe one who ought to be believed, to trust one who ought to be trusted, to love one who ought to be loved. (2.) It is a privilege to believe on Christ, because it is by such faith that our sins are forgiven; that we become reconciled to God, and have the hope of heaven. (3.) It is a privilege, because it saves the mind from the *tortures* and the deadly influence of unbelief—the agitation, and restlessness, and darkness, and gloom of a sceptic. (4.) It is a privilege, because we have then a friend to whom we may go in trial, and on whom we may roll all our burdens. If there is

the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw [a] in me, *and* now hear *to be* in me.

[a] Ac.16.19; 1Th.2.2

anything for which a Christian ought to give unfeigned thanks, it is that he has been permitted to believe on the Redeemer. Let a sincere Christian compare his peace, and joy, and hope of heaven, and support in trials, with the restlessness, uneasiness, and dread of death, in the mind of an unbeliever; and he will see abundant occasion for gratitude. ¶ *But also to suffer for his sake.* Here it is represented as a *privilege* to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer—a declaration which may sound strange to the world. Yet this sentiment frequently occurs in the New Testament. Thus it is said of the apostles (Acts v. 41), that "they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;" Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you;" 1 Pet. iv. 13. "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;" comp. James i. 2; Mark x. 30; see Notes on Acts v. 41. It is a *privilege* thus to suffer in the cause of Christ, because (1.) we then resemble the Lord Jesus, and are united with him in trials; (2.) because we have evidence that we are his, if trials come upon us in his cause; (3.) because we are engaged in a good cause, and the privilege of maintaining such a cause is worth much of suffering; and (4.) because it will be connected with a brighter crown and more exalted honour in heaven.

30. *Having the same conflict.* The same *agony*—ἀγῶνα—the same strife with bitter foes, and the same struggle in the warfare. ¶ *Which ye saw in me.* When I was in Philippi, opposed by the multitude, and thrown into prison; Acts xvi. ¶ And *now hear* to be *in me.* In Rome. He was a prisoner there, was surrounded by enemies, and was about to be tried for his life. He says that they ought to rejoice if they were called to pass through the same trials.

In this chapter we have a beautiful illustration of the true spirit of a Christian in circumstances exceedingly trying. The apostle was in a situation where religion would show itself, if there were any in the heart; and where, if there was none, the bad passions of our nature would be developed. He was a prisoner. He had been unjustly accused. He was about to be put on trial for his life, and it was wholly uncertain what the result would be. He was surrounded with enemies, and there were not a few false friends and rivals who took advantage of his imprisonment to diminish his influence and to extend their own. He was, perhaps, about to die; and at any rate, was in such circumstances as to be under a necessity of looking death in the face.

In this situation he exhibited some of the tenderest and purest feelings that ever exist in the heart of man—the genuine fruit of pure religion. He remembered them with affectionate and constant interest in his prayers. He gave thanks for all that God had done for them. Looking upon his own condition, he said that the trials which had happened to him, great as they were, had been overruled to the furtherance of the gospel. The gospel had become known even in the imperial palace. And though it had been preached by some with no good will towards him, and with much error, yet he cherished no hard feeling; he sought for no revenge; he rejoiced that in any way, and from any motives, the great truth had been made known that a Saviour died. Looking forward to the possibility that his trial before the emperor might terminate in his death, he calmly anticipated such a result, and looked at it with composure. He says that in reference to the great purpose of his life, it would make no difference whether he lived or died, for he was assured that Christ would be honoured, whatever was the result. To him personally it would be gain to die;

CHAPTER II.

IF *here be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels [a] and mercies,

[a] Co.3.12.

and, as an individual, he longed for the hour when he might be with Christ. This feeling is religion, and this is produced only by the hope of eternal life through the Redeemer. An impenitent sinner never expressed such feelings as these; nor does any other form of religion but Christianity enable a man to look upon death in this manner. It is not often that a man is even *willing* to die — and then this state of mind is produced, not by the hope of heaven, but by disgust at the world; by disappointed ambition; by painful sickness, when the sufferer feels that *any* change would be for the better. But Paul had none of these feelings. His desire to depart was not produced by a hatred of life; nor by the greatness of his sufferings; nor by disgust at the world. It was the noble, elevated, and pure wish *to be with Christ*— to see him whom he supremely loved, whom he had so long and so faithfully served, and with whom he was to dwell for ever. To that world where Christ dwelt he would gladly rise; and the only reason why he could be content to remain here was, that he might be a little longer useful to his fellow men. Such is the elevated nature of Christian feeling. But, alas! how few attain to it; and even among Christians, how few are they that can habitually *feel* and *realize* that it would be gain for them to die! How few can say with sincerity that they *desire* to depart and to be with Christ! How rarely does even the Christian reach that state of mind, and gain that view of heaven, that, standing amidst his comforts here, and looking on his family, and friends, and property, he can say from the depths of his soul, that he *feels* it would be gain for him to go to heaven! Yet such deadness to the world *may* be produced—as it was in the case of Paul; such deadness to the world *should* exist in the heart of every sincere Christian. Where it *does* exist, death loses its terror, and the heir of life can look calmly on the bed where he will lie down to die; can think calmly of the moment when he will give the parting hand to wife and child, and press them to his bosom for the last time, and imprint on them the last kiss; can look peacefully on the spot where he will moulder back to dust, and in view of all can triumphantly say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is made up principally of exhortations to the performance of various Christian duties, and the exhibition of Christian virtues. The apostle first exhorts the Philippians, in the most tender manner, so to live as to give him joy, by evincing among themselves unity and concord. He entreats them to do nothing by strife and a desire of distinction, but to evince that humility which is manifested when we regard others as more worthy than we are; ver. 1—4. This exhortation he enforces in a most impressive manner by a reference to the example of Christ — an example of condescension and humiliation fitted to repress in us all the aspirings of ambition, and to make us ready to submit to the most humble offices to benefit others; ver. 5—11. He then exhorts them to work out their salvation with diligence, assuring them, for their encouragement, that God worked in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; ver. 12, 13. To this he adds an exhortation that they would avoid everything like murmuring and disputing — that they would be blameless and harmless in their walk, showing the excellency of the religion which they loved to all around them, and exerting such an influence on others that Paul might feel that he had not laboured in vain; ver. 14 — 16. To excite them to this, he assures them that

he was ready himself to be sacrificed for their welfare, and should rejoice if by his laying down his life their happiness would be promoted. He asked the same thing in return from them; ver. 17, 18. He then tells them, in expressing his interest in them, that he hoped soon to be able to send Timothy to them again — a man who felt a deep interest in their welfare, and whose going to them would be one of the highest proofs of the apostle's love; ver. 19 — 24. The same love for them, he says, he had now shown by sending to them Epaphroditus — a man to whom he was tenderly attached, and who had an earnest desire again to return to the church from which he had been sent. Paul sent him, therefore, again to Philippi, that he might be with them and comfort them, and he asked for him a kind reception and affectionate treatment, in view of the sufferings which he had experienced in the cause of the Redeemer; ver. 25—30.

1. *If* there be *therefore any consolation in Christ.* This, with what is said in the remainder of the verse, is designed as a *motive* for what he exhorts them to in ver. 2 — that they would be of the same mind, and would thus fulfil his joy. To urge them to this, he appeals to the tender considerations which religion furnished—and begins by a reference to the consolation which there was in Christ. The meaning here may be this: "I am now persecuted and afflicted. In my trials it will give me the highest joy to learn that you act as becomes Christians. You also are persecuted and afflicted (chap. i. 28—30); and, in these circumstances, I entreat that the highest consolation may be sought; and by all that is tender and sacred in the Christian religion, I conjure you, so to live as not to dishonour the gospel. So live as to bring down the highest consolation which *can* be obtained—the consolation which Christ alone can impart." We are not to suppose that Paul *doubted* whether there *was* any consolation in Christ, but the form of expression here is one that is designed to urge upon them the duty of seeking the *highest* possible. The *consolation in Christ* is that which *Christ furnishes* or *imparts.* Paul regarded him as the source of all comfort, and earnestly prays that they might so live that he and they might avail themselves in the fullest sense of that unspeakable enjoyment. The idea is, that Christians ought at all times, and especially in affliction, so to act as to secure the highest possible happiness which their Saviour can impart to them. Such an object is worth their highest effort; and if God sees it needful, in order to that, that they should endure much affliction, still it is gain. *Religious consolation is always worth all which it costs to secure it.* ¶ *If any comfort of love.* If there be any comfort in the exercise of tender affection. That there *is,* no one can doubt. Our happiness is almost all centred in love. It is when we love a parent, a wife, a child, a sister, a neighbour, that we have the highest earthly enjoyment. It is in the love of God, of Christ, of Christians, of the souls of men, that the redeemed find their highest happiness. Hatred is a passion full of misery; love an emotion full of joy. By this consideration, Paul appeals to them, and the motive here is drawn from all the joy which mutual love and sympathy are fitted to produce in the soul Paul would have that love exercised in the highest degree, and would have them enjoy all the happiness which its mutual exercise could furnish. ¶ *If any fellowship of the Spirit.* The word "fellowship" — κοινωνία — means that which is *common* to two or more; that of which they partake together; Notes, Eph. iii. 9; Phil. i. 5. The idea here is, that among Christians there was a *participation* in the influences of the Holy Ghost; that they shared in some degree the feelings, views, and joys of the sacred Spirit himself; and that this was a privilege of the highest order. By this fact, Paul now exhorts them to unity, love, and zeal—so to live that they might partake in the highest degree of the consolations of this Spirit. ¶ *If any bowels and mercies*

2 Fulfil [a] ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, [b] having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

a John 3.29. *b* 2Co.13.11; 1Pe.3.8.

3 *Let* nothing [c] *be done* through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each [d] esteem other better than themselves.

c Ga.5.26; Ja.3.14. *d* 1Pe.5.5.

If there is any affectionate bond by which you are united to me, and any regard for my sorrows, and any desire to fill up my joys, so live as to impart to me, your spiritual father and friend, the consolation which I seek.

2. *Fulfil ye my joy.* Fill up my joy so that nothing shall be wanting to complete it. This, he says, would be done by their union, zeal, and humility; comp. John iii. 29. ¶ *That ye be like-minded.* Gr. That ye think the same thing; see Notes on 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Perfect unity of sentiment, opinion, and plan would be desirable if it could be attained. It may be, so far as to prevent discord, schism, contention and strife in the church, and so that Christians may be harmonious in promoting the same great work — the salvation of souls. ¶ *Having the same love.* Love to the same objects, and the same love one for another. Though their opinions might differ on some points, yet they might be united in love; see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 10. ¶ Being *of one accord.* σύμψυχοι—*of one soul; having your souls joined together.* The word used here does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means a union of soul; or an acting together *as if* but one soul actuated them. ¶ *Of one mind.* Gr. *Thinking the same thing.* The apostle here uses a great variety of expressions to denote the same thing. The object which he aimed at was union of heart, of feeling, of plan, of purpose. He wished them to avoid all divisions and strifes; and to show the power of religion by being united in the common cause. Probably there is no single thing so much insisted on in the New Testament as the importance of harmony among Christians. Now, there is almost nothing so little known; but *if* it prevailed, the world would soon be converted to God; comp. Notes on John xvii. 21—or see the text itself without the Notes.

3. Let *nothing* be done *through strife.* With a spirit of contention. This command forbids us to do any thing, or attempt any thing as *the mere result of strife.* This is not the principle from which we are to act, or by which we are to be governed. We are to form *no* plan, and aim at no object which is to be secured in this way. The command prohibits all attempts to secure any thing over others by mere physical strength, or by superiority of intellect or numbers, or as the result of dark schemes and plans formed by rivalry, or by the indulgence of angry passions, or with the spirit of ambition. We are not to attempt to do any thing *merely* by outstripping others, or by showing that we have more talent, courage, or zeal. What we do is to be by principle, and with a desire to maintain the truth, and to glorify God. And yet how often is this rule violated! How often do Christian denominations attempt to outstrip each other, and to see which shall be the greatest! How often do ministers preach with no better aim! How often do we attempt to outdo others in dress, and in the splendour of furniture and equipage! How often, even in plans of benevolence, and in the cause of virtue and religion, is the secret aim to *outdo others.* This is all wrong. There is no holiness in such efforts. Never once did the Redeemer act from such a motive, and never once should this motive be allowed to influence us. The conduct of others may be allowed to show us what we *can* do, and *ought* to do; but it should not be our sole aim to outstrip them; comp. 2 Cor. ix. 2—4. ¶ *Or vain glory.* The word here used—κενοδοξία—*kenodoxia,* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the adjective—κενόδοξος—*kenodoxos,* occurs once in Gal. v. 26; see Notes on that place. It

means properly *empty pride*, or *glory*, and is descriptive of vain and hollow parade and show. Suidas renders it, "any vain opinion about one's self"—*ματαία τις περὶ ἑαυτὸν οἴησις*. The idea seems to be that of mere self-esteem; a mere desire to honour ourselves, to attract attention, to win praise, to make ourselves uppermost, or foremost, or the main object. The command here solemnly forbids our doing *any thing* with such an aim—no matter whether it be in intellectual attainments, in physical strength, in skill in music, in eloquence or song, in dress, furniture, or religion. *Self* is not to be foremost; selfishness is not to be the motive. Probably there is no command of the Bible which would have a wider sweep than this, or would touch on more points of human conduct, if fairly applied. Who is there who passes a single day without, in some respect, desiring to display himself? What minister of the gospel preaches, who never has any wish to exhibit his talents, eloquence, or learning? How few make a gesture, but with some wish to display the grace or power with which it is done! Who, in conversation, is always free from a desire to show his wit, or his power in argumentation, or his skill in repartee? Who plays at the piano without the desire of commendation? Who thunders in the senate, or goes to the field of battle; who builds a house, or purchases an article of apparel; who writes a book, or performs a deed of benevolence, altogether uninfluenced by this desire? If all could be taken out of human conduct which is performed merely from "strife," or from "vain-glory," how small a portion would be left! ¶ *But in lowliness of mind.* Modesty, or humility. The word here used is the same which is rendered *humility* in Acts xx. 19; Col. ii. 18, 23; 1 Pet. v. 5; *humbleness*, in Col. iii. 12; and *lowliness*, in Eph. iv. 2; Phil. ii. 3. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It here means *humility*, and it stands opposed to that pride or self-valuation which would lead us to strive for the ascendancy, or which acts from a wish for flattery, or praise. The best and the only true correction of these faults is humility. This virtue consists in estimating ourselves *according to truth*. It is a willingness to take the place which we *ought* to take in the sight of God and man; and, having the low estimate of our own importance and character which the *truth* about our insignificance as creatures and vileness as sinners would produce, it will lead us to a willingness to perform lowly and humble offices that we may benefit others. ¶ *Let each esteem other better than themselves;* comp. 1 Pet. v. 5. This is one of the effects produced by true humility, and it naturally exists in every truly modest mind. The reasons are these. (1.) We are sensible of our own defects, but we have not the same clear view of the defects of others. We see our own hearts; we are conscious of the great corruption there; we have painful evidence of the impurity of the motives which often actuate us—of the evil thoughts and corrupt desires in our own souls; but we have not the same view of the errors, defects, and follies of others. We can see only their *outward* conduct; but, in our own case, we can look *within*. It is natural for those who have any just sense of the depravity of their own souls, charitably to hope that it is not so with others, and to believe that they have purer hearts. This will lead us to feel that they are worthy of more respect than we are. Hence this is always the characteristic of modesty and humility—graces which the gospel is fitted eminently to produce. A truly pious man will be always, therefore, an humble man, and will wish that others should be preferred in office and honour to himself. Of course, this will not make him blind to the defects of others when they are manifested; but he will be himself retiring, modest, unambitious, unobtrusive. *This* rule of Christianity would strike a blow at all the ambition of the world. It would rebuke the love of office, and would produce universal contentment in any low condition of life where the providence of God may have cast our lot; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. vii. 21.

4 Look not every man on [a] his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

[a] 1 Co. 13. 5.

4. *Look not every man on his own things.* That is, be not selfish. Do not let your care and attention be wholly absorbed by your own concerns, or by the concerns of your own family. Evince a tender interest for the happiness of the whole, and let the welfare of others lie near your hearts. This, of course, does not mean that there is to be any improper interference in the business of others, or that we are to have the character of "busy-bodies in other men's matters" (comp. Notes, 2 Thess. iii. 11; 1 Tim. v. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 15); but that we are to regard with appropriate solicitude the welfare of others, and to strive to do them good. ¶ *But every man also on the things of others.* It is the duty of *every man* to do this. No one is at liberty to live for himself or to disregard the wants of others. The *object* of this rule is to break up the narrow spirit of selfishness, and to produce a benevolent regard for the happiness of others. In respect to the rule we may observe, (1.) We are *not* to be "busy-bodies" in the concerns of others; see the references above. We are *not* to attempt to pry into their secret purposes. Every man has his own plans, and thoughts, and intentions, which no other one has a right to look into. Nothing is more odious than an intermeddler in the concerns of others. (2.) We are not to obtrude our advice where it is not sought, or at unseasonable times and places, even if the advice is in itself good. No man likes to be interrupted to hear *advice;* and I have no right to require that he should suspend his business in order that *I* may give him counsel. (3.) We are not to find fault with what pertains exclusively to him. We are to remember that there are some things which are *his* business, not *ours;* and we are to learn to "possess our souls in patience," if he does not give just as much as we think he ought to benevolent objects, or if he dresses in a manner not to please our taste, or if he indulges in things which do not accord exactly with our views. He may see reasons for his conduct which we do not; and it is *possible* that he may be right, and that, if we understood the whole case, we should think and act as he does. We often complain of a man because he does not give as much as we think he ought, to objects of charity; and it is *possible* that he may be miserably niggardly and narrow. But it is also *possible* that he may be more embarrassed than we know of; or that he may just then have demands against him of which we are ignorant; or that he may have numerous poor relatives dependant on him; or that he gives much with "the left hand" which is not known by "the right hand." At any rate, it is *his* business, not ours; and we are not qualified to judge until we understand *the whole case.* (4.) We are not to be *gossips* about the concerns of others. We are not to hunt up small stories, and petty scandals respecting their families; we are not to pry into domestic affairs, and divulge them abroad, and find pleasure in circulating such things from house to house. There are domestic secrets, which are not to be betrayed; and there is scarcely an offence of a meaner or more injurious character than to divulge to the public what we have seen in a family whose hospitality we have enjoyed. (5.) Where Christian duty and kindness require us to look into the concerns of others, there should be the utmost delicacy. Even children have their own secrets, and their own plans and amusements, on a small scale, quite as important to them as the greater games which we are playing in life; and they will feel the meddlesomeness of a busy-body to be as odious to them as we should in our plans. A delicate parent, therefore, who has undoubtedly a *right* to know all about his children, will not rudely intrude into their privacies, or meddle with their concerns. So, when we visit the sick, while we show a tender sympathy for them, we should not be too particular in inquiring into their ma-

5 Let this[a] mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

[a] John 13.14; 1 Pe.2.21.

ladies or their feelings. So, when those with whom we sympathize have brought their calamities on themselves by their own fault, we should not ask too many questions about it. We should not too closely examine one who is made poor by intemperance, or who is in prison for crime. And so, when we go to sympathize with those who have been, by a reverse of circumstances, reduced from affluence to penury, we should not ask too many questions. We should let them tell their own story. If they voluntarily make us their confidants, and tell us all about their circumstances, it is well; but let us not drag out the circumstances, or wound their feelings by our impertinent inquiries, or our indiscreet sympathy in their affairs. *There are always secrets which the sons and daughters of misfortune would wish to keep to themselves.* But, while these things are true, it is also true that the rule before us positively requires us to show an interest in the concerns of others; and it may be regarded as implying the following things: (1.) We are to feel that the spiritual interests of every one in the church is, in a certain sense, our own interest. The church is one. It is confederated together for a common object. Each one is intrusted with a portion of the honour of the whole, and the conduct of one member affects the character of all. We are, therefore, to promote, in every way possible, the welfare of every other member of the church. If they go astray, we are to admonish and entreat them; if they are in error, we are to instruct them; if they are in trouble, we are to aid them. Every member of the church has a claim on the sympathy of his brethren, and should be certain of always finding it when his circumstances are such as to demand it. (2.) There are circumstances where it is proper to look with special interest on the temporal concerns of others. It is when the poor, the fatherless, and the afflicted must be *sought out* in order to be aided and relieved. They are too retiring and modest to press their situation on the attention of others, and they need that others should manifest a generous care in their welfare in order to relieve them. This is not improper interference in their concerns, nor will it be so regarded. (3.) For a similar reason, we should seek the welfare of all others in a spiritual sense. We should seek to arouse the sinner, and lead him to the Saviour. He is blind, and will not come himself; unconcerned, and will not seek salvation; filled with the love of this world, and will not seek a better; devoted to pursuits that will lead him to ruin, and he ought to be apprized of it. It is no more an improper interference in his concerns to apprize him of his condition, and to attempt to lead him to the Saviour, than it is to warn a man in a dark night, who walks on the verge of a precipice, of his peril; or to arouse one from sleep whose house is in flames. In like manner, it is no more intermeddling with the concerns of another to tell him that there is a glorious heaven which may be his, than it is to apprize a man that there is a mine of golden ore on his farm. It is for the man's own interest, and it is the office of a friend to remind him of these things. He does a man a favour who tells him that he has a Redeemer, and that there is a heaven to which he may rise; he does his neighbour the greatest possible kindness who apprizes him that there is a world of infinite woe, and tells him of an easy way by which he may escape it. The world around is dependant on the church of Christ to be apprized of these truths. The gay will not warn the gay of their danger; the crowd that presses to the theatre or the ball-room will not apprize those who are there that they are in the broad way to hell; and every one who loves his neighbour, should feel sufficient interest in him to tell him that he *may be* eternally happy in heaven.

5. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* The object of this reference to the example of the Saviour is particularly to en-

6 Who, being [a] in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal [b] with God :

[a] John 1.1,2; Co.1.15. [b] John 5.18.

force the duty of humility. This was the highest example which could be furnished, and it would illustrate and confirm all the apostle had said of this virtue. The *principle* in the case is, that we are to make the Lord Jesus our model, and are in all respects to frame our lives, as far as possible, in accordance with this great example. The point here is, that he left a state of inexpressible glory, and took upon him the most humble form of humanity, and performed the most lowly offices, that he might benefit us.

6. *Who, being in the form of God.* There is scarcely any passage in the New Testament which has given rise to more discussion than this. The importance of the passage on the question of the Divinity of the Saviour will be perceived at once, and no small part of the point of the appeal by the apostle depends, as will be seen, in the fact that Paul regarded the Redeemer as equal with God. If he was truly divine, then his consenting to become a man was the most remarkable of all possible acts of humiliation. The word rendered *form*—μορφή—*morphē*, occurs only in three places in the New Testament, and in each place is rendered *form*. Mark xvi. 12; Phil. ii. 6, 7. In Mark it is applied to the *form* which Jesus assumed after his resurrection, and in which he appeared to two of his disciples on his way to Emmaus. "After that he appeared in another *form* unto two of them." This "form" was so unlike his usual appearance, that they did not know him. The word properly means, *form, shape, bodily shape*, especially a beautiful form, a beautiful bodily appearance. *Passow.* In ver. 7, it is applied to the appearance of a servant—"and took upon him *the form* of a servant;" that is, he was in the condition of a servant—or of the lowest condition. The word *form* is often applied to the gods by the classic writers, denoting their aspect or appearance when they became visible to men; see Cic. de Nat. Deor. ii. 2; Ovid, Meta. i. 37; Silius, xiii. 643; Xeno. Memora. iv; Æneid, iv. 556, and other places cited by Wetstein, *in loc.* Hesychius explains it by ἰδέα εἶδος. The word occurs often in the Septuagint, (1.) as the translation of the word זִיו—*Ziv*—*splendour*, Dan. iv. 33; v. 6, 9, 10; vii. 28; (2.) as the translation of the word תַּבְנִית—*Tabnith*, structure, model, pattern—as in building, Isa. xliv. 13; (3.) as the translation of תְּמוּנָה—*temuna*—appearance, form, shape, image, likeness, Job iv. 16; see also the Book of Wisdom xviii. 1. The word can have here only one or two meanings, either (1.) splendour, majesty, glory—referring to the honour which the Redeemer had, his power to work miracles, &c.—or (2.) nature, or essence—meaning the same as φύσις, *nature*, or οὐσία, *being*. The first is the opinion adopted by Crellius, Grotius, and others, and substantially by Calvin. Calvin says, "The form of God here denotes majesty. For as a man is known from the appearance of his form, so the majesty which shines in God, is his figure. Or to use a more appropriate similitude, the form of a king consists of the external marks which indicate a king—as his sceptre, diadem, coat of mail, attendants, throne, and other insignia of royalty; the form of a counsul is the toga, ivory chair, attending lictors, &c. Therefore Christ before the foundation of the world was in the form of God, because he had glory with the Father before the world was; John xvii. 5. For in the wisdom of God, before he put on our nature, there was nothing humble or abject, but there was magnificence worthy of God." *Comm. in loc.* The second opinion is, that the word is equivalent to *nature*, or *being*; that is, that he was in the nature of God, or his mode of existence was that of God, or was divine. This is the opinion adopted by Schleusner (Lex.); Prof. Stuart (Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 40); Doddridge, and by orthodox expositors in general, and seems to me to be the correct interpretation. In support of this interpretation, and in opposition

to that which refers it to his power of working miracles, or his divine appearance when on earth, we may adduce the following considerations. (1.) The "form" here referred to must have been something *before* he became a man, or before he took upon him the form of a servant. It was something *from* which he humbled himself by making "himself of no reputation;" by taking upon himself "the form of a servant;" and *by being made "in the likeness of men."* Of course, it must have been something which existed when he had *not* the likeness of men; that is, *before* he became incarnate. He must therefore have had an existence before he appeared on earth as a man, and *in* that previous state of existence there must have been something which rendered it proper to say that he was "*in the form of God.*" (2.) That it does not refer to any moral qualities, or to his power of working miracles on earth, is apparent from the fact that these were not laid aside. When did he divest himself of these in order that he might humble himself? There was something which he possessed which made it proper to say of him that he was "in the form of God," which he laid aside when he appeared in the form of a servant and in the likeness of men. But assuredly that could not have been his moral qualities, nor is there any conceivable sense in which it can be said that he divested himself of the power of working miracles in order that he might take upon himself the "form of a servant." All the miracles which he ever wrought were performed when he sustained the form of a servant, in his lowly and humble condition. These considerations make it certain that the apostle refers to a period before the incarnation. It may be added (3.) that the phrase "form of God" is one that naturally conveys the idea that he was God. When it is said that he was "in the form of a servant," the idea is, that he was *actually* in a humble and depressed condition, and not merely that he *appeared* to be. Still it may be asked, what *was* the "form" which he had before his incarnation? What is meant by his having been *then* "in the form of God?" To these questions perhaps no satisfactory answer can be given. He himself speaks (John xvii. 5.) of "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was;" and the language naturally conveys the idea that there was then a manifestation of the divine nature through him, which in some measure ceased when he became incarnate; that there was some visible splendour and majesty which was then laid aside. What manifestation of his glory God may make in the heavenly world, of course, we cannot now fully understand. Nothing forbids us, however, to suppose that there *is* some such visible manifestation; some splendour and magnificence of God in the view of the angelic beings such as *becomes* the Great Sovereign of the universe —for he "dwells in light which no man can approach unto;" I Tim. vi. 16. *That* glory, visible manifestation, or splendour, indicating the nature of God, it is here said that the Lord Jesus possessed before his incarnation. ¶ *Thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* This passage, also, has given occasion to much discussion. Prof. Stuart renders it, "did not regard his equality with God as an object of solicitous desire;" that is, that though he was of a divine nature or condition, he did not eagerly seek to retain his equality with God, but took on him an humble condition —even that of a servant. Letters to Channing, pp. 88 — 92. That this is the correct rendering of the passage is apparent from the following considerations;—(1.) It accords with the scope and design of the apostle's reasoning. His object is not to show, as our common translation would seem to imply, that he *aspired* to be equal with God, or that he did not regard it as an improper invasion of the prerogatives of God *to be* equal with him, but that he did not regard it, in the circumstances of the case, as an object to be greatly desired, or eagerly sought *to retain* his equality with God. Instead of retaining this by an earnest effort, or by a grasp which he was unwilling to relinquish, he chose to

7 But [a] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, [b] and was made in the [1] likeness of men:

a Ps.22.6. *b* Lu.22.27. 1 or, *habit.*

forego the dignity, and to assume the humble condition of a man. (2.) It accords better with the Greek than the common version. The word rendered *robbery*—ἁρπαγμος—is found nowhere else in the New Testament, though the verb from which it is derived frequently occurs; Matt. xi. 12; xiii. 19; John vi. 15; x. 12, 28, 29; Acts viii. 29; xxxiii. 10; 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Jude 23; Rev. xii. 5. The notion of *violence*, or *seizing*, or *carrying away*, enters into the meaning of the word in all these places. The word here used does not properly mean *an act of robbery*, but *the thing robbed—the plunder—das Rauben* (*Passow*), and hence something to be eagerly seized and appropriated. *Schleusner;* comp. Storr, Opuscul. Acade. i. 322, 323. According to this, the meaning of the word here is, something to be seized and eagerly sought, and the sense is, *that his being equal with God was not a thing to be anxiously retained.* The phrase "thought it not," means "did not consider;" it was not judged to be a matter of such importance that it could not be dispensed with. The sense is, "he did not eagerly seize and tenaciously hold" as one does who seizes prey or spoil. So Rosenmüller, Schleusner, Bloomfield, Stuart, and others understand it. ¶ *To be equal with God.* τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ. That is, the being equal with God he did not consider a thing to be tenaciously retained. The plural neuter form of the word *equal* in Greek—ἴσα—is used in accordance with a known rule of the language, thus stated by Buttman: "When an adjective as *predicate* is separated from its substantive, it often stands in the neuter where the substantive is a masculine or feminine, and in the singular where the substantive is in the plural. That which the predicate expresses is, in this case, considered in general as a *thing*." Gr. Gram., § 129. 6. The phrase "equal with God," or "equal with the gods," is of frequent occurance in the Greek Classics; see Wetstein *in loc.* The very phrase here used occurs in the Odyssey, O.

Τὸν νῦν ἴσα Θεῷ Δαναοὶ εἰσορόωσι.

Comp. John v. 18. "Made himself equal with God." The phrase means one who sustains the same rank, dignity, nature. Now it could not be said of an angel that he was in any sense equal with God; much less could this be said of a mere man. The natural and obvious meaning of the language is, that there was an equality of nature and of rank with God, from which he humbled himself when he *became* a man. The meaning of the whole verse, according to the interpretation suggested above, is, that Christ, before he became a man, was invested with honour, majesty, and glory, such as was appropriate to God himself; that there was some manifestation or splendour in his existence and mode of being then, which showed that he was equal with God; that he did not consider that that honour, indicating equality with God, was to be retained at all events, and so as to do violence, as it were, to other interests, and to rob the universe of the glory of redemption; and that he was willing, therefore, to forget that, or lay it by for a time, in order that he might redeem the world. There were a glory and majesty which were *appropriate* to God, and which indicated *equality* with God—such as none but God could assume. For how could an angel have such glory, or such external splendour in heaven, as to make it proper to say that he was "equal with God?" With what glory could he be invested which would be such as became *God only?* The fair interpretation of this passage, therefore, is, that Christ before his incarnation was equal with God.

7. *But made himself of no reputation.* This translation by no means conveys the sense of the original. According to this it would seem that he consented to be without distinc-

tion or honour among men; or that he was willing to be despised or disregarded. The Greek is ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε. The word κενόω means literally, *to empty, to make empty, to make vain or void.* It is rendered *made void* in Rom. iv. 14; *made of none effect,* 1 Cor. i. 17; *make void,* 1 Cor. ix. 15; *should be vain,* 2 Cor. ix. 3. The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, except in the passage before us. The essential idea is that of bringing to emptiness, vanity, or nothingness; and hence it is applied to a case where one lays aside his rank and dignity, and becomes in respect to that as *nothing;* that is, he assumes a more humble rank and station. In regard to its meaning here, we may remark (1.) that it cannot mean that he *literally* divested himself of his divine nature and perfections, for that was impossible. He could not cease to be omnipotent, and omnipresent, and most holy, and true, and good. (2.) It is conceivable that he might have laid aside, for a time, the symbols or the manifestation of his glory, or that the outward expressions of his majesty in heaven might have been withdrawn. It is conceivable for a divine being to intermit the exercise of his almighty power, since it cannot be supposed that God is *always* exerting his power to the utmost. And in like manner there might be for a time a laying aside or intermitting of these manifestations or symbols, which were expressive of the divine glory and perfections. Yet (3.) this supposes no change in the divine nature, or in the essential glory of the divine perfections. When the sun is obscured by a cloud, or in an eclipse, there is no real change of its glory, nor are his beams extinguished, nor is the sun himself in any measure changed. His lustre is only for a time obscured. So it might have been in regard to the manifestation of the glory of the Son of God. Of course, there is much in regard to this which is obscure, but the language of the apostle undoubtedly implies more than that he took an humble place, or that he demeaned himself in an humble manner. In regard to the actual change respecting his manifestations in heaven, or the withdrawing of the symbols of his glory there, the Scriptures are nearly silent, and conjecture is useless—perhaps improper. The language before us fairly implies that he laid aside that which was expressive of his being divine—that glory which is involved in the phrase "being in the form of God"—and took upon himself another form and manifestation in the condition of a servant. ¶ *And took upon him the form of a servant.* The phrase "form of a servant," should be allowed to explain the phrase "form of God," in ver. 6. The "form of a servant" is that which indicates the condition of a servant, in contradistinction from one of higher rank. It means to appear as a servant, to perform the offices of a servant, and to be regarded as such. He was made like a servant in the lowly condition which he assumed. The whole connection and force of the argument here demands this interpretation. Storr and Rosenmüller interpret this as meaning that he became *the servant or minister of God,* and that in doing it, it was necessary that he should become a man. But the objection to this is obvious. It greatly weakens the force of the apostle's argument. His object is to state the depth of humiliation to which he descended, and this was best done by saying that he descended to the lowest condition of humanity, and appeared in the most humble garb. The idea of being a "servant or minister of God" would not express that, for this is a term which might be applied to the highest angel in heaven. Though the Lord Jesus was not *literally* a servant or slave, yet what is here affirmed was true of him in the following respects:—(1.) he occupied a most lowly condition in life; and (2.) he condescended to perform such acts as are appropriate only to those who are servants. "I am among you as he that serveth;" Luke xxii. 27; comp. John xiii. 4—15. ¶ *And was made in the likeness of men.* Marg., *habit.* The Greek word means *likeness, resemblance.* The meaning is, he was made like unto

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became [a] obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

a He.12.2.

men by assuming such a body as theirs; see Notes, chap. viii. 3.

8. *And being found.* That is, being such, or existing as a man, he humbled himself. ¶ *In fashion as a man.* The word rendered *fashion*—σχῆμα—means figure, mien, deportment. Here it is the same as *state*, or *condition*. The sense is, that when he was reduced to this condition he humbled himself, and obeyed even unto death. He took upon himself all the attributes of a man. He assumed all the innocent infirmities of our nature. He appeared as other men do, was subjected to the necessity of food and raiment, like others, and was made liable to suffering, as other men are. It was still he who had been in the "form of God" who thus appeared; and, though his divine glory had been for a time laid aside, yet it was not extinguished or lost. It is important to remember, in all our meditations on the Saviour, that it was *the same Being* who had been invested with so much glory in heaven, that appeared on earth in the form of a man. ¶ *He humbled himself.* Even then, when he appeared as a man. He had not only laid aside the symbols of his glory (ver. 7), and become a man; but when *he was a man*, he humbled himself. Humiliation was a constant characteristic of him as a man. He did not aspire to high honours; he did not affect pomp and parade; he did not demand the service of a train of menials; but he condescended to the lowest conditions of life; Luke xxii. 27. The words here are very carefully chosen. In the former case (ver. 7), when he *became* a man, he "emptied himself," or laid aside the symbols of his glory; now, *when* a man, he *humbled* himself. That is, though he was God appearing in the form of man—a divine person on earth—yet he did not assume and assert the dignity and prerogatives appropriate to a divine being, but put himself in a condition of obedience. For *such* a being to obey law, implied voluntary humiliation; and the greatness of his humiliation was shown by his becoming entirely obedient, even till he died on the cross. ¶ *And became obedient.* He subjected himself to the law of God, and wholly obeyed it; Heb. x. 7, 9. It was a characteristic of the Redeemer that he yielded perfect obedience to the will of God. Should it be said that, if he was God himself, he must have been himself the lawgiver, we may reply that this rendered his obedience the more wonderful and the more meritorious. If a monarch should for an important purpose place himself in a position to obey his own laws, nothing could show in a more striking manner their importance in his view. The highest honour that has been shown to the law of God on earth was, that it was perfectly observed by him who made the law—the great Mediator. ¶ *Unto death.* He obeyed even when obedience terminated in death. The point of this expression is this: One may readily and cheerfully obey another where there is no particular peril. But the case is different where obedience is attended with danger. The child shows a spirit of true obedience when he yields to the commands of a father, though it should expose him to hazard; the servant who obeys his master, when obedience is attended with risk of life; the soldier, when he is morally certain that to obey will be followed by death. Thus many a company or platoon has been ordered into the "deadly breach," or directed to storm a redoubt, or to scale a wall, or to face a cannon, when it was morally certain that death would be the consequence. No profounder spirit of obedience can be evinced than this. It should be said, however, that the obedience of the soldier is in many cases scarcely voluntary, since, if he did *not* obey, death would be the penalty. But, in the case of the Redeemer, it was wholly voluntary. He placed himself in the condition of a servant to do the will of God, and then never shrank from what that con-

9 Wherefore [a] God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

[a] He.2.9; Re.3.21.

10 That at the name of Jesus every [b] knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth.

[b] Is.45.23; Rev.5.13.

dition involved. ¶ *Even the death of the cross.* It was not such a death as a servant might incur by crossing a stream, or by falling among robbers, or by being worn out by toil; it was not such as the soldier meets when he is suddenly cut down, covered with glory as he falls; it was the long lingering, painful, humiliating death of the cross. Many a one might be willing to obey if the death that was suffered was regarded as glorious; but when it is ignominious, and of the most degrading character, and the most torturing that human ingenuity can invent, then the whole character of the obedience is changed. Yet this was the obedience the Lord Jesus evinced; and it was in this way that his remarkable readiness to suffer was shown.

9. *Wherefore.* As a reward of this humiliation and these sufferings. The idea is, that there was an appropriate reward for it, and that that was bestowed upon him by his exaltation as Mediator to the right hand of God; comp. Notes on Heb. ii. 9. ¶ *God also hath highly exalted him.* As Mediator. Though he was thus humbled, and appeared in the form of a servant, he is now raised up to the throne of glory, and to universal dominion. This exaltation is spoken of the Redeemer *as he was*, sustaining a divine and a human nature. If there was, as has been supposed, some obscuration or withdrawing of the symbols of his glory (ver. 7), when he became a man, then this refers to the restoration of that glory, and would seem to imply, also, that there was additional honour conferred on him. There was all the augmented glory resulting from the work which he had performed in redeeming man. ¶ *And given him a name which is above every name.* No other name can be compared with his. It stands alone. He only is Redeemer, Saviour. He only is Christ, the Anointed of God; see Notes on Heb. i. 4. He only is the Son of God. His rank, his titles, his dignity, are above all others; see this illustrated in the Notes on Eph. i. 20, 21.

10. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.* The *knee* should bow, or bend, in token of honour, or worship; that is, all men should adore him. This cannot mean merely that at the mention of the name of *Jesus* we should bow; nor is there any evidence that God requires this. Why should we bow at the mention of *that* name, rather than at any of the other titles of the Redeemer? Is there any *special* sacredness or honour in it above the other names which he bears? And why should we bow at *his* name rather than at the name of the Father? Besides, if any *special* homage is to be paid to the name of the Saviour under the authority of *this* passage—and this is the only one on which the authority of this custom is based—it should be by bowing the *knee*, not the "*head.*" But the truth is, this authorizes and requires neither; and the custom of bowing at the name of Jesus, in some churches, has arisen entirely from a misinterpretation of this passage. There is no other place in the Bible to which an appeal is made to authorize the custom; comp. Neal's History of the Puritans, chap. 5. Ninth 5. The meaning here is, not that a *special* act of respect or adoration should be shown wherever the *name* "Jesus" occurs in reading the Scriptures, or whenever it is mentioned, but that he was so exalted that it would be proper that all in heaven and on earth should worship him, and that the time would come when he would be thus everywhere acknowledged as Lord. The bowing of the knee properly expresses homage, respect, adoration (comp. Notes, Rom. xi. 4); and it cannot be done to the Saviour by those who are in heaven, unless it be divine. ¶ *Of things in heaven.* ἐπουρανίων—rather

11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, [a] to the glory of God the Father.

a John13.13; Ro.14.9.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much

of *beings* in heaven, the word "things" being improperly supplied by our translators. The word *may* be in the neuter plural; but it may be also in the masculine plural, and denote *beings* rather than *things*. *Things* do not bow the knee; and the reference here is undoubtedly to angels, and to the "spirits of the just made perfect" in heaven. If Jesus is worshipped there, he is divine; for there is no idolatry of a creature in heaven. In this whole passage there is probably an allusion to Isa. xlv. 23; see it illustrated in the Notes on Rom. xiv. 11. In the great divisions here specified —of those in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth—the apostle intends, doubtless, to denote the universe. The same mode of designating the universe occurs in Rev. v. 13; Ex. xx. 4; comp. Ps. xcvi. 11, 12. This mode of expression is equivalent to saying, "all that is above, around, and beneath us," and arises from what *appears* to us. The division is natural and obvious—that which is above us in the heavens, that which is on the earth where we dwell, and all that is beneath us. ¶ *And* things *in earth.* Rather, "beings on earth," to wit, *men;* for they only are capable of rendering homage. ¶ *And* things *under the earth.* Beings under the earth. The whole universe shall confess that he is Lord. This embraces, doubtless, those who have departed from this life, and perhaps includes also fallen angels. The meaning is, that they shall all acknowledge him as universal Lord; all bow to his sovereign will; all be subject to his control; all recognise him as divine. The fallen and the lost will do this; for they will be constrained to yield an unwilling homage to him by submitting to the sentence from his lips that shall consign them to woe; and thus the whole universe shall acknowledge the exalted dignity of the Son of God. But this does not mean that they will all be *saved,* for the guilty and the lost may be compelled to acknowledge his power, and submit to his decree as the sovereign of the universe. There is the free and cheerful homage of the heart which they who worship him in heaven will render; and there is the constrained homage which they must yield who are compelled to acknowledge his authority.

11. *And* that *every tongue should confess.* Every one should acknowledge him. On the duty and importance of *confessing Christ,* see Notes on Rom. x. 9, 10. ¶ *That Jesus Christ* is *Lord.* The word *Lord,* here, is used in its primitive and proper sense, as denoting owner, ruler, sovereign; comp. Notes, Rom. xiv. 9. The meaning is, that all should acknowledge him as the universal sovereign. ¶ *To the glory of God the Father.* Such a universal confession would honour God; see Notes on John v. 23, where this sentiment is explained.

12. *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed.* The Philippians had from the beginning manifested a remarkable readiness to show respect to the apostle, and to listen to his teaching. This readiness he more than once refers to and commends. He still appeals to them, and urges them to follow his counsels, that they might secure their salvation. ¶ *Now much more in my absence.* Though they had been obedient when he was with them, yet circumstances had occurred in his absence which made their obedience more remarkable, and more worthy of special commendation. ¶ *Work out your own salvation.* This important command was first addressed to Christians, but there is no reason why the same command should not be regarded as addressed to all—for it is equally applicable to all. The *duty* of doing this is enjoined here; the *reason* for making the effort, or the *encouragement* for the effort, is stated in the

more in my absence, work [a] out your own salvation with fear [b] and trembling:

[a] Pr.10.16; John 6.27-29; He.4.11; 2Pe. 1.5-10.

[b] Ep.6.5.

next verse. In regard to the command here, it is natural to inquire why it is a duty; and what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it? On the first of these inquiries, it may be observed that it is a *duty* to make a personal effort to secure salvation, or to work out our salvation: (1.) Because God *commands* it. There is no command more frequently repeated in the Scriptures, than the command to make to ourselves a new heart; to strive to enter in at the strait gate; to break off from sin, and to repent. (2.) It is a duty because it is our own personal interest that is at stake. No other one has, or can have, as much interest in our salvation as we have. It is every man's *duty* to be as happy as possible here, and to be prepared for eternal happiness in the future world. No man has a *right* either to throw away his life or his soul. He has no more right to do the one than the other; and if it is a man's duty to endeavour to save his life when in danger of drowning, it is no less his duty to endeavour to save his soul when in danger of hell. (3.) Our earthly friends cannot save us. No effort of theirs can deliver us from eternal death without our own exertion. Great as may be their solicitude for us, and much as they may do, there *is* a point where their efforts must stop—and that point is *always* short of our salvation, unless *we* are roused to seek salvation. They may pray, and weep, and plead, but they cannot save us. There is a work to be done on our own hearts which *they* cannot do. (4.) It is a duty, because the salvation of the soul will not take care of itself without an effort on our part. There is no more reason to suppose this than that health and life will take care of themselves without our own exertion. And yet many live as if they supposed that *somehow* all would yet be well; that the matter of salvation need not give them any concern, for that things *will so arrange themselves* that they will be saved. Why should they suppose this any more in regard to religion than in regard to anything else? (5.) It is a duty, because there is no reason to expect the divine interposition without our own effort. No such interposition is *promised* to any man, and why should he expect it? In the case of all who *have* been saved, they have made an effort—and why should we expect that God will favour us more than he did them? "God helps them who help themselves;" and what reason has any man to suppose that he will interfere in his case and save him, if he will put forth no effort to "work out his own salvation?" In regard to the other inquiry—What does the command imply; or what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it? we may observe, that it does *not* mean (1.) that we are to attempt to *deserve* salvation on the ground of merit. That is out of the question; for what *can* man do that shall be an *equivalent* for eternal happiness in heaven? Nor (2.) does it mean that we are to endeavour to make atonement for past sins. That would be equally impossible, and it is, besides, unnecessary. *That* work has been done by the great Redeemer. But it means, (1.) that we are to make an honest *effort* to be saved in the way which God has appointed; (2.) that we are to break off from our sins by true repentance; (3.) that we are to believe in the Saviour, and honestly to put our trust in him; (4.) that we are to give up all that we have to God; (5.) that we are to break away from all evil companions and evil plans of life; and (6.) that we are to resist all the allurements of the world, and all the temptations which may assail us that would lead us back from God, and *are to persevere unto the end.* The great difficulty in working out salvation is in forming a purpose *to begin at once.* When *that* purpose is formed, salvation is easy. ¶ *With fear and trem-*

13 For it is God [a] which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

[a] He.13.21.

bling. That is, with that kind of anxiety which one has who feels that he has an important interest at stake, and that he is in danger of losing it. The reason or the ground for "fear" in this case is in general this: *there is danger of losing the soul.* (1.) So many persons make shipwreck of all hope and perish, that there is danger that we may also. (2.) There are so many temptations and allurements in the world, and so many things that lead us to defer attention to religion, that there is danger that we may be lost. (3.) There is danger that if the present opportunity passes, another may not occur. Death may soon overtake us. No one has a moment to lose. No one can designate *one single moment* of his life, and say, "I may *safely* lose that moment. I may *safely* spend it in the neglect of my soul." (4.) It should be done with the most earnest concern, from the immensity of the interest at stake. If the soul is lost, all is lost. And who is there that can estimate the value of that soul which is thus in danger of being lost for ever?

13. *For it is God that worketh in you.* This is given as a *reason* for making an effort to be saved, or for working out our salvation. It is often thought to be the very reverse, and men often feel that if *God* works "in us to will and to do," there can be no need of our making an effort, and that there would be no use in it. If God does all the work, say they, why should we not patiently sit still, and wait until he puts forth his power and accomplishes in us what he wills? It is of importance, therefore, to understand what this declaration of the apostle *means*, in order to see whether this objection is valid, or whether the fact that God "works in us" is to be regarded as a reason why *we* should make no effort. The word rendered *worketh*—ἐνεργῶν—*working*—is from a verb meaning to work, to be active, to produce effect—and is that from which we have derived the word *energetic.* The meaning is, that God *produces a certain effect in us;* he exerts such an influence over us as to lead to a certain result in our minds—to wit, "to will and to do." Nothing is said of the *mode* in which this is done, and probably this cannot be understood by us here; comp. John iii. 8. In regard to the divine agency here referred to, however, certain things, though of a *negative* character, are clear. (1.) It is not God who *acts for us.* He leads *us* to "will and to do." It is not said that *he wills and does for us*, and it cannot be. It is *man* that "wills and does"—though God so influences him that he does it. (2.) He does not *compel* or *force* us against our will. He leads us to "*will* as well as to "do." The *will* cannot be forced; and the meaning here must be that God exerts such an influence as to make us *willing* to obey him; comp. Ps. cx. 3. (3.) It is not a *physical* force, but it must be a *moral* influence. A physical power cannot act on the *will.* You may chain a man, incarcerate him in the deepest dungeon, starve him, scourge him, apply red-hot pincers to his flesh, or place on him the thumb-screw, but the *will* is still free. You cannot bend that or control it, or make him believe otherwise than as he *chooses* to believe. The declaration here, therefore, cannot mean that God compels us, or that we are any thing else but free agents still, though he "works in us to will and to do." It must mean merely that he exerts such an influence as to secure this result. ¶ *To will and to do of* his *good pleasure.* Not to will and to do *every thing*, but 'his good pleasure." The extent of the divine agency *here* referred to, is limited to that, and no man should adduce this passage to prove that God "works" in him to lead him to commit sin. This passage teaches no such doctrine. It refers here to Christians, and means that he works in *their* hearts that which is agreeable to him, or leads them to "will and to do" that which is in accordance with his own will.

14 Do all things without murmurings [a] and disputings; [b]

15 That ye may be blameless

[a] 1 Co.10.10. [b] Ro.14.1.

The word rendered "good pleasure" —εὐδοκία—means *delight, good-will, favour;* then *good pleasure, purpose, will;* see Eph. i. 5; 2 Thess. i. 11. Here it means that which would be agreeable to him; and the idea is, that he exerts such an influence as to lead men to *will* and to *do* that which is in accordance with *his* will. Paul regarded this fact as a *reason* why we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It is with that view that he urges it, and not with any idea that it will embarrass our efforts, or be a hindrance to us in seeking salvation. The question then is, how this fact can be a motive to us to make an effort? In regard to this we may observe, (1.) That the work of our salvation is such that we need *help*, and such help as God only can impart. We need it to enable us to overcome our sins; to give us such a view of them as to produce true penitence; to break away from our evil companions; to give up our plans of evil, and to resolve to lead different lives. We need help that our minds may be enlightened; that we may be led in the way of truth; that we may be saved from the danger of error, and that we may not be suffered to fall back into the ways of transgression. *Such* help we should welcome from any quarter; and any assistance furnished on these points will not interfere with our freedom. (2.) The influence which God exerts on the mind is in the way of *help* or aid. What *he* does will not embarrass or hinder us. It will prevent no effort which we make to be saved; it will throw no hindrance or obstacle in the way. When we speak of God's working "in us to will and to do," men often seem to suppose that his agency will *hinder* us, or throw some obstacle in our way, or exert some *evil* influence on our minds, or make it more difficult for us to work out our salvation than it would be without his agency. But this cannot be. We may be sure that *all* the influence which God exerts over our minds, will be to aid us in the work of salvation, not to embarrass us; will be to enable us to overcome our spiritual enemies and our sins, and not to put additional weapons into their hands or to confer on them new power. Why should men ever dread the influence of God on their hearts, *as if* he would hinder their efforts for their own good? (3.) The fact that *God works* is an encouragement for us to work. When a man is about to set out a peach or an apple tree, it is an *encouragement* for him to reflect that the agency of God is around him, and that *he* can cause the tree to produce blossoms, and leaves, and fruit. When he is about to plough and sow his farm, it is an encouragement, not a hindrance, to reflect that *God works*, and that he can quicken the grain that is sown, and produce an abundant harvest. What encouragement of a higher order can man ask? And what farmer *is afraid of the agency of God* in the case, or supposes that the fact that God exerts an agency is a reason why he should not plough and plant his field, or set out his orchard? Poor encouragement would a man have in these things if God did not exert any agency in the world, and could not be expected to make the tree grow or to cause the grain to spring up; and *equally* poor would be all the encouragement in religion without his aid.

14. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings.* In a quiet, peaceful, inoffensive manner. Let there be no brawls, strifes, or contentions. The object of the apostle here is, probably, to illustrate the sentiment which he had expressed in ver. 3—5, where he had inculcated the general duties of humbleness of mind, and of esteeming others better than themselves. In order that that spirit might be fully manifested, he now enjoins the duty of doing every thing in a quiet and gentle manner, and of avoiding any species of strife; see Notes on Eph. iv. 31, 32.

15. *That ye may be blameless.* That you may give no occasion for others

and [1] harmless, the sons [a] of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked [b] and perverse nation,

1 or, *sincere.* a Mat.5.45; Ep.5.1. b De.32.5.

among whom [2] ye shine as [c] lights in the world;

16 Holding forth the word of

2 or, *shine ye.* c Mat.5.14,16.

to accuse you of having done wrong. ¶ *And harmless.* Marg., *sincere.* The Greek word (ἀκέραιος) means properly that which is *unmixed;* and then *pure, sincere.* The idea here is, that they should be artless, simple, without guile. Then they would injure no one. The word occurs only in Matt. x. 16; Phil. ii. 15, where it is rendered *harmless,* and Rom. xvi. 19, where it is rendered *sincere;* see Notes on Matt. x. 16, and Rom. xvi. 19. ¶ *The sons of God.* The children of God; a phrase by which true Christians were denoted; see Notes, Matt. v. 45; Eph. v. 1. ¶ *Without rebuke.* Without blame; without giving occasion for any one to complain of you. ¶ *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.* Among those of perverted sentiments and habits; those who are disposed to complain and find fault; those who will take every occasion to pervert what you do and say, and who seek every opportunity to retard the cause of truth and righteousness. It is not certainly known to whom the apostle refers here, but it seems not improbable that he had particular reference to the Jews who were in Philippi. The language here used was employed by Moses (Deut. xxxii. 5), as applicable to the Jewish people, and it is accurately descriptive of the character of the nation in the time of Paul. The Jews were among the most bitter foes of the gospel, and did perhaps more than any other people to embarrass the cause of truth and prevent the spread of the true religion. ¶ *Among whom ye shine.* Marg., "or, *shine ye.*" The Greek will admit of either construction, and expositors have differed as to the correct interpretation. Rosenmüller, Doddridge, and others regard it as *imperative,* and as designed to enforce on them the *duty* of letting their light shine. Erasmus says it is doubtful whether it is to be understood in the *indicative* or *imperative.* Grotius, Koppe, Bloomfield, and others regard it as in the *indicative,* and as teaching that they did *in fact* shine as lights in the world. The sense can be determined only by the connection; and in regard to it different readers will form different opinions. It seems to me that the connection seems rather to require the sense of *duty* or *obligation* to be understood. The apostle is enforcing on them the duty of being blameless and harmless; of holding forth the word of life; and it is in accordance with his design to remind them that they *ought* to be lights to those around them. ¶ *As lights in the world.* The comparison of Christians with *light,* often occurs in the Scriptures; see Notes on Matt. v. 14, 16. The image here is not improbably taken from *light-houses* on a sea-coast. The image then is, that as those light-houses are placed on a dangerous coast to apprize vessels of their peril, and to save them from shipwreck, so the light of Christian piety shines on a dark world, and in the dangers of the voyage which we are making; see the Note of Burder, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc.*

16. *Holding forth the word of life.* That is, you are under obligation to hold forth the word of life. It is a duty incumbent on you as Christians to do it. The "word of life" means the gospel, called the "word of life" because it is the message that promises life; or perhaps this is a Hebraism, denoting *the living,* or *life-giving word.* The gospel stands thus in contrast with all human systems of religion—for they have no efficacy to save—and to the law which "killeth;" see Notes on John vi. 63, and 2 Cor. iii. 6. The *duty* here enjoined is that of making the gospel known to others, and of thus keeping up the knowledge of it in the world. This duty rests on Christians (comp. Matt. v. 14, 16.), and they cannot escape from the obligation. They are bound to do this, not only because God commands it, but (1.) because they are called into

life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, [a] neither laboured in vain.

17 Yea, and if I be [1] offered [b] upon the sacrifice and service of

a 1 Co.9.26. 1 *poured forth.* *b* 2 Ti.4.6.

the church that they may be witnesses for God, Isa. xliii. 10. (2.) Because they are kept on the earth for that purpose. If it were not for some such design, they would be removed to heaven at once on their conversion. (3.) Because there are no others to do it. The gay will not warn the gay, nor the proud the proud, nor the scoffer the scoffer. The thoughtless and the vain will not go and tell others that there is a God and a Saviour; nor will the wicked warn the wicked, and tell them that they are in the way to hell. There are none who *will* do this but Christians; and, if *they* neglect it, sinners will go unwarned and unalarmed down to death. This duty rests on *every Christian.* The exhortation here is not made to the pastor, or to any officer of the church particularly; but *to the mass of communicants. They* are to shine as lights in the world; *they* are to hold forth the word of life. There is not one member of a church who is so obscure as to be exempt from the obligation; and there is not one who may not do something in this work. If we are asked *how* this may be done, we may reply, (1.) They are to do it by *example.* Every one is to hold forth the living word in that way. (2.) By efforts to send the gospel to those who have it not. There is almost no one who cannot contribute *something,* though it may be but two mites, to accomplish this. (3.) By conversation. There is no Christian who has not some influence over the minds and hearts of others; and he is bound to use that influence in holding forth the word of life. (4.) By defending the divine origin of religion when attacked. (5.) By rebuking sin, and thus testifying to the value of holiness. The defence of the truth, under God, and the diffusion of a knowledge of the way of salvation, rests on those who are Christians. Paganism never originates a system which it would not be an advantage to the world to have destroyed as soon as it is conceived. Philosophy has never yet told of a way by which a sinner may be saved. The world at large devises no plan for the salvation of the soul. The most crude, ill-digested, and perverse systems of belief conceivable, prevail in the community called "*the world.*" Every form of opinion has an advocate there; every monstrous vagary that the human mind ever conceived, finds friends and defenders there. The human mind has of itself no elastic energy to bring it from the ways of sin; it has no recuperative power to lead it back to God. *The world at large is dependant on the church for any just views of God, and of the way of salvation;* and every Christian is to do *his* part in making that salvation known. ¶ *That I may rejoice.* This was *one* reason which the apostle urged, and which it was proper to urge, why they should let their light shine. He had been the instrument of their conversion, he had founded their church, he was their spiritual father, and had shown the deepest interest in their welfare; and he now entreats them, as a means of promoting his highest joy, to be faithful and holy. The exemplary piety and holy lives of the members of a church will be one of the sources of highest joy to a pastor in the day of judgment; comp. 3 John 4. ¶ *In the day of Christ.* The day when Christ shall appear—the day of judgment. It is called *the day of Christ,* because he will be the glorious object which will be prominent on that day; it will be the day in which he will be honoured as the judge of all the world. ¶ *That I have not run in vain.* That is, that I have not lived in vain—life being compared with a race; see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 26. ¶ *Neither laboured in vain.* In preaching the gospel. Their holy lives would be the fullest proof that he was a faithful preacher.

17. *Yea, and if I be offered.* Marg., *poured forth.* The mention of his labours in their behalf, in the previous verse, seems to have suggested to him

your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

the sufferings which he was likely yet to endure on their account. He had laboured for their salvation. He had exposed himself to peril that they and others might have the gospel. On their account he had suffered much; he had been made a prisoner at Rome; and there was a possibility, if not a probability, that his life might be a forfeit for his labours in their behalf. Yet he says that, even if this should happen, he would not regret it, but it would be a source of joy. The word which is here used—σπένδομαι—properly means, to pour out, to make a libation; and is commonly used, in the classic writers, in connection with sacrifices. It refers to a drink-offering, where one who was about to offer a sacrifice, or to present a drink-offering to the gods, before he tasted of it himself, poured out a part of it on the altar. *Passow.* It is used also to denote the fact that, when an animal was about to be slain in sacrifice, wine was poured on it as a solemn act of devoting it to God; comp. Num. xv. 5; xxviii. 7, 14. In like manner, Paul may have regarded himself as a victim prepared for the sacrifice. In the New Testament it is found only in this place, and in 2 Tim. iv. 6, where it is rendered, "I am ready to be offered;" comp. Notes on that place. It does not here mean that Paul really expected to be *a sacrifice*, or to make an expiation for sin by his death; but that he might be called to *pour out* his blood, or to offer up his life *as if* he were a sacrifice, or an offering to God. We have a similar use of language, when we say that a man *sacrifices himself* for his friends or his country. ¶ *Upon the sacrifice.* ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ. The word here rendered *sarifice*, means (1.) the *act* of sacrificing; (2.) the *victim* that is offered; and (3.) any oblation or offering. *Robinson. Lex.* Here it must be used in the latter sense, and is connected with "*faith*"—"the sacrifice of your faith." The reference is probably to the faith, *i. e.*, the religion of the Philippians, regarded as a sacrifice or an *offering* to God; the worship which they rendered to him. The idea of Paul is, that if, *in order* to render that offering what it should be—to make it as complete and acceptable to God as possible—it were necessary for him to die, pouring out his blood, and strength, and life, as wine was poured out to prepare a sacrifice for the altar and make it complete, he would not refuse to do it, but would rejoice in the opportunity. He seems to have regarded them as engaged in making an offering of faith, and as endeavouring to make the offering complete and acceptable; and says that if *his* death were necessary to make their piety of the highest and most acceptable kind, he was ready to die. ¶ *And service.* λειτουργίᾳ—a word taken from an act of worship, or public service, and especially the *ministry* of those engaged in offering sacrifices; Luke i. 23; Heb. viii. 6. Here it means, the *ministering* or service which the Philippians rendered to God; the worship which they offered, the essential element of which was *faith*. Paul was willing to endure anything, even to suffer death in their cause, if it would tend to make their "service" more pure, spiritual, and acceptable to God. The meaning of the whole is, (1.) that the sufferings and dangers which he now experienced were in their cause, and on their behalf; and (2.) that he was willing to lay down his life, if their piety would be promoted, and their worship be rendered more pure and acceptable to God. ¶ *I joy.* That is, I am not afraid of death; and if my dying can be the means of promoting your piety, it will be a source of rejoicing; comp. Notes on chap. i. 23. ¶ *And rejoice with you all.* My joy will be increased in anything that promotes yours. The fruits of my death will reach and benefit you, and it will be a source of mutual congratulation.

18. *For the same cause.* Because we are united, and what affects one of us should affect both. ¶ *Do ye joy and rejoice with me.* That is, "do not

19 [1] But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus [a] shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

1 *moreover.*

20 For I have no man [2] like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

a 1 Th. 3. 2.

2 or, *so dear unto me.*

grieve at my death. Be not overwhelmed with sorrow, but let your hearts be filled with congratulation. It will be a privilege and a pleasure thus to die." This is a noble sentiment, and one that could have been uttered only by a heroic and generous mind—by a man who did not dread death, and who felt that it was honourable thus to die. Doddridge has illustrated the sentiment by an appropriate reference to a fact stated by Plutarch. A brave Athenian returned from the battle of Marathon, bleeding with wounds and exhausted, and rushed into the presence of the magistrates, and uttered only these two words—χαιρετε, χαιρομεν—"*rejoice, we rejoice,*" and immediately expired. So Paul felt that there was occasion for him, and for all whom he loved, to rejoice, if he was permitted to die in the cause of others, and in such a manner that his death would benefit the world.

19. *But I trust in the Lord Jesus.* His hope was that the Lord Jesus would so order affairs as to permit this—an expression that no man could use who did not regard the Lord Jesus as on the throne, and as more than human. ¶ *To send Timotheus shortly unto you.* There was a special reason why Paul desired to send Timothy to them rather than any other person, which he himself states, ver. 22. "*Ye know the proof of him,* that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." From this passage, as well as from chap. i. 1, where Timothy is joined with Paul in the salutation, it is evident that he had been with the apostle at Philippi. But this fact is nowhere mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which contains an account of the visit of Paul to that place. The narrative in the Acts, however, as Dr. Paley has remarked (*Horæ Paulinæ, in loc.*), is such as to render this altogether probable, and the manner in which the fact is adverted to here is such as would have occurred to no one forging an epistle like this, and shows that the Acts of the Apostles and the epistle are independent books, and are not the work of imposture. In the Acts of the Apostles it is said that when Paul came to Derbe and Lystra he found a certain disciple named Timothy, whom he would have go forth with him; chap. xvi. 1—3. The narrative then proceeds with an account of the progress of Paul through various provinces of Asia Minor, till it brings him to Troas. There he was warned in a vision to go over into Macedonia. In pursuance of this call, he passed over the Ægean sea, came to Samothracia, and thence to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi. No mention is made, indeed, of Timothy as being with Paul at Philippi, but after he had left that city, and had gone to Berea, where the "brethren sent away Paul," it is added, "but Silas and *Timotheus* abode there still." From this it is evident that he had accompanied them in their journey, and had no doubt been with them at Philippi. For the argument which Dr. Paley has derived from the manner in which this subject is mentioned in the Acts, and in this epistle, in favour of the genuineness of the Scripture account; see Horæ Paul. on the epistle to the Philippians, No. iv. ¶ *When I know your state.* It was a considerable time since Epaphroditus had left the Philippians, and since, therefore, Paul had been informed of their condition.

20. *For I have no man like-minded.* Marg., *so dear unto me.* The Greek is, ισοψυχον—*similar in mind,* or like-minded. The meaning is, that there was no one with him who would feel so deep an interest in their welfare. ¶ *Who will naturally care.* The word rendered *naturally*—γνησιως—means *sincerely,* and the idea is, that

21 For all seek their own, [a] not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

[a] 2 Ti. 3. 2.

he would regard their interests with a sincere tenderness and concern. He might be depended on to enter heartily into their concerns. This arose doubtless from the fact that he had been with them when the church was founded there, and that he felt a deeper interest in what related to the apostle Paul than any other man. Paul regarded Timothy *as a son*, and his sending him on such an occasion would evince the feelings of a father who should send a beloved son on an important message.

21. *For all seek their own.* That is, all who are with me. Who Paul had with him at this time is not fully known, but he doubtless means that this remark should apply to the mass of Christians and Christian ministers then in Rome. Perhaps he had proposed to some of them to go and visit the church at Philippi, and they had declined it because of the distance and the dangers of the way. When the trial of Paul came on before the emperor, all who were with him in Rome fled from him (2 Tim. iv. 16), and it is possible that the same disregard of his wishes and his welfare had already begun to manifest itself among the Christians who were at Rome, so that he was constrained to say that, as a general thing, they sought their own ease and comfort, and were unwilling to deny themselves in order to promote the happiness of those who lived in the remote parts of the world. Let us not be harsh in judging them. How many professing Christians in *our* cities and towns are there now who would be willing to leave their business and their comfortable homes and go on embassy like this to Philippi? How many are there who would not seek some excuse, and show that it was a characteristic that they "sought their own" rather than the things which pertained to the kingdom of Jesus Christ? ¶ *Not the things which are Jesus Christ's.* Which pertain to his cause and kingdom. They are not willing to practise self-denial in order to promote that cause. It is implied here (1.) that it is the *duty* of those who profess religion to seek the things which pertain to the kingdom of the Redeemer, or to make that the great and leading object of their lives. They are bound to be willing to sacrifice "their own" things—to deny themselves of ease, and to be always ready to expose themselves to peril and want if they may be the means of advancing his cause. (2.) That frequently this is *not* done by those who profess religion. It was the case with the professed Christians at Rome, and it is often the case in the churches now. There are few Christians who deny themselves much to promote the kingdom of the Redeemer; few who are willing to lay aside what they regard as "*their own*" in order to advance *his* cause. Men live for their own ease; for their families; for the prosecution of their own business—as if a Christian *could* have anything which he has a right to pursue independently of the kingdom of the Redeemer, and without regard to his will and glory.

22. *But ye know the proof of him.* You have had evidence among yourselves how faithfully Timothy devoted himself to the promotion of the gospel, and how constantly he served with me. This proves that Timothy was with Paul when he was at Philippi. ¶ *As a son with the father.* Manifesting the same spirit towards me which a son does towards a father, and evincing the same interest in my work. He did all he could do to aid me, and lighten my labours and sufferings.

23. *So soon as I shall see how it will go with me.* Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and there was not a little uncertainty whether he would be condemned or acquitted. He was, it is

24 But [a] I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, [b] my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, [c] but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

a chap. 1. 25.

b chap. 4. 18. *c* Phile. 2.

commonly supposed, in fact released on the first trial; 2 Tim. iv. 16. He now felt that he would soon be able to send Timothy to them at any rate. If he was condemned and put to death, he would, of course, have no further occasion for his services, and if he was released from his present troubles and dangers, he could spare him for a season to go and visit the churches.

24. *But I trust in the Lord, &c.* Note, chap. i. 25.

25. *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus.* Epaphroditus is nowhere else mentioned but in this epistle; see chap. iv. 18. All that is known of him, therefore, is what is mentioned here. He was from Philippi, and was a member of the church there. He had been employed by the Philippians to carry relief to Paul when he was in Rome (chap. iv. 18), and while in Rome he was taken dangerously sick. News of this had been conveyed to Philippi, and again intelligence had been brought to him that they had heard of his sickness and that they were much affected by it. On his recovery, Paul thought it best that he should return at once to Philippi, and doubtless sent this epistle by him. He is much commended by Paul for his faithfulness and zeal. ¶ *My brother.* In the gospel; or brother Christian. These expressions of affectionate regard must have been highly gratifying to the Philippians. ¶ *And companion in labour.* It is not impossible that he may have laboured with Paul in the gospel, at Philippi; but more probably the sense is, that he regarded him as engaged in the same great work that he was. It is not probable that he assisted Paul much in Rome, as he appears to have been sick during a considerable part of the time he was there. ¶ *And fellow-soldier.* Christians and Christian ministers are compared with soldiers (Philem. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4), because of the nature of the service in which they are engaged. The Christian life is a warfare; there are many foes to be overcome; the period which they are to serve is fixed by the Great Captain of salvation, and they will soon be permitted to enjoy the triumphs of victory. Paul regarded himself as enlisted to make war on all the spiritual enemies of the Redeemer, and he esteemed Epaphroditus as one who had shown that he was worthy to be engaged in so good a cause. ¶ *But your messenger.* Sent to convey supplies to Paul; chap. iv. 18. The original is, "your apostle"—ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον—and some have proposed to take this *literally*, meaning that he was the *apostle* of the church at Philippi, or that he was their *bishop*. The advocates for Episcopacy have been the rather inclined to this, because in chap. i. 1, there are but two orders of ministers mentioned—"bishops and deacons"—from which they have supposed that "*the* bishop" might have been absent, and that "the bishop" was probably this Epaphroditus. But against this supposition the objections are obvious. (1.) The word ἀπόστολος means properly *one sent forth*, a messenger, and it is uniformly used in this sense unless there is something in the connection to limit it to *an apostle*, technically so called. (2.) The supposition that it here means *a messenger* meets all the circumstances of the case, and describes exactly what Epaphroditus did. He was in fact sent as *a messenger* to Paul; chap. iv. 18. (3.) He was *not* an apostle in the proper sense of the term—the apostles having been chosen to be witnesses of the life, the teachings, the death, and the resurrection of the Saviour; see Acts i. 22; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 1. (4.) If he *had been* an apostle, it is altogether improbable that he would have seen sent on an errand comparatively

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I send him therefore the more carefully, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and [1] hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ

1 or, *honour such*; 1 Co. 16. 18.

so humble as that of carrying supplies to Paul. Was there no one else who could do this without sending their *bishop?* Would a diocese be likely to employ a "bishop" for such a purpose now? ¶ *And he that ministered to my wants;* chap. iv. 18.

26. *For he longed after you all.* He was desirous to see you all, and to relieve your anxiety in regard to his safety.

27. *For indeed he was sick nigh unto death.* Dr. Paley has remarked (*Hor. Paul.* on Phil. No. ii.) that the account of the sickness and recovery of Epaphroditus is such as to lead us to suppose that he was not restored by miracle; and he infers that the power of healing the sick was conferred on the apostles only occasionally, and did not depend at all on their will, since, if it had, there is every reason to suppose that Paul would at once have restored him to health. This account, he adds, shows also that this epistle is not the work of an impostor. Had it been, a miracle would not have been spared. Paul would not have been introduced as showing such anxiety about a friend lying at the point of death, and as being unable to restore him. It would have been said that he interposed at once, and raised him up to health. ¶ *But God had mercy on him.* By restoring him to health, evidently not by miracle, but by the use of ordinary means. ¶ *On me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.* In addition to all the sorrows of imprisonment, and the prospect of a trial, and the want of friends. The sources of his sorrow, had Epaphroditus died, would have been such as these: (1.) He would have lost a valued friend, and one whom he esteemed as a brother and worthy fellow-labourer. (2.) He would have felt that the church at Philippi had lost a valuable member. (3.) His grief might have been aggravated from the consideration that his life had been lost in endeavouring to do *him* good. He would have felt that he was the occasion, though innocent, of his exposure to danger.

28. *I send him therefore the more carefully.* With more diligence, or speed; I was the more ready to send him. ¶ *That I may be the less sorrowful.* That is, on account of my solicitude for you; that I may know that your minds are at ease, and that you rejoice in his being among you.

29. *Receive him therefore in the Lord.* As the servant of the Lord, or as now restored to you by the Lord, and therefore to be regarded as a fresh gift from God. Our friends restored to us after a long absence, we should receive as the gift of God, and as a proof of his mercy. ¶ *And hold such in reputation.* Marg., *honour such.* This is a high commendation of Epaphroditus, and, at the same time, it enjoins an important duty in regard to the proper treatment of those who sustain such a character. It is a Christian duty to honour those who ought to be honoured, to respect the virtuous and the pious, and especially to honour those who evince fidelity in the work of the Lord.

30. *Because for the work of Christ.* That is, either by exposing himself in his journey to see the apostle in Rome, or by his labours there. ¶ *Not regarding his life.* There is a difference in the MSS. here, so great that it is impossible now to determine which is the true

he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life [a] to supply your lack of service toward me.

[a] 1 Co. 16. 17.

reading, though the sense is not materially affected. The common reading of the Greek text is, παραζηλωσάμενος; literally *misconsulting, not consulting carefully, not taking pains.* The other reading is, παραβολευσάμενος; *exposing oneself to danger*, regardless of life; see the authorities for this reading in Wetstein; comp. Bloomfield, *in loc.* This reading suits the connection, and is generally regarded as the correct one. ¶ *To supply your lack of service toward me.* Not that they had been indifferent to him, or inattentive to his wants, for he does not mean to blame them; but they had not had an opportunity to send to his relief (see chap. iv. 10), and Epaphroditus therefore made a special journey to Rome on his account. He came and rendered to him the service which they could not do *in person;* and what the church *would* have done, if Paul had been among them, he performed in their name and on their behalf.

REMARKS.

1. Let us learn to esteem others as they ought to be; ver. 3. *Every* person who is virtuous and pious has *some* claim to esteem. He has a reputation which is valuable to him and to the church, and we should not withhold respect from him. It is one evidence, also, of true humility and of right feeling, when we esteem them as better than ourselves, and when we are willing to see them honoured, and are willing to sacrifice our own ease to promote their welfare. It is one of the instinctive promptings of true humility to feel that other persons are better than we are.

2. We should not be disappointed or mortified if others think little of us—if we are not brought into prominent notice among men; ver. 3. We *profess* to have a low opinion of ourselves, if we are Christians, and we *ought* to have; and why should we be chagrined and mortified if others have the same opinion of us? Why should we not be willing that they should accord in judgment with us in regard to ourselves?

3. We should be willing to occupy our appropriate place in the church; ver. 3. That is true humility; and why should any one be unwilling to be esteemed just as he *ought* to be? Pride makes us miserable, and is the grand thing that stands in the way of the influence of the gospel on our hearts. No one can become a Christian who is not willing to occupy just the place which he *ought* to occupy; to take the lowly position as a penitent which he *ought* to take; and to have God regard and treat him just as he *ought* to be treated. The first, second, and third thing in religion is humility; and no one ever becomes a Christian who is not willing to take the lowly condition of a child.

4. We should feel a deep interest in the welfare of others; ver. 4. Men are by nature selfish, and it is the design of religion to make them benevolent. They seek their own interests by nature, and the gospel would teach them to regard the welfare of others. If we are truly under the influence of religion, there is not a member of the church in whom we should not feel an interest, and whose welfare we should not strive to promote as far as we have opportunity. And we *may* have opportunity every day. It is an easy matter to do good to others. A kind word, or even a kind *look*, does good; and who so poor that he cannot render this? Every day that we live, we come in contact with *some* who may be benefited by our example, our advice, or our alms; and every day, therefore, *may* be closed with the feeling that we have not lived in vain.

5. Let us in all things look to the example of Christ; ver. 5. He came that he might be an example; and he *was* exactly such an example as we need. We may be *always* sure that we are right when we follow his example and possess his spirit. We cannot be *so* sure that we are right

in any other way. He came to be our model in all things, and in all the relations of life. (1.) He showed us what the law of God requires of us. (2.) He showed us what we should aim to be, and what human nature would be if it were wholly under the influence of religion. (3.) He showed us what true religion is, for it is just such as was seen in his life. (4.) He showed us how to act in our treatment of mankind. (5.) He showed us how to bear the ills of poverty, and want, and pain, and temptation, and reproach, from the world. We should learn to manifest the same spirit in suffering which he did, for then we are sure we are right. (6.) And he has showed us how to die. He has exhibited in death just the spirit which *we* should when we die; for it is not less desirable *to die well* than *to live well*.

6. It is right and proper to worship Christ; ver. 6. He was in the form of God, and equal with God; and, being such, we should adore him. No one need be afraid to render too high honour to the Saviour; and all piety may be measured by the respect which is shown to him. Religion advances in the world just in proportion as men are disposed to render honour to the Redeemer; it becomes dim and dies away just in proportion as that honour is withheld.

7. Like the Redeemer, we should be willing to deny ourselves in order that we may promote the welfare of others; ver. 6—8. We can never, indeed, equal his condescension. We can never stoop from such a state of dignity and honour as he did; but, in our measure, we should aim to imitate him. If we have comforts, we should be willing to deny ourselves of them to promote the happiness of others. If we occupy an elevated rank in life, we should be willing to stoop to one more humble. If we live in a palace, we should be willing to enter the most lowly cottage, if we can render its inmates happy.

8. Christ was obedient unto death; ver. 8. Let *us* be obedient also, doing the will of God in all things. If in his service we are called to pass through trials, even those which will terminate in death, let us obey. He has a right to command us, and we have the example of the Saviour to sustain us. If he requires us, by his providence, and by the leadings of his Spirit, to forsake our country and home; to visit climes of pestilential air, or to traverse wastes of burning sand, to make his name known; if he demands that, in that service, we shall die far away from kindred and home, and that our bones shall be laid on the banks of the Senegal or the Ganges,—still, let us remember that these sufferings are not equal to those of the Master. He was an exile from heaven, in a world of suffering. *Our* exile from our own land is not like that from heaven; nor will our sufferings, though in regions of pestilence and death, be like *his* sufferings in the garden and on the cross.

9. Let us rejoice that we have a Saviour who has ascended to heaven, and who is to be for ever honoured there; ver. 9—11. He is to suffer no more. He has endured the last pang; has passed through a state of humiliation and woe which he will never repeat; and has submitted to insults and mockeries to which it will not be necessary for him to submit again. When we now think of the Redeemer, we can think of him as always happy and honoured. There is no moment, by day or by night, in which he is not the object of adoration, love, and praise—nor will there *ever* be such a moment to all eternity. Our best friend is thus to be eternally reverenced, and in heaven he will receive a full reward for all his unparalleled woes.

10. Let us diligently endeavour to work out our salvation; ver. 12, 13. Nothing else so much demands our unceasing solicitude as this, and in nothing else have we so much encouragement. We are assured that God aids us in this work. He throws no obstructions in our path, but all that God *does* in the matter of salvation is in the way of *help*. He does not work in us evil passions,

or impure desires, or unbelief;—his agency is to enable us to perform "his good pleasure," or that which will *please* him—that is, that which is holy. The farmer is encouraged to plough and plant his fields when *God works* around him by sending the warm breezes of the spring, and by refreshing the earth with gentle dews and rains. And so *we* may be encouraged to seek our salvation when God works in our hearts, producing serious thoughts, and a feeling that we need the blessings of salvation.

11. Christians should let their light shine; ver. 14—16. God has called them into his kingdom that they may show what is the nature and power of true religion. They are to illustrate in their lives the nature of that gospel which he has revealed, and to show its value in purifying the soul, and in sustaining it in the time of trial. The world is dependent on Christians for just views of religion, and every day that a Christian lives he is doing *something* to honour or dishonour the gospel. Every word that he speaks, every expression of the eye, every cloud or beam of sunshine on his brow, will have *some* effect in doing this. He *cannot* live without making *some* impression upon the world around him, either favourable or unfavourable to the cause of his Redeemer.

12. We should be ready *to die*, if called to such a sacrifice in behalf of the church of Christ; ver. 17. We should *rejoice* in being permitted to suffer, that we may promote the welfare of others, and be the means of saving those for whom Christ died. It has been an honour to be a martyr in the cause of religion, and so it ever will be when God calls to such a sacrifice of life. If he calls *us* to it, therefore, we should not shrink from it, nor should we shrink from any sufferings by which we may honour the Saviour, and rescue souls from death.

13. Let us learn, from the interesting narrative respecting Epaphroditus at the close of this chapter, to live and act as becomes Christians in every situation in life; ver. 25—30. It was much to have the praise of an apostle and to be commended for his Christian conduct, as this stranger in Rome was. He went there, not to view the wonders of the imperial city, and not to run the rounds of giddy pleasure there, but to perform an important duty of religion. While there he became sick—not by indulgence in pleasures; not as the result of feasting and revelry, but in the work of Christ. In a strange city, far from home, amidst the rich, the great, the gay; in a place where theatres opened their doors, and where places of amusement abounded, he led a life which an apostle could commend as pure. There is nothing more difficult for a Christian than to maintain an irreproachable walk when away from the usual restraints and influences that serve to keep him in the paths of piety, and when surrounded with the fascinations and allurements of a great and wicked city. There strangers, extending the rites of hospitality, often invite the guest to places of amusement which the Christian would not visit were he at home. There the desire to see all that is to be seen, and to hear all that is to be heard, attracts him to the theatre, the opera, and the gallery of obscene and licentious statuary and painting. There the plea readily presents itself that an opportunity of witnessing these things may never occur again; that he is unknown, and that his example, therefore, can do no harm; that it is desirable, from personal observation, to know what is the condition of the world; or that perhaps his former views in these matters may have been precise and puritanical. To such considerations he yields; but yields only to regret it in future life. Rarely is such a thing done without its being in some way soon known; and rarely, very rarely does a Christian minister or other member of the church travel much without injury to his piety, and to the cause of religion. A Christian man who is under a *necessity* of visiting Europe from this country, should feel that he has special need of the pray-

CHAPTER III.

FINALLY, my brethren, rejoice [a] in the Lord. To write the same [b] things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

a 1 Th.5.16.

b 2 Pe.1.12-15.

ers of his friends, that he may not dishonour his religion abroad; he who is permitted to remain at home, and to cultivate the graces of piety in his own family, and in the quiet scenes where he has been accustomed to move, should regard it as a cause of special thankfulness to God.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter consists in the main, of exhortations to holy living, and to an effort to make great attainments in the divine life. It is full of tenderness and affection, and is one of the most beautiful appeals which can anywhere be found to induce Christians to devote themselves to the service of the Redeemer. The appeal is drawn in a great measure from the apostle's statement of his own feelings, and is one which the Philippians could not but feel, for they knew him well. In the course of the chapter, he adverts to the following points.

He exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord; ver. 1.

He warns them against the Jewish teachers who urged the necessity of complying with the Mosaic laws, and who appear to have boasted of their being Jews, and to have regarded themselves as the favourites of God on that account; ver. 2, 3.

To meet what they had said, and to show how little all that on which they relied was to be valued, Paul says that *he* had had advantages of birth and education which surpassed them all, and that all the claim to the favour of God, and all the hope of salvation which could be derived from birth, education, and a life of zeal and conformity to the law, had been his; ver. 4, 5.

Yet he says, he had renounced all this, and now regarded it as utterly worthless in the matter of salvation. He had cheerfully suffered the loss of all things, and was willing still to do it, if he might obtain salvation through the Redeemer. Christ was more to him than all the advantages of birth, and rank, and blood; and all other grounds of dependence for salvation, compared with reliance on him, were worthless; ver. 7—11.

The object which he had sought in doing this, he says, he had not yet fully attained. He had seen enough to know its inestimable value, and he now pressed onward that he might secure all that he desired. The mark was before him, and he pressed on to secure the prize; ver. 12—14.

He exhorts them to aim at the same thing, and to endeavour to secure the same object, assuring them that God was ready to disclose to them all that they desired to know, and to grant all that they wished to obtain; ver. 15, 16.

This whole exhortation he enforces in the end of the chapter (ver. 17—21) by two considerations. One was, that there were not a few who had been deceived and who had no true religion —whom he had often warned with tears, ver. 18, 19; the other was, that the home, the citizenship of the true Christian, was in heaven, and they who were Christians ought to live as those who expected soon to be there. The Saviour would soon return to take them to glory. He would change their vile body, and make them like himself, and they should therefore live as became those who had a hope so blessed and transforming.

1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* That is, in the Lord Jesus; see ver. 3; comp. Notes on Acts i. 24, and 1 Thess. v. 16. The idea here is, that it is the duty of Christians to rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ. This duty implies the following things. (1.) They should rejoice that they *have* such a Saviour. Men everywhere have felt the need of a Saviour, and to us it should be a subject of unfeigned joy that one has been provided for us. When we think of our sins, we may now rejoice that

2 Beware of dogs, [a] beware of [o] evil workers, beware of the [e] concision.

[a] Is.56.10,11; Re.22.15. [b] Ps.119.115. [c] Ga.5.1-3.

there is one who can deliver us from them; when we think of the worth of the soul, we may rejoice that there is one who can save it from death; when we think of our danger, we can rejoice that there is one who can rescue us from all peril, and bring us to a world where we shall be for ever safe. (2.) We may rejoice that we have *such* a Saviour. He is just such as we need. He accomplishes just what we want a Saviour to do. We need one to make known to us a way of pardon, and he does it. We need one to make an atonement for sin, and he does it. We need one to give us peace from a troubled conscience, and he does it. We need one to support us in trials and bereavements, and he does it. We need one who can comfort us on the bed of death, and guide us through the dark valley, and the Lord Jesus is just what we want. When we look at his character, it is just such as it should be to win our hearts, and to make us love him; and when we look at what he has done, we see that he has accomplished all that we can desire, and why should we not rejoice? (3.) We may and should rejoice *in* him. The principal joy of the true Christian should be *in* the Lord. He should find his happiness not in riches, or gayety, or vanity, or ambition, or books, or in the world in any form, but in communion with the Lord Jesus, and in the hope of eternal life through him. In his friendship, and in his service, should be the highest of our joys, and in these we may always be happy. It is the *privilege*, therefore, of a Christian to rejoice. He has more sources of joy than any other man—sources which do not fail when all others fail. Religion is not sadness or melancholy, it is joy; and the Christian should never leave the impression on others that his religion makes him either gloomy or morose. A cheerful countenance, an eye of benignity, a conversation pleasant and kind, should always evince the joy of his heart, and in all his intercourse with the world around him he should show that his heart is full of joy. ¶ *To write the same things.* That is, to repeat the same truths and admonitions. Perhaps he refers in this to the exhortations which he had given them when he was with them, on the same topics on which he is now writing to them. He says, that for him to *record* these exhortations, and transmit them by a letter, might be the means of permanent welfare to them, and would not be burdensome or oppressive to him. It was not absolutely *necessary* for them, but still it would be conducive to their order and comfort as a church. We may suppose that this chapter is a summary of what he had often inculcated when he was with them. ¶ *To me indeed* is *not grievous.* It is not burdensome or oppressive to me to repeat these exhortations in this manner. They might suppose that in the multitude of cares which he had, and in his trials in Rome, it might be too great a burden for him to bestow so much attention on their interests. ¶ *But for you* it is *safe.* It will contribute to your security as Christians, to have these sentiments and admonitions on record. They were exposed to dangers which made them proper. What those dangers were, the apostle specifies in the following verses.

2. *Beware of dogs.* Dogs in the east are mostly without masters; they wander at large in the streets and fields, and feed upon offals, and even upon corpses; comp. 1 Kings xiv. 11; xvi. 4; xxi. 19. They are held as unclean, and to call one *a dog* is a much stronger expression of contempt there than with us; 1 Sam. xvii. 43; 2 Kings viii. 13. The Jews called the heathen *dogs*, and the Mohammedans call Jews and Christians by the same name. The term *dog* also is used to denote a person that is shameless, impudent, malignant, snarling, dissatisfied, and contentious, and is evidently so employed here. It is possible that the *language* used here may

3 For we [a] are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus,

[a] Ro.2.28,29.

have been derived from some custom of affixing a caution, on a house that was guarded by a dog, to persons approaching it. Lenfant remarks that at Rome it was common for a dog to lie chained before the door of a house, and that a notice was placed in sight, "Beware of the dog." The same notice I have seen in this city affixed to the kennel of dogs in front of a bank, that were appointed to guard it. The reference here is, doubtless, to Judaizing teachers, and the idea is, that they were contentious, troublesome, dissatisfied, and would produce disturbance. The strong language which the apostle uses here, shows the sense which he had of the danger arising from their influence. It may be observed, however, that the term *dogs* is used in ancient writings with great frequency, and even by the most grave speakers. It is employed by the most dignified characters in the Iliad *(Bloomfield)*, and the name was given to a whole class of Greek philosophers — the *Cynics*. It is used in one instance by the Saviour; Matt. vii. 6. By the use of the term here, there can be no doubt that the apostle meant to express strong disapprobation of the character and course of the persons referred to, and to warn the Philippians in the most solemn manner against them. ¶ *Beware of evil workers.* Referring, doubtless, to the same persons that he had characterized as *dogs*. The reference is to Jewish teachers, whose doctrines and influence he regarded only as evil. We do not know what was the nature of their teaching, but we may presume that it consisted much in urging the obligations of the Jewish rites and ceremonies; in speaking of the advantage of having been born Jews; and in urging a compliance with the law in order to justification before God. In this way their teachings tended to set aside the great doctrine of salvation by the merits of the Redeemer. ¶ *Beware of the concision.* Referring, doubtless, also to the Jewish teachers. The word rendered *concision*—κατατομή—means properly *a cutting off, a mutilation.* It is used here contemptuously for the Jewish circumcision in contrast with the true circumcision. *Robinson, Lex.* It is not to be understood that Paul meant to throw contempt on circumcision as enjoined by God, and as practised by the pious Jews of other times (comp. Acts xvi. 3), but only as it was held by the false Judaizing teachers. As they held it, it was not the true circumcision. They made salvation to depend on it, instead of its being only a sign of the covenant with God. Such a doctrine, as they held it, was a mere *cutting off of the flesh*, without understanding anything of the true nature of the rite, and hence the unusual term by which he designates it. Perhaps, also, there may be included the idea that a doctrine so held would be in fact a cutting off of the soul; that is, that it tended to destruction. Their cutting and mangling the flesh might be regarded as an emblem of the manner in which their doctrine would cut and mangle the church.—*Doddridge.* The meaning of the whole is, that they did not understand the true nature of the doctrine of circumcision, but that with them it was a mere cutting of the flesh, and tended to destroy the church.

3. *For we are the circumcision.* We who are Christians. We have and hold the true doctrine of circumcision. We have that which was intended to be secured by this rite—for we are led to renounce the flesh, and to worship God in the spirit. The apostle in this verse teaches that the ordinance of circumcision was not designed to be a mere *outward* ceremony, but was intended to be emblematic of the renunciation of the flesh with its corrupt propensities, and to lead to the pure and spiritual worship of God. In this, he has undoubtedly stated its true design. They who now urged it as necessary to salvation, and who made salvation depend on its mere outward

and have no confidence in the flesh:

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath where-

observance, had lost sight of this object of the rite. But this, the real design of circumcision, was attained by those who had been led to renounce the flesh, and who had devoted themselves to the worship of God; see Notes on Rom. ii. 28, 29. ¶ *Which worship God in the spirit;* see Notes on John iv. 24; comp. Gen. xvii. 10—14. ¶ *And rejoice in Christ Jesus;* see ver. 1. That is, we have, through him, renounced the flesh; we have become the true worshippers of God, and have thus attained what was originally contemplated by circumcision, and by all the other rites of religion. ¶ *And have no confidence in the flesh.* In our own corrupt nature; or in any ordinances that relate merely to the flesh. We do not depend on circumcision for salvation, or on any external rites and forms whatever—on any advantage of rank, or blood. The word "*flesh*" here seems to refer to every advantage which any may have of birth; to any external conformity to the law, and to everything which unaided human nature can do to effect salvation. On none of these things can we put reliance for salvation; none of them will constitute a ground of hope.

4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.* That is, though I had uncommon advantages of this kind; and if any one could have trusted in them, I could have done it. The object of the apostle is to show that he did not despise those things because he did not possess them, but because he now saw that they were of no value in the great matter of salvation. Once he had confided in them, and if any one could find any ground of reliance on them, he could have found more than any of them. But he had seen that all these things were valueless in regard to the salvation of the soul. We may remark here, that Christians

of he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the

do not despise or disregard advantages of birth, or amiableness of manners, or external morality, because they do not possess them—but because they regard them as insufficient to secure their salvation. They who have been most amiable and moral before their conversion will speak in the most decided manner of the insufficiency of these things for salvation, and of the danger of relying on them. They have once tried it, and they now see that their feet were standing on a slippery rock. The Greek here is, literally, "although I [was] having confidence in the flesh." The meaning is, that he had every ground of confidence in the flesh which any one could have, and that if there was any advantage for salvation to be derived from birth, and blood, and external conformity to the law, he possessed it. He had *more* to rely on than most other men had; nay, he could have boasted of advantages of this sort which could not be found united in any other individual. What those advantages were, he proceeds to specify.

5. *Circumcised the eighth day.* That is, he was circumcised in exact compliance with the law. If there was any ground of confidence from such compliance with the law, he had it. The law required that circumcision should be performed on the eighth day (Gen. xvii. 12; Lev. xii. 3; Luke i. 59); but it is probable that, in some cases, this was delayed on account of sickness, or from some other cause; and, in the case of proselytes, it was not performed until adult age; see Acts xvi. 3. But Paul says that, in his case, the law had been literally complied with; and, consequently, all the advantage which could be derived from such a compliance, was his. ¶ *Of the stock of Israel.* Descended from the patriarch Israel, or Jacob; and, therefore, able to trace his genealogy back as far as any Jew

Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; [a]

a Ac.23.6.

6 Concerning zeal, [b] persecuting the church; touching the righte-

b Ac.22.3,4; Ga.1.13,14.

could. He was not a proselyte himself from among the heathen, nor were any of his ancestors proselytes. He had all the advantages which could be derived from a regular descent from the venerable founders of the Jewish nation. He was thus distinguished from the Edomites and others who practised circumcision; from the Samaritans, who were made up of a mixture of people; and from many, even among the Jews, whose ancestors had been once heathen, and who had become proselytes. ¶ *Of the tribe of Benjamin.* Benjamin was one of the two tribes which remained when the ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam, and, with the tribe of Judah, it ever afterwards maintained its allegiance to God. The idea of Paul is, that he was not one of the revolted tribes, but that he had as high a claim to the honour of being a Jew as any one could boast. The tribe of Benjamin, also, was located near the temple, and indeed it has been said that the temple was on the dividing line between that tribe and the tribe of Judah; and it might have been supposed that there was some advantage in securing salvation from having been born and reared so near where the holy rites of religion were celebrated. If there were any such derived from the proximity of the tribe to the temple, he could claim it; for, though his birth was in another place, yet he was a member of the tribe. ¶ *An Hebrew of the Hebrews.* This is the Hebrew mode of expressing the superlative degree; and the idea is, that Paul enjoyed every advantage which could possibly be derived from the fact of being a Hebrew. He had a lineal descent from the very ancestor of the nation; he belonged to a tribe that was as honourable as any other, and that had its location near the very centre of religious influence; and he was an Hebrew by both his parents, with no admixture of Gentile blood. On this fact—that no one of his ancestors had been a proselyte, or of Gentile extraction—a Jew would pride himself much; and Paul says that he was entitled to all the advantage which could be derived from it. ¶ *As touching the law, a Pharisee.* In my views of the law, and in my manner of observing it, I was of the straitest sect—a Pharisee; see Notes on Acts xxvi. 5. The Pharisees were distinguished among the Jewish sects for their rigid adherence to the letter of the law, and had endeavoured to guard it from the possibility of violation by throwing around it a vast body of traditions, which they considered to be equally binding with the written law; see Notes on Matt. iii. 7. The Sadducees were much less strict; and Paul here says that whatever advantage could be derived from the most rigid adherence to the letter of the law, was his.

6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church.* Showing the greatness of my zeal for the religion which I believed to be true, by persecuting those whom I considered to be in dangerous error. Zeal was supposed to be, as it is, an important part of religion; see 2 Kings x. 16; Ps. lxix. 9; cxix. 139; Isa. lix. 17; Rom. x. 2. Paul says that *he* had shown the highest degree of zeal that was possible. He had gone so far in his attachment for the religion of his fathers, as to pursue with purposes of death those who had departed from it, and who had embraced a different form of belief. If any, therefore, could hope for salvation on the ground of extraordinary devotedness to religion, he said that he could. ¶ *Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.* So far as the righteousness which can be obtained by obeying the law is concerned. It is not needful to suppose here that he refers merely to the ceremonial law; but the meaning is, that he did all that could be done to obtain salvation by the mere observance of law. It was supposed by the Jews, and

ousness which is in the law, blameless. [a]

7 But what things were gain

[a] Lu.1.6.

especially by the Pharisees, to which sect he belonged, that it was possible to be saved in that way; and Paul says that he had done all that was supposed to be necessary for that. We are not to imagine that, when he penned this declaration, he meant to be understood as saying that he had wholly complied with the law of God; but that, before his conversion, he supposed that he had done all that was necessary to be done in order to be saved by the observance of law. He neglected no duty that he understood it to enjoin. He was not guilty of deliberately violating it. He led a moral and strictly upright life, and no one had occasion to "blame" or to accuse him as a violator of the law of God. There is every reason to believe that Paul, before his conversion, was a young man of correct deportment, of upright life, of entire integrity; and that he was free from the indulgences of vice and passion, into which young men often fall. In all that he ever says of himself as being "the chief of sinners," and as being "unworthy to be called an apostle," he never gives the least intimation that his early life was stained by vice, or corrupted by licentious passions. On the contrary, we are left to the fair presumption that, if *any* man could be saved by his own works, he was that man. This fact should be allowed to make its proper impression on those who are seeking salvation in the same way; and they should be willing to inquire whether they may not be deceived in the matter, as he was, and whether they are not in as much real danger in depending on their own righteousness, as was this most upright and zealous young man.

7. *But what things were gain to me.* The advantages of birth, of education, and of external conformity to the law. "I thought these to be gain—that is, to be of vast advantage in the matter of salvation. I

to me, those I counted loss [b] for Christ.

8 Yea, doubtless, and I count

[b] Mat.13.44.

valued myself on these things, and supposed that I was *rich* in all that pertained to moral character and to religion." Perhaps, also, he refers to these things as laying the foundation of a hope of future advancement in honour and in wealth in this world. They commended him to the rulers of the nation; they opened before him a brilliant prospect of distinction; they made it certain that he could rise to posts of honour and of office, and could easily gratify all the aspirings of his ambition.—¶ *Those I counted loss.* "I now regard them all as so much loss. They were really a disadvantage—a hindrance—an injury. I look upon them, not as gain or an advantage, but as an obstacle to my salvation." He had relied on them. He had been led by these things to an improper estimate of his own character, and he had been thus hindered from embarcing the true religion. He says, therefore, that he now renounced all dependence on them; that he esteemed them not as contributing to his salvation, but, so far as *any* reliance should be placed on them, as in fact so much loss. ¶ *For Christ.* Gr., "On account of Christ." That is, so far as Christ and his religion were concerned, they were to be regarded as worthless. In order to obtain salvation by him, it was necessary to renounce all dependence on these things.

8. *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things* but *loss.* Not only those things which he had just specified, and which he had himself possessed, he says he would be willing to renounce in order to obtain an interest in the Saviour, but *every thing* which could be imagined. Were all the wealth and honour which could be conceived of his, he would be willing to renounce them in order that he might obtain the knowledge of the Redeemer. He would be a gainer who should sacrifice every thing in order to win Christ. Paul had not only

all things *but* loss for [a] the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have [b] suffered the loss of all things,

[a] Is.53.11; Je.9.23,24; John17.3; 1Co.2.2.

and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own [c] righteousness,

[b] 2Co.11.25-27. [c] Ro.10.3,5.

acted on this principle when he became a Christian, but had ever afterwards continued to be ready to give up every thing in order that he might obtain an interest in the Saviour. He uses here the same word —ζημίαν—which he does in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. xxvii. 21, when speaking of the *loss* which had been sustained by loosing from Crete, contrary to his advice, on the voyage to Rome. The idea here seems to be, "What I might obtain, or did possess, I regard as loss in comparison with the knowledge of Christ, even as seamen do the goods on which they set a high value, in comparison with their lives. Valuable as they may be, they are willing to throw them all overboard in order to save themselves." *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc.* ¶ *For the excellency of the knowledge.* A Hebrew expression to denote *excellent knowledge.* The idea is, that he held everything else to be worthless in comparison with that knowledge, and he was willing to sacrifice everything else in order to obtain it. On the value of this knowledge of the Saviour, see Notes on Eph. iii. 19. ¶ *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things.* Paul, when he became a Christian, gave up his brilliant prospects in regard to this life, and everything indeed on which his heart had been placed. He abandoned the hope of honour and distinction; he sacrificed every prospect of gain or ease; and he gave up his dearest friends and separated himself from those whom he tenderly loved. He might have risen to the highest posts of honour in his native land, and the path which an ambitious young man desires was fully open before him. But all this had been cheerfully sacrificed in order that he might obtain an interest in the Saviour, and partake of the blessings of his religion. He has not, indeed, informed us of the exact extent of his loss in becoming a Christian. It is by no means improbable that he had been excommunicated by the Jews; and that he had been disowned by his own family. ¶ *And do count them* but *dung.* The word here used—σκύβαλον—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *dregs; refuse;* what is thrown away as worthless; chaff; offal, or the refuse of a table or of slaughtered animals, and then filth of any kind. No language could express a more deep sense of the utter worthlessness of all that external advantages can confer in the matter of salvation. In the question of justification before God, all reliance on birth, and blood, and external morality, and forms of religion, and prayers, and alms, is to be renounced, and, in comparison with the merits of the great Redeemer, to be esteemed as vile. Such were Paul's views, and we may remark that if this was so in his case, it should be in ours. Such things can no more avail for our salvation than they could for his. We can no more be justified by them than he could. Nor will they do anything more in our case to commend us to God than they did in his.

9. *And be found in him.* That is, united to him by a living faith. The idea is, that when the investigations of the great day should take place in regard to the ground of salvation, it might be found that he was united to the Redeemer and depended solely on his merits for salvation; comp. Notes on John vi. 56. ¶ *Not having mine own righteousness.* That is, not relying on that for salvation. This was now the great aim of Paul, that it might be found at last that he was not trusting to his own merits, but to those of the Lord Jesus. ¶ *Which is of the law*; see Notes on Rom. x. 3. The "righteousness which

which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness [a] which is of God by faith:

[a] Ro.1.17;3.21,22.

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the [b] fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

[b] 1Pe.4.13.

is of the law" is that which could be obtained by conformity to the precepts of the Jewish religion, such as Paul had endeavoured to obtain before he became a Christian. He now saw that no one complied perfectly with the holy law of God, and that all dependence on such a righteousness was vain. All men by nature seek salvation by the law. They set up some standard which they mean to comply with, and expect to be saved by conformity to that. With some it is the law of honour, with others the law of honesty, with others the law of kindness and courtesy, and with others the law of God. If they comply with the requirements of these laws, they suppose that they will be safe, and it is only the grace of God showing them how defective their standard is, or how far they come from complying with its demands, that can ever bring them from this dangerous dependence. Paul in early life depended on his compliance with the laws of God as he understood them, and supposed that he was safe. When he was brought to realize his true condition, he saw how far short he had come of what the law of God required, and that all dependence on his own works was vain. ¶ *But that which is through the faith of Christ.* That justification which is obtained by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; see Notes on Rom. i. 17; iii. 24; iv. 5. ¶ *Righteousness which is of God by faith.* Which proceeds from God, or of which he is the great source and fountain. This may include the following things. (1.) God is the author of pardon—and this is a part of the righteousness which the man who is justified has. (2.) God purposes to treat the justified sinner *as if* he had not sinned—and thus his righteousness is of God. (3.) God is the source of all the grace that will be imparted to the soul, making it really holy. In this way, all the righteousness which the Christian has is "of God." The idea of Paul is, that he now saw that it was far more desirable to be saved by righteousness obtained from God than by his own. That obtained from God was perfect, and glorious, and sufficient; that which he had attempted to work out was defective, impure, and wholly insufficient to save the soul. It is far more honourable to be saved by God than to save ourselves; it is more glorious to depend on him than to depend on anything that we can do.

10. *That I may know him.* That I may be fully acquainted with his nature, his character, his work, and with the salvation which he has wrought out. It is one of the highest objects of desire in the mind of the Christian to *know* Christ; see Notes on Eph. iii. 19. ¶ *And the power of his resurrection.* That is, that I may understand and experience the proper influence which the fact of his resurrection should have on the mind. That influence would be felt in imparting the hope of immortality; in sustaining the soul in the prospect of death, by the expectation of being raised from the grave in like manner; and in raising the mind above the world; Rom. vi. 11. There is no one truth that will have greater *power* over us, when properly believed, than the truth that Christ has risen from the dead. His resurrection confirms the truth of the Christian religion (Notes, 1 Cor. xv.); makes it certain that there is a future state, and that the dead will also rise; dispels the darkness that was around the grave, and shows us that our great interests are in the future world. The fact that Christ has risen from the dead, when fully believed, will produce a sure hope that we also shall be raised, and will animate us to bear trials for his sake, with the assurance that we shall be

raised up as he was. One of the things which a Christian ought most earnestly to desire is, to feel the power of this truth on his soul—that his great Redeemer has burst the bands of death; has brought life and immortality to light, and has given us the pledge that our bodies shall rise. What trials may we not bear with this assurance? What is to be dreaded in death, if this is so? What glories rise to the view when we think of the resurrection! And what trifles are all the things which men seek here, when compared with the glory that shall be ours when we shall be raised from the dead! ¶ *And the fellowship of his sufferings.* That I may participate in the same kind of sufferings that he endured; that is, that I may in all things be identified with him. Paul wished to be just like his Saviour. He felt that it was an honour to live as he did; to evince the spirit that he did, and to suffer in the same manner. All that Christ did and suffered was glorious in his view, and he wished in all things to resemble him. He did not desire merely to share his honours and triumphs in heaven, but, regarding his *whole* work as glorious, he wished to be wholly conformed to that, and, as far as possible, to be *just like Christ.* Many are willing to reign with Christ, but they would not be willing to suffer with him; many would be willing to wear a crown of glory like him, but not the crown of thorns; many would be willing to put on the robes of splendour which will be worn in heaven, but not the scarlet robe of contempt and mockery. They would desire to share the glories and triumphs of redemption, but not its poverty, contempt, and persecution. This was not the feeling of Paul. He wished in all things to be *just like Christ*, and hence he counted it an honour to be permitted to suffer as he did. So Peter says, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;" 1 Pet. iv. 13. So Paul says (Col. i. 24) that he rejoiced in his sufferings in behalf of his brethren, and desired "to fill up that which was behind, of the afflictions of Christ," or that in which he had hitherto come short of the afflictions which Christ endured. The idea is, that it is an honour to suffer as Christ suffered; and that the true Christian will esteem it a privilege *to be made just like him*, not only in glory, but in trial. To do this, is one evidence of piety; and we may ask ourselves, therefore, whether these are the feelings of our hearts. Are we seeking merely the honours of heaven, or should we esteem it a privilege to be reproached and reviled as Christ was—to have our names cast out as his was—to be made the object of sport and derision as he was—and to be held up to the contempt of a world as he was? If so, it is an evidence that we love him; if not so, and we are merely seeking the crown of glory, we should doubt whether we have ever known anything of the nature of true religion. ¶ *Being made conformable to his death.* In all things, being just like Christ—to live as he did, and to die as he did. There can be no doubt that Paul means to say that he esteemed it so desirable to be *just like Christ*, that he would regard it as an honour to die in the same manner. He would rejoice to go with him to the cross, and to pass through the circumstances of scorn and pain which attended such a death. Yet how few there are who would be willing to die as Christ died, and how little would the mass of men regard it as a privilege and honour! Indeed, it requires an elevated state of pious feeling to be able to say that it would be regarded as a privilege and honour to die like Christ to have such a sense of the loveliness of his character in all things, and such ardent attachment to him, as to rejoice in the opportunity of dying as he did! When we think of dying, we wish to have our departure made as comfortable as possible. We would have our sun go down without a cloud. We would wish to lie on a bed of down; we would have our head sustained by the kind arm of a friend, and not left to fall, in the intensity of suffering, on the breast; we would wish to have the place where we die surrounded by sympathizing kindred, and not by those who would mock our dying agonies.

11. If by any means I might [a] attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

[a] Ac. 26. 7.

12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: [b] but I follow after, if that I

[b] He. 12. 23.

And, if such is the will of God, it is not improper to desire that our end may be peaceful and happy; but we should also feel, if God should order it otherwise, that it would be an honour, in the cause of the Redeemer, to die amidst reproaches—to be led to the stake, as the martyrs have been—or to die, as our Master did, on a cross. They who are most like him in the scenes of humiliation here, will be most like him in the realms of glory.

11. *If by any means.* Implying, that he meant to make use of the most strenuous exertions to obtain the object. ¶ *I might attain unto.* I may come to, or may secure this object. ¶ *The resurrection of the dead.* Paul believed that *all* the dead would be raised (Acts xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6–8); and in this respect he would certainly attain to the resurrection of the dead, in common with all mankind. But the phrase, "the resurrection of the dead," also might be used, in a more limited sense, to denote the resurrection of the righteous as a most desirable object; and this might be secured by effort. It was this which Paul sought—this for which he strove—this that was so bright an object in his eye that it was to be secured at any sacrifice. To rise with the saints; to enter with them into the blessedness of the heavenly inheritance, was an object that the apostle thought was worth every effort which could be made. The doctrine of the resurrection was, in his view, that which distinguished the true religion, and which made it of such inestimable value (Acts xxvi. 6, 7; xxiii. 6; 1 Cor. xv.); and he sought to participate in the full honour and glory of such a resurrection.

12. *Not as though I had already attained.* This verse and the two following are full of allusions to the Grecian races. "The word rendered 'attained' signifies, to have arrived at the goal and won the prize, but without having as yet received it" *Pict. Bib.* The meaning here is, I do not pretend to have attained to what I wish or hope to be. He had indeed been converted; he had been raised up from the death of sin; he had been imbued with spiritual life and peace; but there was a glorious object before him which he had not yet received. There was to be a kind of resurrection which he had not arrived at. It is possible that Paul here may have had his eye on an error which prevailed to some extent in the early church, that "the resurrection was already past" (2 Tim. ii. 18), by which the faith of some had been perverted. How far this error had spread, or on what it was founded, is not now known; but it is possible that it might have found advocates extensively in the churches. Paul says, however, that he entertained no such opinion. He looked forward to a resurrection which had not yet occurred. He anticipated it as a glorious event yet to come, and he purposed to secure it by every effort which he could make. ¶ *Either were already perfect.* This is a distinct assertion of the apostle Paul that he did not regard himself as a perfect man. He had not reached that state where he was free from sin. It is not indeed a declaration that no one was perfect, or that no one could be in this life but it is a declaration that he did not regard himself as having attained to it. Yet who can urge better claims to having attained perfection than Paul could have done? Who has surpassed him in love, and zeal, and self-denial, and true devotedness to the service of the Redeemer? Who has more elevated views of God, and of the plan of salvation? Who prays more, or lives nearer to God than he did? That must be extraordinary piety which surpasses that of the apostle Paul; and he who lays claim to a degree of holiness which even Paul did not pretend to, gives little evidence that he has any true knowledge of himself, or has ever been im-

may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

bued with the true humility which the gospel produces. It should be observed, however, that many critics, as Bloomfield, Koppe, Rosenmüller, Robinson (*Lex.*), Clarke, the editor of the Pictorial Bible, and others, suppose the word here used—τελειόω—not to refer to *moral* or *Christian* perfection, but to be an allusion to the *games* that were celebrated in Greece, and to mean that he had not completed his course and arrived at the goal, so as to receive the prize. According to this, the sense would be, that he had not yet received the crown which he aspired after as the result of his efforts in this life. It is of importance to understand precisely what he meant by the declaration here; and, in order to this, it will be proper to look at the meaning of the word elsewhere in the New Testament. The word properly means, to *complete*, to *make perfect*, so as to be full, or so that nothing shall be wanting. In the New Testament it is used in the following places, and is translated in the following manner: It is rendered *fulfilled* in Luke ii. 23; John xix. 28: *perfect*, and *perfected*, in Luke xiii. 32; John xvii. 23; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iii. 12; Heb. ii. 10; v. 9; vii. 19; ix. 9; x. 1, 14; xi. 40; xii. 23; James ii. 22; 1 John ii. 5; iv. 12, 17, 18: *finish*, and *finished*, John v. 36; Acts xx. 24: and *consecrated*, Heb. vii. 28. In one case (Acts xx. 24), it is applied to a *race* or *course* that is run—"That I might finish my course with joy;" but this is the only instance, unless it be in the case before us. The proper sense of the word is that of *bringing to an end*, or rendering complete, so that nothing shall be wanting. The idea of Paul evidently is, that he had not yet attained that which would be the *completion* of his hopes. There was something which he was striving after, which he had not obtained, and which was needful to render him perfect, or complete. He *lacked* now what he hoped yet to attain to; and that which he lacked may refer to all those things which were wanting in his character and condition then, which he expected to secure in the resurrection. What he would then obtain, would be—perfect freedom from sin, deliverance from trials and temptations, victory over the grave, and the possession of immortal life. As those things were needful in order to the completion of his happiness, we may suppose that he referred to them now, when he says that he was not yet "perfect." This word, therefore, while it will embrace an allusion to moral character, need not be understood of that only, but may include all those things which were necessary to be observed in order to his complete felicity. Though there may be, therefore, an allusion in the passage to the Grecian foot-races, yet still it would teach that he did not regard himself as in any sense perfect. In all respects, there were things wanting to render his character and condition complete, or what he desired they might ultimately be. The same is true of all Christians now. We are imperfect in our moral and religious character, in our joys, in our condition. Our state here is far different from that which will exist in heaven; and no Christian can say, any more than Paul could, that he has obtained that which is requisite to the *completion* or *perfection* of his character and condition. He looks for something brighter and purer in the world beyond the grave. Though, therefore, there may be—as I think the connection and phraseology seem to demand—a reference to the Grecian games, yet the sense of the passage is not materially varied. It was still a struggle for the crown of perfection—a crown which the apostle says he had not yet obtained. ¶ *But I follow after.* I pursue the object, striving to obtain it. The prize was seen in the distance, and he diligently sought to obtain it. There is a reference here to the Grecian races, and the meaning is, "I steadily pursue my course;" comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 24. ¶ *If that I may apprehend.* If I may

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this*

obtain, or reach, the heavenly prize. There was a glorious object in view, and he made most strenuous exertions to obtain it. The idea in the word "apprehend' is that of taking hold of, or of seizing suddenly and with eagerness; and, since there is no doubt of its being used in an allusion to the Grecian foot-races, it is not improbable that there is a reference to the laying hold of the pole or post which marked the goal, by the racer who had outstripped the other competitors, and who, by that act, might claim the victory and the reward. ¶ *That for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* *By* Christ Jesus. The idea is, that he had been called into the service of the Lord Jesus, *with a view* to the obtaining of an important object. He recognised (1.) *the fact* that the Lord Jesus had, as it were, *laid hold* on him, or seized him with eagerness or suddenness, for so the word used here—κατελήφθην—means (comp. Mark ix. 18; John viii. 3, 4; xii. 35; 1 Thess. v. 4; and (2.) the fact that the Lord Jesus had laid hold on him, *with a view* to his obtaining the prize. He had done it in order that he might obtain the crown of life, that he might serve him faithfully here, and then be rewarded in heaven. We may learn, from this, (1.) That Christians are seized, or laid hold on, when they are converted, by the power of Christ, to be employed in his service. (2.) That there is an object or purpose which he has in view. He designs that they shall obtain a glorious prize, and he "apprehends" them with reference to its attainment. (3.) That the fact that Christ has called us into his service with reference to such an object, and designs to bestow the crown upon us, need not and should not dampen our exertions, or diminish our zeal. It should rather, as in the case of Paul, excite our ardour, and urge us forward. We should seek diligently to gain that, for the securing of which, Christ has called us into his service. The fact that he has thus arrested us in our mad career of sin; that he has by his grace constrained us to enter into his service, and that he contemplates the bestowment upon us of the immortal crown, should be the highest motive for effort. The true Christian, then, who feels that heaven is to be his home, and who believes that Christ means to bestow it upon him, will make the most strenuous efforts to obtain it. The prize is so beautiful and glorious, that he will exert every power of body and soul that it may be his. The belief, therefore, that God *means* to save us, is one of the highest incentives to effort in the cause of religion.

13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.* That is, to have obtained that for which I have been called into the service of the Redeemer. There is something which I strive after which I have not yet gained. This statement is a confirmation of the opinion that in the previous verse, where he says that he was not "already perfect," he includes a moral perfection, and not merely the obtainment of the prize or reward; for no one could suppose that he meant to be understood as saying that he had obtained the crown of glory. ¶ This *one thing* I do. Paul had one great aim and purpose of life. He did not attempt to mingle the world and religion, and to gain both. He did not seek to obtain wealth and salvation too; or honour here and the crown of glory hereafter, but he had one object, one aim, one great purpose of soul. To this singleness of purpose he owed his extraordinary attainments in piety, and his uncommon success as a minister. A man will accomplish little who allows his mind to be distracted by a multiplicity of objects. A Christian will accomplish nothing who has not a single great aim and purpose of soul. That purpose should be to secure the prize, and to renounce everything that would be in the way to its attainment. Let us then so live that we may be able to say, that there is one great object which we always have in view, and that we mean to

one thing *I do*, forgetting [a] those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

[a] Ps.45.10; He.6.1.

avoid everything which would interfere with that. ¶ *Forgetting those things which are behind.* There is an allusion here undoubtedly to the Grecian races. One running to secure the prize would not stop to look behind him to see how much ground he had run over, or who of his competitors had fallen or lingered in the way. He would keep his eye steadily on the prize, and strain every nerve that he might obtain it. If his attention was diverted for a moment from that, it would hinder his flight, and might be the means of his losing the crown. So the apostle says it was with him. He looked *onward* to the prize. He fixed the eye intently on that. It was the single object in his view, and he did not allow his mind to be diverted from that *by anything*—not even by the contemplation of the past. He did not stop to think of the difficulties which he had overcome, or the troubles which he had met, but he thought of what was yet to be accomplished. This does not mean that he would not have regarded a proper contemplation of the past life as useful and profitable for a Christian (comp. Notes on Eph. ii. 11), but that he would not allow any reference to the past to interfere with the one great effort to win the prize. It may be, and is, profitable for a Christian to look over the past mercies of God to his soul, in order to awaken emotions of gratitude in the heart, and to think of his shortcomings and errors, to produce penitence and humility. But none of these things should be allowed for one moment to divert the mind from the purpose to win the incorruptible crown. And it may be remarked in general, that a Christian will make more rapid advances in piety by looking *forward* than by looking *backward.* Forward we see everything to cheer and animate us—the crown of victory, the joys of heaven, the society of the blessed—the Saviour beckoning to us and encouraging us. Backward, we see everything to dishearten and to humble. Our own unfaithfulness; our coldness, deadness, and dulness; the little zeal and ardour which we have, all are fitted to humble and discourage. He is the most cheerful Christian who looks *onward*, and who keeps heaven always in view; he who is accustomed much to dwell on the past, though he may be a true Christian, will be likely to be melancholy and dispirited, to be a recluse rather than a warm-hearted and active friend of the Saviour. Or if he looks backward to contemplate what he has done—the space that he has run over—the difficulties which he has surmounted—and his own rapidity in the race, he will be likely to become self-complacent and self-satisfied. He will trust his past endeavours, and feel that the prize is now secure, and will relax his future efforts. Let us then look onward. Let us not spend our time either in pondering the gloomy past, and our own unfaithfulness, or in thinking of what we have done, and thus becoming puffed up with self-complacency; but let us keep the eye steadily on the prize, and run the race as though we had just commenced it. ¶ *And reaching forth.* As one does in a race. ¶ *Unto those things which are before.* Before the racer there was a crown or garland to be bestowed by the judges of the games. Before the Christian there is a crown of glory, the eternal reward of heaven. There is the favour of God, victory over sin and death, the society of the redeemed and of angelic beings, and the assurance of perfect and eternal freedom from all evil. These are enough to animate the soul, and to urge it on with ever-increasing vigour in the christian race.

14. *I press toward the mark.* As he who was running a race did. The "*mark*" means properly the object set up at a distance at which one looks or aims, and hence the *goal*, or *post* which was set up at the end of a

14 I press [a] toward the mark for the prize of the high [b] calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, [c] be thus [d] minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk

a 1Co.9.24; He.12.1. *b* He.3.1. *c* 1Co.2.6. *d* Ga.5.10.

race-course, and which was to be reached in order that the prize might be won. Here it means that which is at the end of the Christian race—in heaven. ¶ *For the prize.* The prize of the racer was a crown or garland of olive, laurel, pine, or apple; see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 24. The prize of the Christian is the crown that is incorruptible in heaven. ¶ *Of the high calling of God.* Which is the end or result of that calling. God has called us to great and noble efforts; to a career of true honour and glory; to the obtainment of a bright and imperishable crown. It is a calling which is "*high,*" or *upward* —(ἄνω)—that is, which tends to the skies. The calling of the Christian is *from* heaven, and *to* heaven; comp. Prov. xv. 24. He has been summoned by God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus to secure the crown. It is placed before and above him in heaven. It may be his, if he will not faint or tire or look backward. It demands his highest efforts, and it is *worth* all the exertions which a mortal can make even in the longest life.

15. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect;* see Notes on ver. 12. Or, rather, those who *would be* perfect; or who are *aiming at* perfection. It can hardly be supposed that the apostle would address them as already perfect, when he had just said of himself that he had not attained to that state. But those whom he addressed might be supposed to be aiming at perfection, and he exhorts them, therefore, to have the same spirit that he himself had, and to make the same efforts which he himself put forth. ¶ *Be thus minded.* That is, be united in the effort to obtain the prize, and to become entirely perfect. "Let them put forth the same effort which I do, forgetting what is behind, and pressing forward to the mark." ¶ *And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded.* That is, if there were any among them who had not these elevated views and aims, and who had not been brought to see the necessity of such efforts, or who had not learned that such high attainments were possible. There might be those among them who had been very imperfectly instructed in the nature of religion; those who entertained views which impeded their progress, and prevented the simple and earnest striving for salvation which Paul was enabled to put forth. He had laid aside every obstacle; renounced all the Jewish opinions which had impeded his salvation, and had now one single aim—that of securing the prize. But there might be those who had not attained to these views, and who were still impeded and embarrassed by erroneous opinions. ¶ *God shall reveal even this unto you.* He will correct your erroneous opinions, and disclose to you the importance of making this effort for the prize. This is the expression of an opinion, that to those who were sincere and true Christians, God would yet make a full revelation of the nature of religion, or would lead them on so that they would fully understand it. They who are acquainted with religion at all, or who have been truly converted, God will teach and guide until they shall have a full understanding of divine things.

16. *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.* This is a most wise and valuable rule, and a rule that would save much difficulty and contention in the church, if it were honestly applied. The meaning is this, that though there might be different degrees of attainment among Christians, and different views on many subjects, yet there were points in which all could agree; there were attainments which they all had made, and in re-

by the same rule, [a] let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, be followers [b] together of me, and mark them which

[a] Ga.6.16.

[b] 1Th.1.6.

ference to them they should walk in harmony and love. It might be that some had made much greater advances than others. They had more elevated views of religion; they had higher knowledge; they were nearer perfection. Others had had less advantages of education and instruction, had had fewer opportunities of making progress in the divine life, and would less understand the higher mysteries of the Christian life. They might not see the truth or propriety of many things which those in advance of them would see clearly. But it was not worth while to quarrel about these things. There should be no angry feeling, and no fault-finding on either side. There *were* many things in which they could see alike, and where there were no jarring sentiments. In those things they could walk harmoniously; and they who were in advance of others should not complain of their less informed brethren as lacking all evidence of piety; nor should those who had not made such advances complain of those before them as fanatical, or as disposed to push things to extremes. They who had the higher views should, as Paul did, believe that God will yet communicate them to the church at large, and in the mean time should not denounce others; and those who had less elevated attainments should not censure their brethren as wild and visionary. There were *common grounds* on which they might unite, and thus the harmony of the church would be secured. No better rule than this could be applied to the subjects of inquiry which spring up among Christians respecting temperance, slavery, moral reform, and the various doctrines of religion; and, if this rule had been always observed, the church would have been *always* saved from harsh contention and from schism. If a man does not see things just as I do, let me try with mildness to "teach" him, and let me believe that, if he is a Christian, God will make this known to him yet; but let me not quarrel with him, for neither of us would be benefited by that, nor would the object be likely to be attained. In the mean time, there are many things in which we can agree. In them let us work together, and strive, as far as we can, to promote the common object. Thus we shall save our temper, give no occasion to the world to reproach us, *and be much more likely to come together in all our views.* The best way to make true Christians harmonious is, to labour together in the common cause of saving souls. As far as we *can* agree, let us go and labour together; and where we cannot *yet*, let us "agree to differ." We shall all think alike by-and-by.

17. *Brethren, be followers together of me.* That is, live as I do. A minister of the gospel, a parent, or a Christian of any age or condition, *ought* so to live that he can refer to his own example, and exhort others to imitate the course of life which he had led. Paul could do this without ostentation or impropriety. *They* knew that he lived so as to be a proper example for others; and *he* knew that they would feel that his life had been such that there would be no impropriety in his referring to it in this manner. But, alas! how few are there who can safely imitate Paul in this! ¶ *And mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.* There were those in the church who endeavoured to live as he had done, renouncing all confidence in the flesh, and aiming to win the prize. There were others, it would seem, who were actuated by different views; see ver. 18. There are *usually* two kinds of professing Christians in every church —those who imitate the Saviour, and those who are worldly and vain. The exhortation here is, to "mark"—that is, to observe with a view to imitate—those who lived as the apostles did. We should set before our minds the best examples, and endeavour to imitate the most holy men. A worldly

which walk so, as ye have us [a] for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies [b] of the cross of Christ;

[a] 1 Pe. 5. 3. [b] Ga. 1. 7; 6. 12.

and fashionable professor of religion is a very bad example to follow; and especially *young* Christians should set before their minds for imitation, and associate with, the purest and most spiritual members of the church. Our religion takes its form and complexion much from those with whom we associate; and he will usually be the most holy man who associates with the most holy companions.

18. *For many walk.* Many *live*, the Christian life being often in the Scriptures compared with a journey. In order to induce them to imitate those who were the most holy, the apostle says that there were many, even in the church, whom it would not be safe for them to imitate. He evidently here refers mainly to the church at Philippi, though it may be that he meant to make the declaration general, and to say that the same thing existed in other churches. There has not probably been any time yet in the Christian church when the same thing might not be said. ¶ *Of whom I have told you often.* When he preached in Philippi. Paul was not afraid to speak of church-members when they did wrong, and to warn others not to imitate their example. He did not attempt to cover up or excuse guilt because it was in the church, or to apologize for the defects and errors of those who professed to be Christians. The true way is, to admit that there *are* those in the church who do not honour their religion, and to warn others against following their example. But this fact does not make religion any the less true or valuable, any more than the fact that there is counterfeit money makes all money bad, or makes genuine coin of no value. ¶ *And now tell you even weeping.* This is the true spirit with which to speak of the errors and faults of Christians. It is not to go and blazon their inconsistencies abroad. It is not to find pleasure in the fact that they *are* inconsistent. It is not to reproach religion on that account, and to say that all religion is false and hollow, and that all professors are hypocrites. We should rather speak of the fact with tears; for, if there is *any* thing that should make us weep, it is, that there are those in the church who are hypocrites, or who dishonour their profession. We should weep, (1.) because they are in danger of destroying their own souls; (2.) because they are destined to certain disappointment when they come to appear before God; and (3.) because they injure the cause of religion, and give occasion to the "enemies of the Lord to speak reproachfully." He who loves religion, will *weep* over the inconsistencies of its friends; he who does not, will exult and triumph. ¶ That they are *the enemies of the cross of Christ.* The "cross" was the instrument of death on which the Redeemer died to make atonement for sin. As the atonement made by Christ for sin is that which peculiarly distinguishes his religion from all others, the "cross" comes to be used to denote his religion; and the phrase here means, that they were the enemies of his religion, or were strangers to the gospel. It is not to be supposed that they were open and avowed enemies of the cross, or that they denied that the Lord Jesus died on the cross to make an atonement. The characteristic of those persons mentioned in the following verse is, rather, that they were *living* in a manner which showed that they were strangers to his pure gospel. An immoral life is enmity to the cross of Christ; for he died to make us holy. A life where there is no evidence that the heart is renewed, is enmity to the cross; for he died that we might be renewed. They are the enemies of the cross, in the church, (1.) who have never been born again; (2.) who are living in the indulgence of known sin; (3.) who manifest none of the peculiarities of those who truly love

19 Whose end [a] *is* destruction, whose God [b] *is their* belly, and *whose* glory [c] *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

[a] 2Co.11.15; 2Pe.2.1. [b] 1Ti.6.5. [c] Ho.4.7.

20 For our conversation [d] is in heaven; from whence also we look [e] for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;

[d] Ep.2.6,19. [e] He.9.28.

him; (4.) who have a deeper interest in worldly affairs than they have in the cause of the Redeemer; (5.) whom nothing can induce to give up their worldly concerns when God demands it; (6.) who are opposed to all the peculiar *doctrines* of Christianity; and (7.) who are opposed to all the peculiar *duties* of religion, or who live in the habitual neglect of them. It is to be feared that at all times there are such enemies of the cross in the church, and the language of the apostle implies that it is a proper subject of grief and tears. He wept over it, and so should we. It is from this cause that so much injury is done to the true religion in the world. One secret enemy in a camp may do more harm than fifty men who are open foes; and a single unholy or inconstant member in a church may do much more injury than many men who are avowedly opposed to religion. It is not by infidels, and scoffers, and blasphemers, so much, that injury is done to the cause of religion; it is by the unholy lives of its professed friends — the worldliness, inconsistency, and want of the proper spirit of religion, among those who are in the church. Nearly all the objections that are made to religion are from this quarter; and, if this objection were taken away, the religion of Christ would soon spread its triumphs around the globe.

19. *Whose end* is *destruction.* That is, as they have no true religion, they must perish in the same manner as all sinners. A mere profession will not save them. Unless they are converted, and become the true friends of the cross, they cannot enter heaven. ¶ *Whose God* is their *belly.* Who worship their own appetites; or who live not to adore and honour God, but for self-indulgence and sensual gratifications; see Rom. xvi. 18. ¶ *And* whose *glory* is *in their shame.* That is, they glory in things of which they ought to be ashamed. They indulge in modes of living which ought to cover them with confusion. ¶ *Who mind earthly things.* That is, whose hearts are set on earthly things, or who live to obtain them. Their attention is directed to honour, gain, or pleasure, and their chief anxiety is that they may secure these objects. This is mentioned as one of the characteristics of enmity to the cross of Christ; and if this be so, how many are there in the church now who are the real enemies of the cross! How many professing Christians are there who regard little else than worldly things! How many who live only to acquire wealth, to gain honour, or to enjoy the pleasures of the world! How many are there who have no interest in a prayer-meeting, in a Sabbath-school, in religious conversation, and in the advancement of true religion on the earth! These are the real enemies of the cross. It is not so much those who deny the doctrines of the cross, as it is those who oppose its influence on their hearts; not so much those who live to scoff and deride religion, as it is those who "mind earthly things," that injure this holy cause in the world.

20. *For our conversation is in heaven.* That is, this is true of all who are sincere Christians. It is a characteristic of Christians, in contradistinction from those who are the "enemies of the cross," that their conversation is in heaven. The word "conversation" we now apply almost entirely to oral discourse. It formerly, however, meant *conduct in general,* and it is usually employed in this sense in the Scriptures; see Notes on chap. i. 27, where the *verb* occurs, from which the noun here is derived. The word here used — πολίτευμα—is found nowhere else in

the New Testament. It properly means, *any public measure, administration of the state*, the manner in which the affairs of a state are administered; and then *the state itself, the community, commonwealth*, those who are bound under the same laws, and associated in the same society. Here it cannot mean that their "conversation," in the sense of *discourse* or *talking*, was in heaven; nor that their "*conduct*" was in heaven — for this would convey no idea, and the original word does not demand it; but the idea is, that they were *heavenly citizens*, or citizens of the *heavenly* world, in contradistinction from a *worldly* community. They were governed by the laws of heaven; they were a community associated as citizens of that world, and expecting there to dwell. The idea is, that there are two great communities in the universe—that of the world, and that of heaven; that governed by worldly laws and institutions, and that by the laws of heaven; that associated for worldly purposes, and that associated for heavenly or religious purposes; and that the Christian belonged to the latter,—the enemy of the cross, though in the church, belonged to the former. Between true Christians, therefore, and others, there is all the difference which arises from belonging to different communities; being bound together for different purposes; subject to different laws; and altogether under a different administration. There is *more* difference between them than there is between the subjects of two earthly governments; comp. Notes on Eph. ii. 6, 19. ¶ *From whence also we look for the Saviour.* From heaven. That is, it is one of the characteristics of the Christian that he believes that the Lord Jesus will return from heaven, and that he looks and waits for it. Other men do not believe this (2 Pet. iii. 4), but the Christian confidently expects it. His Saviour has been taken away from the earth, and is now in heaven, but it is a great and standing article of his faith that that same Saviour will again come, and take the believer to himself; see Notes on John xiv. 2, 3; 1 Thess. iv. 14. This was the firm belief of the early Christians, and this expectation with them was allowed to exert a constant influence on their hearts and lives. It led them (1.) to desire to be prepared for his coming; (2.) to feel that earthly affairs were of little importance, as the scene here was soon to close; (3.) to live above the world, and in the desire of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. This was one of the elementary doctrines of their faith, and one of the means of producing deadness to the world among them; and among the early Christians there was, perhaps, no doctrine that was more the object of firm belief, and the ground of more delightful contemplation, than that their ascended Master would return. In regard to the certainty of their belief on this point, and the effect which it had on their minds, see the following texts of the New Testament; Matt. xxiv. 42, 44; Luke xii. 37; John xiv. 3; Acts i. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 5; Col. iii. 4; 1 Thess. ii. 19; 2 Thess. ii. 1; Heb. x. 37; James v. 7, 8; 1 John iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20. It may be asked, with great force, whether Christians in general have now any such expectation of the second appearing of the Lord Jesus, or whether they have not fallen into the dangerous error of prevailing unbelief, so that the expectation of his coming is allowed to exert almost no influence on the soul. In the passage before us, Paul says that it was one of the distinct characteristics of Christians that they *looked for* the coming of the Saviour from heaven. They believed that he would return. They anticipated that important effects would follow to them from his second coming. So *we* should look. There may be, indeed, a difference of opinion about the time when he will come, and about the question whether he will come to reign "literally, on the earth—but *the fact that Christ will return to our world* is common ground on which *all* Christians may meet, and is a fact which should be allowed to exert its full influence on

21 Who shall change [a] our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working [b] whereby he is able even [c] to subdue all things unto himself.

[a] 1 Co.15.43,&c; 1 John 3.2. [b] Ep.1.19. [c] 1 Co.15.26,27.

the heart. It is a glorious truth—for what a sad world would this be, and what a sad prospect would be before the Christian, if the Saviour were never to come to raise his people from their graves, and to gather his redeemed to himself! The *fact* that he will come is identified with all our hopes. It is fitted to cheer us in trial; to guard us in temptation; to make us dead to the world; to lead us to keep the eye turned toward heaven.

21. *Who shall change our vile body;* comp. Notes on 1 Cor. xv. The original words, which are here rendered "vile body," properly mean "the body of humiliation;" that is, our *humble body.* It refers to the body as it is in its present state, as subject to infirmities, disease, and death. It is different far from what it was when man was created, and from what it will be in the future world. Paul says that it is one of the objects of the Christian hope and expectation, that this body, so subject to infirmities and sicknesses, will be changed. ¶ *That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.* Gr., "The body of his glory;" that is, the body which he has in his glorified state. What change the body of the Redeemer underwent when he ascended to heaven, we are not informed,—nor do we know what is the nature, size, appearance, or form of the body which he now has. It is certain that it is adapted to the glorious world where he dwells; that it has none of the infirmities to which it was liable when here; that it is not subject, as here, to pain or death; that it is not sustained in the same manner. The body of Christ in heaven is of the same nature as the bodies of the saints will be in the resurrection, and which the apostle calls "spiritual bodies," (Notes, 1 Cor. xv. 44); and it is doubtless accompanied with all the circumstances of splendour and glory which are appropriate to the Son of God. The idea here is, that it is the object of the desire and anticipation of the Christian, to be made *just like Christ* in all things. He desires to resemble him in moral character here, and to be like him in heaven. Nothing else will satisfy him but such conformity to the Son of God; and when he shall resemble him in all things, the wishes of his soul will all be met and fulfilled. ¶ *According to the working,* &c. That is, such a change demands the exertion of vast power. No creature can do it. But there is One who has power intrusted to him over all things, and he can effect this great transformation in the bodies of men; comp. 1 Cor. xv. 26, 27. He can mould the mind and the heart to conformity to his own image, and thus also he can transform the body so that it shall resemble his. Every thing he can make subject to his will. (Notes on Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2.) And he that has this power *can* change our humbled and debased bodies, so that they shall put on the glorious appearance and form of that of the Son of God himself. What a contrast between our bodies here—frail, feeble, subject to sickness, decay, and corruption—and the body as it will be in heaven! And what a glorious prospect awaits the weak and dying believer, in the future world!

REMARKS.

1. It is a privilege of the Christian to rejoice; ver. 1. He has more sources of real joy than any other persons; see 1 Thess. v. 16. He has a Saviour in whom he may always find peace; a God whose character he can always contemplate with pleasure; a heaven to look forward to where there is nothing but happiness; a Bible that is full of precious promises, and at all times the opportunity of prayer, in which he may roll all his sorrows on the arms of an unchanging friend. If there is any one on

earth who *ought* to be happy, it is the Christian.

2. The Christian should so live as to leave on others the impression that religion *produces* happiness. In our intercourse with our friends, we should show them that religion does not cause sadness or gloom, sourness or misanthropy, but that it produces cheerfulness, contentment, and peace. This may be shown by the countenance, and by the whole demeanour—by a calm brow, and a benignant eye, and by a cheerful aspect. The internal peace of the soul should be evinced by every proper external expression. A Christian may thus be *always* doing good—for he is always doing good who leaves the impression on others that religion makes its possessors happy.

3. The nature of religion is almost always mistaken by the world. They suppose that it makes its possessors melancholy and sad. The reason is, not that they are told so by those who are religious, and not that even *they* can see any thing in religion to produce misery, but because they have fixed their affections on certain things which they suppose to be *essential* to happiness, and which they suppose religion would require them to give up without substituting any thing in their place. But never was there a greater mistake. Let them go and ask Christians, and they will obtain but one answer from them. It is, that they never knew what true happiness was till they found it in the Saviour. This question may be proposed to a Christian of any denomination, or in any land, and the answer will be uniformly the same. Why is it, then, that the mass of persons regard religion as adapted only to make them unhappy? Why will they not take the testimony of their friends in the case, and believe those whom they would believe on any other subject, when they declare that it is only true religion that ever gives them solid peace?

4. We cannot depend on any external advantages of birth or blood for salvation; ver. 4—6. Few or no persons have as much in this respect to rely on as Paul had. Indeed, if salvation were to be obtained at all by such external advantages, it is impossible to conceive that more could have been united in one case than there was in his. He had not only the advantage of having been born a Hebrew; of having been early trained in the Jewish religion; of being instructed in the ablest manner, but also the advantage of entire blamelessness in his moral deportment. He had showed in every way possible that he was heartily attached to the religion of his fathers, and he began life with a zeal in the cause which seemed to justify the warmest expectations of his friends. But all this was renounced, when he came to see the true method of salvation, and saw the better way by which eternal life is to be obtained. And if Paul could not depend on this, we cannot safely do it. It will not save us that we have been born in the church; that we have had pious parents; that we were early baptized and consecrated to God; that we were trained in the Sabbath-school. Nor will it save us that we attend regularly on the place of worship, or that we are amiable, correct, honest, and upright in our lives. We can no more depend on these things than Saul of Tarsus could, and if all his eminent advantages failed to give him a solid ground of hope, our advantages will be equally vain in regard to our salvation. It almost seems as if God *designed* in the case of Saul of Tarsus, that there should be *one* instance where *every possible* external advantage for salvation should be found, and there should be every thing that men ever could rely on in moral character, in order to show that no such things could be sufficient to save the soul. All these may exist, and yet there may not be a particle of love to God, and the heart may be full of selfishness, pride, and ambition, as it was in his case.

5. Religion demands humility; ver. 7, 8. It requires us to renounce all dependence on our own merits, and to rely simply on the merits of another—the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are ever saved, we must be brought to esteem all the advantages which birth

and blood and our own righteousness can bestow as worthless, and even vile, in the matter of justification. We shall not despise these things in themselves, nor shall we consider that vice is as desirable as virtue, nor that a bad temper is to be sought rather than an amiable disposition, nor that dishonesty is as commendable as honesty; but we shall feel that in comparison with the merits of the Redeemer all these are worthless. But the mind is not brought to this condition without great humiliation. Nothing but the power of God can bring a proud and haughty and self-righteous sinner to this state, where he is willing to renounce all dependence on his own merits, and to be saved in the same way as the vilest of the species.

6. Let us seek to obtain an interest in the righteousness of the Redeemer; ver. 9. Our own righteousness cannot save us. But in him there is enough. There is all that we want, and if we have that righteousness which is by faith, we have all that is needful to render us accepted with God, and to prepare us for heaven. When there is *such* a way of salvation—so easy, so free, so glorious, so ample for all, how unwise is any one to rest on his own works, and to expect to be saved by what he has done! The highest honour of man is to be saved by the merits of the Son of God, and he has reached the most elevated rank in the human condition who has the most certain hope of salvation through him.

7. There is enough to be gained to excite us to the utmost diligence and effort in the Christian life; ver. 10—14. If men can be excited to effort by the prospect of an earthly crown in a race or a game, how much more should we be urged forward by the prospect of the eternal prize! To seek to know the Redeemer; to be raised up from the degradation of sin; to have part in the resurrection of the just; to obtain the prize of the high calling in heaven—to be made everlastingly happy and glorious there—what object was ever placed before the mind like this? What ardour should it excite that we may gain it! Surely, the hope of obtaining such a prize as is before the Christian, should call forth all our powers. The struggle will not be long The race will soon be won. The victory will be glorious; the defeat would be overwhelming and awful No one need fear that he can put forth *too much* effort to obtain the prize. It is worth every exertion, and we should never relax our efforts, or give over in despair.

8. Let us, like Paul, ever cherish an humble sense of our attainments in religion; ver. 12, 13. If Paul had not reached the point of perfection, it is not to be presumed that we have; if he could not say that he had "attained," it is presumption in us to suppose that we have, if he had occasion for humiliation, we have more; if he felt that he was far short of the object which he sought, and was pressed down with the consciousness of imperfection, such a feeling becomes us also. Yet let us not sink down in despondency and inaction. Like him, let us strain every nerve that we may overcome our imperfections and win the prize. That prize is before us. It is glorious. We may be sensible that we, as yet, have not reached it, but if we will strive to obtain it, it will soon be certainly ours. We may feel that we are far distant from it now in the degree of our attainments, but we are not far from it in fact. It will be but a short period before the Christian will lay hold on that immortal crown, and before his brow will be encircled with the diadem of glory. For the race of life, whether we win or lose, is soon run; and when a Christian begins a day, he knows not but he may end it in heaven; when he lies down on his bed at night, he knows not but he may awake with the "prize" in his hand, and with the diadem of glory sparkling on his brow.

9. Our thoughts should be much in heaven; ver. 20. Our home is there; our citizenship is there. Here we are strangers and pilgrims. We are away from home, in a cold and unfriendly world. Our great interests are in the skies; our eternal dwelling is to be

there; our best friends are already there. There is our glorious Saviour, with a body adapted to those pure abodes, and there are many whom we have loved on earth already with him. They are happy now, and we should not love them less because they are in heaven. Since, therefore, our great interests are there, and our best friends there; and since we ourselves are citizens of that heavenly world, our best affections should be there.

10. We look for the Saviour; ver. 20, 21. He will return to our world. He will change our vile bodies, and make them like his own glorious body. And since this is so, let us (1.) bear with patience the trials and infirmities to which our bodies here are subject. These trials will be short, and we may well bear them for a few days, knowing that soon all pain will cease, and that all that is humiliating in the body will be exchanged for glory. (2.) Let us not think too highly or too much of our bodies here. They may be now beautiful and comely, but they are "vile" and degraded, compared with what they will soon be. They are subject to infirmity and to numerous pains and sicknesses. Soon the most beautiful body may become loathsome to our best friends. Soon, too offensive to be looked upon, it will be hidden in the grave. Why then should we seek to pamper and adorn these mortal frames? Why live only to decorate them? Why should we idolize a mass of moulded and animated clay? Yet (3.) let us learn to honour the body in a true sense. It is soon to be changed. It will be made like the glorified body of Christ. Yes, this frail, diseased, corruptible, and humbled body; this body, that is soon to be laid in the grave, and to return to the dust, is soon to put on a new form, and to be clothed with immortality. It will be what the body of Christ now is—glorious and immortal. What a change! Christian, go and look on the creeping caterpillar, and see it changed to the gay and gilded butterfly—yesterday, a crawling and offensive insect; to-day, with gaudy colours an inhabitant of the air, and a dweller amidst flowers; and see an *image* of what thy body shall be, and of the mighty transformation which thou wilt soon undergo. See the change from the cold death of winter to the fragrance and life of spring, and behold an image of the change which thou thyself wilt ere long experience, and a *proof* that some such change awaits thee.

"Shall spring the faded world revive?
Shall waning moons their light renew?
Again shall setting suns ascend
And chase the darkness from our view?

Shall life revisit dying worms,
And spread the joyful insect's wing?
And, oh, shall man awake no more,
To see thy face, thy name to sing?

Faith sees the bright, eternal doors
Unfold to make her children way;
They shall be cloth'd with endless life,
And shine in everlasting day."

DWIGHT.

11. Let us look for the coming of the Lord; ver. 21. All that we hope for depends on his reappearing. Our day of triumph and of the fulness of our joy is to be when he shall return. Then we shall be raised from the grave; then our vile bodies shall be changed; then we shall be acknowledged as his friends; then we shall go to be for ever with him. The earth is not our home; nor is the grave to be our everlasting bed of rest. Our home is heaven—and the Saviour will come, that he may raise us up to that blessed abode. And who knows when he may appear? He himself commanded us to be ready, for he said he would come at an hour when we think not. We should so desire his coming, that the hours of his delay would seem to be heavy and long, and should so live that we can breathe forth with sincerity, at all times, the fervent prayer of the beloved disciple, "Come, Lord Jesus, COME QUICKLY;" Rev. xxii. 20.

"My faith shall triumph o'er the grave,
And trample on the tombs;
My Jesus, my Redeemer, lives,
My God, my Saviour, comes;
Ere long I know he shall appear,
In power and glory great;
And death, the last of all his foes,
Lie vanquish'd at his feet.

Then, though the worms my flesh devour,
And make my form their prey,
I know I shall arise with power,
On the last judgment-day;—

CHAPTER IV.

THEREFORE, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

When God shall stand upon the earth,
Him then mine eyes shall see;
My flesh shall feel a sacred birth,
And ever with him be.

Then his own hand shall wipe the tears
From every weeping eye;
And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
Shall cease eternally.
How long, dear Saviour! Oh, how long
Shall this bright hour delay?
Fly swift around, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day."

WATTS.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter comprises the following points:

I. Exhortations.

II. Solemn commands to live as became Christians.

III. The expression of a grateful acknowledgment of the favours which he had received from them; and,

IV. The customary salutations.

I. *Exhortations;* ver. 1—3. (1.) He exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord; ver 1. (2.) He entreats Eudias and Syntyche, who appear to have been alienated from each other, to be reconciled; ver. 2. (3.) He entreats one whom he calls a "true yoke-fellow" to render assistance to those women who had laboured with him in the gospel; ver. 3.

II. *Commands;* ver. 4—9. He commands them to rejoice in the Lord always, ver. 4; to let their moderation be known to all, ver. 5; to have no anxiety about worldly matters, but in all their necessities to go to God, ver. 6, 7; and to do whatever was honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, ver. 8, 9.

III. *A grateful acknowledgment of their kindness;* ver. 10—19. He says that their care of him had been manifested again, in such a way as to be highlygrateful to his feelings; ver. 10. He did not indeed say that he had suffered, for he had learned, in whatever state he was, to be content (ver. 11—13); but they had shown a proper spirit in endeavouring to relieve his necessities; ver. 14. He remarks that their church was the only one that had aided him when he was in Macedonia, and that they had sent to him more than once when he was in Thessalonica, and says that their favour now was an offering acceptable to God, who would abundantly reward them; ver. 15—20.

IV. *Salutations;* ver. 21—23.

1. *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for.* Doddridge unites this verse with the previous chapter, and supposes that it is the proper close of the solemn statement which the apostle makes there. The word *therefore*—ὥστε—has undoubted reference to the remarks made there; and the meaning is, that in view of the fact that there were many professed Christians who were not sincere—that the "citizenship" of all true Christians was in heaven, and that Christians looked for the coming of the Lord Jesus, who would make them like to himself, the apostle exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord. The accumulation of epithets of endearment in this verse shows his tender regard for them, and is expressive of his earnest solicitude for their welfare, and his deep conviction of their danger. The term "*longed for*" is expressive of strong affection; see chap. i. 8, and ii. 26. ¶ *My joy.* The source of my joy. He rejoiced in the fact that they had been converted under him; and in their holy walk, and their friendship. Our chief joy is in our friends; and the chief happiness of a minister of the gospel is in the pure lives of those to whom he ministers; see 3 John 4. ¶ *And crown;* comp. 1 Thess. ii. 19. The word *crown* means a circlet, chaplet, or diadem, (1) as the emblem of royal dignity—the symbol of office; (2) as the prize conferred on victors in the public games, 1 Cor. ix. 25, and hence as an emblem of the rewards of a future life; 2 Tim. iv. 8; James i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 4; (3) anything that is an ornament

2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellow-labourers

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or honour, as one *glories* in a crown; comp. Prov. xii. 4, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;" xiv. 24, "The crown of the wise is their riches;" xvi. 31, "The hoary head is a crown of glory;" xvii. 6, "Children's children are the crown of old men." The idea here is, that the church at Philippi was that in which the apostle gloried. He regarded it as a high honour to have been the means of founding such a church, and he looked upon it with the same interest with which a monarch looks upon the diadem which he wears. ¶ *So stand fast in the Lord.* In the service of the Lord, and in the strength which he imparts; see Notes on Eph. vi. 13, 14.

2. *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche.* These are doubtless the names of females. The name Syntyche is sometimes the name of a man; but, if these persons are referred to in ver. 3, there can be no doubt that they were females. Nothing more is known of them than is here mentioned. It has been commonly supposed that they were deaconesses, who preached the gospel to those of their own sex; but there is no certain evidence of this. All that is known is, that there was some disagreement between them, and the apostle entreats them to be reconciled to each other. ¶ *That they be of the same mind.* That they be united, or reconciled. Whether the difference related to doctrine, or to something else, we cannot determine from this phrase. The language is such as would properly relate to *any* difference. ¶ *In the Lord.* In their Christian walk and plans. They were doubtless professing Christians, and the apostle exhorts them to make *the Lord* the great object of their affections, and in their regard for him, to bury all their petty differences and animosities.

3. *And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow.* It is not known to whom the apostle refers here. No name is mentioned, and conjecture is useless. All that is known is, that it was some one whom Paul regarded as associated with himself in labour, and one who was so prominent at Philippi that it would be understood who was referred to, without more particularly mentioning him. The presumption, therefore, is, that it was one of the ministers, or "bishops" (see Notes, chap. i. 1) of Philippi, who had been particularly associated with Paul when he was there. The epistle was addressed to the "church with the bishops and deacons" (chap. i. 1); and the fact that this one had been particularly associated with Paul, would serve to designate him with sufficient particularity. Whether he was related to the women referred to, is wholly unknown. Doddridge supposes that he might be the husband of one of these women; but of that there is no evidence. The term "yoke-fellow"—σύζυγος—some have understood as a proper name (*Syzygus*); but the proper import of the word is *yoke-fellow*, and there is no reason to believe that it is used here to denote a proper name. If it had been, it is probable that some other word than that here used and rendered *true*—γνήσιος—would have been employed. The word *true*—γνήσιε—means that he was sincere, faithful, worthy of confidence. Paul had had evidence of his sincerity and fidelity; and he was a proper person, therefore, to whom to intrust a delicate and important business. ¶ *Help those women.* The common opinion is, that the women here referred to were Euodias and Syntyche, and that the office which the friend of Paul was asked to perform was, to secure a reconciliation between them. There is, however, no certain evidence of this The reference seems rather to be to influential females who had rendered

whose names *are* in the book of life.

4 Rejoice [a] in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation [b] be known unto all men: The Lord [c] *is* at hand

a chap.3.1. *b* 1 Co.9.25. *c* Re.22.7,20.

important assistance to Paul when he was there. The kind of "help" which was to be imparted was probably by counsel, and friendly co-operation in the duties which they were called to perform. There is no evidence that it refers to pecuniary aid; and, had it referred to a reconciliation of those who were at variance, it is probable that some other word would have been used than that here rendered *help*—συλλαμβάνου. ¶ *Which laboured with me in the gospel.* As Paul did not permit women to preach (see 1 Tim. ii. 12; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. x. 5), he must have referred here to some other services which they had rendered. There were deaconesses in the primitive churches (Notes, Rom. xvi. 1; 1 Tim. v. 9, seq.), to whom was probably intrusted particularly the care of the female members of a church. In the custom which prevailed in the oriental world, of excluding females from the public gaze, and of confining them to their houses, it would not be practicable for the apostles to have access to them. The duties of instructing and exhorting them were then probably intrusted chiefly to pious females; and in this way important aid would be rendered in the gospel. Paul could regard such as "labouring with him," though they were not engaged in preaching. ¶ *With Clement also.* That is, they were associated with Clement, and with the other fellow-labourers of Paul, in aiding him in the gospel. Clement was doubtless some one who was well known among them; and the apostle felt that, by associating them with him, as having been real helpers in the gospel, their claim to respectful attention would be better appreciated. Who Clement was, is unknown. Most of the ancients say it was Clement of Rome, one of the primitive fathers. But there is no evidence of this. The name Clement was common, and there is no improbability in supposing that there might have been a preacher of this name in the church at Philippi. ¶ *Whose names* are *in the book of life;* see Notes on Isa. iv. 3. The phrase, "the book of life," which occurs here, and in Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8; xx. 12, 15; xxi. 27; xxii. 19, is a Jewish phrase, and refers originally to a record or catalogue of names, as the roll of an army. It then means to be among the living, as the name of an individual would be erased from a catalogue when he was deceased. The word *life* here refers to eternal life; and the whole phrase refers to those who were enrolled among the true friends of God, or who would certainly be saved. The use of this phrase here implies the belief of Paul that these persons were true Christians. Names that are written in the book of life will not be blotted out. If the hand of God records them there who can obliterate them?

4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway;* see Notes, chap. iii. 1. It is the privilege of Christians to do this, not at certain periods and at distant intervals, but at all times they may rejoice that there is a God and Saviour; they may rejoice in the character, law, and government of God—in his promises, and in communion with him. The Christian, therefore, may be, and should be, always a happy man. If everything else changes, yet the Lord does not change; if the sources of all other joy are dried up, yet this is not; and there is not a moment of a Christian's life in which he may not find joy in the character, law, and promises of God.

5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men.* That is, let it be such that others may see it. This does not mean that they were to make an ostentatious display of it, but that it should be such a characteristic of their lives that it would be constantly visible to others. The word *moderation*—ἐπιεικὴς—refers to restraint on the passions, general so-

6 Be careful [a] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and sup-

[a] Mat.6.25; 1 Pe.5.7.

berness of living, being free from all excesses. The word properly means that which is *fit* or *suitable*, and then propriety, gentleness, mildness.—They were to indulge in no excess of passion, or dress, or eating, or drinking. They were to govern their appetites, restrain their temper, and to be examples of what was proper for men in view of the expectation that the Lord would soon appear. ¶ *The Lord is at hand.* Is near; see Notes, chap. iii. 20; 1 Cor. xvi. 22. This has the appearance of being a phrase in common use among the early Christians, and as being designed to keep before their minds a lively impression of an event which ought, by its anticipation, to produce an important effect. Whether, by this phrase, they commonly understood the coming of the Lord to destroy Jerusalem, or to remove them by death, or to judge the world, or to reign personally on the earth, it is impossible now to determine, and is not very material to a proper understanding of its use here. The idea is, that the expectation that the Lord Jesus will "come," *ought* to be allowed to produce moderation of our passions, in our manner of living, in our expectations of what this world can furnish, and in our desires of earthly good. On him who feels that he is soon to die, and to stand at the bar of God—on him who expects soon to see the Lord Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, it cannot fail to have this effect. Men indulge their passions—are extravagant in their plans of life, and in their expectations of earthly good for themselves and for their families, because they have no realizing sense of the truth that there is before them a vast eternity. He that has a lively expectation that heaven will soon be his, will form very moderate expectations of what this world can furnish.

6. *Be careful for nothing.* That is, be not *anxious* or *solicitous* about the things of the present life. The word here used—μεριμνᾶτε—does not mean that we are to exercise no *care* about worldly matters—no care to preserve our property, or to provide for our families (comp. 1 Tim. v. 8); but that there is to be such confidence in God as to free the mind from anxiety, and such a sense of dependence on him as to keep it calm; see the subject explained in the Notes on Matt. vi. 25. ¶ *But in everything.* Everything in reference to the supply of your wants, and the wants of your families; everything in respect to afflictions, embarrassments, and trials; and everything relating to your spiritual condition. There is nothing which pertains to body, mind, estate, friends, conflicts, losses, trials, hopes, fears, in reference to which we may not go and spread it all out before the Lord. ¶ *By prayer and supplication.* The word rendered *supplication* is a stronger term than the former. It is the mode of prayer peculiarly which arises from the sense of *need*, or *want*—from δέομαι, *to want, to need.* ¶ *With thanksgiving* Thanksgiving connected with prayer. We can always find *something* to be thankful for, no matter what may be the burden of our wants, or the special subject of our petitions. When we pray for the supply of our wants, we may be thankful for that kind providence which has hitherto befriended us; when we pray for restoration from sickness, we may be thankful for the health we have hitherto enjoyed, and for God's merciful interposition in the former days of trial, and for his goodness in now sparing our lives; when we pray that our children and friends may be preserved from danger and death, we may remember how often God has interposed to save them; when, oppressed with a sense of sin, we pray for pardon, we have abundant cause of thanksgiving that there *is* a glorious way by which we may be saved. The greatest sufferer that lives in this world of redeeming love, and who has the offer of heaven before him, has cause of gratitude. ¶ *Let your request be made known unto God.* Not as if you were to give him *information*,

plication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God:

7 And the peace [a] of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever

[a] Is. 26. 3; John 14. 27.

but to *express* to him your wants. God needs not to be informed of our necessities, but he requires that we come and express them to him; comp. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

7. *And the peace of God.* The peace which God gives. The peace here particularly referred to is that which is felt when we have no anxious care about the supply of our wants, and when we go confidently and commit everything into the hands of God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee;" Isa. xxvi. 3; see Notes on John xiv. 27. ¶ *Which passeth all understanding.* That is, which surpasses all that men had conceived or imagined. The expression is one that denotes that the peace imparted is of the highest possible kind. The apostle Paul frequently used terms which had somewhat of a hyperbolical cast (see Notes on Eph. iii. 19; comp. John xxi. 25), and the language here is that which one would use who designed to speak of that which was of the highest order. The Christian, committing his way to God, and feeling that he will order all things aright, *has* a peace which is nowhere else known. Nothing else will furnish it but religion. No confidence that a man can have in his own powers; no reliance which he can repose on his own plans or on the promises or fidelity of his fellow-men, and no calculations which he can make on the course of events, can impart such peace to the soul as simple confidence in God. ¶ *Shall keep your hearts and minds.* That is, shall keep them from anxiety and agitation. The idea is, that by thus making our requests known to God, and going to him in view of all our trials and wants, the mind would be preserved from distressing anxiety. The way to find peace, and to have the heart kept from trouble, is thus to go and spread out all before the Lord; comp. Isa. xxvi. 3, 4, 20; xxxvii. 1—7. The word here rendered *shall keep*, is a military term, and means that the mind would be guarded as a camp or castle is. It would be preserved from the intrusion of anxious fears and alarms. ¶ *Through Christ Jesus.* By his agency, or intervention. It is only in him that the mind can be preserved in peace. It is not by mere confidence in God, or by mere prayer, but it is by confidence in God as he is revealed through the Redeemer, and by faith in him. Paul never lost sight of the truth that all the security and happiness of a believer were to be traced to the Saviour.

8. *Finally, brethren.* As for what remains—τὸ λοιπὸν—or as a final counsel or exhortation. ¶ *Whatsoever things are true.* In this exhortation the apostle assumes that there were certain things admitted to be true, and pure, and good, in the world, which had not been directly revealed, or which were commonly regarded as such by the men of the world, and his object is to show them that such things ought to be exhibited by the Christian. Everything that was honest and just towards God and towards men was to be practised by them, and they were in all things to be examples of the highest kind of morality. They were not to exhibit partial virtues; not to perform one set of duties to the neglect or exclusion of others; not to be faithful in their duties to God, and to neglect their duty to men; not to be punctual in their religious rites, and neglectful of the common laws of morality; but they were to do *everything* that could be regarded as the fair subject of commendation, and that was implied in the highest moral character. The word *true* refers here to everything that was the reverse of falsehood. They were to be true to their engagements; true to their pro-

things are true, [a] whatsoever things are [1] honest, [b] whatsoever things *are* just, [c] whatsoever things *are* pure, [d] whatsoever things *are* lovely, [e] whatsoever things *are* of good report; [f] if *there be* any virtue,

[a] Ep.4.25. [1] or, *venerable*. [b] 2 Co.8.21. [c] De.16.20; Is.26.7. [d] Ja.3.17. [1] John3.3. [e] 1 Co.xiii. [f] Col.4.5; He.11.2.

mises; true in their statements; and true in their friendships. They were to maintain the truth about God; about eternity; about the judgment; and about every man's character. Truth is a representation of things as they are; and they were constantly to live under the correct impression of objects. A man who is false to his engagements, or false in his statements and promises, is one who will always disgrace religion. ¶ *Whatsoever things are honest.* σεμνὰ. Properly, *venerable, reverend;* then *honourable, reputable.* The word was originally used in relation to the gods, and to the things that pertained to them, as being worthy of honour or veneration. *Passow.* As applied to men, it commonly means grave, dignified, worthy of veneration or regard. In the New Testament it is rendered *grave* in 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11, and Titus ii. 2, the only places where the word occurs except this; and the *noun* (σεμνότης) is rendered *honesty* in 1 Tim. ii. 2, and *gravity* in 1 Tim. iii. 4, and Tit. ii. 7. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The word, therefore, does not express precisely what the word *honest* does with us, as confined to *dealings* or *business transactions,* but rather has reference to what was regarded as worthy of reputation or honour; what there was in the customs of society, in the respect due to age and rank, and in the intercourse of the world, that deserved respect or esteem. It *includes* indeed what is right in the transaction of business, but it embraces also much more, and means that the Christian is to show respect to all the venerable and proper customs of society, when they did not violate conscience or interfere with the law of God; comp. 1 Tim. iii. 7. ¶ *Whatsoever things are just.* The things which are right between man and man. A Christian should be *just* in all his dealings. His religion does not exempt him from the strict laws which bind men to the exercise of this virtue, and there is no way by which a professor of religion can do more injury perhaps than by injustice and dishonesty in his dealings. It is to be remembered that the men of the world, in estimating a man's character, affix much more importance to the virtues of justice and honesty than they do to regularity in observing the ordinances of religion; and therefore if a Christian would make an impression on his fellow-men favourable to religion, it is indispensable that he manifest uncorrupted integrity in his dealings. ¶ *Whatsoever things* are *pure.* Chaste—in thought, in feeling, and in the intercourse between the sexes; comp. Notes, 1 Tim. v. 2. ¶ *Whatsoever things* are *lovely.* The word here used means properly what is *dear* to any one; then what is pleasing. Here it means what is *amiable*—such a temper of mind that one can love it; or such as to be agreeable to others. A Christian should not be sour, crabbed, and irritable in his temper—for nothing almost tends so much to injure the cause of religion as a temper always chafed; a brow morose and stern; an eye that is severe and unkind, and a disposition to find fault with everything. And yet it is to be regretted that there are many persons who make no pretensions to piety, who far surpass many professors of religion in the virtue here commended. A sour and crabbed temper in a professor of religion will undo all the good that he attempts to do. ¶ *Whatsoever things* are *of good report.* That is, whatsoever is truly *reputable* in the world at large. There are actions which all men agree in commending, and which in all ages and countries are regarded as virtues. Courtesy, urbanity, kindness, respect for parents, purity between brothers and sisters, are among those virtues, and the Christian should be a pattern and an

[a] and if *there be* any praise, [b] think on these things.

9 Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God [c] of peace shall be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me [1] hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.[d]

11 Not that I speak in respect

a 2 Pe.1.3,4. b Ro.13.3. c He.13.20.

1 or, *is revived* d 2 Co.6.7.

example in them all. His usefulness depends much more on the cultivation of these virtues than is commonly supposed. ¶ *If* there be *any virtue.* If there is anything truly virtuous. Paul did not suppose that he had given a full catalogue of the virtues which he would have cultivated. He, therefore, adds, that if there was anything else that had the nature of true virtue in it, they should be careful to cultivate that also. The Christian should be a pattern and an example of every virtue. ¶ *And if* there be *any praise.* Anything worthy of praise, or that ought to be praised. ¶ *Think on these things.* Let them be the object of your careful attention and study, so as to practise them. Think what they are; think on the obligation to observe them; think on the influence which they would have on the world around you.

9. *Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.* That is, what you have witnessed in me, and what you have learned of me, and what you have heard about me, practise yourselves. Paul refers them to his uniform conduct—to all that they had seen, and known, and heard of him, as that which it was proper for them to imitate. The same thing, substantially, he urges in chap. iii. 17; see Notes on that verse. It could have been only the consciousness of a pure and upright life which would make such counsel proper. How few are the men at this day who can urge others to imitate all that they have seen in them, and learned from them, and *heard* of them. ¶ *And the God of peace shall be with you.* The God who gives peace; comp. Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Thes. v. 23; see also Notes on ver. 7. The meaning here is, that Paul, by pursuing the course of life which he had led, and which he here counsels them to follow, had found that it had been attended with the blessing of the God of peace, and he felt the fullest assurance that the same blessing would rest on them if they imitated his example. The way to obtain the blessing of the God of peace, is to lead a holy life, and to perform with faithfulness all the duties which we owe to God and to our fellow-men.

10. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly.* The favour which Paul had received, and for which he felt so much gratitude, had been received of the Philippians; but he regarded "the Lord" as the source of it, and rejoiced in it as the expression of his kindness. The effect was to lead his heart with cheerfulness and joy up to God. ¶ *That now at the last.* After so long a time. The reason why he had not before received the favour, was not neglect or inattention on their part, but the difficulty of having communication with him. ¶ *Your care of me hath flourished again.* In the margin this is rendered "*is revived,*" and this is the proper meaning of the Greek word. It is a word properly applicable to plants or flowers, meaning to grow green again; to flourish again; to spring up again. Here the meaning is, that they had been again *prospered* in their care of him, and to Paul it seemed *as if* their care had sprung up anew. ¶ *Wherein ye were also careful.* That is, they were desirous to render him assistance, and to minister to his wants. Paul adds this, lest they should think he was disposed to blame them for inattention. ¶ *But ye lacked opportunity.* Because there were no persons going to Rome from Philippi by whom they could send to him. The distance was considerable, and it is not probable that the inter-

of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.[a]

a Heb. 13. 5.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I

course between the two places was very constant.

11. *Not that I speak in respect of want.* Though Paul was doubtless often in circumstances of necessity, yet he did not make these remarks on that account. In his journeys, in his imprisonments, he could not but be at times in want; but he had learned to bear all this; and that which most impressed itself on his mind was the interest which the church *ought* to show in the cause of religion, and the evidence which it would thus furnish of attachment to the cause. As to his own personal trials, he had learned to bear them, so that they did not give him great uneasiness. ¶ *For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,* therewith *to be content.* That is, to have a contented mind. Paul says that he had "*learned*" this. Probably by nature he had a mind as prone to impatience as others, but he had been in circumstances fitted to produce a different state of feeling. He had had ample experience (2 Cor. xi. 26), and, in his life of trials, he had acquired invaluable lessons on the subject. He had had abundant time for reflection, and he had found that there was grace enough in the gospel to enable him to bear trials with resignation. The *considerations* by which he had been taught this, he does not state; but they were probably such as the following:—that it is wrong to murmur at the allotments of Providence; that a spirit of impatience does no good, remedies no evil, and supplies no want; that God could provide for him in a way which he could not foresee, and that the Saviour was able abundantly to sustain him A contented mind is an invaluable blessing, and is one of the fruits of religion in the soul. It arises from the belief that God is right in all his ways. Why should we be impatient, restless, discontented? What evil will be remedied by it? what want supplied? what calamity removed? "He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast" (Prov. xv. 15); and one of the secrets of happiness is to have a mind satisfied with all the allotments of Providence. The members of the Episcopal church beautifully pray, every day, "Give us minds always contented with our present condition." No prayer can be offered which will enter more deeply into all our happiness on earth.

12. *I know both how to be abased.* To be in circumstances of want. ¶ *And I know how to abound.* To have an abundance. He had been in circumstances where he had an ample supply for all his wants, and knew what it was to have enough. It requires as much grace to keep the heart right in prosperity, as it does in adversity, and perhaps more. Adversity, *of itself,* does something to keep the mind in a right state; prosperity does nothing. ¶ *Everywhere and in all things.* In all my travels and imprisonments, and in reference to everything that occurs, I learn important lessons on these points. ¶ *I am instructed.* The word here used—μεμύημαι—is one that is commonly used in relation to *mysteries,* and denoted being instructed in the secret doctrines that were taught in the ancient "mysteries." *Passow.* In those mysteries, it was only the "initiated" who were made acquainted with the lessons that were taught there. Paul says that *he* had been initiated into the lessons taught by trials and by prosperity. The secret and important lessons which these schools of adversity are fitted to teach, he had had an ample opportunity of learning; and he had faithfully embraced the doctrines thus taught. ¶ *Both to be full.* That is, he had learned to have an ample supply of his wants, and yet to observe the laws of temperance and soberness, and to cherish gratitude for the mercies which he had enjoyed. ¶ *And to be hungry.* That is, to be

am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through a Christ which strengtheneth me.

a John 15.5; 2 Co. 12.9.

in circumstances of want, and yet not to murmur or complain. He had learned to bear all this without discontent. This was then, as it is now, no easy lesson to learn; and it is not improper to suppose that, when Paul says that he had "been instructed" in this, even he means to say that it was only *by degrees* that he had acquired it. It is a lesson which we slowly learn, not to murmur at the allotments of Providence; not to be envious at the prosperity of others; not to repine when our comforts are removed. There may be another idea suggested here. The condition of Paul was not always the same. He passed through great reverses. At one time he had abundance; then he was reduced to want;—now he was in a state which might be regarded as affluent; then he was brought down to extreme poverty. Yesterday, he was poor and hungry; to-day, all his necessities are supplied. Now, it is in these sudden reverses that grace is most needed, and in these rapid changes of life that it is most difficult to learn the lessons of calm contentment. Men get accustomed to an even tenor of life, no matter what it is, and learn to shape their temper and their calculations according to it. But these lessons of philosophy vanish when they pass suddenly from one extreme to another, and find their condition in life suddenly changed. The garment that was adapted to weather of an uniform temperature, whether of heat or cold, fails to be fitted to our wants when these transitions rapidly succeed each other. Such *changes* are constantly occurring in life. God tries his people, not by a steady course of prosperity, or by long-continued and uniform adversity, but by *transition* from the one to the other; and it often happens that the grace which would have been sufficient for either continued prosperity or adversity, would fail in the transition from the one to the other. Hence, new grace is imparted for this new form of trial, and new traits of Christian character are developed in these rapid transitions in life, as some of the most beautiful exhibitions of the laws of matter are brought out in the transitions produced in chemistry. The rapid changes from heat to cold, or from a solid to a gaseous state, develope properties before unknown, and acquaint us much more intimately with the wonderful works of God. The gold or the diamond, unsubjected to the action of intense heat, and to the changes produced by the powerful agents brought to bear on them, might have continued to shine with steady beauty and brilliancy; but we should never have witnessed *the peculiar* beauty and brilliancy which may be produced in rapid chemical changes. And so there is many a beautiful trait of character which would never have been known by either continued prosperity or adversity. There might have been *always* a beautiful exhibition of virtue and piety, but not that peculiar manifestation which is produced in the transitions from the one to the other.

13. *I can do all things.* From the experience which Paul had in these various circumstances of life, he comes here to the general conclusion that he could "do all things." He could bear any trial, perform any duty, subdue any evil propensity of his nature, and meet all the temptations incident to any condition of prosperity or adversity. His own experience in the various changes of life had warranted him in arriving at this conclusion; and he now expresses the firm confidence that nothing would be required of him which he would not be able to perform. In Paul, this declaration was not a vain self-reliance, nor was it the mere result of his former experience. He knew well where the strength was to be obtained by which to do all things, and on that arm that was able to uphold him he confidently relied. ¶ *Through Christ which strengtheneth me;* see Notes on John xv. 5. Of the strength which Christ

14 Notwithstanding, ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15 Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no [a] church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

[a] 2 Co. 11.8,9.

can impart, Paul had had abundant experience; and now his whole reliance was there. It was not in any native ability which he had; not in any vigour of body or of mind; not in any power which there was in his own resolutions; it was in the strength that he derived from the Redeemer. By that he was enabled to bear cold, fatigue, and hunger; by that, he met temptations and persecutions; and by that, he engaged in the performance of his arduous duties. Let us learn, hence, (1.) That we need not sink under any trial, for there is one who can strengthen us. (2.) That we need not yield to temptation. There is one who is able to make a way for our escape. (3.) That we need not be harassed, and vexed, and tortured with improper thoughts and unholy desires. There is one who can enable us to banish such thoughts from the mind, and restore the right balance to the affections of the soul. (4.) That we need not dread what is to come. Trials, temptations, poverty, want, persecution, may await us; but we need not sink into despondency. At every step of life, Christ is able to strengthen us, and can bring us triumphantly through. What a privilege it is, therefore, to be a Christian—to feel, in the trials of life, that we have one friend, unchanging and most mighty, who can always help us! How cheerfully should we engage in our duties, and meet the trials that are before us, leaning on the arm of our Almighty Redeemer! Let us not shrink from duty; let us not dread persecution let us not fear the bed of death. In all circumstances, Christ, our unchanging Friend, can uphold us. Let the eye and the affections of the heart be fixed on him; let the simple, fervent, believing prayer be directed always to him when trials come, when temptations assail, when duty presses hard upon us, and when a crowd of unholy and forbidden thoughts rush into the soul: and we shall be safe.

14. *Notwithstanding, ye have well done.* Though he had learned the grace of contentment, and though he knew that Christ could enable him to do all things, it was well for them to show sympathy for his sufferings; for it evinced a proper regard for a benefactor and an apostle. ¶ *Ye did communicate.* You took part with my affliction. That is, you sympathized with me, and assisted me in bearing it. The relief which they had sent, not only supplied his wants, but it sustained him by the certainty that he was not forgotten.

15. *In the beginning of the gospel.* "At the time when I first preached the gospel to you; or when the gospel began its benign influence on your hearts." ¶ *When I departed from Macedonia;* see Acts xvii. 14. The last place that Paul visited in Macedonia, at that time, was Berea. There a tumult was excited by the Jews, and it was necessary for him to go away. He left Macedonia to go to Athens; and left it in haste, amidst scenes of persecution, and when he needed sympathizing aid. At that time, as well as when he was in Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 1—10), he needed the assistance of others to supply his wants; and he says that aid was not withheld. The meaning here is, that this aid was sent to him "as he was departing from Macedonia;" that is, alike in Thessalonica and afterwards. This was about twelve years before this epistle was written. *Doddridge.* ¶ *No church communicated with me.* No church so participated with me in my sufferings and necessities, as to send to my relief; comp. 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9. *Why* they did not, Paul does not intimate. It is not necessary to suppose that he meant to blame them. They might not have been acquainted with his necessities. All that is implied here is, that he specially com-

16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

1 or, *have received.*

18 But I [1] have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice [a] acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

a He.13.16.

mends the Philippians for their attention to him.

16. *For even in Thessalonica;* Notes, Acts xvii. 1. Paul remained there long enough to establish a flourishing church. He met, indeed, with much opposition and persecution there; and hence it was necessary that his wants should be supplied by others.

17. *Not because I desire a gift.* "The reason why I rejoice in the reception of what you have sent to me, is not that I am covetous." From the interest with which he had spoken of their attention to him, some might perhaps be disposed to say, that it arose from this cause. He says, therefore, that, grateful as he was for the favour which he had received, his chief interest in it arose from the fact that it would contribute ultimately to their own good. It showed that they were governed by Christian principle, and this would not fail to be rewarded. What Paul states here is by no means impossible; though it may not be very common. In the reception of favours from others, it is practicable to rejoice in them mainly, because their bestowment will be a means of good to the benefactor himself. All our selfish feelings and gratifications may be absorbed and lost in the superior joy which we have in seeing others actuated by a right spirit, and in the belief that they will be rewarded. This feeling is one of the fruits of Christian kindness. It is that which leads us to look away from self, and to rejoice in every evidence that others will be made happy. ¶ *I desire fruit.* The word "fruit" is often used in the Scriptures, as elsewhere, to denote *results*, or that which is *produced.* Thus we speak of punishment as the fruit of sin, poverty as the fruit of idleness, and happiness as the fruit of a virtuous life. The language is taken from the fact, that a man reaps or gathers the fruit or result of that which he plants. ¶ *To your account.* A phrase taken from commercial dealings. The apostle wished that it might be set down *to their credit.* He desired that when they came to appear before God, they might reap the benefit of all the acts of kindness which they had shown him.

18. *But I have all.* Marg., "or, *have received.*" The phrase here is equivalent to, "I have received every thing. I have all I want, and desire no more." He was entirely satisfied. What they had sent to him is, of course, now unknown. It is sufficient to know, that it was of such a nature as to make his situation comfortable. ¶ *I am full.* I have enough. This is a strong expression, denoting that nothing was lacking. ¶ *Having received of Epaphroditus;* see Notes, chap.ii.25. ¶ *An odour of a sweet smell.* This does not mean that it was such an odour to Paul, but to God. He regarded it as an offering which they had made to God himself; and he was persuaded that he would regard it as acceptable to him. They had doubtless made the offering, not merely from personal friendship for Paul, but because he was a minister of Christ, and from love to his cause; and Paul felt assured that this offering would be acceptable to him; comp. Matt. x 41, 42. The word "*odour*" refers properly to the pleasant fragrance produced in the temple by the burning of incense; Notes on Luke i. 9. On the meaning of the word rendered "a sweet smell,"—ἰνωδία—see Notes on 2 Cor. ii 15. The whole language here is taken from an act of worship; and the apostle regarded what he had received from the Philippians as in fact a thank-offering to God, and a presented with the spirit of true devotion to him. It was not, indeed, a

19 But my God shall supply [a] all your need, according to his riches [b] in glory by Christ Jesus.

20 Now [c] unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever Amen.

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

[a] Ps.23.1. [b] Ep.3.16. [c] Ro.16.27.

formal act of worship; but it was acceptable to God as an expression of their regard for his cause. ¶ *A sacrifice acceptable.* Acceptable to God; comp. Heb. xiii. 16; Notes, Rom. xii. 1. ¶ *Well-pleasing to God.* Because it evinced a regard for true religion. Learn hence, (1.) That kindness done to the ministers of the gospel is regarded as an acceptable offering to God. (2.) That kindness to the servants of God *in distress and want,* is as well-pleasing to God as direct acts of worship. (3.) That such acts of benevolence are evidences of attachment to the cause of religion, and are proofs of genuine piety; Notes, Matt. x. 42.

19. *But my God shall supply all your need.* That is, "You have shown your regard for me as a friend of God, by sending to me in my distress, and I have confidence that, in return for all this, God will supply all your wants, when you are in circumstances of necessity." Paul's confidence in this seems not to have been founded on any express revelation; but on the general principle that God would regard their offering with favour. Nothing is lost, even in the present life, by doing good. In thousands of instances it is abundantly repaid. The benevolent are not usually poor; and if they are, God often raises up for them benefactions, and sends supplies in a manner as unexpected, and bearing proofs of divine interposition as decided, as when supplies were sent by the ravens to the prophet. ¶ *According to his riches in glory;* Notes, Eph. iii. 16. The word *riches* here means, his abundant fulness; his possessing all things; his inexhaustible ability to supply their wants. The phrase "*in glory,*" is probably to be connected with the following phrase, "in Christ Jesus;" and means that the method of imparting supplies to men was through Jesus Christ, and was a glorious method; or, that it was done in a glorious manner. It is such an expression as Paul is accustomed to use, when speaking of what God does. He is not satisfied with saying simply that *it is so;* but connects with it the idea that whatever God does is done in a way worthy of himself, and so as to illustrate his own perfections. ¶ *In Christ Jesus.* By the medium of Christ; or through him. All the favours that Paul expected for himself, or his fellow-men, he believed would be conferred through the Redeemer. Even the supply of our temporal wants comes to us through the Saviour. Were it not for the atonement, there is no more reason to suppose that blessings would be conferred on *men* than that they would be on fallen angels. For them no atonement has been made; and at the hand of justice they have received only wretchedness and woe.

20. *Now unto God and our Father,* &c.; see Notes on Rom. xvi. 27. It was common for Paul to address such an ascription of praise to God, at the close of his epistles.

21. *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.* It was usual for him also to close his epistles with affectionate salutations to various members of the churches to which he wrote. These salutations are generally specific, and mention the names, particularly if prominent members of the churches; see the close of the epistles to the Romans; 1 Corinthians; Colossians, and 2 Timothy. In this epistle, however, as in some others, the salutation is general. Why none are specified in particular is not certainly known. ¶ *The brethren which are with me,* &c. The word "brethren" here probably refers to ministers that were with Paul as the "*saints*" in general are mentioned in the next verse. It is possible that at Rome the ministers were

22 All the saints salute you, [a] chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household.

[a] chap 1.13.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

It was written to the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus.

known by the general name of *the brethren*. *Pierce.*

22. *All the saints salute you.* All in Rome, where this epistle was written. No individuals are specified, perhaps because none of the Christians at Rome were personally known to the church at Philippi. They would, however, feel a deep interest in a church which had thus the confidence and affection of Paul. There is reason to believe that the bonds of affection among the churches then were much stronger than they are now. There was a generous warmth in the newness of the Christian affection—the first ardour of love; and the common trials to which they were exposed would serve to bind them closely together. ¶ *Chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household.* That is, of Nero, who was at that time the reigning emperor. The name *Cæsar* was given to all the emperors after the time of Julius Cæsar, as the name *Pharaoh* was the common name of the kings of Egypt. The *phrase* here used—"the household of Cæsar"—*may* refer to the *relatives* of the emperor; and it is certainly possible that some of them may have been converted to Christianity. But it does not of necessity refer to those related to him, but may be applied to his domestics, or to some of the officers of the court that were more particularly employed around his person; and as it is more probable that some of them would be converted than his own relatives, it is more safe to suppose that they were intended; see Notes on chap. i. 13.

23. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*; Notes, Rom. xvi. 20.

In regard to the subscription at the end of this epistle, it may be remarked, as has been done of the other subscriptions at the end of the epistles, that it is of no authority whatever. There is no reason, however, to doubt that in this case it is correct. The epistle bears internal evidence of having been written from Rome, and was doubtless sent by Epaphroditus. See the Intro., § 3. There is considerable variety in the subscription. The Greek is, "It was written to the Philippians from Rome by Epaphroditus." The Syriac, "The epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome, and sent by Epaphroditus." The Æthiopic, "To the Philippians, by Timothy."

REMARKS.

The principal lessons taught in this closing chapter are the following:—

1. It is our duty to be firm in the Lord, in all the trials, temptations, and persecutions to which we may be exposed; ver. 1. This duty should be pressed on Christians by their teachers, and by each other, by all that is tender and sacred in the Christian profession, and all that is endearing in Christian friendship. Like Paul, we should appeal to others as "brethren dearly beloved and longed for," and by all their affection for us we should entreat them to be steadfast in the Christian profession. As their "joy and crown," also, ministers should desire that their people should be holy. Their own happiness and reward is to be closely connected with the firmness with which their people maintain the principles of the Christian faith. If Christians, therefore, wish to impart the highest joy to their religious teachers, and to exalt them as high as possible in future happiness and glory, they should strive to be faithful to their great Master, and to be steadfast in attachment to his cause.

2. It is the duty of those who have from any cause been alienated, to seek to be reconciled; ver 2. They should be of the same mind. Almost nothing does more to hinder the cause of religion than alienations and bickerings among its professed friends. It is *possible* for them to live in harmony, and to be of the same mind in the Lord; and such is the importance of this, that it well deserves to be en-

forced by apostolic authority and persuasion. It may be observed, also, that in the case referred to in this chapter—that of Euodias and Syntyche—the exhortation to reconciliation is addressed to *both*. Which was in the wrong, or whether both were, is not intimated, and is not needful for us to know. It is enough to know that there was alienation, and *both* of them were exhorted to see that the quarrel was made up. So, in all cases where members of the church are at variance, it is the business of both parties to seek to be reconciled, and neither party is right if he waits for the other before he moves in the matter. If you feel that you have been injured, go and tell your brother kindly wherein you think he has done you wrong. He may at once explain the matter, and show that you have misunderstood it, or he may make proper confession or restitution. Or, if he will do neither, you will have done your duty; Matt. xviii. 15. If you are conscious that you have injured, him, then nothing is more proper than that you should go and make confession. The blame of the quarrel rests wholly on you. And if some meddling third person has got up the quarrel between you, then go and see your brother, and disappoint the devices of the enemy of religion.

3. It is our duty and our privilege to rejoice in the Lord always; ver. 4. As God is unchanging, we may always find joy in him. The character of God which we loved yesterday, and in the contemplation of which we found happiness then, is the same to-day, and its contemplation will furnish the same joy to us now. His promises are the same; his government is the same; his readiness to impart consolation is the same; the support which he can give in trial and temptation is the same. Though in our own hearts we may find much over which to mourn, yet when we look away from ourselves we may find abundant sources of consolation and peace. The Christian, therefore, *may* be always happy. If he will look to God and not to himself; to heaven and not to earth, he will find permanent and substantial sources of enjoyment. But in nothing else than God can we rejoice *always*. Our friends, in whom we find comfort, are taken away; the property that we thought would make us happy, fails to do so; and pleasures that we thought would satisfy, pall upon the sense and make us wretched. No man can be permanently happy who does not make THE LORD the source of joy, and who does not expect to find his chief pleasure in him.

4. It is a privilege to be permitted to go and commit everything to God; ver. 6, 7. The mind *may be* in such a state that it shall feel no *anxiety* about anything. We may feel so certain that God will supply all our wants; that he will bestow upon us all that is really necessary for us in this life and the next, and that he will withhold from us nothing which it is not for our real good to have withheld, that the mind may be constantly in a state of peace. With a thankful heart for all the mercies which we *have* enjoyed—and in all cases they are many—we may go and commit ourselves to God for all that we need hereafter. Such is the privilege of religion; such an advantage is it to be a Christian. Such a state of mind will be followed by peace. And it is only in such a way that true peace can be found. In every other method there will be agitation of mind and deep anxiety. If we have not this confidence in God, and this readiness to go and commit all to him, we shall be perplexed with the cares of this life; losses and disappointments will harass us; the changes which occur will weary and wear out our spirits, and through life we shall be tossed as on a restless ocean.

5. It is the duty of Christians to be upright in every respect; ver. 8. Every friend of the Redeemer should be a man of incorruptible and unsuspected integrity. He should be one who can always be depended on to do what is right, and pure, and true, and lovely. I know not that there is a more important verse in the New Testament than the *eighth* verse of

this chapter. It deserves to be recorded in letters of gold in the dwelling of every Christian, and it would be well if it could be made to shine on his way as if written in characters of living light. There should be no virtue, no truth, no noble plan of benevolence, no pure and holy undertaking in society, of which the Christian should not be, according to his ability, the patron and the friend. The reasons are obvious. It is not only because this is in accordance with the law of God, but it is from its effect on the community. The people of the world judge of religion by the character of its professed friends. It is not from what they hear in the pulpit, or learn from the Bible, or from treatises on divinity; it is from what they see in the lives of those who profess to follow Christ. They mark the expression of the eye; the curl of the lip; the words that we speak—and if they perceive peevishness and irritability, they set it down to the credit of religion. They watch the conduct, the temper and disposition, the manner of doing business, the respect which a man has for truth, the way in which he keeps his promises, and set it all down to the credit of religion. If a professed Christian fails in *any one* of these things, he dishonours religion and neutralizes all the good which he might otherwise do. It is not only the man in the church who is untrue, *and* dishonest, *and* unjust, *and* unlovely in his temper, that does evil; it is he who is *either* false, *or* dishonest, *or* unjust, *or* unlovely in his temper. One evil propensity will neutralize all that is good; and one member of the church who fails to lead a moral and upright life will do much to neutralize all the good that can be done by all the rest of the church; comp. Eccl. x. 1.

6. It is the duty of Christians to show kindness to the ministers of the gospel, especially in times and circumstances of want; ver. 10, 14—17. Paul commended much what the Philippians had done for him. Yet they had done no more than they ought to do; see 1 Cor. ix. 11. He had established the gospel among them, carrying it to them by great personal sacrifice and self-denial. What he had done for *them* had cost him much more than what they had done for *him*—and was of much more value. He had been in want. He was a prisoner; among strangers; incapable of exerting himself for his own support; not in a situation to minister to his own wants, as he had often done by tent making, and in these circumstances he *needed* the sympathizing aid of friends. He was not a man to be voluntarily dependent on others, or to be at any time a burden to them. But circumstances beyond his control had made it necessary for others to supply his wants. The Philippians nobly responded to his claims on them, and did all that he could ask. Their conduct is a good example for other Christians to imitate in their treatment of the ministers of the gospel. Ministers now are often in want. They become old, and are unable to labour; they are sick, and cannot render the service which they have been accustomed to; their families are afflicted, and they have not the means of providing for them comfortably in sickness. It is to be remembered also that such cases often happen where a minister has spent the best part of his life in the service of a people; where he has devoted his most vigorous days to their welfare; where he has been unable to lay up anything for sickness or old age; where he may have abandoned what would have been a lucrative calling in life, for the purpose of preaching the gospel. If there ever is a claim on the generosity of a people, his case is one, and there is no debt of gratitude which a people ought more cheerfully to pay than that of providing for the wants of an aged or an afflicted and disabled servant of Christ, who has spent his best years in endeavouring to train them and their children up for heaven. Yet, it cannot be denied, that great injustice is often done in such cases. The poor beast that has served a man and his family in the days of his vigour, is often turned

out in old age to die; and something like this sometimes occurs in the treatment of ministers of the gospel. The conduct of a people, generous in many other respects, is often unaccountable in their treatment of their pastors; and one of the lessons which ministers often have to learn, like their Master, by bitter experience, is the ingratitude of those for whose welfare they have toiled, and prayed, and wept.

7. Let us learn to be contented with our present condition; ver. 11, 12. Paul *learned* this lesson. It is not a *native* state of mind. It is a lesson to be acquired by experience. By nature we are all restless and impatient; we are reaching after things that we have not, and often after things that we cannot and ought not to have. We are envious of the condition of others, and suppose that if we had what they have we should be happy. Yet, if we have right feelings, we shall always find enough in our present condition to make us *contented.* We shall have such confidence in the arrangements of Providence as to feel that things are ordered for the best. If we are poor, and persecuted, and in want, or are prostrated by sickness, we shall feel that there is some good reason why this is so arranged—though the reason may not be known to us. If we are benevolent, as we ought to be, we shall be willing that others shall be made happy by what they possess, instead of coveting it for ourselves, and desiring to wrest it from them. If we are disposed to estimate our mercies, and not to give up our minds to a spirit of complaining, we shall see enough around us to make us contented. Paul was a prisoner; he was poor; he was among strangers; he had neither wife nor children; he was about to be tried for his life, and probably put to death—yet he learned to be content. He had a good conscience; the hope of heaven; a sound intellect; a heart disposed to do good, and confidence in God, and why should a man in such circumstances murmur? Says Jeremy Taylor, "Am I fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, who have taken all from me? What now? Let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse; and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and a cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they still have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too; and still I sleep and digest; I eat and drink; I read and meditate; I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all in which God delights, that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself. And he who hath so many causes of joy, and so great, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, who loses all these pleasures, and chooses to sit down upon his little handful of thorns."—*Holy Living,* chap. ii. sect. vi. Let the whole of this section "on Contentedness" be read. It is one of the most beautiful arguments for *contentment* that ever proceeded from uninspired lips.

8. In all these things; in all the duties and the trials of life; in all our efforts to meet temptation, and to cultivate contentment with our present condition, let us put our trust in the Saviour; ver. 13. Paul said that he could "do all things through Christ who strengthened him." His strength was there; ours is there also. If we attempt these things, relying on our own strength, we shall certainly fail. The bad passions of our nature will get the ascendency, and we shall be left to discontent and murmuring. The arm that is to uphold us is that of the Redeemer; and relying on that, we shall find no duty so arduous that we may not be able to perform it; no temptation so formidable that we may not be able to meet it;

no trial so great that we may not be able to bear it; no situation in life through which we may be called to pass, where we may not find contentment and peace. And may God of his rich mercy give to each one who shall read these Notes on this beautiful epistle to the Philippians, abundant grace thus to confide in the Saviour, and to practise all the duties so tenderly enjoined on the Philippian Christians and on us by this illustrious prisoner in the cause of Christ.

THE

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The situation of Colosse.*

Colosse, or, as it is written in many manuscripts, *Colasse*, was a celebrated city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor. See the map prefixed to the Notes on the Acts of the Apostles. It was in the southern part of that province, was nearly directly east of Ephesus, north of Laodicea, and nearly west of Antioch in Pisidia. It is mentioned by Herodotus (Polyhymn. Lib. viii. c. 30) as "a great city of Phrygia, in that part where the river Lycus descends into a chasm of the earth and disappears, but which, after a distance of five stadia, rises again and flows into the Meander"—εἰς τον Μαιανδρον. Xenophon also mentions the city of Colosse as being Πολις οικουμενη ευδαιμων και μεγαλη—"a city well inhabited, pleasant, and large." Expedi. Cyr. Lib. i. In the time of Strabo, however, it seems to have been much diminished in size, as it is mentioned by him among the "smaller towns"—πολισματα. Lib. xii. p. 864. In the latter part of the reign of Nero, and not long after this epistle was written, Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, were at the same time overwhelmed by an earthquake. Pliny, Hist. Nat. Lib. v. c. 41. Colosse recovered, however, from this shock, and is mentioned by the Byzantine writers as among the most opulent cities; see Koppe, *Proleg.* The ancient town is now extinct, but its site is occupied by a village called *Chonos*, or *Khonas*. This village is described by Mr. Arundell as being situated most picturesquely under the immense range of Mount Cadmus, which rises to a very lofty and perpendicular height behind the village, in some parts clothed with pines, in others bare of soil, with vast chasms and caverns. An immense perpendicular chasm, affords an outlet to a wide mountain torrent, the bed of which is dry in summer. The approach to the village is as wild as the village itself is beautiful, abounding in tall trees, from which vines of most luxuriant growth are suspended. In the immediate neighbourhood are several vestiges of an ancient city, consisting of arches, vaults, squared stones, while the ground is strewed with broken pottery, which so generally and so remarkably indicates the site of ancient towns in the East. That these ruins are all that now remain of Colosse, there seems no reason to doubt.

Colosse, as has been remarked, was situated in Phrygia. On the name Phrygia, and the origin of the Phrygians, very different opinions have been entertained, which it is not necessary to specify in order to an understanding of this epistle. They claimed to be the most ancient people of the world; and it is said that this claim was admitted by the Egyptians, who, though boastful of their own antiquity, were content to regard themselves as second to the Phrygians. *Pict. Bib.* Like other parts of Asia Minor which were distinguished as provinces under the Roman empire, Phrygia is first historically known as a kingdom, and continued such until it was made a province of the Lydian monarchy. It remained a province of that monarchy until Crœsus, king of Lydia, was conquered by Cyrus of Persia, who added the Lydian kingdom to his empire. After that, Phrygia, like the rest of Asia Minor, became successively subject to the Greeks, the Romans, and the Turks. In the time when the gospel was preached there, it was subject to the Romans; it is now under the dominion of the Turks. Phrygia was anciently celebrated for its fertility; but, under the Moslem yoke, a great part of the country lies uncultivated.

2. *The establishment of the church in Colosse.*

The gospel was first preached in Phrygia by Paul and Silas, accompanied also by Timothy; Acts xv. 40, 41; xvi. 1—3, 6. It is said that they "went throughout Phrygia," which means, doubtless, that they went to the principal cities and towns; in Acts xviii. 23, it is said that Paul visited Phrygia again, after he had been to Philippi, Athens, Jerusalem, and Antioch. He "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples." It is not, indeed, expressly said of Paul and Silas that they went to Colosse; but, as this was one of the principal cities of Phrygia, there is every reason to suppose that they preached the gospel there.

It has been doubted, however, whether Paul was ever at Colosse. It is expressly affirmed by Hug (*Intro.*), and by Koppe (*Proleg.*), that Paul had not taught at Colosse himself, and that he had no personal acquaintance with the Christians there. It has been maintained that the gospel was, probably, first preached there by Epaphras, who heard the apostle at Ephesus, and who returned and preached the gospel to his own countrymen. The opinion that Paul had not been there, and was personally unacquainted with the church, is founded on his declaration in chap. ii. 1: "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, *and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.*" From this it is inferred that he was neither at Colosse nor at Laodicea. Yet it may be justly doubted whether this passage will authorize this conclusion. Theodoret long since suggested that the meaning of this was—"I have not only a concern for you, but I have also great concern for those who have not seen me." Dr. Lardner, however, maintains that the gospel was preached in Colosse by Paul. The reasons which he gives for the opinion are briefly these:

(1.) The declarations of Luke, already quoted, that Paul more than once passed through Phrygia. The presumption is, that he would visit the chief cities of that province in passing and repassing through it. It is to be remembered that, according to chap. ii. 1, Colosse and *Laodicea* are placed on the same footing; and hence the difficulty of the supposition that he did not visit the former is increased. Can it be supposed that Paul would go again and again through that region, preaching the gospel in the points where it would be likely to exert the widest influence, and yet never visit either of these principal cities of the province, especially when it is remembered that Laodicea was the capital? (2.) Dr. Lardner appeals

to what Paul says in chap. i. 6, and ii. 6, 7, in proof that he knew that they had been rightly taught the gospel. From this he infers that Paul had himself communicated it to them. This conclusion is not perfectly clear, since it is certain that Paul might have known their first teachers, and been satisfied that they taught the truth; but it is such language as he would have used on the supposition that he was the spiritual father of the church. (3.) Epaphras, says Dr. Lardner, was not their first instructor in the gospel. This he infers from what is said of him in chap. i. 7, and in chap. iv. 12, 13. He is commended as "one of them," as a "fellow-servant," as "a faithful minister of Christ," as one "beloved." But he is not spoken of as sustaining any nearer relation to them. If he had been the founder of their church, he thinks it is incredible that there is no allusion to this fact in writing to them; that the apostle should have spoken more than once of him, and never referred to his agency in establishing the church there. (4.) Paul does, in effect, say that he had himself dispensed the gospel to these Colossians; chap. i. 21—25. The salutations at the end of the epistle, to various persons at Laodicea and Colosse, show that he was personally acquainted there. See these and other reasons drawn out in Lardner's Works, vol. vi., pp. 151 seq., Ed. Lond. 1829. The considerations suggested by Dr. Lardner seem to me to be sufficient to render it in the highest degree probable that the church at Colosse was founded by Paul.

§ 3. *When and where the epistle was written.*

This epistle is believed to have been written at Rome, when Paul was a prisoner there, and at about the same time that the epistle to the Ephesians, and the epistle to Philemon, were written; and that they were all sent by the same persons. It is said in the epistle itself (chap. iv. 7, 9), that it was sent by Tychicus and Onesimus, both of whom are commended as "faithful and beloved" brethren. But the epistle to the Ephesians was written at Rome (see the Intro.) and was sent by Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21); and the epistle to Philemon was sent by Onesimus. It is probable, therefore, that these persons visited Ephesus, Colosse, and the place where Philemon resided; or, rather, that Tychicus and Onesimus visited Colosse together, and that then Tychicus went to Ephesus, and Onesimus went to his former master Philemon. That this epistle and the one to Philemon were written at about the same time, is further apparent from the fact that Epaphras is mentioned in both as with the apostle, and as joining in the salutation; Col. iv. 12; Phile. 23. The epistle to the Colossians bears *internal* marks of having been written at Rome, when the apostle was a prisoner. Thus, in chap. i. 24, he says, "who now rejoice in my sufferings for you;" chap. iv. 18, "Remember my bonds." If this be so, then it is not difficult to fix the date of the epistle with some degree of accuracy. This would be about the year 62.

§ 4. *The occasion and design of the epistle.*

The general drift of this epistle has a strong resemblance to that addressed to the Ephesians, and it bears internal marks of being from the same hand. It was evidently written in view of errors which extensively prevailed among the churches of that part of Asia Minor, and was designed to inculcate the same general duties. It is of importance, therefore, to possess a general understanding of the nature of these errors, in order to a correct interpretation of the epistle.

The church at Colosse was one of a circle or group of churches, lying near each other, in Asia Minor; and it is probable that the same general views of philosophy, and the same errors, prevailed throughout the entire

region where they were situated. That group of churches embraced those at Ephesus, Laodicea, Thyatira, and, in general, those addressed in the Apocalypse as "the seven churches of Asia." From some of the notices of those churches in the New Testament, as well as from the epistle before us, we may learn what errors prevailed there in general, and against what form of error particularly the epistle to the Colossians was designed to guard.

(1.) Several classes of errorists are mentioned as existing within the limits of the "seven churches of Asia." Thus, in the church at Ephesus, "those which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. ii. 2); in Smyrna, those "which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. ii. 9); in Thyatira, "that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess" (Rev. ii. 20); in Pergamos, "them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes;" those "who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel" (Rev. ii. 14, 15). The near proximity of these churches to Colosse would render it probable that the infection of these errors might have reached that church also.

(2.) The apostle Paul, in his parting speech to the elders of the church at Ephesus, alludes to dangerous teachers to which the church there might be exposed, in such a manner as to show that there was some peculiar danger from such teachers in that community. "For I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your ownselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" Acts xx. 29, 30. He does not specify, indeed, the kind of danger to which they would be exposed; but it is evident that the danger arose from plausible teachers of error. These were of two classes —those who would come in from abroad, implying probably that there were such teachers in the neighbouring churches; and such as would spring up among themselves.

(3.) In that vicinity there appear to have been numerous disciples of John the Baptist, retaining many Jewish prejudices and prepossessions, who would be tenacious of the observances of the Mosaic law. What were their views, is not precisely known. But it is clear that they regarded the Jewish law as still binding; that they would be rigid in its observance, and in insisting on its observance by others; that they had at best, if any, a very imperfect acquaintance with Christianity; and that they were ignorant of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, and of the fact that that had been poured out in a remarkable manner under the preaching of the apostles. Paul found a number of these disciples of John at Ephesus, who professed not to have received the Holy Ghost, and who said that they had been baptized unto John's baptism; Acts xix. 1—3. Among the most distinguished and influential of the disciples of John in that region was Apollos (Acts xviii. 24, 25), who is represented as an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. He taught at Ephesus, but how long before he was made more fully acquainted with the gospel, is unknown. He is represented as having been zealously engaged in that work, and as being eminently successful; Acts xviii. 25. There is no reason to doubt that he contributed not a little in diffusing, in that region, the peculiar views held by those who were known as the disciples of John. What was precisely the doctrine which Apollos taught, before "the way of God was expounded more perfectly to him" (Acts xviii. 26), is not now known. There is every reason, however, to suppose that he would insist on the observance of the Jewish laws, and the customs of their nation. The opinions which would be *likely* to be defended by one in his circumstances, would be those which prevailed when John preached—when the law of Moses was considered to be in full force, and when it was necessary to observe all his institutions. The advocates for

the Jewish law among the churches would be likely to appeal with great force to the sentiments of so good and so eloquent a man as Apollos. So extensive was his influence, that Koppe supposes that the principal errors prevailing in the churches in Phrygia, which it was the design of the apostle in this epistle to correct, could be traced to the influence of the disciples of John, and especially to the teachings of this eloquent man. Proleg., p. 160.

(4.) If we look into the epistle itself, we shall be able to determine with some degree of certainty the errors which prevailed, and which it was the design of this epistle to correct, and we shall find that they correspond remarkably with what we might anticipate, from what we have seen to be the errors abounding in that region. (*a*) Their first danger arose from the influence of philosophy; chap. ii. 4—8. The apostle warns them to beware lest any one should "beguile them with enticing words;" he cautions them against "philosophy and vain deceit"—a philosophy that was based on the "tradition of men," "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Such philosophy might be expected to prevail in those cities so near to Greece, and so much imbued with the Grecian spirit, and one of the chief dangers which would beset them would arise from its prevalence. (*b*) A second source of danger referred to, was that arising from the influence of those who insisted on the observance of the rites and customs of the Jewish religion. This the apostle refers to in chap. ii. 16. "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days." These are subjects on which the Jews would insist much, and in this respect the disciples of John would be likely to sympathize entirely with them. It is evident that there were those among them who were endeavouring to enforce the observance of these things. (*c*) There is some evidence of the prevalence there of a philosophy more Oriental than Grecian—a philosophy that savoured of Gnosticism. This philosophy was subsequently the foundation of a large part of the errors that crept into the church. Indications of its prevalence in Colosse, occur in places like the following; chap. ii. 9—"For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*;" from which it would seem probable that there were those who denied that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt *bodily* in the Lord Jesus—a favourite doctrine of the Gnostics, who maintained that the assumption of human nature by the Son of God, was *in appearance* only, and that he died on the cross only *in appearance*, and not in reality. So in chap. ii. 18, there is a reference to "a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which are not seen, and which tend vainly to puff up a fleshly mind"—a description that will apply with remarkable accuracy to the homage paid by the Gnostics to the Æons, and to the general efforts of those who held the doctrines of that philosophy to intrude into those things which are not seen, and to offer an explanation of the mode of the divine existence, and the nature of the divine agency. See Notes on the verses here referred to. It will contribute not a little to a proper understanding of this epistle, to keep these things in remembrance respecting the kind of philosophy which prevailed in the region in which Colosse was situated, and the nature of the dangers to which they were exposed.

(5.) It will be seen from these remarks, and from the epistle itself, that the difficulties in the church at Colosse did not relate to the moral and religious character of its members. There is no mention of any improper conduct, either in individuals or in the church at large, as there was in the church at Corinth; there is no intimation that they had been guilty of any sins but such as were common to all heathens before conversion. There are, indeed, intimations that they were exposed to sin, and there are solemn charges against indulgence in it. But the sins to which they

were exposed were such as prevailed in all the ancient heathen world, and doubtless such as the Gentile part of the church particularly, had been guilty of before their conversion. The following sins particularly are mentioned: "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications, and lying;" chap. iii. 5—9. These were common sins among the heathen (comp. Notes on Rom. i.), and to a relapse into these they were particularly exposed; but it does not appear that any of the members of the church had given occasion for public reproach, or for apostolic reproof, by falling into them. As they were sins, however, in which they had formerly indulged (chap. iii. 7), and as they were therefore the more liable to fall into them again, there was abundant occasion for all the solicitude which the apostle manifests on the subject.

From the remarks now made, it is easy to see what was the *design* of the epistle to the Colossians. It was primarily to guard the church against the errors to which it was exposed from the prevalence of false philosophy, and from the influence of false teachers in religion; to assert the superior claims of Christianity over all philosophy, and its independence of the *peculiar* rites and customs of the Jewish religion.

It has been asked *why* the apostle wrote an epistle to the church at Colosse, rather than to the church in Laodicea, especially as Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia? And it has been asked also, why an epistle was addressed to that church so strikingly resembling the epistle to the Ephesians (see § 5), especially as it has been supposed that the Epistle to the Ephesians was designed to be a *circular* letter, to be read by the churches in the vicinity? The reasons why an epistle was addressed particularly to the church at Colosse, seem to have been such as the following:—

(1.) Onesimus was at that time with Paul at Rome, and was about to return to his master Philemon, at Colosse; see the Introduction to the Epistle to Philemon. It was perfectly natural that Paul should avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded him, to address a letter to the church at Colosse also.

(2.) Epaphras, a principal teacher of the church at Colosse, was also with Paul at Rome; chap. i. 7; iv. 12. He was at that time a fellow-prisoner with him (Philem. 23), and it is not improbable that it was at his solicitation particularly that this epistle was written. Paul had learned from him the state of the church at Colosse (chap. i. 6, 7), and it is not impossible, as Koppe conjectures, that he had been sent to Rome by the church to seek the counsel of the apostle in the state of things which then existed in Colosse. Epaphras was, at any rate, greatly interested in the state of things in the church, as well as in the condition of the churches at Laodicea and Hierapolis (chap. iv. 13), and nothing was more natural than that he should endeavour to induce the apostle to direct a letter that might be of benefit to them all.

(3.) A particular reason for sending this epistle appears to have been to confirm the authority of Epaphras, and to give the sanction of the apostle to the truths which he had taught. In their difficulties and dangers Epaphras had taken an important part in giving them counsel. His views might have been opposed; or his authority might have been disputed by the teachers of error there, and it was important that the apostolic sanction should be given to what he had taught. Hence the apostle speaks with so much affection of Epaphras, and so warmly of him as a faithful servant of Christ; chap. i. 7; iv. 12, 13.

(4.) It may be added, that although there is a strong resemblance between this epistle and that to the Ephesians, and although it may be regarded as probable that the epistle to the Ephesians was intended in part as a circular, yet this epistle would not have been needless. It contains many

things which are not in that epistle ; is especially adapted to the state of things in the church at Colosse, and would have the greater weight with Christians there from being specifically addressed to them. See Michaelis' Intro. to the New Testament, vol. v. 122, and Koppe, Proleg. pp. 163, 164.

§ 5. *The resemblance between this epistle and that to the Ephesians.*

Every person who has given any considerable degree of attention to this epistle, must have been struck with its remarkable similarity to the epistle to the Ephesians. That resemblance is greater by far than exists between any other two of the epistles of Paul—a resemblance not only in the general style and manner which may be expected to characterize the different productions of the same author, but extending to the course of thought ; the structure of the argument ; the particular instructions, and to some phrases which do not occur elsewhere. This similarity relates particularly to the following points :—

(1.) In the representation of the reason for which the apostle was imprisoned at Rome. This resemblance, Dr. Paley (*Horæ Paul.*) remarks, is too close to be accounted for from accident, and yet too indirect and latent to be imputed to design, and is one which cannot easily be resolved into any other source than truth. It is not found in any other of his epistles. It consists in this, that Paul in these two epistles attributes his imprisonment not to his preaching Christianity in general, but to his asserting the right of the Gentiles to be admitted into the church on an equal footing with the Jews, and without being obliged to conform themselves to the Jewish law. This was the doctrine to which he considered himself a martyr. Thus in chap. i. 24, he says, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings *for you ;*" and in chap. ii. 1, "for I would that ye knew what great conflict I have *for you*, and for them at Laodicea." That is, his conflicts and trials, his imprisonment and danger of death, had somehow come upon him in consequence of his endeavouring to spread the gospel in such places as Colosse and Laodicea. These were Gentile communities ; and the meaning is, that his trials were the result of his efforts to preach among *the Gentiles*. The same representation is made in the epistle to the Ephesians—likewise written from Rome during his imprisonment. "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles;*" chap. iii. 1. And this coincidence is also apparent by comparing two other places in the epistles. Thus Col. iv. 3, "Praying for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the *mysteries of Christ, for which I am in bonds.*" An allusion to the same "*mystery*" occurs also in the Epistle to the Ephesians. "Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the *mystery of Christ—that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel;*" chap. iii. 4—6. In the Acts of the Apostles the same statement occurs in regard to the cause for which the apostle was persecuted and imprisoned – and it is on this coincidence, which is so evidently undesigned, that Paley has founded the argument for the genuineness of the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. *Horæ Paulinæ.* The statement in the Acts of the Apostles is, that the persecutions of Paul which led to his appeal to the Roman emperor and to his imprisonment, at Rome, were in consequence of his maintaining that the Gentiles were, in the Christian administration, to be admitted to the same privileges as the Jews, or that there was no distinction between them in the matter of salvation ; and his sufferings, therefore, were, as he says, "in behalf of the Gentiles." See, particularly, Acts xxi. 28 ; xxii. 21, 22. From these passages it appears that the offence which drew down on Paul the vengeance of his countrymen was, his mission *to the Gentiles*, and his maintaining that they were to be admitted to the privileges of salvation on the same terms as the Jews.

(2.) There is a strong resemblance between the course of thought and the general structure of the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. To an extent that does not occur in any other of Paul's epistles, the same topics are introduced, and in the same order and connection. Indeed, in some portions, they are almost identical. Particularly the *order* in which the various topics are introduced is nearly the same. The following portions of the two epistles will be seen to correspond with each other.

Ephesians.		*Colossians.*
i. 15—19	with	i. 9—11.
i. 20—23	"	i. 15—19.
i. 10	"	i. 20.
ii. 1—10	"	i. 21—23.
iii. 7	"	i. 25.
iii. 9, 10	"	i. 26, 27.
iii. 17	"	ii. 7.
ii. 11—22	"	ii. 11—15.
iv. 14	"	ii. 8.
iv. 15, 16	"	ii. 19.
iv. 25	"	iii. 9.
iv. 22—24	"	iii. 9, 10.
iv. 32	"	iii. 12.
v. 19, 20	"	iii. 16, 17.
v. 21; vi. 6—9	"	iii. 18—22; iv. 1.
vi. 19	"	iv. 3.
v. 16	"	iv. 5.
vi. 21	"	iv. 7.

This resemblance, thus carried almost through the epistle, shows that there was a similarity of condition in the two churches in reference to the dangers to which they were exposed, the kind of philosophy which prevailed, the false teachers who might have an influence over them, and the particular duties to which it was desirable their attention should be turned. There is, indeed, some considerable variety of phraseology in the discussion of these topics, but still the resemblance is remarkable, and would indicate that the epistles were written not far from the same time, and clearly by the same person. It is remarkable, among other things, as Michaelis has observed, that it is only in these two epistles that the apostle warns his readers against *lying;* Eph. iv. 25; Col. iii. 9. Hence we may conclude that this vice was one that particularly prevailed in the region where these churches were situated, and that the members of these churches had been particularly addicted to this vice before their conversion.

§ 6. *The epistle from Laodicea*

In chap. iv. 16 of this epistle, the apostle gives this direction: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." The former part of this verse is clear, and the direction was given, doubtless, because the churches of Colosse and Laodicea were in the vicinity of each other, and the instructions were adapted to both churches. Doubtless the same form of philosophy prevailed, and the churches were exposed to the same errors. But it is not so clear what is meant by the "epistle from Laodicea." The most natural and obvious interpretation would be, that Paul had sent a letter also to that church, and that he wished them to procure it and read it. But no such epistle is now extant, and, consequently, much difficulty has been felt in determining what the apostle referred to. A brief ex-

amination of the opinions entertained on the subject seems necessary in this place. They are the following:

1. It has been supposed that the reference is to a letter *sent from* the Laodiceans *to* Paul, proposing to him some questions which they desired him to answer, and that he now wishes the Colossians to procure that letter, in order that they might more fully understand the drift of the epistle which he now sent to them. This opinion was held by Theodoret, and has been defended by Storr, Rosenmüller, and others. But the objections to it are obvious and conclusive. (1.) It is not the fair meaning of the language used by Paul. If he had referred to a letter *to him*, he would have said so; whereas the obvious meaning of the language used is, that the Colossians were to procure a letter in the possession of the Laodiceans, in exchange for the one which they now received from Paul. The churches were to make an exchange of letters, and one church was to read that which had been addressed to the other. (2.) If the letter had been addressed *to* Paul, it was doubtless in his possession; and if he wished the church at Colosse to read it, nothing would be more natural or obvious than to send it, by Tychicus, along with the letter which he now sent. Why should he give directions to send to Laodicea to procure a copy of it? (3.) If a letter had been sent *to* him by the Laodiceans, proposing certain questions, why did he send the answer to the church at Colosse, and not to the church at Laodicea? The church at Laodicea would certainly have been the one that was entitled to the reply. There would have been a manifest impropriety in sending an epistle to one church, made up of answers to questions proposed by another, and then at the end requesting them to procure those questions, that they might understand the epistle. (4.) It may be added, that it is not necessary to suppose that there was any such epistle, in order to understand this epistle to the Colossians. This is not more difficult of interpretation than the other epistles of Paul, and does not furnish in its structure any particular evidence that it was sent in answer to inquiries which had been proposed to the author.

2. It has been supposed by some that the epistle referred to was one written to Timothy, by the apostle himself, *at* Laodicea. This opinion was defended by Theophylact. The only show of authority for it is the subscription at the end of the First Epistle to Timothy—"The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana." But that this is erroneous, can be easily shown. (1.) The subscription to the epistle to Timothy is of no authority. (2.) If this epistle had been referred to, Paul would not have designated it in this manner. It would have been rather by mentioning the *person* to whom it was addressed, than the *place* where it was written. (3.) There is nothing in the epistle to Timothy which would throw any important light on this to the Colossians, or which would be particularly important to them as a church. It was addressed to one individual, and it contains counsels adapted to a minister of the gospel, rather than to a church.

3. Many have supposed that the "epistle from Laodicea," referred to, was one which Paul had written to the Laodiceans, partly for their use, but which was of the nature of a *circular* epistle, and that we still have it under another name. Those who hold this opinion suppose that the epistle to the Ephesians is the one referred to, and that it was, in fact, sent also to the church at Laodicea. See this question treated at length in the Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians § 5. The reasons for supposing that the epistle now known as the "Epistle to the Ephesians" was neither a *circular* letter, nor addressed to the church at Laodicea, are there given. But if the common reading of the text in Eph. i. 1, "the saints which are *at Ephesus*," be correct, then it is clear that *that epistle* was really sent to the church in that place. The only question, then, is, whether it is of so general a character that it might as well be sent to other churches as to that, and whether Paul actually sent it as a

circular, with a direction to different churches? Against this supposition, there are strong improbabilities. (1.) It is contrary to the usual practice of Paul. He addressed letters to particular churches and individuals; and, unless this case be one, there is no evidence that he ever adopted the practice of sending the same letter to different individuals or churches. (2.) There would have been some impropriety in it, if not dishonesty. An avowed circular letter, addressed to churches in general, or to any number whose names are enumerated, would be perfectly honest. But how would this be, if the same letter was addressed to one church, and then, with a new direction, addressed to another, with no intimation of its circular character? Would there not be a species of concealment in this which we should not expect of Paul? (3.) How happens it, if this had occurred, that all remembrance of it was forgotten? When those epistles were collected, would not the attention be called to the fact, and some record of it be found in some ancient writer? Would it fail to be adverted to that the same epistle had been found to have been addressed to different churches, with a mere change in the name?

4. There is but one other opinion which can exist on this question; and that is, that the apostle refers to some letter which had been sent to the Laodiceans, which we have not now in the New Testament. If this be so, then the reference could only be to some epistle which may be extant elsewhere, or which is now lost. There is an epistle extant which is known by the name of "St. Paul's Epistle to the Laodiceans;" but it has no well-founded claims to being a genuine epistle of Paul, and is universally regarded as a forgery. "It is," says Michaelis, "a mere rhapsody, collected from St. Paul's other epistles, and which no critic can receive as a genuine work of the apostle. It contains nothing which it was necessary for the Colossians to know, nothing which is not ten times better and more fully explained in the epistle which St. Paul sent to the Colossians; in short, nothing which could be suitable to St. Paul's design." Intro. to the New Tes. iv. 127. The Greek of this epistle may be found at length in Michaelis; and, as it may be a matter of curiosity, and will show that this cannot be the epistle referred to by Paul in Col. iv. 16, I will subjoin here a translation. It is as follows: "Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, to the brethren in Laodicea. Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God in Christ always, in my prayers, that you are mindful of and are persevering in good works, waiting for the promise in the day of judgment. And let not the vain speeches of some who would conceal the truth disturb you, to turn you away from the truth of the gospel which has been preached unto you. Now God grant that all they who are of me may be borne forward to the perfection of the truth of the gospel, to perform those excellent good works which become the salvation of eternal life. And now are my bonds manifest, in which bonds I am in Christ, and at the present time; but I rejoice, for I know that this shall be for the furtherance of my salvation, which is through your prayer and the supply of the Holy Ghost, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is joy. But our Lord himself shall grant you his mercy with us, that possessing love you may be of the same mind and think the same thing. On this account, brethren, as ye have heard of the appearing of the Lord, so think and do in the fear of God, and it shall be eternal life to you, for it is God who worketh in you. Do all things without murmurings and disputings. And for the remainder, brethren, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and see that ye keep yourselves from all base gain of covetousness. Let all your requests be made known with boldness unto God, and be firm in the mind of Christ. And finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, these things do. And what you have heard and received, keep in your hearts, and it shall give you peace

Salute all the brethren with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Cause that this epistle be read in the church of the Colossians, and do you also read the epistle from Colosse." Nothing can be plainer than that this is not such an epistle as the apostle Paul would have written; it is therefore a mere forgery. The conclusion to which we are conducted is, that the reference in Col. iv. 16, is to some epistle of Paul to the church at Laodicea which is not now extant, and that the probability is, that, having accomplished the object for which it was sent, it has been suffered to be lost. Thus, it is to be numbered with the writings of Gad, and Iddo the seer, and Nathan, and the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the book of Jehu (1 Chron. xix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xx. 34; 1 Kings xvi. 1); works which, having accomplished the object for which they were composed, have been suffered to become extinct. Nor is there any thing improbable or absurd in the supposition that an inspired book may have been lost. There is no special sacredness in a mere *writing*, or in the fact that inspired truth was *recorded*, that makes it indispensable that it should be preserved. The *oral discourses* of the Saviour were as certainly inspired as the *writings* of Paul; and yet but a small part of what he said has been preserved; John xxi. 25. Why should there be any improbability in supposing that an inspired *book* may also have been lost? And, if it has, how does that fact weaken the evidence of the importance or the value of what we now possess? How does the fact that a large part of the sermons of the Saviour have perished, by not being recorded, diminish the value, or lessen the evidence of the divine authority, of the Sermon on the Mount?

PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, [a] an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

2 To the saints [b] and faithful

a Ep.1.1. *b* Ps.16.3.

brethren in Christ which are at Colosse:[c] Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We [d] give thanks to God and

c Ga.1.3. *d* Ep.1.15,16.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter embraces the following topics:—

(1.) The usual salutation to the church; ver. 1, 2.

(2.) Thanks to God for what he had done for the Colossians, and for the fruits of the gospel among them; ver. 3—8.

(3.) Prayer that they might persevere in the same course, and might walk worthy of their calling; ver. 9—11.

(4.) An exhortation to render thanks to God for what he had done for them in redemption; ver. 12—14.

(5.) A statement of the exalted dignity of the Redeemer; ver. 15—18.

(6.) A statement of what he had done in the work of redemption, in making peace by the blood of his cross and reconciling the world to God; ver. 19, 20.

(7.) Through this gospel, Paul says, they had been reconciled to God, and were now brought into a state in which they might be presented as holy and unblameable in his sight; ver. 21—23.

(8.) Of this gospel, Paul says he was a minister; in preaching it he had been called to endure trials, but those trials he endured with joy; and in preaching this gospel he used the utmost diligence, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every one perfect in Christ Jesus; ver. 24—29.

1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ;* see Notes, Rom. i. 1. ¶ *By the will of God;* Notes, 1 Cor. i. 1. ¶ *And Timotheus* our *brother.* On the question why Paul associated others with him in his epistles, see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 1. There was a particular reason why Timothy should be associated with him in writing this epistle. He was a native of the region where the church was situated (Acts xvi. 1—3), and had been with Paul when he preached there, and was doubtless well known to the church there; Acts xvi. 6. It is evident, however, from the manner in which Paul mentions him here, that he did not regard him as "an apostle," and did not wish the church at Colosse to consider him as such. It is not "Paul *and* Timothy, apostles of Jesus Christ," but "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our brother.*" Paul is careful never to apply the term apostle to Timothy; Phil. i. 1. "Paul and Timotheus, *the servants* of Jesus Christ;" comp. 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1. If he had regarded Timothy as an apostle, or as having apostolic authority, it is not easy to conceive why he should not have referred to him as such in these letters to the churches. Could he have failed to see that the manner in which he referred to him was adapted to produce a very important difference in the estimate in which he and Timothy would be held by the Colossians?

2. *Grace* be *unto you;* see Notes, Rom. i. 7.

3. *We give thanks to God;* see Notes on the parallel place in Eph. i. 15, 16. ¶ *Praying always for you;* see Notes on Rom. i. 9; Eph. i. 16; comp. 1 Thess. i. 2.

the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints;

5 For the hope which is laid up [a] for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

a 2 Ti.4.8;1 Pe.1.4. b ver 23. John15.16.

6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all [b] the world; and bringeth [c] forth fruit as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard [d] *of it*, and knew the [e] grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of [g] Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

Ro.10.17. c Tit.2.11,12. d John4.23. g Phi.23.

4. *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.* To wit, by Epaphras, who had informed Paul of the steadfastness of their faith and love; ver. 7, 8. This does not prove that Paul had never been at Colosse, or that he did not establish the church there, for he uses a similar expression respecting the church at Ephesus (Eph. i. 15), of which he was undoubtedly the founder. The meaning is, that he had heard of their faith *at that time*, or of their *perseverance* in faith and love. ¶ Which ye have *to all the saints.* In what way they had manifested this is not known. It would seem that Paul had been informed that this was a character of their piety, that they had remarkable love for all who bore the Christian name. Nothing could be more acceptable information respecting them to one who himself so ardently loved the church; and nothing could have furnished better evidence that they were influenced by the true spirit of religion; comp. 1 John iii. 14.

5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.* That is, "I give thanks that there *is* such a hope laid up for you." The *evidence* which he had that this hope was theirs, was founded on the faith and love to the saints which he heard they had evinced. He fully believed that where there was such faith and love, there was a well-founded hope of heaven. The word "hope" here is used, as it often is, for *the thing hoped for.* The *object* of hope—to wit, eternal happiness, was reserved for them in heaven. ¶ *Whereof ye heard before.* When the gospel was first preached to you. You were told of the blessed rewards of a life of faith, in heaven. ¶ *In the word of the truth of the gospel.* In the true word of the gospel.

6. *Which is come unto you.* It has not been confined to the Jews, or limited to the narrow country where it was first preached, but has been sent abroad to the Gentile world. The object of the apostle here seems to be, to excite in them a sense of gratitude that the gospel had been sent to *them.* It was owing entirely to the goodness of God in sending them the gospel, that they had this hope of eternal life. ¶ *As* it is *in all the world.* It is confined to no place or people, but is designed to be a universal religion. It offers the same blessedness in heaven to all; comp. Notes on ver. 23. ¶ *And bringing forth fruit.* The fruits of righteousness or good living; see Notes on 2 Cor. ix. 10. The meaning is, that the gospel was not without effect wherever it was preached. The same results were observable everywhere else as in Colosse, that it produced most salutary influences on the hearts and lives of those who received it. On the nature of the "fruits" of religion, see Notes on Gal. v. 22, 23. ¶ *Since the day ye heard* of it. It has constantly been producing these fruits since you first heard it preached. ¶ *And knew the grace of God in truth.* Since the time ye knew the *true* grace of God; since you became acquainted with the *real* benevolence which God has manifested in the gospel. The meaning is, that ever since they had heard the gospel it had been producing among them abundantly its appropriate fruit, and that the same thing had also characterized it wherever it had been dispensed.

7. *As ye also learned of Epaphras.* Epaphras was then with Paul. Philem. 23. He had probably been sent

8 Who also declared unto us your love [a] in the Spirit.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that

[a] Ro.15.30. [b] Ro.12.2; Ep.5.10,17. [c] Ps.119.99.

ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, [b] in all [c] wisdom and spiritual understanding; [d]

10 That ye might walk [e] worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing [f] be-

[d] 1 John 5.20. [e] Phi.1.27. [f] 1 Th.4:1.

to him by the church at Colosse to consult him in reference to some matters pertaining to the church there. It is evident from this, that Epaphras was a minister of the church at Colosse, though there is no evidence, as has been often supposed, that he was the founder of the church. The apostle here says, that they had learned from Epaphras *the true nature of the gospel*, and he designs undoubtedly to confirm what he had taught them in opposition to the teachings of errorists; see the Introduction, § 4. He had doubtless conferred with Epaphras respecting the doctrines which he had taught there. ¶ *Our dear fellow-servant.* This shows that Paul had contracted a strong friendship for Epaphras. There is no reason to believe that he had known him before, but his acquaintance with him now had served to attach him strongly to him. It is possible, as has been conjectured (see the Introduction), that there was a party in the church at Colosse opposed to Epaphras and to the doctrines which he preached, and if this were so, Paul's strong expression of attachment for him would do much to silence the opposition. ¶ *Who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.* "For you," when he is with you, and in managing your interests here.

8. *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.* The love wrought in you by the Holy Spirit. It was not mere natural affection, but love wrought in their hearts by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

9. *Do not cease to pray for you;* ver. 3. The progress which they had already made, and the love which they had shown, constituted an encouragement for prayer, and a reason why higher blessings still should be sought. We always feel stimulated and encouraged to pray for those who are doing well. ¶ *That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will.* They had shown by their faith and love that they were disposed to do his will, and the apostle now prays that they might be fully acquainted with what he would have them do. He offered a similar prayer in behalf of the Ephesians; see the parallel place in Eph. i. 17—19, and the Notes on those verses. ¶ *In all wisdom.* That you may be truly wise in all things; Eph. i. 17. ¶ *And spiritual understanding.* In understanding those things that pertain to the "Spirit;" that is, those things taught by the Holy Spirit, and those which he produces in the work of salvation; see Notes on 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13; comp. 1 John ii. 20; v. 20.

10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord.* That you may live as becomes the followers of the Lord. How this was to be done he states in this and the following verses. ¶ *Unto all pleasing.* So as to please him in all things; comp. Heb. xi. 5. ¶ *Being fruitful in every good work.* This is one way in which we are to walk worthy of the Lord, and so as to please him; see Notes on John xv. 8. ¶ *And increasing in the knowledge of God.* This is another way in which we may walk worthy of the Lord, and so as to please him. It is by endeavouring to become better acquainted with his true character. God is *pleased* with those who desire to understand what he is; what he does; what he purposes; what he commands. Hence he not only *commands* us to study his works (comp. Ps. cxi. 2), but he has made a world so beautiful as to *invite* us to contemplate his perfections as reflected in that world. All good beings desire that others should understand their character, and God delights in those who are sincerely desirous of

ing [a] fruitful in every good work, and increasing [b] in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened [c] with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience [d] and long-suffering, with joyfulness; [e]

12 Giving thanks unto the Fa-

a John 15.8,16. b 2Pe.3.18. c Is.45.24. d Ja.1.4. e Ro.5.3.

knowing what he is, and who inquire with humility and reverence into his counsels and his will. Men are often displeased when others attempt to look into their plans, for they are sensible they will not bear the light of investigation. God has no plans which would not be seen to be, in the highest degree, glorious to him.

11. *Strengthened with all might.* This was also an object of Paul's earnest prayer. He desired that they might be strengthened for the performance of duty; to meet temptations; and to bear up under the various trials of life. ¶ *According to his glorious power.* Not by any human means, but by the power of God. There is a manifestation of *power* in the spirit with which Christians are enabled to bear up under trials, which shows that it is not of human origin. It is the power which God gives them in the day of trial. This power is "glorious," or, as it is in the Greek, it is the "power of his glory." It is manifestly the power of the great and glorious God, and it tends to promote his glory, and to show forth his praise. ¶ *Unto all patience.* So that you may be enabled to bear all your trials without murmuring. It is only the power of God that can enable us to do that. ¶ *And long-suffering;* Notes, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. ¶ *With joyfulness;* Notes, Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. vii. 4. The Syriac version, Chrysostom, and a few MSS. attach this to the following verse, and read it, "With joyfulness giving thanks to the Father," &c. The only difference is in the pointing, and either reading makes good sense.

12. *Giving thanks to the Father.* This is another mode by which we may "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (ver. 10); to wit, by rendering appropriate thanks to God for his mercy. The particular point which the apostle here says demanded thanksgiving was, that they had been called from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. This had been done by the special mercy of the Father who had provided the plan of salvation, and had sent his Son to redeem them. The connection shows that the word "Father" refers, in this place, not to God as the Father of his creatures, but to the Father as distinguished from the Son. It is the "Father" who has translated us into the kingdom of the "Son." Our especial thanks are due to the "Father" in this, as he is represented as the great Author of the whole plan of salvation—as he who sent his Son to redeem us. ¶ *Who hath made us meet.* The word here used—ἱκανόω—means properly *to make sufficient,* from ἱκανός — *sufficient, abundant, much.* The word conveys the idea of having *sufficient* or *enough* to accomplish anything; see it explained in the Notes on 2 Cor. iii. 6. The verb is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. In its use here, there seems to be implied the idea of conferring the privilege or the ability to be thus made the partakers of the kingdom, and the idea also of rendering us *fit* for it. The sense is, he has conferred on us grace *sufficient* to make it proper that we should partake of the blessings of his kingdom. In regard to this "fitness" or "meetness" for that kingdom, we may remark, (1.) that it does not mean that we are rendered fit by our own merits, or by anything which we have done; for it is expressly said that it is God who has thus rendered us "meet" for it. No one, by his own merits, ever made himself *fit* for heaven. His good works cannot be an equivalent for the eternal rewards of heaven; nor is the heart when unrenewed, even in the best state, *fit* for the society and the employments of heaven. There is no *adaptedness* of such a heart, however

ther, which hath made us [a] meet to be partakers of the [b]

[a] Re.22.14. [b] Ac.20.32.

amiable and however refined, to the pure spiritual joys of the upper world. Those joys are the joys of religion, of the love of God, of pleasure in holiness; and the unrenewed heart can never be *wrought up* to a fitness to enter into those joys. Yet (2.) there *is* a fitness or meetness which Christians possess for heaven. It consists in two things. *First*, in their having complied with the conditions on which God promises heaven, so that, although they have no merit in themselves, and no fitness by their own works, they have that meetness which results from having complied with the terms of favour. They have truly repented of their sins, and believed in the Redeemer; and they are thus in the proper state of mind to receive the mercy of God; for, according to the terms of mercy, there is a propriety that pardon should be bestowed on the penitent, and peace on the believing. A child that is truly broken-hearted for a fault, is in a fit state of mind to be forgiven; a proud, and obstinate, and rebellious child, is not. *Secondly*, there is, *in fact*, a fitness in the Christian for the participation of the inheritance of the saints in light. He has a state of feeling that is *adapted* to that. There is a congruity between his feelings and heaven—a state of mind that can be satisfied with nothing but heaven. He has in his heart substantially the same principles which reign in heaven; and he is fitted to find happiness only in the same objects in which the inhabitants of heaven do. He loves the same God and Saviour; has pleasure in the same truths; prefers, as they do, holiness to sin; and, like the inhabitants of heaven, he would choose to seek his pleasure in holy living, rather than in the ways of vanity. His preferences are all on the side of holiness and virtue; and, with such preferences, he is fitted for the enjoyments of heaven. In character, views, feelings, and preferences, therefore, the Christian is made "fit" to

inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from

participate in the employments and joys of the saints in light. ¶ *To be partakers of the inheritance.* The privileges of religion are often represented as an *heirship*, or an *inheritance*; see Notes on Rom. viii. 17. ¶ *Of the saints in light.* Called in ver. 13, "the kingdom of his dear Son." This is a kingdom of light, as opposed to the kingdom of darkness in which they formerly were. In the East, and particularly in Persia, there prevailed early the belief that there were two great kingdoms in the universe — that of light, and that of darkness. We find traces of this opinion in the Scriptures, where the kingdom of God is called "light," and that of Satan is called "darkness." These are, of course, figurative expressions; but they convey important truth. Light, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of holiness, knowledge, happiness; and all these are found in the kingdom over which God presides, and of which Christians are the heirs. Accordingly, we find the word *light* often used to describe this kingdom. Thus it is said of God, who presides over it, that he "is *light*, and in him is no darkness at all," 1 John i. 5; of Christ, that he is "the light of man," John i. 4; that he is "the true light," John i. 9; that he is "the light of the world," John viii. 12; comp. xii. 35; Luke ii. 32. The angels of that kingdom are "angels of light," 2 Cor. xi. 14. Those who compose that kingdom on earth are "the children of light," Luke xvi. 8; 1 Thess. v. 5. And all the descriptions of that kingdom in heaven represent it as filled with light and glory; Isa. lx. 19; Rev. xx. 23; xxii. 5.

13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.* The power exerted over us in that dark kingdom to which we formerly belonged—the kingdom of Satan. The characteristic of this empire is *darkness*—the emblem of (1.) sin; (2.) error; (3.) misery and death. Over us, by nature, these things had uncontrollable

the power of darkness, [a] and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of [1] his dear Son;

14 In [b] whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image [c] of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

[a] 1 Pe. 2. 9. [1] *the Son of his love.* [b] Ep. 1. 7. [c] He. 1. 3.

power; but now we are delivered from them, and brought to the enjoyment of the privileges of those who are connected with the kingdom of light. Darkness is often used to represent the state in which men are by nature; comp. Luke i. 79; Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. xiii. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 8. ¶ *And hath translated* us. The word here rendered "translated" is often used in the sense of removing *a people* from one country to another; see Josephus, Ant. ix. 11. 1. It means, here, that they who are Christians have been transferred from one kingdom to another, *as if* a people were thus removed. They become subjects of a new kingdom, are under different laws, and belong to a different community. This change is made in regeneration, by which we pass from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light; from the empire of sin, ignorance, and misery, to one of holiness, knowledge, and happiness. No change, therefore, in a man's life is so important as this; and no words can suitably express the gratitude which they should feel who are thus transferred from the empire of darkness to that of light.

14. *In whom we have redemption;* see this explained in the Notes on Eph. i. 7. The passage here proves that we obtain forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ; but it does not prove that this is *all* that we obtain through that blood.

15. *Who is the image of the invisible God.* εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου. The object here, as it is in the parallel place in Eph. i. 20—23, is to give a just view of the exaltation of the Redeemer. It is probable that, in both cases, the design is to meet some erroneous opinion on this subject that prevailed in those churches, or among those that claimed to be teachers there. See the Introduction to this epistle, and comp. the Notes on Eph. i. 20—23. For the meaning of the phrase occurring here, "*the image of the invisible God,*" see the Notes on Heb. i 3, and 2 Cor. iv. 4. The meaning is, that he represents to mankind the perfections of God, as an image, figure, or drawing does the object which it is made to resemble. See the word *image*—εἰκὼν—explained in the Notes on Heb. x. 1. It properly denotes that which is a copy or delineation of a thing; which accurately and fully represents it, in contradistinction from a rough sketch, or outline; comp. Rom. viii. 29; 1 Cor. xi. 7; xv. 49. The meaning here is, that the being and perfections of God are accurately and fully represented by Christ. In what respects particularly he was thus a representative of God, the apostle proceeds to state in the following verses, to wit, in his creative power, in his eternal existence, in his heirship over the universe, in the fulness that dwelt in him. This cannot refer to him merely as incarnate, for some of the things affirmed of him pertained to him *before* his incarnation; and the idea is, that *in all things* Christ fairly represents to us the divine nature and perfections. God is manifest to us through him; 1 Tim. iii. 16. We see God in him as we see an object in that which is in all respects an exact copy of it. God is invisible. No eye has seen him, or can see him; but in what Christ is, and has done in the works of creation and redemption, we have a fair and full representation of what God is; see Notes on John i. 18; xiv. 9. ¶ *The first-born of every creature.* Among all the creatures of God, or over all his creation, occupying the rank and pre-eminence of the first-born. The first-born, or the eldest son, among the Hebrews as elsewhere, had peculiar privileges. He was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance. It has been, also, and especially in oriental countries, a common thing for the eldest son to succeed to

the estate and the title of his father. In early times, the first-born son was the officiating priest in the family, in the absence or on the death of the father. There can be no doubt that the apostle here has reference to the *usual* distinctions and honours conferred on the first-born, and means to say that, among all the creatures of God, Christ occupied a pre-eminence *similar* to that. He does not say that, *in all respects*, he resembled the first-born in a family; nor does he say that he himself was a creature, for the point of his comparison does not turn on these things, and what he proceeds to affirm respecting him is inconsistent with the idea of his being a created being himself. He that "created all things that are in heaven and that are in earth," was not himself *created*. That the apostle did not mean to represent him as a creature, is also manifest *from the reason which he assigns* why he is called the first-born. "He is the image of God, and the first-born of every creature, *for*—ὅτι—by him were all things created." That is, he sustains the elevated rank of the first-born, or a high eminence over the creation, *because* by him "all things were created in heaven and in earth." The *language* here used, also, does not fairly imply that he was a creature, or that he was in nature and rank one of those in relation to whom it is said he was the first-born. It is true that the word first-born—πρωτότοκος—properly means the first-born child of a father or mother, Matt. i. 25; Luke ii. 7; or the first-born of animals. But two things are also to be remarked in regard to the use of the word: (1.) It does not necessarily imply that any one is born *afterwards* in the family, for it would be used of the first-born, though an only child; and (2.) it is used to denote one who is chief, or who is highly distinguished and pre-eminent. Thus it is employed in Rom. viii. 29, "That he might be the first-born among many brethren." So, in verse 18 of this chapter, it is said that he was "the first-born from the dead;" not that he was literally the first that was raised from the dead, which was not the fact, but that he might be pre-eminent among those that are raised; comp. Ex. iv. 22. The meaning, then, is, that Christ sustains the most exalted rank in the universe; he is pre-eminent above all others; he is at the head of all things. The expression does not mean that he was "begotten before all creatures," as it is often explained, but refers to the simple fact that he sustains the highest rank over the creation. He is the Son of God. He is the heir of all things. All other creatures are also the "offspring of God;" but he is exalted as the Son of God above all.

[This clause has been variously explained. The most commonly received, and, as we think, best supported opinion, is that which renders πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως "begotten before all creation." This most natural and obvious sense would have been more readily admitted, had it not been supposed hostile to certain views on the sonship of Christ. Some explain πρωτ. actively, and render "first begetter or producer of all things," which gives, at all events, a sense consistent with truth and with the context, which immediately assigns as the reason of Christ being styled πρωτ., the clause beginning ὁτι εν αυτω εκτισθη, "For by him were all things created." Others, with the author, explain the word figuratively, of pre-eminence or lordship. To this view however, there are serious objections. It seems not supported by sufficient evidence. No argument can be drawn from verse 18. until it be proved, that "firstborn from the dead," does not mean the *first* that was raised to *die no more*, which Doddridge affirms to be "the easiest, surest, most natural sense, in which the best commentators are agreed." Nor is the argument from Rom. viii. 29 satisfactory. "Πρωτοτ.," says Bloomfield, at the close of an admirable note on this verse, "is not well taken by Whitby and others, in a figurative sense, to denote 'Lord of all things,' since the word is never so used, except in reference to primogeniture. And although, in Rom. viii. 29, we have τον πρ. εν πολλοις αδελφοις, yet there his followers are represented not as his *creatures*, but as his *brethren*. On which, and other accounts, the interpretation, according to which we have here a strong testimony to the eternal filiation of our Saviour is greatly preferable; and it is clear that ver. 15 and 18 are illustrative of the *nature*, as ver. 16 and 17 are an evidence of the *pre-existence* and *divinity* of Christ."]

16. *For by him were all things created.* This is one of the *reasons* why

16 For by him [a] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by [b] him, and for him:

[a] John 1. 3. [b] Ro. 11. 36.

he is called "the image of God," and the "first-born." He makes God known to us by his creative power, and by the same power in creation shows that he is exalted over all things as the Son of God. The phrase which is here used by the apostle is universal. He does not declare that he created all things in the spiritual kingdom of God, or that he arranged the events of the gospel dispensation, as Socinians suppose (see Crellius); but that *every thing* was created by him. A similar form of expression occurs in John i. 3; see Notes on that verse. There could not possibly be a more explicit declaration that the universe was created by Christ, than this. As if the simple declaration in the most comprehensive terms were not enough, the apostle goes into a specification of things existing in heaven and earth, and so varies the statement as if to prevent the possibility of mistake. ¶ *That are in heaven.* The division of the universe into "heaven and earth" is natural and obvious, for it is the one that is *apparent;* see Gen. i. 1. *Heaven*, then, according to this division, will embrace all the universe, *except* the earth; and will include the heavenly bodies and their inhabitants, the distant worlds, as well as *heaven*, more strictly so called, where God resides. The declaration, then, is, that all things that were in the worlds above us were the work of his creative power. ¶ *And that are in earth.* All the animals, plants, minerals, waters, hidden fires, &c. Every thing which the earth contains. ¶ *Visible and invisible.* We see but a small part of the universe. The angels we cannot see. The inhabitants of distant worlds we cannot see. Nay, there are multitudes of worlds which, even with the best instruments, we cannot see. Yet all these things are said to have been created by Christ. ¶ *Whether* they be *thrones.* Whether those invisible things be thrones. The reference is to the ranks of angels, called here *thrones, dominions,* &c.; see Notes on Eph. i. 21. The word "*thrones*" does not occur in the parallel place in Ephesians; but there can be no doubt that the reference is to an order of angelic beings, as those to whom dominion and power were intrusted. The other orders enumerated here are also mentioned in Eph. i. 21. ¶ *All things were created by him.* The repetition, and the varied statement here, are designed to express the truth with emphasis, and so that there could not be the possibility of mistake or misapprehension; comp. Notes on John i. 1—3. The importance of the doctrine, and the fact that it was probably denied by false teachers, or that they held philosophical opinions that tended to its practical denial, are the reasons why the apostle dwells so particularly on this point. ¶ *And for him.* For his glory; for such purposes as *he* designed. There was a reference to himself in the work of creation, just as, when a man builds a house, it is with reference to some important purposes which he contemplates, pertaining to himself. The universe was built by the Creator to be his own property; to be the theatre on which he would accomplish his purposes, and display his perfections. Particularly the earth was made by the Son of God to be the place where he would become incarnate, and exhibit the wonders of redeeming love. There could not be a more positive declaration than this, that the universe was created by Christ; and, if so, he is divine. The work of creation is the exertion of the highest power of which we can form a conception, and is often appealed to in the Scriptures by God to prove that he is divine, in contradistinction from idols. If, therefore, this passage be understood literally, it settles the question about the divinity of Christ. Accordingly, Unitarians have endeavoured to show that the creation here referred to is a

17 And he is before [a] all things, and by him all things consist;

[a] John 1. 1.

moral creation; that it refers to the arrangement of affairs in the Christian church, or to the kingdom of God on earth, and not to the creation of the material universe. This interpretation has been adopted even by Grotius, who supposes that it refers to the arrangement by which all things are fitted up in the new creation, and by which angels and men are reconciled. By "the things in heaven and in earth," some Unitarian expositors have understood the Jews and the Gentiles, who are reconciled by the gospel; others, by the things in heaven, understand the angels, and, by the things on earth, men, who are brought into harmony by the gospel plan of salvation. But the objections to this interpretation are insuperable: (1.) The word *created* is not used in this sense properly, and cannot be. That it *may* mean *to arrange, to order*, is true; but it is not used in the sense of *reconciling*, or of bringing discordant things into harmony. To the great mass of men, who have no theory to support, it would be understood in its natural and obvious sense, as denoting the literal creation. (2.) The assertion is, that the "creative" power of Christ was exerted on "all *things*." It is not in reference to angels only, or to men, or to Jews, or to Gentiles; it is in relation to "*everything* in heaven and in earth;" that is, to the whole universe. Why should so universal a declaration be supposed to denote merely the intelligent creation? (3.) With what propriety, or in what tolerable sense, can the expression "things in heaven and things in earth" be applied to the Jews and Gentiles? In what sense can it be said that they are "visible and invisible?" And, if the language could be thus used, how can the fact that Christ is the means of reconciling them be a reason why he should be called "the image of the invisible God?" (4.) If it be understood of *a moral creation*, of a renovation of things, of a change of nature, how can this be applied to *the angels?* Has Christ *created* them anew? Has he changed their nature and character? Good angels cannot need a spiritual renovation; and Christ did not come to convert fallen angels, and to bring them into harmony with the rest of the universe. (5.) The phrase here employed, of "creating all things in heaven and on earth," is *never* used elsewhere to denote a moral or spiritual creation. It appropriately expresses the creation of the universe. It is language strikingly similar to that used by Moses, Gen. i. 1; and it would be so understood by the great mass of mankind. If this be so, then Christ is divine, and we can see in this great work a good reason why he is called "the *image* of the invisible God," and why he is at the head of the universe—the first-born of the creation. It is because, through him, God is made known to us in the work of creation; and because, being the great agent in that work, there is a propriety that he should occupy this position at the head of all things.

17. *And he is before all things.* As he must be, if he *created* all things. Those who regard this as referring to a moral creation, interpret it as meaning that he has the *pre-eminence over* all things; not as referring to his *pre-existence.* But the fair and proper meaning of the word *before* (πρὸ) is, that he was *before* all things in the order of existence; comp. Matt. viii. 29; John xi. 55; xiii. 1; Acts v. 36; xxi. 38; 2 Cor. xii. 2. It is equivalent to saying that he was eternal—for he that had an existence before *any thing* was created, must be eternal. Thus it is equivalent to the phrase, "In the beginning;" Gen. i. 1; comp. Notes, John i. 1. ¶ *And by him all things subsist.* Or are sustained; see Notes on Heb. i. 3. The meaning is, that they are kept in the present state; their existence, order, and arrangement are continued by his power. If unsupported by him, they would fall into disorder, or sink back to nothing. If this be the proper interpretation, then it is the ascription to

18 And he is the head [a] of the body, the church; who is the beginning, [b] the first-born from the dead; that [1] in all *things* he might have the pre-eminence.

19 For it pleased *the Father*

a Ep.5.23. b 1 Co.15.20.

1 *among all.*

Christ of infinite *power*—for nothing less could be sufficient to uphold the universe; and of infinite *wisdom*—for this is needed to preserve the harmonious action of the suns and systems of which it is composed. None could do this but one who is divine; and hence we see the reason why he is represented as the image of the invisible God. He is the great and glorious and ever-active agent by whom the perfections of God are made known.

18 *And he is the head of the body, the church*; Notes Eph. i. 22; v. 23. ¶ *Who is the beginning.* In all things—alike in the work of creation and in the church. He is the fountain of authority and power, and commences everything that is designed to uphold the order of the universe, and to save the world. ¶ *The first-born from the dead.* At the head of those who rise from their graves. This does not mean literally that he was the first who rose from the dead, for he himself raised up Lazarus and others, and the bodies of saints arose at his crucifixion; but it means that he had the pre-eminence among them all; he was the most illustrious of those who will be raised from the dead, and is the head over them all. Especially, he had this pre-eminence in the resurrection in this respect, that he was the first who rose from death to immortality. Others who were raised undoubtedly died again. Christ rose to die no more; see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 20.

[And Supplementary Note on v. 15]

¶ *That in all* things. Marg., *among all.* The Greek will bear either construction, and either will accord with the scope of the apostle's remarks. If the former, it means that he is at the head of all *things*—the universe; if the latter, that he is chief among those who rose from the dead. Each of these is true, but the scope of the passage seems rather to require us to understand this of *everything*, and to mean that all the arrangements respecting him were such as to give him supremacy over the universe. ¶ *He might have the pre-eminence.* Gr., *might be first*—πρωτεύων. That is, might be first in rank, dignity, honour, power. He has the pre-eminence (1) as over the universe which he has formed—as its Creator and Proprietor; (2.) as chief among those who shall rise from the dead—since he first rose to die no more, and their resurrection depends on him; (3.) as head of the church—all synods, councils, and governments being subject to him, and he alone having a right to give law to his people; and (4.) in the affections of his friends—being in their affections and confidence superior to all others.

19. *For it pleased* the Father. The words "the Father" are not in the original, but they are not improperly supplied. Some word must be understood, and as the apostle in ver. 12 referred to "the Father" as having a claim to the thanks of his people for what he had done, and as the great favour for which they ought to be thankful is that which he immediately specifies—the exaltation of Christ, it is not improper to suppose that this is the word to be understood here. The meaning is, that he chose to confer on his Son such a rank, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, and that there might be in him "all fulness." Hence, by his appointment, he was the agent in creation, and hence he is placed over all things as the head of the church. ¶ *That in him should all fulness dwell.* That in him there should be such dignity, authority, power, and moral excellence as to be fitted to the work of creating the world, redeeming his people, and supplying everything needful for their salvation. On the word *fulness*, see Notes on John i.

that in him [a] should all fulness dwell;

20 And, [1] having made [b] peace

[a] John 1.16. [1] or, *making.*

through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether

[b] Ep.2.14-16.

14. 16; comp Rom. xi. 12, 25; Gal. iv. 4; Eph. i. 23; iii. 19; Col. ii. 9. This is to us a most precious truth. We have a Saviour who is in no respect deficient in wisdom, power, and grace to redeem and save us. There is nothing necessary to be done in our salvation which he is not qualified to do; there is nothing which we need to enable us to perform our duties, to meet temptation, and to bear trial, which he is not able to impart. In no situation of trouble and danger will the church find that there is a deficiency in him; in no enterprise to which she can put her hands will there be a lack of power in her great Head to enable her to accomplish what he calls her to. We may go to him in all our troubles, weaknesses, temptations, and wants, and may be supplied from his fulness—just as, if we were thirsty, we might go to *an ocean* of pure water and drink.

20. *And having made peace.* Marg., *making.* The Greek will bear either. The meaning is, that by his atonement he produces reconciliation between those who were alienated from each other; see Notes on Eph. ii. 14. It does not mean here that he had actually effected peace by his death, but that he had laid the foundation for it; he had done that which would secure it. ¶ *By the blood of his cross.* By his blood shed on the cross. That blood, making atonement for sin, was the means of making reconciliation between God and man. On the meaning of the word *blood*, as used in this connection, see Notes on Rom. iii. 25. ¶ *By him to reconcile all things to himself.* On the meaning of the word *reconcile*, see Notes on Matt. v. 24.; Rom. v. 10, and 2 Cor. v. 18. When it is said that "it pleased the Father by Christ to reconcile *all things* to himself," the declaration must be understood with some limitation. (1.) It relates only to those things which are *in heaven and earth*—for those only are specified. Nothing is said of the inhabitants of hell, whether fallen angels, or the spirits of wicked men who are there. (2.) It cannot mean that all things *are* actually reconciled—for that never has been true. Multitudes on earth have remained alienated from God, and have lived and died his enemies. (3.) It can mean then, only, that he had executed a plan that was adapted to this; that if fairly and properly applied, the blood of the cross was fitted to secure entire reconciliation between heaven and earth. There was no enemy which it was not fitted to reconcile to God; there was no guilt, now producing alienation, which it could not wash away. ¶ *Whether* they be *things in earth, or things in heaven.* That is, to produce *harmony* between the things in heaven and in earth; so that all things shall be reconciled to him, or so that there shall be harmony between heaven and earth. The meaning is not, that "the things *in heaven*" were alienated from God, but that there was alienation in the universe which *affected* heaven, and the object was to produce again universal concord and love. Substantially the same sentiment is found in Eph. i. 10; see Notes on that verse. Much has been written on the meaning of this expression, and a great variety of opinions have been entertained of it. It is best, always, unless necessity require a different interpretation, to take words in their usual signification. If that rule be adopted here, "things in heaven" will refer to God and the angels, and perhaps may include the principles of the divine government. "Things on earth," will embrace *men*, and the various things on earth which are now at variance with God and with heaven. Between these, it is designed to produce harmony by the blood of the cross, or by the atone-

they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies [1] in

1 or, *by*.

your mind [2] by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present [a] you

2 or, *in*. a Jude 24.

ment. As in heaven nothing is *wrong;* as it is not desirable that anything should be changed there, all the *change* that is to take place in order to produce reconciliation, is to be on the part of men and the things of this world. The only effect of the blood of the atonement on the "things" of heaven in effecting the reconciliation is, to render it consistent for God *to be* at peace with sinners. The effect on earth is, to dispose the sinner to a willingness to be reconciled; to lead him to lay aside his enmity; to change his heart, and to effect a change in the views and principles prevailing on earth which are now at variance with God and his government. When this shall be done there will be *harmony* between heaven and earth, and an alienated world will be brought into conformity with the laws and government of the Creator.

21. *And you, that were sometime alienated.* In this work of reconciling heaven and earth, you at Colosse, who were once enemies of God, have been reached. The benefit of that great plan has been extended to you, and it has accomplished in you what it is designed to effect everywhere—to reconcile enemies to God. The word *sometime* here—ποτε—means *formerly*. In common with all other men they were, by nature, in a state of enmity against God; comp. Notes on Eph. ii. 1—3. ¶ *In* your *mind*. It was not merely by wicked works, or by an evil life; it was alienation seated *in the mind*, and leading to wicked works. It was deliberate and purposed enmity. It was not the result of passion and excitement; it had a deeper seat, and took hold of the intellectual powers. The understanding was perverse and alienated from God, and all the powers of the soul were enlisted against him. It is this fact which renders reconciliation with God so difficult. Sin has corrupted and perverted alike the moral and the intellectual powers, and thus the whole man is arrayed against his Creator; comp. Notes on Eph. iv. 18. ¶ *By wicked works.* The alienation of the mind showed itself by wicked works, and those works were the public evidence of the alienation; comp. Eph. ii. 1, 2. ¶ *Yet now hath he reconciled.* Harmony has been secured between you and God, and you are brought to friendship and love. Such a change has been produced in you as to bring your minds into friendship with that of God. All the *change* in producing this is on the part of man, for God *cannot* change, and there is no reason why he *should*, if he could. In the work of reconciliation man lays aside his hostility to his Maker, and thus becomes his friend; see Notes, 2 Cor. v. 18.

22. *In the body of his flesh through death.* The death of his body, or his death in making an atonement, has been the means of producing this reconciliation. It (1.) removed the obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God—vindicating his truth and justice, and maintaining the principles of his government as much as if the sinner had himself suffered the penalty of the law—thus rendering it *consistent* for God to indulge the benevolence of his nature in pardoning sinners; and (2.) it was the means of bringing the sinner himself to a willingness to be reconciled—furnishing the strongest possible appeal to him; leading him to reflect on the love of his Creator, and showing him his own guilt and danger. No means ever used to produce reconciliation between two alienated parties has had so much tenderness and power as those which God has adopted in the plan of salvation; and if the dying love of the Son of God fails to lead the sinner back to God, everything else will

holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight;

23 If ye continue [a] in the faith

[a] He.10.38.

grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and*

fail. The phrase "the body of his flesh" means, the *body of flesh* which he assumed in order to suffer in making an atonement. The reconciliation could not have been effected but by his assuming such a body, for his divine nature could not so suffer as to make atonement for sins. ¶ *To present you.* That is, before God. The object of the atonement was to enable him to present the redeemed to God freed from sin, and made holy in his sight. The whole work had reference to the glories of that day when the Redeemer and the redeemed will stand before God, and he shall present them to his Father as completely recovered from the ruins of the fall. ¶ *Holy.* Made holy, or made free from sin; comp. Luke xx. 36. ¶ *And unblameable.* Not that in themselves they will not be deserving of *blame*, or will not be unworthy, but that they will be purified from their sins. The word here used—ἄμωμος—means, properly *spotless, ; without blemish ;* see the Notes on Eph. i. 4 ; v. 27 ; Heb. ix. 4. It is applied to a lamb, 1 Pet. i. 19 ; to the Saviour, Heb. ix. 14, and to the church, Eph. i. 4 ; v. 27 ; Jude 24 ; Rev. xiv. 5. It does not elsewhere occur. When the redeemed enter heaven, all their sins will have been taken away ; not a *spot* of the deep dye of inquity will remain on their souls ; Rev. 1. 5 ; vii. 14. ¶ *And unreproveable in his sight.* There will be none to *accuse* them before God ; or they will be free from all *accusation.* The *law* will not accuse them—for the death of their Redeemer has done as much to honour it as their own punishment would have done ; God will not accuse them—for he has freely forgiven them ; their consciences will not accuse them—for their sins will all have been taken away, and they will enjoy the favour of God *as if* they had not sinned ; holy angels will not accuse them—for they will welcome them to their society ; and even Satan will not accuse them, for he will have seen that their piety is sincere, and that they are truly what they profess to be ; comp. Notes on Rom. viii. 33, 34.

23. *If ye continue in the faith.* In the belief of the gospel, and in holy living. If this were done, they would be presented unblameable before God ; if not, they would not be. The meaning is, that it will be impossible to be saved unless we continue to lead lives becoming the gospel. ¶ *Grounded.* On a firm foundation ; see Notes on Eph. iii. 17, where the same word occurs. ¶ *And settled.* Gr., *firm ;* as a building is that is founded on a rock ; comp. Matt. vii. 25. ¶ *And* be *not moved away from the hope of the gospel.* By the arts of philosophy, and the allurements of sin. ¶ *Which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.* It cannot be supposed that it was literally true that every creature under heaven had actually *heard* the gospel. But this may mean, (1.) That it was *designed* to be preached to every creature, or that the commission to make it known embraced every one, and that, so far as the provisions of the gospel are concerned, it may be said that it was a system proclaimed to all mankind ; see Mark xvi. 15. If a vast army, or the inhabitants of a distant province, were in rebellion against a government, and a proclamation of pardon were issued, it would not be improper to say that *it was made to every one of them,* though, as a matter of fact, it might not be true that every one in the remote parts of the army or province had actually heard of it. (2.) The gospel in the time of Paul seems to have been so extensively preached, that it might be said that it was proclaimed to everybody. All known countries appear to have been visited ; and so zealous and laborious had been the heralds

which was preached to [a] every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions [b] of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church;

25 Whereof I am made a minis-

[a] Mat. 24. 14; Mar. 16. 15.

[b] Phi. 3. 10.

of salvation, that it might be said that the message had been proclaimed to all the world; see ver. 6; comp. Notes on Matt. xxiv. 14. ¶ *Whereof I Paul am made a minister;* see Notes, Eph. iii. 1—7. Paul here pursues the same train of thought which he does in the epistle to the Ephesians, where, having shown the exalted nature of the Redeemer, and the design of the gospel, he adverts to his own labours and sufferings in making it known. The object seems to be to show that he regarded it as the highest honour to be thus intrusted with the message of mercy to mankind, and considered it as a privilege to suffer in that cause.

24. *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you.* For you as a part of the Gentile world. It was not for the Colossians alone, but he regarded himself as suffering on account of his labours in preaching to the heathen at large. His trials at Rome had come upon him because he had maintained that the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down, and that the gospel was to be preached indiscriminately to all mankind; see this illustrated in the Introduction, § 5. ¶ *And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.* That which I lack of coming up to the sufferings which Christ endured in the cause of the church. The apostle seems to mean, (1.) that he suffered in the same cause as that for which Christ suffered; (2.) that he endured the same kind of sufferings, to some extent, in reproaches, persecutions, and opposition from the world; (3.) that he had not yet suffered *as much* as Christ did in this cause, and, though he had suffered greatly, yet there was much that was lacking to make him equal in this respect to the Saviour; and (4.) that he felt that it was an object to be earnestly desired to be made in all respects *just like Christ*, and that in his present circumstances he was fast filling up that which was lacking, so that he would have a more complete resemblance to him. What he says here is based on the leading desire of his soul — the great principle of his life — TO BE JUST LIKE CHRIST; alike in moral character, in suffering, and in destiny; see Notes on Phil. iii. 10. Having this strong wish, he had been led to pursue a course of life which conducted him through trials strongly resembling those which Christ himself endured; and, as fast as possible, he was filling up that in which he now fell short. He does not mean that there was anything lacking or deficient in the sufferings which Christ endured in making an atonement which was to be supplied by his followers, so that *their* merits might be added to *his* in order to secure the salvation of men, as the Romanists seem to suppose; but that there was still much lacking on *his* part before he should be entirely conformed to the Saviour in his sufferings, and that his present condition was such as rapidly to fill that up. This seems to me to be the fair meaning of this expression, though not the one commonly given. The usual interpretation is, "that which remains to me of affliction to be endured in the cause of Christ." But this seems to me to be cold and tame, and not to suit the genius of Paul. ¶ *In my flesh.* In bodily sufferings. ¶ *For his body's sake, which is the church;* see Notes on Eph. i. 23.

25. *According to the dispensation of God.* The arrangement which God has made. That is, he designed that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and, in accordance with that arrangement, he has called me to be a minister. Notes, Eph. iii. 2. ¶ *To fulfil the word of God.* Marg., "*fully to preach.*" The Greek is, "to fill up

ter, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, [1] to fulfil the word of God;

26 *Even* the mystery [a] which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now [b] is made manifest to his saints:

1 or, *fully to preach.* a Eph.3.9. b 2 Ti.1.10.

27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ [1] in you, the [c] hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning [d] every man, and teaching every

1 or, *among.* c 1 Ti.1.1. d Ac.20.28,31.

the word of God;" the meaning is, "fully to teach and promulgate the gospel;" comp. Notes, Rom. xv. 19.

26. Even *the mystery.* To make that mystery fully known. See this explained in the Notes on Eph. iii. 2—9. The great doctrine that salvation was to be proclaimed to all mankind, Paul says, had been *concealed* for many generations. Hence it was called a *mystery,* or a hidden truth. ¶ *But now is made manifest to his saints.* It was communicated especially to the apostles who were appointed to proclaim it, and through them to all the saints. Paul says that he regarded himself as specially called to make this truth known, as far as possible, to mankind

27. *To whom.* To the saints. ¶ *God would make known.* "*Willed* (Gr.) to make known;" that is, he was pleased to make this known. It was concealed in his bosom until he chose to reveal it to his apostles. It was a doctrine which the Jewish people did not understand; Eph. iii. 5, 6. ¶ *What* is *the riches of the glory of this mystery.* The rich glory of this great, long-concealed truth. On the use of the word *riches,* see Notes on Rom. ii. 4. It is a favourite word with the apostle Paul to denote that which is valuable, or that which *abounds.* The meaning here is, that the truth that the gospel was to be preached to all mankind, was a truth *abounding in glory.* ¶ *Among the Gentiles.* That is, the glory of this truth is manifested by the effects which it has produced among the Gentiles. ¶ *Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Or, Christ *among* you. *Margin.* The meaning is, that the whole of that truth, so full of glory, and so rich and elevated in its effect, is summed up in this—that Christ is revealed among you as the source of the hope of glory in a better world. This was the great truth which so animated the heart and fired the zeal of the apostle Paul. The wonderful announcement had burst on his mind like a flood of day, that the offer of salvation was not to be confined, as he had once supposed, to the Jewish people, but that all men were now placed on a level; that they had a common Saviour; that the same heaven was now opened for all, and that there were none so degraded and vile that they might not have the offer of life as well as others. This great truth Paul burned to communicate to the whole world; and for holding it, and in making it known, he had involved himself in all the difficulties which he had with his own countrymen; had suffered from want, and peril, and toil; and had finally been made a captive, and was expecting to be put to death. It was just such a truth as was fitted to fire such a mind as that of Paul, and to make it known was *worth* all the sacrifices and toils which he endured. Life is well sacrificed in making known such a doctrine to the world.

28. *Whom we preach, warning every man.* This does not mean *warning* of danger, but "*admonishing* all of the claims of the gospel to attention." Our word *warn* is commonly used in the sense of *cautioning against danger.* The Greek word here means *to put in mind; to admonish; to exhort.* The idea of the apostle is, that he made it his great business to bring the offers of the gospel fairly before the mind of every man. As it had the same claims on all; as it might be freely offered to all, and as it furnished the only hope of glory, he made it the object of his life to apprize *every man* of it, as far as he could. ¶ *And teaching every man.* Paul

[a] man in all wisdom; [b] that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

[a] 2 Ti. 2. 25. [b] 2 Co. 11. 2.

29 Whereunto [c] I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

[c] 1 Co. 15. 10.

made it his business to *instruct* men, as well as to exhort them. Exhortation and warning are of little use where there is not sound instruction and a careful inculcation of the truth. It is one of the duties of the ministry to *instruct* men in those truths of which they were before ignorant; see Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Tim. ii. 25. ¶ *In all wisdom;* comp. Notes on Matt. x. 16; Col. i. 9. The meaning is, that he and his fellow-labourers endeavoured to *manifest* true wisdom in the method in which they instructed others. ¶ *That we may present every man.* When we come to appear before God; Notes, 2 Cor. xi. 2. Paul was anxious that no one to whom this gospel was preached should be lost. He believed it to be adapted to save every man; and as he expected to meet all his hearers at the bar of God, his aim was to present them made perfect by means of that gospel which he preached.

29. *Whereunto I also labour;* see Notes, 1 Cor. xv. 10. ¶ *Striving.* Gr. *agonizing.* He taxed all his energies to accomplish this, as the wrestlers strove for the mastery in the Grecian games. ¶ *According to his working.* Not by my own strength, but by the power which God alone can give; see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 10.

REMARKS.

Among the truths of practical importance taught by this chapter are the following:—

1. We should rejoice in the piety of others; ver. 2—8. It should be to us a subject of unfeigned gratitude to God, when others are faithful to their high calling, and when they so live as to adorn the blessed gospel. In all their faith, and love, and joy, we should find occasion for thankfulness to God. We should not envy it, or be disposed to charge it to wrong motives, or suspect it of insincerity or hypocrisy; but should welcome every account of the zeal and faithfulness of those who bear the Christian name—no matter who the persons are, or with what denomination of Christians they may be connected. Especially is this true in relation to our friends, or to those for whose salvation we have laboured. The source of highest gratitude to a Christian, in relation to his friends, should be, that they act as becomes the friends of God; the purest joy that can swell the bosom of a minister of Christ, is produced by the evidence that they to whom he has ministered are advancing in knowledge and love.

2. We should earnestly pray that they who have been much favoured should be prospered more and more; ver. 9-11.

3. It is a good time to pray for Christians when they are already prosperous, and are distinguished for zeal and love; ver. 9—11. We have then *encouragement* to do it. We feel that our prayers will not be in vain. For a man that is doing well, we feel encouraged to pray that he may do still better. For a Christian who has true spiritual joy, we are encouraged to pray that he may have more joy. For one who is aiming to make advances in the knowledge of God, we are encouraged to pray that he may make still higher advances; and if, therefore, we *wish* others to pray for us, we should show them by our efforts that there is some encouragement for them to do it.

4. Let us cherish with suitable gratitude the remembrance of the goodness of God, who has translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son; ver. 12, 13. By nature we, like others, were under the power of darkness. In that kingdom of sin, and error, and misery, we were born and reared, until God, in great compassion, brought us out from it, and made us heirs of light. Now, if we are true Christians, we belong to a kingdom of holiness, and knowledge, and happiness. No words can express appropriately the goodness of God in thus making us heirs

of light; and not an hour of our lives should pass without a thoughtful remembrance of his mercy.

5. In the affections of our hearts let the Saviour in all things have the pre-eminence; ver. 15—18. He is the image of God; and when we think of him, we see what God is—how holy, pure, benevolent. He is the first-born of all things; the Son of God; exalted to the highest seat in the universe. When we look on the sun, moon, and stars, let us remember that he created them all. When we think of the angels, let us remember that they are the workmanship of his hands. When we look on the earth—the floods, the rivers, the hills, let us remember that all these were made by his power. The vast universe is still sustained by him. Its beautiful order and harmony are preserved by him; and all its movements are under his control. So the church is under him. It is subject to his command; receives its laws from his lips, and is bound to do his will. Over all councils and synods; over all rule and authority in the church, Christ is the Head; and whatever may be ordained by man, his will is to be obeyed. So, when we think of the resurrection, Christ is *chief*. He first rose to return to death no more; he rose as the pledge that his people should also rise. As Christ is thus head over all things, so let him be first in the affections of our hearts; as it is designed that in every thing he shall have the pre-eminence, so let him have the pre-eminence in the affections of our souls. None should be loved by us as Christ is loved; and no friend, however dear, should be allowed to displace him from the supremacy in our affections.

6. In all our wants let us go to Christ; ver. 19, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." We have not a want which he cannot supply; there is not a sorrow of our lives in which he cannot comfort us; not a temptation from which he cannot deliver us; not a pain which he cannot relieve, or enable us to bear. Every necessity of body or mind he can supply; and we *never* can go to him, in any circumstance of life in which we can possibly be placed, where we shall fail of consolation and support *because* Christ is not able to help us. True piety learns day by day to live more by simple dependence on the Saviour. As we advance in holiness, we become more and more sensible of our weakness and insufficiency, and more and more disposed to live by the faith of the Son of God."

7. By religion we become united with the angels; ver. 20. Harmony is produced between heaven and earth. Alienated worlds are reconciled again, and from jarring elements there is rearing one great and harmonious empire. The work of the atonement is designed to remove what separated earth from heaven; men from angels; man from God. The redeemed have substantially the same feelings now, which they have who are around the throne of God; and though we are far inferior to them in rank, yet we shall be united with them in affection and purpose, for ever and ever. What a glorious work is that of the gospel! It reconciles and harmonizes distant worlds, and produces concord and love in millions of hearts which *but* for that would have been alienated for ever.

8. By religion we become fitted for heaven; ver. 12, 22. We are made "meet" to enter there; we shall be presented there unblamable and unreprovable. No one will accuse us before the throne of God. Nor Satan, nor our own consciences nor our fellowmen will then urge that we *ought not* to be admitted to heaven. Redeemed and pardoned, renewed and sanctified, the universe will be satisfied that we *ought* to be saved, and will rejoice. Satan will no longer charge the friends of Jesus with insincerity and hypocrisy; our own minds will be no longer troubled with doubts and fears; and holy angels will welcome us to their presence. Not a voice will be lifted up in reproach or condemnation, and the Universal Father will stretch out his arms and press to his bosom the returning prodigals. Clothed in the white robes of salvation, we shall be

welcome even in heaven, and the universe will rejoice that we are there.

9. It is a privilege to suffer for the welfare of the church; ver. 24. Paul regarded it as such and *rejoiced* in the trials which came upon him in the cause of religion. The Saviour so regarded it, and shrank not from the great sorrows involved in the work of saving his people. We may suffer much in promoting the same object. We may be exposed to persecution and death. We may be called to part with all we have—to leave country and friends and home, to go and preach the gospel to benighted men. On a foreign shore, far from all that we hold dear on earth, we may lie down and die, and our grave, unmarked by sculptured marble, may be soon forgotten. But to do good; to defend truth; to promote virtue; to save the souls of the perishing, *is worth all which it costs*, and he who accomplishes these things by exchanging for them earthly comforts, and even life, has made a wise exchange. The universe *gains* by it in happiness; and the benevolent heart should rejoice that there *is such a gain*, though attended with our individual and personal suffering.

10. Ministers have a noble office; ver. 24—29. It is their privilege to make known to men the most glorious truths that can come before the human mind; truths which were hid from ages and generations, but which are now revealed by the gospel. These great truths are intrusted to the ministry to explain and defend, and are by them to be carried around the world. The ministers of religion strive not for gold and honour and worldly pleasures; they strive in the noble effort to show to every man that he has a Saviour; that there is a heaven to which he may come; and to present every one perfect before God. With all its sacrifices and self-denials, therefore, it is an inestimable privilege to be a minister of the gospel—for there is no man who diffuses through a community so much solid happiness; there is no one, the result of whose labours reaches so far into future ages. To a benevolent heart there is no higher privilege than to be permitted to go to *every man*—to the poor, the tempted, the oppressed, the slave, the penitent, and the dying sinner, and to say to him that *he* has a Saviour, that Christ died for *him*, and that, if he will have it so, *he* may have a home in heaven. No matter whom he meets; no matter how debased and degraded he may be to whom he ministers, no matter though it be the poor slave, or the lonely wanderer on pathless sands, or the orphan, or the outcast, the herald of salvation may tell him that there is a heaven for *him*—a Saviour who died for *him*—a God who is ready to pardon and save *his* soul. In such a work it is a privilege to exhaust our strength; in the performance of the duties of such an office, it is an honour to be permitted to wear out life itself. Doing this, a man when he comes to die will feel that he has not lived in vain; and whatever self-denial he may practise in it; however much comfort, or however many friends he may forsake, all these things will give him no pang of regret when from a bed of death he looks out on the eternal world.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This entire chapter may be regarded as designed to guard the Colossians against the seductive influence of the false philosophy which tended to draw them away from the gospel. It is evident from the chapter that there were at Colosse, or in the vicinity, professed instructors in religion, who taught an artful and plausible philosophy, adapting themselves to the prejudices of the people, and inculcating opinions that tended to lead them away from the truths which they had embraced. These teachers were probably of Jewish origin, and had adopted many of the arts of a plausible rhetoric, from the prevailing philosophy in that region. See the Intro. § 4. Against the seductive influences of this philosophy, it is the design of this chapter to guard them, and though the apostle does not seem to have intended to pursue an exact logical order; yet the argument in the chapter can

CHAPTER II.

FOR I would that ye knew what great [1] conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, [a] and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

1 or, *fear*; or *care*.

a Re. 3.14, &c.

be conveniently regarded as consisting of two parts:—A statement of the reasons why they should be on their guard against the arts of that philosophy; and a specification of the particular errors to which they were exposed.

1. A statement of the reasons why they should not allow themselves to be drawn away by the influence of the prevalent philosophy; ver. 1—15. This also consists of two parts.

A. The importance of the subject; ver. 1—7.

(1.) The apostle felt great solicitude for them, and for all whom he had not seen, that they might hold the truth in reference to the divine existence and perfections; ver. 1, 2.

(2.) All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were in Christ, and it was, therefore, of the greatest importance to hold to the truth respecting him; ver 3.

(3.) They were in danger of being led astray by enticing words; ver. 4.

(4.) Paul says that he was with them in spirit, and he exhorted them, therefore, to remain rooted and grounded in the doctrines which they had received respecting the Saviour; ver. 5—7.

B. Reasons why they should be steadfast and not drawn away by the influence of false philosophy; ver. 8—15.

(1.) The danger of depending on traditions and worldly principles in religion; of being "spoiled" or robbed by philosophy; ver. 8.

(2.) All that we need to desire is to be found in Christ; ver. 9, 10.

(3.) We have received through him the true circumcision—the putting away our sins; ver. 11.

(4.) We have been buried with him in baptism, and have solemnly devoted ourselves to him, ver. 12.

(5.) We have been quickened by him; our sins have been forgiven; and everything that hindered our salvation has been taken out of the way by him, and he has triumphed over our foes; ver. 13—15.

II. Specification of particular errors to which they were exposed, or of particular things to be avoided; ver. 16—23.

The chapter closes (ver. 20—23) with an earnest exhortation wholly to avoid these things; not to touch or taste or handle them. However plausible the pretences might be on which they were urged; whatever appearance of wisdom or humility there might be, the apostle assures them that there was no real honour in them, and that they were wholly to be avoided.

1. *For I would that ye knew.* I wish you knew or fully understood. He supposes that this would deeply affect them if they understood the solicitude which he had had on their account. ¶ *What great conflict.* Marg., *fear*, or *care*. The Greek word is *agony*—ἀγῶνα. It is not, however, the word rendered *agony* in Luke xxii. 44—ἀγωνία—though that is derived from this. The word is rendered *conflict* in Phil. i. 30; *contention*, 1 Thess. ii. 2; *fight*, 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim iv. 7; and *race*, Heb. xii. 1. It properly refers to the combats, contests, struggles, efforts at the public games; the toil and conflict to obtain a victory. It refers here to the anxious care, the mental conflict, the earnest solicitude which he had in their behalf, in view of the dangers to which they were exposed from Judaizing Christians and Pagan philosophy. This mental struggle resembled that which the combatants had at the public games; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix 25, 27. *And* for *them at Laodicea* For Christians there, who were exposed to similar danger. Laodicea

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, [a] and unto all riches of the full [b] assurance of understanding,

[a] chap. 3. 14.

[b] Isa. 32. 17; He. 6. 11.

was the capital of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and a little south of Colosse. See Intro. § 1. 6. Notes on chap. iv. 16. There was a church early planted there —the "lukewarm" church mentioned in Rev. iii. 14. Being in the vicinity of Colosse, the church there would be exposed to the same perils, and the rebuke in Rev. iii. 14, showed that the fears of Paul were well founded, and that the arts of the false teachers were too successful. ¶ *And* for *as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.* That is, evidently in that region. He had, doubtless, a general solicitude for all Christians, but his remark here has reference to those in the neighbourhood of the church at Colosse, or in that church. On the question which has been raised, whether this proves that the apostle Paul had never been at Colosse or Laodicea, see Intro. § 2. 4. This passage does not seem to me to prove that he had not been there. It may mean that he had great solicitude for those Christians there whom he knew, and for all others there, or in the vicinity, even though he was not personally acquainted with them. He may refer (1.) to some churches in the neighbourhood formed since he was there; or (2.) to strangers who had come in there since he was with them; or (3.) to those who had been converted since he was there, and with whom he had no personal acquaintance. For all these he would feel the same solicitude, for they were all exposed to the same danger. To "see one's face in the flesh," is a Hebraism, meaning to become personally acquainted with him.

2. *That their hearts might be comforted.* Like all other Christians in the times of the apostles, they were doubtless exposed to trials and persecutions. ¶ *Being knit together in love.* The same word which is here used (συμβιβάζω) occurs in Eph. iv. 16, and is rendered *compacted;* see Notes on that place. In Acts ix. 22, it is rendered *proving;* Acts xvi. 10, *assuredly gathering;* 1 Cor. ii. 16, *instruct;* and here, and in ver. 19, *knit together.* It means, properly, *to make to come together,* and hence refers to a *firm union,* as where the heart of Christians are one. Here it means that the way of comforting each other was by solid Christian friendship, and that the means of cementing that was *love.* It was not by a mere outward profession, or by mere speculative faith; it was by a union of affection. ¶ *And unto all riches.* On the meaning of the word *riches,* as used by the apostle Paul, see Notes on Rom. ii. 4. There is a great energy of expression here. The meaning is, that the thing referred to—"the full understanding" of the "mystery" of religion—was an invaluable possession, like abundant wealth. This passage also shows the object for which they should be united. It should be in order that they might obtain this inestimable wealth. If they were divided in affections, and split up into factions, they could not hope to secure it. ¶ *Of the full assurance of understanding.* This word (πληροφορία) means *firm persuasion, settled conviction.* It occurs only here and in 1 Thess. i. 5; Heb. vi. 11; x. 22, and is rendered by *assurance,* or *full assurance,* in every instance. See the *verb,* however, in Luke i. 1; Rom. iv. 21; xiv. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 5, 17. It was the desire of the apostle that they might have *entire conviction* of the truth of the Christian doctrines. ¶ *To the acknowledgment.* So as fully and openly to acknowledge or confess this mystery. ¶ *The mystery.* On the meaning of this word, see Notes on Rom. xi. 25; Eph. i. 9. The meaning is, the doctrine respecting God, which had before been concealed or hidden, but which was now revealed in the gospel. It does not mean that there was any thing unintelligible or incomprehensible respecting this doctrine when it was made known. That might be as clear as any other truth

to the acknowledgment of the mystery [a] of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In [1] whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[a] 1 John 5.7. [1] or, *wherein.*

4 And this I say lest any man should beguile [b] you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your

[b] Mar. 13. 22.

¶ *Of God.* Of God as he *actually* subsists. This does not mean that the mere fact of the *existence* of God was a "mystery," or a truth which had been concealed, for that was not true. But the sense plainly is, that there were truths now made known in the gospel to mankind, about the mode of the divine existence, which had not before been disclosed; and *this* "mystery" he wished them to retain, or fully acknowledge. The "mystery," or the hitherto unrevealed truth, related to the fact that God subsisted in more persons than one, as "Father," and as "Christ." ¶ *And of the Father.* Or, rather, "*even* of the Father;" for so the word *καὶ (and)* is often used. The apostle does not mean that he wished them to acknowledge the hitherto unrevealed truth respecting "God" *and* another being called "the Father;" but respecting "God" *as* the "Father," or of God *as* "Father" and *as* "Christ." ¶ *And of Christ.* As a person of the Godhead. What the apostle wished them to acknowledge was, the full revelation now made known respecting the essential nature of God, as the "Father," and as "Christ." In relation to this, they were in special danger of being corrupted by the prevalent philosophy, as it is in relation to this that error of Christian doctrine usually commences. It should be said, however, that there is great variety of reading in the MSS. on this whole clause, and that many critics (see Rosenmüller) regard it as spurious. I do not see evidence that it is not genuine; and the strain of exhortation of the apostle seems to me to demand it.

3. *In whom.* Marg., *wherein.* The more correct translation is "in whom." The reference is doubtless to Christ, as his name is the immediate antecedent, and as what is affirmed here properly appertains to him. ¶ *Are hid.* Like treasures that are concealed or garnered up. It does not mean that none of those "treasures" had been developed; but that, so to speak, Christ, as Mediator, was the great treasure-house where were to be found all the wisdom and knowledge needful for men. ¶ *All the treasures.* It is common to compare any thing valuable with "treasures" of silver or gold. The idea here is, that in reference to the wisdom and knowledge needful for us, Christ is what abundant treasures are in reference to the supply of our wants. ¶ *Wisdom.* The wisdom needful for our salvation. Notes, 1 Cor. i. 24. ¶ *And knowledge.* The knowledge which is requisite to guide us in the way to life. Christ is able to instruct us in all that it is desirable for us to know, so that it is not necessary for us to apply to philosophy, or to the teachings of men.

4. *And this I say.* Respecting the character and sufficiency of the truth revealed in Christ. ¶ *Lest any man should beguile you.* Deceive you, lead you away from the truth. ¶ *With enticing words.* Artful words, smooth and plausible arguments, such as were employed by the Greek sophists and rhetoricians.

5. *For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit.* That is, I *seem* to see you; I feel as if I were there, and were looking upon you; and I have the same solicitude as if I were there, and saw all the danger which exists that your beautiful order and harmony should be disturbed by the influence of false philosophy; see Notes on 1 Cor. v. 3. The word "spirit," here, does not refer to the Holy Spirit, or to any *inspiration* by which the apostle was enabled to see them; but it is equivalent to what we mean when we say,

order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk [a] ye in him;

[a] 1 John 2.6 [b] Ep.3.17.

7 Rooted [b] and built up in him, [c] and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

8 Beware [d] lest any man spoil

[c] John 15.4,5. [d] Ro.16.17; Ep.5.6; He.13.9.

"My *heart* is with you." He *seemed* to be beholding them. ¶ *Joying and beholding your order.* That is, I rejoice *as if* I *saw* your order. He had such confidence that everything would be done among them as became Christians, that he could rejoice as if he actually saw it.

6. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord.* Have received him by faith as your Saviour, or as you were instructed respecting his rank, character, and work. The *object* here is to induce them not to swerve from the views which they had of Christ when he was made known to them. They had at first probably received their ideas of the Saviour from the apostle himself (see the Intro.); and, at any rate, the apostle designs to assure them that the views which they had when they "received him," were founded in truth. ¶ So *walk in him.* Continue in those views of Christ; live in the maintenance of them; let them regulate your whole conduct. The word *walk*, in the Scriptures, is used to denote the manner of life; and the sense here is, that they should live and act wholly under the influence of the conceptions which they had of the Saviour when they first embraced him. The particle "*so*" is supplied by our translators, and rather weakens the sense. No stress should be laid on it, as is often done. The meaning is, simply, "Since you have received Christ as your Lord, as he was preached to you, hold fast the doctrine which you have received, and do not permit yourselves to be turned aside by any Jewish teachers, or teachers of philosophy."

7. *Rooted—in him.* As a tree strikes its roots deep in the earth, so our faith should strike deep into the doctrine respecting the Saviour. See the phrase here used explained in the parallel place in Eph. iii. 17. ¶ *And established in the faith, as ye have been taught.* To wit, by the founders of the church, and by those faithful ministers who had succeeded them; Notes, chap. i. 7. ¶ *Abounding therein with thanksgiving.* Expressing overflowing thanks to God that you have been made acquainted with truths so precious and glorious. If there is any thing for which we ought to be thankful, it is for the knowledge of the great truths respecting our Lord and Saviour.

8. *Beware lest any man spoil you.* The word *spoil* now commonly means, *to corrupt, to cause to decay and perish*, as fruit is *spoiled* by keeping too long, or paper by wetting, or hay by a long rain, or crops by mildew. But the Greek word here used means to spoil in the sense of *plunder, rob*, as when plunder is taken in war. The meaning is, "Take heed lest any one plunder or rob you of your faith and hope by philosophy." These false teachers would strip them of their faith and hope, as an invading army would rob a country of all that was valuable. ¶ *Through philosophy.* The Greek philosophy prevailed much in the regions around Colosse, and perhaps also the oriental or Gnostic philosophy. See the Intro. They were exposed to the influences of these plausible systems. They consisted much of speculations respecting the nature of the divine existence; and the danger of the Colossians was, that they would rely rather on the deductions of that specious *reasoning*, than on what they had been *taught* by their Christian teachers. ¶ *And vain deceit.* Mere fallacy. The idea is, that the doctrines which were advanced in those systems were maintained by plausible, not by solid arguments; by considerations not fitted to lead to the truth, but to lead astray. ¶ *After the tradition of men.* There appear to have been two sources of danger to which the Christians at Colosse were

you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the [1] rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:

9 For in him [a] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete [b] in him, which is the head [c] of all principality and power;

1 or, *elements.* a chap. 1. 19. b He. 5. 9. c 1 Pe. 3. 22.

exposed, and to which the apostle in these cautions alludes, though he is not careful to distinguish them. The one was that arising from the Grecian philosophy; the other, from Jewish opinions. The latter is that to which he refers here. The Jews depended much on tradition (see Notes on Matt. xv. 2); and many of those traditions would have tended much to corrupt the gospel of Christ. ¶ *After the rudiments of the world.* Marg., *elements.* See this explained in the Notes on Gal. iv. 3. ¶ *And not after Christ.* Not such as Christ taught.

9. *For in him dwelleth.* That is, this was the great and central doctrine that was to be maintained about Christ, that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him. Every system which denied this was a denial of the doctrine which they had been taught; and against every thing that would go to undermine this, they were especially to be on their guard. Almost all heresy has been begun by some form of the denial of the great central truth of the incarnation of the Son of God. ¶ *All the fulness;* Notes, chap. i. 19. ¶ *Of the Godhead.* Of the Divinity, the divine nature—θεότης. The word is one that properly denotes the divine nature and perfections. *Robinson, Lex.* It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. ¶ *Bodily.* σωματικῶς. This word also is found nowhere else in the New Testament, though the adjective *bodily*—σωματικὸς—occurs twice; Luke iii. 22, "in a *bodily* shape;" and 1 Tim. iv. 8, "for *bodily* exercise profiteth little." The word means, "having a bodily appearance, instead of existing or appearing in a spiritual form;" and the fair sense of the phrase is, that the fulness of the divine nature became incarnate, and was indwelling in the body of the Redeemer. It does not meet the case to say, as Crellius does, that the "whole divine will was in him," for the word θεότης—*godhead*—does not mean the *will* of God; and it is as certainly true that the inspired prophets were under the control of the divine will, as that the Saviour was. Nor can it mean, as Socinus supposes, that the fulness of divine *knowledge* dwelt in him, for this is not the proper meaning of the word (θεότης) *godhead;* nor can it mean, for the same reason, that a fulness of *divine gifts* was intrusted to him. The language is such as would be obviously employed on the supposition that God became incarnate, and appeared in human form; and there is no other idea which it so naturally expresses, nor is there any other which it can be *made* to express without a forced construction. The meaning is, that it was not any *one* attribute of the Deity that became incarnate in the Saviour; that he was not merely endowed with the knowledge, *or* the power, *or* the wisdom of God; but that the whole Deity thus became incarnate, and appeared in human form; comp. John xiv. 9; i 18. No language could, therefore, more clearly demonstrate the divinity of Christ. Of what mere man—of what angel, could it be used?

10. *And ye are complete in him.* Having no need, for the purposes of salvation, of any aid to be derived from the philosophy of the Greeks, or the traditions of the Jews. All that is necessary to secure your salvation is to be found in the Lord Jesus. There is a *completion*, or a *filling up*, in him, so as to leave nothing wanting. This is true in respect (1.) to the *wisdom* which is needful to guide us; (2.) the *atonement* to be made for sin; (3.) the *merit* by which a sinner can be justified; and (4.) the *grace* which is needful to sustain us in the trials, and to aid us in the duties, of life; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. i. 30. There is no necessity, therefore, that we should look to the aid of philosophy, as if there was a defect in the teachings of the Saviour; or to human

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision [a] made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

12 Buried [b] with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation [c] of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And [d] you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision

[a] Je.4.4; Phi.3.3. [b] Ro.6. 4, 5. [c] Ep. 1. 19. [d] Eph.2.1,5,11.

strength, as if he were unable to save us; or to the merits of the saints, as if those of the Redeemer were not sufficient to meet all our wants. The sentiment advanced in this verse would overthrow the whole papal doctrine of the merits of the saints, and, of course, the whole doctrine of papal "indulgences." ¶ *Which is the head;* see Notes on Eph. i. 21, 22.

11. *In whom.* In connection with whom, or in virtue of whose religion. ¶ *Ye are circumcised.* You have received that which was designed to be represented by circumcision—the putting away of sin; Notes, Phil. iii. 3. ¶ *With the circumcision made without hands.* That made in the heart by the renunciation of all sin. The Jewish teachers insisted on the necessity of the literal circumcision in order to salvation (comp. Eph. ii. 11); and hence this subject is so often introduced into the writings of Paul, and he is at so much pains to show that, by believing in Christ, all was obtained which was required in order to salvation. Circumcision was an ordinance by which it was denoted that all sin was to be cut off or renounced, and that he who was circumcised was to be devoted to God and to a holy life. All this, the apostle says, was obtained by the gospel; and, consequently they had all that was denoted by the ancient rite of circumcision. What Christians had obtained, moreover, related *to the heart;* it was not a mere ordinance pertaining *to the flesh.* ¶ *In putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.* That is, in renouncing the deeds of the flesh, or becoming holy. The word "*body,*" here, seems to be used with reference to circumcision. In that ordinance, the *body of the* FLESH was subjected to the rite; with Christians, it is the *body of* SIN that is cut off. ¶ *By the circumcision of Christ.* Not by the fact that Christ was circumcised, but that we have that kind of circumcision which Christ established, to wit, *the renouncing of sin.* The idea of the apostle here seems to be, that since we have thus been enabled by Christ to renounce sin, and to devote ourselves to God, we should not be induced by any plausible arguments to return to an ordinance pertaining to the flesh, as if that were needful for salvation.

12. *Buried with him in baptism;* see Notes on Rom. vi. 4. ¶ *Wherein also.* In which ordinance, or by virtue of that which is signified by the ordinance. *Ye are risen with* him. From the death of sin to the life of religion; Notes Rom. vi 4, 5; comp. Notes Eph. ii. 5, 6. ¶ *Through the faith of the operation of God.* By a firm belief on the agency of God in raising him up; that is, a belief of the fact that God has raised him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is often represented as the foundation of all our hopes; and, as he was raised from the grave to die no more, so, in virtue of that *we* are raised from the death of sin to eternal spiritual life. The *belief* of this is shown by our baptism, whatever be *the mode* in which that ordinance is performed, and as *well* shown in one mode as another.

13. *And you, being dead in your sins;* Notes, Eph. ii. 1. ¶ *And the uncircumcision of your flesh.* That is, Gentiles, and giving unrestrained indulgence to the desires of the flesh. They lived as those who had not by any religious rite or covenant brought themselves under obligations to lead holy lives. ¶ *Hath he quickened;* Notes, Eph. ii. 1. ¶ *Together with him.* In virtue of his being restored to life. That is, the resurrection of

of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting [a] out the hand-

[a] Ep. 2. 15, 16.

writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross

the Lord Jesus was the means of imparting to us spiritual life.

14. *Blotting out the handwriting.* The word rendered *handwriting* means something written by the hand, a manuscript; and here, probably, the *writings* of the Mosaic law, or the law appointing many ordinances or observances in religion. The allusion is probably to a written contract, in which we bind ourselves to do any work, or to make a payment, and which remains in force against us until the bond is cancelled. That might be done, either by blotting out the names, or by drawing lines through it, or, as appears to have been practised in the East, by driving a nail through it. The Jewish ceremonial law is here represented as such a contract, binding those under it to its observance, until it was nailed to the cross. The meaning here is, that the burdensome requirements of the Mosaic law are abolished, and that its necessity is superseded by the death of Christ. His death had the same effect, in reference to those ordinances, *as if* they had been blotted from the statute-book. This it did by fulfilling them, by introducing a more perfect system, and by rendering their observance no longer necessary, since all that they were designed to typify had been now accomplished in a better way; comp. Notes, Eph. ii. 15. ¶ *Of ordinances.* Prescribing the numerous rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. ¶ *That was against us.* That is, against our peace, happiness, comfort; or in other words, which was oppressive and burdensome; comp. Notes, Acts xv. 10. Those ordinances bound and fettered the soul, restrained the expansive spirit of true piety which seeks the salvation of all alike, and thus operated as a *hindrance* to the enlarged spirit of true religion. Thus they really operated *against* the truly pious *Jew*, whose religion would lead him to seek the salvation of the world; and to the *Gentile*, since he was not in a situation to avail himself of them, and since they would be burdensome if he could. It is in this sense, probably, that the apostle uses the word "*us*," as referring to all, and as cramping and restraining the true nature of religion. ¶ *Which was contrary to us.* Operated as a hindrance, or obstruction, in the matter of religion. The ordinances of the Mosaic law were *necessary*, in order to introduce the gospel; but they were always burdensome. They were to be confined to one people; and, if they were continued, they would operate to prevent the spread of the true religion around the world; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. Hence the exulting language of the apostle in view of the fact that they were now taken away, and that the benefits of religion might be diffused all over the world. The gospel contains nothing which is "*against*," or "*contrary to*," the true interest and happiness of any nation or any class of men. ¶ *And took it out of the way.* Gr., "Out of the midst;" that is, he wholly removed it. He has removed the obstruction, so that it no longer prevents union and harmony between the Jews and the Gentiles. ¶ *Nailing it to his cross. As if* he had nailed it to his cross, so that it would be entirely removed out of our way. The death of Jesus had the same effect, in regard to the rites and institutions of the Mosaic religion, *as if* they had been affixed to his cross. It is said that there is an allusion here to the ancient method by which a bond or obligation was cancelled, by driving a nail through it, and affixing it to a post. This was practised, says Grotius, in Asia. In a somewhat similar manner, in our banks now, a sharp instrument like the blade of a knife is driven through a check, making a hole through it, and furnishing to the teller of the bank a sign or evidence that it has

15 *And* having [a] spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in [1] it.

[a] Ps. 68. 18; Is. 53. 12; Lu. 10. 18; 11. 22; John 12. 31; He. 2. 14.

[1] or, *himself.*

been paid. If this be the meaning, then the expression here denotes that the obligation of the Jewish institutions ceased on the death of Jesus, *as if* he had taken them and nailed them to his own cross, in the manner in which a bond was cancelled.

15. And *having spoiled.* Plundered as a victorious army does a conquered country. Notes on ver. 8. The terms used in this verse are all military, and the idea is, that Christ has completely subdued our enemies by his death. A complete victory was achieved by his death, so that every thing is now in subjection to him, and we have nothing to fear. ¶ *Principalities and powers;* Notes, Eph. i. 21; vi. 12. The "principalities and powers" here referred to, are the formidable enemies that had held man in subjection, and prevented his serving God. There can be no doubt, I think, that the apostle refers to the ranks of fallen, evil spirits which had usurped a dominion over the world; Notes, John xii 31; Eph. ii. 2. The Saviour, by his death, wrested the dominion from them, and seized upon what they had captured as a conqueror seizes upon his prey. Satan and his legions had invaded the earth and drawn its inhabitants into captivity, and subjected them to their evil reign. Christ, by his death, subdues the invaders and recaptures those whom they had subdued. ¶ *He made a show of them openly.* As a conqueror, returning from a victory, displays in a triumphal procession the kings and princes whom he has taken, and the spoils of victory. This was commonly done when a "triumph" was decreed for a conqueror. On such occasions it sometimes happened that a considerable number of prisoners were led along amidst the scenes of triumph; see Notes on 2 Cor. ii. 14. Paul says that this was now done "*openly*"—that is, it was in the face of the whole universe—a grand victory; a glorious triumph over all the powers of hell. It does not refer to any public procession or display on the earth; but to the grand victory as achieved in view of the universe, by which Christ, as a conqueror, dragged Satan and his legions at his triumphal car; comp. Rom. xvi. 20. ¶ *Triumphing over them in it.* Marg., "or, *himself.*" Either "by the cross," or by "himself." Or, it may mean, as Rosenmüller suggests, that "God (ver. 12) triumphed over these foes in *him;* i. e., *in Christ* The sense is substantially the same, that this triumph was effected by the atonement made for sin by the Redeemer. See the word *triumph* explained in the Notes on 2 Cor ii. 14. The meaning of all this is, that since Christ has achieved for us such a victory, and has subdued all the foes of man, we should not be led captive, but should regard ourselves as freemen. We should not be made again the slaves of custom, or habit, or ritual observances, or superstitious rites, or anything whatever that has its origin in the kingdom of darkness. We are bound to assert and to use our freedom, and should not allow any hostile power in the form of philosophy or false teaching of any kind, to *plunder* or "*spoil*" us; ver. 8. The Christian is a freeman. His great Captain has subdued all his enemies, and we should not allow them again to set up their dark empire over our souls. The *argument* of the apostle in these verses (13—15) is derived from what Christ has done for us. He mentions *four* things. (1.) He has given us spiritual life; (2.) he has forgiven all our trespasses; (3.) he has blotted out or abolished the "ordinances" that were against us; and (4.) he has triumphed over all our foes. From all this he infers (ver. 16, seq.) that we should not be made captive or subdued by any of the rites of superstition, or any of the influences of the kingdom of darkness.

16 Let no man therefore judge [a] you in [1] meat, or in drink, or in [2] respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath *days*;

17 Which are a shadow [b] of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ

a Ro.14.10,13. 1 or, *for eating and drinking.* 2 or, *part.* b He.8.5.

16. *Let no man, therefore, judge you;* comp. Notes on Rom. xiv. 10, 13. The word *judge* here is used in the sense of pronouncing a sentence. The meaning is, "since you have thus been delivered by Christ from the evils which surrounded you; since you have been freed from the observances of the law, let no one sit in judgment on you, or claim the right to decide for you in those matters. You are not responsible to *man* for your conduct, but to Christ; and no man has a right to impose that on you as a burden from which he has made you free." ¶ *In meat.* Marg., *or eating and drinking.* The meaning is, "in respect to the various articles of food and drink." There is reference here, undoubtedly, to the distinctions which the Jews made on this subject, implying that an effort had been made by Jewish teachers to show them that the Mosaic laws were binding on all. ¶ *Or in respect of a holy day.* Marg., *part.* The meaning is, "in the part, or the *particular* of a holy day; that is, in respect to it." The word rendered "holy-day"—ἑορτῆ—means properly *a feast* or *festival;* and the allusion here is to the festivals of the Jews. The sense is, that no one had a right to impose their observance on Christians, or to condemn them if they did not keep them. They had been delivered from that obligation by the death of Christ; ver. 14. ¶ *Or of the new moon.* On the appearance of the new moon, among the Hebrews, in addition to the daily sacrifices, two bullocks, a ram, and seven sheep, with a meat offering, were required to be presented to God; Num. x. 10; xxviii. 11—14. The new moon in the beginning of the month Tisri (October) was the beginning of their civil year, and was commanded to be observed as a festival; Lev. xxiii. 24, 25. ¶ *Or of the Sabbath* days. Gr., "of the Sabbaths." The word *Sabbath* in the Old Testament is applied not only to the seventh day, but to all the days of holy rest that were observed by the Hebrews, and particularly to the beginning and close of their great festivals. There is, doubtless, reference to those days in this place, as the word is used in the plural number, and the apostle does not refer particularly to *the* Sabbath properly so called. There is no evidence from this passage that he would teach that there was no obligation to observe *any* holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had used the word in the singular number—"THE *Sabbath,*" it would then, of course, have been clear that he meant to teach that that commandment had ceased to be binding, and that a Sabbath was no longer to be observed. But the use of the term in the plural number, and the connection, show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, and not to the *moral* law, or the ten commandments. No part of the moral law—no one of the ten commandments could be spoken of as "*a shadow* of good things to come." These commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal obligation.

17. *Which are a shadow of things to come;* see Notes on Heb. viii. 5; x. 1. They were only a dim outline of future things, not the reality. ¶ *But the body* is *of Christ.* The reality, the substance. All that they signified is *of* or *in* Christ. Between those things themselves which are in Christ, and those which only represented or prefigured them, there is as much difference as there is between a body and a shadow; a solid substance and a mere outline. Hav-

18 Let [a] no man [1] beguile you of your reward, [2] in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding [b] into those things

[a] Re.3.11. 1 or, *judge against you.* 2 *being a voluntary in humility.*

[b] De.29.29; Job38.2.

ing now, therefore, the *thing itself* the shadow can be to us of no value; and that having come which was prefigured, that which was designed merely to represent it, is no longer binding.

18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward.* Marg., *judge against you.* The word here used—καταβραβεύω—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is a word which was employed with reference to the distribution of prizes at the Grecian games, and means, *to give the prize against any one, to deprive of the palm.* Hence it means to *deprive of a due reward;* and the sense here is, that they were to be on their guard lest the "reward"—the crown of victory to which they looked forward—should be wrested from them by the arts of others. That would be done if they should be persuaded to turn back, or to falter in the race. The only way to secure the prize was to hold on in the race which they then were running; but if they yielded to the philosophy of the Greeks, and the teachings of the Jews, they would be defrauded of this reward as certainly as a racer at the games would if the crown of victory should be unjustly awarded to another. In this case, too, as real injustice would be done, though the apostle does not say it would be in the same manner. Here it would be by art; in the case of the racer it would be by a wrong decision—*but in either case the crown was lost.* This exhortation has the more force from this consideration. Against an unjust *judge* we could have no power; but we may take care that the reward be not wrested from us by *fraud.* ¶ *In a voluntary humility.* Marg., "*being a voluntary in humility.*" Tindal renders this, "Let no man make you shoot at a wrong mark, which, after his own imagination, walketh in the humbleness of angels." The word used here (ταπεινοφροσύνη) means *lowliness of mind, modesty, humbleness of deportment:* and the apostle refers, doubtless, to the spirit assumed by those against whom he would guard the Colossians—the spirit of modesty or of humble inquirers. The meaning is, that they would not announce their opinions with dogmatic certainty, but they would put on the appearance of great modesty. In this way, they would become really more dangerous—for no false teachers are so dangerous as those who assume the aspect of great humility, and who manifest great reverence for divine things. The word rendered "voluntary" here—θέλων—does not, properly, belong to the word rendered "humility." It rather appertains to the subsequent part of the sentence, and means that the persons referred to were *willing,* or had pleasure in attempting, to search into the hidden and abstruse things of religion. They were desirous of appearing to do this with an humble spirit—even with the modesty of an angel—but still they had pleasure in that profound and dangerous kind of inquiry. ¶ *And worshipping of angels.*—Θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων. This does not mean, as it seems to me, that they would *themselves worship angels,* or that they would teach others to do it—for there is no reason to believe this. Certainly the Jewish teachers, whom the apostle seems to have had particularly in his eye, would not do it; nor is there any evidence that *any* class of false teachers would deliberately teach that *angels* were to be worshipped The reference is rather to the profound reverence; the spirit of lowly piety which *the angels evinced,* and to the fact that the teachers referred to *would assume* the same spirit, and were, therefore, the more dangerous. They would come professing profound regard for the great mysteries of religion, and for the incomprehensible

which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;

19 And not holding the Head, [a] from which all the body by joints

a Ep. 4 15,16.

and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 Wherefore, if ye be dead

perfections of the divinity, and would approach the subject professedly with the awful veneration which the angels have when they "look into these things;" 1 Pet. i. 12. There was no bold, irreverent, or confident declamation, but the danger in the case arose from the fact that they *assumed* so much the aspect of modest piety; so much the appearance of the lowly devotion of angelic beings. The word here rendered *worship*—θρησκία—occurs in the New Testament only here, in Acts xxvi. 5; and James i. 26, 27, in each of which places it is rendered *religion*. It means here the religion, or the spirit of humble reverence and devotion which is evinced by the angels; and this accords well with the meaning in James i. 26, 27. ¶ *Intruding into those things which he hath not seen.* Or *inquiring* into them. The word used here (ἐμβατεύων) means to go in, or enter; then to investigate, to inquire. It has not, properly, the meaning of *intruding*, or of impertinent inquiry (see Passow), and I do not see that the apostle meant to characterize the inquiry here as such. He says that it was the object of their investigations to look, with great professed modesty and reverence, into those things which are not visible to the eye of mortals. The "things" which seem here to be particularly referred to, are the abstruse questions respecting the mode of the divine subsistence; the ranks, orders, and employments of angelic beings; and the obscure doctrines relating to the divine government and plans. These questions comprised most of the subjects of inquiry in the Oriental and Grecian philosophy, and inquiries on these the apostle apprehended would tend to draw away the mind from the "simplicity that is in Christ." Of these subjects what can be known more than is revealed? ¶ *Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.* Notwithstanding the avowed "humility," the modesty, the *angelic reverence*, yet the mind was full of vain conceit, and self-confident, carnal wisdom. The two things are by no means incompatible—the men apparently most meek and modest being sometimes the most bold in their speculations, and the most reckless in regard to the great landmarks of truth. It is not so with *true* modesty, and *real* "angelic veneration," but all this is sometimes assumed for the purpose of deceiving; and sometimes there is a native appearance of modesty which is by no means an index of the true feelings of the soul. The most meek and modest men in appearance are sometimes the most proud and reckless in their investigations of the doctrines of religion.

19. *And not holding the Head.* Not holding the true doctrine respecting the Great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ; Notes, Eph. i. 22. This is regarded here as essential to the maintenance of all the other doctrines of religion. He who has just views of the Redeemer will not be in much danger of erring respecting the other points of religious belief. ¶ *From which all the body,* &c. This passage is almost word for word the same as in Eph. iv. 15, 16. See it explained in the Notes there.

20. *Wherefore.* In view of all that has been said. If it be true that you are really dead to the world, why do you act *as if* you still lived under the principles of the world? ¶ *If ye be dead with Christ.* If you are dead to the world in virtue of his death. The apostle here, as elsewhere, speaks of a very close union with Christ. We died with him; that is, such was the efficacy of his death, and such is our union with him, that *we* became dead also to the world; Notes, Rom. vi. 2, 4, 8, 11. ¶ *From the rudiments*

with Christ from the [1] rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

1 or, *elements.*

of the world. Marg., *elements.* The elements or principles which are of a worldly nature, and which reign among worldly men; see Notes on Gal. iv. 3. ¶ *Why, as though living in the world.* Why do you allow them to influence you, as though you were living and acting under those worldly principles? They ought no more to do it, than the things of this world influence those who are in their graves. ¶ *Are ye subject to ordinances.* The rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion; see Notes, Gal. v. 1—4.

21. *Touch not; taste not; handle not.* These words seem intended as a *specimen* of the kind of ordinances which the apostle refers to, or an *imitation* of the language of the Jewish teachers in regard to various kinds of food and drink. "Why are ye subject to ordinances of various kinds, *such as* this—Touch not, taste not, handle not?" That is, such as prohibit you from even touching certain kinds of food, or tasting certain kinds of drink, or handling certain prohibited things. The rapid succession of the words here, without any connecting particle, is supposed to denote the *eagerness* of the persons who imposed this injunction, and their *earnestness* in warning others from contaminating themselves with the prohibited things. Many injunctions of this kind are found in the writings of the Jewish Rabbins; and the ancient Jewish sect of the Essenes (Notes, Matt. iii. 7) abounded in precepts of this kind. See *Schoetgen*, and *Pict. Bib.* in *loc.* "They allowed themselves no food that was pleasent to the taste, but ate dry, coarse bread, and drank only water. Many of them ate nothing until sunset, and, if any one touched them who did not belong to their sect, they washed themselves as if they had been most deeply defiled. Perhaps there was at Colosse a society of this kind, as there were in many other places out of Judea; and, if there was, it is not improbable that many Christians imitated them in the peculiarity of their rules and observances;" comp. Jenning's Jew. Ant. i. 471, and Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc.* If this be the correct interpretation, then these are not the words of the apostle, forbidding Christians to have anything to do with these ordinances, but are introduced as a *specimen* of the manner in which they who enjoined the observance of those ordinances pressed the subject on others. There were certain things which they prohibited, in conformity with what they understood to be the law of Moses; and they were constantly saying, in regard to them, "do not touch them, taste them, handle them." These words are often used as a kind of motto in reference to the use of intoxicating drinks. They express very well what is held by the friends of total abstinence; but it is obvious that they had no such reference as used by the apostle, nor should they be alleged as an *authority*, or as an *argument*, in the question about the propriety or impropriety of the use of spirituous liquors. They may as well be employed in reference to anything else as that, and would have no *authority* in either case. Intoxicating drinks should be abstained from; but the obligation to do it should be made to rest on solid arguments, and not on passages of Scripture like this. This passage could with more plausibility be pressed into the service of the enemies of the total abstinence societies, than into their support; but it really has nothing to do with the subject, one way or the other.

22. *Which all are to perish with the using.* This is commonly marked as a part of the parenthesis, or the

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship,

quotation; and there is considerable difficulty in ascertaining its true meaning. It seems most probable that these are the words of the apostle himself, thrown in in the rapidity of composition, and that they are not to be connected with the phrase "touch not," &c. If so, the idea is, that it cannot be of so much consequence as the Jewish teachers supposed, to mark distinctly the difference between meats and drinks. They were all to perish with the use of them. Nothing was permanent about them. It could really then be of no great importance what was eaten, or what was drunk, provided it was not in itself injurious. These ordinances had a value among the Hebrews when it was designed to keep them as a distinct people; but they had no value in themselves, so as to make them binding on all mankind. To suppose this, was the common error of the Jews; and hence the apostle so frequently laboured to show that the Jewish rites had no permanent value; see Notes on Rom. xiv. 1—6; 1 Cor. viii; comp. Notes on Matt. xv. 17, 18. According to this interpretation, the 21st verse should be regarded as expressing the common maxim of the Jewish teachers, and the clause before us as the words of the apostle, and should be marked as a parenthesis. So it is marked in Hahn's Ed. of the New Testament. ¶ *After the commandments and doctrines of men.* Many of the ordinances on which the Jews insisted were those which were handed down by tradition. They depended on human authority only, and of course, should not bind the conscience. Others take the words here to mean, "All which things tend to the corruption of religion (*Doddridge*), or are cause of destruction or condemnation (*Rob. Lex.*), by the use of these things, according to the commandments and doctrines of these men."

23. *Which things.* Which scrupulous observance of the numerons precepts enjoining rites and ceremonies, the observance of days, and the distinctions between meats and drinks. ¶ *Have indeed a show of wisdom* Have a great appearance of piety and of regard for the will of God. They have a show of "wisdom," too, or of a deep acquaintance with divine things. They who insist on them *appear* to be learned in what constitutes religion, and to have a deep insight into its mysteries. Doubtless they who urged the obligation of these things laid claim to uncommon acquaintance with the nature of religion, and urged the observance of these things on the ground of their tendency to promote piety, just as they always do who insist much on the observance of religious rites and ceremonies. ¶ *In will-worship.* Voluntary worship; i. e., worship beyond what God strictly requires—supererogatory service. Probably many of these things they did not urge as being strictly *required*, but as conducing greatly to piety. The plea doubtless was, that piety might be promoted by service rendered *beyond* what was absolutely enjoined, and that thus there would be evinced a spirit of uncommon piety—a readiness not only to obey *all* that God required, but even to go *beyond* this, and to render him *voluntary* service. There is much plausibility in this; and this has been the foundation of the appointment of the fasts and festivals of the church; of penances and self-inflicted tortures; of painful vigils and pilgrimages; of works of supererogation, and of the merits of the "saints." A large part of the corruptions of religion have arisen from this plausible but deceitful argument. God knew best what things it was most conducive to piety for his people to observe; and we are most safe when we adhere most closely to what he has appointed, and observe no more days and ordinances than he has directed. There is much apparent piety about these things; but there is much wickedness of heart at the bottom, and there is nothing that more tends to corrupt pure religion. ¶ *And humility;* Notes on ver. 18. There is a

and humility, and [1] neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

1, or, *punishing*; or, *not sparing*.

great show of reverence for divine things in the manner in which they pursue their investigations, and in their humble and meek compliance with painful rites and ceremonies; in fastings, abstinence, and penances. Under all this there lurks often the worst kind of pride; for

"Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean."

¶ *And neglecting the body.* Putting on sackcloth and ashes; subjecting it to painful fastings and penances; appearing in a form of squalid poverty, *as if* the body were not worth regarding, and *as if* the attention were so much engrossed by the nobler care of the soul, as to be entirely regardless of the body. Yet, we may observe, (1.) God made the body as well as the soul, and has shown *his* care of it by its "being fearfully and wonderfully made," and by all the provision which he has made for all its wants. (2.) Religion pertains to the body as well as the soul, and should teach a man properly to regard it. Man is bound *so* to take care of the body, as to have the most health and the longest life possible in the service of his Creator, and so as to be able to employ it in the best manner. There is no religion in ragged or squalid clothing, in a dirty face, in offensive personal habits, in filth and defilement, and in setting at defiance the decencies of life. (3.) Much affected sanctity may exist where there is a most proud and corrupt heart. A long face, a demure countenance, a studied disregard of the decencies of dress and the courtesies of life, *as if* they were unworthy of notice, may be the *exponent* of the most hateful pride, and of the basest purposes of the soul. A man should be on his guard always against one who, under pretence of extraordinary sanctity, professes to despise the ordinary dress and usages of society. ¶ *Not in any honour.* That is, there is no real honour in these things; there is nothing to ennoble and elevate the soul; nothing that is to be commended. ¶ *To the satisfying of the flesh.* The only effect is, to satisfy or please the flesh; that is, the carnal and corrupt nature, for so the word *flesh* is often used in the Scriptures. The effect of these observances, on which so much stress is laid as if they would promote piety, is merely to gratify pride, self-righteousness, the love of distinction, and the other carnal propensities of our nature. There *seems* to be a great deal of humility and piety in them; there is really little else than pride, selfishness, and ambition.

REMARKS.

1. We should feel a deep interest for the welfare of other Christians, even those whom we have never seen; ver. 1, 2. All belong to the same family, have the same enemies to contend with, are engaged in the same warfare, are travelling to the same heaven. By our prayers and sympathy, we may often do much good to those whom we shall never see till we meet them in heaven.

2. We should be on our guard against the seductive arts of false teachers. They are often plausible; they can urge arguments which we may not be able to answer; they may have much more learning than we have; and they may put on the appearance of great humility and of real piety; ver. 3, 4,

3. It is, in general, a safe rule for a Christian to abide by the views which he had on the great subjects of religion when he became converted; ver. 6. Then the heart was tender and soft—like wax—and received the impression which the Spirit made on it. There are some things in which the *heart* judges better than the *head;* and in which we are quite as likely to go right if we follow the former as we are the latter. In relation to the performance of many of the duties of life—the duties of kindness and charity—the heart is often a more safe guide than the head; and so in many

things pertaining more immediately to religion, a man is more likely to judge right if he follows the promptings of his feelings in the happiest moments of piety, than he is to wait for the more cool and cautious course of argument. The same thing may be true even of many of the *doctrines* of religion. When a poor sinner trembles on the verge of hell, he feels that none but an *Almighty* Saviour can deliver him, and he goes and commits himself to Jesus *as God*—and he is not in much danger of erring in that. He will be more likely to be drawn aside from the truth by the artful reasonings of the advocates of error, than he will by his *feelings* at that moment.

4. Our views of the "mystery of God"—of the divine nature, and especially of the rank and character of Christ, will determine *all* our views of theology; ver. 2. This *has* been so in all ages; and however it may be accounted for, the fact is undoubted, that if at any time we can ascertain what are the prevalent views of Christ we can easily see what is the prevailing character of the theology of that age. The influence of this will be felt on the views which are held of the native character of man: of regeneration, the divine purposes, the nature of holiness, and the retributions beyond the grave. Hence, the reason why the apostle Paul insisted so much on this, and urged so earnestly the importance of adhering to just views of the Saviour.

5. Christ has laid us under the highest obligations to love and serve him; ver. 11—15. He has enabled us to put off our sins; he has raised us from spiritual death to spiritual life; he has removed the old ordinances that were against us, and has made religion easy and pleasant; he has subdued our enemies, and triumphed over them. He achieved a glorious victory over "principalities and powers," and has led our great enemy captive. He met the enemy of man when on earth, and overcame his power of temptation; expelled him from the bodies of men; laid the foundation for a permanent victory over him on the cross, and triumphed over him when he rose and ascended to heaven. Satan is now an humbled foe. His power is broken and limited, and the Lord Jesus will yet completely triumph over him. He will return from heaven; raise *all* the dead; and reascend, in the face of the universe, to his native skies, with all his ransomed hosts—the "spoils" of victory. We should not then fear what Satan can do to us; nor should we fear that the great enemy of the church will ever be triumphant.

Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears,
And gird the gospel armour on;
March to the gates of endless joy,
Where thy great Captain Saviour's gone.

Hell and thy sins resist thy course,
But hell and sin are vanquish'd foes;
Thy Jesus nail'd them to the cross,
And sung the triumph when he rose.

Then let my soul march boldly on,
Press forward to the heavenly gate;
There peace and joy eternal reign,
And glittering robes for conquerors wait.

Then shall I wear a starry crown,
And triumph in Almighty grace;
While all the armies of the skies
Join in my glorious Leader's praise.

6. No individual has a right to appoint ceremonies and ordinances in the church to be binding on the consciences of others; nor is this authority intrusted to any body of men; ver. 16. What *God* has enjoined is to be obeyed. What *man* enjoins beyond that, is of no binding force on the conscience: and it is the solemn and sacred duty of all Christians to resist all such attempts to make ceremonial observances binding on the conscience. Christ has appointed a *few* ordinances of religion—and they are enough. They are simple, easily observed, and all adapted to promote piety. He appointed baptism and the Lord's supper; but he appointed no stated festivals or fasts; no days in commemoration of the saints, or of his own birth or death; he enjoined no rites of religion but those which are most simple and which are easily observed. He well knew how those observances would be abused to the purposes of superstition, and *obscure the great doc-*

CHAPTER III.

IF ye then be risen [a] with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ [b] sitteth on the right hand of God.

[a] chap. 2. 12. [b] Ro. 8. 34.

trine of justification by faith. He knew how ready men would be to rely on them rather than on the merits of the great Sacrifice, and hence he appointed no ordinance where that danger could exist.

7. Pride is often united with apparent humility; ver. 18. It is easy to *assume* the appearance of humility in the outer deportment, but no such assumed appearance reaches the heart. That remains the same, whatever external appearance is assumed, until it is renewed by the grace of God.

8. A meek, modest, and candid demeanour is consistent with great boldness and daring in speculation; ver. 18. The most daring speculators in religion; they who make the most reckless attacks on the truth, are often, to appearance, eminently candid, and even put on the aspect of angelic devotion. Yet they are bold "where angels fear to tread;" and they declaim with confidence on subjects which must be for ever beyond the grasp of the human mind.

9. We should not infer, because a man is modest and humble, and because he appears to be endued with uncommon meekness and piety, that, *therefore*, he is a good man or a safe guide; ver. 18. The teachers in Colosse, against whom Paul warned the Christians there, appear to have been men just of this stamp; and this is commonly *assumed* by those who would lead their fellow-men into error. "Satan is often transformed into an angel of light."

10. We should not attempt to penetrate into those things which lie beyond the grasp of the human mind; ver. 18. We should not "intrude into those things which are unseen." There is an outer limit to our investigations on all subjects, and we soon reach it. In life we are to act chiefly on *facts;* not on the *reason* why those facts exist. When we have ascertained or established *a fact*, our feet stand on a solid rock; and there we shall stand securely. We act safely and wisely if we act in view of *that fact*; we do *not* act safely or wisely if we disregard that, and act on theory or imagination.

11. Many real Christians are in danger of being "beguiled of the reward" which they might obtain; ver. 18. They are allured by the world; they are drawn into error by the arts of philosophy; they obscure the lustre of their piety by conformity to the world, and thus they lose the high recompense which they might have obtained in heaven. For the rewards of heaven will be strictly in proportion to the measure of our religion here—the zeal, and faith, and love which we evince in the cause of our Master.

12. Many persons are in danger of losing the "reward" altogether—for the "reward" of a life of piety is set before all; ver. 18. Heaven is offered freely to all, and there is no one who might not obtain it. But, alas! how many there are who are drawn aside by the allurements of error and of sin; who are led to defer to a future time the great subject of preparation for death; who spend their lives in disregard of the commands of God and the invitations of mercy, until it is too late to seek salvation, and they sink down to final ruin. Every impenitent sinner is in imminent danger of losing his soul. The great deceiver is endeavouring to blind him and decoy him down to death, and a thousand snares on every side are spread for his feet, into which he is in constant danger of falling. In a world of allurements, where the work of death from the beginning has been carried on chiefly by deception, with what solicitude should man guard himself lest he be "beguiled of heaven" and sink to a world where heaven will be offered no more!

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

In the previous chapter, the apostle had showed what a true Christian ought *not* to follow after. He had warned the Colossians against the dangers of false philosophy, and the

2 Set your [1] affection on things above, not [a] on things on the earth.

1 or, *mind.* a 1 John 2.15.

3 For [b] ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

b Ro.6.2.

doctrines of erroneous teachers. In this chapter, he teaches them what they *ought* to pursue and to seek. He therefore enjoins various duties in the different relations of life, which they ought to perform in such a way as to show that true religion had a controlling influence over their hearts. He specifies the following: (1.) The duty of setting the affections on things above; ver. 1—4. They were risen with Christ (chap. ii. 12), they were dead to sin (ver. 3); they were soon to be like Christ (ver. 4), and they should, therefore, fix their affections on heavenly things. (2.) The duty of mortifying their corrupt passions and carnal propensities; ver. 5—8. (3.) The duty of speaking the truth, since they had put off the old man with his deeds; ver. 9—11. (4.) The duty of kindness, gentleness, charity, and the spirit of peace; ver. 12—15. (5.) The duty of edifying one another by psalms and songs of praise; ver. 16, 17. (6.) The duty of wives, ver. 18; (7.) of husbands, ver. 19; (8.) of children, ver. 20; (9.) of fathers, ver. 21; (10.) of servants, ver. 22—25. There is a very striking similarity between this chapter and the fifth and sixth chapters of the epistle to the Ephesians, and a full exposition of the principal subjects adverted to here may be found in the Notes there.

1. *If ye then be risen with Christ.* The apostle in this place evidently founds the argument on what he had said in chap. ii. 12; see Notes on that passage. The argument is, that there was such an union between Christ and his people, that in virtue of *his* death *they* become dead to sin; that in virtue of *his* resurrection *they* rise to spiritual life, and that, *therefore*, as Christ now lives in heaven, they should live for heaven, and fix their affections there. ¶ *Seek those things which are above.* That is, seek them as the objects of pursuit and affection; strive to secure them. ¶ *Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God;* Notes, Mark xvi. 19. The argument here is, that since Christ is there, and since he is the object of our supreme attachment, we should fix our affections on heavenly things, and seek to be prepared to dwell with him.

2. *Set your affections.* Marg., "or *mind.*" Gr. "*think of*"—φρονεῖτε. The thoughts should be occupied about the things where Christ now dwells, where our final home is to be, where our great interests are. Since we are raised from the death of sin, and are made to live anew, the great object of our contemplation should be the heavenly world. ¶ *Not on things on the earth.* Wealth, honour, pleasure. Our affections should not be fixed on houses and lands; on scenes of fashion and gaiety; on low and debasing enjoyments.

3. *For ye are dead.* Dead to the world; dead to sin; dead to earthly pleasures. On the meaning of the word *dead*, see Notes on Rom. vi. 2; Eph. ii. 1. The idea of the apostle is, that as Christ became literally *dead* in the tomb, so we, in virtue of our connection with him, have become *dead* to sin, to worldly influences, pleasures, and ambition. Or, in other words, we are to be to them *as if* we were dead, and they had no more influence over us than the things of earth had over him in the grave; Notes, Rom. vi. 2. ¶ *And your life.* There is still *life.* Though *dead* to one class of objects, you are *alive* to others. See the sentiment here expressed, explained at large in the Notes on Gal. ii. 20. ¶ *Is hid with Christ in God.* The language here is taken probably from *treasure* which is "hid" or concealed in a place of security; and the idea is, that eternal life is an invaluable *jewel* or *treasure*, which is laid up with Christ in heaven where God is. There it is safely deposited. It has this security, that it is with the Redeemer, and that he is in the presence of God; and thus nothing can reach it or take it away. It is not left with *us*, or intrusted to *our* keeping—for then it might be lost

4 When [a] Christ, *who is* [b] our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

5 Mortify [c] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

7 In [d] the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

[a] 1 John 3.2. [b] John 11.25; 14.6. Ep.5.3-6. [c] Ro.8.13; Ga.5.24; [d] Ti.3.3.

as we might lose an invaluable jewel; or it might be wrested from us; or we might be defrauded of it; but it is now laid up far out of our sight, and far from the reach of all our enemies, and with one who can "keep that which we have committed to him against that day;" 2 Tim. i. 12. Our eternal life, therefore, is as secure as it could possibly be made. The true condition of the Christian is, that he is "dead" to this world, but that he has immortal *life* in prospect, and that is secure, being in the holy keeping of his Redeemer, now in the presence of God. From this it follows that he should regard himself as living for heaven.

4. *When Christ,* who is *our life;* Notes, John i. 4; xi. 25. ¶ *Shall appear.* In the day when he shall come to judge the world. ¶ *Then shall ye also appear with him in glory;* 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. Christians shall then be raised from the dead, and ascend with the Redeemer to heaven.

5. *Mortify therefore your members.* Since you are dead to sin and the world, and are to appear with Christ in the glories of his kingdom, subdue every carnal and evil propensity of your nature. The word *mortify* means *to put to death* (Notes, Rom. viii. 13; Gal. v. 24), and the meaning here is that they were entirely to subdue their evil propensities, so that they would have no remains of life; that is, they were not at all to indulge them. The word "*members*" here, refers to the different members of the body—as the seat of evil desires and passions; comp. Notes, Rom. vi. 13. They were wholly to extirpate those evil passions which he specifies as having their seat in the various members of the earthly body. ¶ *Fornication;* Notes, Rom. i. 2. ¶ *Uncleanness;* Notes, Rom. i. 24. ¶ *Inordinate affection.* πάθος. Rendered in Rom. i. 26, "vile *affections*;" see Notes on that verse. In 1 Thess. iv. 5, the word is rendered *lust*—which is its meaning here. ¶ *Evil concupiscence.* Evil desires; licentious passions; Rom. i. 24. *Greek.* ¶ *And covetousness, which is idolatry.* It is remarkable that the apostle always ranks *covetousness* with these base and detestable passions. The meaning here is, (1.) that it is a low and debasing passion, like those which he had specified; and (2.) that it secures the affections which properly belong to God, and is, therefore, idolatry. Of all base passions, this is the one that most dethrones God from the soul. See this whole passage more fully explained in the Notes on Eph. v. 3—5.

6. *For which things' sake,* &c.; see Notes, Eph. v. 6, where the same expression occurs.

7. *In the which.* In all which evil passions. ¶ *Ye also walked sometime.* You formerly lived. These were the common vices of the heathen; Notes, Eph. v. 8; 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11; comp. Notes, Rom. i. 24—32.

8. *But now ye also put off all these.* All these which follow, as being also inconsistent with the Christian calling. ¶ *Anger, wrath;* Notes, Eph. iv. 26. ¶ *Malice;* Notes, Eph. iv. 31. ¶ *Blasphemy;* Notes, Matt. ix. 3. The word *here* seems to mean *all* injurious and calumnious speaking—whether against God or man. ¶ *Filthy communication out of your mouth.* Lewd, indecent, and immodest discourse; Notes, Eph. iv. 29. The conversation of the heathen everywhere abounds with this. A pure method of conversation among men is the fruit of Christianity.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed [a] in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where[b] there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

a Ep.4.23,24. b Ro.10.12.

9. *Lie not one to another;* Notes Eph. iv. 25. ¶ *Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.* Your former corrupt and evil nature; Notes, Eph. iv. 22. The reason for putting away lying, stated in Eph. iv. 25, is, that we "are members one of another" — or are brethren. The reason assigned here is, that we have put off the old man with his deeds. The sense is, that *lying* is one of the fruits of sin. It is that which the corrupt nature of man naturally produces; and when that is put off, then all that that nature produces should be also put off with it. The vice of lying is a universal fruit of sin, and seems to exist everywhere where the gospel does not prevail; comp. Notes on Titus i. 12. There is, perhaps, no single form of sin that reigns so universally in the heathen world.

10. *Which is renewed in knowledge.* In Eph. iv. 24, it is said that the new man is "created after God in righteousness and true holiness." In this place it is *added* that to the renewed soul *knowledge* is imparted, and it is made in that respect as man was when he was first created. This passage, in connection with Eph. iv. 24, proves that before man fell he was endowed with "righteousness, true holiness, and *knowledge*." The *knowledge* here referred to, is not the knowledge of *everything*, but the knowledge *of God*. Man was acquainted with his Creator. He resembled him in his capacity for knowledge. He was an intelligent being, and he had an acquaintance with the divine existence and perfections; comp. Notes on Rom. v. 12. But especially had he that knowledge which is the fear of the Lord; that knowledge of God which is the result of love. Piety, in the Scriptures, is often represented as the "knowledge" of God; see Notes on John xvii. 3; comp. Notes on Eph. iii. 19. ¶ *After the image of him that created him.* So as to resemble God. In *knowledge* he was made in the likeness of his Maker.

11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew;* see this fully explained in the Notes on Gal. iii. 28. The meaning here is, that all are on a level; that there is no distinction of nation in the church; that all are to be regarded and treated as brethren, and that *therefore* no one should be false to another, or lie to another. ¶ *Circumcision nor uncircumcision.* No one is admitted into that blessed society *because* he is circumcised; no one is excluded *because* he is uncircumcised. That distinction is unknown, and all are on a level. ¶ *Barbarian.* No one is excluded *because* he is a barbarian, or because he lives among those who are uncivilized, and is unpolished in his manners; see the word *barbarian* explained in the Notes on Rom. i. 14. ¶ *Scythian.* This word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The name *Scythian* is applied in ancient geography to the people who lived on the north and north-east of the Black and Caspian seas, a region stretching indefinitely into the unknown countries of Asia. They occupied the lands now peopled by the Monguls and Tartars. The name was almost synonymous with *barbarian*, for they were regarded as a wild and savage race. The meaning here is, that even such a ferocious and uncivilized people were not excluded from the gospel, but they were as welcome as any other, and were entitled to the same privileges as others. No one was excluded because he belonged to the most rude and uncivilized portion of mankind. ¶ *Bond* nor *free;* see Notes, Gal. iii. 28. ¶ *But Christ is all, and in all.* The great thing that constitutes the peculiarity of the church is, that Christ is its Sa-

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

13 Forbearing [a] one another, and forgiving [b] one another, if any man have a quarrel [1] against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.

a Mar.11.25; Ep.4.2,32. *b* Mat.6.14,15.

14 And above all these things *put on* charity, [c] which is [d] the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace [e] of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

1 or. *complaint.* *c* 1 Pe.4.8. *d* 1 Co.13.2,8,13. *e* Phi.4.7.

viour, and that all are his friends and followers. Its members lay aside all other distinctions, and are known only as *his* friends. They are not known as Jews and Gentiles; as of this nation or that; as slaves or freemen, but they are known as Christians; distinguished from *all* the rest of mankind as the united friends of the Redeemer; comp. Notes on Gal. iii. 28.

12. *Put on, therefore, as the elect of God.* The fact that you thus belong to one and the same church; that you have been redeemed by the same blood, and chosen by the same grace, and that you are all brethren, should lead you to manifest a spirit of kindness, gentleness, and love. ¶ *Bowels of mercies;* Notes, Phil. ii. 1. ¶ *Kindness,* &c.; see Notes on Eph. iv. 32. The language here is a little different from what it is there, but the sentiment is the same.

13. *Forbearing one another;* Notes, Eph. iv. 2. ¶ *And forgiving one another;* Notes, Matt. vi. 12, 14. ¶ *If any man have a quarrel against any.* Marg., "or *complaint.*" The word here used—*μομφή*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, *fault found, blame, censure;* and here denotes *occasion of complaint.* The idea is, that if another one has given us *just occasion of complaint,* we are to forgive him; that is, we are (1.) to harbour no malice against him; (2.) we are to be ready to do him good as if he had not given us occasion of complaint; (3.) we are to be willing to *declare* that we forgive him when he asks it; and (4.) we are always afterwards to treat him as kindly as if he had not injured us—*as God treats* us *when he forgives us;* see Notes, Matt. xviii. 21. ¶ *Even as Christ forgive you, so also* do *ye.* Learn here that Christ has power to forgive sin; comp. Notes, Matt. ix. 6; Acts v. 31. Christ forgave us (1.) *freely*—he did not hesitate or delay when we asked him; (2.) *entirely*—he pardoned *all* our offences; (3.) *for ever*—he did it so as to remember our sins no more, and to treat us ever onward *as if* we had not sinned. So *we* should forgive an offending brother.

14. *And above all these things.* Over, or upon all these things; comp. Notes, Eph. vi. 16. ¶ *Charity.* Love. Notes, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. ¶ *Which is the bond of perfectness.* The bond of all perfection; the thing which will unite all other things, and make them complete; comp. the parallel place in Eph. iv. 3. The idea seems to be that love will bind all the other graces fast together, and render the whole system complete. Without love, though there might be other graces and virtues, there would be a want of harmony and compactness in our Christian graces, and this was necessary to unite and complete the whole. There is great beauty in the expression, and it contains most important truth. If it were possible to conceive that the other graces could exist among a Christian people, yet there would be a sad incompleteness, a painful want of harmony and union, if love were not the reigning principle. Nor faith, nor zeal, nor prophecy, nor the power of speaking with the tongue of angels, would answer the purpose. See this sentiment expressed in 1 Cor. xiii., and the effect of love more fully explained in the Notes on that chapter.

15. *And let the peace of God.* The peace which God gives; Notes, Phil. iv. 7. ¶ *Rule in your hearts;* sit as umpire there *(Doddridge);* govern and control you The word here rendered *rule*—*βραβευ-*

16 Let the word [a] of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms [b] and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever [c] ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

a Ps.119.11. b Ep.5.19. c 1 Co.10.31.

βραβεύω—is commonly used in reference to the Olympic and other games. It means, to be a director, or arbiter of the public games; to preside over them and preserve order, and to distribute the prizes to the victors. The meaning here is, that the peace which God gives to the soul is to be to us what the *brabeutes*, or governor at the games was to those who contended there. It is to preside over and govern the mind; to preserve every thing in its place; and to save it from tumult, disorder, and irregularity. The thought is a very beautiful one. The soul is liable to the agitations of passion and excitement—like an assembled multitude of men. It needs something to preside over it, and keep its various faculties in place and order; and nothing is so well fitted to do this as the calm peace which religion gives, a deep sense of the presence of God, the desire and the evidence of his friendship, the hope of his favour, and the belief that he has forgiven all our sins. The "peace of God" will thus calm down every agitated element of the soul; subdue the tumult of passion, and preserve the mind in healthful action and order—as a ruler sways and controls the passions of assembled multitudes of men. ¶ *To the which ye are also called.* To which peace. ¶ *In one body.* To be one body; or to be united as one; Notes, Eph. iv. 4—6. ¶ *And be ye thankful.* For all mercies, and especially for your privileges and hopes as Christians. A spirit of thankfulness, also, would tend much to promote harmony and peace. An ungrateful people is commonly a tumultuous, agitated, restless, and dissatisfied people. Nothing better tends to promote peace and order than gratitude to God for his mercies.

16. *Let the word of Christ.* The doctrine of Christ. ¶ *Dwell in you richly in all wisdom.* Abundantly, producing the spirit of true wisdom. That doctrine is adapted to make you wise. The meaning is, that they were to lay up the doctrines of the gospel in their hearts; to meditate upon them; to allow them to be their guide, and to endeavour wisely to improve them to the best purpose. ¶ *Teaching and admonishing,* &c.: see this explained in the Notes on Eph. v. 19, 20. The only additional thought here is, that their psalms and hymns were to be regarded as a method of "*teaching*" and "*admonishing;*" that is, they were to be imbued with truth, and to be such as to elevate the mind, and withdraw it from error and sin. Dr. Johnson once said, that if he were allowed to make the ballads of a nation, he cared not who made the laws. It is true in a more important sense that he who is permitted to make the *hymns* of a church, need care little who preaches, or who makes the creed. He will more effectually mould the sentiments of a church than they who preach or make creeds and confessions. Hence, it is indispensable, in order to the preservation of the truth, that the sacred songs of a church should be imbued with sound evangelical sentiment.

17. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed.* Whatever ye say or do—whether relating to temporal affairs or to religion. The command here extends to *all* that we do. ¶ Do *all in the name of the Lord Jesus.* Do it all because he requires and commands it, and with a desire to honour him. His authority should be the warrant; his glory the aim of all our actions and words. See the general sentiment here expressed, fully illustrated in the Notes on 1 Cor. x. 31. ¶ *Giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* Through him; or in his name. All our actions are to be accompanied with thanksgiving; Notes, Phil. iv. 6. We are to engage in every duty, not only in the name of

18 Wives, [a] submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, [b] obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

22 Servants, [c] obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

a Ep.5.22,&c.; Ti.2.4,5; 1 Pe.3.1, &c.
b Ep 6.1,&c. *c* 1 Pe.2.18.

23 And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men;

24 Knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

CHAPTER IV.

MASTERS, [d] give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

d Ep.6.9,&c.

Christ, but with thankfulness for strength and reason; for the privilege of acting so that we *may* honour him; and with a grateful remembrance of the mercy of God that gave us such a Saviour to be an example and guide. He is most likely to do his duty well who goes to it with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God for his mercies, and he who is likely to perform his duties with the most cheerful fidelity, is he who has the deepest sense of the divine goodness in providing a Saviour for his lost and ruined soul; see Notes on 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

18. *Wives, submit yourselves*, &c.; Notes on the parallel passage in Eph. v. 21—24.

19. *Husbands, love* your *wives*, &c.; Notes on Eph. iv. 25—29.

20. *Children, obey* your *parents*, &c.; Notes on Eph. vi. 1—4.

21. *Fathers, provoke not*, &c.; Notes on Eph. vi. 4. ¶ *Lest they be discouraged.* Lest, by your continually finding fault with them, they should lose all courage, and despair of ever pleasing you. There is much sound sense and practical wisdom in this observation of the apostle. Children should not be *flattered*, but they should be *encouraged*. They should not be so praised as to make them vain and proud, but they should be commended when they do well. The *desire* of praise should not be the principle from which they should be taught to act, but they should feel that the approbation of parents is a desirable thing, and when they act so as to deserve that approbation, no injury is done them by their understanding it. He who always finds fault with a child; who is never satisfied with what he does; who scolds and frets and complains, let him do as he will, breaks his spirit, and soon destroys in the delicate texture of his soul all *desire* of doing well. The child in despair soon gives over every effort to please. He becomes sullen, morose, stupid, and indifferent to all the motives that can be presented to him, and becomes to a great extent indifferent as to *what* he does—since all that he does meets with the same reception from the parent.

22—25. *Servants, obey in all things*, &c.; see Notes on Eph. vi. 5—8.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *Masters, give unto* your *servants*, &c.; see Notes on Eph. vi. 9. ¶ *That which is just and equal.* What they *ought* to have; what is fairly their due. The apostle here, probably, refers to bondmen or slaves, and the propriety of this rule is apparent. Such persons were subject to their masters' control; their time and services were at their disposal, and they could not enforce their just and equal claims by an appeal to the *laws*. They were, therefore, dependent on the equity and kindness of their masters. There can

2 Continue [a] in prayer, and watch [b] in the same with thanksgiving;

[a] Lu.18.1. [b] Mar.13.33.

be no doubt that not a few who were converted to the Christian faith were held to involuntary servitude (see 1 Cor. vii.); and it is as clear that the apostles did not design to make a violent disruption of these bonds, or to lead the slaves to rise and murder their masters; see Notes, 1 Tim. vi. 1—4. But it is equally clear that they meant to represent slavery as a hard and undesirable condition; that they intended to instruct the slaves to embrace the earliest opportunity to be free which was presented (1 Cor. vii. 21); and that they meant to suggest such considerations, and to lay down such principles as would lead masters to emancipate their slaves, and thus ultimately to abolish it. Among these principles are such as these. (1.) That all men were of one and the same blood; Acts xvii. 26. (2.) That they were all redeemed by the same Saviour, and were brethren; 1 Tim. vi. 2; Philem. 16. If redeemed; if they were "brethren;" if they were heirs of glory, they were not "*chattels*," or "*things;*" and how could a Christian conscientiously hold or regard them *as property?* (3.) That they were to "render them that which was *just* and *equal.*" What would follow from this if fairly applied? What *would* be *just* and *equal* to a man in those circumstances? Would it not be (*a*) to compensate him *fairly* for his labour; to furnish him an adequate remuneration for what he had earned? But this would strike a blow at the root of slavery—for one of the elementary principles of it is, that there *must* be "unrequited labour;" that is, *the slave must earn as much more than he receives as will do his part in maintaining the master in idleness,* for it is of the very essence of the system that he is to be maintained in indolence by the slaves which he owns—or just so far as he owns a slave. If he were disposed to earn his own living, he would not need the labour of slaves. No man ever yet became the permanent owner of a slave from *benevolence* to him, or because he desired to pay him fully for his work, or because he meant himself to work in order to maintain his slave in indolence. (*b*) If a man should in fact render to his slaves "that which is just and equal," would he not restore them to freedom? Have they not been deprived of their liberty by *injustice,* and would not "justice" restore it? What has the *slave* done to forfeit his liberty? If he should make him "equal" in rights to himself, or to what he is by nature, would he not emancipate him? Has he not been reduced to his present condition by withholding that which is "*equal?*" Has he "equal" rights, and "equal" privileges with other *men?* Has he not been cut off from them by *denying* him the equality to which he is entitled in the arrangements of God's government? Can he be held at all without violating all the just notions of *equality?* Though, therefore, it may be true that this passage only enjoins the rendering of that which was "just" and "equal" *in* their condition as slaves, yet it contains a *principle* which would "lay the axe at the root" of slavery, and would lead a conscientious Christian to the feeling that his slaves *ought* to be free. These principles actually effected the freedom of slaves in the Roman empire in a few centuries after Christianity was introduced, and they are destined to effect it yet all over the world. ¶ *Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven*; Notes, Eph. vi. 9.

2. *Continue in prayer.* That is, do not neglect it; observe it at all stated times; maintain the spirit of prayer, and embrace all proper occasions to engage in it; comp. Notes, Luke xviii. 1; Eph. vi. 18; 1 Thess. iv. 17. ¶ *And watch in the same with thanksgiving.* Watch for favourable opportunities; watch that your mind may be in a right frame *when* you pray; and watch, that when your mind *is* in a right frame you may not neglect to pray; see Notes on Eph. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 6.

3. *Withal.* With all the supplica-

3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open [a] unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

[a] 2Th.3.1.

5 Walk in wisdom [b] toward them that are without, redeeming the time

6 Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned [c] with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

[b] Ps.90.12; Ep.5.15,16. [c] Mar.9.50.

tions which you offer for other persons and things; or at the same time that you pray for them. ¶ *Praying also for us;* Notes, Eph. vi. 19, 20; comp. 2 Cor. i. 11; Phil. i. 19; Heb. xiii. 18, 19. ¶ *That God would open to us a door of utterance.* To preach the gospel. He earnestly desired to have liberty to preach the gospel, and asked them to pray that this might be restored to him; see Notes on Eph. vi. 19. ¶ *To speak the mystery of Christ.* Called in Eph. vi. 19, the "mystery of the gospel;" see Notes there. ¶ *For which I also am in bonds.* A prisoner at Rome; Notes, Eph. vi. 20.

4. *That I may make it manifest,* &c.; Notes, Eph. vi. 20.

5. *Walk in wisdom.* That is, conduct uprightly and honestly. Deal with them on the strictest principles of integrity, so that they may not have occasion to reproach the religion which you profess. ¶ *Toward them that are without.* Without the pale of the church, or who are not professing Christians; see Notes on 1 Cor. v. 12. They were surrounded by heathens, as Christians now are by men of the world. The injunction is one that requires us to act with prudence and propriety (ἐν σοφίᾳ) towards them; and there is perhaps not a more important direction in the New Testament than this. Among the reasons for this are the following: (1.) Men of the world judge of religion, not from the *profession,* but from the *life* of its friends. (2.) They judge of religion, not from preaching, or from books, or from the conduct of its Founder and his apostles, but from what they see in the daily walk and conversation of the members of the church. (3.) They *understand* the nature of religion so well as to know when its friends are or are not consistent with their profession. (4.) They set a much higher value on honesty and integrity than they do on the doctrines and duties of religion; and if the professed friends of religion are destitute of the principles of truth and honesty, they think they have nothing of any value. They may be very devout on the Sabbath; very regular at prayer-meetings; very strict in the observance of rites and ceremonies—but all these are of little worth in the estimation of the world, unless attended with an upright life. (5.) No professing Christian can possibly do good to others who does not live an upright life. If you have cheated a man out of never so small a sum, it is vain that *you* talk to him about the salvation of his soul; if you have failed to pay him a debt when it was due, or to finish a piece of work when you promised it, or to tell him the exact truth in conversation, it is vain for *you* to endeavour to induce him to be a Christian. He will *feel,* if he does not *say*—and he *might* very properly say—that he wants no religion which will not make a man honest. (6.) No man *will attempt* to do much good to others whose own life is not upright. He will be sensible of the inconsistency, and will feel that he *cannot* do it with any sense of propriety; and the honour of religion, therefore, and the salvation of our fellow-men, demand that in all our intercourse with others, we should lead lives of the strictest integrity. ¶ *Redeeming the time;* Notes, Eph. v. 6.

6. *Let your speech.* Your conversation. In the previous verse the apostle had given a *general* direction that our conduct towards those who are not professing Christians should

7 All [a] my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord:

8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Onesimus, [b] a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

[a] Ep.6.21,22.

[b] Phile.10.

be wise and prudent; he here gives a *particular* direction in regard to our conversation. ¶ Be *alway with grace.* Imbued with the spirit of religion. It should be such as religion is fitted to produce; such as to show that the grace of God is in our hearts. Bloomfield supposes that this means "courteous and agreeable, not morose and melancholy." But though this may be included, and though the rule here laid down would lead to that, it cannot be *all* that is intended. It rather means that our conversation should be such as to show that we are governed by the principles of religion, and that there is unfeigned piety in the heart. This will indeed *make* us mild, courteous, agreeable, and urbane in our conversation; but it will do more than this. It will imbue our discourse *with the spirit of religion,* so as to show that the soul is under the influence of love to the Redeemer. ¶ *Seasoned with salt.* Salt, among the Greeks, was the emblem of *wit.* Here the meaning seems to be, that our conversation should be seasoned with piety or grace in a way similar to that in which we employ salt in our food. It makes it wholesome and palatable. So with our conversation. If it be not imbued with the spirit of piety, it is flat, insipid, unprofitable, injurious. The spirit of piety will make it what it should be—useful, agreeable, beneficial to mankind. This does not mean that our conversation is to be always, strictly speaking, *religious*—wherever we may be—any more than our food should be mere salt; but it means that, *whatever* be the topic, the spirit of piety should be diffused through it—as the salt in our food should properly season it all—whatever the article of food may be. ¶ *That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* Be imbued with the spirit of piety, that you may not utter any thing that would be rash and foolish, but be prepared to answer any one who may question you about your religion in a way that will show that you understand its nature, and that will tend to edification. This remark may be extended farther. It may be understood as meaning also, "be imbued with the spirit of religion, and you will be able to answer any man appropriately on any subject. If he asks you about the evidence or the nature of religion, you will be able to reply to him. If he converses with you on the common topics of the day, you will be able to answer him in a mild, kind, affable spirit. If he asks you of things of which you are ignorant; if he introduces some topic of science with which you are not acquainted, you will not be ashamed to confess your ignorance, and to seek instruction. If he addresses you in a haughty, insolent, and overbearing manner, you will be able to repress the risings of your temper, and to answer him with gentleness and kindness;" comp. Luke ii. 46.

7, 8. *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you;* see these verses explained in the Notes, Eph. vi. 21, 22.

9. *With Onesimus.* Who had been formerly a servant of Philemon, an inhabitant of Colosse; see Notes, Philem 10. Onesimus had probably been recently converted; and Paul felt towards him the warm attachment of a brother; Philem. 16. In what way he became acquainted with him is unknown. A more full account of him will be found in the Notes on the Epistle to Philemon. ¶ *Who is* one *of you.* That is, either who is from your city, or one of your own people and nation. It is clear from this, that

10 Aristarchus [a] my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, [b]

[a] Ac.27.2. [b] Ac.15.37; 2Ti.4.11.

Onesimus was from Phrygia, and probably from the city of Colosse itself. It would seem also that he was of a higher rank than is designated by the word "*slave*" now. He was, indeed, a "servant"—δοῦλος—of Philemon. but would the apostle have addressed the Colossians, and said that he was "one of *them*," if he had occupied precisely the condition which is now denoted by the word *slave?* Would a minister of the gospel now in the Northern States, who should send a letter by a run-away slave to a community of masters at the South, say of him that he was "*one of them?*" Would it be kindly received, or produce a good *impression*, if he did? There is reason, therefore, to think that Onesimus was not a *slave* in the proper sense, but that he might have been a respectable youth, who had bound himself to service for a term of years; comp. Philem. 18. ¶ *They shall make known to you all things which* are done *here.* Relating to Paul himself and the state of the church in Rome. As the epistle which Paul sent was designed not only for them, but to be a part of the volume of revealed truth, he *wrote* only those things which would be of permanent interest. Other matters he left for those who carried the epistle to communicate. It would also serve to give Tychicus and Onesimus more respectability in view of the church at Colosse, if he referred the church to them for information on important points.

10. *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner.* Aristarchus was of Thessalonica, and is mentioned in Acts xix. 29; xx. 4, as Paul's companion in his travels. In Acts xxvii. 2, it is said that he accompanied him in his voyage to Rome, and from the passage before us it appears that he was there imprisoned with him. As he held the same sentiments as Paul, and was united with him in his travels and labours, it was natural that he should be treated in the same manner. He,

sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

together with Gaius, had been seized in the tumult at Ephesus and treated with violence, but he adhered to the apostle in all his troubles, and attended him in all his perils. Nothing further is certainly known of him, though "the Greeks say that he was bishop of Assamea in Syria, and was beheaded with Paul at Rome, under Nero."—*Calmet.* ¶ *And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas.* John Mark, in relation to whom Paul and Barnabas had formerly disagreed so much as to cause a separation between Barnabas and Paul. The ground of the disagreement was, that Barnabas wished to take him, probably on account of relationship, with them in their travels; Paul was unwilling to take him, because he had, on one occasion, departed from them; Notes, Acts xv. 37—39. They afterwards became reconciled, and Paul mentions Mark here with affection. He sent for him when he sent Tychicus to Ephesus, and it seems that he had come to him in obedience to his request; 2 Tim. iv. 11. Mark had probably become more decided, and Paul did not harbour unkind and unforgiving feelings towards any one. ¶ *Touching whom ye received commandments.* What these directions were, and how they were communicated, whether verbally or by writing, is now unknown. It was, not improbably, on some occasion when Paul was with them. He refers to it here in order that they might know distinctly whom he meant. ¶ *If he come to you, receive him.* In Philem. 24, Mark is mentioned as a "fellow-labourer" of Paul. It would seem probable, therefore, that he was not a prisoner. Paul here intimates that he was about to leave Rome, and he enjoins it on the Colossians to receive him kindly. This injunction may have been necessary, as the Colossians may have been aware of the breach between him and Paul, and may have been disposed to regard him with suspicion. Paul retained no malice, and now commend-

11 And Jesus, which is called Justus; who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring [1] fervently [a] for you in prayers, that ye may stand [b] perfect and [2] complete in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.

1 or, *striving.* a Ja.5.16. b Matt.5.48; He.6.1. 2 or, *filled.*

ed, in the warmest manner, one from whom he was formerly constrained to separate.

11. *And Jesus, who is called Justus.* The name Jesus was probably that which he bore among the Jews. Justus is a Roman name, and was probably that by which he was known among the Romans. It was not uncommon thus to assume another name when one went among a foreign people; comp. Notes, Acts xiii. 9. ¶ *Who are of the circumcision.* Jews, or Jewish Christians. Nothing more is known of Justus. ¶ *These only* are my *fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God.* The word "*only*" here, probably refers to the fact that they only of *all the Jews* who were at Rome assisted Paul in his work. Epaphras and Luke were also with him at Rome, and doubtless aided him. ¶ *Which have been a comfort unto me.* The more so because they were Jews. The other Jews in Rome stood aloof, and doubtless endeavoured to augment the trials of the apostle; comp. Acts xxviii. 23—29.

12. *Epaphras;* Notes, chap. i. 7. ¶ *Always labouring fervently for you in prayers.* Marg., "or *striving.*" Gr., *agonizing.* The word denotes the *intense desire* which he had for their salvation; his fervent, earnest pleading for their welfare. ¶ *That ye may stand perfect and complete.* Marg., as in Gr., *filled.* The desire was, that they might maintain their Christian principles unadulterated by the mixture of philosophy and error, and completely perform the will of God in every respect. This is the expression of a pious *wish* in regard to them, without any affirmation that any had been absolutely perfect, or that they would be perfect in this world. It is, however, a command of God that we should be perfect (see Matt. v. 48), and it is the highest wish of benevolence in reference to any one that he may be complete in moral character, and may do all the will of God; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

13. *For I bear him record.* Paul had had abundant opportunity to know what were his feelings in regard to these churches. ¶ *A great zeal for you.* A great desire to promote your welfare. ¶ *And them* that are *in Laodicea.* Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia, and not far from Colosse. There was a church there. See the Introduction, and Notes on ver. 16. ¶ *And them in Hierapolis.* This was also a city in Phrygia, and not far from Laodicea and Colosse. It was situated under a hill to the north, and had on the south a large plain about five miles over. On the south of that plain, and opposite to Hierapolis, was Laodicea, with the river Lycus running between them, nearer to Laodicea than to Hierapolis. This place is now called by the Turks *Pambuck-Kulasi,* or the *Cotton-Tower,* on account of the white cliffs which lie round about it. It is now utterly forsaken and desolate, but the ruins are so magnificent as to show that it was once one of the most splendid cities in the East. It was celebrated for the hot springs in its vicinity; and on account of the numerous temples erected there, it received the name of *Hierapolis,* or the *holy city.* The principal deity worshipped there was Apollo. See Travels by T. Smith. B. D. 1678. Comp. Notes on ver. 16. From the allusion to it here, it would seem that there were Christians there

14 Luke, [a] the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the [b] church which is in his house.

16 And when [c] this epistle is read among you, cause that it be

[a] 2 Ti.4.10,11. [b] Ro.16.5; 1 Co.16.19. [c] 1 Th.5.27.

in the time of Paul, though there is no mention of a church there. It is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament.

14. *Luke, the beloved physician.* This was undoubtedly the author of the Gospel which bears his name, and of the Acts of the Apostles. He is mentioned as the travelling companion of Paul in Acts xvii. 10, and appears to have accompanied him afterwards until his imprisonment at Rome see 2 Tim. iv. 11. From ver. 11. of this chapter, it is evident that he was not by birth a Jew, but was probably a proselyte. He is supposed to have been a native of Cyrene, and to have died in Achaia, soon after the martyrdom of Paul, at the advanced age of eighty-four. See Rob. Cal. Art. *Luke*. He is here mentioned as a *physician*, and in his Gospel, and in the Acts, there are incidental evidences that he was acquainted with the science of medicine, and that he observed the events which he has recorded with the eye of one who practised the healing art. It is easy to imagine that the presence of a physician might have been of important service to the apostle Paul in his travels; and that his acquaintance with the art of healing may have aided not a little in the furtherance of the gospel. The miraculous power of healing, possessed by the Saviour and his apostles, contributed much to the success of their preaching; for the power of alleviating pain of body—of restoring to health by miracles, would not only be an evidence of the divine origin of their mission—a credential that they were sent from God, but would dispose those who had received such important benefits to listen attentively to the message of salvation. One of the best qualifications in missionaries in modern times, in order to gain access to the heathen, is an acquaintance with the healing art. ¶ *And Demas.* Demas is mentioned in two other places, Philem. 24, and 2 Tim. iv. 10. He is here spoken of with commendation as one in whom the apostle had confidence. Afterwards, when troubles thickened, he was not found proof to the trials which threatened him in Rome, and forsook the apostle and went to Thessalonica. He did this under the influence of the "love of this present world," or of life, evidently unwilling to lay down his life in the cause for which Paul suffered; see Notes on 2 Tim. iv. 10. His departure, and that of the others on whom Paul relied in Rome, was one of the severest trials which he was called there to endure; see Notes on 2 Tim. iv. 16.

15. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea;* Notes, chap. ii. 1. ¶ *And Nymphas.* This person is nowhere else mentioned, and nothing more is known of him. ¶ *And the church which is in his house;* Notes, Rom. xvi. 5.

16. *And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.* Laodicea was near to Colosse, and the church there was evidently exposed to the same dangers from philosophy and false teachers as that at Colosse. The counsels in this epistle, therefore, would be equally applicable to both. In 1 Thess. v. 27, the apostle also charges those to whom that epistle was addressed to see that it be "read unto all the holy brethren." It is evident that the apostles designed that the letters which they addressed to the churches should be read also by others, and should become the permanent source of instruction to the friends of Christ. Laodicea, here referred to, was the seat of one of the "Seven churches" of Asia (Rev. iii. 14); was a city of Phrygia, and was its capital. It was situated on the river Lycus (hence called Λαοδίκεια ἐπὶ Λύκῳ

read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

17 And say to Archippus, [a] Take

[a] Philem. 2.

[b] heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

18 The salutation [c] by the

[b] 1 Ti. 4. 17. [c] 2 Th. 3. 17.

—*Laodicea on the Lycus*) and stood at the southwestern angle of Phrygia. Its early name appears to have been Diospolis, changed subsequently to Rhoas. The name Laodicea was given to it by Antiochus Theos, in honour of his wife Laodice. Under the Romans it became a very flourishing commercial city. It was often damaged by earthquakes, but was restored by the Roman emperors. It is supposed to have been destroyed during the inroad of Timur Leng, A. D. 1402. The ruins are called by the Turks *Eski Hissar*. These ruins, and the ruins of Hierapolis, were visited by Mr. Riggs, an American Missionary, in 1842, who thus speaks of them: "These spots, so interesting to the Christian, are now utterly desolate. The threatening expressed in Rev. iii. 10, has been fulfilled, and Laodicea is but a name. In the midst of one of the finest plains of Asia Minor, it is entirely without inhabitant. Sardis, in like manner, whose church had a name to live, but was dead, is now an utter desolation. Its soil is turned up by the plough, or overgrown by rank weeds: while in Philadelphia, since the day when our Saviour commended those who had there "kept the word of his patience," there has never ceased to be a nominally Christian church. The ruins of Laodicea and Hierapolis are very extensive. The stadium of the former city, and the gymnasia and theatres of both, are the most complete which I have anywhere seen. Hierapolis is remarkable also for the so-called frozen cascades, a natural curiosity, in its kind probably not surpassed for beauty and extent in the world. It consists of a deposit of carbonate of lime, white as the driven snow, assuming, when closely examined, various forms, and covering nearly the whole southern and western declivities of the elevation on which the city was built. It is visible for many miles, and has procured for the place the name by which alone Hierapolis is known among the Turks, of the Cotton Castle." ¶ *And that ye likewise read the* epistle *from Laodicea.* In regard to this epistle, see Introduction, § 6.

17. *And say to Archippus.* Archippus is mentioned also in Philem. 2. He is not elsewhere referred to in the New Testament, and nothing further is known of him. ¶ *Take heed to the ministry,* &c. The Greek here is, τὴν διακονίαν—meaning the office of ministering in divine things; but it is not certain precisely what office he held there. It seems probable from the language which the apostle applies to him—"the ministry"—(comp. Acts i. 17, 25; vi. 4; xx. 24; xxi. 19; Rom. xi. 13; 1 Cor. xii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9; iv. 1; v. 18; vi. 3; Eph. iv. 12), that he was not *a deacon*, properly so called, but that he was a preacher of the word. In Philem. 2, he is mentioned by Paul as his "fellow-soldier," and it is evident that the apostle meant to speak of him with honour. There is no evidence, as has been supposed by some, that he intended to imply, by what he said, that he had been remiss in the performance of his duties, but the apostle doubtless meant to encourage him and to excite him to increased ardour and zeal in the work of the Lord; comp. Notes Acts xx. 28. It is always proper to caution even the most faithful and self-denying servants of the Lord to "take heed," or see to it, that they perform their duties with fidelity. The office of the ministry is such, and the temptations to unfaithfulness are so great, that we need constant watchfulness. ¶ *That thou fulfil it.* That there be nothing wanting, or lacking, in any of the departments of labour which you are called to perform.

18. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul.* Probably the rest of the epistle was written by an amanuensis,

hand of me Paul. Remember[a] my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

a He. 13. 3, 25.

Written from Rome to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus.

As was his custom, Paul affixed his own hand to it in the form of a salutation; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. xvi. 21; 2 Thess. iii. 17. ¶ *Remember my bonds.* Also evidently written by his own hand, to make the injunction more impressive; comp. Notes, Heb. xiii. 3. The meaning is, that they should not forget him in his confinement. They should remember that he was suffering on their account (Notes, chap. i. 24), and that he was entitled to every expression of sympathy and love. ¶ *Grace* be *with you;* Notes, Rom. xvi. 20.

The subscription to this epistle is undoubtedly correct. See the Introduction.

Notes on the New Testament

Albert Barnes

Edited by
Robert Frew

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TO PHILEMON

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THE FIRST

EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The situation of Thessalonica.*

THESSALONICA was a city and sea-port of Macedonia. It was at the head of the bay Thermaicus, or the Gulf of Thessalonica (see the map prefixed to the Notes on the Acts of the Apostles), and was, therefore, favourably situated for commerce. It was on the great Egnatian Way; was possessed of an excellent harbour, and had great advantages for commerce through the Hellespont, and with Asia Minor and the adjacent countries. It was south-west of Philippi and Amphipolis, and a short distance north-east of Berea. Macedonia was an independent country until it was subdued by the Romans. The occasion of the wars which led to its conquest by the Romans was an alliance which was formed by Philip II. with Carthage, during the second Punic war. The Romans delayed their revenge for a season; but Philip having laid siege to Athens, the Athenians called the Romans to their aid, and they declared war against the Macedonians. Philip was compelled to sue for peace, to surrender his vessels, to reduce his army to 500 men, and to defray the expenses of the war. Perseus, the successor of Philip, took up arms against the Romans, and was totally defeated at Pydna by Paulus Æmilius, and the Romans took possession of the country. Indignant at their oppression, the Macedonian nobility and the whole nation rebelled under Andriscus; but after a long struggle they were overcome by Quintus Cæcilius, surnamed, from his conquest, Macedonius, and the country became a Roman province, B. C. 148. It was divided into four districts, and the city of Thessalonica was made the capital of the second division, and was the station of a Roman governor and questor. At the time, therefore, that the gospel was preached there, this whole country was subject to Roman authority.

The city, called, when Paul visited it, Thessalonica, was anciently called *Therme*, and by this name was known in the times of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Æschines. We are informed by Strabo that Cassander changed the name of Therme to Thessalonica, in honour of his wife, who was a daughter of Philip. Others have said that the name was given to it by Philip himself, in memory of a victory which he obtained over the armies of Thessaly. In the time of Brutus and Cassius it was a city of so much importance that the promise of being permitted to plunder the city, as the reward of victory, infused new courage into their armies.

The city was inhabited by Greeks, Romans, and Jews. It adored many gods, but particularly Jupiter, as the father of Hercules, the alleged founder of its ancient royal family. It had a celebrated amphitheatre, where gladiatorial shows were exhibited for the amusement of the citizens, and a circus

for public games. The Roman part of the population was, of course, introduced after the conquest, and it is impossible now to estimate the relative number of the Greeks and the Romans in the time when the gospel was preached there. In common with most of the other cities of Greece, a considerable number of Jews resided there, who had a synagogue at the time when the city was visited by Paul; Acts xvii. 1. Little is known of the *morals* of the place, but there is reason to believe that it was somewhat distinguished for dissoluteness of manners. "The females, particularly, could claim little credit on the score of modest, retiring demeanour; for this virtue was in so low estimation in the city, that the place was selected as the scene of the wanton fancies of the satirist." (Lucian.) See Hug. Intro.

The name of the place now is Saloniki. It is a Turkish commercial town, and contains about 70,000 inhabitants. Its situation and appearance are thus described by Dr. Clarke:—"The walls of Salonica give a very remarkable appearance to the town, and cause it to be seen at a great distance, being white-washed; and what is still more extraordinary, they are painted. They extend in a semi-circular manner from the sea, enclosing the whole of the buildings within a *peribolus*, whose circuit is five or six miles; but a great part of the space within the walls is void. It is one of the few remaining cities which has preserved the ancient form of its fortifications; the mural turrets yet standing, and the walls that support them, being entire. Their antiquity is perhaps, unknown, for, though they have been ascribed to the Greek emperors, it is very evident they were constructed in two distinct periods of time; the old Cyclopean masonry remaining in the lower parts of them, surmounted by an upper structure of brickwork. Like all the ancient and modern cities of Greece, its wretched aspect within is forcibly contrasted with the beauty of its external appearance. The houses are generally built of unburnt bricks, and, for the most part, they are no better than so many hovels." It is, however, a flourishing commercial town, from which is exported the corn, cotton, wool, tobacco, bees-wax, and silk of Macedonia. It is the seat of a Pasha, and has still among its population a considerable proportion of Jews. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, who visited it in A. D. 1160, describes it, under the name of *Salunki*, and says that it was built by Seleucus, one of the four Greek nobles who arose after Alexander, and that when, he visited it, it was "a large city containing about five hundred Jewish inhabitants." "The Jews," says he, "are much oppressed in this place, and live by the exercise of handicrafts." Itinerary, vol. i. 49, 50. Ed. 1840. He describes it as having at that time more Jewish inhabitants than any other town in Greece, Thebes alone excepted. It is said at present to contain about 20,000 Jewish inhabitants. Its favourable situation for commerce is probably the cause of the numerous assemblage of the Jews there. See Asher's Ed. of Benjamin of Tudela, vol. ii. p. 42.

§ 2. *The establishment of the church in Thessalonica.*

The gospel was first preached in Thessalonica by Paul and Silas. After their release from imprisonment at Philippi, they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica. For some cause they appear not to have paused to preach in either of the first two places, but went at once to the city of Thessalonica. That was a much more important place, and they may have been attracted there particularly because many Jews resided there. It was customary for the apostle Paul, when he came to a place where there were Jews, to preach the gospel first to them; and as there was a synagogue in Thessalonica, he entered it, and, for three Sabbath days, reasoned with the Jews in regard to the Messiah. The points on which he endeavoured to convince them were, that, according

to the Scriptures, it was necessary that the Messiah should be put to death, and that he would rise from the dead, and that all the predictions on these points were completely fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; Acts xvii. 2, 3. A few of the Jews believed, and a much larger number of the "devout Greeks," and also a considerable number of females of the more elevated ranks. From these converts the church was organized, and the number at the organization would seem to have been large. It is not quite certain how long Paul and Silas remained at Thessalonica. It is known only that they preached in the synagogue for three Sabbaths, and if that were all the time that they remained there, it could not have been more than about three weeks. But it is not certain that they did not remain in the city a longer time. It is possible that they may have been excluded from the synagogue, but still may have found some other place in which to preach. This would seem probable from one or two circumstances referred to in the history and in the Epistle. In the history (Acts xvii. 5), it appears that Paul and Silas, for a time at least, made the house of Jason their home, and that so large numbers attended on their ministry as to give occasion to great excitement among the Jews. In the epistle (1 Thess. ii 9), Paul says that when he was among them, he "laboured night and day, because he would not be chargeable unto any of them, and preached unto them the gospel of God" (comp. 2 Thess. iii. 8), which looks as if he had been with them a longer time than the "three Sabbaths," and as if he had laboured at his usual occupation for support, before he shared the hospitality of Jason. It appears also, from Phil. iv. 16, that he was there long enough to receive repeated supplies from the church at Philippi. "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity."

Paul and Silas were driven away from Thessalonica by the opposition of the Jews. A mob was created by them; the house of Jason was assailed; he and "certain brethren," who were supposed to have harboured and secreted Paul and Silas, were dragged before the magistrates and accused of receiving those who "had turned the world upside down," and who were guilty of treason against the Roman emperor; Acts xvii. 5—7 So great was the tumult, and such would be the danger of Paul and Silas if they remained there, that the members of the church judged it best that they should go to a place of safety, and they were conveyed by night to the neighbouring city of Berea. There the gospel was received with more favour, and Paul preached without opposition, until the Jews from Thessalonica, hearing where he was, came thither and excited the people against him; Acts xvii. 13. It became necessary again that he should be removed to a place of safety, and he was conducted to Athens, while Silas and Timothy remained at Berea. Timothy, it appears, had accompanied Paul, and had been with him, as well as Luke, at Philippi and Thessalonica, though he is not mentioned as present with them until the arrival at Berea. When Paul went to Athens, he gave commandment to those who conducted him, that Silas and Timothy should come to him as soon as possible; and while he waited for them at Athens, he delivered the memorable speech on Mars' hill, recorded in Acts xvii. Their actual arrival at Athens is not mentioned by Luke (Acts xvii.), but that Timothy came to him there appears from 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2, "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone, and sent Timotheus our brother, &c., to comfort you concerning your faith." Timothy appears, therefore, to have been with Paul at Athens but a short time, for he sent him back to Thessalonica, and before his return, Paul had gone to Corinth, whither Timothy followed him; Acts xviii. 5.

§ 3. *The time and place of writing the Epistle.*

The subscription at the close of this epistle affirms that it was written

at Athens. But these subscriptions are of no authority whatever (see Notes at the close of 1 Corinthians), and in this case, as in several others, the subscription is false. Paul remained but a short time at Athens, and there is internal evidence that the epistle was not written there. In 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2, Paul says that, such was his anxiety for them, that he had concluded to remain at Athens alone, and that he had sent Timothy to them from that place to impart to them consolation. In the same epistle (chap. iii. 6), he speaks of Timothy's return to him *before* the epistle was written. But from Acts xvii. and xviii. 5, it is evident that Timothy did not return to Paul at Athens, but that he and Silas came to him after he had left Athens and had gone to Corinth. To that place Paul had gone after his short visit to Athens, and there he remained a year and a half; Acts xviii. 11. It is further evident that the epistle was not written to the Thessalonians *so soon* as it would be necessary to suppose, if it were written from Athens. In chap. ii. 17, 18, the author says, "But we, brethren, being taken from you a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, *once and again;* but Satan hindered us." From this it is evident that the apostle had repeatedly endeavoured to visit them, but had been hindered. But it is not reasonable to suppose that he had attempted this during the short time that he was in Athens, and so soon after having been driven away from Berea. It is more probable that this had occurred during his residence at Corinth, and it would seem also from this, that the epistle was written towards the close of his residence there. At the time of writing the epistle, Silas and Timothy were with the apostle (chap. i. 1), and we know that they were with him when he was at Corinth; Acts xviii. 5.

If this epistle was written at the time supposed, at Corinth, it must have been about the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, and about A. D. 52. That this was the time in which it was written, is the opinion of Mill, of Lardner, of Hug, and is indeed generally admitted. It was the *first* epistle written by the apostle Paul, and, in some respects, may be allowed to excite a deeper interest on that account than any others of his. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is supposed to have been written at the same place, and probably in the same year; see Lardner, vol. vi. 4—6. Grotius, indeed, supposes that the order of the epistles has been inverted, and that that which is now called the "Second Epistle to the Thessalonians" was in fact first sent. But there is no evidence of this.

4. *The character of the church at Thessalonica, and the design of the Epistle.*

The church at Thessalonica, at first, was composed of the following classes of persons:—(1.) Jews. To them Paul preached first, and though the mass of them opposed him, and rejected his message, yet some of them believed; Acts xvii. 4. (2.) Greeks who had been proselyted to the Jewish faith, and who seem to have been in attendance on the synagogue; Acts xvii. 4. They are called "devout Greeks"—σεβομένοι Ἑλλήνες—that is, religious Greeks, or those who had renounced the worship of idols, and who attended on the worship of the synagogue. They were probably what the Jews called "Proselytes of the Gate;" persons who were admitted to many privileges, but who were not proselytes in the fullest sense. There were many such persons usually where a synagogue was established among the Gentiles. (3.) Females of the more elevated rank and standing in the community; Acts xvii. 4. They were women of influence, and were connected with distinguished families. Possibly they also may have been of the number of the proselytes. (4.) Not a few members of the church appear to have been converted from idolatry by the preaching of the apostle, or had connected themselves with it after h

had left them. Thus, in chap. i. 9, it is said, "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, *and how ye turned to God from idols*, to serve the living and true God."

Though the apostle had been much opposed when there, and the gospel had been rejected by the great body of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, yet it had been most cordially embraced by these different classes (chap. ii. 13), and they were entirely harmonious in the belief of it. They forgot all their former differences in the cordiality with which they had embraced the gospel.

The characteristics of the church there, and the circumstances existing, which gave occasion for the two epistles to the Thessalonians, appear to have been, so far as can be gathered from the history (Acts xvii.), and the epistles themselves, the following:—

(1.) The members of the church had very cordially embraced the gospel; they were the warm friends of the apostle; they greatly desired to receive his instruction; and these things prompted him to the earnest wish which he had cherished to visit them (chap. ii. 17), and now led him to write to them; comp. chap. i. 5, 6; ii. 8, 9, 13, 19, 20. Paul had for them the strong affection which a nurse has for the children committed to her charge (chap. ii. 7), or a father for his children (chap. ii. 11), and hence the interest shown for them by writing these epistles.

(2.) They were disposed not only to embrace the gospel, but to spread it abroad (chap. i. 8), and Paul was evidently desirous of commending them for this, and of exciting them to greater love and zeal in doing it.

(3.) They had at first embraced the gospel amidst scenes of strife (chap. ii. 2); they were now opposed, as they had been there, by the Jews, and by their own countrymen (chap. ii. 14); and they appear to have been called to some peculiar trials, by the loss of some valued members of the church—friends who were peculiarly dear to their hearts; chap. ii. 3, 5; iii. 13. To console them in view of these afflictions was one design of the first epistle, and in doing it the apostle states one of the most interesting views of the resurrection to be found in the Scriptures; chap. iv. 14—18.

(4.) They had been instructed in reference to the future coming of the Saviour; the day of judgment, and the fact that the appearing of the "day of the Lord" would be like a thief in the night; chap. v. 2. But they seem to have inferred that that day was near, and they were looking for the immediate advent of the Redeemer, and the close of the world. To this view they seem to have been led by two things. One was, a misinterpretation of what the apostle says, chap. iv. 14—18; v. 2,3, about the advent of the Redeemer, which they seem to have understood as if it meant that it would be "soon;" and the other was, probably, the fact that certain letters had been forged in the name of Paul which maintained this doctrine; 2 Thess. ii. 2. To correct this view was one of the leading objects of the second epistle, and accordingly the apostle in that shows them that events must occur preceding the coming of the Lord Jesus which would occupy a long time, and that the end of the world, therefore, could not be near; 2 Thess. ii. 3—12.

(5.) An error seems also to have prevailed among them in regard to the resurrection, which was the cause of great uneasiness to those who had lost Christian friends by death; 1 Thess. iv. 13. They seem to have supposed that when the Lord Jesus appeared, they who were alive would have great advantages over those who were deceased; that the living would be allowed to behold his glory, and to participate in the splendours of his personal reign, while those who were in their graves would slumber through these magnificent scenes. To correct these views, appears to have been one design of the first epistle. The apostle shows them that at the coming of the Saviour, all the redeemed, whether living or dead, would participate alike in his glory. They who were alive would not anticipate those who were in their graves. In fact,

he says, those who were dead would rise *before* the change would take place in the living that was to fit them to dwell with the Lord, and then all would be taken up to be for ever with him; 1 Thess. iv. 15—18.

(6.) It would appear to be not improbable that after the departure of the apostle from Thessalonica, he had been accused by the enemies of the gospel there, of a want of courage, and that they had urged this as proof that he was conscious that the gospel was an imposture. Besides, his leaving the church there without any instructors in a time when they greatly needed them, may have been urged as a proof that he had no real affection for them, or concern for their welfare. To meet this charge, the apostle urges several things, vindicating his conduct, and showing the strength of his attachment for them. He says, 1. that, as they knew, so far from being deterred by persecution from preaching, after a violent persecution at Philippi, he and his fellow-labourers had at once preached the same gospel at Thessalonica, and they had done it there amidst the same kind of opposition; chap. ii. 2. 2. That they themselves were witnesses that it had been done without any appearance of fraud or of guile. They had given them all possible proofs of sincerity; chap. ii. 3—5. 3. That they had given every proof possible that they did not seek glory from men, and that their aims were not selfish. They were willing to have imparted, not the gospel only, but also their own lives; and to show that they had had no selfish aim while with them, they had supported themselves by the labour of their own hands; chap. ii. 6—9. 4. That so far from not feeling any interest in them, he had repeatedly sought to visit them, but had in every instance been prevented (chap. ii. 17, 18); and 5. that, since *he* was prevented from going to them, he had submitted to the personal sacrifice of parting with Timothy at Athens, and of being left alone there, in order that he might go to them and comfort their hearts; chap. iii. 1, 2.

(7.) In common with other churches, gathered in part or in whole from the heathen, they were in danger of falling into the sins to which they had been addicted before their conversion, and one object of the first epistle is to put them on their guard against the leading vices to which they were exposed; chap. iv. 1—7.

(8.) It would seem, also, that there were some in the church who had a spirit of insubordination towards their religious teachers, and who, under pretence of edifying others, were guilty of disorder. To correct this was also one object of the epistle; 1 Thess. v. 12—14.

From these views, the design of this epistle, and also of the second epistle to the same church, which seems to have been written soon after this, will be apparent. They were the effusions of warm attachment towards a church which the apostle had founded, but from which he had been soon driven away, and which he had been prevented from revisiting when he had earnestly desired it. They are filled with expressions of tender regard; they remind the members of the church of the ardour with which they had at first embraced the gospel; caution them against the dangers to which they were exposed; commend them for their fidelity hitherto, and encourage them in their trials and persecutions. They present some most interesting views of the nature of the gospel, and especially contain statements about the resurrection of the saints which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament, and views in relation to the great apostasy, and the "man of sin," which demonstrate that the writer was inspired, and which are of inestimable importance in guarding the true church from the power of Antichrist. No one could have drawn the picture of the Papacy in the second chapter of the second epistle who was not under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and no true Christian can be sufficiently grateful that the apostle was thus inspired to reveal the features of that great apostasy, to put the church on its guard against the wiles and the power of him who "exalteth himself above all that is called God."

EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, and Silvanus, [a] and Timotheus, unto the church of the [b] Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father, and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace [c] *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always

a 1 Pe.5.12. *b* Ac.17.1,&c. *c* Ep.1.2.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

The first chapter of this epistle embraces the following subjects:—

1. The inscription by Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the Thessalonians, and the usual salutations; ver. 1.

2. An expression of thanks for their fidelity in the gospel; ver. 2—4. The apostle says that he made mention of them continually in his prayers; that he remembered their faith, and love, and patience, for by these things they had shown that they were among the elect of God.

3. He reminds them of the manner in which they received the gospel when it was first preached to them; ver. 5, 6. The power of God had been manifested among them in a remarkable manner; they had embraced the gospel with strong assurance, and though in the midst of deep afflictions, they had received the word with joy.

4. The effect of the establishment of the church in Thessalonica had been felt far abroad, and had been of the most happy character; ver. 7—10. They had become examples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia. From them the gospel had been sounded abroad throughout Greece, and indeed in all places with which they had connection by their commercial relations. Those who dwelt in distant places bore witness to the influence of the gospel on them, and to the power of that religion which had turned them from idols to serve the living God. These verses contain a beautiful illustration of the effect of the gospel in a place favourably situated for commerce, and having extensive intercourse with other regions.

1. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.* On the reasons why Paul associated other names with his in his epistles, see Notes on 1 Cor. i. 1, and 2 Cor. ii. 1. Silvanus, or Silas, and Timothy were properly united with him on this occasion, because they had been with him when the church was founded there, Acts xvii., and because Timothy had been sent by the apostle to visit them after he had himself been driven away; chap. ii. 1, 2. Silas is first mentioned in the New Testament as one who was sent by the church at Jerusalem with Paul to Antioch (Notes, Acts xv. 22); and he afterwards became his travelling companion. ¶ Which is *in God the Father, and* in *the Lord Jesus Christ.* Who are united to the true God and to the Redeemer; or who sustain an intimate relation to the Father and the Lord Jesus. This is strong language, denoting that they were a true church; comp. 1 John v. 20. ¶ *Grace* be *unto you,* &c.; see Notes, Rom. i. 7.

2. *We give thanks to God always for you all;* see Notes, Rom. i. 9. ¶ *Making mention of you in our prayers;* Notes, Eph. i. 16. It may be observed here, (1.) that the apostle was in the habit of constant prayer. (2.) That he was accustomed to extemporary prayer, and not to written prayer. It is not credible that "forms" of prayer had been framed for the churches at Thessalonica and Ephesus, and the other churches for which Paul says he prayed, nor would it have been possible to have adapted such forms to the varying circum-

for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work [a] of faith, and labour [b] of love, and patience [c] of hope in

a John 6.29; 2 Th.1.11.

stances attending the organization of new churches.

3. *Remembering without ceasing.* Remembering your faith and love whenever we pray. This is not to be understood literally, but it is language such as we use respecting anything that interests us much. It is constantly in our mind. Such an interest the apostle had in the churches which he had established. ¶ *Your work of faith.* That is, your *showing* or *evincing* faith. The reference is probably to acts of duty, holiness, and benevolence, which *proved* that they exercised *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ. Works of faith are those to which faith prompts, and which show that there *is* faith in the heart. This does not mean, therefore, a work of their own *producing* faith, but a work which showed that they *had* faith. ¶ *And labour of love.* Labour *produced* by love, or showing that you are actuated by love. Such would be all their kindness toward the poor, the oppressed, and the afflicted; and all their acts which showed that they loved the *souls* of men. ¶ *And patience of hope.* Patience in your trials, showing that you have such a hope of future blessedness as to sustain you in your afflictions. It was the hope of heaven through the Lord Jesus that gave them patience; see Notes on Rom. viii. 24. "The phrases here are Hebraisms, meaning *active faith*, and *laborious love*, and patient hope, and might have been so translated." *Doddridge.* ¶ *In our Lord Jesus Christ.* That is, your hope is founded only on him. The only hope that we have of heaven is through the Redeemer. ¶ *In the sight of God and our Father.* Before God, even our Father. It is a hope which we have *through* the merits of the Redeemer, and which we are permitted to cherish *before* God; that is, in his very presence. When we think of

our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

4 Knowing, brethren [1] beloved, your election of God.

b He.6.10. *c* Ro.12.12.

1 or, *beloved of God, your election.*

God; when we reflect that we must soon stand before him, we are permitted to cherish this hope. It is a hope which will be found to be genuine even in the presence of a holy and heart-searching God. This does not mean that it had been merely *professed* before God, but that it was a hope which they might dare to entertain even in the presence of God, and which would bear the scrutiny of his eye.

4. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.* The margin here reads, "beloved of God, your election." The difference depends merely on the pointing, and that which would require the marginal reading has been adopted by Hahn, Tittman, Bloomfield, and Griesbach. The sense is not materially varied, and the common version may be regarded as giving the true meaning. There is no great difference between "being *beloved* of God," and "being *chosen* of God." The sense then is, "knowing that you are chosen by God unto salvation;" comp. Notes on Eph. i. 4, 5, 11. The word "knowing" here refers to Paul himself, and to Silas and Timothy, who united with him in writing the epistle, and in rendering thanks for the favours shown to the church at Thessalonica. The meaning is, that they had so strong confidence that they had been chosen of God as a church unto salvation, that they might say they *knew* it. The *way* in which they knew it seems not to have been by direct revelation or by inspiration, but by the *evidence* which they had furnished, and which constituted such a proof of piety as to leave no doubt of the fact. *Calvin.* What this evidence was, the apostle states in the following verses. I was shown by the manner in which they embraced the gospel, and by the spirit which they had evinced under its influence. The meaning here seems to be, not that all the members of the church at

5 For our gospel came [a] not unto you in word only, but also in power, [b] and in the [c] Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as

[a] Is 55.11; Mark 16.20. [b] 1 Co.2.4 [c] 2 Co.6.6.

Thessalonica were certainly chosen of God to salvation—for, as in other churches, there might have been those there who were false professors—but that *the church, as such,* had given evidence that it was a true church—that it was founded on Christian principles—and that, as a church, it had furnished evidence of its "election by God." Nor can it mean, as Clarke and Bloomfield suppose, that God "had *chosen* and *called* the Gentiles to the same privileges to which he chose and called the Jews; and that as they (the Jews) had *rejected* the gospel, God had now *elected* the Gentiles in their stead;" for a considerable portion of the church was composed of *Jews* (see Acts xvii. 4, 5), and it cannot, therefore, mean that the *Gentiles* had been selected in the place of the Jews. Besides, the election of the *Gentiles,* or any portion of the human family, to the privileges of salvation, to the neglect or exclusion of any other part, would be attended with all the difficulties which occur in the doctrine of personal and individual election. Nothing is gained on this subject in removing the difficulties, by supposing that God chooses *masses* of men instead of *individuals.* How can the one be more proper than the other? What difficulty in the doctrine of election is removed by the supposition? Why is it not as right to choose an individual as a nation? Why not as proper to reject an individual as a whole people? If this means that the church at Thessalonica had shown that it was a true church of Christ, chosen by God, then we may learn, (1.) that a true church owes what it has to the "election of God." It is because God has chosen it; has called it out from the world; and has endowed it in such a manner as to be a true church. (2.) A church *may* give evidence that it is chosen of God, and is a true church. There are things which it may do, which will show that it is undoubtedly such a church as God has chosen, and such as he approves. There *are* just principles on which a church should be organized, and there *is* a spirit which may be manifested by a church which will distinguish it from any other association of men. (3.) It is not improper to speak with strong confidence of such a church as undoubtedly chosen of God. There *are* churches which, by their zeal, self-denial, and deadness to the world, show beyond question their "election of God," and the world may see that they are founded on other principles and manifest a different spirit from other organizations of men. (4.) Every church *should* evince such a spirit that there may be no doubt of its "election of God." It should be so dead to the world; so pure in doctrine and in practice, and so much engaged in spreading the knowledge of salvation, that the world will see that it is governed by higher principles than any worldly association, and that nothing could produce this but the influence of the Holy Spirit of God.

5. *For our gospel came not unto you.* When first preached; Acts xvii. 1—3. Paul speaks of it as "*our* gospel," because it was the gospel *preached* by him and Silas and Timothy; comp 2 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 8. He did not mean to say that the gospel had been *originated* by him, but only that he had delivered the good news of salvation to them. He is here stating the *evidence* which had been given that they were a church "chosen by God." He refers, *first,* to the manner in which the gospel was received by them (ver. 5—7), and, *secondly,* to the spirit which they themselves manifested in sending it abroad; ver. 8—10. ¶ *In word only.* Was not merely *spoken;* or was not merely *heard.* It produced a powerful effect on the heart and life. It was not a mere empty sound that produced no other effect than to entertain or amuse; comp. Ezek. xxxiii. 32. ¶ *But also in power.* That is, in such power as to convert the soul. The apostle

[a] ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

a He.2.3

6 And ye became [b] followers of us, and of the Lord, having re-

b 2 Co.8.5.

evidently refers not to any miracles that were wrought there, but to the effect of the gospel on those who heard it. It is *possible* that there were miracles wrought there, as there were in other places, but there is no mention of such a fact, and it is not necessary to suppose it, in order to see the full meaning of this language. There was great *power* manifested in the gospel in its leading them to break off from their sins, to abandon their idols, and to give their hearts to God; see this more fully explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. ii. 4. ¶ *And in the Holy Ghost;* comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ii. 4. It is there called the "demonstration of the Spirit." ¶ *And in much assurance.* That is, with firm conviction, or full persuasion of its truth. It was not embraced as a doubtful thing, and it did not produce the effect on the mind which is caused by anything that is uncertain in its character. Many seem to embrace the gospel as if they only *half* believed it, or as if it were a matter of very doubtful truth and importance; but this was not the case with the Thessalonians. There was the firmest conviction of its truth, and they embraced it "heart and soul;" comp. Col. ii. 2; Heb. vi. 11. From all that is said in this verse, it is evident that the power of God was remarkably manifested in the conversion of the Thessalonians, and that they embraced the gospel with an uncommonly strong conviction of its truth and value. This fact will account for the subsequent zeal which the apostle so much commends in them —for it is usually true that the character of piety in a church, as it is in an individual, is determined by the views with which the gospel is first embraced, and the purposes which are formed at the beginning of the Christian life. ¶ *As ye know what manner of men,* &c. Paul often appeals to those among whom he had laboured as competent witnesses with respect to his own conduct and character; see chap. ii. 9, 10; Acts xx. 33—35. He means here that he and his fellow-labourers had set them an example, or had shown what Christianity was by their manner of living, and that the Thessalonians had become convinced that the religion which they taught was real. The holy life of a preacher goes far to confirm the truth of the religion which he preaches, and is among the most efficacious means of inducing them to embrace the gospel.

6. *And ye became followers of us.* "You became *imitators*—μιμηταί—of us," This does not mean that they became *followers* of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, in the sense that they had set themselves up as *teachers*, or as the head of a sect, but that they *imitated* their manner of living; see Notes on 1 Cor. iv. 16; xi. 1. ¶ *And of the Lord.* The Lord Jesus. You also learned to *imitate* him. From this it is evident that the manner in which the Saviour lived was a prominent topic of their preaching, and also that it was one of the means of the conversion of the Thessalonians. It is probable that preaching on the pure and holy life of the Lord Jesus might be made a much more important means of the conversion of sinners than it is. Nothing is better adapted to show them the evil of their own guilty lives than the contrast between their lives and his; and nothing can be conceived better fitted to *win* them to holy living than the contemplation of his pure and holy deportment. ¶ *Having received the word in much affliction.* That is, amidst much opposition from others; see Acts xvii. 5—8. It was in the midst of these trials that they had become converted—and they seem to have been all the better Christians for them. In *this* they were imitators of the Saviour, or shared the same lot with him, and thus became his followers. Their embracing and holding fast the truths of religion amidst all this opposition, showed that they were controlled by the same

ceived the word in much affliction, with joy [a] of the Holy Ghost;

a Ac.13.52.

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

principles that he was, and that they were truly his friends. ¶ *With joy of the Holy Ghost.* With happiness produced by the Holy Ghost. Though they were much afflicted and persecuted, yet there was joy. There was *joy* in their conversion—in the evidence of pardoned sin—in the hope of heaven; see Notes, Acts viii. 8. However great may be the trials and persecutions experienced in receiving the gospel, or however numerous and long the sufferings of the subsequent life in consequence of having embraced it, there is a joy in religion that more than overbalances all, and that makes religion the richest of all blessings.

7. *So that ye were ensamples to all that believe.* Examples in reference to the firmness with which you embraced the gospel, the fidelity with which you adhered to it in trials, and the zeal which you showed in spreading it abroad. These things are specified in the previous and subsequent verses as characterizing their piety. The word here rendered *ensamples*—τύπους—is that from which the word *type* is derived. It properly denotes anything caused or produced by the means of *blows* (from τύπτω), and hence a mark, print, or impression, made by a stamp or die; and then a resemblance, figure, pattern, exemplar—a model after which anything is made. This is the meaning here. They became, as it were, a model or pattern after which the piety of others should be moulded, or showed what the piety of others ought to be. ¶ *In Macedonia.* Thessalonica was an important city of Macedonia (see the Intro.; comp. Notes, Acts xvi. 9), and of course their influence would be felt on the whole of the surrounding region. This is a striking instance of the effect which a church in a city may have on the country. The influence of a city church may be felt, and will usually be felt afar on the other churches of a community—just as, in all other respects, a city has an important influence on the country at large. ¶ *And Achaia.* Achaia proper was the part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital. The word, however, was sometimes so used as to comprehend the whole of Greece, and in this sense it seems to be employed here, as there is no reason to suppose that their influence would be felt *particularly* in the province of which Corinth was the centre. Koppe observes that Macedonia and Achaia were the two provinces into which all Greece was divided when it was brought under the Roman yoke, the former of which comprehended Macedonia proper, Illyricum, Epirus, and Thessaly, and the other Greece properly so called. The meaning here is, therefore, that their influence was felt on all the parts of Greece; that their piety was spoken of, and the effect of their conversion had been felt in all those places. Thessalonica was a commercial city, and a sea-port. It had intercourse with all the other parts of Macedonia, with Greece, and with Asia Minor. It was partly owing to the advantages of its situation that its influence was thus felt. Its own merchants and mariners who went abroad would carry with them the spirit of the religion of the church there, and those who visited it from other ports would see the effect of religion there. This is just an instance, therefore, of the influence which a commercial town and a sea-port may have in religion on other parts of the world. A revival of religion in such a place will extend its influence afar to other places, and appropriate zeal among the friends of the Redeemer there may have an important effect on sea-ports, and towns, and lands far remote. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of such places in regard to the spread of the gospel; and Christians who reside there—be they merchants, mechanics, lawyers, physicians, mariners, or ministers of the gospel, should feel that on them God

8 For from you sounded *a* out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place *b* your faith to God ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

a Ro. 10. 18. *b* 2 Th. 1. 4.

9 For they themselves show

has placed the responsibility of using a vast influence in sending the gospel to other lands. He that goes forth from a commercial town should be imbued with the spirit of the gospel, and churches located there should be so under the influence of religion, that they who come among them from abroad shall bear to their own lands honourable testimony of the power of religion there.

8. *For from you sounded out the word of the Lord.* The truths of religion were thus spread abroad. The word rendered "sounded out"—ἐξήχηται—refers to the sounding of a trumpet (Bloomfield), and the idea is, that the gospel was proclaimed like the sonorous voice of a trumpet echoing from place to place; comp. Isa. lviii. 1; Rev. i. 10. Their influence had an effect in diffusing the gospel in other places, *as if* the sound of a trumpet echoed and re-echoed among the hills and along the vales of the classic land of Greece. This seems to have been done (1.) *involuntarily;* that is, the necessary result of their conversion, even without any direct purpose of the kind of their own, would be to produce this effect. Their central and advantageous commercial position; the fact that many of them were in the habit of visiting other places; and the fact that they were visited by strangers from abroad, would naturally contribute to this result. But (2.) this does not appear to be all that is intended. The apostle commends them in such a way as to make it certain that they were *voluntary* in the spread of the gospel; that they made decided efforts to take advantage of their position to send the knowledge of the truth abroad. If so, this is an interesting instance of one of the first efforts made by *a church* to diffuse the gospel, and to send it to those who were destitute of it. There is no improbability in the supposition that they sent out members of their church—messengers of salvation—to other parts of Macedonia and Greece that they might communicate the same gospel to others. See *Doddridge*. ¶ *But also in every place.* Thessalonica was connected not only with Macedonia and Greece proper, in its commercial relations, but also with the ports of Asia Minor, and not improbably with still more remote regions. The meaning is, that in all the places with which they trafficked the effect of their faith was seen and spoken of. ¶ *Faith to God-ward.* Fidelity toward God. They showed that they had a true belief in God and in the truth which he had revealed. ¶ *So that we need not to speak anything.* That is, wherever we go, we need say nothing of the fact that you have been turned to the Lord, or of the character of your piety. These things are sufficiently made known by those who come from you, by those who visit you, and by your zeal in spreading the true religion.

9. *For they themselves.* They who have visited you, and they whom you have sent out; all persons testify of your piety. The apostle seems to refer to all whom he had met or had heard of "in all places," who said anything about the Thessalonians They were unanimous in bearing testimony to their fidelity and piety ¶ *Show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you.* The testimony which they bear of *you* is, *in fact,* testimony of the manner in which *we* preached the gospel, and demeaned ourselves when we were with you. It shows that we were intent on our Master's work, and that we were not actuated by selfish or sinister motives The argument is, that such effects could not have been produced among them if Paul, Silas, and their fellow-labourers had been impostors. Their sound conversion to God; their change from idolatry to the true religion, and the zeal which had been the result

of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God [a] from idols, to serve the living and true God;

[a] 1 Co. 12.2 Ga 4.8.

10 And to wait [b] for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath [c] to come.

[b] Ph. 3.20. [c] Mat.3.7; Ro.5.9.

their conversion, was an argument to which Paul and his fellow-labourers might appeal in proof of their sincerity and their being sent from God. Paul often makes a similar appeal; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3. It is certain that many of the Jews in Thessalonica, when Paul and his fellow-labourers were there, regarded them as impostors (Acts xvii. 6, 8), and there is every reason to suppose that after they left the city, they would endeavour to keep up this impression among the people. To meet this, Paul now says that their own undoubted conversion to a life of holiness and zeal under their ministry, was an unanswerable argument that this was not so. How could impostors and deceivers have been the means of producing such effects? ¶ *And how ye turned to God from idols.* That is, under our preaching. This proves that the church was to a considerable extent composed of those who were converted from idolatry under the preaching of Paul; comp. Intro. § 4. The meaning here is, that they who came from them, or they who had visited them, bore abundant testimony to the fact that they had turned from idols to the worship of the true God; comp. Notes 1 Cor. xii. 2; Gal. iv. 8. ¶ *To serve the living and true God.* He is called the "*living* God" in opposition to idols—who are represented as dead, dumb, deaf, and blind; comp. Ps. cxxxv. 15—17; Notes, Is. xliv. 10—17; Mat. xvi. 16; John v. 26; Ac. xiv. 15.

10. *And to wait for his Son from heaven.* It is clear from this and from other parts of these two epistles, that the return of the Lord Jesus to this world was a prominent subject of the preaching of Paul at Thessalonica. No small part of these epistles is occupied with stating the true doctrine on this point (1 Th. iv. v.), and in correcting the errors which prevailed in regard to it after the departure of Paul. Perhaps we are not to infer, however, that this doctrine was made *more* prominent there than others, or that it had been inculcated there more frequently than it had been elsewhere, but the apostle adverts to it here particularly because it was a doctrine so well fitted to impart comfort to them in their trials (chap. iv. 13—18), and because, in that connection, it was so well calculated to rouse them to vigilance and zeal; chap. v. 1—11. He makes it prominent in the second epistle, because material errors prevailed there in reference to it which needed to be corrected. In the passage before us, he says that the return of the Son of God from heaven was an important point which had been insisted on when he was there, and that their conduct, as borne witness to by all, had shown with what power it had seized upon them, and what a practical influence it had exerted in their lives. They lived *as if* they were "*waiting*" for his return. They fully believed in it; they expected it. They were looking out for it, not knowing when it might occur, and *as if* it might occur at any moment. They were, therefore, dead to the world, and were animated with an earnest desire to do good. This is one of the instances which demonstrate that the doctrine that the Lord Jesus will return to our world, is fitted, when understood in the true sense revealed in the Scriptures, to exert a powerful influence on the souls of men. It is eminently adapted to comfort the hearts of true Christians in the sorrows, bereavements, and sicknesses of life (John xiv. 1—3; Acts i 11; 1 Th. iv. 13—18; 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9); to lead us to watchfulness and to an earnest inquiry into the question whether we are prepared to meet him (Mat. xxiv. 37—44; xxv. 13); to make us dead to the world, and to lead us to act as becomes the children of light (1 Th.

v. 5—9); to awaken and arouse impenitent and careless sinners (1 Thess. v. 2, 3; 2 Pet. iii. 3—7), and to excite Christians to self-denying efforts to spread the gospel in distant lands, as was the case at Thessalonica. Every doctrine of the gospel is adapted to produce some happy practical effects on mankind, but there are few that are more full of elevated and holy influences than that which teaches that the Lord Jesus will return to the earth, and which leads the soul to wait for his appearing; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. i. 7; Phil. iii. 20. ¶ *Whom he raised from the dead;* Notes, Acts ii. 24—32; 1 Cor. xv. 4—9. Paul probably means to intimate here, that this was one of the great truths which they had received, that the Lord Jesus had been raised from the dead. We know it was a prominent doctrine wherever the gospel was preached. ¶ *Which delivered us from the wrath to come.* Another of the prominent doctrines of Christianity, which was undoubtedly always inculcated by the first preachers of religion. The "wrath to come" is the divine indignation which will come upon the guilty; Matt. iii. 7. From that Christ delivers us by taking our place, and dying in our stead. It was the great purpose of his coming to save us from this approaching wrath. It follows from this (1.) that there *was* wrath which man had to dread—since Jesus came to deliver us from something that was *real*, and not from what was *imaginary;* and (2.) that the same wrath is to be dreaded now by all who are not united to Christ, since in this respect they are now just as all were before he died; that is, they are exposed to fearful punishment, from which He alone can deliver. It may be added, that the existence of this wrath is *real*, whether men believe it or not, for the fact of its existence is not affected by our belief or unbelief

REMARKS.

This chapter teaches—

(1.) That it is right to commend those who do well; ver. 3. Paul was never afraid of injuring any one by commending him when he deserved it: nor was he ever afraid to rebuke when censure was due.

(2.) Christians are chosen to salvation; ver. 4. Their hope of heaven depends on the "election of God."

(3.) It is possible for *a people* to know that they are chosen of God, and to give such evidence of it that others shall know it also; ver. 4. It is possible for *a church* to evince such a spirit of piety, self-denial, love, and holiness, and such a desire to spread the gospel, as to show that they are "chosen of God," or that they are a true church. This question is not to be determined by their adherence to certain rites and forms; by their holding to the sentiments of an orthodox creed: or by their zeal in defence of the "apostolic succession," but by their bringing forth "the fruits of good living." In determining that the church at Thessalonica was "chosen of God," Paul does not refer to its external organization, or to the fact that it was founded by apostolic hands, or that it had a true ministry and valid ordinances, but to the fact that it evinced the true spirit of Christian piety; and particularly that they had been zealous in sending the gospel to others. There were three things to which he referred: 1. That the gospel had power over themselves, inducing them to abandon their sins; 2. that it had such influence on their lives that others recognized in them the evidence of true religion; and, 3. that it made them benevolent, and excited them to make efforts to diffuse its blessings abroad.

(4.) If a *church* may know that it is chosen or elected of God, it is true of an individual also that *he* may know it. It is not by any direct revelation from heaven; not by an infallible communication of the Holy Spirit; not by any voice or vision; but it is in the same way in which this may be evinced by a church. The conversion of an individual, or his "election of God," may be certainly known by himself, if, 1. the gospel is received as "the word of God," and induces him to abandon his sins; 2. if it leads him to pursue such a life that others shall see that

he is actuated by Christian principles; and, 3. if he makes it his great aim in life to do good, and to diffuse abroad, as far as he can, that religion which he professes to love. He who finds in his own heart and life evidence of these things, need not doubt that he is among the "chosen of God."

(5.) The character of piety in the life of an individual Christian, and in a church, is often determined by the manner in which the gospel is embraced at first, and by the spirit with which the Christian life is entered on; see Notes on ver. 5, 6. If so, then this fact is of immense importance in the question about organizing a church, and about making a profession of religion. If a church is so organized as to have it understood that it shall be to a considerable extent the patron of worldly amusements—a "half-way house" between the world and religion, that purpose will determine all its subsequent character—unless it shall be counteracted by the grace of God. If it is organized so as to look with a benignant and tolerant eye on gayety, vanity, self-indulgence, ease, and what are called the amusements and pleasures of life, it is not difficult to see what will be its character and influence. How can such a church diffuse far and near the conviction that it is "chosen of God," as the church at Thessalonica did? And so of an individual. Commonly, the whole character of the religious life will be determined by the views with which the profession of religion is made. If there is a purpose to enjoy religion and the world too; to be the patron of fashion as well as a professed follower of Christ; to seek the flattery or the plaudits of man as well as the approbation of God, *that* purpose will render the whole religious life useless, vacillating, inconsistent, *miserable*. The individual will live without the enjoyment of religion, and will die leaving little evidence to his friends that he has gone to be with God. If, on the other hand, there be singleness of purpose, and entire dedication to God at the commencement of the Christian life, the religious career will be one of usefulness, respectability, and peace. The most important period in a man's life, then, is that when he is pondering the question whether he shall make a profession of religion.

(6.) A church in a city should cause its influence to be felt afar; ver. 7—9. This is true, indeed, of all other churches, but it is especially so of a church in a large town. Cities will be centres of influence in fashion, science, literature, religion, and morals. A thousand ties of interest bind them to other parts of a land, and though in fact there may be, as there often is, much more *intelligence* in a country neighbourhood than among the same number of inhabitants taken promiscuously from a city; and though there may be, as there often is, far more good sense and capability to appreciate religious truth in a country congregation than in a congregation in a city, yet it is true that the city will be the radiating point of influence. This, of course, increases the responsibility of Christians in a city, and makes it important that, like those of Thessalonica, they should be models of self-denial and of efforts to spread the gospel.

(7.) A church in a commercial town should make use of its peculiar influence to spread the gospel abroad; ver. 7—9. Such a place is connected with remote lands, and those who, for commercial purposes, visit distant ports from that place, should bear with them the spirit of the gospel. Such, too, should be the character of piety in the churches in such a city, that all who visit it for any purpose, should see the reality of religion, and be led to bear the honourable report of it again to their own land.

(8.) Such, too, should be the piety of any church. The church at Thessalonica evinced the true spirit of religion; ver. 7—9. Its light shone afar. It sent out those who went to spread the gospel. Its members, when they went abroad, showed that they were influenced by higher and purer principles than those which actuated them before conversion, and than were evinced by the heathen

world. Those who visited them, also, saw that there was a reality in religion, and bore an honourable report of it again to their own lands. Let any church evince *this* spirit, and it will show that it is "chosen of God," or a true church; and wherever there is a church formed after the primitive model, these traits will always be seen.

(9.) It is *our* duty and privilege to "wait for the Son of God to return from heaven." We know not when his appearing, either to remove us by death, or to judge the world, will be —and we should therefore watch and be ready. The hope of his return to our world to raise the dead, and to convey his ransomed to heaven, is the brightest and most cheering prospect that dawns on man, and we should be ready, whenever it occurs, to hail him as *our* returning Lord, and to rush to his arms as *our* glorious Redeemer. It should be always the characteristic of *our* piety, as it was that of John to say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus;" Rev. xxii. 20.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

The principal *subjects* embraced in this chapter are the following:—

I. A statement of the conduct of Paul and his fellow-labourers when they first preached the gospel at Thessalonica; ver. 1—12. In this statement, the apostle specifies particularly the following things. (1.) That he and his fellow-labourers had been shamefully treated at Philippi, and had been obliged to encounter much opposition at Thessalonica; ver. 1, 2. (2.) That in their efforts to convert the Thessalonians they had used no deceit, corruption, or guile; ver. 3, 4. (3.) That they had not sought the praise of men, and had not used the weight of *authority* which they might have done as the apostles of Christ; ver. 6. (4.) That they had been gentle and mild in all their intercourse with them; ver. 7, 8. (5.) That, in order not to be burdensome, or to subject themselves to the charge of selfishness, they had supported themselves by labouring night and day; ver. 9. (6.) That the Thessalonians themselves were witnesses in what a holy and pure manner they had lived when there, and how they had exhorted them to a holy life; ver. 10—12.

II. The apostle refers to the manner in which the Thessalonians had received the truth at first, as undoubtedly the word of God, and not as the word of men; ver. 13.

III. He reminds them of the fact that they had met with the same opposition from the Jews which the churches in Judea had, for that everywhere the Jews had made the same opposition to the messengers of God, killing the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and forbidding the apostles everywhere to speak to the Gentiles; ver. 14—16.

IV. In the conclusion of the chapter, the apostle expresses the earnest desire which he had to visit them, and the reason why he had not done it. It was because he had been prevented by causes beyond his control, and now his earnest and sincere wish was that he might be permitted to see them—for they were his hope, and joy, and crown; ver. 17—20.

It is reasonable to suppose that the statements in this chapter were designed to meet a certain condition of things in the church there, and if so, we may learn something of the difficulties which the Thessalonians had to encounter, and of the objections which were made to Paul and to the gospel. It is often in this way that we can get the best view of the internal condition of a church referred to in the New Testament—not by direct *statement* respecting difficulties and errors in it, but by the character of the epistle sent to it. Judging by this rule, we should infer that there were those in Thessalonica who utterly denied the divine origin of the gospel. This general charge, the apostle meets in the first chapter, by showing that the *power* of the gospel evinced in their conversion, and its *effects* in their lives, demonstrated it to be of heavenly origin.

In reference to the state of things

CHAPTER II.

FOR yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, [a] we were [b] bold in our

a Ac.16.12,&c. b Ac.17.2,3.

as referred to in this chapter, we should also infer the following things:

1. That it was represented by some that the apostle and his fellow-labourers sought influence and power; that they were dictatorial and authoritative; that they were indisposed to labour; and were, in fact, impostors. This charge Paul refutes abundantly by his appeal to what *they* knew of him, and what they had *seen* of him when he was there; ver. 1—12.

2. That the church at Thessalonica met with severe and violent opposition from the Jews who were there; ver. 14—17. This appears to have been a formidable opposition; comp. Acts xvii. 5, *seq.* They would not only be likely to use violence, but it is not improbable that they employed the semblance of *argument* that might perplex the church. They might represent that they were from the same country as Paul and his fellow-labourers; that they, while pretending to great zeal for religión, were, in fact, apostates, and were engaged in overturning the revealed doctrines of God. It would be easy to represent them as men who, from this cause, were worthy of no confidence, and to urge the fact that those who thus acted in opposition to the religion of their own country, and to the sacred rites of the temple at Jerusalem, could be entitled to no regard. These charges, if they were made, the apostle meets, by assuring the Thessalonians that they were suffering precisely the same things which the churches in Judea did; that the Jews manifested the same spirit there which they did in Thessalonica; that they had killed alike the Lord Jesus and their own undoubted prophets, and that it was a characteristic of them that they were opposed to all other men. Their opposition, therefore, was not to be wondered at, nor was it to be regarded as any argument that the apostles, though Jews, were unworthy of confidence; ver. 15, 16.

3. It was very probably represented by the enemies of Paul and his fellow-labourers, that they had fled from Thessalonica on the slightest danger, and had no regard for the church there, or they would have remained there in the time of peril, or, at least, that they would have returned to visit them. Their continued absence was probably urged as a proof that they had no concern for them. The apostle meets this by stating that they had been indeed "taken from them" for a little time, but that their hearts were still with them, and by assuring them that he had often endeavoured to visit them again, but that "Satan had hindered" him; ver. 17—20. He had, however, given them the highest proof of interest and affection that he could, for when he was unable to go himself, he had, at great self-denial, sent Timothy to establish them in the faith, and to comfort their hearts; chap. iii. 1—3. His absence, therefore, should not be urged as a proof that he had no regard for them.

1. *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you;* Notes, chap. i. 9. Paul appeals to themselves for proof that they had not come among them as impostors. They had had a full opportunity to see them, and to know what influenced them. Paul frequently appeals to his own life, and to what they, among whom he laboured, knew of it, as a full refutation of the slanderous accusations of his enemies; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. iv. 10—16; ix. 19—27; 2 Cor. vi. 3—10. Every minister of the gospel ought so to live as to be able, when slanderously attacked, to make such an appeal to his people. ¶ *That it was not in vain.* κενὴ. This word

God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. [a]

3 For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, [b] nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

[a] Jude 3. [b] 2 Pe. 1.16.

means (1.) *empty, vain, fruitless,* or without success; (2.) that in which there is no truth or reality—*false, fallacious*; Eph. v. 6; Col. ii. 8. Here it seems, from the connection (ver. 3–5), to be used in the latter sense, as denoting that they were not deceivers. The object does not appear to be so much to show that their ministry was *successful*, as to meet a charge of their adversaries that they were impostors. Paul tells them that from their own observation they knew that this was not so.

2. *But even after that we had suffered before.* Before we came among you. ¶ *And were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi;* Acts xvi. 19, *seq.* By being beaten and cast into prison. The *shame* of the treatment consisted in the fact that it was wholly undeserved; that it was contrary to the laws; and that it was accompanied with circumstances *designed* to make their punishment as ignominious as possible. The Thessalonians knew of this, and Paul was not disposed to palliate the conduct of the Philippians. What was "shameful treatment" he speaks of as such without hesitation. It is not wrong to call things by their right names, and when we have been abused, it is not necessary that we should attempt to smooth the matter over by saying that it was not so. ¶ *We were bold in our God.* By humble dependence on the support of our God. It was only *his* powerful aid that could have enabled them to persevere with ardour and zeal in such a work after such treatment. The meaning here is, that they were not deterred from preaching the gospel by the treatment which they had received, but at the very next important town, and on the first opportunity, they proclaimed the same truth, though there was no security that they might not meet with the same persecution there. Paul evidently appeals to this in order to show them that they were not impostors, and that they were not influenced by the hope of ease or of selfish gains. Men who were not sincere and earnest in their purposes would have been deterred by such treatment as they had received at Philippi. ¶ *With much contention.* Amidst much opposition, and where great *effort* was necessary. The Greek word here used is ἀγών (*agony*), a word referring usually to the Grecian games; Notes, Col. ii. 1. It means the course, or place of contest; and then the contest itself, the strife, the combat, the effort for victory; and the apostle here means, that owing to the opposition there, there was need of an effort on his part like the desperate struggles of those who contended for the mastery at the Grecian games; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. The triumph of the gospel there was secured only by an effort of the highest kind, and by overcoming the most formidable opposition.

3. *For our exhortation.* That is, the exhortation to embrace the gospel. The word seems to be used here so as to include *preaching* in general. The sense is, that the means which they used to induce them to become Christians were not such as to delude them. ¶ Was *not of deceit.* Was not founded on sophistry. The apostle means to say, that the Thessalonians knew that his manner of preaching was not such as was adopted by the advocates of error. ¶ *Nor of uncleanness.*—Not such as to lead to an impure life. It was such as to lead to holiness and purity. The apostle appeals to what they knew to be the *tendency* of his doctrine as an evidence that it was true. Most of the teaching of the heathen philosophers led to a life of licentiousness and corruption. The tendency of the gospel was just the reverse. ¶ *Nor in guile.* Not by the arts of deceit. There was no *craftiness* or *trick*, such as could not bear a severe scrutiny. No point was carried by art, cunning, or stratagem. Everything was done on the

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust [b] with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither [c] at any time used

[b] 1 Ti.1.11,12.

[c] 2 Co.2.17.

most honourable and fair principles. It is much when a man can say that he has never endeavoured to accomplish anything by mere *trick, craft,* or *cunning.* Sagacity and shrewdness are always allowable in ministers as well as others; trick and cunning never. Yet stratagem often takes the place of sagacity, and trick is often miscalled shrewdness. Guile, craft, cunning, imply deception, and can never be reconciled with that entire honesty which a minister of the gospel, and all other Christians, ought to possess; see Notes on 2 Cor. xii. 16; comp. Ps. xxxii. 2; xxxiv. 13; John i. 47; 1 Pet. ii. 1, 22; Rev. xiv. 5.

4. *But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel;* comp. 1 Tim. i. 11, 12. Since there had been committed to us an office so high and holy, and so much demanding sincerity, fidelity, and honesty, we endeavoured to act in all respects in conformity to the trust reposed in us. The gospel is a system of truth and sincerity, and we evinced the same. The gospel is concerned with great realities, and we did not resort to trick and illusion. The office of the ministry is most responsible, and we acted in view of the great account which we must render. The meaning is, that Paul had such a sense of the truth, reality, and importance of the gospel, and of his responsibility, as effectually to keep him from anything like craft or cunning in preaching it. An effectual restrainer from mere management and trick will always be found in a deep conviction of the truth and importance of religion. Artifice and cunning are the usual accompaniments of a bad cause—and, when adopted by a minister of the gospel, will usually, when detected, leave the impression that *he* feels that he is engaged in such a cause. If an object cannot be secured by sincerity and straight-forward dealing, it is not desirable that it should be secured at all. ¶ *Even so we speak.* In accordance with the nature of the gospel; with the truth and sincerity which such a cause demands. ¶ *Not as pleasing men.* Not in the manner of impostors, who make it their object to please men. The meaning of the apostle is, that he did not aim to teach such doctrines as would flatter men; as would win their applause; or as would gratify their passions or their fancy. We are not to suppose that he *desired* to offend men; or that he regarded their esteem as of no value; or that he was indifferent whether they were pleased or displeased; but that it was not the direct object of his preaching to please them. It was to declare the truth, and to obtain the approbation of God whatever men might think of it; see Notes on Ga. i. 10. ¶ *Which trieth our hearts.* It is often said to be an attribute of God that he tries or searches the hearts of men; 1 Ch. xxviii. 9; xxix. 17; Jer. xi. 20; xvii. 10; Ps. xi. 4; Rom. viii. 27. The meaning here is, that the apostle had a deep conviction of the truth that God knew all his motives, and that all would be revealed in the last day.

5. *For neither at any time used we flattering words;* see Notes on Job xxxi. 21, 22; and on 2 Cor. ii. 17. The word here rendered "flattering" —κολακεία—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The meaning is, that the apostle did not deal in the language of adulation; he did not praise them for their beauty, wealth, talent, or accomplishments, and conceal from them the painful truths about their guilt and danger. He stated simple truth—not refusing to commend men if truth would admit of it, and never hesitating to declare his honest convictions about their guilt and danger. One of the principal arts of the deceiver on all subjects is flattery; and Paul says, that when preaching to the Thessalonians he had carefully avoided it. He now appeals

we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness.

6 Nor of men [a] sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have [1] been burdensome, [b] as the apostles of Christ.

[a] John 5. 41, 44; Ga. 1. 10.

1 or, *used authority.* [b] 2 Co. 12. 13-15.

to that fact as a proof of his own integrity. They knew that he had been faithful to their souls. ¶ *Nor a cloke of covetousness.* The word rendered "*cloke*" here—προφασις—means, properly, "what is shown or appears before any one;" i. e., *show, pretence, pretext,* put forth in order to cover one's real intent; Matt. xxii. 14; Mark xii. 40; Luke xx. 47. The meaning here is, that he did not put on a *pretence* or *appearance* of piety for the sake of promoting the schemes of covetousness. The *evidence* of that was not only what they observed of the general spirit of the apostle, but also the fact that when with them he had actually laboured with his own hands for a support; ver. 9. It is obvious that there were those there, as sometimes there are now, who, under the pretence of great zeal for religion, were really seeking wealth, and it is possible that it may have been alleged against Paul and his fellow-labourers that they were such persons. ¶ *God is witness.* This is a solemn appeal to God for the truth of what he had said. He refers not only to their own observation, but he calls God himself to witness his sincerity. God knew the truth in the case. There could have been no imposing on him; and the appeal, therefore, is to one who was intimately acquainted with the truth. Learn hence, (1.) That it is right, on important occasions, to appeal to God for the truth of what we say. (2.) We should always so live that we *can* properly make such an appeal to him.

6. *Nor of men sought we glory.* Or *praise.* The love of applause was not that which influenced them; see Notes on Col. i. 10. ¶ *Neither of you, nor yet of others.* Nowhere has this been our object. The love of fame is not that which has influenced us. The particular idea in this verse seems to be that though they had uncommon advantages, as the apostles of Christ, for setting up a dominion or securing an ascendancy over others, yet they had not availed themselves of it. As an apostle of Christ; as appointed by him to found churches; as endowed with the power of working miracles, Paul had every advantage for securing authority over others, and turning it to the purposes of ambition or gain. ¶ *When we might have been burdensome.* Marg., "or, *used authority.*" Some understand this as meaning that they might have demanded *a support* in virtue of their being apostles; others, as Calvin, and as it is in the margin, that they might have used authority, and have governed them wholly in that manner, exacting unqualified obedience. The Greek properly refers to that which is *weighty*—εν βαρει—*heavy, burdensome.* Anything that *weighs down* or *oppresses*—as a burden, sorrow, or authority, would meet the sense of the Greek. It seems probable, from the context, that the apostle did not refer either to authority or to support exclusively, but may have included both. In their circumstances it might have been somewhat burdensome for them to have maintained him and his fellow-labourers, though as an apostle he *might* have required it; comp. 1 Cor. ix. 8—15. Rather than be oppressive in this respect, he had chosen to forego his right, and to maintain himself by his own labour. As an apostle also he might have exerted his *authority,* and might have made use of his great office for the purpose of placing himself at the head of churches, and giving them laws. But he chose to do nothing that would be a burden: he treated them with the gentleness with which a nurse cherishes her children (ver. 7), or a father his sons (ver. 11), and employed only the arts of persuasion; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. xii. 13—16. ¶ *As the apostles of Christ*

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have [a] imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our

[a] Ro. 1. 11.

Though the writer uses the word *apostles* here in the plural number, it is not certain that he means to apply it to Silas and Timothy. He often uses the plural number where he refers to himself only; and though Silas and Timothy are joined with him in this epistle (chap. i. 1), yet it is evident that he writes the letter as if he were alone and that they had no part in the composition or the instructions. Timothy and Silas are associated with him for the mere purpose of salutation or kind remembrance. That this is so, is apparent from chap. iii. In ver. 1 of that chapter, Paul uses the plural term also. "When *we* could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; comp. ver. 5. "For this cause, when *I* could no longer forbear, *I* sent to know your faith." Neither Silas nor Timothy were apostles in the strict and proper sense, and there is no evidence that they had the "authority" which Paul here says might have been exerted by an apostle of Christ.

7. *But we were gentle among you.* Instead of using authority, we used only the most kind and gentle methods to win you and to promote your peace and order. The word here rendered "nurse," may mean any one who nurses a child, whether a mother or another person. It seems here to refer to a mother (comp. ver. 11), and the idea is, that the apostle felt for them the affectionate solicitude which a mother does for the child at her breast.

8. *So, being affectionately desirous of you.* The word here rendered "being affectionately desirous"—ἱμείρω—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means *to long after, to have a strong affection for.* The sense here is, that Paul was so strongly attached to them that he would have been willing to lay down his life for them. ¶ *We were willing to have imparted unto you.* To have given or communicated; Rom. i. 11. ¶ *Not the gospel of God only.* To be willing to communicate the knowledge of the gospel was in itself a strong proof of love, even if it were attended with no self-denial or hazard in doing it. We evince a decided love for a man when we tell him of the way of salvation, and urge him to accept of it. We show strong interest for one who is in danger, when we tell him of a way of escape, or for one who is sick, when we tell him of a medicine that will restore him; but we manifest a much higher love when we tell a lost and ruined sinner of the way in which he may be saved. There is no method in which we can show so strong an interest in our fellow-men, and so much true benevolence for them, as to go to them and tell them of the way by which they may be rescued from everlasting ruin. ¶ *But also our own souls.* Or rather *lives*—ψυχὰς; Matt. vi. 25; xx. 28; Luke xii. 22, 13; Mark iii. 4. This does not mean that the apostle was willing to be *damned*, or to lose his *soul* in order to save them, but that if it had been necessary he would have been ready to lay down his life; see 1 John iii. 16. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;" comp. Notes, John xv. 13. His object seems to be to assure them that he did not leave them from any want of love to them, or from the fear of being put to death. It was done from the strong conviction of duty. He appears to have left them because he could not longer remain without exposing others to danger, and without the certainty that there would be continued disturbances; see Acts xvii. 9, 10.

9. *Ye remember, brethren, our labour.* Doubtless in the occupation of a tent-maker; Notes, Acts xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12. ¶ *And travail;* see Notes on 2 Cor. xi. 27. The word means *wearisome labour.* ¶ *For la-*

labour [a] and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

10 Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

[a] Ac.20 34,35; 2 Th.3.7,8.

11 As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children,

12 That ye would walk [b] worthy of God, who [c] hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when

[b] Ep.4.1. [c] 1 Co.1.9.

bouring night and day. That is, when he was not engaged in preaching the gospel. He appears to have laboured through the week and to have preached on the Sabbath; or if engaged in preaching in the day time during the week, he made it up *by night labour.* ¶ *We preached unto you the gospel of God.* That is, I supported myself when I preached among you. No one, therefore, could say that I was disposed to live in idleness; no one that I sought to make myself rich at the expense of others.

10. *Ye* are *witnesses.* They had a full opportunity of knowing his manner of life. ¶ *And God* also; Notes on ver. 5. ¶ *How holily.* Piously—observing all the duties of religion. ¶ *And justly.* In our intercourse with men. I did them no wrong. ¶ *And unblameably.* This seems to refer to his duties *both* to God and man. In reference to all those duties no one could bring a charge against him. Every duty was faithfully performed. This is not a claim to absolute *perfection*, but it is a claim to consistency of character, and to faithfulness in duty, which every Christian should be enabled to make. Every man professing religion should so live as to be able to appeal to all who have had an opportunity of knowing him, as witnesses that he was consistent and faithful, and that there was nothing which could be laid to his charge.

11. *How we exhorted.* That is, to a holy life. ¶ *And comforted.* In the times of affliction. ¶ *And charged.* Gr., *testified.* The word *testify* is used here in the sense of *protesting*, or making an earnest and solemn appeal. They came as *witnesses* from God of the truth of religion, and of the importance of living in a holy manner

They did not *originate* the gospel themselves, or teach its duties and doctrines as their own, but they came in the capacity of those who bore *witness* of what God had revealed and required, and they did this in the earnest and solemn manner which became such an office. ¶ *As a father* doth *his children.* With an interest in your welfare, such as a father feels for his children, and with such a method as a father would use. It was not done in a harsh, dictatorial, and arbitrary manner, but in tenderness and love.

12. *That ye would walk worthy of God, &c.* That you would live in such a manner as would honour God, who has chosen you to be his friends; Notes, Eph. iv. 1. A child "walks worthy of a parent" when he lives in such way as to reflect honour on that parent for the method in which he has trained him; when he so lives as to bring no disgrace on him, so as not to pain his heart by misconduct, or so as to give no occasion to any to speak reproachfully of him. This he does, when (1.) he keeps all his commands; (2.) when he leads a life of purity and virtue; (3.) when he carries out the principles of the family into his own life; (4.) when he honours a father by evincing a profound respect for his opinions; and (5.) when he endeavours to provide for his comfort and to promote his welfare. In a manner similar to this, a true Christian honours God. He lives so as not to bring a reproach upon him or his cause, and so as to teach the world to honour him who has bestowed such grace upon him. ¶ *Who hath called you:* Notes, 1 Cor. i. 9.

13. *For this cause also thank we God.* In addition to the reasons for

ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not[a] *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh[b] also in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of

a Mat.10.40; 2 Pe.3.2. b Ja.1.18; 1 Pe.1.23

thankfulness already suggested, the apostle here refers to the fact that they received the truth, when it was preached, in such a way as to show that they fully believed it to be the word of God. ¶ *Not* as *the word of men.* Not of human origin, but as a divine revelation. You were not led to embrace it by human reasoning, or the mere arts of persuasion, or from personal respect for others, but by your conviction that it was a revelation from God. It is only when the gospel is embraced in this way that religion will show itself sufficient to abide the fiery trials to which Christians may be exposed. He who is convinced by mere human reasoning may have his faith shaken by opposite artful reasoning; he who is won by the mere arts of popular eloquence will have no faith which will be proof against similar arts in the cause of error; he who embraces religion from mere respect for a pastor, parent, or friend, or because others do, may abandon it when the popular current shall set in a different direction, or when his friends shall embrace different views; but he who embraces religion as the truth of God, and from the love of the truth, will have a faith, like that of the Thessalonians, which will abide every trial. ¶ *Which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* The word rendered "which" here—ὅς—may be referred either to "truth" or to "God." The grammatical construction will admit of either, but it is not material which is adopted. Either of them expresses a sense undeniably true, and of great importance. The meaning is, that the truth was made efficacious in the minds of all who became true Christians. It induced them to abandon their sins, to devote themselves to God, to lead pure and holy lives, and enabled them to abide the trials and temptations of life; comp. Notes on Phil. ii. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 21. The particular *illustration* here is, that when they embraced the gospel it had such an efficacy on their hearts as to prepare them to meet all the terrors of bitter persecution without shrinking.

14. *For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus.*—Which are *united* to the Lord Jesus, or which are founded on his truth: that is, which are true churches. Of those churches they became *imitators*—μιμηταὶ—to wit, in their sufferings. This does not mean that they were founded on the same model; or that they professed to be the followers of those churches, but that *they had been treated in the same way,* and thus were *like* them. They had been persecuted in the same manner, and by the same people—the Jews; and they had borne their persecutions with the same spirit. The *object* of this is to comfort and encourage them, by showing them that others had been treated in the same manner, and that it was to be expected that a true church would be persecuted by the Jews. They ought not, therefore, to consider it as any evidence that they were not a true church that they had been persecuted by those who claimed to be the people of God, and who made extraordinary pretensions to piety. ¶ *For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen.* Literally, "of those who are of your *fellow-tribe,* or *fellow-clansmen*"—συμφυλετῶν. The Greek word means "one of the same tribe," and then a fellow-citizen, or fellow-countryman. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The particular reference here seems not to be to the heathen who were the *agents* or *actors* in the scenes of tumult and persecutions, but to the Jews by whom they were led on, or who were the prime movers in the persecutions which they had endured. It is necessary to suppose that they were principally Jews who were the *cause* of the

your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews;

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their [a] own prophets, and have [1] persecuted us; and

a Ac.7.52. 1 or, *chased us out*

persecution which had been excited against them, in order to make the parallelism between the church there and the churches in Palestine exact. At the same time there was a propriety in saying that, though the parallelism was exact, it was by the "hands *of their own countrymen*" that it was done; that is, they were the visible agents or actors by whom it was done—the instruments in the hands of others. In Palestine, the Jews persecuted the churches *directly;* out of Palestine, they did it by means of others. They were the real *authors* of it, as they were in Judea, but they usually accomplished it by producing an excitement among the heathen, and by the plea that the apostles were making war on civil institutions. This was the case in Thessalonica. "The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, set all the city on an uproar." "They drew Jason and certain brethren *unto the rulers of the city*, crying, Those that have turned the world upside down have come hither also;' Acts xvii. 5, 6. The same thing occurred a short time after at Berea. "When the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also *and stirred up the people;*" Acts xvii. 13; comp. Acts xiv. 2. "The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected against the brethren." "The epistle, therefore, represents the case accurately as the history states it. It was the Jews always who set on foot the persecutions against the apostles and their followers;" Paley, *Hor Paul. in loc.* It was, therefore, strictly true, as the apostle here states it, (1.) that they were subjected to the same treatment from the Jews as the churches in Judea were, since they were the *authors* of the excitement against them; and (2.) that it was carried on, as the apostle states, "by their own countrymen;" that is, that they were the agents or instruments by which it was done. This kind of *undesigned coincidence* between the epistle and the history in the Acts of the Apostles, is one of the arguments from which Paley (*Hor. Paul.*) infers the genuineness of both ¶ *As they* have *of the Jews.* Directly. In Palestine there were no others but Jews who could be excited against Christians, and they were obliged to *appear* as the persecutors themselves.

15. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus;* see the Notes on Acts ii. 23. The meaning here is, that it was characteristic of the Jews to be engaged in the work of persecution, and that they should not regard it as strange that they who had put their own Messiah to death, and slain the prophets, should now be found persecuting the true children of God. ¶ *And their own prophets;* see Notes on Matt. xxi. 33—40; xxiii. 29—37; Acts vii. 52. ¶ *And have persecuted us.* As at Iconium (Acts xiv. 1), Derbe, and Lystra (Acts xiv. 6), and at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. The meaning is, that it was characteristic of them to persecute, and they spared no one. If they had persecuted the apostles themselves, who were their own countrymen, it should not be considered strange that they should persecute those who were Gentiles. ¶ *And they please not God.* Their conduct is not such as to please God, but such as to expose them to his wrath; ver. 16. The meaning is not that they did not aim to please God—whatever may have been the truth about that—but that they had shown by all their history that their conduct could not meet with the divine approbation. They made extraordinary pretensions to being the peculiar people of God, and it was important for the apostle to show that their conduct demonstrated that they had no such claims. *Their* opposition to the Thessalonians, therefore, was no proof that *God* was opposed to them, and they should not allow themselves to be troubled by such opposition. It was rather proof that they were the friends of God—

they please not God, and are contrary to all men;

16 Forbidding [a] us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill [b] up their sins alway;

[a] Ac.17.5,13; 18.12. [b] Ge.15.16; Mat.23.32.

since those who now persecuted them had been engaged in persecuting the most holy men that had lived. ¶ *And are contrary to all men.* They do not merely *differ* from other men in customs and opinions—which might be harmless—but they keep up *an active opposition* to all other people. It was not opposition to one nation only, but to all; it was not to one form of religion only, but to all—even including God's last revelation to mankind; it was not opposition evinced in their own country, but they carried it with them wherever they went. The truth of this statement is confirmed, not only by authority of the apostle and the uniform record in the New Testament, but by the testimony borne of them in the classic writers. This was universally regarded as their national characteristic, for they had so demeaned themselves as to leave this impression on the minds of those with whom they had intercourse. Thus Tacitus describes them as "cherishing hatred against all others"—adversus omnes alios hostile odium; Hist. v. 5. So Juvenal (Sat. xiv. 103, 104), describes them.

Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.

"They would not even point out the way to any one except of the same religion, nor, being asked, guide any to a fountain except the circumcised." So they are called by Appollonius "atheists and misanthropes, and the most uncultivated barbarians"—ἄθεοι καὶ μισανθρώποι καὶ ἀφυέστατοι τῶν βάρβαρῶν; Josephus Con. Ap. ii. 14. So Diodorus Siculus (xxxiv. p. 524), describes them as "those alone among all the nations who were unwilling to have any intercourse [or intermingling—ἐπιμιξίας] with any other nation, and who regarded all others as enemies"—καὶ πολεμίους ὑπολαμβάνειν πάντας. Their history had given abundant occasion for these charges.

16. *Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles;* see Acts xvii. 5, 13. No particular instance is mentioned in the life of Paul *previous* to this, when they had formally commanded him not to preach to the heathen, but no one can doubt that this was one of the leading points of difference between him and them. Paul maintained that the Jews and Gentiles were now on a level with regard to salvation; that the wall of partition was broken down; that the Jew had no advantages over the rest of mankind in this respect, and that the heathen might be saved without becoming Jews, or being circumcised; Rom. ii. 25—29; iii. 22—31; Notes, Col. i. 24. The Jews did not hold it unlawful "to speak to the Gentiles," and even to offer to them eternal life (Matt. xxiii. 15), but it was only on condition that they should become proselytes to *their* religion, and should observe the institutions of Moses. If saved, they held that it would be *as Jews*—either originally such, or such by becoming proselytes. Paul maintained just the opposite opinion, that heathens might be saved *without* becoming proselytes to the Jewish system, and that, in fact, salvation was as freely offered to them as to the children of Abraham. Though there are no express *instances* in which they prohibited Paul from speaking to the Gentiles recorded *before* the date of this epistle, yet events occurred *afterwards* which showed what were their feelings, and such as to make it in the highest degree probable that they had attempted to restrain him; see Acts xxii. 21, 22, "And he [Christ] said unto me [Paul], Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they [the Jews] gave him audience unto this word, and then lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." ¶ *That they might be saved.* That is, as freely as others, and on the same terms, not by conversion to Judaism, but by repentance and faith. ¶ *To fill up their sins alway.* At all times—πάντοτε—in every generation. That is, to do now as they

for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. [a]

[a] Re.22.11.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured

have always done, by resisting God and exposing themselves to his wrath. The idea is, that it had been a characteristic of the nation, at all times, to oppose God, and that they did it now in this manner in conformity with their fixed character; comp. Acts vii. 51 — 53, and Notes on Matt. xxiii. 32, on the expression, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." ¶ *For the wrath is come upon them.* This cannot mean that the wrath of God had been then *actually* poured out upon them in the extreme degree referred to, or that they had *experienced* the full expressions of the divine displeasure, for this epistle was written before the destruction of their city and temple (see the Introduction); but that the cup of their iniquity was full; that they were in fact abandoned by God; that they were the objects *even then* of his displeasure, and that their destruction was so certain that it might be spoken of as an indubitable fact. The "wrath of God" may be said to have come upon a man when he abandons him, even though there may not be *as yet* any *external* expressions of his indignation. It is not *punishment* that constitutes the wrath of God. That is the mere *outward expression* of the divine indignation, and the wrath of God may in fact have come upon a man when as yet there are no external tokens of it. The overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple, were but the outward expressions of the divine displeasure at their conduct. Paul, inspired to speak of the feelings of God, describes that wrath as already existing in the divine mind; comp. Rom. iv. 17. ¶ *To the uttermost.* Gr.—εἰς τέλος—*to the end;* that is, until wrath shall be *complete* or *exhausted;* or wrath in the extremest degree. It does not mean "to the end of their race or history;" nor necessarily to the remotest periods of time, but to that which constitutes *completion,* so that there should be nothing *lacking* of that which would make indignation perfect: "εἰς τέλος—gantz und gar"—thoroughly, entirely, through and through." *Passow.* Some have understood this as meaning *at the last,* or *at length,* as Macknight, Rosenmüller, Koppe, and Wetstein; others as referring to *duration,* meaning that it would follow them everywhere; but the more correct interpretation seems to be to refer it to that *extremity* of calamity and woe which was about to come upon the nation. For an account of this, see Notes on Matt. xxiv. 21.

17. *But we, brethren, being taken from you.* There is more implied in the Greek word here rendered, "being taken from you"—ἀπορφανισθέντες—than appears from our translation. It properly has relation to the condition of an *orphan* (comp. Notes on John xiv. 18), or one who is bereaved of parents. Then it is used in a more general sense, denoting *to be bereaved of;* and in this place it does not mean merely that he was "taken from them," but there is included the idea that it was like a painful bereavement. It was such a state as that of one who had lost a parent. No word, perhaps, could have expressed stronger attachment for them. ¶ *For a short time.* Gr., "For the time of an hour;" that is, for a brief period. The meaning is, that when he left them he supposed it would be only for a short time. The *fact* seems to have been (Acts xvii. 10), that it was supposed, when Paul was sent to Berea, that things would soon be in such a state that he could safely return to Thessalonica. He was "sent" there by those who thought it was necessary for the safety of some of his friends at Thessalonica, and he evidently purposed to return as soon as it could properly be done. It had, in fact, however, turned out to be a long and painful absence. ¶ *In presence, not in heart.* My heart was still with you. This is an elegant and touch-

the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of [1] rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in [a] the presence [b] of our Lord Jesus Christ at his [c] coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

1 or, *glorying.* a 2 Co.1.14; Phi.4.1. b Jude 24. c Re 1.7.

ing expression, which we still use to denote affection for an absent friend. ¶ *Endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face.* Made every endeavour possible. It was from no want of affection that I have not done it, but from causes beyond my control. ¶ *With great desire;* comp. Notes, Luke xxii. 15.

18. *Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul.* The phrase "even I Paul," seems to be used by way of emphasis. He had a special desire to go himself. He had sent Timothy to them (chap. iii. 2, 5), and perhaps, some might have been disposed to allege that Paul was afraid to go himself, or that he did not feel interest enough in them to go, though he was willing to *send* one to visit them. Paul, therefore, is at much pains to assure them that his long separation from them was unavoidable. ¶ *But Satan hindered us;* comp. Notes on 2 Cor. xii. 7. In what way this was done is unknown, and conjecture would be useless. The apostle recognised the hand of *Satan* in frustrating his attempt to do good, and preventing the accomplishment of his strong desire to see his Christian friends. In the obstacles, therefore, to the performance of our duty, and in the hindrances of our enjoyment, it is not improper to trace the hand of the great enemy of good. The agency of Satan may, for aught we can tell, often be employed in the embarrassments that we meet with in life. The hindrances which we meet with in our efforts to do good, when the providence of God seems to favour us, and his word and Spirit seem to call us to a particular duty, often look very much like the work of Satan. They are just such obstructions as a very wicked being would be glad to throw in our way.

19. *For what* is *our hope.* That is, "I had a strong desire to see you; to assist you; to enjoy your friendship; for you are my hope and joy, and my absence does not arise from a want of affection." The meaning, when he says that they were his "*hope,*" is, that their conversion and salvation was one of the *grounds* of his hope of future blessedness. It was an evidence that he was a faithful servant of God, and that he would be rewarded in heaven. ¶ *Or joy.* The source of joy here and in heaven. ¶ *Or crown of rejoicing.* Marg., as in Gr., *glorying;* that is, boasting, or exulting. The allusion is, probably, to the victors at the Grecian games; and the sense is, that he rejoiced in their conversion as the victor there did in the garland which he had won; Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. ¶ Are *not even ye.* Or, *will* not you be? ¶ *In the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.* "When the Lord Jesus appears at the end of the world, then our highest source of happiness and honour will be your conversion and salvation." Then their salvation would be a proof of his fidelity. It would fill his soul with the highest happiness, that he had been the means of saving them from ruin.

20. *For ye are our glory and joy.* The meaning is, that the source of happiness to a minister of the gospel in the day of judgment will be the conversion and salvation of souls. The *object* of the apostle in dwelling on this in a manner so tender and affectionate is, to show them that his leaving them, and his long absence from them, were not caused by any want of affection for them.

REMARKS.

(1.) Ministers of the gospel should be entirely sincere, and without guile. They should attempt to carry no measure—not even the conversion of sinners—by *trick* or *management*; ver. 3-5.

(2.) They should not make it a point to please men; ver. 4. If they *do* please men; or if their ministry is acceptable to men, they should not regard it, indeed, as proof that they are unfaithful, for they "should have a good report of them that are without;" nor should they make it a point to *displease* men, or consider it a proof that because men are offended, *therefore* they are faithful; but it should not be their leading aim or purpose to gratify men. They should preach the truth; and if they do this, God will take care of their reputation, and give them just as much as they ought to have. The same principle should operate with all Christians. They should do *right*, and leave their reputation with God.

(3.) Ministers of the gospel should be gentle, tender, and affectionate. They should be kind in feeling, and courteous in manner—like a father or a mother; ver. 7, 11. Nothing is ever gained by a sour, harsh, crabbed, dissatisfied manner. Sinners are never *scolded* either into duty or into heaven. "Flies are not caught with vinegar." No man is a better or more faithful preacher because he is rough in manner, coarse or harsh in his expressions, or sour in his intercourse with mankind. Not thus was the Master or Paul. There is no *crime* in being polite and courteous; none in observing the rules of good breeding, and paying respect to the sensibilities of others; and there is no piety in outraging all the laws which society has found necessary to adopt to promote happy intercourse. What is *wrong* we should indeed oppose—but it should be in the kindest manner towards *the persons* of those who do wrong; what is true and right we should maintain and defend—and we shall always do it more effectually if we do it kindly.

(4.) Ministers should be willing to labour in any proper calling, if it is necessary for their own support or to do good; ver. 9. It is, indeed, the duty of a people to support the gospel, but there may be situations where they are not able to do it, and a minister should be *able* to earn something, in some other way, and should be *willing* to do it. Paul made tents; and if he was willing to do that, a minister should not feel himself degraded if he is obliged to make shoes, or to hoe corn, or to plough, or to keep cattle. He had better *not* do it, if he can avoid it well—for he needs his time for his more important work; but he should feel it no dishonour if he is obliged to do it—and should feel that it is a privilege to preach the gospel even if he *is* obliged to support himself by making either tents or shoes. It is no dishonour for a minister to work hard; and it is not well for a man to enter the ministry wholly unacquainted with every other way of procuring an honest living.

(5.) Every minister should be able to appeal to the people among whom he has laboured in proof that he is an honest man, and lives consistently with his profession; ver. 1, 9, 10, 11. The same remark applies to all other Christians. They should so live that they may at once refer to their neighbours in proof of the uprightness of their lives, and their consistent walk. But to be enabled to do this, a man should live as he ought—for the world generally forms a very correct estimate of character.

(6.) The joy of a minister in the day of judgment will be measured by the amount of good which he has done, and the number of souls which he has been the means of converting and saving; ver 19. It will not be the honour which he has received from men; the titles which they have conferred on him; the commendation which he has received for eloquence or talent, or the learning which he has acquired, but it will be found in the number of those who have been converted from the error of their ways, and in the evidence of the good which he did on the earth. And will not the same thing be substantily true of all others who bear the Christian name? Will it then be a source of joy to them that they were richer than their neighbours; or that they were advanced to higher honours; or that they had a more splendid mansion, or were able to fare more "sumptuously?" The good that we do will be remembered *certainly* with pleasure in the day of

judgment: of how many other things which now interest us so much can the same thing be said?

(7.) Paul expected evidently to *recognise* the Thessalonian Christians at the day of judgment, for he said that they would be then his "joy and crown of rejoicing;" ver. 19. But this could not be, unless he should be able to know those who had been converted by his instrumentality. If he expected then to recognise them, and to rejoice with them, then we also may hope to know our pious friends in that happy world. Nothing in the Bible forbids this hope, and we can hardly believe that God has created the strong ties which bind us to each other, to endure for the present life only. If Paul hoped to meet those who had been converted by his instrumentality, and to rejoice with them there, then the parent may hope to meet the child over whose loss he mourned; the husband and wife will meet again; the pious children of a family will be re-assembled; and the pastor and his flock will be permitted to rejoice together before the Lord. This hope, which nothing in the Bible forbids us to entertain, should do much to alleviate the sorrow of the parting pang, and may be an important and powerful inducement to draw our own thoughts to a brighter and a better world. Of many of the living it is true that the best and dearest friends which they have are already in heaven—and how should their own hearts pant that they may meet them there!

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is a continuation of the course of thought pursued in the previous chapter, and seems designed to meet the same state of feeling existing in Thessalonica, and the same objection which some there urged against the apostle. The objection seems to have been, that he had really no attachment for them, and no regard for their welfare; that he had fled from them on the slightest danger, and that when the danger was passed he had not returned, but had left them to bear their afflictions alone. It appears to have been inferred from his long absence, that he had no solicitude for their welfare, and had brought them into difficulties, to escape from which, or to bear which, he was now indisposed to render any assistance. It was important, therefore, for him to remind them of what he had actually done, and to state his real feelings towards them. He refers them, therefore, to the following things as proof of his interest in them, and his affection for them:—

(1.) He had sent Timothy to them at great personal inconvenience, when he *could not* go himself; ver. 1—5.

(2.) He had been greatly comforted by the report which Timothy had brought of their steadfastness in the faith; ver. 6—8. Every expression of their attachment to him had gone to his heart, and their faith and charity had been to him in his trials the source of unspeakable consolation. His very *life* depended, as it were, on their fidelity, and he says he should live and be happy if they stood fast in the Lord; ver. 8.

(3.) He expresses again the earnest desire which he had to see them; says that it had been to him the subject of unceasing prayer night and day, and beseeches God again now that he would be pleased to direct his way to them; ver. 9—11.

(4.) As a proof of affection, the chapter is closed with a fervent prayer that God would cause them to abound more and more in love, and would establish their hearts unblameable before him; ver. 12, 13. The Thessalonians well knew the apostle Paul. They had had abundant proof of his love when he was with them; and if his enemies there had succeeded in any degree in causing their affection towards him to become cool, or to excite suspicions that he was not sincere, their love must have been rekindled, and their suspicions must have been entirely allayed by the expressions of attachment in this chapter. Language of warmer love, or of deeper interest in the welfare of others, it would not be possible to find anywhere.

CHAPTER III.

WHEREFORE when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

2 And sent Timotheus, our

1. *Wherefore;* see chap. ii. 18. This particle (διὸ) is designed here to refer to another proof of his affection for them. One evidence had been referred to in his strong desire to visit them, which he had been unable to accomplish (chap. ii. 18), and he here refers to another—to wit, the fact that he had sent Timothy to them. ¶ *We could no longer forbear.* That is, when *I* could not (ver. 5), for there is every evidence that Paul refers to himself only though he uses the plural form of the word. There was no one with him at Athens after he had sent Timothy away (Acts xvii. 15; xviii. 5), and this shows that when, in chap. ii. 6, he uses the term *apostles* in the plural number, he refers to himself only, and does not mean to give the name to Timothy and Silas. If this be so, Timothy and Silas are nowhere called "apostles" in the New Testament. The word rendered here *could forbear* (στέγοντες), means, properly, *to cover, to conceal;* and then to hide or conceal anger, impatience, weariness, &c.; that is, to hold out as to anything, to bear with, to endure. It is rendered *suffer* in 1 Cor. ix. 12; *beareth,* 1 Cor. xiii. 7; and *forbear,* 1 Thess. iii. 1, 5. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. It means that he could no longer bear up under, hide, or suppress his impatience in regard to them—his painful emotions—his wish to know of their state; and he therefore sent Timothy to them. ¶ *We thought it good.* I was willing to suffer the inconvenience of parting with him in order to show my concern for you. ¶ *To be left at Athens alone.* Paul had been conducted to Athens from Berea, where he remained until Silas and Timothy could come to him; Acts xvii. 15. It appears from the statement here that Timothy *had* joined him there, but such was his solicitude for the church at Thessalonica, that he very soon after sent him there, and chose to remain himself alone at Athens. Why he did not *himself* return to Thessalonica, is not stated. It is evidently implied here that it was a great personal inconvenience for him thus to part with Timothy, and to remain alone at Athens, and that he evinced the strong love which he had for the church at Thessalonica by being willing to submit to it. What that inconvenience consisted in, he has not stated, but it is not difficult to understand. (1.) He was among total strangers, and, when Timothy was gone, without an acquaintance or friend. (2.) The aid of Timothy was needed in order to prosecute the work which he contemplated. He had requested that Timothy should join him as soon as possible when he left Berea (Acts xvii. 15), and he evidently felt it desirable that in preaching the gospel in that city he should have all the assistance he could obtain. Yet he was willing to forego those comforts and advantages in order to promote the edification of the church at Thessalonica.

2. *And sent Timotheus.* That is, evidently, he sent him *from* Athens—for this is the fair construction of the passage. But in the history (Acts xvii.) there is no mention that Timothy came to Athens at all, and it may be asked how this statement is reconcilable with the record in the Acts? It is mentioned there that "the brethren sent away Paul [from Berea] to go, as it were, to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. And they that conducted Paul brought him to Athens;" Acts xvii. 14, 15. The history further states, that after Paul had remained some time at Athens, he went to Corinth, where he was joined by Timothy and Silas, who came to him "*from Macedonia;*" Acts xviii. 5. But in order to reconcile the account in the Acts with the statement before us in the epistle, it is necessary to suppose that Timothy *had* come to Athens

brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;

In reconciling these accounts, we may observe, that though the history does not expressly mention the arrival of Timothy at Athens, yet there are circumstances mentioned which render this extremely probable. First, as soon as Paul reached Athens, he sent a message back to Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, and there is every probability that this request would be obeyed; Acts xvii. 15. Secondly, his stay at Athens was on purpose that they might join him there. "Now whilst *Paul waited for them at Athens*, his spirit was stirred within him;" Acts xvii. 16. Thirdly, his departure from Athens does not appear to have been in any sort hastened or abrupt. He had an opportunity of seeing the city (Acts xvii. 23); he disputed in the synagogue and in the market "daily" (Acts xvii. 17); he held a controversy with the philosophers (Acts xvii. 18—22); he made converts there (Acts xvii. 24), and "after these things" he calmly went to Corinth. There was no tumult or excitement, and it is not suggested that he was driven away, as in other places, because his life was in danger. There was, therefore, ample *time* for Timothy to come to him there—for Paul was at liberty to remain as long as he pleased, and as he stayed there *for the express purpose* of having Timothy and Silas meet him, it is to be presumed that his wish was in this respect accomplished. Fourthly, *the sending back of Timothy to Macedonia*, as mentioned in the epistle, is a circumstance which will account for the fact mentioned in Acts xviii. 5, that Timothy came to him "*at Corinth*," instead of at Athens. He had given directions for him to meet him *at Athens* Acts xvii, 15), but the history mentions only that he met him, after a long delay, *at Corinth*. This delay, and this change of place, when they rejoined each other for the purpose of labouring together, can only be accounted for by the supposition that Timothy *had* come to him at Athens, and had been immediately sent back to Macedonia, with instructions to join him again at Corinth. This is one of the "undesigned coincidences" between the history in the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul, of which Paley (*Hor. Paul.*) has made so good use in demonstrating the genuineness of both. "The epistle discloses a fact which is not preserved in the history; but which makes what is said in the history more significant, probable, and consistent. The history bears marks of an omission; the epistle furnishes a circumstance which supplies that omission." ¶ *Our brother;* Notes, Col. i. 1. The mention of his being a "*brother*" is designed to show his interest in the church there. He did not send one whose absence would be no inconvenience to him, or for whom he had no regard. He sent one who was as dear to him as a brother. ¶ *And minister of God.* Another circumstance showing his affection for them. He did not send a layman, or one who could not be useful with him or to them, but he sent one fully qualified to preach to them, and to break to them the bread of life. One of the richest tokens of affection which can be shown to any people, is to send to them a faithful minister of God. ¶ *And our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ.* A third token of affectionate interest in their welfare. The meaning is, "I did not send one whom I did not want, or who could be of no use here, but one who was *a fellow-labourer* with me, and whose aid would have been of essential service to me. In parting with him, therefore, for your welfare I showed a strong attachment for you. I was willing to endure personal inconvenience, and additional toil, in order to promote your welfare." ¶ *To establish you.* To strengthen you; to make you firm—στηρίξαι This was to be done by presenting such considerations as would enable

3 That [a] no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we [b] are appointed thereunto.

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

5 For this cause, when [a] I could

[a] Ep. 3. 13. [b] John 16. 2; 1 Co. 4. 9; 2 Ti. 3.12; 1 Pe. 2. 21.

[a] ver. 1.

them to maintain their faith steadfastly in their trials. ¶ *And to comfort you concerning your faith.* It is evident that they were suffering persecution on account of their faith in the Lord Jesus; that is, for their belief in him as a Saviour. The object of sending Timothy was to suggest such topics of consolation as would sustain them in their trials—that is, that he was the Son of God; that the people of God had been persecuted in all ages; that God was able to support them, &c.

3. *That no man should be moved.* The word rendered *moved* (σαίνω) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means to wag, to move to and fro, as of dogs which wag their tails in fondness (Hom. Od. K. 216. Æl. A. N. x. 7. Ovid. xiv. 258); then to caress, to fawn upon, to flatter; then to move or *waver* in mind—as from fear; to dread, to tremble. See Passow and Wetstein. Here the sense is, to be so moved or agitated by fear, or by the terror of persecution, as to forsake their religion. The object of sending Timothy was, that they might not be thus moved, but that amidst all opposition they might adhere steadfastly to their religion. ¶ *These afflictions;* Notes, chap. ii. 14. ¶ *For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.* It is not quite certain whether by the word "*we*" here the apostle refers to himself; or to himself *and* the Thessalonians; or to Christians in general. On either supposition what he says is true, and either would meet the case. It would be most to the purpose, however, to suppose that he means to state the general idea that *all* Christians are exposed to persecution and could not hope to avoid it. It would then appear that the Thessalonians had partaken only of the common lot. Still there may have been a special reference to the fact that Paul and his fellow-labourers there were subjected to trials; and if this be the reference, then the idea is, that the Thessalonians should not be "moved" by their trials, for even their teachers were not exempt. Even their enemies could not say that the apostle and his co-workers were impostors, for they had persevered in preaching the gospel when they knew that these trials were coming upon them. The phrase, "we are appointed thereunto," means that such was the divine arrangement. No one who professed Christianity could hope to be exempted from trial, for it was the common lot of all believers; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. iv. 9; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

4. *For verily, when we were with you, we told you before,* &c. It is not mentioned in the history (Acts xvii.) that Paul thus predicted that peculiar trials would come upon them, but there is no improbability in what is here said. He was with them long enough to discourse to them on a great variety of topics, and nothing can be more probable, than that in their circumstances, the subjects of persecution and affliction would be prominent topics of discourse. There was every reason to apprehend that they would meet with opposition on account of their religion, and nothing was more natural than that Paul should endeavour to prepare their minds for it beforehand. ¶ *That we should suffer tribulation.* We who preached to you; perhaps also including those to whom they preached. ¶ *Even as it came to pass, and ye know.* When Paul, Silas, and Timothy were driven away, and when the church was so much agitated, by the opposition of the Jews; Acts xvii. 5—8.

5. *For this cause.* Since I knew that you were so liable to be persecuted, and since I feared that some might

no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest [a] by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour [b] be in vain.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring [c] greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you;

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted [d] over you, in all our affliction and distress, by your faith:

8 For now we live, if ye stand fast [e] in the Lord.

[a] 2 Co.11.2,3. [b] Ga. 4,11. [c] Phi.1.8. [d] 2 Co.7.6,7. [e] Ep.6.13,14; Phi.4.1.

be turned from the truth by this opposition. ¶ *When I could no longer forbear;* Notes, ver. 1. ¶ *I sent to know your faith.* That is, your *fidelity*, or your steadfastness in the gospel. ¶ *Lest by some means.* Either by allurements to apostasy, set before you by your former heathen friends; or by the arts of false teachers; or by the severity of suffering. Satan has *many* methods of seducing men from the truth, and Paul was fearful that by some of his arts he might be successful there. ¶ *The tempter.* Satan; for though the Jews were the immediate actors in those transactions, yet the apostle regarded them as being under the direction of Satan, and as accomplishing his purposes. He was, therefore, the real author of the persecutions which had been excited. He is here called the "*Tempter*," as he is often (comp. Matt. iv.), and the truths taught are (1.) that Satan is the great author of persecution; and (2.) that in a time of persecution—or of trial of any kind—he endeavours to *tempt* men to swerve from the truth, and to abandon their religion. In persecution, men are tempted to apostatize from God, in order to avoid suffering. In afflictions of other kinds, Satan often tempts the sufferer to murmur and complain; to charge God with harshness, partiality, and severity, and to give vent to expressions that will show that religion has none of its boasted power to support the soul in the day of trial; comp. Job i. 9—11. In all times of affliction, as well as in prosperity, we may be sure that "the Tempter" is not far off, and should be on our guard against his wiles. ¶ *And our labour be in vain.* By your being turned from the faith; Notes, Gal. iv. 11.

6. *But now when Timotheus came from you unto us.* To Corinth, after he had been sent to Thessalonica; Acts xviii. 5; comp. Notes on ver. 2. ¶ *And brought us good tidings.* A cheerful or favourable account. Gr. "evangelizing;" that is, bringing good news. ¶ *Of your faith.* Of your faithfulness or fidelity. Amidst all their trials they evinced fidelity to the Christian cause. ¶ *And charity.* Love; Notes, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. ¶ *And that ye have good remembrance of us always.* That is, probably, they showed their remembrance of Paul by obeying his precepts, and by cherishing an affectionate regard for him, notwithstanding all the efforts which had been made to alienate their affections from him. ¶ *Greatly desiring to see us, as we also* to see *you.* There was no disposition to blame him for having left them, or because he did not return to them. They would have welcomed him again as their teacher and friend. The meaning of this is, that there was between him and them a strong mutual attachment.

7. *We are comforted over you;* see Notes, 2 Cor. i. 3—7; vii. 6, 7. The sense here is, that their steadfastness was a great source of comfort to him in his trials. It was an instance where the holy lives and the fidelity of a people did much, as will always be the case, to lighten the burdens and cheer the heart of a minister of the gospel. In the inevitable trials of the ministerial office there is no source of comfort more rich and pure than this.

8. *For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.* This is equivalent to saying, "My life and comfort depend on your stability in the faith, and your correct Christian walk;" comp. Martial vi. 70. Non est vivere, sed valere, vita—"Life consists not merely in

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect [a] that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, [1] direct our way unto you.

a 2 Co.13.9,11; Col.4.12. 1 or, *guide*.

living, but in the enjoyment of health." See also Seneca, Epis. 99, and Manilius, iv. 5, as quoted by Wetstein. The meaning here is, that Paul now *enjoyed* life; he had that which constituted real life, in the fact that they acted as became Christians, and so as to show that his labour among them had not been in vain. The same thing here affirmed is true of all faithful ministers of the gospel. They feel that they have something that may be called life, and that is worth living for, when those to whom they preach maintain a close walk with God.

9. *For what thanks can we render to God again.* That is, what expression of thanksgiving can we render to God that shall be an *equivalent* for the joy which your holy walk has furnished, or which will suitably express our gratitude for it.

10. *Night and day.* Constantly. ¶ *Praying exceedingly.* Gr., abundantly; that is, there was much more than ordinary prayer. He made this a special subject of prayer; he urged it with earnestness, and without intermission; comp. chap. ii. 17. ¶ *And might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.* Might render it *complete*, or fill up anything which is wanting. The word here used (καταρτίσαι), means, properly, *to make fully ready, to put full in order, to make complete;* see Notes, Rom. ix. 22; 2 Cor. xiii. 9; Gal. vi. 1. It is rendered *mending*, Matt. iv. 21; Mark i. 19; *perfect* and *perfected*, Matt. xxi. 19; Luke vi. 40; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 10; Heb. xiii. 21; 1 Pet. v. 10; *fitted*, Rom. ix. 22; *perfectly joined together*, 1 Cor. i. 10; *restore*, Gal. vi. 1; *prepared*, Heb. x. 5; and *framed*, Heb. xi. 3. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The meaning here is, that whatever was deficient in their views of religious doctrine the apostle desired to supply. It is to be remembered that he was with them but a comparatively short time before he was compelled to depart to Berea, and it is reasonable to suppose that there were many subjects on which he would be glad to have an opportunity to instruct them more fully.

11. *Now God himself.* This is evidently *a prayer.* He earnestly sought of God that he might be permitted to visit them, and that he would so prepare the way that he might do it. ¶ *And our Father. Even* our Father. The reference is particularly to the "Father," the First Person of the Trinity. It does not refer to the divine nature in general, or to God *as such*, but to God as the Father of the Lord Jesus. It is a distinct prayer offered to *him* that he would direct his way to them. It is right therefore to offer prayer to God as the First Person of the Trinity. ¶ *And our Lord Jesus Christ.* This also is a prayer, as much as the former was, for it can be understood in no other way. What can be its meaning, unless the apostle believed that the Lord Jesus had power to direct his way to them, and that it was proper for him to express this wish to him; that is, to *p ay* to him? If this be so, then it is right to pray to the Lord Jesus, or to worship him; see Notes on John xx. 28; Acts i. 24. Would Paul have prayed to an *angel* to direct his way to the church at Thessalonica? ¶ *Direct our way unto you.* Marg., *guide.* The Greek word — κατευθύνω — means, to guide straight towards or upon anything. It is rendered *guide*, in Luke i. 79, and *direct* here and in 2 Thess. iii. 5. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The idea is that of conducting one *straight* to a place, and not by a round-about course. Here the petition is, that God would remove all obstacles so that he could come directly to them.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love [a] one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts [b] unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

a 1 John 4.7-12. b 2 Th.2.17; 1 John3.20,21. c Zec.14.5; Jude 14.

CHAPTER IV.

FURTHERMORE then we [1] beseech you, brethren, and [2] exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us, how ye

1 or, *request.* 2 or, *beseech.*

12. *And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love;* comp. Notes, 2 Cor. ix. 8. The word "Lord" here probably refers to the Lord Jesus, as this is the name by which he is commonly designated in the New Testament; see Notes on Acts i. 24. If this be so, then this is a petition to the Lord Jesus as the fountain of all grace and goodness.

13. *To the end he may establish your hearts.* That is, "may the Lord cause you to increase in love (ver. 12), *in order* that you may be established, and be without blame in the day of judgment." The idea is, that if charity were diffused through their hearts, they would abound in every virtue, and would be at length found blameless. ¶ *Unblameable;* see Notes on chap. i. 10; Phil. ii. 15; iii. 6; Heb. viii. 7; comp. Luke i. 6; 1 Thess. v. 23. The meaning is, so that there could be no *charge* or *accusation* against them. ¶ *In holiness.* Not in outward conduct merely, or the observance of rites and forms of religion, but in purity of heart. ¶ *At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* To judge the world; Notes, chap. i. 10. As we are to appear before him, we should so live that our Judge will find nothing in us to be *blamed.* ¶ *With all his saints.* With all his *holy ones*—τῶν ἁγίων. The word includes his *angels*, who will come with him (Matt. xxv. 31), and all the redeemed, who will then surround him. The idea is, that before that holy assemblage it is desirable that we should be prepared to appear *blameless.* We should be fitted to be welcomed to the "goodly fellowship" of the angels, and to be regarded as worthy to be numbered with the redeemed who "have washed their robes and have made them pure in the blood of the Lamb." When we come to appear amidst that vast assemblage of holy beings, the honours of the world will appear to be small things; the wealth of the earth will appear worthless, and all the pleasures of this life beneath our notice. Happy will they be who are prepared for the solemnities of that day, and who shall have led such a life of holy love—of pure devotion to the Redeemer—of deadness to the world—and of zeal in the cause of pure religion—of universal justice, fidelity, honesty, and truth, as to be without reproach, and to meet with the approbation of their Lord.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter, properly, comprises two parts:—First, various practical exhortations, ver. 1—12; and secondly, suggestions designed to console those who have been bereaved; ver. 13—18.

The first part embraces the following topics:—

(1.) An exhortation to increase and abound in the Christian virtues which they had already manifested; ver. 1, 2.

(2.) A particular exhortation on the subject of sanctification (ver. 3—8), in which two points are specified, probably as *illustrations* of the general subject, and embracing those in regard to which they were exposed to special danger. The first was fornication, the other was fraud.

(3.) An exhortation to brotherly love; ver. 9, 10.

(4.) An exhortation to quiet industry, and to honesty in their dealings, particularly with those who were Christians; ver. 11, 12.

The second part is designed to comfort the Thessalonians who had been bereaved; ver. 13—18. Some of their

ought to walk [a] and to please God, *so* ye would abound [b] more and more.

2 For ye know what command-

[a] Col. 1. 10. [b] 1 Co. 15. 58. [c] 1 Co. 6. 15, 18.

ments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that [c] ye should abstain from fornication:

number had died. They appear to have been beloved members of the church, and dear friends of those to whom the apostle wrote. To console them he brings into view the doctrine of the second coming of the Saviour, and the truth that they would be raised up to live with him for ever. He reminds them that those who had died were "*asleep*"—reposing in a gentle slumber, *as if* they were to be awakened again (ver. 13); that they should not sorrow as they did who have no hope (ver. 13); that if they believed that Jesus died and rose again, they ought to believe that God would raise up all those who sleep in Jesus (ver. 14); that in the last day they would rise *before* the living should be changed, and that the living would not be taken up to heaven and leave their departed friends in their graves (ver. 15, 16), and that both the living and the dead would be raised up to heaven, and would be for ever with the Lord; ver. 17. With this prospect, they had every ground of comfort which they could desire, and they should sustain each other in their trials by this bright hope; ver. 18.

1. *Furthermore then.* Τὸ λοιπὸν. "As to what remains." That is, all that remains is to offer these exhortations; see Notes, 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Gal. vi. 17; Eph. vi. 10; Phil. iv. 8. The phrase is a formula appropriate to the *end* of an argument or discourse. ¶ *We beseech you.* Marg., *request.* The Greek is, "we *ask* you"—ἐρωτῶμεν. It is not as strong a word as that which follows ¶ *And exhort you.* Marg., *beseech.* This is the word which is commonly used to denote earnest exhortation. The use of these words here implies that Paul regarded the subject as of great importance. He might have *commanded* them—but kind exhortation usually accomplishes more than a command. ¶ *By the Lord Jesus.* In his name and by his authority ¶ *That as ye have received of us.* As you were taught by us. Paul doubtless had given them repeated instructions as to their duty as Christians. ¶ *How ye ought te walk.* That is, how ye ought to live. Life is often represented as a journey; Rom vi. 4; viii. 1; 1 Cor. v. 7; Gal. vi. 16; Eph. iv. 1. ¶ So *ye would abound more and more.* "That is, follow the directions which they had received more and more fully." *Abbott.*

2. *For ye know what commandments.* It was but a short time since Paul was with them, and they could not but recollect the rules of living which he had laid down. ¶ *By the Lord Jesus.* By the authority of the Lord Jesus. Some of those rules, or commandments, the apostle refers to, probably, in the following verses.

3. *For this is the will of God,* even *your sanctification.* It is the will or command of God that you should be holy. This does not refer to the *purpose* or *decree* of God, and does not mean that he intended to make them holy—but it means that it was his *command* that they should be holy. It was also true that it was agreeable to the divine will or purpose that they *should be* holy, and that he meant to use such an influence as to secure this; but this is not the truth taught here. This text, therefore, should not be brought as a proof that God intends to make his people holy, or that they *are* sanctified. It is a proof only that he *requires* holiness. The word here rendered *sanctification*—ἁγιασμὸς—is not used in the Greek classics, but is several times found in the New Testament. It is rendered *holiness,* Rom. vi. 19, 22; 1 Thess. iv. 7; 1 Tim. ii. 15; Heb. xii. 14; and *sanctification,* 1 Cor. i. 30; 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4; 2 Thess. ii. 13, and 1 Pet. i. 2; see Notes, Rom. vi. 19; 1 Cor. i. 30. It means here *purity* of life, and particularly abstinence from those vices which debase and degrade the soul.

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles [a] which know not God:

6 That no *man* go beyond and

[a] Ep. 4. 17, 18.

Sanctification consists in two things, (1.) in "ceasing to do evil;" and (2.) in "learning to do well." Or in other words, the first work of sanctification is in overcoming the propensities to evil in our nature, and checking and subduing the unholy *habits* which we had formed before we became Christians; the second part of the work consists in cultivating the positive principles of holiness in the soul. ¶ *That ye should abstain from fornication.* A vice which was freely indulged among the heathen, and to which, from that fact, and from their own former habits, they were particularly exposed. On the fact that they were thus exposed, and on the reasons for these solemn commands on the subject, see Notes on Acts xv. 20, and 1 Cor. vi. 18.

4. *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel.* The word *vessel* here (σκεῦος), probably refers to the body. When it is so used, it is either because the body is frail and feeble, like an earthen vessel, easily broken (2 Cor. iv. 7), or because it is that which contains the soul, or in which the soul is lodged. Lucret. Lib. iii. 441. The word *vessel* also (Heb. כְּלִי, Gr. σκεῦος) was used by the latter Hebrews to denote a wife, as the vessel of her husband. Schœttg. Hor. Heb. p. 827. Comp. Wetstein *in loc.* Many, as Augustine, Wetstein, Schœttgen, Koppe, Robinson (Lex.), and others, have supposed that this is the reference here; comp. 1 Pet. iii. 7. The word *body*, however, accords more naturally with the usual signification of the word, and as the apostle was giving directions to the whole church, embracing both sexes, it is hardly probable that he confined his direction to those who had *wives*. It was the duty of females, and of the unmarried among the males, as well as of married *men*, to observe this command. The injunction then is, that we should preserve the body pure; see Notes on 1 Cor. vi. 18—20. ¶ *In sanctification and honour.* Should not debase or pollute it; that is, that we should honour it as a noble work of God, to be employed for pure purposes; Notes, 1 Cor. vi. 19.

5. *Not in the lust of concupiscence.* In gross gratifications. ¶ *Even as the Gentiles.* This was, and *is*, a common vice among the heathen; see Notes, Acts xv. 20; Rom. i. 29; Eph. iv. 17, 18, and the reports of missionaries everywhere. ¶ *Which know not God;* see Notes, Rom. i. 21, 28; Eph. ii. 12.

6. *That no* man *go beyond.* ὑπερβαίνειν. This word means, *to make to go over*, as, *e. g.*, a wall or mountain; then, to *overpass*, to wit, certain limits, to transgress; and then *to go too far, i. e.*, to go beyond right—hence to cheat or defraud. It is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. The idea of *overreaching* is that which is implied in its use here. ¶ *And defraud* πλεονεκτεῖν. Marg., *oppress*, or *overreach.* This word properly means, to have more than another; then to *have* an advantage; and then to *take* advantage of any one, to circumvent, defraud, cheat. It is rendered *got an advantage*, 2 Cor. ii. 11; *defraud*, 2 Cor. vii. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 6; *make a gain*, 2 Cor. xii. 17, 18. Comp. for the use of the *adjective*, 1 Cor. v. 10, 11; vi. 10; Eph. v. 5; and the *noun*, Mark vii. 22; Luke xii. 15; Rom. i. 29; 2 Cor. ix. 5; Eph. v. 3; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 5; 2 Pet. ii. 3, 14. It is the word commonly used to denote *covetousness. Taking advantage of*, is the idea which it conveys here. ¶ *In* any *matter.* Marg., "or *the.*" According to the reading in the margin, this would refer to the particular matter under discussion (ver. 3—5), to wit, concupiscence, and the meaning then would be, that no one should be guilty of illicit intercourse with the wife of another. Many expositors — as Hammond

[1] defraud his brother in [2] *any* matter; because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but [a] unto holiness.

1 or, *oppress*; or, *overreach*. 2 or, *the*.
a Le.11.44; He.12.14; 1 Pe.1.14-16.

8 He therefore that [3] despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught [b] of God to love one another.

3 or, *rejecteth*. *b* John 15.12,17.

Whitby, Macknight, Rosenmüller, and others, suppose that this is a prohibition of adultery, and there can be no doubt that it *does* include this. But there is no reason why it should be confined to it. The Greek is so general that it may prohibit all kinds of *fraud, overreaching*, or *covetousness*, and may refer to *any* attempt to deprive another of his rights, whether it be the right which he has in his property, or his rights as a husband, or his rights in any other respect. It is a general command not to defraud; in no way to take advantage of another; in no way to deprive him of his rights. ¶ *Because that the Lord* is *the avenger of all such.* Of all such as are guilty of fraud; that is, he will punish them; comp. Notes on Rom. xii. 19; Eph. vi. 9. ¶ *As we have also forewarned.* Doubtless when he was with them.

7. *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness.* When he called us to be his followers, it was not that we should lead lives of impurity, but of holiness. We should, therefore, fulfil the purposes for which we were called into his kingdom. The word *uncleanness* (ἀκαθαρσία), means, properly, *impurity, filth;* and then, in a moral sense, *pollution, lewdness*, as opposed to chastity; Rom. i. 24; vi. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 21; Gal. v. 19; Eph. iv. 19; v. 3; Col. iii. 5.

8. *He therefore that despiseth.*—Marg., *rejecteth.* That is, he who disregards such commands as these which call him to a holy life, is really rejecting and disobeying God. Some might be disposed to say that these were merely the precepts of man, and that therefore it was not important whether they were obeyed or not. The apostle assures them in the most solemn manner, that, though communicated to them *by* man, yet they were really the commands of God. ¶ *Who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.* This is a claim to inspiration. Paul did not give these commands as his own, but as taught by the Spirit of God; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. vii. 40.

9. *But as touching brotherly love.* The "peculiar charity and affection which one Christian owes to another." *Doddridge;* see Notes on John xiii. 34. ¶ *Ye need not that I write unto you.* That is, "as I have done on the other points." They were so taught of God in regard to this duty, that they did not need any special instruction. ¶ *For ye yourselves are taught of God.* The word here rendered "taught of God"—θεοδίδακτοί—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is correctly translated, and must refer here to some *direct* teaching of God on their own hearts, for Paul speaks of their being so taught by him as to need no special precepts in the case. He probably refers to that influence exerted on them when they became Christians, by which they were led to love all who bear the divine image. He calls this being "taught of God," not because it was of the nature of *revelation* or *inspiration*, but because it was in fact the *teaching* of God in this case, though it was secret and silent. God has many ways of *teaching* men. The lessons which we learn from his Providence are a part of his instructions. The same is true of the decisions of our own consciences, and of the secret and silent influence of his Spirit on our hearts, disposing us to love what is lovely, and to do what ought to be done. In this manner all true Christians are taught to love those who bear the image of their

10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to [a] do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

[a] 1 Pe.4.15.

Saviour. They feel that they are brethren; and such is their strong attachment to them, from the very nature of religion, that they do not need any express command of God to teach them to love them. It is one of the first—the elementary effects of religion on the soul, to lead us to love "the brethren"—and to do this is one of the evidences of piety about which there need be no danger of deception; comp. 1 John iii. 14.

10. *And indeed ye do it;* see Notes on chap. i. 7. ¶ *But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;* Notes, chap. iii. 12. Here, as elsewhere, the apostle makes the fact that they deserved commendation for what they had done, a stimulus to arouse them to still higher attainments. *Bloomfield.*

11. *And that ye study to be quiet.* Orderly, peaceful; living in the practice of the calm virtues of life. The duty to which he would exhort them was that of being subordinate to the laws; of avoiding all tumult and disorder; of calmly pursuing their regular avocations, and of keeping themselves from all the assemblages of the idle, the restless, and the dissatisfied. No Christian should be engaged in a *mob;* none should be identified with the popular excitements which lead to disorder and to the disregard of the laws. The word rendered "ye study" (φιλοτιμέομαι), means properly, *to love honour, to be ambitious*; and here means the same as when we say "*to make it a point of honour* to do so and so. *Robinson, Lex.* It is to be regarded as a sacred duty; a thing in which our honour is concerned. Every man should regard himself as *disgraced* who is concerned in a mob. ¶ *And to do your own business.* To attend to their own concerns, without interfering with the affairs of others; see Notes on Phil. ii. 4; comp. 2 Thess. iii. 11; 1 Tim. v. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 13. The injunction here is one of the beautiful precepts of Christianity so well adapted to promote the good order and the happiness of society. It would prevent the impertinent and unauthorized prying into the affairs of others, to which many are so prone, and produce that careful attention to what properly belongs to our calling in life, which leads to thrift, order, and competence. Religion teaches no man to neglect his business. It requires no one to give up an honest calling and to be idle. It asks no one to forsake a useful occupation, unless he can exchange it for one more useful. It demands, indeed, that we shall be willing so far to suspend our ordinary labours as to observe the Sabbath; to maintain habits of devotion; to improve our minds and hearts by the study of truth, to cultivate the social affections, and to do good to others as we have an opportunity; but it makes no one idle, and it countenances idleness in no one. A man who is habitually idle can have very slender pretensions to piety. There is enough in this world for every one to do, and the Saviour set such an example of untiring *industry* in *his* vocation as to give each one occasion to doubt whether he is his true follower if he is not disposed to be employed. *And to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.* This command is not referred to in the history (Acts xvii.), but it is probable that the apostle saw that many of those residing in Thessalonica were disposed to spend their time in indolence, and hence insisted strongly on the necessity of being engaged in some useful occupation; comp. Acts xvii. 21. Idleness is one of the great evils of the heathen world in almost every country, and the parent of no small part of their vices. The effect of religion everywhere is to make men industrious; and every man, who is

12 That ye may walk honestly [a] toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

[a] Ro. 13.13. 1 or, *no man.*

13 But I would not have you

able, should feel himself under sacred obligation to be employed. God made man to work (comp. Gen. ii. 15; iii. 19), and there is no more benevolent arrangement of his government than this. No one who has already enough for himself and family, but who can make money to do good to others, has a right to retire from business and to live in idleness (comp. Acts xx. 34; Eph. iv. 27); no one has a right to live in such a relation as to be wholly dependent on others, if he can support himself; and no one has a right to compel others to labour for him, and to exact their unrequited toil, in order that he may be supported in indolence and ease. The application of this rule to all mankind would speedily put an end to slavery, and would convert multitudes, even in the church, from useless to useful men. If a man has no *necessity* to labour for himself and family, he should regard it as an inestimable *privilege* to be permitted to aid those who cannot work—the sick, the aged, the infirm. If a man has no need to add to what he has for his own temporal comfort, what a privilege it is for him to toil in promoting public improvements: in founding colleges, libraries, hospitals, and asylums; and in sending the gospel to those who are sunk in wretchedness and want! No man understands fully the blessings which God has bestowed on him, if he has hands to work and will not work.

12. *That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without.* Out of the church; comp Notes on Col. iv. 5. The word rendered *honestly*, means *becomingly, decorously, in a proper manner;* Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. xiv. 40. It does not refer here to mere honesty in the transaction of business, but to their *general treatment* of those who were not professing Christians. They were to conduct themselves towards them in all respects in a becoming manner—to be honest with them; to be faithful to their engagements; to be kind and courteous in their intercourse; to show respect where it was due, and to endeavour in every way to do them good. There are few precepts of religion more important than those which enjoin upon Christians the duty of a proper treatment of those who are not connected with the church. ¶ *And* that *ye may have lack of nothing.* Marg., *no man.* The Greek will bear either construction, but the translation in the text is probably the correct one. The phrase is to be taken in connection not merely with that which immediately precedes it—as if "their walking honestly towards those who were without" would preserve them from want—but as meaning that their industrious and quiet habits; their patient attention to their own business, and upright dealing with every man, would do it. They would, in this way, have a competence, and would not be beholden to others. Learn hence, that it is the duty of a Christian so to live as not to be dependent on others, unless he is made so by events of divine Providence which he cannot foresee or control. No man should be dependent on others as the result of idle habits; of extravagance and improvidence; of the neglect of his own business, and of intermeddling with that of others. If by age, losses, infirmities, sickness, he is made dependent, he cannot be blamed, and he should not repine at his lot. One of the ways in which a Christian may always do good in society, and honour his religion, is by quiet and patient industry, and by showing that religion prompts to those habits of economy on which the happiness of society so much depends.

13. *But I would not have you to be ignorant.* I would have you fully informed on the important subject which is here referred to. It is quite probable from this, that some erroneous views prevailed among them in reference to the condition of those who were dead, which tended to prevent their enjoying the full consolation which they might otherwise have

to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

done. Of the prevalence of these views, it is probable the apostle had been informed by Timothy on his return from Thessalonica; chap. iii. 6. What they were we are not distinctly informed, and can only gather from the allusions which Paul makes to them, or from the opposite doctrines which *he* states, and which are evidently designed to correct those which prevailed among them. From these statements, it would appear that they supposed that those who had died, though they were true Christians, would be deprived of some important advantages which those would possess who should survive to the coming of the Lord. There seems some reason to suppose, as Koppe conjectures (comp. also Saurin, Serm. vol. vi. 1), that the case of their grief was two-fold; one, that some among them doubted whether there would be any resurrection (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 12), and that they supposed that they who had died were thus cut off from the hope of eternal happiness, so as to leave their surviving friends to sorrow "as those who had no hope;" the other, that some of them believed that, though those who were dead would indeed rise again, yet it would be long after those who were living when the Lord Jesus would return had been taken to glory, and would be always in a condition inferior to them. See Koppe, *in loc.* The effect of such opinions as these can be readily imagined. It would be to deprive them of the consolation which they might have had, and should have had, in the loss of their pious friends. They would either mourn over them as wholly cut off from hope, or would sorrow that they were to be deprived of the highest privileges which could result from redemption. It is not to be regarded as wonderful that such views should have prevailed in Thessalonica. There were those even at Corinth who wholly denied the doctrine of the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 12); and we are to remember that those to whom the apostle now wrote had been recently converted from heathenism; that they had enjoyed his preaching but a short time; that they had few or no books on the subject of religion; and that they were surrounded by those who had *no* faith in the doctrine of the resurrection at all, and who were doubtless able—as sceptical philosophers often are now—to urge their objections to the doctrine in such a way as greatly to perplex Christians. The apostle, therefore, felt the importance of stating the *exact truth* on the subject, that they might not have unnecessary sorrow, and that their unavoidable grief for their departed friends might not be aggravated by painful apprehensions about their future condition. ¶ *Concerning them which are asleep.* It is evident from this that they had been recently called to part with some dear and valued members of their church. The word *sleep* is frequently applied in the New Testament to the death of saints. For the reasons why it is, see the Notes on John xi. 11; 1 Cor. xi. 30; xv. 51. ¶ *That ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.* That is, evidently, as the heathen, who had no hope of future life; comp. Notes on Eph. ii. 12. Their sorrow was caused not only by the fact that their friends were removed from them by death, but from the fact that they had no evidence that their souls were immortal; or that, if they still lived, that they were happy; or that their bodies would rise again. Hence, when they buried them, they buried their hopes in the grave, and so far as they had any evidence, they were never to see them again. Their grief at parting was not mitigated by the belief that the soul was now happy, or by the prospect of again being with them in a better world. It was on this account, in part, that the heathens indulged in expressions of such excessive grief. When their friends died, they hired men to play in a mournful manner on a pipe or trumpet, or women to howl and lament in a dismal manner. They beat their breasts; uttered loud shrieks; rent their garments; tore

off their hair; cast dust on their heads, or sat down in ashes. It is not improbable that some among the Thessalonians, on the death of their pious friends, kept up these expressions of excessive sorrow. To prevent this, and to mitigate their sorrow, the apostle refers them to the bright hopes which Christianity had revealed, and points them to the future glorious re-union with the departed pious dead. Learn hence, (1.) That the world without religion is destitute of hope. It is just as true of the heathen world now as it was of the ancient pagans, that they have no hope of a future state. They have no *evidence* that there is any such future state of blessedness; and *without* such evidence there can be no *hope*; comp. Notes on Eph. ii. 12. (2.) That the excessive sorrow of the children of this world, when they lose a friend, is not to be wondered at. They bury their hopes in the grave. They part, for all that they know or believe, with such a friend for ever. The wife, the son, the daughter, they consign to silence — to decay — to dust, not expecting to meet them again. They look forward to no glorious resurrection when that body shall rise, and when they shall be reunited to part no more. It is no wonder that they weep—for who would *not* weep when he believes that he parts with his friends *for ever?* (3.) It is only the hope of future blessedness that can mitigate this sorrow. Religion reveals a brighter world—a world where all the pious shall be reunited; where the bonds of love shall be made stronger than they were here; where they shall never be severed again. It is only *this* hope that can sooth the pains of grief at parting; only when we can look forward to a better world and feel that we shall see them again—love them again—love them for ever—that our tears are made dry. (4.) The Christian, therefore, when he loses a Christian friend, should not sorrow as others do. He will feel, indeed, as keenly as they do, the loss of their society; the absence of their well-known faces; the want of the sweet voice of friendship and love; for religion does not blunt the sensibility of the soul, or make the heart unfeeling. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and religion does not prevent the warm, gushing expressions of sorrow when God comes into a family and removes a friend. But this sorrow should not be like that of the world. It should not be (*a*) such as arises from the feeling that there is to be no future union; (*b*) it should not be accompanied with repining or complaining; (*c*) it should not be excessive, or beyond that which God designs that we should feel. It should be calm, submissive, patient; it should be that which is connected with steady confidence in God; and it should be mitigated by the hope of a future glorious union in heaven. The eye of the weeper should look up through his tears to God. The heart of the sufferer should acquiesce in him even in the unsearchable mysteries of his dealings, and feel that all is right. (5.) It is a sad thing to die without hope —so to die as to have no hope for ourselves, and to leave none to our surviving friends that we are happy Such is the condition of the whole heathen world; and such the state of those who die in Christian lands, who have no evidence that their peace is made with God. As I love my friends—my father, my mother, my wife, my children, I would not have them go forth and weep over my grave as those who have no hope in my death. I would have their sorrow for my departure alleviated by the belief that my soul is happy with my God, even when they commit my cold clay to the dust; and were there no other reason for being a Christian, this would be worth all the effort which it requires to become one. It would demonstrate the unspeakable value of religion, that my living friends may go forth to my grave and be comforted in their sorrows with the assurance that my soul is already in glory, and that my body will rise again! No eulogium for talents, accomplishments, or learning; no pæans of praise for eloquence, beauty, or martial deeds; no remembrances of

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so [a] them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

[a] 1Co.15.20,&c

wealth and worldly greatness, would then so meet the desires which my heart cherishes, as to have them enabled, when standing around my open grave, to sing the song which only Christians can sing:—

Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust;
And give these sacred relics room
To seek a slumber in the dust.

Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear
Invade thy bounds. No mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
While angels watch the soft repose.

So Jesus slept: God's dying Son
Pass'd thro' the grave, and blest the bed;
Rest here, blest saint, till from his throne
The morning break, and pierce the shade.

Break from his throne, illustrious morn;
Attend, O Earth, his sovereign word;
Restore thy trust—a glorious form—
Call'd to ascend, and meet the Lord.
WATTS.

14. *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again.* That is, if we believe this, we ought also to believe that those who have died in the faith of Jesus will be raised from the dead. The meaning is not that the *fact* of the resurrection depends on our *believing* that Jesus rose, but that the death and resurrection of the Saviour were connected with the resurrection of the saints; that the one followed from the other, and that the one was as certain as the other. The doctrine of the resurrection of the saints so certainly follows from that of the resurrection of Christ, that, if the one is believed, the other ought to be also; see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 12—14. ¶ *Which sleep in Jesus.* A most beautiful expression. It is not merely that they have calm repose—like a gentle slumber—in the hope of awaking again, but that this is "*in Jesus*"—or "through" (διὰ) him; that is, his death and resurrection are the cause of their quiet and calm repose. They do not "sleep" in heathenism, or in infidelity, or in the gloom of atheism—but in the blessed hope which Jesus has imparted. They lie, *as he did,* in the tomb—free from pain and sorrow, and with the certainty of being raised up again.

They sleep in Jesus, and are bless'd,
How kind their slumbers are;
From sufferings and from sin released,
And freed from every snare.

When, therefore, we think of the death of saints, let us think of what Jesus was in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Such is the sleep of our pious friends now in the grave; such will be our own when we die. ¶ *Will God bring with him.* This does not mean that God will bring them with him *from heaven* when the Saviour comes—though it will be true that their spirits will descend with the Saviour; but it means that he will bring them from their graves, and will conduct them with him to glory, to be with him; comp. Notes, John xiv. 3. The declaration, as it seems to me, is designed to teach the general truth that the redeemed are so united with Christ that they shall share the same destiny as he does. As the head was raised, so will all the members be. As God brought Christ from the grave, so will he bring them; that is, his resurrection made it certain that they would rise. It is a great and universal truth that God will bring all from their graves who "sleep in Jesus;" or that they shall all rise. The apostle does not, therefore, refer so much to the *time* when this would occur — meaning that it would happen *when* the Lord Jesus should return—as to the fact that there was an established connection between him and his people, which made it certain that if they died united with him by faith, they would be as certainly brought from the grave as he was. If, however, it means, as Prof. Bush (Anastasis, pp. 266, 267) supposes, that they will be brought with him from heaven, or will accompany him down, it does not prove that there must have been a previous resurrection, for the full force of the language would be met by the sup-

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For [a] the Lord himself shall

[a] Matt. 24.30,31.

position that their *spirits* had ascended to heaven, and would be brought with him to be united to their bodies when raised. If this be the correct interpretation, then there is probably an allusion to such passages as the following, representing the coming of the Lord accompanied by his saints. "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Zech. xiv. 5. "And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh, with thousand of his saints;" Jude 14. "Who," says President Dwight (*Serm.* 164), "are those whom God will bring with Him at this time? Certainly not the *bodies* of his saints. . . . The only answer is, he will bring with him 'the spirits of just men made perfect.'"

15. *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord.* By the command or inspired teaching of the Lord. Prof. Bush (Anastasis, p. 265) supposes that the apostle here alludes to what the Saviour says in Matt. xxiv. 30, 31, "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven," &c. It is possible that Paul may have designed a general allusion to *all* that the Lord had said about his coming, but there cannot have been an exclusive reference to that passage, for in what he says here there are several circumstances mentioned to which the Saviour in Matthew does not allude. The probability, therefore, is, that Paul means that the Lord Jesus had made a special communication to him on the subject. ¶ *That we which are alive;* see this fully explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 51. From this expression, it would seem, that some of the Thessalonians supposed that Paul meant to teach that he himself, and many of the living, would survive until the coming of the Lord Jesus, and, of course, that that event was near at hand. That this was *not* his meaning, however, he is at special pains to show in 2 Th. ii. 1—10. ¶ And *remain unto the coming of the Lord.* Those Christians who shall then be alive. ¶ *Shall not prevent them which are asleep.* Shall not precede; anticipate; go before. The word *prevent* with us is now commonly used in the sense of *hinder*, but this is never its meaning in the Scriptures. The word, in the time of the translators of the Bible, was used in its primitive and proper sense (*præ-venio*), meaning to precede, or anticipate. Job iii. 12, "Why did the knees *prevent* me?" That is, why did they anticipate me, so that I did not perish, Ps. lxxix. 8, "Let thy tender mercies speedily *prevent* us;" that is, go before us in danger. Ps. cxix. 147, "I *prevented* the dawning of the morning and cried;" that is, I *anticipated* it, or I prayed *before* the morning dawned. Matt. xvii. 25, "Jesus *prevented* him, saying;" that is, Jesus anticipated him; he commenced speaking before Peter had told him what he had said; comp. Ps. xvii. 13; lix. 10; lxxxviii. 13; xcv. 2; 2 Sam. xxii. 6, 19; Job xxx. 27; xli. 11 The meaning here is, that they who would be alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus, would not be "changed" and received up into glory *before* those who were in their graves were raised up. The object seems to be to correct an opinion which prevailed among the Thessalonians that they who should survive to the coming of the Lord Jesus would have great advantages over those who had died. What they supposed those advantages would be—whether the privilege of *seeing* him come, or that they would be raised to higher honours in heaven, or that they who had died would not rise at all, does not appear, nor is the origin of this sentiment known. It is clear, however, that it was producing an increase of their sorrow on the death of their pious friends, and hence it was very important to correct the error. The apostle, therefore, states that no such disadvantage could follow, for the matter of fact was, that the dead would rise first

16. *For the Lord himself shall de-*

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:[a]

[a] Re.20.5,6.

scend from heaven; Notes, Acts i. 11. ¶ *With a shout.* The word here used (κέλευσμα), does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means a *cry* of excitement, or of urging on; an outcry, clamour, or shout, as of sailors at the oar, Luc. Catapl. 19; of soldiers rushing to battle, Thuc. iii 14; of a multitude of people, Diod. Sic. iii. 15; of a huntsman to his dogs, Xen. Ven. vi. 20. It does not mean here, that the Lord would himself make such a shout, but that he would be attended with it; that is, with a multitude who would lift up the voice like that of an army rushing to the conflict. ¶ *With the voice of the archangel.* The word archangel occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Jude 9, where it is applied to Michael. It properly means a *chief* angel; one who is first, or who is over others—ἄρχων. The word is not found in the Septuagint, and the only archangel, therefore, which is *named* in the Scriptures, is Michael; Jude 9; comp. Rev. xii. 7. Seven angels, however, are referred to in the Scriptures as having an eminence above others, and these are commonly regarded as archangels. Rev. viii. 2, "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God." One of these is supposed to be referred to in the Book of Tobit, xii. 15, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." The names of three only of the seven are mentioned in the Jewish writings: Michael, the patron of the Jewish nation, Da. x. 13, 21; xii. 1. Gabriel, Da. viii. 16; ix. 21; comp. Luke i. 19, 26. Raphael, Tobit iii. 17; v. 4; viii. 2; ix. 1, 5; xii. 15. The Book of Enoch adds that of Uriel, pp. 187, 190, 191, 193. Michael is mentioned as one "of the chief princes," Da. x. 13; and as "the great prince," Da. xii. 1; comp. Notes on Eph. i. 21, and see an article by Prof. Stuart in the Bibliotheca Sacra, No. 1, on *Angelology.* It seems evident from the Scriptures, that there is one or more among the angels to whom the name archangel properly belongs. This view is in accordance with the doctrine in the Scriptures that the heavenly beings are divided into ranks and orders, for if so, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there should be one or more to whom the most exalted rank appertains; comp. Rev. xii. 7. Whether there is more than one to whom this name appropriately belongs, it is impossible now to determine, and is not material. The word here (in Greek) is without the article, and the phrase might be rendered, "with the voice of *an* archangel." The Syriac renders it, "with the voice of the prince of the angels." On an occasion so august and momentous as that of the coming of the final Judge of all mankind; the resurrection of the dead, and the solemn transactions before the tribunal of the Son of God deciding the destiny of countless millions for ever, it will not be inappropriate that the highest among the heavenly hosts should be present and take an important part in the solemnities of the day. It is not quite certain what is meant here by "the *voice* of the archangel," or for what purpose that voice will be heard. It cannot be that it will be to raise the dead—for that will be by the "voice of the Son of God" (John v. 28, 29), and it seems most probable that the meaning is, that this will be a part of the loud shout or cry which will be made by the descending hosts of heaven; or perhaps it may be for the purpose of summoning the world to the bar of judgment; comp. Matt. xxiv. 31. ¶ *And with the trump of God.* The trump which God appoints to be sounded on that solemn occasion. It does not mean that it will be sounded by God himself; see Notes on Matt. xxiv. 31. ¶ *And the dead in Christ.* Christians. ¶ *Shall rise first.* That is, before the living shall be changed. A doctrine similar to this was held by

17 Then we which are alive *and* remain, shall be caught up together with them in [a] the clouds, to meet

a Re. 11.12.

the Jews. "Resch Lachisch said, Those who die in the land of Israel, shall rise first in the days of the Messiah." See Wetstein, *in loc.* It is implied in all this description, that the interval between their resurrection and the change which will occur to the living, will be brief, or that the one will rapidly succeed the other; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. xv. 23, 51, 52.

17. *Then we which are alive.* Those who shall then be alive; see ver. 15. The word here rendered *then* (ἔπειτα), does not necessarily mean that this would occur *immediately.* It properly marks *succession in time,* and means *afterwards, next, next in the order of events;* Luke xvi. 7; Ga. i. 21; Ja. iv. 14. There may be a considerable interval between the resurrection of the pious and the time when the living shall be caught up to meet the Lord, for the change is to take place in them which will fit them to ascend with those who have been raised The meaning is, that *after* the dead are raised, or the next thing *in order,* they and the living will ascend to meet the Lord. The proper meaning of the word, however, denotes a succession so close as to exclude the idea of a *long* interval in which other important transactions would occur, such an interval, for example, as would be involved in a long personal reign of the Redeemer on earth. The word demands *this* interpretation—that the *next* thing in order after the resurrection of the righteous, will be their being caught up with the living, with an appropriate change, into the air—though, as has been remarked, it will admit of the supposition of such a brief, momentary interval (ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52) as shall be necessary to prepare for it. ¶ *Shall be caught up.* The word here used implies that there will be the application of external force or power by which this will be done. It will not be by any power of ascending which they will themselves have; or by any tendency of their raised or changed bodies to ascend of their own accord, or even by any effort of their own will, but by *a power* applied to them which will cause them to rise. Comp. the use of the word ἁρπάζω in Matt. xi. 12, "the violent *take* it by force;" xiii. 19, "then cometh the wicked one and *snatcheth away;*' John vi. 15, "that they would come and take him *by force;* x. 12, "the wolf *catcheth them;*" Acts viii. 39, "the Spirit of the Lord *caught away* Philip; 2 Cor. xii. 2, "such an one *caught up* to the third heaven;" also, John xii. 28, 29; Acts xxiii. 10; Jude 23; Rev. xii. 5. The verb does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament In all these instances there is the idea of either foreign force or violence effecting that which is done. What *force* or *power* is to be applied in causing the living and the dead to ascend, is not expressed. Whether it is to be by the ministry of angels, or by the direct power of the Son of God, is not intimated, though the latter seems to be most probable. The word should not be construed, however, as implying that there will be any reluctance on the part of the saints to appear before the Saviour, but merely with reference to the physical fact that power will be necessary to elevate them to meet him in the air. Will their bodies then be such that they will have the power of locomotion at will from place to place? ¶ *In the clouds.* Gr., "in clouds"—ἐν νεφέλαις—without the article. This may mean "in clouds;" that is, in such numbers, and in such grouping as to resemble clouds. So it is rendered by Macknight, Koppe, Rosenmüller, Bush (Anasta. 266), and others. The absence of the article here would rather seem to demand this interpretation Still, however, the other interpretation may be true, that it means that they will be caught up into the region of the clouds, or to the clouds which shall accompany the Lord Jesus on his return to our world. Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64; Mark xvi.

the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be [a] with the Lord.

a John 14.3.

18 Wherefore [1] comfort one another with these words.

1 or, *exhort.*

26; xiv. 62; Rev. i. 7; comp. Dan. vii. 13. In whichever sense it is understood, the expression is one of great sublimity, and the scene will be immensely grand. Some doctrine of this kind was held by the ancient Jews. Thus Rabbi Nathan (Midras Tillin, xlviii. 13) says, "What has been done before will be done again. As he led the Israelites from Egypt in the clouds of heaven, so will he do to them in the future time." ¶ *To meet the Lord in the air.* In the regions of the atmosphere—above the earth. It would seem from this, that the Lord Jesus, in his coming, would not descend *to* the earth, but would remain at a distance from it in the air, where the great transactions of the judgment will occur. It is, indeed, nowhere said that the transactions of the judgment will occur *upon* the earth. The world would not be spacious enough to contain all the assembled living and dead, and hence the throne of judgment will be fixed in the ample space above it. ¶ *And so shall we ever be with the Lord.* This does not mean that they will always remain with him *in the air*—for their final home will be heaven—and after the trial they will accompany him to the realms of glory; Matt. xxv. 34, "*Come*, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," &c. The *time* during which they will remain with him "in the air" is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. It will be as long as will be necessary for the purposes of judging a world and deciding the eternal doom of every individual "according to the deeds done in the body." There is no reason to suppose that this will be accomplished in a single day of twenty-four hours; but it is impossible to form and conjecture of the period which will be occupied.

18. *Wherefore comfort one another.* Marg., *exhort.* The word *comfort* probably best expresses the meaning. They were to bring these glorious truths and these bright prospects before their minds, in order to alleviate the sorrows of bereavement. The topics of consolation are these: first, that those who had died in the faith would not always lie in the grave; second, that when they rose they would not occupy an inferior condition because they were cut off before the coming of the Lord; and third, that all Christians, living and dead, would be received to heaven and dwell for ever with the Lord. ¶ *With these words.* That is, with these truths.

REMARKS.

1. This passage (ver. 13—18) contains a truth which is to be found in no heathen classic writer, and nowhere else, except in the teachings of the New Testament. For the elevated and glorious view which it gives of future scenes pertaining to our world, and for all its inestimable consolations, we are wholly indebted to the Christian religion. Reason, unassisted by revelation, never dared to *conjecture* that such scenes would occur; if it had, it would have had no arguments on which the conjecture could be supported.

2. The death of the Christian is a calm and gentle slumber; ver. 13. It is not annihilation; it is not the extinction of hope. It is like gentle repose when we lie down at night, and when we hope to awake again in the morning; it is like the quiet, sweet slumber of the infant. Why, then, should the Christian be afraid to die? Is he afraid to close his eyes in slumber? Why dread the night—the stillness of death? Is he afraid of the darkness, the silence, the chilliness of the midnight hour, when his senses are locked in repose? Why should death to him appear so terrible? *Is the slumbering of an infant an object of terror?*

3. There are magnificent scenes before us. There is no description anywhere which is more sublime than that in the close of this chapter. Great events are brought together

here, any one of which is more grand than all the pomp of courts, and all the sublimity of battle, and all the grandeur of a triumphal civic procession. The glory of the descending Judge of all mankind; the attending retinue of angels, and of the spirits of the dead; the loud shout of the descending host; the clangour of the archangel's trumpet; the bursting of graves and the coming forth of the millions there entombed; the rapid, sudden, glorious change on the millions of living men; the consternation of the wicked; the ascent of the innumerable host to the regions of the air, and the solemn process of the judgment there—what has ever occurred like these events in this world. And how strange it is that the thoughts of men are not turned away from the trifles—the show—the shadow—the glitter—the empty pageantry here—to these bright and glorious realities!

4. In those scenes we shall all be personally interested. If we do not survive till they occur, yet we shall have an important part to act in them. We shall hear the archangel's trump; we shall be summoned before the descending Judge. In these scenes we shall mingle not as careless spectators, but as those whose eternal doom is there to be determined, and with all the intensity of emotion derived from the fact that the Son of God will descend to judge *us*, and to pronounce *our* final doom! Can we be too much concerned to be prepared for the solemnities of that day?

5. We have, in the passage before us, an interesting view of the *order* in which these great events will occur. There will be (1.) the descent of the judge with the attending hosts of heaven; (2.) the raising up of the righteous dead; (3.) the change which the living will undergo (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 52); (4.) the ascent to meet the Lord in the air; and (5.) the return with him to glory. What place in this series of wonders will be assigned for the resurrection of the *wicked*, is not mentioned here. The object of the apostle did not lead him to advert to that, since his purpose was to comfort the afflicted by the assurance that their pious friends would rise again, and would suffer no disadvantage by the fact that they had died before the coming of the Redeemer. From John v. 28, 29, however, it seems most probable that they will be raised at the same time with the righteous, and will ascend with them to the place of judgment in the air.

6. There is no intimation here of a "personal reign" of Christ upon the earth. Indeed, there is no evidence that he will return *to* the earth at all. All that appears is, that he will descend "from heaven" to the regions of "the air," and there will summon the living and the dead to his bar. But there is no intimation that he will set up a visible kingdom then on earth, to continue a thousand or more years; that the Jews will be re-collected in their own land; that a magnificent city or temple will be built there; or that the saints will hover in the air, or reign personally with the Lord Jesus over the nations. There are two considerations in view of this passage, which, to my mind, are conclusive proof that all this is romance—splendid and magnificent indeed as an Arabian tale—but wholly unknown to the apostle Paul. The one is, that *if* this were to occur, it is inconceivable that there should have been no allusion to it here. It would have been such a magnificent conception of the design of the Second Advent, that it could not have failed to have been adverted to in a description like this. The other consideration is, that such a view would have been exactly *in point* to meet the object of the apostle here. What could have been more appropriate in comforting the Thessalonian Christians respecting those who had died in the faith, than to describe the gorgeous scenes of the "personal reign" of Christ, and the important part which the risen saints were to play in that great drama? How can it be accounted for that the apostle did not advert to it? *Would a believer in the "personal reign" now be likely to omit so material a point in a description of the scenes which are to occur at the "Second Advent?"*

7. The saints will be for ever with the Lord. They will dwell with him in his own eternal home; John xiv. 3. This expression comprises the sum of all their anticipated felicity and glory. To be with Christ will be, in itself, the perfection of bliss; for it will be a security that they will sin no more, that they will suffer no more, and that they will be shielded from danger and death. They will have realized the object of their long, fond desire—that of seeing their Saviour; they will have suffered the last pang, encountered the last temptation, and escaped for ever from the dominion of death. What a glorious prospect is this! Assuredly we should be willing to endure pain, privation, and contempt here for the brief period of our earthly pilgrimage, if we may come at last to a world of eternal rest. What trifles are all earthly sorrows compared with the glories of an endless life with our God and Saviour!

8. It is possible that even the prospect of the judgment-day should be a source of consolation; ver. 18. To most men it is justly an object of dread—for *all* that they have to fear is concentrated on the issues of that day. But why should a Christian fear it? In the descending Judge he will hail his Redeemer and friend; and just in proportion as he has true religion here, will be the certainty of his acquittal there. Nay, his feelings in anticipation of the judgment may be more than the *mere* absence of fear and alarm. It may be to him the source of positive joy. It will be the day of his deliverance from death and the grave. It will confirm to him all his long-cherished hopes. It will put the seal of approbation on his life spent in endeavouring to do the will of God. It will reunite him to his dear friends who have died in the Lord. It will admit him to a full and glorious view of that Saviour whom "having not seen he has loved;" and it will make him the companion of angels and of God. If there is anything, therefore, which ought to cheer and sustain our hearts in the sorrows and bereavements of this life, it is the anticipation of the glorious scenes connected with the Second Advent of our Lord, and the prospect of standing before him clothed in the robes of salvation, surrounded by all those whom we have loved who have died in the faith, and with the innumerable company of the redeemed of all ages and lands.

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter consists of two parts. I. The continuation of the subject of the coming of the Lord; ver. 1—11; and, II. Various practical exhortations.

In the first part, the apostle states (1.) that it was well understood by the Thessalonians that the coming of the Lord would be sudden, and at an unexpected moment, ver. 1, 2; (2.) he refers to the effect of his coming on the wicked and the righteous, and says that it would be attended with the sudden and inevitable destruction of the former, ver. 3; but that the result of his coming would be far different on the righteous; ver. 4—11. The prospect of his coming was fitted to make them watchful and sober, ver. 6—8; and his advent would be attended with their certain salvation; ver 9—11.

In the second part of the chapter, he exhorts them to show proper respect for their spiritual teachers and rulers, ver. 12, 13; to endeavour to restrain the unruly, to support the feeble, and to evince towards all the spirit of patience and forbearance, ver. 14; to manifest a meek and benevolent manner of life, ver. 15; to rejoice always, ver. 16; to pray constantly, ver. 17; to render thanks to God in every situation, ver. 18; to cherish the influences of the Holy Ghost on their souls, ver. 19; to show respect for all the divine prophetic communications, ver. 20; to consider and examine carefully everything submitted to them for belief; to adhere steadfastly to all that was good and true, ver. 21; and to avoid the very appearance of evil, ver. 22. The epistle closes with a fervent prayer that God would sanctify them

CHAPTER V.

BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh [a] as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden

[a] Lu.12.39,40; 2 Pe.3.10; Re.16.15.

entirely; with an earnest entreaty that they would pray for him; with a command that the epistle should be read to all the churches, and with the benediction; ver. 22—28.

1. *But of the times and the seasons;* see Notes, Acts i. 7. The reference here is to the coming of the Lord Jesus, and to the various events connected with his advent; see the close of chap. iv. ¶ *Ye have no need that I write unto you.* That is, they had received all the information on the particular point to which he refers, which it was necessary they should have. He seems to refer particularly to the *suddenness* of his coming. It is evident from this, as well as from other parts of this epistle, that this had been, from some cause, a prominent topic which he had dwelt on when he was with them; see Notes on chap. i. 10.

2. *For yourselves know perfectly.* That is, they had been fully taught this. There could be no doubt in their minds respecting it. ¶ *The day of the Lord so cometh.* Of the Lord Jesus—for so the word "Lord" in the New Testament commonly means; see Notes, Acts i. 24. The "day of the Lord" means that day in which he will be manifested, or in which he will be the prominent object in view of the assembled universe. ¶ *As a thief in the night.* Suddenly and unexpectedly, as a robber breaks into a dwelling. A thief comes without giving any warning, or any indications of his approach. He not only gives none, but he is careful that none shall be given. It is a point with him that, if possible, the man whose house he is about to rob shall have no means of ascertaining his approach until he comes suddenly upon him; comp. Notes on Matt. xxiv. 37—43; Luke xii. 39, 40. In this way the Lord Jesus will return to judgment; and this *proves* that all the attempts to determine the day, the year, or the *century* when he will come, must be fallacious. He intends that his coming to this world shall be sudden and unexpected, "like that of a thief in the night;" that there shall be no such indications of his approach that it shall *not* be sudden and unexpected; and that no warning of it shall be given so that men may know the time of his appearing. If this be not the point of the comparison in expressions like this, what is it? Is there anything else in which his coming will resemble that of a thief? And if this *be* the true point of comparison, how *can* it be true that men can ascertain *when* that is to occur? Assuredly, if they *can*, his coming will *not* be like that of a thief; comp Notes on Acts i. 7.

3. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety.* That is, when the wicked shall say this, for the apostle here refers only to those on whom "sudden destruction" will come; comp. Notes on Matt. xxiv. 36—42.; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. It is clear from this, (1.) that when the Lord Jesus shall come the world will not all be converted. There will be some to be "destroyed." How large this proportion will be, it is impossible now to ascertain. This supposition, however, is not inconsistent with the belief that there will be a general prevalence of the gospel before that period. (2.) The impenitent and wicked world will be sunk in carnal security when he comes. They will regard themselves as safe. They will see no danger. They will give no heed to warning. They will be unprepared for his advent. So it has always been. It seems to be a universal truth in regard to all the visitations of God to wicked men for punishment, that he comes upon them at a time when they are not expecting him, and that they have no faith in the predictions of his advent. So it was in the time of the flood; in the destruction of Sodom

destruction cometh upon them, as travail [a] upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, [b] brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light,

[a] Je.13.21. [b] Ep.5.8; 1John 2.8.

Gomorrah, and Jerusalem; in the overthrow of Babylon: so it is when the sinner dies, and so it will be when the Lord Jesus shall return to judge the world. One of the most remarkable facts about the history of man is, that he takes no warning from his Maker; he never changes his plans, or feels any emotion, *because* his Creator "thunders damnation along his path," and threatens to destroy him in hell. ¶ *Sudden destruction.* Destruction that was unforeseen (ἀιφνίδιος) or unexpected. The word here rendered *sudden*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Luke xxi. 34, "Lest that day come upon you *unawares*." The word rendered *destruction*—ὄλεθρος—occurs in the New Testament only here and in 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Thess. i. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 9, in all of which places it is correctly translated *destruction*. The word *destruction* is familiar to us. It means, properly, demolition; pulling down; the annihilation of the form of anything, or that form of parts which constitutes it what it is; as the destruction of grass by eating; of a forest by cutting down the trees; of life by murder; of the soul by consigning it to misery. It does not necessarily mean annihilation—for a house or city is not annihilated which is pulled down or burnt; a forest is not annihilated which is cut down; and a man is not annihilated whose character and happiness are destroyed. In regard to the destruction here referred to, we may remark, (1.) it will be *after* the return of the Lord Jesus to judgment; and hence it is not true that the wicked experience all the punishment which they ever will in the present life; (2.) that it seems fairly implied that the destruction which they will then suffer will not be annihilation, but will be connected with conscious existence; and (3.) that they will then be cut off from life and hope and salvation How can the solemn affirmation that they will be "destroyed suddenly," be consistent with the belief that all men will be saved? Is it the same thing to be *destroyed* and to be *saved*? Does the Lord Jesus, when he speaks of the salvation of his people, say that he comes to *destroy* them? ¶ *As travail upon a woman with child.* This expression is sometimes used to denote great consternation, as in Ps. xlviii. 6; Jer. vi. 24; Micah iv. 9, 10; great pain, as Isa. liii. 11; Jer. iv. 31; John xvi. 21; or the *suddenness* with which anything occurs; Jer. xiii. 21. It seems here to be used to denote two things; first, that the coming of the Lord to a wicked world will be sudden; and, secondly, that it will be an event of the most distressing and overwhelming nature. ¶ *And they shall not escape.* That is, the destruction, or punishment. They calculated on impunity, but now the time will have come when none of these refuges will avail them, and no rocks will cover them from the "wrath to come."

4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.* The allusion here is to the manner in which a thief or robber accomplishes his purpose. He comes in the night, when men are asleep. So, says the apostle, the Lord will come to the wicked. They are like those who are asleep when the thief comes upon them. But it is not so with Christians. They are, in relation to the coming of the day of the Lord, as men are who are awake when the robber comes. They could see his approach, and could prepare for it, so that it would not take them by surprise

5. *Ye are all the children of light.* All who are Christians. The phrase "children of light" is a Hebraism, meaning that they were the enlightened children of God. ¶ *And the children of the day.* Who live as if light always shone round about them. The meaning is, that in reference to the coming of the Lord they are as men would be in reference to the coming of a thief, if there were no night and no necessity of slum-

and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore [a] let us not sleep,

[a] Mat. 25.5; Ro. 13.12,13.

as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. [b]

7 For they that sleep, sleep in

[b] 1Pe. 5.8.

ber. They would always be wakeful and active, and it would be impossible to come upon them by surprise. Christians are always to be wakeful and vigilant; they are so to expect the coming of the Redeemer, that he will not find them off their guard, and will not come upon them by surprise.

6. *Therefore let us no sleep, as* do *others.* As the wicked world does; comp. Notes Matt. xxv. 5. ¶ *But let us watch.* That is, for the coming of the Lord. Let us regard it as an event which is certainly to occur, and which *may* occur at any moment; Notes Matt. xxv. 13. ¶ *And be sober.* The word here used (νήφω) is rendered sober in 1 Thess. v. 6, 8; 1 Pet. i. 13; v. 8; and *watch* in 2 Tim. iv. 5, and 1 Pet. iv. 7. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means, to be temperate or abstinent, especially in respect to wine. Joseph. Jewish Wars, 5. 5, 7; Xenophon, Cyr. 7. 5, 20; and then it is used in a more general sense, as meaning to be sober-minded, watchful, circumspect. In this passage there is an allusion to the fact that persons not only *sleep* in the night, but that they are frequently *drunken* in the night also. The idea is, that the Lord Jesus, when he comes, will find the wicked sunk not only in carnal security, but in sinful indulgences, and that those who are Christians ought not only to be awake and to watch as in the day-time, but to be temperate. They ought to be like persons engaged in the sober, honest, and appropriate employments of the day, and not like those who waste their days in sleep, and their nights in revelry. A man who expects soon to see the Son of God coming to judgment, ought to be a sober man. No one would wish to be summoned from a scene of dissipation to his bar. And who would wish to be called there from the ball-room; from the theatre; from the scene of brilliant worldly amusement? The most gay votary of the world; the most accomplished and flattered and joyous patron of the ball-room; the most richly-dressed and admired daughter of vanity, would tremble at the thought of being summoned from those brilliant halls, where pleasure is now found, to the judgment bar. They would wish to have at least a little time that they might prepare for so solemn a scene. But if so, as this event may at any moment occur, why should they not be habitually sober-minded? Why should they not aim to be always in that state of mind which they know would be appropriate to meet him? Especially should Christians live with such vigilance and soberness as to be always prepared to meet the Son of God. What Christian can think it appropriate for him to go up to meet his Saviour from the theatre, the ball-room, or the brilliant worldly party? A Christian *ought* always so to live that the coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven would not excite the least alarm.

7. *For they that sleep, sleep in the night.* Night is the time for sleep. The day is the time for action, and in the light of day men should be employed. Night and sleep are made for each other, and so are the day and active employment. The meaning here is, that it is in accordance with the character of those who are of the night, that is, sinners, to be sunk in stupidity and carnal security, as if they were asleep; but for the children of the day, that is, for Christians, it is no more appropriate to be inactive than it is for men to sleep in the day-time. "It is not to be wondered at that wicked men are negligent and are given to vice, for they are ignorant of the will of God. Negligence in doing right, and corrupt morals, usually accompany ignorance." *Rosenmüller.* ¶ *And they that be drunken are drunken in the night.* The night is devoted by them to revelry and dissipation. It is in accordance with the

the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-

a Is.59. 17. *b* Ro.9.22; 1 Pe.2.8.

plate, [a] of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed [b] us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

usual custom in all lands and times, that the night is the usual season for riot and revelry. The leisure, the darkness, the security from observation, and the freedom from the usual toils and cares of life, have caused those hours usually to be selected for indulgence in intemperate eating and drinking. This was probably more particularly the case among the ancients than with us, and much as drunkenness abounded, it was much more rare to see a man intoxicated in the day-time than it is now. To be drunk then in the day-time was regarded as the greatest disgrace. See Polyb. Exc. Leg. 8, and Apul. viii., as quoted by Wetstein; comp. Notes, Acts ii. 15; Is. v. 11. The object of the apostle here is, to exhort Christians to be sober and temperate, and the meaning is, that it is as disgraceful for them to indulge in habits of revelry, as for a man to be drunk in the day-time. The propriety of this exhortation, addressed to Christians, is based on the fact that intoxication was hardly regarded as a crime, and, surrounded as they were with those who freely indulged in drinking to excess, they were then, as they are now, exposed to the danger of disgracing their religion. The actions of Christians ought always to be such that they may be performed in open day and in the view of all the world. Other men seek the cover of the night to perform their deeds; the Christian should do nothing which may not be done under the full blaze of day.

8. *But let us, who are of the day, be sober.* Temperate, as men usually are in the day-time. ¶ *Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love.* This is a favourite comparison of the apostle Paul; see it explained at length in the Notes on Eph. vi. 14. ¶ *And for an helmet, the hope of salvation;* Notes, Eph. vi. 17.

9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath.* This is designed as an encouragement to effort to secure our salvation. The wish of God is to save us, and therefore we should watch and be sober; we should take to ourselves the whole of the Christian armour, and strive for victory. If he had appointed us to wrath, effort would have been in vain, for we could do nothing but yield to our inevitable destiny. The hope of a final triumph should animate us in our efforts, and cheer us in our struggles with our foes. How much does the hope of victory animate the soldier in battle! When morally certain of success, how his arm is nerved! When everything conspires to favour him, and when he seems to feel that God fights for him, and intends to give him the victory, how his heart exults, and how strong is he in battle! Hence, it was a great point among the ancients, when about entering into battle, to secure evidence that the gods favoured them, and meant to give them the victory. For this purpose they offered sacrifices, and consulted the flight of birds and the entrails of animals; and for this armies were accompanied by soothsayers and priests, that they might interpret any signs which might occur that would be favourable, or to propitiate the favour of the gods by sacrifice. See Homer, *passim;* Arrian's Expedition of Alexander, and the classic writers generally. The apostle alludes to something of this kind here. He would excite us to maintain the Christian warfare manfully, by the assurance that God intends that we shall be triumphant. This we are to learn by no conjectures of soothsayers; by no observation of the flight of birds; by no sacrifice which *we* can make to propitiate his favour, but by the unerring assurance of his holy word. If we are Christians, we know that he intends our salvation, and that victory will be ours; if we are willing to become Christians, we know that the Almighty arm will be stretched out to

10 Who died for us, that, whether [a] we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore [1] comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them[a] which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

a Ro. 14.8,9; 2 Co. 5.15.
1 or, *exhort.*
a He.13.7,17.

aid us, and that the "gates of hell" cannot prevent it.

10. *Who died for us.* That is, to redeem us. He designed by his death that we should ultimately live with him; and this effect of his death could be secured only as it was an atoning sacrifice. ¶ *Whether we wake or sleep.* Whether we are found among the living or the dead when he comes. The object here is to show that the one class would have no advantage over the other. This was designed to calm their minds in their trials, and to correct an error which seems to have prevailed in the belief that those who were found alive when he should return would have some priority over those who were dead; see Notes on chap. iv. 13—18. ¶ *Should live together with him;* Notes, John xiv. 3. The word rendered "together" (ἅμα) is not to be regarded as connected with the phrase "with him"—as meaning that he and they would be "together," but it refers to those who "wake and those who sleep"—those who are alive and those who are dead—meaning that they would be *together* or would be with the Lord *at the same time;* there would be no priority or precedence. *Rosenmüller.*

11. *Wherefore comfort yourselves,* Notes, chap. iv. 18. ¶ *And edify one another.* Strive to build up each other, or to establish each other in the faith by these truths; Notes, Rom. xiv. 19. ¶ *Even as also ye do.* Continue to do it. Let nothing intervene to disturb the harmony and consolation which you have been accustomed to derive from these high and holy doctrines.

12. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you.* Who they were is not mentioned. It is evident, however, that the church was not left without appointed persons to minister to it when its founders should be away. We know that there were presbyters ordained over the church at Ephesus, and over the churches in Crete (Acts xx. 17; Titus i. 5), and that there were bishops and deacons at Philippi (Phil. i. 1), and there is every reason to believe that similar officers would be appointed in every newly organized church. The word "*know*" seems to mean that they were not to make themselves strangers to them—to be cold and distant towards them—to be ignorant of their wants, or to be indifferent to them. While a people are not obtrusively to intermeddle with the business of a minister, any more than they are with that of any other man, yet there *are* things in regard to him with which they should be acquainted. They should seek to be personally acquainted with him, and make him their confidant and counsellor in their spiritual troubles. They should seek his friendship, and endeavour to maintain all proper intercourse with him. They should not regard him as a distant man, or as a stranger among them. They should so far understand his circumstances as to know what is requisite to make him comfortable, and should be on such terms that they may readily and cheerfully furnish what he needs. And they are to "know" or regard him as their spiritual teacher and ruler; not to be strangers to the place where he preaches the word of life, and not to listen to his admonitions and reproofs as those of a stranger, but as those of a pastor and friend. ¶ *Which labour among you.* There is no reason to suppose, as many have done, that the apostle here refers to different classes of ministers. He rather refers to different parts of the work which the same ministers perform. The first is, that they "labour"—that is, evidently, in preaching the gospel. For the use of the word, see John iv. 38, where it occurs twice; 1 Cor. xv.

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be [a] at peace among yourselves.

[a] Mar.9.50. 1 or, *beseech.* 2 or, *disorderly.*

14 Now we [1] exhort you, brethren, warn them that are [2] unruly, [b] comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, [c] be patient [d] toward all *men.*

[b] He.12,12. [c] Ro.15. 1. [d] Ep.4.2.

10; xvi. 16. The word is one which properly expresses wearisome toil, and implies that the office of preaching is one that demands constant industry. ¶ *And are over you in the Lord.* That is, by the appointment of the Lord, or under his direction. They are not absolute sovereigns, but are themselves subject to one who is over them—the Lord Jesus. On the word here rendered "are over you" (προϊσταμένους), see Notes on Rom. xii. 8, where it is translated *ruleth.* ¶ *And admonish you.* The word here used (νουθετέω) is rendered *admonish,* and *admonished,* in Rom. xv. 14; Col. iii. 16; 1 Thess. v. 12; 2 Thess. iii. 15; and *warn,* and *warning,* 1 Cor. iv. 14; Col. i. 28; 1 Thess. v. 14. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, to put in mind; and then to warn, entreat, exhort. It is a part of the duty of a minister to put his people in mind of the truth; to warn them of danger; to exhort them to perform their duty; to admonish them if they go astray.

13. *And to esteem them very highly in love.* To cherish for them an affectionate regard. The *office* of a minister of religion demands respect. They who are faithful in that office have a claim on the kind regards of their fellow-men. The very nature of the office requires them to do good to others, and there is no benefactor who should be treated with more affectionate regard than he who endeavours to save us from ruin; to impart to us the consolations of the gospel in affliction; and to bring us and our families to heaven. ¶ *For their work's sake.* Not primarily as a personal matter, or on their own account, but on account of the work in which they are engaged. It is a work whose only tendency, when rightly performed, is to do good. It injures no man, but contributes to the happiness of all. It promotes intelligence, industry, order, neatness, economy, temperance, chastity, charity, and kindness in this world, and leads to eternal blessedness in the world to come. A man who sincerely devotes himself to such a work has a claim on the kind regards of his fellow-men. ¶ And *be at peace among yourselves;* Notes, Mark ix. 50; Rom. xii. 18; xiv. 19.

14. *Now we exhort you, brethren.* Marg., *beseech.* This earnest entreaty is evidently addressed to the whole church, and not to the ministers of the gospel only. The duties here enjoined are such as appertain to all Christians in their appropriate spheres, and should not be left to be performed by ministers only. ¶ *Warn them.* The same word which in ver. 12 is rendered *admonish.* It is the duty of every church member, as well as of the ministers of the gospel, affectionately to admonish those whom they know to be living contrary to the requirements of the gospel. One reason why there is so little piety in the church, and why so many professors of religion go astray, is, that the great mass of church members feel no responsibility on this subject. They suppose that it is the duty *only* of the officers of the church to admonish an erring brother, and hence many become careless and cold and worldly, and no one utters a kind word to them to recall them to a holy walk with God. ¶ *That are unruly.* Marg., *disorderly.* The word here used (ἄτακτος), is one which properly means *not keeping the ranks,* as of soldiers; and then irregular, confused, neglectful of duty, disorderly. The reference here is to the members of the church who were irregular in their Christian walk. It is not difficult, in an army, when soldiers get out of the line, or leave their places in the ranks, or are thrown into confusion, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state of irregularity and confusion. As little

15 See that none render [a] evil for evil unto any *man;* but ever follow [b] that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men.*

[a] Pr.20.22,24,29; Mat.5.39,44; 1 Pe.3.9.

[b] Ga. 6.10.

difficult is it, when the members of a church are out of their places, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state. Many a church is like an army where half the soldiers are out of the line; where there is entire insubordination in the ranks, and where not half of them could be depended on for efficient service in a campaign. Indeed, an army would accomplish little if as large a proportion of it were irregular, idle, remiss, or pursuing their own aims to the neglect of the public interest, as there are members of the church who can never be depended on in accomplishing the great purpose for which it was organized. ¶ *Comfort the feeble-minded.* The dispirited; the disheartened; the downcast. To do this is also the duty of each church member. There are almost always those who are in this condition, and it is not easy to appreciate the value of a kind word to one in that state. Christians are assailed by temptation; in making efforts to do good they are opposed and become disheartened; in their contests with their spiritual foes they are almost overcome; they walk through shades of spiritual night, and find no comfort. In such circumstances, how consoling is the voice of a friend! How comforting is it to feel that they are not alone! How supporting to be addressed by one who has had the same conflicts, and has triumphed! Every Christian—especially every one who has been long in the service of his Master—has a fund of experience which *is the property of the church,* and which may be of incalculable value to those who are struggling now amidst many embarrassments along the Christian way. He who has that experience should help a weak and sinking brother; he should make his own experience of the efficacy of religion in *his* trials and conflicts, the means of sustaining others in their struggles. There is no one who would not reach out his hand to save a child borne down a rapid stream; yet how often do experienced and strong men in the Christian faith pass by those who are struggling in the "deep waters, where the proud waves have come over their souls!" ¶ *Support the weak;* Notes, Rom. xv. 1. ¶ *Be patient toward all* men. See the Greek word here used, explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. xiii 4; comp. Eph. iv. 2; Gal. v. 22; Col. iii. 12.

15. *See that none render evil for evil;* see Notes on Matt. v. 39, 44. The meaning here is, that we are not to take *vengeance;* comp. Notes on Rom. xii. 17, 19. This law is positive, and is universally binding. The moment we feel ourselves acting from a desire to "return evil for evil," that moment we are acting wrong. It may be right to defend our lives and the lives of our friends; to seek the protection of the law for our persons, reputation, or property, against those who would wrong us; to repel the assaults of calumniators and slanderers, but in no case should the motive be to do *them* wrong for the evil which they have done *us.* ¶ *But ever follow that which is good.* Which is benevolent, kind, just, generous; see Notes, Rom. xii. 20, 21. ¶ *Both among yourselves, and to all* men. The phrase "to all men," seems to have been added to avoid the possibility of misconstruction. Some might possibly suppose that this was a good rule to be observed towards those of their own number, but that a greater latitude in avenging injuries might be allowable towards their enemies out of the church. The apostle, therefore, says that the rule is universal. It relates to the heathen, to infidels, sceptics, and persecutors, as well as to the members of the church. To every man we are to do good as we are able—no matter what they do to us. This is the rule which God himself observes towards the evil and unthankful (Notes, Matt. v. 45), and

16 Rejoice [a] evermore.
17 Pray [b] without ceasing.
18 In [c] every thing give thanks:
a Ph.4.4; b Ro.12.12. c Ep.5.20.

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
19 Quench[d] not the Spirit.
d Ep.4.30.

is one of the original and beautiful laws of our holy religion.

16. *Rejoice evermore;* see Notes on Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4.

17. *Pray without ceasing;* see Notes on Rom. xii. 12. The direction here may be fairly construed as meaning (1.) That we are to be regular and constant in the observance of the *stated* seasons of prayer. We are to observe the duty of prayer in the closet, in the family, and in the assembly convened to call on the name of the Lord. We are not to allow this duty to be interrupted or intermitted by any trifling cause. We are so to act that it may be said we pray *regularly* in the closet, in the family, and at the usual seasons when the church prays to which we belong. (2.) We are to maintain an uninterrupted and constant *spirit* of prayer. We are to be in such a frame of mind as to be ready to pray publicly if requested; and when alone, to improve any moment of leisure which we may have when we feel ourselve strongly inclined to pray. That Christian is in a bad state of mind who has suffered himself, by attention to worldly cares, or by light conversation, or by gayety and vanity, or by reading an improper book, or by eating or drinking too much, or by late hours at night among the thoughtless and the vain, to be brought into such a condition that he cannot engage in prayer with proper feelings. There has been evil done to the soul if it is not prepared for communion with God at all times, and if it would not find pleasure in approaching his holy throne.

18. *In every thing give thanks;* Notes, Eph. v. 20; Phil. iv. 6. We can always find *something* to be thankful for, and there may be reasons why we *ought* to be thankful for even those dispensations which appear dark and frowning. Chrysostom, once the archbishop of Constantinople, and then driven into exile, persecuted, and despised, died far away form all the splendours of the capital, and all the comforts and honours which he had enjoyed, uttering his favourite motto—δόξα τῷ θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν—*glory to God for all things.* Bibliotheca Sacra, i. 700. So *we* may praise God for everything that happens to us under his government. A man owes a debt of obligation to him for *anything* which will recall him from his wanderings, and which will prepare him for heaven. Are there *any* dealings of God towards men which do not contemplate such an end? Is a man ever made to drink the cup of affliction when *no* drop of mercy is intermingled? Is he ever visited with calamity which does not in some way contemplate his own temporal or eternal good! Could we see all, we should see that we are never placed in circumstances in which there is not much for which we should thank God. And when, in his dealings, a cloud seems to cover his face, let us remember the good things without number which we *have* received, and especially remember that we are in the world of redeeming love, and we shall find enough for which to be thankful. ¶ *For this is the will of God.* That is, that you should be grateful. This is what God is pleased to require you to perform in the name of the Lord Jesus. In the gift of that Saviour he has laid the foundation for that claim, and he requires that you should not be unmindful of the obligation; see Notes, Heb xiii. 15.

19. *Quench not the Spirit.* This language is taken from the way of putting out a fire, and the sense is, we are not to extinguish the influences of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Possibly there may be an allusion here to fire on an altar, which was to be kept constantly burning. This fire may have been regarded as emblematic of devotion, and as denoting that that devotion was never to become extinct. The Holy

20 Despise [a] not prophesyings.
21 Prove [b] all things; hold fast [c] that which is good.

[a] 1 Co.14.1,39. [b] 1 John4.1. [c] Ph. 4.8.

Spirit is the source of true devotion, and hence the enkindlings of piety in the heart, by the Spirit, are never to be quenched. Fire may be put out by pouring on water; or by covering it with any incombustible substance; or by neglecting to supply fuel. If it is to be made to burn, it must be nourished with proper care and attention. The Holy Spirit, in his influences on the soul, is here compared with *fire* that might be made to burn more intensely, or that might be extinguished. In a similar manner the apostle gives this direction to Timothy, "I put thee in remembrance that thou *stir up* (ἀναζωπυρεῖν, *kindle up, cause to burn*) the gift of God;" 2 Tim. i. 6. Anything that will tend to damp the ardour of piety in the soul; to chill our feelings; to render us cold and lifeless in the service of God, may be regarded as "quenching the Spirit." Neglect of cultivating the Christian graces, or of prayer, of the Bible, of the sanctuary, of a careful watchfulness over the heart, will do it. Worldliness, vanity, levity, ambition, pride, the love of dress, or indulgence in an improper train of thought, will do it. It is a great rule in religion that all the piety which there is in the soul is the fair result of culture. A man has no more religion than he intends to have; he has no graces of the Spirit which he does not seek; he has no deadness to the world which is not the object of his sincere desire, and which he does not aim to have. Any one, if he will, may make elevated attainments in the divine life; or he may make his religion merely a religion of form, and know little of its power and its consolations.

20. *Despise not prophesyings.* On the subject of prophesyings in the early Christian church, see Notes on 1 Cor. xiv. 1, seq. The reference here seems to be to *preaching*. They were not to undervalue it in comparison with other things. It is possible that in Thessalonica, as appears to have been the case subsequently in Corinth (comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 19), there were those who regarded the power of working miracles, or of speaking in unknown tongues, as a much more eminent endowment than that of stating the truths of religion in language easily understood. It would not be unnatural that comparisons should be made between these two classes of endowments, much to the disadvantage of the latter; and hence may have arisen this solemn caution not to disregard or despise the ability to make known divine truth in intelligible language. A similar counsel may not be inapplicable to us now. The office of setting forth the truth of God is to be the permanent office in the church; that of speaking foreign languages by miraculous endowment, was to be temporary. But the office of addressing mankind on the great duties of religion, and of publishing salvation, is to be God's great ordinance for converting the world. It should not be *despised*, and no man commends his own wisdom who contemns it—for (1.) it is God's appointment—the means which he has designated for saving men. (2.) It has too much to entitle it to respect to make it proper to despise or contemn it. There is nothing else that has so much power over mankind as the preaching of the gospel; there is no other institution of heaven or earth among men that is destined to exert so wide and permanent an influence as the Christian ministry. (3.) It is an influence which is wholly good. No man is made the poorer, or the less respectable, or more miserable in life or in death, by following the counsels of a minister of Christ when he makes known the gospel. (4.) He who despises it contemns that which is designed to promote his own welfare, and which is indispensable for his salvation. It remains yet to be shown that any man has promoted his own happiness, or the welfare of his family, by affecting to treat with contempt the instructions of the Christian ministry.

21. *Prove all things.* Subject everything submitted to you to be be-

22 Abstain [a] from all appearance of evil.

a Is.33.15.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and *I pray*

lieved to the proper test. The word here used (δοκιμάζετε), is one that is properly applicable to metals, referring to the art of the assayer, by which the true nature and value of the metal is tested; see Notes, 1 Cor. iii. 13. This trial was usually made by fire. The meaning here is, that they were carefully to examine everything proposed for their belief. They were not to receive it on trust; to take it on assertion; to believe it because it was urged with vehemence, zeal, or plausibility. In the various opinions and doctrines which were submitted to them for adoption, they were to apply the appropriate tests from reason and the word of God, and what they found to be true they were to embrace; what was false they were to reject. Christianity does not require men to disregard their reason, or to be credulous. It does not expect them to believe anything because others say it is so. It does not make it a duty to receive as undoubted truth all that synods and councils have decreed; or all that is advanced by the ministers of religion. It is, more than any other form of religion, the friend of free inquiry, and would lead men everywhere to understand the reason of the opinions which they entertain; comp. Acts xvii. 11, 12; 1 Pet. iii. 15. ¶ *Hold fast that which is good.* Which is in accordance with reason and the word of God; which is adapted to promote the salvation of the soul and the welfare of society. This is just as much a duty as it is to "prove all things." A man who has applied the proper tests, and has found out what is truth, is bound to embrace it and to hold it fast. He is not at liberty to throw it away, as if it were valueless; or to treat truth and falsehood alike. It is a duty which he owes to himself and to God to adhere to it firmly, and to suffer the loss of all things rather than to abandon it. There are few more important rules in the New Testament than the one in this passage. It shows what is the true nature of Christianity, and it is a rule whose practical value cannot but be felt constantly in our lives. Other religions require their votaries to receive everything upon trust; Christianity asks us to examine everything. Error, superstition, bigotry, and fanaticism attempt to repress free discussion, by saying that there are certain things which are too sacred in their nature, or which have been too long held, or which are sanctioned by too many great and holy names, to permit their being subjected to the scrutiny of common eyes, or to be handled by common hands. In opposition to all this, Christianity requires us to examine *everything*—no matter by whom held; by what councils ordained; by what venerableness of antiquity sustained; or by what sacredness it may be invested. We are to receive no opinion until we are *convinced* that it is true; we are to be subjected to no pains or penalties for not believing what we do *not* perceive to be true; we are to be prohibited from examining no opinion which our fellow-men regard as true, and which they seek to make others believe. No popular current in favour of any doctrine; no influence which name and rank and learning can give it, is to commend it to us as certainly worthy of our belief. By whomsoever held, we are to examine it freely before we embrace it; but *when* we are convinced that it is true, it is to be held, no matter what current of popular opinion or prejudice may be against it; no matter what ridicule may be poured upon it; and no matter though the belief of it may require us to die a martyr's death.

22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* Not only from evil itself, but from that which *seems* to be wrong. There are many things which are *known* to be wrong. They are positively forbidden by the laws of heaven, and the world concurs in the sentiment that they are wicked. But there are also many things about which there

God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless [a] unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[a] 1 Co. 1. 8, 9.

may be some reasonable doubt. It is not quite easy to determine in the case what is right or wrong. The subject has not been fully examined, or the question of its morality may be so difficult to settle, that the mind may be nearly or quite balanced in regard to it. There are many things which, in themselves, may not appear to us to be positively wrong, but which are so considered by large and respectable portions of the community; and for us to do them would be regarded as inconsistent and improper. There are many things, also, in respect to which there is great variety of sentiment among mankind—where one portion would regard them as proper, and another as improper. There are things, also, where, whatever may be our motive, we may be certain that our conduct will be regarded as improper. A great variety of subjects, such as those pertaining to dress, amusements, the opera, the ball-room, games of chance and hazard, and various practices in the transaction of business, come under this general class; which, though on the supposition that they cannot be proved to be in themselves positively wrong or forbidden, have much the "*appearance*" of evil, and will be so interpreted by others. The safe and proper rule is to *lean always* to the side of virtue. In these instances it may be certain that there will be no sin committed by abstaining; there *may be* by indulgence. No command of God, or of propriety, will be violated if we decline complying with these customs; but on the other hand we *may* wound the cause of religion by yielding to what possibly is a mere temptation. No one ever does injury or wrong by abstaining from the pleasures of the ball-room, the theatre, or a glass of wine; who can indulge in them without, in the view of large and respectable portions of the community, doing that which has the "appearance" at least of "evil?"

23. *And the very God of peace.* The God who gives peace or happiness; comp. Notes, Rom. i. 7. ¶ *Sanctify you.* Notes, John xvii. 17. ¶ *Wholly.* ὁλοτελεῖς. In every part; completely. It is always proper to pray that God would make his people entirely holy. A *prayer* for perfect sanctification, however, should not be adduced as a *proof* that it is in fact attained in the present life. ¶ *Your whole spirit and soul and body.* There is an allusion here, doubtless, to the popular opinion in regard to what constitutes man. We have a body; we have animal life and instincts in common with the inferior creation; and we have also a rational and immortal soul. This distinction is one that appears to the mass of men to be true, and the apostle speaks of it in the language commonly employed by mankind. At the same time, no one can demonstrate that it is *not* founded in truth. The *body* we see, and there can be no difference of opinion in regard to its existence. The *soul* (ἡ ψυχὴ—*psyche*), the vital principle, the animal life, or the seat of the senses, desires, affections, appetites, we have in common with other animals. It appertains to the nature of the animal creation, though more perfect in some animals than in others, but is in all distinct from the soul as the seat of conscience, and as capable of moral agency. See the use of the word in Matt. xxii. 37; Mark xii. 30; Luke x. 27; xii. 20; Acts xx. 10; Heb. iv. 12; Rev. viii. 9, *et al.* In the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy this was distinguished from the higher rational nature (ὁ νοῦς, τὸ πνεῦμα) as this last belonged to man alone. This *psyche* (ψυχὴ) "soul," or life, it is commonly supposed, becomes extinct at death. It is so connected with the bodily organization, that when the tissues of the animal frame cease their functions, this ceases also. This was not, however, the opinion of the ancient Greeks. Homer uses the term to denote that which leaves the body with the breath, as escaping from the ἕρκος ὀδόντων—*the fence or sept of th*

24 Faithful *is* he [a] that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

[a] 1 Co.10.13; 2 Th.3.3.

teeth—and as also passing out through a wound.—This ψυχὴ—*psyche*—continued to exist in Hades, and was supposed to have a definite form there, but could not be seized by the hands. Ody. ii. 207. See *Passow*, 2; comp. Prof. Bush, Anasta. pp. 72, 73. Though this word, however, denotes the vital principle or the animal life, in man it may be connected with *morals*—just as the body may be—for it is a part of himself in his present organization, and whatever may be true in regard to the inferior creation, it is his duty to bring *his whole nature* under law, or so to control it that it may not be an occasion of sin. Hence the apostle prays that the "whole *body* and *soul*"—or animal nature—may be made holy. This distinction between the animal life and the mind of man (the *anima* and *animus*, the ψυχὴ and the πνεῦμα), was often made by the ancient philosophers. See Plato, Timæ. p. 1048, A. Nemesius, de Nat. Hom. 1 Cit. Glyca, p. 70; Lucretius, iii. 94; 116, 131; Juvenal, xv. 146; Cicero, de Divinat. 129, as quoted by Wetstein *in loc.* A similar view prevailed also among the Jews. Rabbi Isaac (Zohar in Lev. fol. 29, 2), says, "Worthy are the righteous in this world and the world to come, for lo, they are all holy; their *body* is holy, their *soul* is holy, their *spirit* and their *breath* is holy." Whether the apostle meant to sanction this view, or merely to speak in common and popular language, may indeed be questioned, but there seems to be a foundation for the language in the nature of man. The word here rendered *spirit* (πνεῦμα), refers to the intellectual or higher nature of man; that which is the seat of reason, of conscience, and of responsibility. This is immortal. It has no *necessary* connection with the body, as animal life or the *psyche* (ψυχὴ) has, and consequently will be unaffected by death. It is this which distinguishes man from the brute creation; this which allies him with higher intelligences around the throne of God. ¶ *Be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The apostle does not intimate here that either the body or the vital principle will be admitted to heaven, or will be found in a future state of being, whatever may be the truth on that subject. The prayer is, that they might be entirely holy, and be kept from transgression, until the Lord Jesus should come; that is, until he should come either to remove them by death, or to wind up the affairs of this lower world; see Notes on chap. i. 10. By his praying that the "body and the soul"—meaning here the animal nature, the seat of the affections and passions—might be kept holy, there is reference to the fact that, connected as they are with a rational and accountable soul, they may be *the occasion* of sin. The same natural propensities; the same excitability of passion; the same affections which in a brute would involve no responsibility, and have nothing moral in their character, may be a very different thing in *man*, who is placed under a moral law, and who is bound to restrain and govern *all* his passions by a reference to that law, and to his higher nature. For a cur to snarl and growl; for a lion to roar and rage; for a hyena to be fierce and untameable; for a serpent to hiss and bite, and for the ostrich to leave her eggs without concern (Job xxxix. 14), involves no blame, no guilt for them, for they are not accountable; but for *man* to evince the same temper, and the same want of affection, *does* involve guilt, for he has a higher nature, and all these things should be subject to the law which God has imposed on him as a moral and accountable being. As these things may, therefore, in man be the *occasion* of sin, and *ought* to be subdued, there was a fitness in praying that they might be "preserved blameless" to the coming of the Saviour; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 27.

24. *Faithful is he that calleth you,* That is, your sanctification after all depends on him, and as he has begun a work of grace in your hearts, you

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

27 I [1] charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

1 or, *adjure.*

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

The first *epistle* unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

may depend on his faithfulness to complete it; see Notes on chap. iv. 3; Phil. i. 6; 1 Cor. i. 9.

25. *Brethren, pray for us.* A request which the apostle often makes; Notes on Heb. xiii. 18. He was a man of like passions as others: liable to the same temptations; engaged in an arduous work; often called to meet with opposition, and exposed to peril and want, and he peculiarly needed the prayers of the people of God. A minister, surrounded as he is by temptations, is in great danger if he has not the prayers of his people. Without those prayers, he will be likely to accomplish little in the cause of his Master. His own devotions in the sanctuary will be formal and frigid, and the word which he preaches will be likely to come from a cold and heavy heart, and to fall also on cold and heavy hearts. There is no way in which a people can better advance the cause of piety in their own hearts, than by praying much for their minister.

26. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss;* see Notes on Rom xvi. 16.

27. *I charge you by the Lord.* Marg., *adjure.* Gr., "I put you under oath by the Lord"—ὁρκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν Κύριον. It is equivalent to binding persons by an oath; see Notes on Matt. xxvi. 63; comp. Gen. xxi. 23, 24; xxiv. 3, 37; l. 25. ¶ *That this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.* To all the church; comp. Notes on Col. iv. 16. The meaning is, that the epistle was to be read to the whole church on some occasion on which it was assembled together. It was not merely designed for the individual or individuals into whose hands it might happen to fall, but as it contained matters of common interest, and was designed for the whole body of believers at Thessalonica, the apostle gives a solemn charge that it should not be suppressed or kept from them. Injunctions of this kind occurring in the epistles, look as if the apostles regarded themselves as under the influence of inspiration, and as having authority to give infallible instructions to the churches.

28. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,* &c.; Notes, Rom. xvi. 20.

In regard to the subscription at the close of the epistle, purporting that it was written from Athens, see the Intro. § 3. These subscriptions are of no authority, and the one here, like several others, is probably wrong.

From the solemn charge in ver. 27, of this chapter, that "this epistle should be read to *all* the holy brethren," that is, to the church at large, we may infer that it is in accordance with the will of God that all Christians should have free access to the Holy Scriptures. What was the particular reason for this injunction in Thessalonica, is not known, but it is possible that an opinion had begun to prevail even then that the Scriptures were designed to be kept in the hands of the ministers of religion, and that their common perusal was to be prohibited. At all events, whether this opinion prevailed then or not, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Holy Spirit, by whom this epistle was dictated, foresaw that the time *would* come when this doctrine would be defended by cardinals and popes and councils; and that it would be one of the means by which the monstrous fabric of the Papacy would be sustained and perpetuated. It is worthy of remark, also, that the apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Thessalonians, has dwelt more fully on the fact that the great apostasy would occur under the Papacy, and on the characteristics of that grand usurpation over the rights of men, than he has anywhere else in his epistle; see 2 Thess. ii. 11. It is no improbable supposition that with reference to that, and

to counteract one of its leading dogmas, his mind was supernaturally directed to give this solemn injunction, that the contents of the epistle which he had written should be communicated without reserve to *all* the Christian brethren in Thessalonica. In view of this injunction, therefore, at the close of this epistle, we may remark, (1.) that it is a subject of express divine command that the people should have access to the Holy Scriptures. So important was this considered, that it was deemed necessary to enjoin those who should receive the word of God, under the solemnities of an oath, and by all the force of apostolic authority, to communicate what they had received to others. (2.) This injunction had reference to *all* the members of the church, for they were *all* to be made acquainted with the word of God. The command is, indeed, that it be "read" to them, but by parity of reasoning it would follow that it was to be in their hands; that it was to be accessible to them; that it was in no manner to be withheld from them. Probably many of them could not read, but *in some way* the contents of revelation were to be made known to them—and not by *preaching* only, but by *reading* the words of inspiration. No part was to be kept back; nor were they to be denied such access that they could fully understand it; nor was it to be insisted on that there should be an authorized expounder of it. It was presumed that all the members of the church were qualified to understand what had been written to them, and to profit by it. It follows therefore, (3.) that there is great iniquity in all those decisions and laws which are designed to keep the Scriptures from the common people. This is true (*a*) in reference to the Papal communion, and to all the ordinances there which prohibit the free circulation of the Sacred Volume among the people; (*b*) it is true of all those laws in slave-holding communities which prohibit slaves from being taught to read the Scriptures; and (*c*) it is true of all the opinions and dogmas which prevail in *any* community where the right of "private judgment" is denied, and where free access to the volume of inspiration is forbidden. The richest blessing of heaven to mankind is the Bible; and there is no book ever written so admirably adapted to the common mind, and so fitted to elevate the sunken, the ignorant, and the degraded. There is no more decided enemy of the progress of the human race in intelligence, purity, and freedom, than he who prevents the free circulation of this holy volume; and there is no sincerer friend of the species than he who "causes it to be read by all," and who contributes to make it accessible to all the families and all the inhabitants of the world.

THE SECOND

EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION.

For a general view of Thessalonica; of the establishment of the church there; of the character of the church, and of the design for which the apostle addressed these letters to it, see the Introduction to the First Epistle.

This epistle appears to have been written soon after the first, and from the same place—Corinth. See Intro. to the First Epistle, § 3. The proof of this indeed is not certain, for there are no marks of time or place *in* the epistle by which these points can be determined. The probability rests upon these grounds: (1.) That the same persons—Paul, Silas, and Timothy—are associated in both epistles, and are mentioned as being together at the time when they were written (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1); but as there is reason to believe that they did not continue long together, it is to be presumed that one epistle was written soon after the other. (2.) Paul refers to an error which had grown up, apparently in consequence of a misunderstanding of his first epistle (chap. ii. 1, 2); an error which he regarded as of great magnitude, and which was producing very unhappy results (chap. iii. 11, 12), and it was natural that he should hasten to correct that error as soon as possible. (3.) There is some probability, as Benson has remarked, that the epistle was written *before* the troubles came upon him at Corinth under the administration of Gallio (Acts xviii. 12—16), and yet that he saw that the storm was approaching, and hints at it in chap. ii. 2, "And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." If so, this epistle was written but a few months at farthest after the first. We may regard the evidence, therefore, as sufficiently clear, that this epistle was written at Corinth some time during the latter part of A. D. 53, or the beginning of A. D. 54.

There is little doubt as to the design for which it was written. Either by a false interpretation of his former epistle, or by an epistle forged in his name and sent to them, the opinion had become prevalent in the church at Thessalonica that the Saviour was about to appear, and that the end of the world was at hand; see chap. ii. 2; comp. Hug's Intro. § 94, and Stuart's Notes on the same, pp. 741, seq. To correct this impression was the leading design of this epistle. Some had become alarmed, and were suffering from unnecessary apprehension (chap. ii. 2); and some, under the natural belief that labour then was useless, and that property was of no value, had given up all attention to their worldly concerns (chap. iii. 10, 11); and it was of the utmost importance that the error should be corrected. This was done in this second epistle, and in doing it, Paul, as was usual, intermingled several

other topics of importance, adapted to the condition of those to whom he wrote.

This epistle, though short, has great permanent value, and is indispensable to a proper understanding of the great doctrine of the Second Advent of the Redeemer. It was written, indeed, to correct an error in a single church, and at a particular time, but history has shown there is a tendency to that same error in all ages, and that there was need of some permanent inspired statement to check it. It was inferred from the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, that *he* meant to teach that the day of judgment was not far off. Had not this second epistle been written to correct that false interpretation, and to show what *was* his belief, it would have been charged on him that he was mistaken, and *then* the inference would have been naturally made that *all* the prophecies respecting that event were false. The distance between this and absolute infidelity, it is easy to see, is very small. Paul, by his prompt explanation, arrested that danger, and showed that he intended to teach no such doctrine as had been drawn from his first letter to them. This epistle, therefore, is of importance to show (1.) that the apostle did not believe, or mean to teach, that the end of the world was near. There are many expressions, indeed, which like those in First Thessalonians, would *seem* to imply that the apostle held that belief, *but the explanation of an inspired apostle of his own sentiments at the time, settled that matter.* No one has now a right to charge that belief on him, or on others who then used the same language. No one can pretend that they held the opinion that the end of the world was near. There is no stronger language on that subject in any of their writings than occurs in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, and Paul in the second epistle expressly says that he held no such opinion, and meant to teach no such thing. (2.) This epistle is a standing rebuke of the kind of interpretation which attempts to determine the time when the Saviour will come, and of all those theories which represent "the day of Christ as at hand." The declarations in the Scriptures are positive and abundant that the time of his appearing is not made known to mortals (Notes on Acts i. 7), and it is not possible now to make out a *stronger* argument to prove that that time is near, than could have been made out from the First Epistle to the Thessalonians; and yet Paul deemed it necessary to write them a second letter, expressly to show them that the interpretation which they put on his language was unauthorized. The truth is, that it was not the design of God to make known to men the exact time when the Lord Jesus will return to judgment; and all attempts since the time of Paul to settle that have failed, and all will doubtless continue to fail, as they always have done.

THE SECOND

EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto [a] the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Grace [b] unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth:

4 So that we ourselves glory [c] in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; [d]

5 *Which is* [e] a manifest token

a 1 Th.1.1,&c. *b* 1 Co.1.3. *c* 2 Co.9.2, 1 Th.2.19,20. *d* Ja.5.11. *e* Ph.1.28.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter comprises the following points:—

(1.) The salutation; ver. 1, 2.

(2.) An expression of thanks for the progress which the Thessalonians had made in piety, and especially for the manner in which they had been enabled to bear their trials; ver. 3, 4.

(3.) An assurance that the manner in which they had been enabled to bear their trials was an evidence that they were true Christians; ver. 5.

(4.) A declaration that those who had persecuted them, and all others who were wicked, would be punished when the Lord Jesus should come, and that when this should occur the righteous would appear in glory and honour; ver. 6—10.

(5.) The expression of an earnest desire that they might be prepared for the solemn scenes of that day; ver. 11, 12.

1, 2. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus;* see Notes on 1 Thess. i. 1.

3. *We are bound to thank God always for you;* Notes on 1 Thess. i. 2. ¶ *As it is meet.* As it is fit or proper. ¶ *Because that your faith groweth exceedingly.* It would seem probable from this that Paul had heard from them since his first epistle was written. He had doubtless received intelligence of the error which prevailed among them respecting his views of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and of the progress which the truth was making, at the same time. ¶ *And the charity of every one of you all toward each other.* Your mutual love.

4. *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God.* That is, we mention your example to other churches, and glory in it, as an evidence of what the gospel is fitted to do; see Notes on 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. ix. 2. ¶ *For your patience.* Your patient endurance of trials. ¶ *And faith.* Fidelity, or constancy. You have shown unwavering confidence in God in your afflictions. ¶ *In all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure;* see Notes on 1 Thess. ii. 14; iv. 13. It would seem from this that the persecutions and trials to which the apostle referred in his first epistle were still continued.

5. Which is *a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.* The word "*which*" is supplied by our translators, and there may be some doubt to what the apostle has reference as being "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God." The general sense seems to be, that the fact that they

of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer : [a]

6 Seeing [b] *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

a Th.2.14; He.10.32,23. *b* Re.6.10.

were thus persecuted was an evidence that there would be a future judgment, when the righteous who were persecuted would be rewarded, and the wicked who persecuted them would be punished. The manner in which they bore their trials was an indication also of what the result would be in regard to them. Their patience and faith under persecutions were constantly showing that they would "be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they were called to suffer." It is evident that a *relative* must be supplied here, as our translators have done, but there has been a difference of view as to what it refers. Some suppose that it is to "*patience*," others to "*persecutions and tribulations*," and others to the *whole sentence* preceding. The latter is probably the true construction, and the sense is, that the endurance of affliction in a proper manner by the righteous is a proof that there will be a righteous judgment of God in the last day. (1.) It is evidence that there *will be* a future judgment—since the righteous here suffer so much, and the wicked triumph. (2.) These things are now permitted *in order* that the character may be developed, and that the reason of the sentence in the last day may be seen. (3.) The manner in which these afflictions are borne is an *evidence*—an *indication* (ἔνδειγμα) of what the results of the judgment will be. The word rendered "manifest token" (ἔνδειγμα), occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means an indication, token, proof—anything that *shows* or *points out* how a thing *is*, or *is to be* (from ἐνδείκνυμι, *to show, to point out*). The meaning here is, therefore, that the course of events referred to—the persecutions which they endured, and the manner in which they were borne—furnished a proof that there would be a righteous judgment, and also afforded an indication of what the result of that judgment would be. We may, in general, learn what will be the issues of the judgment in the case of an individual from the manner in which he bears trials. ¶ *Of the righteous judgment of God.* That there will be a just judgment hereafter. The crimes of the wicked who go unpunished on the earth, and the sufferings of the good who are unavenged, are a demonstration that there will be a judgment, when all these inequalities will be adjusted. ¶ *That ye may be counted worthy.* As the result of your affliction, that you may be *fitted* for the kingdom of God. This does not mean that Christians will *merit* heaven by their sufferings, but that they may show that they have such a character that there is a *fitness* or *propriety* that they should be admitted there. They may evince by their patience and resignation, by their deadness to the world and their holy lives, that they are not disqualified to enter into that kingdom where the redeemed are to dwell. No true Christian will ever feel that he is *worthy* on his own account, or that he has any *claim* to eternal life, yet he may have evidence that he has the characteristics to which God has promised salvation, and is fitted to dwell in heaven. ¶ *Of the kingdom of God.* In heaven, see Notes on Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *For which ye also suffer.* The sufferings which you now endure are because you are professed heirs of the kingdom; that is, you are persecuted because you are Christians; see 1 Thess. ii. 14.

6. *Seeing* it is *a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.* The sense is, "There will be a future judgment, because it is proper that God should punish those who now persecute you. It is not right that they should go unpunished, and triumph for ever. It is not an *arbitrary* thing, a thing which is indifferent, a thing which may or may not be done; it is a *just* and *proper* thing that the wicked should

7 And to you who are troubled, rest [a] with us; when the Lord Jesus [b] shall be revealed from heaven with [1] his mighty angels.

a Re.14.13. b 1 Th.4.16; Jude 14.

1 *the angels of his power.*

be punished." The doctrine is, that the future punishment of the wicked is *just* and *proper;* and that, *being* just and proper, it will be inflicted. Many suppose that there would be no justice in the eternal punishment of the wicked; that the threatening of that punishment is wholly arbitrary; that it might easily be dispensed with, and that *because* it is unjust it will *not* be inflicted, and need not be dreaded. But that it is just and proper, a very slight degree of reflection must show. For (1.) it is inconceivable that God should *threaten* such punishment unless it were just. How can it be reconciled with his perfections that he can hold up before mankind the assurance that any of them will be punished for ever, unless it be right that it should be so? Can we believe that he deliberately threatens what is wrong, or that, in the face of the universe, he publicly declares his intention to do what is wrong? (2.) Men themselves believe that it is *just* that the wicked should be punished. They are constantly making laws, and affixing penalties to them, and executing them, under the belief that it is right. Can they regard it as wrong in God to do the same thing? Can that be wrong in him which is right in themselves? (3.) If it is right to punish wickedness here, it is not wrong to punish it in the future world. There is nothing in the two *places* which can change the nature of what is done. If it is right for God to visit the sinner here with the tokens of his displeasure, there is nothing which can make it wrong to visit him in like manner in the future world. Why should that be wrong in another world which is right and proper in this? (4.) It will be a righteous thing for God to punish the wicked in a future state, for they are *not* always punished here as they deserve. No one can seriously maintain that there is an equal distribution of rewards and punishments on the earth. Many a man goes to the grave having received *no* adequate punishment for his crimes. Many a murderer, pirate, robber, traitor, and plunderer of nations under the name of a conqueror, thus dies. No one can doubt that it would be a "just" thing to punish them here if they could be arrested. Why should it be any the less "just" to punish them when they enter another world? In like manner, many a man lives a life of profligacy; or is an open scoffer; or aims to cast off the government of God; or is a seducer of innocence; and yet lives in the midst of wealth, and goes down in calmness and peace to the grave; Ps. lxxiii. 3—5; Job xxi. 23—33. Why is it not "just" that such an one should be punished in the future world? comp. Ps. lxxiii. 16—20. But, if it is right that God should punish the wicked in the future world, it will be done. For (1.) there is nothing to hinder him from doing it. He has all power, and has all necessary means of inflicting punishment, entirely at his disposal. (2.) It would not be right not to do it. It is not right for a magistrate to treat the righteous and the wicked alike, or to show that he has as much regard to the one as to the other. (3.) It cannot be believed that God has uttered a threatening which he never *meant* to execute, or to appear before the universe as having held up before men the terror of the most awful punishment which *could* be inflicted, but which he never intended to carry into effect. Who could have confidence in such a Being? Who could know what to believe when he makes the most solemn declaration? (4.) The Judge of all the earth "will do right;" and if it is right to *declare* that "the wicked shall be turned into hell," it will not be wrong to *inflict* the sentence. And if, on the whole, it is *right* that the sinner should be punished, *it will be done.* ¶ *Them that trouble you.* Those who persecute you; see 1 Thess. ii. 14.

7. *And to you who are troubled*

8 In [a] flaming fire, [1] taking [b] vengeance on them that know [c] not God, and [d] that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

[a] He.10.27; 2 Pe.3.7.
[b] De.32.41 43.
[1] or, *yielding.*
[c] Ps.79.6; Zep.1.6.
[d] Ro.2.8.

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction [e] from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory [f] of his power;

[e] Ph.3.19; 2 Pe.3.7.
[f] Is.2.19.

That is, "it will be a righteous thing for God to give to you who are persecuted *rest* in the last day." As it will be right and proper to punish the wicked, so it will be right to reward the good. It will not, however, be in precisely the same sense. The wicked will *deserve* all that they will suffer, but it cannot be said that the righteous will *deserve* the reward which they will receive. It will be right and proper, because (1.) there is a fitness that they who are the friends of God should be treated as such, or it is proper that he should show himself to be their friend; and (2.) because in this life this is not always clearly done. They are often less prospered, and less happy in their outward circumstances, than the wicked. There is, therefore, a propriety that in the future state God should manifest himself as their friend, and show to assembled worlds that he is not indifferent to character, or that wickedness does not deserve his smiles, and piety incur his frown. At the same time, however, it will be owing wholly to his grace that any are ever admitted to heaven. ¶ *Rest.* The future happiness of believers is often represented under the image of *rest.* It is rest like that of the weary labourer after his day of toil; rest, like that of the soldier after the hardships of a long and perilous march; rest, like the calm repose of one who has been racked with pain; see Notes on Heb. iv. 9. The word *rest* here (ἄνεσις) means a letting loose, a remission, a relaxation; and hence composure, quiet; 2 Cor. ii. 12; vii. 5. ¶ *With us.* That is, with Paul, Silas, and Timothy; ver. 1. It would increase the comfort of the Thessalonians derived from the anticipation of the future world, to reflect that they would meet their religious teachers and friends there. It always augments the anticipated joy of heaven to reflect that we are to share its blessedness with them. There is no envy among those who anticipate heaven; there will be none there. They who desire heaven at all, desire that it may be shared in the highest degree by all who are dear to them. ¶ *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.* Shall appear; shall come from heaven; Notes, 1 Thess. iv. 6. ¶ *With his mighty angels.* Marg., *angels of his power.* So the Greek. The sense is, that angels of exalted rank and glory will accompany him; Notes on 1 Thess. iv. 16; Matt. xxiv. 31; xxv. 31.

8. *In flaming fire.* This is a circumstance which is not noticed in the account of his appearing in the parallel place in 1 Thess. iv. 16. The object of the apostle here seems to be to represent him as coming amidst vivid flashes of lightning. He is commonly described as coming in clouds, and to that common description there is here added the image of incessant lightnings, as if the whole heavens were illuminated with a continued blaze. ¶ *Taking vengeance.* Marg., *yielding.* Gr., *giving.* The word *vengeance* is used in the sense of *punishment,* for there cannot be in God what literally corresponds with the passion of *revenge;* comp. Notes on Rom. xii. 19. ¶ *On them that know not God.* On all who are strangers to him; that is, who are living in heathenish darkness, or who, having heard of him, have no practical acquaintance with him. ¶ *And that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Who do not embrace it, and practise its precepts in their lives; comp. Notes on Rom. ii. 9.

9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction;* see Notes on Matt. xxv. 41. 46. The word which is here rendered *destruction* (ὄλεθρον), is dif-

10 When he shall come to be glorified [a] in his saints, and to be admired [b] in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

[a] Mat.25.31. [b] Ps.68.35.

ferent from that which occurs in Matt. xxv. 46, and which is there rendered *punishment*—κόλασις. The word ὄλεθρον—*olethron*—occurs only here and in 1 Cor. v. 5 ; 1 Thess. v. 3 ; 1 Tim. vi. 9 ; in each of which places it is rendered *destruction*. It does not denote annihilation, but is used in the same sense in which we use the word when we say that a thing is *destroyed*. Thus health is destroyed when it fails ; property is destroyed when it is burned or sunk in the ocean ; a limb is destroyed that is lost in battle ; life is destroyed when one dies. In the case before us, the destruction, whatever it be, is (1.) to be continued for ever ; and (2.) is to be of the nature of punishment. The meaning then must be, that the soul is destroyed as to the great purposes of its being—its enjoyment, dignity, honour, holiness, happiness. It will not be annihilated, but will live and linger on *in* destruction. It seems difficult to conceive how any one can profess to hold that this passage is a part of the word of God, and yet deny the doctrine of future eternal punishment. It would not be possible to state that doctrine in clearer language than this. It never *is* stated in clearer language in any creed or confession of faith, and if it be not true that the wicked will be punished for ever, it must be admitted that it would not have been *possible* to reveal the doctrine in human language. ¶ *From the presence of the Lord.* That is, a part of their punishment will consist in being banished from the immediate presence of the Lord. There is a sense in which God is everywhere present, and in that sense he will be in the world where the wicked will dwell, to punish them. But the phrase is also used to denote his more immediate presence ; the place where are the symbols of his majesty and glory ; the home of the holy and the blessed. It is in that sense that the word is used here, and the idea is, that it will be one of the circumstances contributing to the deeper woe of the place of punishment, that those who dwell there will be banished from that holy abode, and will never be permitted to enter there. ¶ *And from the glory of his power.* The meaning seems to be, that they will not be able to endure the manifestation of his power and majesty when he shall appear, but will be driven away by it into outer darkness ; see chap. ii. 8. The Saviour, in describing his Second Advent, uses this language : " They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory ;" Matt. xxiv. 30. There will be a great exhibition of both. The *power* will be seen in the convulsions of nature which will precede or attend him ; in the resurrection of the dead ; and in the bringing of all to judgment : and the *glory* will be seen in his own person ; the dignity and number of his attendants ; and the honour that shall then be conferred on him as the final Judge of all mankind. By the manifestation of that power and glory the wicked will be driven away into eternal ruin. They will not be able to stand before it, and though, in common with the righteous, they may see the majesty of the Redeemer in the last day, yet they will be driven away to witness it no more.

10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints.* That is, the redeemed in that day will be the means of promoting his glory, or the universe will see his glory manifested in their redemption. His chief glory as seen in that day will be connected with the fact that he has redeemed his people ; and he will come in order that all the appropriate honour of such a work may then be manifested. He will be " glorified " then by the numbers that shall have been redeemed ; by their patience in the trials through which they have passed ; by the triumphs which religion shall have made on the earth ; by their praises and songs, and

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would [1] count you worthy [a] of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power;

[1] or, *vouchsafe*. [a] Col. 1. 12; Re. 3. 4.

by their ascent with him to the realms of blessedness. ¶ *And to be admired in all them that believe.* This may either mean that he will be admired *among* or *by* them that believe; or that the ground of the admiration which he will receive in that day will be what will be seen *in* them; that is, their graces, their numbers, their joys, their triumphs will be the occasion of producing admiration of *him*—for he will be regarded as the source of it all. Tindal renders it, "and to be made marvellous in all them that believe." The latter interpretation seems to me to be the correct one. The general idea is, that Christ in that day will be manifested in a glorious manner, and that the source of his highest triumphs will be what is seen *in* the saints. His main honour when he returns to the world will not be the outward splendours which will attend his coming, nor the angels that will accompany him, nor the manifestation of his power over the elements, but the church which he has redeemed. It will then be seen that he is worthy of universal admiration, for having redeemed that church. He shall then be admired or glorified in his people, (1.) for having conceived the plan of redeeming them; (2.) for being willing to become incarnate and to die to save them; (3.) for the defence of his church in all its persecutions and trials; (4.) for raising his people from the dead; (5.) for the virtues and graces which they will exhibit in that day. This appropriate honour of Christ in the church has never yet been fully seen. His people on earth have, in general, most imperfectly reflected his image. They have in general been comparatively few in number, and scattered upon the earth. They have been poor and despised. Often they have been persecuted and regarded as the "filth of the world and the offscouring of all things." The honours of this world have been withheld from them. The great have regarded it as no honour to be identified with the church, and the proud have been ashamed to be enrolled among the followers of the Lamb. In the last day all this will be changed, and the assembled church will show to admiring worlds how great and glorious is its Redeemer, and how glorious was the work of redemption. ¶ *Because our testimony among you was believed.* The meaning of this seems to be, that they would be among the number of those who would in that day honour the Saviour, because they had embraced what the apostle had preached to them respecting these future scenes. Thus interpreted, this clause should be regarded as connected with ver. 7. "And to you it is a righteous thing that he should give rest with us, because our testimony among you was believed." That is, you have shown that you are true Christians, and it is proper that you should partake of the triumphs and hopes of that day.

11. *Wherefore also we pray always for you;* Notes, 1 Thess. i. 2. ¶ *That our God would count you worthy of* this *calling.* Marg., "or, *vouchsafe.*" The meaning is, "that he would regard you as worthy of this calling;" see Notes on ver. 5. ¶ *Of this calling;* Notes, Eph. iv. 1. The "calling" here, is that which had brought them into the kingdom, and led them to become Christians. ¶ *And fulfil all the good pleasure of* his *goodness.* That is, make the work of salvation complete and effectual. Oldshausen has well expressed the sense: "May God fill you with all that good which is pleasing to him." The thoughts in the passage are, (1.) that the purpose towards them on the part of God was one of "goodness" or benevolence: (2.) that there was a state of mind which would be regarded by him as pleasing, or as his "good pleasure;" and (3.) that Paul wished that this might be accomplished in them. He desired that there might be in them everything which would be pleasing to

12 That [a] the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[a] 1 Pe. 1. 7.

God, and which his benevolence was fitted to secure. ¶ *And the work of faith.* The work which faith is adapted to produce on the soul; see 1 John v. 4, 5. ¶ *With power.* Effectually, completely. The apostle prays that so much power may be exerted as will be sufficient to secure the object. The work of religion on the soul is always represented in the Bible as one of *power.*

12. *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* That is, that the Lord Jesus himself may be honoured among you; the name often denoting the person. The idea is that the apostle wished that the Lord Jesus might be honoured among them by the fair application and development of the principles of his religion. ¶ *And ye in him.* That you may be regarded and treated as his friends when he shall come to judge the world. ¶ *According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.* That is, that you may experience all the honour which his grace is fitted to impart.

In view of the exposition given of this chapter, we may remark:—

(1.) That the wicked will certainly be punished when the Lord Jesus shall come to judgment. Words cannot reveal this truth more plainly than is done in this chapter, and if it is not to be so, then language has no meaning.

(2.) The punishment of the wicked will be eternal. It is impossible for language to teach that doctrine more clearly than is done in this chapter. If it were admitted to have been the intention of God to teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, it is impossible to conceive that he could have chosen more plain and positive language to express the doctrine than has been done here. Can it be, then, that he means to trifle with men on so solemn a subject, by using words which have no meaning?

(3.) It will greatly aggravate the punishment of the wicked that it will be "a *righteous* thing" for God thus to punish them. If they were to suffer as martyrs; if in their sufferings they could feel that they were oppressed and crushed beneath mere power; if they could feel that they were right and that God was wrong; if they could get up a party in the universe against God, sympathizing with them as if they were wronged, the case would be changed. A man can endure suffering much more easily when he has a good conscience, and feels that he is right, than he can when he feels that what he endures is deserved. But the sinner in hell can never have this consolation. He will for ever feel that God is *right* and that he is wrong, and that every pang which he endures is deserved.

(4.) If it be a "righteous thing" that the wicked shall be punished, then they never can be saved by mere justice. No one will go to heaven because he *deserves* or *merits* it. All dependence on human merit, therefore, is taken away in the matter of salvation, and if the sinner is ever saved, it will be by *grace*, and not by *justice.*

(5.) If it is a "righteous thing" that the sinner should perish, he will perish. God will do right to all.

(6.) It is amazing that the mass of men have so little concern about their future condition. God has plainly revealed that he will destroy the wicked for ever, and that it will be a righteous thing for him to do it; and yet the mass of mankind are wholly unconcerned, and disregard all the solemn declarations of the Bible on this subject as if they were idle tales. One would suppose that the very possibility of eternal suffering would rouse all the sensibilities of the soul, and lead to the earnest inquiry whether it is not possible to avoid it. Yet the mass of men feel no concern in this inquiry. It is impossible to get them ever to *think* of it. We cannot get them even to ask the question, seriously, whether they themselves are to be happy or miserable to all eternity. This stupidity and indifference is the most unac-

countable fact on earth, and probably distinguishes this world from all others.

(7.) It is *rational* to think of religion; to reflect on eternity; to be serious; to be *anxious* about the future state. If there is even a *possibility* that we may be miserable for ever, it is proper to be *serious* about it. And if there is a solemn declaration of God that it will be a "righteous thing" for him to punish the wicked, and that he *will* "punish them with everlasting destruction," assuredly the mind *should* be concerned. Is there anything more worthy the calm and sober attention of the human soul than such solemn declarations of the infinite God?

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

The main object of this chapter is to correct an erroneous impression which had been made on the minds of the Thessalonians respecting the second coming of the Saviour, either by his own former letter, or by one forged in his name. They had received the impression that that event was about to take place. This belief had produced an unhappy effect on their minds; ver. 2. It became, therefore, necessary to state the truth on the subject, in order to free their minds from alarm; and this purpose of the apostle leads to one of the most important prophecies in the New Testament. The chapter comprises the following points:—

I. An exhortation that they would not be alarmed or distressed by the expectation of the speedy coming of the Saviour; ver. 1, 2.

II. A statement of the truth that he would *not* soon appear, and of the characteristics of a great apostasy which must intervene before his advent; ver. 3—12.

In this part of the chapter, the apostle shows that he did *not* mean to teach that that event would soon happen, by stating that *before* that there would occur a most melancholy apostasy, which would require a considerable time before it was matured.

(*a*) That day would not come until there should be a great apostasy, and a revelation of the man of sin; ver. 3.

(*b*) The character of this man of sin was to be such that it could not be mistaken: he would be opposed to God; would exalt himself above all that is called God; and would sit in the temple showing himself as God; ver. 4.

(*c*) There was a restraint then exercised which prevented the development of the great apostasy. There were indeed causes then at work which would lead to it, but they were then held in check, and God would restrain them until some future time, when he would suffer the man of sin to be revealed; ver. 5—7.

(*d*) When that time should come, then that "wicked" one would be revealed, with such marks that he could not be mistaken. His coming would be after the working of Satan, with power and signs and lying wonders, and under him there would be strong delusion, and the belief of a lie; ver. 8—12. This great foe of God was to be destroyed by the coming of the Saviour, and one object of his appearing would be to put an end to his dominion; ver. 8.

III. The apostle then says, that there was occasion for thankfulness to God, that he had chosen them to salvation, and not left them to be destroyed; ver. 13, 14.

IV. An exhortation to stand fast, and to maintain what they had been taught (ver. 15), and a prayer that God, who had given them a good hope, would comfort their hearts, closes the chapter; ver. 16, 17.

1. NOW we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in

1. *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The phrase "by the coming," is not here, as our translators seem to have supposed, a form of solemn adjuration. It is not common, if it ever occurs, in the Scriptures, to make a solemn adjuration in view of *an event*, and the

mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as [a] that the day of Christ is at hand.

[a] Mat. 24. 4-6.

connection here demands that we give to the phrase a different sense. It means, *respecting his coming;* and the idea of Paul is, "In regard to that great event of which I spoke to you in my former epistle—the coming of the Saviour—I beseech you not to be troubled, as if it were soon to happen. As his views had been misunderstood or misrepresented, he now proposes to show them that there was nothing in the true doctrine which should create alarm, as if he were about to appear. ¶ *And* by *our gathering together unto him.* There is manifest allusion here to what is said in the first epistle (chap. iv. 17), "then we shall be caught up together with them in the clouds;" and the meaning is, "in reference to our being gathered unto him, I beseech you not to be shaken in mind, as if that event were near."

2. *That ye be not soon shaken in mind.* The word here used signifies, properly, to be moved as a wave of the sea, or to be tossed upon the waves, as a vessel is. Then it means to be shaken in any way; see Mat. xi. 7; xxiv. 29; Luke vi. 38; Acts iv. 31; Heb. xii. 26. The reference here is to the agitation or alarm felt from the belief that the day of judgment would soon occur. It is uniformly said in the Scriptures, that the approach of the Lord Jesus to judge the world, will produce a great consternation and alarm. Mat. xxiv, 30, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." Rev. i. 7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Luke xxiii. 30, "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us;" comp. Isa. ii. 21, 22. Of the truth of this, there can be no doubt. We may *imagine* something of the effects which will be produced by the alarm caused in a community when a belief prevails that the day of judgment is near. In a single year (1843) seventeen persons were admitted to the Lunatic Asylum in Worcester, Mass., who had become deranged in consequence of the expectation that the Lord Jesus was about to appear. It is easy to account for such facts, and no doubt, when the Lord Jesus shall actually come, the effect on the guilty world will be overwhelming. The apostle here says, also, that those who were Christians were "shaken in mind and troubled" by this anticipation. There are, doubtless, many true Christians who would be alarmed at such an event, as there are many who, like Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 1, 2), are alarmed at the prospect of death. Many real Christians might, on the sudden occurrence of such an event, feel that they were not prepared, and be alarmed at the prospect of passing through the great trial which is to determine their everlasting destiny. It is no certain evidence of a want of piety to be alarmed at the approach of death. Our nature dreads death, and though there may be a well-founded hope of heaven, it will not always preserve a delicate physical frame from trembling when it comes. ¶ *Or be troubled.* That is, disturbed, or terrified. It would seem that this belief had produced much consternation among them. ¶ *Neither by spirit.* By any pretended spirit of prophecy. But whether this refers to the predictions of those who were false prophets in Thessalonica, or to something which it was alleged the apostle Paul had himself said there, and which was construed as meaning that the time was near, is not certain. This depends much on the question whether the phrase "as from us," refers only to the *letters* which had been sent to them, or also to the "word" and to the "spirit," here spoken of; see Oldshausen on the place. It would seem, from the connection, that *all* their consternation had been caused

by some misconstruction which had been put on the sentiments of Paul himself, for if there had been any other source of alarm, he would naturally have referred to it. It is probable, therefore, that allusion is made to some representation which had been given of what he had said under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and that the expectation that the end of the world was near, was supposed to be a doctrine of inspiration. Whether, however, the Thessalonians themselves put this construction on what he said, or whether those who had caused the alarm represented him as teaching this, cannot be determined. ¶ *Nor by word.* That is, by public instruction, or in preaching. It is evident that when the apostle was among them, this subject, from such causes, was prominent in his discourses; see ver. 5. It had been inferred, it seems, from what he said, that he meant to teach that the end of the world was near. ¶ *Nor by letter.* Either the one which he had before written to them—the First Epistle to the Thessalonians—or one which had been forged in his name. ¶ *As from us.* That is, Paul, Silas, and Timothy, who are united in writing the two epistles (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1), and in whose names a letter would be forged, if one of this description were sent to them. It has been made a question, whether the apostle refers here to the former epistle which he had sent to them, or to a forged letter; and on this question critics have been about equally divided. The reasons for the former opinion may be seen in Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, *in loc.* The question is not very important, and perhaps cannot be easily settled. There are two or three circumstances, however, which seem to make it probable that he refers to an epistle which had been forged, and which had been pretended to be received from him. (1.) One is found in the expression "*as* from us." If he had referred to his own former letter, it seems to me that the allusion would have been more distinct, and that the particle "*as*" (ὡς) would not have been used. This is such an expression as would have been employed *if* the reference were to such a forged letter. (2.) A second circumstance is found in the expression in the next verse, "Let *no man deceive* you by any means," which looks as if they were not led into this belief by their own interpretation of his former epistle, but by a deliberate attempt of some one to delude them on the subject. (3.) Perhaps a third circumstance would be found in the fact that it was not uncommon in early times of Christianity to attempt to impose forged writings on the churches. Nothing would be more natural for an impostor who wished to acquire influence, than to do this; and that it was often done is well known. That epistles *were* forged under the names of the apostles, appears very probable, as Benson has remarked, from chap. iii. 17; Gal. vi. 11; and Philem. 19. There are, indeed, none of those forged epistles extant which were composed in the time of the apostles, but there is extant an epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, besides the two which we have; another to the Laodiceans, and six of Paul's epistles to Seneca—all of which are undoubted forgeries; see Benson *in loc.* If Paul, however, here refers to his former epistle, the reference is doubtless to 1 Thess. iv. 15, and v. 2, 3, 4, which might easily be understood as teaching that the end of the world was near, and to which those who maintained that opinion might appeal with great plausibility. We have, however, the authority of the apostle himself that he meant to teach no such thing. ¶ *As that the day of Christ is at hand.* The time when he would appear—called "the day of Christ," because it would be appointed especially for the manifestation of his glory. The phrase "at hand," means *near*. Grotius supposes that it denotes *that same year*, and refers for proof to Rom. viii. 38; 1 Cor. iii. 22; Gal. i. 4. Heb. ix. 9. If so, the attempt to fix the day was an early indication of the desire to determine *the very time* of his appearing—a disposition which has been so common since, and which has led into so many sad mistakes.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come,* except [a] there come a falling away first, and that man of sin [b] be revealed, the [c] son of perdition:

a 1 Ti.4.1. b Da.7.25. c John 17.12.

3. *Let no man deceive you by any means.* That is, respecting the coming of the Lord Jesus. This implies that there were then *attempts* to deceive, and that it was of great importance for Christians to be on their guard. The result has shown that there is almost no subject on which caution is more proper, and on which men are more liable to delusion. The *means* then resorted to for deception appear from the previous verse to have been either an appeal to a pretended verbal message from the apostle, or a pretended letter from him. The means now, consist of a claim to uncommon wisdom in the interpretation of obscure prophecies of the Scriptures. The necessity for the *caution* here given has not ceased. ¶ *For* that day shall not come, *except there come a falling away first.* Until an *apostasy* (ἀποστασία) shall have occurred—*the great* apostasy. There is scarcely any passage of the New Testament which has given occasion to greater diversity of opinion than this. Though the reference seems to be plain, and there is scarcely *any* prophecy of the Bible apparently more obvious and easy in its general interpretation; yet it is proper to mention some of the opinions which have been entertained of it. Some have referred it to a great apostasy from the Christian church, particularly on account of persecution, which would occur before the destruction of Jerusalem. The "coming of the Lord" they suppose refers to the destruction of the holy city, and according to this, the meaning is, that there would be a great apostasy before that event would take place. Of this opinion was Vitringa, who refers the "apostasy" to a great defection from the faith which took place between the time of Nero and Trajan. Whitby also refers it to an event which was to take place before the destruction of Jerusalem, and supposes that the apostasy would consist in a return from the Christian to the Jewish faith by multitudes of professed converts. The "man of sin," according to him, means the Jewish nation, so characterized on account of its eminent wickedness. Hammond explains the apostasy by the defection to the Gnostics, by the arts of Simon Magus, whom he supposes to be the man of sin, and by the "day of the Lord" he also understands the destruction of Jerusalem. Grotius takes Caius Cesar or Caligula, to be the man of sin, and by the apostasy he understands his abominable wickedness. In the beginning of his government, he says, his plans of iniquity were concealed, and the hopes of all were excited in regard to his reign; but his secret iniquity was subsequently "revealed," and his true character understood. Wetstein understands by the "man of sin," "Titus and the Flavian house." He says that he does not understand it of the Roman Pontiff, who "is not one such as the demonstrative pronoun thrice repeated designates, and who neither sits in the temple of God, nor calls himself God, nor Caius, nor Simon Gioriae, nor any Jewish impostor, nor Simon Magus." Koppe refers it to the King mentioned in Dan. xi. 36. According to him, the reference is to a great apostasy of the Jews from the worship of God, and the "man of sin" is the Jewish people. Others have supposed that the reference is to Mohammed, and that the main characteristics of the prophecy may be found in him. Of the Papists, a part affirm that the apostasy is the falling away from Rome in the time of the Reformation, but the greater portion suppose that the allusion is to Antichrist, who, they say, will appear in the world before the great day of judgment, to combat religion and the saints. See these opinions stated at length, and examined, in Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, Diss. xxii. Some more recent expositors have referred it to Napoleon Bonaparte,

and some (as Oldshausen) suppose that it refers to some one who has not yet appeared, in whom all the characteristics here specified will be found united Most Protestant commentators have referred it to the great apostasy under the Papacy, and, by the "man of sin," they suppose there is allusion to the Roman Pontiff, the Pope. It is evident that we are in better circumstances to understand the passage than those were who immediately succeeded the apostles. Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the epistle was written, and the "day of the Lord" has not yet come, and we have an opportunity of inquiring, whether in all that long tract of time any one man can be found, or any series of men have arisen, to whom the description here given is applicable. If so, it is in accordance with all the proper rules of interpreting prophecy, to make such an application. If it is fairly applicable to the Papacy, and cannot be applied in its great features to anything else, it is proper to regard it as having such an original reference. Happily, the expressions which are used by the apostle are, in themselves, not difficult of interpretation, and all that the expositor has to do is, to ascertain whether *in any one great apostasy all the things here mentioned have occurred.* If so, it is fair to apply the prophecy to such an event; if not so, we must wait still for its fulfilment. The word rendered "falling away" (ἀποστασία, *apostasy*), is of so *general* a character, that it may be applied to *any* departure from the faith as it was received in the time of the apostles. It occurs in the New Testament only here and in Acts xxi. 21, where it is rendered "to forsake"—"thou teachest all the Jews which are among us *to forsake* Moses"—*apostasy from Moses*—ἀποστασίαν ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως. The word means *a departing from*, or *a defection;* see the verb used in 1 Tim. iv. 1, "Some shall *depart from* the faith"—ἀποστήσονται; comp. Notes on that passage; see also Heb. iii. 12; Luke viii. 13; Acts v. 37. The reference here is evidently to some general falling away, or to some great religious apostasy that was to occur, and which would be under one head, leader, or dynasty, and which would involve many in the same departure from the faith, and in the same destruction. The use of the article here, "*the* apostasy" (Gr.), Erasmus remarks, "signifies that great and before-predicted apostasy." It is evidently emphatic, showing that there had been a reference to this before, or that they understood well that there was to be such an apostasy. Paul says (ver. 5), that when he was with them, he had told them of these things. The writers in the New Testament often speak of such a defection under the name of Antichrist; see Rev. xiii. 14; 1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3; 2 John 7. ¶ *And that man of sin.* This is a Hebraism, meaning a man of eminent wickedness; one distinguished for depravity; comp. John xvii. 12; Prov. vi. 12, in Heb. The use of the article here—ὁ ἄνθρωπος—"*the* man of sin," is also emphatic, as in the reference to "*the* falling away," and shows that there is allusion to one of whom they had before heard, and whose character was well known; who would be *the* wicked one by way of eminence; see also ver. 8, "*that* wicked"—ὁ ἄνομος. There are two general questions in regard to the proper interpretation of this appellative; the one is, whether it refers to an individual, or to a series of individuals of the same general character, aiming at the accomplishment of the same plans; and the other is, whether there has been any individual, or any series of individuals, since the time of the apostle, who, by eminence, deserved to be called "*the* man of sin." That the phrase, "the *man* of sin," may refer to a *succession* of men of the same general character, and that it does so refer here, is evident from the following considerations: (1.) The word "king" is used in Dan. vii. 25; xi. 36, to which places Paul seems to allude, to denote a succession of kings. (2.) The same is true of the *beast* mentioned in Dan. vii., viii., Rev. xiii., representing a kingdom or empire through its successive changes and revolutions, (3.)

The same is true of the "*woman* arrayed in purple and scarlet" (Rev. xvii. 4), which cannot refer to a single woman, but is the emblem of a continued corrupt administration. (4.) It is clear that a succession is intended here, because the work assigned to "the man of sin," cannot be supposed to be that which could be accomplished by a single individual. The statement of the apostle is, that there were then tendencies to such an apostasy, and that the "man of sin" would be revealed at no distant period, and yet that he would continue his work of "lying wonders" until the coming of the Saviour. In regard to this "man of sin," it may be further observed, (1.) that his appearing was to be *preceded* by "the great apostasy;" and (2.) that he was to continue and perpetuate it. His rise was to be owing to a great departure from the faith, and then he was to be the principal agent in continuing it by "signs and lying wonders." He was not himself to *originate* the defection, but was to be the creation, or result of it. He was to rise upon it, or grow out of it, and, by artful arrangements adapted to that purpose, was to perpetuate it. The question then is, to whom this phrase, descriptive of a succession of individuals so eminent for wickedness that the name "*the* man of sin" could be applied, was designed by the spirit of inspiration to refer. Bishop Newton has shown that it cannot refer to Caligula, to Simon Magus, to the revolt of the Jews from the Romans, or to the revolt of the Jews from the faith, or to the Flavian family, or to Luther, as some of the papists suppose, or to one man who will appear just before the end of the world, as others of the Romanists suppose; see his Dissertations on the Prophecies, xxii. pp. 393—402; comp. Oldshausen, *in loc.* The argument is too long to be inserted here. But can it be referred to the papacy: Can it denote the pope of Rome, meaning not a single pope, but the succession? If all the circumstances of the entire passage can be shown to be fairly applicable to him, or if it can be shown that all that is fairly implied in the *language* used here has received a fulfilment in him, then it is proper to regard it as having been designed to be so applied, and then this may be numbered among the prophecies that are in part fulfilled. The question now is on the applicability of the phrase "the man of sin" to the pope. That his rise was *preceded* by a great apostasy, or departure from the purity of the simple gospel, as revealed in the New Testament, cannot reasonably be doubted by any one acquainted with the history of the church. That he is the *creation* or *result* of that apostasy, is equally clear. That he is the grand agent in *continuing* it, is equally manifest. Is the phrase itself one that is properly applicable to him? Is it proper to speak of the pope of Rome, as he has actually appeared, as "*the* man of sin?" In reply to this, it might be sufficient to refer to the general character of the papacy, and to its influence in upholding and perpetuating various forms of iniquity in the world. It would be easy to show that there has been no dynasty or system that has contributed so much to uphold and perpetuate sins of various kinds on the earth, as the papacy. No other one has been so extensively and so long the patron of superstition; and there are vices of the grossest character which have all along been fostered by its system of celibacy, indulgences, monasteries, and absolutions. But it would be a better illustration of the meaning of the phrase "man of sin," as applicable to the pope of Rome, to look at the general character of the popes themselves. Though there may have been some exceptions, yet there never has been a *succession* of men of so decidedly wicked character, as have occupied the papal throne since the great apostasy commenced. A very few references to the characters of the popes will furnish an illustration of this point. Pope Vagilius waded to the pontifical throne through the blood of his predecessor. Pope Joan —the Roman Catholic writers tell us —a female in disguise, was elected and confirmed pope, as John VIII.

4 Who opposeth and exalteth[a] himself above all that is called God,

[a] Is.14.13; Re.13.6.

Platina says, that "she became with child by some of those that were round about her; that she miscarried, and died on her way from the Lateran to the temple." Pope Marcellinus sacrificed to idols. Concerning pope Honorius, the council of Constantinople decreed, "We have caused Honorius, the late pope of Old Rome, to be *accursed;* for that in all things he followed the mind of Sergius the *heretic*, and confirmed his wicked doctrines." The council of Basil thus condemned pope Eugenius; "We condemn and depose pope Eugenius, a despiser of the holy canons; a disturber of the peace and unity of the church of God; a notorious offender of the whole universal church; a Simonist; a perjurer; a man incorrigible; a schismatic; a man fallen from the faith, and a wilful heretic." Pope John II., was publicly charged at Rome with incest. Pope John XIII. usurped the Pontificate, spent his time in hunting, in laciviousness, and monstrous forms of vice; he fled from the trial to which he was summoned, and was stabbed, being taken in the act of adultery. Pope Sixtus IV. licensed brothels at Rome. Pope Alexander VI. was, as a Roman Catholic historian says, "one of the greatest and most horrible monsters in nature that could scandalize the holy chair. His beastly morals, his immense ambition, his insatiable avarice, his detestable cruelty, his furious lusts, and monstrous incest with his daughter Lucretia, are, at large, described by Guicciardini Ciaconius, and other authentic papal historians." Of the popes, Platina, a Roman Catholic, says: "The chair of Saint Peter was usurped, rather than possessed, by monsters of wickedness, ambition, and bribery. They left no wickedness unpractised;" see the New Englander, April, 1844, pp. 285, 286. To no succession of men who have ever lived could the appellative, "*the* man of sin, be applied with so much propriety as to this succession. Yet they claim to have been the true "successors" of the apostles, and there are *Protestants* that deem it of essential importance to be able to show that they have derived the true "succession" through such men. ¶ *Be revealed.* Be made manifest. There were, at the time when the apostle wrote, two remarkable things, (1.) that there was already a *tendency* to such an apostasy as he spoke of; and (2.) there was something which as yet prevented the appearance or the rise of the man of sin; ver. 7. When the hindrance which then existed should be taken out of the way, he would be manifested; see Notes on ver. 7. ¶ *The son of perdition.* This is the same appellation which the Saviour bestowed on Judas; see it explained in the Notes on John xviii 12. It may mean either that he would be the cause of ruin to others, or that he would himself be devoted to destruction. It would seem here rather to be used in the latter sense, though this is not absolutely certain. The phrase, whichever interpretation be adopted, is used to denote one of eminent wickedness.

4. *Who opposeth.* That is, he is distinguished as an *opposer* of the great system which God has revealed for human salvation, and of those who would serve God in purity in the gospel of his Son. No Protestant will doubt that this has been the character of the papacy. The opposition of the general system to the gospel; the persecution of Wickliffe, of John Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of the Waldenses and the Reformers; the Inquisition, the cruelties in the reign of Mary, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France, are obvious illustrations of this. ¶ *And exalteth himself above all that is called God.* That is, whether among the heathens or the Jews; above a false God, or the true God. This could be true only of one who set aside the divine laws; who undertook to legislate where God only has a right to legislate, and whose legislation was contrary to that of God. Any claim of a

or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

dominion over conscience; or any arrangement to set aside the divine laws, and to render them nugatory, would correspond with what is implied in this description. It cannot be supposed that any one would openly *claim* to be superior to God, but the sense must be, that the enactments and ordinances of the "man of sin" would pertain to the province in which God only can legislate, and that the ordinances made by him would be such as to render nugatory the divine laws, by appointing others in their place. No one can reasonably doubt that all that is here affirmed may be found in the claims of the pope of Rome. The assumptions of the papacy have related to the following things: (1.) To authority above all the inferior orders of the priesthood—above all pastors, bishops, and primates. (2.) Authority above all kings and emperors, "deposing some, and advancing others, obliging them to prostrate themselves before him, to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, to wait barefooted at his gate, treading even upon the neck, and kicking off the imperial crown with his foot."—*Newton.* Thus Gregory VII. made Henry IV. wait barefooted at his gate. Thus Alexander III. trod upon the neck of Alexander I. Thus Celestin kicked off the imperial crown of Henry VI. Thus the right was claimed, and asserted, of laying nations under interdict, of deposing kings, and of absolving their subjects from their oaths of allegiance. And thus the pope claimed the right over all unknown lands that might be discovered by Columbus, and apportioned the New World as he pleased—in all these things claiming prerogatives which can appertain only to God. (3.) To authority over the *conscience*, in matters which can pertain only to God himself, and where he only can legislate. Thus it has been, and is, one of the claims set up for the pope that he is infallible. Thus he "forbids what God has commanded," as the marriage of the clergy, communion in both kinds, the use of the Scriptures for the common people. Thus he has set aside the second commandment by the appointment of image-worship; and thus he claims the power of the remission of sins. Multitudes of things which Christ allows his people are forbidden by the papacy, and many things are enjoined, or allowed, directly contrary to the divine legislation. ¶ *Or that is worshipped.* σέβασμα. This word means *an object of worship;* see Acts xvii. 3, where it is rendered *devotions.* It may be applied to the worship of a heathen divinity, or of the true God. "It may refer to a person, an idol, or a place. Probably Paul refers here to the heroes and other subordinate divinities of the heathen mythology." *Oldshausen.* No one can doubt that the pope has claimed higher honours, as the vicegerent of Christ, than was ever rendered in the ancient "hero worship." ¶ *So that he, as God.* That is, claiming the honours due to God. This expression would not imply that he actually claimed *to be* the true God, but only that he sits in the temple, and manifests himself *as if* he were God. He claims such honours and such reverence as the true God *would* if he should appear in human form. It should be observed here, however, that there is much reason to doubt the genuineness of this phrase —"*as God*"—ὡς θεὸν. Mill supposes that it was inserted from the context. It is marked with an asterisk in the Vulgate, the Coptic, and the Syriac, and is omitted by many of the fathers; see Mill and Wetstein. It is rejected by Griesbach and Lachmann, and marked as doubtful by Hahn. It is defended, however, by Matthaei, Koppe, Knapp, and Schott. The sense is not materially affected whether it be regarded as genuine or not. ¶ *Sitteth in the temple of God.* That is, in the Christian church. It is by no means necessary to understand this of the temple at Jerusalem, which was standing at the time this epistle was written, for (1.) the phrase "the temple of God" is several times used with

reference to the Christian church, 1 Cor. iii, 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 21; Rev. iii. 12; and (2.) the temple was the proper symbol of the church, and an apostle trained amidst the Hebrew institutions would naturally speak of the church as the temple of God. The temple at Jerusalem was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God on earth. When the Christian church was founded, it was spoken of as the peculiar dwelling-place of God; see the passages referred to above. He dwelt among his people. He was with them, and walked with them, and manifested himself among them—as he had done in the ancient temple. The usage in the New Testament would not lead us to restrict this language to an *edifice*, or a "church," as the word is now commonly used, but rather to suppose that it denotes the church as a society, and the idea is, that the Antichrist here referred to would present himself in the midst of that church as claiming the honours due to God alone. In the temple at Jerusalem, God himself presided. There he gave laws to his people; there he manifested himself as God; and there he was worshipped. The reign of the "man of sin" would be *as if* he should sit there. In the Christian church he would usurp the place which God had occupied in the temple. He would claim divine attributes and homage. He would give laws and responses as God did there. He would be regarded as the head of all ecclesiastical power; the source from which all authority emanated; the same in the Christian church which God himself was in the temple. This does not then refer primarily to the pope as sitting in any particular church on any particular occasion, but to his claiming *in* the church of Christ the authority and homage which God had in the temple at Jerusalem. In whatever place, whether in a cathedral or elsewhere, this authority should be exercised, all that the language here conveys would be fulfilled. No one can fail to see that the authority claimed by the pope of Rome, meets the full force of the language used here by the apostle. ¶ *Showing himself that he is God.* This does not necessarily mean that he actually, in so many words, claimed *to be God;* but that he usurped the place of God, and claimed the prerogatives of God. If the names of God are given to him, or are claimed by him; if he receives the honours due to God; if he asserts a dominion like that of God, then all that the language fairly implies will be fulfilled. The following expressions, applied to the pope of Rome by Catholic writers, without any rebuke from the papacy, will show how entirely applicable this is to the pretended head of the church. He has been styled "Our Lord God the pope; another God upon earth; king of kings and lord of lords. The same is the dominion of God and the pope. To believe that our Lord God the pope might not decree as he decreed, is heresy. The power of the pope is greater than all created power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestrial, and infernal. The pope doeth whatsoever he listeth, even things unlawful, and is more than God;" see the authority for these extraordinary declarations in bishop Newton on the Prophecies, xxii. How can it be doubted that the reference here is to the papacy? Language could not be plainer, and it is not possible to conceive that anything can ever occur which would furnish a more manifest fulfilment of this prophecy. Indeed, interpreted by the claims of the papacy, it stands among the very clearest of all the predictions in the Sacred Scriptures.

5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? The whole subject of the second advent of the Saviour seems to have constituted an important part of the instructions of Paul when at Thessalonica. He now refers them to what he had told them respecting the great apostasy, to show that his views had not changed, and that he did not mean to have them understand that the world would soon come to an end He had stated these things to them implying that a considerable interval *must* elapse before the Sa-

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you those things?

6 And now ye know what [1] withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.

1 or, *holdeth.*

viour would appear. Much of the *obscurity* of this prophecy arises from the fact, that the apostle alludes to things which he had told them when with them, of which we have now no knowledge. Hence, what would be perfectly clear to them, on reading this letter, is now difficult to be understood.

6, *And now ye know what withholdeth.* Marg., *holdeth.* The reference is, to something that then operated to *constrain* or *hold back* the obvious tendency of things, so that the "man of sin" should not at once appear, or so that things should not soon so develope themselves as to give rise to this antichristian power. There were causes at work even then, which *would* ultimately lead to this; but there was also something which checked the tendency of things, so that the revelation or development of the "man of sin" was put off to a future period. The obvious meaning of this would be, that, when the apostle wrote, there was a tendency to what would occur under the great apostasy, and that this would soon develope itself if it were not restrained. If the reference is to the papacy, this would consist in corruptions already existing in the church, having a resemblance to those which afterwards existed under that system, or which were the *germ* of that system. If there was a tendency towards the concentration of all power in an individual in the church,—if there was an assumption of authority by one class of ministers above another,—if there was a denial of the "parity of the clergy," the tendency would have been to that ultimate assumption of authority which is found in the Romish hierarchy. But conjecture is useless as to what was the precise form in which this tendency then began to develope itself That the corruptions early began in the church which terminated in the papacy, and which led on directly to it, we know; and that the apostle was able to foresee and predict such a final development, shows that he was under the influence of inspiration. It is not known precisely what is referred to by the phrase "what withholdeth," τὸ κατέχον. The phrase means properly, something that *holds back*, or *restrains.* The word here is in the *neuter* gender, "*What* withholdeth." In the following verse it is in the *masculine* gender, ὁ κατέχων,—"he that letteth," or withholdeth; and the reference would seem to be to some agency or state of things under the control of an *individual*, or of *some civil power*, that then operated as a restraint on the natural tendency of things. Of this, the apostle says, *they* had had full information; but *we* can only conjecture what it was. The restraining power of anything controlled by an individual, or of any government, or the restraining power of God, would meet all that the phrase implies. The most natural interpretation is that which refers it to civil power, meaning that there was something in the form of the existing administration which would prevent this development until that restraint should be removed. The supposition that there was even then a tendency to concentrate all ecclesiastical power at Rome, and that while the civil authority remained there it would not suffer ecclesiastical power to grow to the exorbitant height which it ultimately reached, will meet all that is implied in the language. ¶ *That he might be revealed in his time.* The man of sin. The meaning is, that there was then a restraint operating which would prevent the development of this antichristian power until the proper time; that is, till the state of the world should be such that in the divine arrangements it would be proper to permit it. It was not to be permitted until the gospel should be extensively preached, and had had an opportunity of showing its fair effects on the nations; until it

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already [a] work: only he who now letteth, *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

[a] 1 John 4.3.

had become so planted and established that even the rise of this antichristian power could not effectually uproot it. Had the "man of sin" been permitted to rise at once, the consequence might have been that the new religion would have been crushed, so that it could never have revived again. There was then a providential arrangement by which this growth of wickedness should be checked and restrained, until the new religion should take deep root in the earth, and its perpetuity should be secured. Then the great trial was to be permitted under the "man of sin."

7. *For the mystery of iniquity.* On the meaning of the word *mystery*, see Notes on Rom. xi. 25; comp. 1 Cor. ii. 7; Eph. i. 9; iii. 3; Col. i. 26. It means properly that which *is hidden* or *concealed;* not necessarily that which is *unintelligible.* The "mystery of iniquity" seems here to refer to some *hidden* or *concealed* depravity, —some form of sin which was working secretly and silently, and which had not yet developed itself. Any secret sources of iniquity in the church,— anything that tended to corrupt its doctrines, and to destroy the simplicity of the faith of the gospel, would correspond with the meaning of the word. Doddridge correctly supposes that this may refer to the pride and ambition of some ministers, the factious temper of some Christians, the imposing of unauthorized severities, the worship of angels, &c. ¶ *Doth already work.* There are elements of these corruptions already existing in the church. Bishop Newton maintains that the foundations of popery were laid in the apostle's days, and that the superstructure was raised by degrees; and this is entirely in accordance with the statements of the apostle Paul. In his own time, he says, there were things which, if not restrained, would expand and ripen into that apostasy. He has not told us particularly to what he refers, but there are several intimations in his writings, as well as in other parts of the New Testament, that even in the apostolic age there existed the elements of those corruptions which were afterwards developed and imbodied in the papacy. Even "then," says Bishop Newton, "*idolatry* was stealing into the church (1 Cor. x. 14), and a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels." [Col. ii. 18; see, however, my Note on that passage.] "There existed strife and divisions (1 Cor. iii. 3), an adulterating and handling the word of God deceitfully (2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 2), a gain of godliness, teaching of things for filthy lucre's sake (1 Tim. vi. 5; Titus i. 11), a vain observation of festivals (Gal. iv. 10,) a vain distinction of meats (1 Cor. viii. 8), a neglecting of the body (Col. ii. 23), traditions, and commandments, and doctrines of men (Col. ii. 8, 22);" comp. 3 John 9, "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence." These things constituted the elements of the corruptions which were afterwards developed in the papacy, and which are imbodied in that system. An eye that could see all, would even then have perceived that if there were no restraint, these incipient corruptions would grow up into that system, and would be expanded into all the corruptions and arrogant claims which have ever characterized it; comp. 1 John iv. 3. ¶ *Only he who now letteth.* Who now *hinders*, or *restrains*—ὁ κατέχων. This is the same word which is used in ver. 6, and rendered "withholdeth," except that it is there in the neuter gender. There can be no doubt that there is reference to the same restraining power, or the same power under the control of an individual; but what that was, is not quite certain. It was some power which operated as a check on the growing corruptions then existing, and which prevented their full development, but which was to be removed at no distant period, and whose removal would give an opportunity for these corruptions to develope themselves, and for the ful

revelation of the man of sin. Such a supposition as that the civil power of Rome was such a restraint, operating to prevent the assumption of the ecclesiastical claims of supremacy which afterwards characterized the papacy, will correspond with all that is necessarily implied in the language. ¶ Will let, *until he be taken out of the way.* This will be an effectual check on these corruptions, preventing their full development, until it is removed, and then the man of sin will appear. The supposition which will best suit this language is, that there was then some civil restraint, preventing the development of existing corruptions, but that there would be a removal, or withdrawing of that restraint; and that then the tendency of the existing corruptions would be seen. It is evident, as Oldshausen remarks, that this resisting or restraining power must be something *out* of the church, and distinguished from the antichristian tendency itself; von der Kirche und vom Antichristenthum. It is necessary, therefore, to understand this of the restraints of civil power. Was there, then, any fact in history which will accord with this interpretation? The belief among the primitive Christians was, that what hindered the rise of the man of sin was the Roman empire, and therefore "they prayed for its peace and welfare, as knowing that when the Roman empire should be dissolved and broken in pieces, the empire of the man of sin would be raised on its ruins." *Bp. Newton.* How this revolution was effected, may be seen by the statement of Machiavel. "The emperor of Rome, quitting Rome to dwell at Constantinople" (in the fourth century, under Constantine), "the Roman empire began to decline, but the church of Rome augmented as fast. Nevertheless, until the coming in of the Lombards, all Italy being under the dominion of either emperors or kings, the bishops assumed no more power than what was due to their doctrine and manners; in civil affairs they were subject to the civil power. But Theodoric, king of the Goths, fixing his seat at Ravenna, was that which advanced their interest, and made them more considerable in Italy, for there being no other prince left in Rome, the Romans were forced for protection to pay greater allegiance to the pope. The Lombards having invaded and reduced Italy into several cantons, the pope took the opportunity, and began to hold up his head. For being, as it were, governor and principal of Rome, the emperor of Constantinople and the Lombards bare him a respect, so that the Romans (by mediation of their pope,) began to treat and confederate with Longinus [the emperor's lieutenant], and the Lombards, not as subjects, but as equals and companions; which said custom continuing, and the pope's entering into alliance sometimes with the Lombards, and sometimes with the Greeks, contracted great reputation to their dignity." (Hist. of Florence, B. i. p. 6, of the English translation.) A more extended quotation on the same subject, may be seen in Newton on the Prophecies, pp. 407, 408. To any one acquainted with the decline and fall of the Roman empire, nothing can be more manifest than the correspondence of the facts in history respecting the rise of the papacy, and the statement of the apostle Paul here. The simple facts are these. (1.) There were early corruptions in the church at Rome, as there were elsewhere, but peculiarly there, as Rome was the seat of philosophy and of power. (2.) There were great efforts made by the bishop of Rome to increase his authority, and there was a steady approximation to what he subsequently claimed—that of being universal bishop. (3.) There was a constant tendency to yield to him deference and respect in all matters. (4.) This was kept in check as long as Rome was the seat of the imperial power. Had that power remained there, it would have been impossible for the Roman bishop ever to have obtained the civil and ecclesiastical eminence which he ultimately did. Rome could not have had *two* heads, both claiming and exercising supreme power; and there never could have been a "revelation of the man of sin." (5.) Constantine

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall [a] consume with the spirit [b] of his mouth, and shall destroy [c] with the brightness of his coming:

a Da.7.10,11. b Is.11.4; Re.19.15,21. c He.10.27.

removed the seat of empire to Constantinople; and this removal or "taking away" of the only restraint on the ambitious projects of the Roman bishops, gave all the opportunity which could be desired for the growth of the papal power. In all history there cannot, probably, be found a series of events corresponding more accurately with a prophetic statement than this; and there is every evidence, therefore, that these are the events to which the Spirit of inspiration referred.

8. *And then shall that Wicked be revealed.* ὁ ἄνομος—"*the* wicked one," referring to the "man of sin," and called "*the* wicked one" because of the eminent depravity of the system of which he was to be the head; see Notes on ver. 3. ¶ *Whom the Lord shall consume.* The Lord Jesus; see Notes on Acts i. 24. The word *consume* here—ἀναλώσει—means to *destroy;* see Gal. v. 15; Luke ix. 54. The word would be applicable to any kind of destruction. The *methods* by which this will be done are immediately specified—and it is of much importance to understand them, if this refers to the papacy. ¶ *With the spirit of his mouth.* What goes out of his mouth, or what he speaks; that is, *word, truth, command,* or *gospel*—all of which he may be regarded as *speaking.* In Rev. i. 16; xix. 15, 21, it is said of the Redeemer that "a sharp two-edged sword goeth out of his mouth;" that is, his word, doctrine, or command—*what he speaks*—is *like* a sharp sword. It will cut deep; will lay open the heart; will destroy his enemies. Comp. Isa. xi. 4, "With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." The reference in the passage before us is to *one* of the methods which would be employed to "destroy" the man of sin; and the sense is, that it would be by what is *spoken* by the Redeemer. This may refer either to what he will say *at his coming,* or to his *truth*—already spoken; to what has gone from his lips, by whomsoever uttered; and the meaning then is, that one of the grand agencies for destroying this antichristian power is the *truth* spoken or revealed by the Saviour—that is, his pure gospel. If this latter be the true interpretation, it may mean that the process for his destruction may have commenced long anterior to the personal appearing of the Redeemer, but that the *complete* destruction of this power will be accomplished by the splendour of his Second Advent. It cannot be denied, however, that the most obvious interpretation is that which refers both clauses in the sentence to the same period—that of his second coming. Still, it is not improper to suppose that it may be implied that his power will be weakened and diminished by the influence of the gospel, though it may not be *wholly* destroyed until the second coming of the Saviour. ¶ *And shall destroy.* καταργήσει. Shall bring to naught; cause to cease; put an end to. This is, in some respects, a stronger word than that which in the former part of the verse is rendered *consume.* It denotes a more entire *destruction* than that, though it does not refer so much to any positive *agency* by which it will be done. In the former word, the attention is directed more to the *agency* by which the destruction will be effected—to the exertion of some kind of *power* to do it; in this word the attention is directed rather to the *entireness* or *totality* of the destruction. The antichristian domination will *wholly* cease, or be *entirely* destroyed. The *words* would naturally harmonize with the idea that there would be a somewhat gradual process under the operation of *truth* toward the destruction of the man of sin, but that the *complete* annihilation of his power would be by some more manifest exhibition of the personal glory of the Saviour. ¶ *With the brightness of his coming.* This is evidently a Hebraism, meaning his splen-

9 *Even him,* whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders,

did or glorious appearing. The Greek word, however, rendered "*brightness*" (ἐπιφανεία—*epiphany*)—means merely *an appearing*, or *appearance*. So it is used in 1 Tim. vi. 4; 2 Tim. i. 10; iv. 1, 8; Titus ii. 13, in all which places it is rendered *appearing*, and refers to the manifestation of the Saviour when he shall come to judge the world. It is used nowhere else in the New Testament. There is no necessary idea of *splendour* in the word, and the idea is not, as our translation would seem to convey, that there would be *such a dazzling light*, or *such unsufferable brightness* that all would be consumed before it, but that he would *appear*, and that this antichristian power would be destroyed *by* his appearing; that is, by *himself* when he would return. The agency in doing it would not be his *brightness*, but *himself*. It would seem to follow from this, that, however this enormous power of wickedness might be weakened by truth, the final triumph over it would be reserved for the Son of God himself on his second return to our world. Yet, if this be so, it need not lessen our zeal in endeavouring to diminish the power of these corruptions; to establish and spread the truth, or to convert the defenders of these errors to a better faith.

9. Even him, *whose coming is after the working of Satan.* Greek, κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Σατανᾶ. According to the energy of Satan; that is, the energetic or efficient operation of Satan. The word rendered *after*, it need not be said to one who looks at the Greek, does not refer to *time*, but is a preposition, meaning *according to; in conformity with;* meaning that the manner of his appearing would be accompanied by such works as would show that the agency of Satan was employed, and such as he only could produce. It does not mean that *the coming of the Lord Jesus* would be *after* Satan had worked in this manner, but that the manifestation of that wicked one would be with such demonstrations of power and wonder as Satan only could effect. The system over which he presides is originated by Satan, and sustained by those things which he alone can perform. On the word *Satan*, see Notes on Job i. 6. The idea is, that it would be under the direction and control of the great enemy of God, and that the things on which it would rely for support could be traced to his agency. In all the pretended miracles to which it would appeal, there would be nothing which Satan could not accomplish. ¶ *With all power.* With all the power which Satan can exhibit; meaning also, that there would be a great exertion of power in the case. It would not be a feeble and imbecile dominion. The dominion of the papacy has been one of the *most powerful* on earth. There has been none which has been more dreaded by the nations of the earth—and there have been times when nations trembled, and kings turned pale on their thrones at the frown of the pope. ¶ *And signs.* This word frequently denotes real miracles, but not necessarily so. It may be applied to pretended miracles as well as real, and is undoubtedly so used here, as it is connected with "*lying* wonders," and as it is said that the thing wrought would be "after the working of Satan." There is doubtless reference to such "signs and wonders" as the Saviour mentions in Matt. xxiv. 24; see Notes on that passage. It is hardly necessary to remark that the papacy has always relied for support on its pretended miracles. Even in our own age the wonders performed by the Prince Hohenloe, and by the pretended seamless garment of the Saviour, have been proclamed as true miracles, and as furnishing indubitable evidence of the truth of the Roman Catholic system. The dissolving of the blood of St. Januarius, the removal of Pilate's stairs to Rome, and the transportation to Italy of the "house of our Lady," are among the miracles to which there is a constant reference in the papal communion. In addition

10 And with all deceivableness [a] of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love [b] of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall

[a] He.3.13.

[b] 1 Co.16.22.

to these and to all similar pretensions, thereis the power claimed of performing a miracle at the pleasure of the priest by the change of bread and wine into the "body and blood, the soul and divinity" of the Lord Jesus. In 1756, there was published in London a book entitled, "The miraculous power of the church of Christ, asserted through each successive century, from the apostle down to the present time." The power of working miracles has been one of the standing claims of the Papacy. ¶ *And lying wonders.* False or pretended miracles. They would be such as would be claimed to be miracles; such as would excite wonder; and yet such as were false and delusive. No Protestant assuredly needs to be convinced that this is just the character of the pretended miracles of the Papacy. It would be impossible for language to describe them more clearly, in the apprehension of all Protestants, than is done in this language of the apostle Paul.

10. *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.* There are two ideas here. The first is, that there would be *deceit;* and the other is, that it would be for the purpose of promoting unrighteousness or iniquity. The iniquitous system would be maintained by fraudulent methods. No one who has read Pascal's Provincial Letters can ever doubt that this description is applicable to the system of the Jesuits; and no one familiar with the acts of the Papacy, as they have always been practised, can doubt that the whole system is accurately described by this language. The plausible reasoning by which the advocates of that system have palliated and apologized for sins of various kinds, has been among its most remarkable features. ¶ *In them that perish. Among* those who will perish; that is, among the abandoned and wicked. The reference is to men of corrupt minds and lives, over whom this system would have power; countenancing them in their depravity, and fitting them still farther for destruction. The idea is, that these acts would have especial reference to men who would be lost at any rate, and who would be sustained in their wickedness by this false and delusive system. ¶ *Because they received not the love of the truth.* They prefer this system of error and delusion to the simple and pure gospel, by which they might have been saved.

11. *And for this cause.* Because they choose error, or their hearts love that more than they do truth. The original reason then of their embracing and adhering to the system was not an arbitrary decree on the part of God, but that they did not love the truth. Hence, he gave them up to this system of error. If a man strongly *prefers* error to truth, and sin to holiness, it is not wrong to allow him freely to evince his own preference. ¶ *God shall send them strong delusion.* Gr., "energy of deceit;" a Hebraism, meaning strong deceit. The agency of God is here distinctly recognised, in accordance with the uniform statements of the Scriptures, respecting evil; comp. Ex. vii. 13; ix. 12; x. 1, 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 8. Deut. x. 30; Isa. xlv. 7. On the nature of this agency, see Notes on John xii. 40. It is not necessary here to suppose that there was any positive influence on the part of God in *causing* this delusion to come upon them, but all the force of the language will be met, as well as the reasoning of the apostle, by supposing that God withdrew all restraint, and suffered men simply *to show* that they did not love the truth. God often places men in circumstances to develope their own nature, and it cannot be shown to be wrong that he should do so. If men *have* no love of the truth, and no desire to be saved, it is not improper that they should be allowed to manifest this. How it happened that they *had* no "love of the truth," is a different question, to which the remarks

send them strong delusion, [a] that they should believe a lie :

12 That [b] they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

[a] Eze.14.9; Ro.1.24. [b] De.32.35.

of the apostle do not appertain ; comp. Notes on Rom. ix. 17, 18 ; i. 24. ¶ *That they should believe a lie.* This does not affirm that God *wished* them to believe a lie ; nor that he would not have preferred that they should believe the truth ; nor that he exerted any direct agency to cause them to believe a lie. It means merely that he left them, because they did not love the truth, to believe what was false, and what would end in their destruction. Can any one doubt that this constantly occurs in the world ? Men are left to believe impostors ; to trust to false guides ; to rely on unfounded information ; to credit those who live to delude and betray the innocent ; and to follow those who lead them to ruin. God does not interpose by direct power to preserve them. Can any one doubt this ? Yet this is not peculiarly the doctrine of revelation. The fact pertains just as much to the infidel as it does to the believer in Christianity, and he is just as much bound to explain it as the Christian is. It belongs to our world—to us all—and it should not be charged on Christianity as a doctrine pertaining peculiarly to that system.

12. *That they all might be damned.* The word *damned* we commonly apply now exclusively to future punishment, and it has a *harsher* signification than the original word ; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. xi. 29. The Greek word—κρίνω—means to judge, determine, decide ; and then to condemn ; Rom. ii. 27 ; xiv. 22 ; James iv. 11 ; John vii. 51 ; Luke xix. 22 ; Acts xiii. 27. It may be applied to the judgment of the last day (John v. 22 ; viii. 50 ; Acts xvii. 31 ; Rom. iii. 6 ; 2 Tim. iv. 1,) but not necessarily. The word *judged* or *condemned*, would, in this place, express all that the Greek word necessarily conveys. Yet there can be no doubt that the *judgment* or *condemnation* which is referred to, is that which will occur when the Saviour will appear. It does not seem to me to be a necessary interpretation of this to suppose that it teaches that God would send a strong delusion that they should believe a lie, *in order* that all might be damned who did not believe the truth ; or that he *desired* that they should be damned, and sent this as the means of securing it ; but the sense is, that this course of events would be allowed to occur, *so that* (ἵνα—not εἰς τὸ) all who do not love the truth would be condemned. The particle here used, and rendered "*that*" (ἵνα), in connection with the phrase "all might be damned" is employed in two general senses, either as marking the end, purpose, or cause *for*, or *on account of*, which anything is done ; *to the end that*, or *in order that it may be so and so ;* or as marking simply the result, event, or upshot of an action, *so that, so as that. Robinson, Lex.* In the latter case it denotes merely that something will really take place, without indicating that such was the design of the agent, or that what brought it about was in order that it *might* take place. It is also used, in the later Greek, so as neither to mark the purpose, nor to indicate that the event would occur, but merely to point out that to which the preceding words refer. It is not proper, therefore, to infer that this passage teaches that all these things would be brought about in the arrangements of Providence, *in order* that they might be damned who came under their influence. The passage teaches that such would be the result ; that the connection between these delusions and the condemnation of those who were deluded, would be certain. It cannot be proved from the Scriptures that God sends on men strong delusions, *in order* that they may be damned. No such construction should be put on a passage of Scripture if it can be avoided, and it cannot be shown that it is necessary here. ¶ *Who believed not the truth.*

13 But we [a] are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen [b] you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;

[a] chap.1.3. [b] Ep.1.4; 1 Th.1.4; 1 Pe.1.2.

14 Whereunto [c] he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory [d] of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.

[c] 1 Pe.5.10. [d] John 17.22.

The grounds or reasons why they would be damned are now stated. One would be that they did not believe the truth—not that God sent upon them delusion *in order* that they might be damned. That men will be condemned for not believing the truth, and that it will be right thus to condemn them, is everywhere the doctrine of the Scriptures, and is equally the doctrine of common sense; see Notes on Mark xvi. 16. ¶ *But had pleasure in unrighteousness.* This is the second ground or reason of their condemnation. If men have *pleasure* in sin, it is proper that they should be punished. There *can* be no more just ground of condemnation than that a man *loves to do wrong.*

13. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you*; see Notes on chap. i. 3. ¶ *Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.* The following important things are affirmed or implied here: (1.) That God had *chosen* or *elected* them (εἵλετο) to salvation. The doctrine of *election*, therefore, is true. (2.) That this was from *the beginning* (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς); that is, from eternity; see Notes on John i. 1; Eph. i. 4; iii. 9—11. The doctrine of *eternal* election is, therefore, true. (3.) That this was the choice of the persons to whom Paul referred. The doctrine of *personal* election is, therefore, true. (4.) That this is a reason for thanksgiving. Why should it not be? Can there be any higher ground of praise or gratitude than that God has chosen us to be eternally holy and happy, and that he has from eternity designed that we should be so? Whatever, therefore, may be the feelings with which those who are *not* chosen to salvation, regard this doctrine, it is clear that those who have evidence that they *are* chosen should make it a subject of grateful praise. They can have no more exalted source of gratitude than that they are chosen to eternal life. ¶ *Through sanctification of the Spirit.* Being made holy by the divine Spirit. It is not without respect to character, but it is a choice *to* holiness and then *to* salvation. No one can have evidence that he is chosen to salvation except as he has evidence that he is sanctified by the Spirit; see Notes on Eph. i. 4. ¶ *And belief of the truth.* In connection with believing the truth. No one who is not a believer in the truth can have evidence that God has chosen him.

14. *Whereunto he called you by our gospel.* He made the gospel as preached by us the means of calling you to salvation. That is, God has chosen you to salvation from eternity, and has made the gospel as preached by us the means of carrying that eternal purpose into effect. ¶ *To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* That you may partake of the same glory as the Saviour in heaven; see Notes on John xvii. 22, 24.

15. *Therefore.* In view of the fact that you are thus chosen from eternity, and that you are to be raised up to such honour and glory. ¶ *Stand fast.* Amidst all the temptations which surround you; comp. Notes on Eph. vi. 10—14. ¶ *And hold the traditions which ye have been taught.* On the word *traditions*, see Notes on Matt. xv. 2. It means properly things delivered over from one to another; then anything orally delivered—any precept, doctrine, or law. It is frequently employed to denote that which is not written, as contradistinguished from that which is

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which [a] hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope [b] through grace,

[a] John 13.1; Re.1.5.

[b] 1 Pe.1.3.

written (comp. Matt. xv. 2), but not necessarily or always; for here the apostle speaks of the "traditions which they had been taught *by his epistle;*" comp. Notes, 1 Cor. xi. 2. Here it means the doctrines or precepts which they had received from the apostle, whether when he was with them, or after he left them; whether communicated by preaching or by letter. This passage can furnish no authority for holding the "traditions" which have come down from ancient times, and which profess to have been derived from the apostles; for (1.) there is no evidence that any of those traditions were given by the apostles; (2.) many of them are manifestly so trifling, false, and contrary to the writings of the apostles, that they could not have been delivered by them; (3.) if any of them are genuine, it is impossible to separate them from those which are false; (4.) we have all that is necessary for salvation in the written word; and (5.) there is not the least evidence that the apostle here meant to refer to any such thing. He speaks only of what had been delivered to them *by himself*, whether orally or by letter; not of what was delivered from one to another as *from* him. There is no intimation here that they were to hold anything as from him which they had not received directly from him, either by his own instructions personally or by letter. With what propriety, then, can this passage be adduced to prove that we are to hold the traditions which professedly come to us through a great number of intermediate persons?—Where is the evidence here that the church was to hold those unwritten traditions, and transmit them to future times? ¶ *Whether by word.* By preaching, when we were with you. It does not mean that he had sent any oral message to them by a third person. ¶ *Or our epistle.* The former letter which he had written to them.

16. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself.* This expression is equivalent to this: "I pray our Lord Jesus, and our Father, to comfort you." It is really a prayer offered to the Saviour—a recognition of Christ as the source of consolation as well as the Father, and a union of his name with that of the Father in invoking important blessings. It is such language as could be used only by one who regarded the Lord Jesus as divine. ¶ *And God even our Father.* Gr. "And God, *and* (καὶ) our Father;" though not incorrectly rendered "*even* our Father." If it should be contended that the use of the word "and"—"our Lord Jesus Christ, *and* God," proves that the Lord Jesus is a different *being* from God—the use of the same word "and" would prove that the "Father" is a different being from God. But the truth is, the apostle meant to speak of the Father *and* the Son as the *common* source of the blessing for which he prayed. ¶ *Which hath loved us.* Referring particularly to the Father. The love which is referred to is that manifested in redemption, or which is shown us through Christ; see John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9. ¶ *And hath given us everlasting consolation.* Not temporary comfort, but that which will endure for ever. The joys of religion are not like other joys. *They* soon fade away;—they always terminate at death;—they cease when trouble comes, when sickness invades the frame, when wealth or friends depart, when disappointment lowers, when the senses by age refuse to minister as they once did to our pleasures. The comforts of religion depend on no such contingencies. They live through all these changes—attend us in sickness, poverty, bereavement, losses, and age; they are with us in death, and they are perpetual and un-

17 Comfort your hearts, [a] and stablish you in every good word and work.

[a] 1 Co.1.8.

changing beyond the grave. ¶ *And good hope through grace;* see Notes on Rom. v. 2, 5; Heb. vi. 19.

17. *Comfort your hearts;* Notes, 1 Thess. iii. 2; v. 11, 14. The Thessalonians were in the midst of trials, and Paul prayed that they might have the full consolations of their religion. ¶ *And stablish you.* Make you firm and steadfast; 1 Thess. iii. 2, 13. ¶ *In every good word and work.* In every true doctrine, and in the practice of every virtue.

This chapter is very important in reference to the rise of that great antichristian power which has exerted, and which still exerts so baleful an influence over the Christian world. Assuming now that it refers to the Papacy, in accordance with the exposition which has been given, there are a few important reflections to which it gives rise.

(1.) The Second Advent of the Redeemer is an event which is distinctly predicted in the Scriptures. This is assumed in this chapter; and though Paul corrects some errors into which the Thessalonians had fallen, he does not suggest this as one of them. Their error was in regard to the *time* of his appearing; not the *fact.*

(2.) The *time* when he will appear is not made known to men. The apostles did not pretend to designate it, nor did the Saviour himself; Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32; Acts i. 7.

(3.) The course of reasoning in this chapter would lead to the expectation that a considerable time would elapse before the Saviour would appear. The apostles, therefore, did not believe that the end of the world was near, and they did not teach false doctrine on the subject, as infidels have often alleged. No one, who attentively and candidly studies this chapter, it seems to me, can suppose that Paul believed that the Second Advent of the Saviour would occur within a short time, or during the generation when he lived. He has described a long series of events which were to intervene before the Saviour would appear—events which, if the interpretation which has been given is correct, have been in fact in a process of development from that time to the present, and which, it must have been foreseen, even then, would require a long period before they would be completed. There was to be a great apostasy. There were at that time subtle causes at work which would lead to it. They were, however, then held in check and restrained by some foreign influence. But the time would come, when that foreign power would be withdrawn. Then these now hidden and restrained corruptions would develope themselves into this great antichristian power. That power would sustain itself by a series of pretended miracles and lying wonders—and, *after* all this, would be the second coming of the Son of man. But this would require time. Such a series of events would not be completed in a day, or in a single generation. They would require a succession—perhaps a *long* succession—of years, before these developments would be complete. It is clear, therefore, that the apostle did not hold that the Lord Jesus would return in that age, and that he did not mean to be understood as teaching it; and consequently it should not be said that he or his fellow-apostles were mistaken in the statements which they have recorded respecting the second coming of the Lord Jesus and the end of the world.

(4.) The apostle Paul was inspired. He has recorded in this chapter a distinct prediction of an important series of events which were to occur at a future, and most of them at quite a remote period. They were such that they could have been foreseen by no natural sagacity, and no human skill. There were, indeed, corruptions existing then in the church, but no mere natural sagacity could have foreseen that they would grow up into that enormous system which would overshadow the Christian world, and live for so many ages.

(5.) If these predictions referred to the Papacy, we may see how we are to regard that system of religion. The simple inquiry, if this interpretation is correct, is, *how did the apostle Paul regard that system to which he referred?* Did he consider it to be the true church? Did he regard it as a church at all? The language which he uses will enable us easily to answer these questions. He speaks of it as "the apostasy;" he speaks of the head of that system as "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," "the wicked one," and as "opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God;" he says that his "coming is after the working of Satan, with lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Can it be believed then that he regarded this as a true church of Jesus Christ? Are these the characteristics of the church as laid down elsewhere in the Scriptures? Wherever it may lead, it seems clear to me that the apostle did not regard that system of which he spoke as having any of the marks of a true church, and the only question which can be raised on this point is, whether the fair interpretation of the passage demands that it shall be considered as referring to the Papacy. Protestants believe that it must be so understood, and Papists have not yet disproved the reasons which they allege for their belief.

(6.) If this be the fair interpretation, then we may see what is the value of the pretended "succession" of the ministry through that system. If such a regular "succession" of ministers from the apostles could be made out, what would it be worth? What is the value of a spiritual descent from Pope Alexander VI.? How would it increase the proper respect for the ministerial office, if it could be proved to be derived in a right line from those monsters of incest, ambition, covetousness, and blood, who have occupied the Papal throne? A Protestant minister should blush and hang his head if it were *charged* on him that he held his office by no better title than such a derivation. Much less should he make it a matter of glorying and an argument to prove that he only is an authorized minister, that he has received his office through such men.

(7.) From this chapter we may see the tendency of human nature to degeneracy. The elements of that great and corrupt apostasy existed even in apostolic times. Those elements grew regularly up into the system of the Papacy, and spread blighting and death over the whole Christian world. It is the tendency of human nature to corrupt the best things. The Christian church was put in possession of a pure, and lovely, and glorious system of religion. It was a religion adapted to elevate and save the race. There was not an interest of humanity which it would not have fostered and promoted; there was not a source of human sorrow which it would not have mitigated or relieved; there were none of the race whom it would not have elevated and purified. Its influence, as far as it was seen, was uniformly of the happiest kind. It did no injury anywhere, but produced only good, But how soon was it voluntarily exchanged for the worst form of superstition and error that has ever brooded in darkness over mankind! How soon did the light fade, and how rapidly did it become more obscure, until it well nigh-went out altogether! And with what tenacity did the world adhere to the system that grew up under the great apostasy, maintaining it by learning, and power, and laws, and dungeons, and racks, and faggots! What a comment is this on human nature, thus "loving darkness more than light," and error rather than truth!

(8.) The chapter teaches the importance of resisting error at the beginning. These errors had their foundation in the time of the apostles. They were then comparatively small, and perhaps to many they appeared unimportant; and yet the whole Papal system was just the development of errors, the germs of which existed in their days, Had these been crushed, as Paul wished to crush them, the church might have been saved from

CHAPTER III.

FINALLY, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may [1] have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you;

[1] *run.*

the corruption, and woes, and persecutions produced by the Papacy. So error now should always be opposed—no matter how small or unimportant it may appear. We have no right to connive at it; to patronise it; to smile upon it. The *beginnings* of evil are always to be resisted with firmness; and if that is done, the triumph of truth will be certain,

(9.) The church is safe. It has now passed through every conceivable form of trial, and still survives, and is now more vigorous and flourishing than it ever was before. It has passed through fiery times of persecution; survived the attempts of emperors and kings to destroy it, and lived while the system of error described here by the apostle Paul has thrown its baleful shade over almost the whole Christian world. It cannot reasonably be supposed that it will be called to pass through such trials again as it has already endured; but whether it does or not, the past history of the church is a guarantee that it will survive all that it is destined to encounter. None but a religion of divine origin could have continued to live amidst so many corruptions, and so many attempts to destroy it; and in the view of the past history of that church it is impossible not to come to the conclusion that it has been founded by God himself.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is made up of exhortations and directions in regard to the performance of various Christian duties.

(1.) The apostle asks their prayers; ver. 1, 2. He desires them to pray particularly that the true religion might be prospered, and that, in preaching the gospel, he might be delivered from the opposition of unreasonable and wicked men.

(2.) He expresses confidence that God would incline them to do what was right, and prays that he would keep their hearts in his love, and in patient waiting for the Saviour; ver 3–5.

(3.) He commands them to remove from their number those who were disorderly, and especially those who were idle, and addresses an earnest exhortation to this class, that they would be diligently engaged in the prosecution of the business of their appropriate callings; ver. 6—12.

(4.) He exhorts them not to be weary in doing well; ver. 13.

(5.) He directs that if any one should not obey the commands given in this epistle, he should be noted, and they were to separate themselves from him. Yet they were not to regard him as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother; ver. 14, 15.

(6.) The epistle closes with the usual salutations; ver. 16—18.

1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us.* That is, for Paul, Silas, and Timothy, then engaged in arduous labours at Corinth. This request for the prayers of Christians is one which Paul often makes; see Notes, 1 Thess. v. 25. ¶ *That the word of the Lord may have* free *course.* That is, the gospel. The margin is "*run.*" So also the Greek. The idea is, that it might meet with no obstruction, but that it might be carried abroad with the rapidity of a racer out of whose way every hindrance was removed. The gospel would spread rapidly in the earth if all the obstructions which men have put in its way were removed; and that they may be removed should be one of the constant subjects of prayer. ¶ *And be glorified.* Be honoured; or appear to be glorious. ¶ *As it is with you.* It is evident from this that Paul met with some obstructions in preaching the gospel where he was then labouring What they were, he mentions in the next verse. He was then at Corinth (see the Introduction), and the history in the Acts of the Apostles informs us of the difficulties which he had to encounter there; see Acts xviii.

2 And that we may be delivered from [1] unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

1 *absurd.*

2. *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.* That is, from opposition in their endeavours to spread the gospel. Paul encountered such men everywhere, as all do who labour to diffuse the knowledge of the truth, but it is probable that there is particular reference here to the opposition which he encountered when in Corinth. This opposition arose mainly from the Jews; see Acts xviii. 5, 6, 12, 13. The word *unreasonable* is rendered in the margin *absurd.* The Greek word (ἀτόπος) means, properly, *out of place;* then absurd, unusual, strange; then improper, unreasonable, wicked. It is rendered in Luke xxiii. 41, *amiss;* in Acts xxviii. 6, *harm.* It does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It refers here to men who acted amiss or improperly; men who were not found in the right place, or who had not the right views of things; and probably does not refer so much to their being positively wicked or malicious, as *to their putting things out of their proper place.* They gave an undue prominence to certain things, and less importance to others than they deserved. They had a distorted vision of the value of objects, and in tenacious adherence to their own views, and prosecuting their own objects to the exclusion of all others, they presented a constant obstruction to the true gospel. This word would apply, and probably was designed to be applied, to Jewish teachers (see Acts xviii. 5, 6), who gave an undue prominence to the laws of Moses; but it will apply well to all who entertain distorted views of the relative importance of objects, and who put things out of their place. Men often have a *hobby.* They give more importance to some object than it deserves. They, therefore, undervalue other objects; press their own with improper zeal; denounce others who do not feel the same interest in them which they do; withdraw from those who will not go with them in their views; form separate parties, and thus throw themselves in the way of all who are endeavouring to do good in some other method. It was from men who thus put themselves *out of place,* that the apostle prayed to be delivered. ¶ *And wicked men.* Men with bad aims and purposes. It is not always true that those who would come under the appellation of what the apostle here calls "*unreasonable,*" are *wicked.* They are sometimes well-meaning, but misguided men. But in this case, it seems, they were men of bad character, who were at heart opposed to what was good, as well as inclined to put things out of their place. ¶ *For all* men *have not faith.* Of the truth of this, no one can doubt. The only question is, as to its bearing on the case before us. Some suppose it means, "there are few men whom we can safely trust;" others, that it means that they have not that "upright and candid disposition which would engage men to receive the testimony of the apostles" (*Doddridge*); others, that "all men do not embrace the Christian faith, but many oppose it" (*Benson*); and others, that "all men do not believe, but the worthy only." *Bloomfield.* The connection seems to require us to understand it as meaning that all men are not prepared to embrace the gospel. Hence they set themselves against it, and from such men Paul prayed that he might be delivered; comp. 2 Tim. iii. 8. The state of mind in which the apostle was when he wrote this, seems to have been this: He recollected the readiness with which the Thessalonians had embraced the gospel, and the firmness with which they held it, and seems to suppose that *they* would imagine the same thing must be found true everywhere. But he says all men have not the same faith; all were not prepared cordially and fully to embrace the gospel. There were unreasonable and wicked men whom he had encountered, from whom he prayed that he might be delivered.

3 But the Lord [a] is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep [b] *you* from evil.

4 And we have confidence [c] in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

[a] 1 Co.1.9. [b] John 17.15. [c] 2 Co.7.16.

5 And the Lord direct [d] your hearts into the love of God, and into the [1] patient waiting for Christ.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw [e] yourselves from every brother

[d] 1 Ch.29.18. 1 or, *patience of Christ.* [e] 1 Ti.6.5.

3. *But the Lord is faithful.*—Though men cannot be trusted, God is faithful to his promises and his purposes. He may always be confided in; and when men are unbelieving, perverse, unkind, and disposed to do us wrong, we may go to him, and we shall always find in him one in whom we may confide. This is an exceedingly interesting declaration, and is a beautiful illustration of the resource which a truly pious mind will feel that it has. We often have occasion to know, to our sorrow, that "all men have not faith." We witness their infidelity. We see how they turn away from the truth. We see many who once gave some evidence that they had "faith," abandon it all; and we see many in the church who seem to have no true faith, and who refuse to lend their aid in promoting the cause of religion. In such circumstances, the heart is disposed to despond, and to ask whether religion *can* be advanced in the midst of so much indifference and opposition? At such times, how consoling is it to be able to turn, as Paul did, to one who is faithful; who never fails us; and who will certainly accomplish his benevolent purposes. Men may be faithless and false, but God never is. They may refuse to embrace the gospel, and set themselves against it, but God will not abandon his great purposes. Many who are in the church may forget their solemn and sacred vows, and may show no fidelity to the cause of their Saviour, but God himself will never abandon that cause. *To a pious mind it affords unspeakably more consolation to reflect that a faithful God is the friend of the cause which we love, than it would were all men, in and out of the church, its friends.* ¶ *Who shall stablish you, and keep* you *from evil;* see Notes on John xvii. 5; comp. Notes on Eph. vi. 16. The allusion is to *the Evil One*, or Satan, and the meaning is, that God would keep them from his wiles.

4. *And we have confidence in the Lord.* Not primarily in you, for you have hearts like others, but in the Lord. It is remarkable that when Paul expresses the utmost confidence in Christians that they will live and act as becomes their profession, his reliance is not on anything in themselves, but wholly on the faithfulness of God. He must be a stranger to the human heart who puts much confidence in it even in its best state; see Phil. i. 6; iv. 7; 2 Tim. i. 12; comp. Jude 24; Rev. iii. 10; Prov. xxviii. 26.

5. *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.* So direct your hearts that you may love God. ¶ *And into the patient waiting for Christ.* Marg., *patience of Christ.* The marginal reading is in accordance with the Greek, and seems best to express the apostle's meaning. The prayer of the apostle was, that they might have the love of God in their hearts, and "the patience of Christ;" that is, the same patience which Christ evinced in his trials. They were then suffering affliction and persecution. They needed patience, that they might endure their trials in a proper manner. It was natural for the apostle to refer them to the Saviour, the great example of patience, and to pray that they might have the same which he had. That it does not mean that they were to wait patiently for the *appearing* of Christ, as our translation seems to imply, is quite clear, because the apostle had just been showing them that he would *not* appear until after a long series of events had occurred.

6. *Now we command you, brethren.* The apostle now (vers. 6—12) turns to an important subject—the proper

[a] that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us

[a] 1 Co.5.11,13.

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

method of treating those who were idle and disorderly in the church. In the previous epistle he had adverted to this subject, but in the mild language of exhortation. When he wrote that epistle he was aware that there were some among them who were disposed to be idle, and he had tenderly exhorted them "to be quiet, and to mind their own business, and to work with their own hands;" 1 Thess. iv. 11. But it seems the exhortation, and the example of Paul himself when there (1 Thess. ii. 9), had not been effectual in inducing them to be industrious. It became, therefore, necessary to use the strong language of *command*, as he does here, and to require that if they would not work, the church should withdraw from them. What was the original *cause* of their idleness, is not known. There seems no reason, however, to doubt that it was much increased by their expectation that the Saviour would soon appear, and that the world would soon come to an end. If this was to be so, of what use would it be to labour? Why strive to accumulate property with reference to the wants of a family, or to a day of sickness, or old age? Why should a man build a house that was soon to be burnt up, or why buy a farm which he was soon to leave? The effect of the expectation of the speedy appearing of the Lord Jesus has always been to induce men to neglect their worldly affairs, and to lead idle lives. Man, naturally disposed to be idle, wants the stimulus of hope that he is labouring for the future welfare of himself, for his family, or for society, nor will he labour if he believes that the Saviour is about to appear. ¶ *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ;* see Notes on 1 Cor. v. 4. ¶ *That ye withdraw yourselves;* Notes on 1 Tim. vi. 5. This is the true notion of Christian discipline. It is not primarily that of cutting a man off, or denouncing him, or excommunicating him; it is that of *withdrawing* from him. We cease to have fellowship with him. We do not regard him any longer as a Christian brother. We separate from him. We do not seek to affect him in any other respect; we do not injure his name or standing as a man, or hold him up to reprobation; we do not follow him with denunciation or a spirit of revenge; we simply cease to recognise him as a Christian brother, when he shows that he is no longer worthy to be regarded as such. We do not deliver him over to the civil arm; we do not inflict any positive punishment on him; we leave him unmolested in all his rights as a citizen, a man, a neighbour, a husband, a father, and simply say that he is no longer one of us as a Christian. How different is this from *excommunication*, as it has been commonly understood! How different from the anathemas fulminated by the Papacy, and the delivering of the heretic over to the civil power! ¶ *From every brother that walketh disorderly;* comp. Notes, 1 Cor. v. 11—13. A "disorderly walk" denotes conduct that is in any way contrary to the rules of Christ. The proper idea of the word used here (ἀτάκτως), is that of soldiers who do not keep the ranks; who are regardless of order; and then who are irregular in any way. The word would include any violation of the rules of Christ on any subject. ¶ *And not after the tradition which ye received of us.* According to the doctrine which we delivered to you; see Notes on chap. ii. 15. This shows that by the word "tradition" the apostle did not mean *unwritten* doctrines handed down from one to another, for he evidently alludes to what he had himself taught them, and his direction is not that that should be *handed down* by them, but that they should *obey* it.

7. *For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us.* You know what you should do in order to imitate us. ¶ *For we behaved not ourselves dis-*

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought [a] with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

9 Not because we have not power, [b] but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that [c] if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. [d]

a Ac.18.3; 20.34. b 1 Co.9.6. c Ge.3.19. d 1 Ti.5 13; 1 Pe.4.15

orderly among you; see Notes on 1 Thess. ii. 10.

8. *Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought.* We were not supported in idleness at the expense of others. We gave a fair equivalent for all that we received, and, in fact, laboured for our own support; see Notes on 1 Thess. ii. 9.

9. *Not because we have not power,* &c.; see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 6, 12, 14.

10. *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you.* It would seem from this that the evil of which the apostle here complains had begun to operate even when he was with them. There were those who were disposed to be idle, and who needed the solemn command of an apostle to induce them to labour. ¶ *That if any would not work, neither should he eat.* That is, at the public expense. They should not be supported by the church. This was a maxim among the Jews (see Wetstein, *in loc.*), and the same sentiment may be found in Homer, Demosthenes, and Pythagoras; see Grotius, *in loc.* The maxim is founded in obvious justice, and is in accordance with the great law under which our Creator has placed us; Gen. iii. 19. That law, in the circumstances, was benevolent, and it should be our aim to carry it out in reference to ourselves and to others. The law here laid down by the apostle extends to all who are able to work for a living, and who will not do it, and binds us *not* to contribute to their support if they will not labour for it. It should be regarded as extending (1.) to the members of a church—who, though poor, should not be supported by their brethren, unless they are willing to work in any way they can for their own maintenance. (2.) To those who beg from door to door, who should never be assisted unless they are willing to do all they can do for their own support. No one can be justified in assisting a lazy man. In no possible circumstances are we to contribute to foster indolence. A man might as properly help to maintain open vice.

11. *For we hear.* It is not known in what way this was made known to Paul, whether by Timothy, or by some other one. He had no doubt of its truth, and he seems to have been prepared to believe it the more readily from what he saw when he was among them. ¶ *Which walk disorderly;* Notes, ver. 6. ¶ *But are busy-bodies;* comp. Notes, 1 Tim. v. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 15. That is, they meddled with the affairs of others—a thing which they who have nothing of their own to busy themselves about will be very likely to do. The apostle had seen that there was a tendency to this when he was in Thessalonica, and hence he had commanded them to "do their own business;" 1 Thess. iv. 11. The injunction, it seems, had availed little, for there is no class of persons who will so little heed good counsel as those who have a propensity to intermeddle with the affairs of others. One of the indispensable things to check this is, that each one should have enough to do himself; and one of the most pestiferous of all persons is he who has nothing to do but to look after the affairs of his neighbours. In times of affliction and want, we should be ready to lend our aid. At other times, we should feel that he can manage his own affairs as well as we can do it for him; or if he cannot, it is his busi-

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, [a] and eat their own bread.

13 But ye, brethren, [1] be not [b] weary in well doing.

14 And if any man obey not our word by [2] this epistle, note that man, and have [c] no company with him, that he may be ashamed

a Ep.4 28. 1 or, *faint not.* b 1 Co.15 58
2 or. *signify that man by an epistl*
Matt. 18.17; ver. 6

ness, not ours. The Greek word used occurs only here, and in 1Tim. v. 13; comp. Notes on Phil. ii. 4.

12. *Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus,* &c. A more solemn command and appeal to do what he had before enjoined on all of them; 1 Thess. iv. 11; see Notes on that verse.

13. *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.* Marg., *faint not.* The Greek means, properly, to turn out a coward; then to be faint-hearted, to despond. The idea is, that they were not to be discouraged from doing good to the truly worthy and deserving by the idleness and improper conduct of some who asked their assistance. They were, indeed, shiftless and worthless. They would not labour; they spent their time in intermeddling with the concerns of their neighbours, and they depended for their support on the charity of others. The tendency of this, as all persons feel who have ever been applied to by such persons for aid, is, to indispose us to do good *to any.* We almost insensibly feel that all who ask for aid are of the same character; or, not being able to discriminate, we close our hands alike against all. Against this the apostle would guard us, and he says that though there may be many such persons, and though we may find it difficult to distinguish the worthy from the unworthy, we should not become so disheartened as not to give at all. Nor should we be weary though the applications for assistance are frequent. They *are* indeed frequent. God designs that they should be. But the effect should not be to dishearten us, or to make us weary in well-doing, but to fill us with gratitude—for it is a privilege to be permitted to do good. It is the great distinguishing characteristic of God that he always does good. It was that which marked the character of the Redeemer, that he "went about doing good;" and whenever God gives us the opportunity and the means of doing good, it should be to us an occasion of special thanksgiving. A man ought to become "weary" of everything else sooner than of evincing benevolence; comp. Notes on Gal. vi. 10.

14. *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle.* Marg., or *signify that man by an epistle.* According to the marginal reading this would mean "signify, mark out, or designate that man *to me* by an epistle." The difference is merely whether we unite the words "by the epistle" with what goes before, or what follows. The Greek would admit of either construction (Winer, p. 93), but it seems to me that the construction in the text is the correct one, for (1.) the requirement was to proceed to discipline such a man by withdrawing from him; (2.) in order to do this it was not necessary that the case should be made known to Paul, for there was no supposable difficulty in it, and the effect would be only needless delay; (3.) Paul regarded the right of discipline as residing in the church itself, and did not require that cases should be referred to him to determine; see Notes on 1 Cor. v. 2—4. (4.) Though the Greek will admit of either construction, yet it rather favours this; see Oldhhausen, *in loc.* ¶ *Note that man.* The word here used, means to mark; to sign; to note with marks; and the idea is, set such a mark upon him that he shall be shunned; that is, withdraw all Christian fellowship from him. ¶ *And have no company with him.* The Greek word here means, to mix up together; then to mingle together with; to have intercourse with. The idea is. that they were not

15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother. [a]

16 Now the Lord [b] of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

17 The salutation [c] of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18 The [d] grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

The second *epistle* to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

a Le.19.17.

b Ro.16.20. *c* 1 Co 16.21. *d* Ro.16.24

to mingle with him as a Christian brother, or as one of their own number. They were not to show that they regarded him as a worthy member of the church, or as having a claim to its privileges. The extent of their discipline was, that they were to withdraw from him; see Notes on ver. 6, and Matt. xviii. 17; comp. 2 John 10, 11.

15. *Yet count* him *not as an enemy, but admonish* him *as a brother.* This shows the true spirit in which discipline is to be administered in the Christian church. We are not to deal with a man as an adversary over whom we are to seek to gain a victory, but as an erring brother—*a brother still, though he errs.* There was necessity for this caution. There is great danger that when we undertake the work of discipline we shall forget that he who is the subject of it is a brother, and that we shall regard and treat him as an enemy. Such is human nature. We set ourselves in array against him. We cut him off as one who is unworthy to walk with us. We triumph over him, and consider him at once as an enemy of the church, and as having lost all claim to its sympathies. We abandon him to the tender mercies of a cold and unfeeling world, and let him take his course. Perhaps we follow him with anathemas, and hold him up as unworthy the confidence of mankind. Now all this is entirely unlike the method and aim of discipline as the New Testament requires. There all is kind, and gentle, though firm; the offender is a man and a brother still; he is to be followed with tender sympathy and prayer, and the hearts and the arms of the Christian brotherhood are to be open to receive him again when he gives any evidence of repenting.

16. *Now the Lord of peace.* The Lord who alone can impart peace; see Notes on Rom. xv. 33; 1 Cor. xiv. 33; Heb. xiii. 20; John xiv. 27.

17. *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand;* Notes, 1 Cor. xvi. 21. ¶ *Which is the token in every epistle.* Gr., *sign.* That is, this signature is a *sign* or *proof* of the genuineness of the epistle; comp. Notes on Gal. vi. 11. ¶ *So I write.* Referring, probably, to some mark or method which Paul had of signing his name, which was well known, and which would easily be recognised by them.

18. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* be *with you all;* Notes, Rom. xvi. 20.

From the subscription to this epistle, it purports to have been "written from Athens." This is probably incorrect, as there is reason to think that it was written from Corinth. See the Introduction. At all events, this subscription is of no authority. See Notes at the end of the Epistles to the Romans and 1 Corinthians.

THE FIRST

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. *Notices of the life of Timothy.*

NEARLY all that can now be known of Timothy is to be learned from the New Testament. He was a native of either Derbe or Lystra, but it is not certainly known which; Acts xvi. 1. Paul found him there on his visit to those places, and does not appear to have been acquainted with him before. His mother, whose name was Eunice, was a Jewess, and was pious, as was also his grandmother, Lois; 2 Tim. i. 3. His father was a Greek, but was evidently not unfriendly to the Jewish religion, for Timothy had been carefully trained in the Scriptures; 2 Tim. iii. 15. Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, and became acquainted with him, about A. D. 51 or 52, but there is no method now of ascertaining the exact age of Timothy at that time, though there is reason to think that he was then a youth; 1 Tim. iv. 12. It would seem, also, that he was a youth of uncommon hope and promise, and that there had been some special indications that he would rise to distinction as a religious man, and would exert an extended influence in favour of religion; 1. Tim. i. 18. At the time when Paul first met with him, he was a "disciple," or a Christian convert; but the means which had been used for his conversion are unknown. His mother had been before converted to the Christian faith (Acts xvi. 1), and Timothy was well known to the Christians in the neighbouring towns of Lystra and Iconium. The gospel had been preached by Paul and Barnabas, in Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra, some six or seven years before it is said that Paul met with Timothy (Acts xvi. 1), and it is not improbable that this youth had been converted in the interval.

Several things appear to have combined to induce the apostle to introduce him into the ministry, and to make him a travelling companion. His youth; his acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; the "prophecies which went before on him;" his talents; his general reputation in the church, and, it would seem also, his amiableness of manners, fitting him to be an agreeable companion, attracted the attention of the apostle, and led him to desire that he might be a fellow-labourer with him. To satisfy the prejudices of the Jews, and to prevent any possible objection which might be made against his qualifications for the ministerial office, Paul circumcised him (Acts xvi. 3),

and he was ordained to the office of the ministry by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery;" 1 Tim. iv. 14. *When* this ordination occurred is not known, but it is most probable that it was before he went on his travels with Paul, as it is known that Paul was present on the occasion, and took a leading part in the transaction; 2 Tim. i. 6.

Timothy having joined Paul and Silas, accompanied them on a visit to the churches of Phrygia and Galatia, in which they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained at Jerusalem; Acts xvi. 4, seq. Having done this, they endeavoured to go together into Bythinia, a province of Asia Minor, on the north-west, but were prevented; and they then went into Mysia, and to the towns of Troas; Acts xvi. 8. Here Luke appears to have joined them, and from this place, in obedience to a vision which appeared to Paul, they went into Macedonia, and preached the gospel first at Philippi, where they established a church. In this city Paul and Silas were imprisoned; but it is remarkable that nothing is said of Timothy and Luke, and it is not known whether they shared in the sufferings of the persecution there or not. Everything, however, renders it probable that Timothy was with them at Philippi, as he is mentioned as having started with them to go on the journey (Acts xvi. 3, seq.); and as we find him at Berea, after the apostle had been released from prison, and had preached at Thessalonica and Berea; Acts xvii. 14. From this place Paul was conducted to Athens, but left an injunction for Silas and Timothy to join him there as soon as possible. This was done;—but when Timothy had come to Athens, Paul felt it to be important that the church at Thessalonica should be visited and comforted in its afflictions, and being prevented from doing it himself, he sent Timothy, at great personal inconvenience, back to that church. Having discharged the duty there, he re joined the apostle at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5), from which place the first epistle to the Thessalonians was written; see Intro. to 1 Thess. and Notes on 1 Thess. i. 1, and iii. 2. These transactions occurred about A. D. 52.

Paul remained at Corinth a year and a half (Acts xviii. 11), and it is probable that Timothy and Silas continued with him; see 2 Thess. i. 1. From Corinth he sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, whom he appears to have left on his way at Ephesus; Acts xviii. 18, 19, 26. Whether Timothy and Silas accompanied him is not mentioned, but we find Timothy again with him at Ephesus, after he had been to Cesarea and Antioch, and had returned to Ephesus; Acts xviii. 22; xix. 1, 22. From Ephesus, he sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (Acts xix. 22), but for what purpose, or how long they remained, is unknown. From 1 Cor. iv. 17, it appears that Paul expected that on this journey Timothy would stop at Corinth, and would give the church there instructions adapted to its situation. Paul continued in Ephesus until he was compelled to depart by the tumult caused by Demetrius, when he left and went to Macedonia; Acts xx. Whether Timothy, during the interval, had returned to Ephesus from Macedonia, is not expressly mentioned in the history; but such a supposition is not improbable. Paul, during the early part of his residence in Ephesus, appears to have laboured quietly (Acts xix. 9, 10); and Timothy was sent away *before* the disturbances caused by Demetrius; Acts xix. 22. Paul designed to follow him soon, and then to go to Jerusalem, and then to Rome; Acts xix. 21. Paul (Acts xx. 31) was in Ephesus in all about three years; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he remained there after Timothy was sent to Macedonia long enough for him to go and to return to him again. If so, it is *possible* that when he himself went away, he left Timothy there in his place; comp. 1 Tim. i. 3. It has been the general opinion that the First Epistle to Timothy was written at this time, either when the apostle was on his way to Macedonia, or while in Macedonia. But this opinion has not been unquestioned. The departure of Paul for Macedonia occurred about A. D. 58, or 59. In Acts xx. 4, Timothy is again mentioned as accompanying Paul,

after he had remained in Greece three months, on the route to Syria through Macedonia. He went with him, in company with many others, into "Asia." Going before Paul, they waited for him at Troas (Acts xx. 5), and thence doubtless accompanied him on his way to Jerusalem. It was on this occasion that Paul delivered his farewell charge to the elders of the church of Ephesus, at Miletus; Acts xx. 17, seq. When in Macedonia, Paul wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and Timothy was then with him, for he unites in the salutations; 2 Cor. i. 1. Timothy was also with the apostle on this journey at Corinth, when from that city he wrote his epistle to the Romans; Rom. xvi. 21.

The subsequent events of the life of Timothy are less known. It does not appear from the Acts of the Apostles, that he was with Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Cesarea, nor during his voyage to Rome. It is certain, however, that he was at Rome with the apostle when he wrote the epistles to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Philem. i. From Heb. xiii. 23 it appears also, that Timothy had been with the apostle there, but that when the epistle was written he was absent on some important embassy, and that Paul was expecting his speedy return; see Notes on that verse. Between the first and second imprisonment of Paul at Rome, no mention is made of Timothy, nor is it known where he was, or whether he accompanied him in his travels or not. When he was imprisoned there the second time, he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he desires him to come to Rome, and bring with him several things which he had left at Troas; 2 Tim. iv. 9—13, 21. If Timothy went to Rome, agreeably to the request of the apostle, it is probable that he was a witness there of his martyrdom.

In regard to the latter part of the life of Timothy, there is nothing which can be depended on. It has been the current opinion, derived from tradition, that he was "bishop" of Ephesus; that he died and was buried there; and that his bones were subsequently removed to Constantinople. The belief that he was "bishop" of Ephesus rests mainly on the "subscription" to the Second Epistle to Timothy—which is no authority whatever; see Notes on that subscription. On the question whether he was an episcopal prelate at Ephesus, the reader may consult my "Enquiry into the Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church," pp. 88—107. The supposition that he died at Ephesus, and was subsequently removed to Constantinople, rests on no certain historical basis.

Timothy was long the companion and the friend of the apostle Paul, and is often mentioned by him with affectionate interest. Indeed there seems to have been no one of his fellow-labourers to whom he was so warmly attached; see 1 Tim. i. 2, 18; 2 Tim. i. 2; ii. 1; 1 Cor. iv. 17, where he calls him "his own son," and "his beloved son;" 2 Tim. i. 4, where he expresses his earnest desire to see him, and makes a reference to the tears which Timothy shed at parting from him;—1 Cor. xvi. 10. 11, where he bespeaks for him a kind reception among the Corinthians;—1 Cor. xvi. 10; Rom. xvi. 21; 1 Thess. iii. 2, and especially ii. 19, 20, where he speaks of his fidelity, of his usefulness to him in his labours, and of the interest which he took in the churches which the apostle had established.

§ 2. *When and where the Epistle was written.*

The subscription at the close of the epistle states that it was written from Laodicea. But these subscriptions are of no authority, and many of them are false; see Notes at the end of 1 Corinthians. There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to the time when this epistle was written, and of course in regard to the place where it was composed. All that is certain from the epistle itself is, that it was addressed to Timothy at Ephesus, and

that it was soon after Paul had left that city to go to Macedonia; 1 Tim. i. 3. Paul is mentioned in the Acts as having been at Ephesus twice: Acts xviii. 19—23; xix. 1—41. After his first visit there, he went directly to Jerusalem, and of course it could not have been written at that time. The only question then is, whether it was written when Paul left the city, having been driven away by the excitement caused by Demetrius (Acts xx. 1), or whether he visited Ephesus again on some occasion *after* his first imprisonment at Rome, and of course after the narrative of Luke in the Acts of the Apostles closes. If on the former occasion, it was written about the year 58 or 59; if the latter, about the year 64 or 65. Critics have been divided in reference to this point, and the question is still unsettled, and it may be impossible to determine it with entire certainty.

Those who have maintained the former opinion, among others, are Theodoret, Benson, Zachariae, Michaelis, Schmidt. Koppe, Planck, Grotius Lightfoot, Witsius, Lardner, Hug, and Prof. Stuart. The latter opinion, that it was written subsequently to the period of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, is maintained by Paley, Pearson, L'Enfant, Le Clerc, Cave, Mill, Whitby, Macknight, and others.

An examination of the reasons in favour of each of these opinions in regard to the date of the epistle, may be found in Paley's Horæ Paul.; Macknight; Hug's Intro., and Koppe, *Proleg.*

The theory of Eichhorn, which is peculiar, and which is supported by some ingenious and plausible, but not conclusive reasoning, may be seen in his Einleitung in das neue Test. 3 B. 314—352.

In the diversity of opinion which prevails about the time when the epistle was written, it is impossible to determine the question in such a manner as to leave no room for doubt. After the most careful examination which I have been able to give to the subject, however, it seems to me that the former opinion is correct, that it was writen soon after Paul was driven from Ephesus by the tumult caused by Demetrius, as recorded in Acts xix.; xx. 1. The reasons for this opinion are briefly these:—

1. This is the only *record* that occurs in the New Testament of the apostle's having gone from Ephesus to Macedonia; see above. It is natural, therefore, to suppose that this is referred to in 1 Tim. i. 3, unless there is some insuperable difficulty in the way.

2. There is no certain evidence that Paul visited the church at Ephesus after his first imprisonment at Rome. It is certainly *possible* that he did, but there is no record of any such visit in the New Testament, nor any historical record of it elsewhere. If there *had* been such a visit after his release, and if this epistle was written then, it is remarkable that the apostle does not make any allusion to his imprisonment in this epistle, and that he does not refer at all to his own escape from this danger of death at Rome; comp. 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.

3. The supposition that the epistle was written at the time supposed, agrees better with the character of the epistle, and with the design for which Timothy was left at Ephesus, than the others. It is manifest from the epistle that the church was in some respects in an unsettled condition, and it would seem also that one part of the duty of Timothy there was to see that it was placed under a proper organization. This Paul had evidently proposed to accomplish himself, but it is clear from chap. i. 3, that he left his work unfinished, and that he gave what *he* had proposed to do into the hands of Timothy to be perfected. After the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome, however, there is every reason to suppose that the church was completely organized. Even when Paul went from Macedonia to Jerusalem (Acts xx.), there were "elders" placed over the church at Ephesus, whom Paul assembled at Miletus, and to whom he gave his parting charge, and his final instructions in regard to the church.

4. At the time when Paul wrote this epistle, Timothy was a young man —a youth; 1 Tim. iv. 12. It is true, that if he was somewhere about twenty years of age when he was introduced into the ministry, as has been commonly supposed, this language would not be entirely inappropriate, even after the imprisonment of Paul, but still the language would more properly denote one somewhat younger than Timothy would be at that time.

5. To this may be added the declaration of Paul in 1 Tim. iii. 14, that he "hoped to come to him shortly." This is an expression which agrees well with the supposition that he had himself been driven away before he had intended to leave; that he had left something unfinished there which he desired to complete, and that he hoped that affairs would soon be in such a state that he would be permitted to return. It may be also suggested, as a circumstance of some importance, though not conclusive, that when Paul met the elders of the church of Ephesus at Miletus, he said that he had no expectation of ever seeing them again. "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more;" Acts xx. 25. I do not think that this is to be understood as an inspired prediction, affirming with absolute certainty that he never would see them again, but that he rather expressed his apprehensions that it would be so from the circumstances which then existed; Acts xx. 22, 23. Still, this passage shows that when he uttered it he did not *expect* to visit Ephesus again, as he manifestly did when he wrote the epistle to Timothy.

These considerations seem so clear that they would leave no doubt on the mind, were it not for certain things which it seems to many impossible to reconcile with this supposition. The difficulties are the following:—

1. That before Paul went to Macedonia, he had sent Timothy with Erastus before him (Acts xix. 22), purposing to follow them at no distant period, and to pass through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go to Jerusalem, and afterwards to visit Rome; Acts xix. 21. As he had sent Timothy before him but so short a time before he left Ephesus, it is asked how Timothy could be *left at Ephesus* when Paul went himself to Macedonia? To this objection we may reply, that it is not improbable by any means that Timothy may have accomplished the object of his journey to Macedonia, and may have returned to the apostle at Ephesus before he was driven away. It does not appear, from the narrative, that Timothy was intrusted with any commission which would require a long time to fulfil it, nor that Paul expected that he would remain in Macedonia until he himself came. The purpose for which he sent Timothy and Erastus is not indeed mentioned, but it seems probable that it was with reference to the collection which he proposed to take up for the poor saints at Jerusalem; see Notes on Acts xix. 21, 22; comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 1—6. If it was the purpose to prepare the churches for such a collection, it could not have required any considerable time, nor was it necessary that Timothy should remain long in a place; and it was natural also that he *should* return to the apostle at Ephesus and apprize him of what he had done, and what was the prospect in regard to the collection. It has been clearly shown by Hug (Intro. to the New Test. § 104, 109), that such a journey could easily have been made during the time which the apostle remained at Ephesus after he had sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia.

2. The next objection—and one which is regarded by Paley as decisive against the supposition that the epistle was written on this occasion—is, that from the second epistle to the Corinthians (i. 1), it is evident that at the time in which this epistle is supposed to have been written, Timothy was with the apostle in Macedonia. The second epistle to the Corinthians was undoubtedly written during this visit of Paul to Macedonia, and at that time Timothy was with him; see the Intro. to 2 Cor. § 3. How then can it be supposed that he was at Ephesus? Or how can this fact be reconciled with

the supposition that Timothy was left there, and especially with the declaration of Paul to him (1 Tim. iii. 14), that he "hoped to come to him shortly?" That Paul *expected* that Timothy would remain at Ephesus, at least for some time, is evident from 1 Tim. iii. 15, "But *if I tarry long*, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God;" and from chap. iv. 13, "*Till I come*, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." The only solution of this difficulty is, that Timothy had left Ephesus, and had followed the apostle into Macedonia; and the only question here is, whether, since the apostle designed that he should remain at Ephesus, and expected himself to return and meet him there, Timothy would be likely to leave that place and go to Macedonia. It is certain that the history in the Acts does not make this record, but that is no material objection—since it cannot be supposed that every occurrence in the travels of the apostles was recorded. But there are two or three circumstances which may render the supposition that Timothy, either by the concurrence, or by the direction of Paul, privately communicated to him, may have left Ephesus sooner than was at first contemplated, and may have rejoined him in Macedonia. (1.) One is, that the main business which Timothy was appointed to perform at Ephesus—to give a solemn charge to certain persons there to teach no other doctrine but that which Paul taught (1 Tim. i. 3)—might have been speedily accomplished. Paul was driven away in haste, and as he had not the opportunity of doing this himself as he wished, he left Timothy in charge of it. But this did not require, of necessity, any considerable time. (2.) Another is, that the business of appointing suitable officers over the church there, might also have been soon accomplished. In fact, the church there is known to have been supplied with proper officers not long after this, for Paul sent from Miletus for the elders to meet him there on his way to Jerusalem. This remark is made in accordance with the opinion that a part of the work which Timothy was expected to perform there was to constitute proper officers over the church. But there is no *proof* that that was a part of his business. It is not specified in what Paul mentions, in chap. i. 3, as the design for which he was left there, and it is hardly probable that the apostle would have spent so long a time as he did in Ephesus—nearly three years (Acts xx. 31)—without having organized the church with proper officers. Besides, the address of Paul to the elders at Miletus implies that they had received their appointment before he left them; see Acts xx. 18—35, particularly ver. 35. The instructions to Timothy in this epistle about the proper qualifications of the officers of the church, do not prove that he was then to appoint officers at Ephesus, for they are *general* instructions, having no particular reference to the church there, and designed to guide him in his work through life. There is, therefore, nothing in the duties which Timothy was to perform at Ephesus which would forbid the supposition that he may have soon followed the apostle into Macedonia. (3.) It appears that though Paul may have intended, if possible, to visit Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem, in accordance with 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15; iv. 13, yet, if that had been his intention, he subsequently changed his mind, and found it necessary to make other arrangements. Thus it is said (Acts xx. 16), that "Paul had determined to sail *by* Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia;" that is, he had resolved to sail *past* Ephesus without visiting it. It would seem probable also, that this resolution had been formed before he left Macedonia, for it is said that he "*had* determined" it (κεκρικε), and if so, there is no improbability in supposing that he had in some way caused it to be intimated to Timothy that he wished him to leave Ephesus and join him before he left Macedonia. (4.) In fact, and in accordance with this supposition, we find Timothy *with* Paul when he went on that occasion into "Asia;" Acts xx. 4, 5. These considerations render it probable that the epistle was written to Timothy

soon after Paul left Ephesus to go into Macedonia after the tumult excited by Demetrius. As Paul was driven away unexpectedly, and when he had not completed what he designed to do there, nothing is more natural than the supposition that he would embrace the earliest opportunity to give suitable instructions to Timothy, that he might know how to complete the work.

3. *The occasion and design of the epistle.*

This is specified in chap. i. 3. Paul had gone into Macedonia, having been suddenly driven away from Ephesus, before he had entirely done what he had designed to do there. He left Timothy there to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine;" that is, no other doctrine than that which he had himself taught when there. It is clear, from this, that there were certain errors prevailing there which Paul thought it of the highest importance to have corrected. In regard to those errors, see the Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the Epistle to the Colossians. Some of the circumstances which gave occasion to this epistle can be gathered from the history in the Acts of the Apostles; others can be derived from the epistle itself. From these sources of information we learn the following things in reference to the state of the church in Ephesus, which made it proper that Timothy should be left there, and that these instructions should be given him to regulate his conduct.

(1.) There was much opposition to the apostle Paul from the Jews who resided there; Acts xix. 8, 9.

(2.) There were in the church teachers who endeavoured to enforce the maxims of the Jewish law, and to represent that law as binding on Christians; 1 Tim. i. 6, 7.

(3.) Some of the Jews residing there were addicted to exorcism, and endeavoured to make use of Christianity and the name of Jesus to promote their selfish ends; Acts xix. 14; comp. 1 Tim. i. 4.

(4.) The Jewish teachers laid great stress on genealogies and traditions, and were much given to debates about various questions connected with the law; 1 Tim. i. 4—6.

(5.) There were erroneous views prevailing respecting the rights of women, and the place which they ought to occupy in the church; 1 Tim. ii. 8—15.

(6.) The organization of the officers of the church had not been effected as Paul wished it to be. It is probable that some of the officers had been appointed, and that some instructions had been given to them in regard to their duties, but the whole arrangement had not been completed; 1 Tim. iii., iv.

(7.) There were certain questions in regard to the proper treatment of widows which had not yet been determined; 1 Tim. v.

(8.) The apostle in his preaching had inculcated benevolent principles, and had asserted the natural equality of all men, and it would seem that certain persons had taken occasion from this to excite a spirit of discontent and insubordination among those who were servants. The doctrine seems to have been advanced, that, as all men were equal, and all had been redeemed by the same blood, therefore those who had been held in bondage were free from all obligation to serve their masters. There were those evidently who sought to excite them to insurrection; to break down the distinctions in society, and to produce a state of insubordination and disorder; 1 Tim. vi.; comp. Eph. vi. 5—10; Col. iii. 22; iv. 2.

Such appears to have been the state of things when the apostle was compelled suddenly to leave Ephesus. He had hitherto directed the affairs of the church there mainly himself, and had endeavoured to correct the errors then prevailing, and to establish the church on a right foundation. Matters

appear to have been tending to the desired result; religion was acquiring a strong hold on the members of the church (Acts xix. 18—20); error was giving way; the community was becoming more and more impressed with the value of Christianity; the influence of idolatry was becoming less and less (Acts xix. 23, *seq.*), and the arrangements for the complete organization of the church were in progress. Such was the promising state of things in these respects that the apostle hoped to be able to leave Ephesus at no very distant period, and had actually made arrangements to do it; Acts xix. 21. But his arrangements were not quite finished, and before they were completed, he was compelled to leave by the tumult excited by Demetrius. He left Timothy, therefore, to complete the arrangements, and, in this first epistle, gave him all the instructions which were necessary to guide him in that work.

This view of the state of things in Ephesus at the time when the apostle was constrained to leave it, will enable us to understand the drift of the epistle, and the reasons why the various topics found in it were introduced. At the same time, the instructions are of so general a character that they would be an invaluable guide to Timothy not only at Ephesus, but through his life; and not only to him, but to all the ministers of the gospel in every age and land. A more detailed view of these topics will be furnished in the analysis prefixed to the several chapters of the epistle.

The epistles to Timothy and Titus occupy a very important place in the New Testament, and without them there would be a manifest and most material defect in the volume of inspiration. Their canonical authority has never been questioned by the great body of the church, and there is no doubt that they are the productions of the apostle Paul. If the various epistles which he wrote, and the various other books of the New Testament be attentively examined, it will be found that each one is designed to accomplish an important object, and that if any one were removed a material chasm would be made. Though the removal of any *one* of them would not so impair the volume of the New Testament as to obscure any *essential* doctrine, or prevent our obtaining the knowledge of the way of salvation from the remainder, yet it would mar the beauty and symmetry of the truth, and would render the system of instruction defective and incomplete.

This is true in regard to the epistles to Timothy and Titus, as it is of the other epistles. They fill a department which nothing else in the New Testament would enable us to supply, and without which instructions to man respecting redemption would be incomplete. They relate mainly *to the office of the ministry;* and though there are important instructions of the Saviour himself respecting the office (Matt. x., Mark xvi., and elsewhere), and though in the address of Paul to the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx.), and in the epistles to the Corinthians, there are invaluable suggestions respecting it, yet such is its importance in the organization of the church, that more full and complete instructions seem to be imperiously demanded. Those instructions are furnished in these epistles. They are as full and complete as we could desire in regard to the nature of the office, the qualifications for it, and the duties which grow out of it. They are fitted not only to direct Timothy and Titus in the work to which they were specifically appointed, but to counsel the ministry in every age and in every land. It is obvious that the character and welfare of the church depend greatly, if not entirely, on the character of the ministry. The office of the ministry is God's great appointment for the preservation of pure religion, and for spreading it abroad through the world. The church adheres to the truth; is built up in faith; is distinguished for love, and purity, and zeal, in proportion as the ministry is honoured, and shows itself qualified for its work. In every age corruption in the church has commenced in the ministry; and where the gospel has been spread abroad with zeal, and the church has arisen in her strength and beauty, it

has been pre-eminently where God has sent down his Spirit in copious measures on those who have filled the sacred office. So important, then, is this office to the welfare of the church and the world, that it was desirable that full instructions should be furnished in the volume of revelation in regard to its nature and design. Such instructions we have in these epistles, and there is scarcely *any* portion of the New Testament which the church could not better afford to part with than the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Had the ministry always been such as these epistles contemplate; had they who have filled the sacred office always had the character and qualifications here described, we may believe that the church would have been saved from the strifes that have rent it, and that the pure gospel would long ere this have been spread through the world.

But it is not to the ministry only that these epistles are of so much value. They are of scarcely less importance to the church at large. Its vitality; its purity; its freedom from strife; its zeal and love and triumph in spreading the gospel, depend on the character of the ministry. If the church will prosper from age to age, the pulpit must be filled with a pious, learned, laborious, and devoted ministry, and one of the first cares of the church should be that such a ministry should be secured. This great object cannot better be attained than by keeping the instructions in these epistles steadily before the minds of the members of the church; and though a large part of them is particularly adapted to the ministers of the gospel, yet the church itself can in no better way promote its own purity and prosperity than by a prayerful and attentive study of the epistles to Timothy and Titus

THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, [a] by the commandment of God

a Ac.9.15.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter comprises the following subjects :—

(1.) The salutation to Timothy, in the usual manner in which Paul introduces his epistles ; ver. 1, 2.

(2.) The purpose for which he had left him at Ephesus ; ver. 3, 4. It was that he might correct the false instructions of some of the teachers there, and especially, as it would seem, in regard to the true use of the law. They gave undue importance to some things in the laws of Moses ; they did not understand the true nature and design of his laws ; and they mingled in their instructions much that was mere fable.

(3.) The true use and design of the law ; ver. 5—11. It was to produce *love* not vain jangling. It was not made to fetter the conscience by vain and troublesome austerities and ceremonies ; it was to restrain and bind the wicked. The use of the law, according to these teachers, and according to the prevailing Jewish notions, was to prescribe a great number of formalities, and to secure outward conformity in a great variety of cumbrous rites and ceremonies. Paul instructs Timothy to teach them that *love,* out of a pure heart and a good conscience, was the elementary principle of religion, and that the "law" was primarily designed to restrain and control the wicked, and that the gospel brought to light and enforced this important truth.

our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ *which is* our hope.[b]

2 Unto Timothy [c] *my* own son

b Co 1.27. c Ac.16.1.

(4.) The mention of the gospel in this connection, leads Paul to express his thanks to God that *he* had been intrusted with this message of salvation ; ver. 12—17. Once he had the same views as others. But he had obtained mercy, and he was permitted to *publish* that glorious gospel which had shed such light on the law of God, and which had revealed a plan of salvation that was worthy of universal acceptation.

(5.) This solemn duty of preaching the gospel he commits now to Timothy, ver. 18—20. He says that he had been called to the work in accordance with the prophecies which had been uttered of him in anticipation of his future usefulness in the church, and in the expectation that he would not, like some others, make shipwreck of his faith.

1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ;* see Notes on Rom. i. 1. ¶ *By the commandment of God;* Notes, 1 Cor. i. 1. ¶ *Our Saviour.* The name Saviour is as applicable to God the Father as to the Lord Jesus Christ, since God is the great Author of salvation ; see Notes, Luke i. 47 ; comp. 1 Tim. iv. 10 ; Titus ii. 10 ; Jude 25. ¶ *And Lord Jesus Christ.* The apostle Paul had received his commission directly from him ; see Notes, Gal. i. 11, 12. ¶ Which is *our hope;* see Notes, Col. i. 27.

2. *Unto Timothy.* For an account of Timothy, see Intro. § 1. ¶ *My own son in the faith.* Converted to the Christian faith by my instrumen-

[a] in the faith; Grace, [b] mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went [c] in to Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

[a] Tit. 1.4. [b] Ga.1.3; 1Pe.1 2. [c] Ac.20.1,3.

tality, and regarded by me with the affection of a father; see Notes, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Paul had no children of his own, and he adopted Timothy as a son, and uniformly regarded and treated him as such. He had the same feeling also toward Titus; Tit. i. 4; comp. Notes, Gal. iv. 19; 1 Thess. ii. 7, 11; and Philem. 10. ¶ *Grace, mercy,* and *peace,* &c.; see Notes, Rom. i. 7.

3. *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus.* It is clear from this, that Paul and Timothy had been labouring together at Ephesus, and the language accords with the supposition that Paul had been compelled to leave before he had completed what he had designed to do there. See the Intro. § 2. ¶ *When I went into Macedonia.* Having been driven away by the excitement caused by Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen; Acts xx. 1. See the Intro. § 2, 3. ¶ *That thou mightest charge some.* The word *charge* here —παραγγειλης—seems to mean more than is commonly implied by the word as used by us. If it had been a single direction or command, it might have been given by Paul himself before he left, but it seems rather to refer to that *continuous instruction* which would convince these various errorists and lead them to inculcate only the true doctrine. As they may have been numerous,—as they may have embraced various forms of error, and as they might have had plausible grounds for their belief, this was evidently a work requiring time, and hence Timothy was left to effect this at leisure. It would seem that the wrath which had been excited against Paul had not affected Timothy, but that he was permitted to remain and labour without molestation. It is not certainly known who these teachers were, but they appear to have been of Jewish origin, and to have inculcated the peculiar sentiments of the Jews respecting the law. ¶ *That they teach no other doctrine.* That is, no other doctrine than that taught by the apostles. The Greek word here used is not found in the classic writers, and does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, except in chap. vi. 3 of this epistle, where it is rendered "teach otherwise." We may learn here what was the design for which Timothy was left at Ephesus. (1.) It was for a temporary purpose, and not as a permanent arrangement. It was to correct certain errors prevailing there which Paul would have been able himself soon to correct if he had been suffered to remain. Paul expected soon to return to him again, and then they would proceed unitedly with their work; chap. iv. 13; iii. 15. (2.) It was not that he might be the "*Bishop*" of Ephesus. There is no evidence that he was "ordained" there at all, as the subscription to the second epistle declares (see Notes on that subscription), nor were the functions which he was to perform, those of a prelatical bishop. He was not to take the charge of a "diocese," or to ordain ministers of the "second rank," or to administer the rite of confirmation, or to perform acts of discipline. He was left there for a purpose which is specified, and that is as far as possible from what are now regarded as the appropriate functions of a prelatical bishop. Perhaps no claim which has ever been set up has had less semblance of argument than that which asserts that Timothy was the "Bishop of Ephesus." See this clause examined in my "Inquiry into the Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church," pp. 84—107.

4. *Neither give heed to fables.* That is, that *they* should not bestow their attention on fables, or regard such trifles as of importance. The "fables" here referred to were probably the idle and puerile superstitions and con-

4 Neither give heed to fables [a] and endless genealogies, which mi-

[a] chap.6.3,4,20. [b] Ro.13.8,10; Ga.5.14.

nister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith; *so do.*

5 Now the end [b] of the com-

ceits of the Jewish Rabbies. The word rendered *fable* (μῦθος) means properly *speech* or *discourse*, and then fable or fiction, or a mystic discourse. Such things abounded among the Greeks as well as the Jews, but it is probable that the latter here are particularly intended. These were composed of frivolous and unfounded stories, which they regarded as of great importance, and which they seem to have desired to incorporate with the teachings of Christianity. Paul, who had been brought up amidst these superstitions, saw at once how they would tend to draw off the mind from the truth, and would corrupt the true religion. One of the most successful arts of the adversary of souls has been to mingle fable with truth; and when he cannot overthrow the truth by direct opposition, to neutralize it by mingling with it much that is false and frivolous. ¶ *And endless genealogies.* This also refers to Jewish teaching. The Hebrews kept careful genealogical records, for this was necessary in order that the distinction of their tribes might be kept up. Of course, in the lapse of centuries these tables would become very numerous, complicated, and extended—so that they might without much exaggeration be called "*endless.*" The Jews attached great importance to them, and insisted on their being carefully preserved. As the Messiah, however, had now come—as the Jewish polity was to cease—as the separation between them and the heathen was no longer necessary, and the distinction of tribes was now useless, there was no propriety that these distinctions should be regarded by Christians. The whole system was, moreover, contrary to the genius of Christianity, for it served to keep up the pride of blood and of birth. ¶ *Which minister questions.* Which afford matter for troublesome and angry debates. It was often difficult to settle or understand them. They became complicated and perplexing. Nothing is more difficult than to unravel an extensive genealogical table. To do this, therefore, would often give rise to contentions, and *when* settled, would give rise still further to questions about rank and precedence. ¶ *Rather than godly edifying which is in faith.* These inquiries do nothing to promote true religion in the soul. They settle no permanent principle of truth; they determine nothing that is really concerned in the salvation of men. They might be pursued through life, and not one soul be converted by them; they might be settled with the greatest accuracy, and yet not one heart be made better. Is not this still true of many controversies and logomachies in the church? No point of controversy is worth much trouble, which, if it were settled one way or the other, would not tend to convert the soul from sin, or to establish some important principle in promoting true religion. ¶ So do. These words are supplied by our translators, but they are necessary to the sense. The meaning is, that Timothy was to remain at Ephesus, and faithfully perform the duty which he had been left there to discharge.

5. *Now the end of the commandment;* see Notes on Rom. x. 4. In order that Timothy might fulfil the design of his appointment, it was necessary that he should have a correct view of the design of the law. The teachers to whom he refers insisted much on its obligation and importance; and Paul designs to say that he did not intend to teach that the law was of no consequence, and was not, when properly understood, obligatory. Its nature and use, however, was not correctly understood by them, and hence it was of great importance for Timothy to inculcate correct views of the purpose for which it was given. The word "commandment" here some have understood of the gospel (Doddridge), others of the particular command which the apostle here gives to Timothy (Benson, Clarke, and

mandment is charity, out of a pure heart, [a] and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

6 From which some [1] having swerved, [b] have turned aside unto vain jangling:

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding [c] neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

a 2 Ti.2.22. 1 or, *not aiming at.* *b* 2 Ti.4.10. *c* Ro.1.23.

Macknight); but it seems more naturally to refer to *all* that God had commanded—his whole law. As the error of these teachers arose from improper views of the nature and design of *law*, Paul says that that design should be understood. It was not to produce distinctions and angry contentions, and was not to fetter the minds of Christians with minute and burdensome observances, but it was *to produce love.* ¶ *Is charity.* On the meaning of this word, see Notes on 1 Cor. xiii. 1. ¶ *Out of a pure heart.* The love which is genuine must proceed from a holy heart. The commandment was not designed to secure merely the outward expressions of love, but that which had its seat in the heart. ¶ *And* of *a good conscience.* A conscience free from guilt. Of course there can be no genuine love to God where the dictates of conscience are constantly violated, or where a man knows that he is continually doing wrong. If a man wishes to have the evidence of love to God, he must keep a good conscience. All pretended love, where a man knows that he is living in sin, is mere hypocrisy. ¶ *And* of *faith unfeigned.* Undissembled confidence in God. This does seem to be intended specifically of faith in the Lord Jesus, but it means that all true love to God, such as this law would produce, must be based on confidence in him. How can any one have love to him who has no confidence in him? Can we exercise love to a professed friend in whom we have no confidence? Faith, then, is as necessary under the law as it is under the gospel.

6. *From which some having swerved.* Marg., *not aiming at.* The word here used — ἀστοχέω — means properly, to miss the mark; to err; and then, to swerve from; comp. chap. vi. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 18. It does not mean that they had ever had that from which they are said to have swerved—for it does not follow that a man who misses a mark had ever hit it—but merely that they failed of the things referred to, and had turned to vain talk. The word "which" (ὧν), in the plural, refers not to the law, but to the things enumerated—a pure heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith. ¶ *Have turned aside unto vain jangling.* Vain talk, empty declamation, discourses without sense. The word here used does not mean contention or strife, but that kind of discourse which is not founded in good sense. They were discourses on their pretended distinctions in the law; on their traditions and ceremonies; on their useless genealogies, and on the fabulous statements which they had appended to the law of Moses.

7. *Desiring to be teachers of the law.* That is, to have the credit and reputation of being well versed in the law of Moses, and qualified to explain it to others. This was a high honour among the Jews, and these teachers laid claim to the same distinction. ¶ *Understanding neither what they say.* That is, they do not understand the true nature and design of that law which they attempt to explain to others. This was true of the Jewish teachers, and equally so of those in the church at Ephesus, who attempted to explain it. They appear to have explained the law on the principles which commonly prevailed among the Jews, and hence their instructions tended greatly to corrupt the faith of the gospel. They made affirmations of what they knew nothing of, and though they made confident asservations, yet they often pertained to things about which they had no knowledge. One needs only a slight acquaintance with the man-

8 But we know that the law *is* good, [a] if a man use it lawfully;
9 Knowing this, that [b] the law

[a] Ro.7.12.

is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners,

[b] Ga.5.23.

ner of teaching among Jewish Rabbies, or with the things found in their traditions, to see the accuracy of this statement of the apostle. A sufficient illustration of this may be found in Allen's "Modern Judaism."

8. *But we know that the law* is *good.* We admit this; it is that which we all concede. This declaration is evidently made by the apostle to guard against the supposition that he was an enemy of the law. Doubtless this charge would be brought against him, or against any one who maintained the sentiments which he had just expressed. By speaking thus of what those teachers regarded as so important in the law, it would be natural for them to declare that he was an enemy of the law itself, and would be glad to see all its claims abrogated. Paul says that he designs no such thing. He admitted that the law was good. He was never disposed for one moment to call it in question. He only asked that it should be rightly understood and properly explained. Paul was never disposed to call in question the excellency and the utility of the law, however it might bear on him or on others; comp. Notes on Rom. vii. 12, and on Acts xxi. 21—26. ¶ *If a man use it lawfully.* In a proper manner; for the purposes for which it was designed. It is intended to occupy a most important place, but it should not be perverted. Paul asked only that it should be used *aright,* and in order to this, he proceeds to state what *is* its true design.

9. *Knowing this.* That is, "If any one knows, or admits this, he has the proper view of the design of the law." The apostle does not refer particularly to himself as knowing or conceding this, for then he would have used the plural form of the participle (see the Greek), but he means that *any one* who had just views of the law would see that that which he proceeds to specify was its real purpose. ¶ *The law is not made for a righteous man.*—There has been great variety in the interpretation of this passage. Some suppose that the law here refers to the ceremonial laws of Moses (*Clarke, Rosenmüller, Abbot*); others to the denunciatory part of the law (*Doddridge* and *Bloomfield*); and others that it means that the chief purpose of the law was to restrain the wicked. It seems clear, however, that the apostle does not refer merely to the ceremonial law, for he specifies that which condemns the unholy and profane; the murderers of fathers and mothers; liars and perjured persons. It was not the *ceremonial* law which condemned these things, but the *moral* law. It cannot be supposed, moreover, that the apostle meant to say that the law was not binding on a righteous man, or that he was under no obligation to obey it—for he everywhere teaches that the moral law is obligatory on all mankind. To suppose also that a *righteous* man is released from the obligation to obey the law, that is, to do *right,* is an absurdity. Nor does he seem to mean, as Macknight supposes, that the law was not given for the purpose of justifying a righteous man—for this *was* originally one of its designs. Had man always obeyed it, he would have been justified by it. The meaning seems to be, that the purpose of the law was not to fetter and perplex those who were righteous, and who aimed to do their duty and to please God. It was not intended to produce a spirit of servitude and bondage. As the Jews interpreted it, it did this, and this interpretation appears to have been adopted by the teachers at Ephesus, to whom Paul refers. The whole tendency of their teaching was to bring the soul into a state of bondage, and to make religion a condition of servitude. Paul teaches, on the other hand, that religion was a condition of freedom, and that the main purpose of the law

for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for

was not to fetter the minds of the righteous by numberless observances and minute regulations, but that it was to restrain *the wicked* from sin. This is the case with all law. No *good* man feels himself fettered and manacled by wholesome laws, nor does he feel that the purpose of law is to reduce him to a state of servitude. It is only the wicked who have this feeling—and in this sense the law is *made* for a man who intends to do wrong. ¶ *For the lawless.* To bind and restrain them. The word here used means, properly, those who have no law, and then those who are transgressors—the wicked. It is rendered *transgressors* in Matt. xv. 28; Luke xxii. 37, and *wicked,* Acts ii. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 8. ¶ *And disobedient.* Those who are insubordinate, lawless, refractory. The word properly means those who are under no subjection or authority. It occurs in the New Testament only here, and Titus i. 6, 10, where it is rendered *unruly,* and Heb. ii. 8, where it is translated *not put under;* that is, under Christ. ¶ *For the ungodly.* Those who have no religion; who do not worship or honour God. The Greek word occurs in the following places, in all of which it is rendered *ungodly;* Rom. iv. 5; v. 6; 1 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. iv. 18; 2 Pet. ii. 5; iii. 7; Jude 15. The meaning is, that the law is against all who do not worship or honour God. ¶ *And for sinners.* The word used here is the common word to denote *sinners.* It is general, and includes sins of all kinds. ¶ *For unholy.* "Those who are regardless of duty to God or man." *Robinson, Lex.* The word occurs in the New Testament only here, and in 2 Tim. iii. 2. It has particular reference to those who fail of their duty *towards God,* and means those who have no piety; who are irreligious. ¶ *And profane.* This does not necessarily mean that they were profane in the sense that blasphemed the name of God, or were profane swearers—though the word would include that—but it means properly those who are impious, or who are scoffers; Notes, Heb. xii. 16. The word occurs only in the following places, in all of which it is rendered *profane:* 1 Tim. i. 9; iv. 7; vi. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 16; Heb. xii. 16. A man who treats religion with contempt, mockery, or scorn, would correspond with the meaning of the word. ¶ *For murderers of fathers.* The Greek properly means *a smiter of a father* (*Robinson*), though here it undoubtedly means a parricide. This was expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, and was a crime punishable by death; Ex. xxi. 15. It is said to have been a crime which the Roman law did not contemplate as possible, and hence that there was no enactment against it. It is, indeed, a crime of the highest order; but facts have shown that if the Romans supposed it would *never* be committed, they did not judge aright of human nature. There is *no* sin which man will not commit if unrestrained, and there is in fact no conceivable form of crime of which he has *not* been guilty. ¶ *Murderers of mothers.* A still more atrocious and monstrous crime, if possible, than the former. We can conceive nothing superior to this in atrocity, and yet it has been committed. Nero caused his mother to be murdered, and the annals of crime disclose the names of not a few who have imbrued their own hands in the blood of those who bare them. This was also expressly forbidden by the law of Moses; Ex. xxi. 15. ¶ *For manslayers.* This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means a homicide — a murderer. The crime is expressly forbidden by the law; Ex. xx. 13; Gen. ix. 6.

10. *For whoremongers;* Lev. xix. 29; xx. 5. ¶ *For them that defile themselves with mankind;* Sodomites. See the evidence that this crime abounded in ancient times, in the Notes on Rom. i. 27. It was forbid

perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound [a] doctrine;

11 According to the glorious

[a] 2 Ti.4.3; Tit.1.9.

gospel of the blessed [b] God, which was [c] committed to my trust.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled [d] me,

[b] chap.6.15. [c] 1Co.9.17. [d] 1Co.15.10.

den by the law of Moses, and was punishable with death; Lev. xx. 13. ¶ *For menstealers.* The word here used—ἀνδραποδιστής—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means one who steals another for the purpose of making him a slave—a kidnapper. This is the common way in which men are made slaves. Some, indeed, are taken in war and sold as slaves, but the mass of those who have been reduced to servitude have become slaves by being kidnapped. Children are *stolen* from their parents, or wives from their husbands, or husbands from their wives, or parents from their children, or whole families are stolen together. None become slaves voluntarily, and consequently the whole process of making slaves partakes of the nature of *theft* of the worst kind. What theft is like that of stealing a man's children, or his wife, or his father or mother? The *guilt* of manstealing is incurred essentially by those who purchase those who are thus stolen—as the purchaser of a stolen horse, knowing it to be so, participates in the crime. A measure of that criminality also adheres to all who own slaves, and who thus maintain the system—for it is a system known to have been originated by theft. This crime was expressly forbidden by the law of God, and was made punishable with death; Ex. xxi. 16; Deut. xxiv. 7. ¶ *For liars;* Lev. vi. 2—4; xix. 11. ¶ *For perjured persons.* Those who swear falsely; Lev. xix. 12; vi. 3; Ex. xx. 7. ¶ *And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.* To sound or correct *teaching*—for so the word doctrine means. The meaning is, if there is anything else that is opposed to the instruction which the law of God gives.

11. *According to the glorious gospel.* The gospel is a system of divine revelation. It makes known the will of God. It states what is duty, and accords in its great principles with the law, or is in harmony with it. The law, in principle, forbids all which the gospel forbids, and in publishing the requirements of the gospel, therefore, Paul says that the law really forbade all which was prohibited in the gospel, and was designed to restrain all who would act contrary to that gospel. There is no contradiction between the law and the gospel. They forbid the same things, and in regard to morals and true piety, the clearer revelations of the gospel are but carrying out the principles stated in the law. They who preach the gospel, then, should not be regarded as arrayed against the law, and Paul says that they who preached the gospel aright really stated the true principles of the law. This he evidently intends should bear against the false teachers who professed to explain the law of Moses. He means here that if a man wished to explain the law, the best explanation would be found in that gospel which it was his office to publish; comp. Rom. iii. 31. ¶ *Of the blessed God.* Revealed by the blessed God—the same God who was the Author of the law. ¶ *Which was committed to my trust.* Not to him alone, but to him in common with others. He had received it directly from the Lord; 1 Cor. ix. 17; Notes, Gal. i. 1.

12. *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord.* The mention of the gospel (ver. 11), and of the fact that it was committed to him, leads the apostle to express his gratitude to him who had called him to the work of preaching it. The Lord Jesus had called him when he was a blasphemer and a persecutor. He had constrained him to leave his career of persecution and blasphemy, and to consecrate himself to the defence and the propagation of the gospel. For all this, though it had required him to give up his favourite projects

for that he counted me faithful, [a] putting [b] me into the ministry;

13 Who was before [c] a blas-

[a] 1 Co.7.25. [b] Col.1.25. [c] Ac.8.3; 1Co.15.9.

in life, and all the flattering schemes of ambition, he now felt that praise was due to the Redeemer. If there is anything for which a good man will be thankful, and should be thankful, it is that he has been so directed by the Spirit and providence of God as to be put into the ministry. It is indeed a work of toil, and of self-denial, and demanding many sacrifices of personal ease and comfort. It requires a man to give up his splendid prospects of worldly distinction, and of wealth and ease. It is often identified with want, and poverty, and neglect, and persecution. But it is an office so honourable, so excellent, so noble, and ennobling; it is attended with so many precious comforts here, and is so useful to the world, and it has such promises of blessedness and happiness in the world to come, that *no matter what a man is required to give up in order to become a minister of the gospel*, he should be thankful to Christ for putting him into the office. A minister, when he comes to die, feels that the highest favour which Heaven has conferred on him has been in turning his feet away from the paths of ambition, and the pursuits of ease or gain, and leading him to that holy work to which he has been enabled to consecrate his life. ¶ *Who hath enabled me.* Who has given me ability or strength for this service. The apostle traced to the Lord Jesus *the fact* that he was in the ministry at all, and all the ability which he had to perform the duties of that holy office. It is not necessary here to suppose, as many have done, that he refers to miraculous power conferred on him, but he makes the acknowledgment which any faithful minister would do, that all the strength which he has to perform the duties of his office is derived from Christ; comp. Notes, John xv. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 10. ¶ *For that he counted me faithful.* This is equivalent to saying that he reposed confidence in me. It means that there was something in the character of Paul, and in his attachment to the Saviour, on which reliance could be placed, or that there was that which gave the assurance that he would be faithful. A sovereign, when he sends an ambassador to a foreign court, reposes confidence in him, and would not commission him unless he had reason to believe that he would be faithful. So it is in reference to all who are called by the Redeemer into the ministry. They are his ambassadors to a lost world. His putting them into the ministry is an act expressive of great confidence in them—for he commits to them great and important interests. Learn hence, (1.) that no one ought to regard himself as called to the ministry who will not be "faithful" to his Master; and (2.) that the office of the ministry is most honourable and responsible. Nowhere else are there so great interests intrusted to man.

13. *Who was before a blasphemer.* This does not mean that Paul before his conversion was what would now be regarded as an open blasphemer—that he was one who abused and reviled sacred things, or one who was in the habit of profane swearing. His character appears to have been just the reverse of this, for he was remarkable for treating what he regarded as sacred with the utmost respect; see Notes on Phil. iii. 4—6. The meaning is, that he had reviled the name of Christ, and opposed him and his cause—not believing that he was the Messiah; and in thus opposing he had *really* been guilty of blasphemy. The true Messiah he had in fact treated with contempt and reproaches, and he now looked back upon that fact with the deepest mortification, and with wonder that one who had been so treated by him should have been willing to put him into the ministry. On the meaning of the word *blaspheme*, see Notes on Matt. ix. 3; comp. Acts xxvi. 11. In his conduct here referred to, Paul elsewhere says, that he thought at the time that he was doing what he ought to

phemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly [a] in unbelief.

[a] Lu.23.34.

do (Acts xxvi. 9); here he says that he now regarded it as *blasphemy*. Learn hence that men may have very different views of their conduct when they come to look at it in subsequent life. What they now regard as harmless, or even as right and proper, may hereafter overwhelm them with shame and remorse. The sinner will yet feel the deepest self-reproaches for that which now gives us no uneasiness. ¶ *And a persecutor;* Acts ix. 1, seq.; xxii. 4; xxvi. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 9; Gal. i. 13, 23. ¶ *And injurious.* The word here used (ὑβριστής), occurs only in one other place in the New Testament, Rom. i. 30, where it is rendered *despiteful*. The word *injurious* does not quite express its force. It does not mean merely doing *injury*, but refers rather to the manner or spirit in which it is done. It is a word of intenser signification than either the word "blasphemer," or "persecutor," and means that what he did was done with a proud, haughty, insolent spirit. There was wicked and malicious violence, an arrogance and spirit of tyranny in what he did, which greatly aggravated the wrong that was done; comp. the Greek in Matt. xxii. 6; Luke xi. 45; xviii. 32; Acts xiv. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 2; 2 Cor. xii. 10, for illustrations of the meaning of the word. Tindal and Coverdale render it here "tyrant." ¶ *But I obtained mercy, because I did* it *ignorantly in unbelief;* comp. Notes on Luke xxiii. 34. The ignorance and unbelief of Paul were not such excuses for what he did that they would wholly free him from blame, nor did he regard them as such—for what he did was with a violent and wicked spirit—but they were mitigating circumstances. They served to modify his guilt, and were among the reasons why God had mercy on him. What is said here, therefore, accords with what the Saviour said in his prayer for his murderers; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is undoubtedly true that persons who sin ignorantly, and who regard themselves as right in what they do, are much more likely to obtain mercy than those who do wrong designedly.

[Yet we cannot but regard Paul's "ignorance in unbelief" as, in itself, a *grievous sin*, He had abundant means of knowing the truth had he been disposed to inquire with patience and candour. His great abilities and excellent education are a farther aggravation of the crime. It is, therefore, impossible to acquiesce in any solution of this clause which *seems* to make criminal ignorance a ground of mercy. The author, however, intends nothing of this kind, nor would it be fair to put such construction on his words. Yet, a little more fullness had been desirable on a subject of this nature. It is certain, that, independent of the nature of the ignorance, whether wilful or otherwise, the *character* of crime is affected by it. He who should oppose truth, *knowing it to be such*, is more guilty than he who opposes it in ignorance, or under the conviction that it is not truth, but falsehood. *In a certain sense*, too, this ignorance, may be regarded as a reason why mercy is bestowed on such as sin desperately or blasphemously under it. Rather, it is a reason why they are not *excluded from* mercy. It shows why persons *so* guilty are not beyond its pale. This is, we think, the true key both to the passage, and that in Luke xxiii. 34. The ignorance is not a reason why God should bestow mercy on such persons, rather than on others left to perish, but a reason why *they* obtain mercy at all, who, by their blasphemies, had been supposed to have reached the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Now consider the passage in this view. The apostle had just been showing how great a sinner he had formerly been. His criminality had been *so* great that it went near to shutting him out from mercy altogether. Had he maliciously persecuted and blasphemed Christ, knowing him to be the Messiah, his had been the unpardonable sin, and his lot that of judicial, final obduracy. But he had not got that length. He was saved from that gulph, and obtained mercy, *because*, sinning ignorantly and in unbelief, he was not beyond its range.

That Paul should set himself to excuse his guilt is altogether impossible He does the very reverse. He has but escaped the unpardonable sin. He is chief of sinners. He owes his salvation to exceeding abundant grace. All long-suffering has been exercised towards him. He affirms, that mercy was extended

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This *is* a faithful [a] saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came [b] into the

[a] 2 Ti.2.11; Tit.3.8. [b] Matt.9.13; Lu.19.10.

to him, that, to the end of time, there might be a proof or pattern of mercy to the guiltiest. Had he been assigning a reason why *he* obtained mercy, rather than others left to perish, doubtless *that* had been what he has elsewhere assigned and defended, "God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion;" Ro. ix. 15.]

14. *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant.* That is, in his conversion under these circumstances and in the aid which was afterwards imparted to him in his work. ¶ *With faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Accompanied with the exercise of faith and love; or producing faith and love. The grace which was imparted to him was seen in the faith and love which it produced; see Notes, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

15. *This* is *a faithful saying.* Gr., "Faithful is the word," or doctrine—ὁ λογος. This verse has somewhat the character of a parenthesis, and seems to have been thrown into the midst of the narrative because the mind of the apostle was full of the subject. He had said that he, a great sinner, had obtained mercy. This naturally led him to think of the purpose for which Christ came into the world—*to save sinners*—and to think how strikingly that truth had been illustrated in his own case, and how that case had shown that it was worthy the attention of all. The word rendered "saying," means in this place *doctrine, position,* or *declaration.* The word "faithful," means *assuredly true;* it was that which might be depended on, or on which reliance might be placed. The meaning is, that the doctrine that Christ came to save sinners might be depended on as certainly true; comp. 2 Tim. ii. 11; Titus iii. 8. ¶ *And worthy of all acceptation.* Worthy to be embraced or believed by all. This is so, because, (1.) all are sinners and need a Saviour. All, therefore ought to welcome a doctrine which shows them how they may be saved. (2.) Because Christ died for all. If he had died for only a part of the race, and could save only a part, it could not be said with any propriety that the doctrine was worthy of the acceptance of all. If that were so, what had it to do with *all*? How could all be interested in it or benefited by it? If medicine had been provided for only a part of the patients in a hospital, it could not be said that the announcement of such a fact was worthy the attention of all. It would be highly worthy the attention of those for whom it was designed, but there would be a part who would have nothing to do with it; and why should they concern themselves about it? But if it was provided for each one, then each one would have the highest interest in it. So, if salvation has been provided for me, it is a matter claiming my profoundest attention; and the same is true of every human being. If *not* provided for me, I have nothing to do with it. It does not concern me at all.

[See this subject discussed at length in the supplementary Note on 2 Cor. v. 14.]

(3.) The manner in which the provision of salvation has been made in the gospel is such as to make it worthy of universal acceptation. It provides for the complete pardon of sin, and the restoration of the soul to God. This is done in a way that is honourable to God—maintaining his law and his justice; and, at the same time, it is in a way that is honourable to man. He is treated afterwards as a friend of God and an heir of life. He is raised up from his degradation, and restored to the favour of his Maker. If man were himself to suggest a way of salvation, he could think of none that would be more honourable to God and to himself; none that would do so much to maintain the law and to elevate him from all that now degrades him. What higher honour can be conferred on man than to have his salvation *sought as an object of intense*

world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern [a] to

[a] Ro.15.4.

and earnest desire by one so great and glorious as the Son of God? (4.) It is worthy of all acceptance, from the nature of the salvation itself. Heaven is offered, with all its everlasting glories, through the blood of Christ—and is not this worthy of universal acceptation? Men would accept of a coronet or crown; a splendid mansion, or a rich estate; a present of jewels and gold, if freely tendered to them—but what trifles are these compared with heaven! If there is anything that is worthy of *universal* acceptation, it is *heaven*—for all will be miserable unless they enter there. ¶ *That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* The great and peculiar doctrine of the gospel. He "*came* into the world." He therefore had a previous existence. He *came*. He had, therefore, an object in coming. It makes his gospel more worthy of acceptation that he had an intention, a plan, a wish, in thus coming into the world. He "came" when he was under no necessity of coming; he came to save, not to destroy; to reveal mercy, not to denounce judgment; to save *sinners*—the poor, the lost, the wandering, not to condemn them; he came to restore them to the favour of God, to raise them up from their degradation, and to bring them to heaven. ¶ *Of whom I am chief.* Gr., *first.* The word is used to denote eminence—and it means that he occupied the *first rank* among sinners. There were none who surpassed him. This does not mean that he had been the greatest of sinners in *all respects*, but that in some respects he had been so great a sinner, that on the whole there were none who had surpassed him. That to which he particularly refers was doubtless the part which he had taken in putting the saints to death; but in connection with this, he felt, undoubtedly, that he had by nature a heart eminently prone to sin; see Rom. vii. Except in the matter of persecuting the saints, the youthful Saul of Tarsus appears to have been eminently moral, and his outward conduct was framed in accordance with the strictest rules of the law; Phil. iii. 6; Acts xxvi. 4, 5. After his conversion, he never attempted to extenuate his conduct, or excuse himself. He was always ready, in all circles, and in all places, to admit to its fullest extent the fact that he was a sinner. So deeply convinced was he of the truth of this, that he bore about with him the constant impression that he was eminently unworthy; and hence he does not say merely that he *had been* a sinner of most aggravated character, but he speaks of it as something that always pertained to him—"of whom I *am* chief." We may remark, (1.) that a true Christian will always be ready to admit that his past life has been evil; (2.) that this will become the abiding and steady conviction of the soul; and (3.) that an acknowledgment that we are sinners is not inconsistent with evidence of piety, and with high attainments in it. The most eminent Christian has the deepest sense of the depravity of his own heart and of the evil of his past life.

16. *Howbeit for this cause.* That is, this was *one* of the causes, or this was a leading reason. We are not to suppose that this was the only one. God had other ends to answer by his conversion than this, but this was one of the designs why he was pardoned—that there might be for all ages a permanent proof that sins of the deepest dye might be forgiven. It was well to have one such example at the outset, that a doubt might never arise about the possibility of forgiving great transgressors. The question thus would be settled for ever. ¶ *That in me first.* Not *first* in the order of time, as our translation would seem to imply, but that in me the first or chief of sinners (ἐν ἐμοὶ πρώτῳ) he might show an example. The idea is, that he sustained the first rank as a sinner, and that Jesus Christ designed to show mercy to

them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.
a Ps.10.16.

17 Now unto the King [a] eternal, immortal, [b] invisible, [c] the
b chap.6.15,16. *c* John 1.18.

him *as such*, in order that the possibility of pardoning the greatest sinners might be evinced, and that no one might afterwards despair of salvation on account of the greatness of his crimes. ¶ *Might show forth all long-suffering.* The highest possible degree of forbearance, in order that a case might never occur about which there could be any doubt. It was shown by his example that the Lord Jesus could evince any possible degree of patience, and could have mercy on the greatest imaginable offenders. ¶ *For a pattern.* ὑποτύπωσιν. This word occurs no where else in the New Testament, except in 2 Tim. i. 13, where it is rendered *form*. It properly means a form, sketch, or imperfect delineation. Then it denotes a pattern or example, and here it means that the case of Paul was an example for the encouragement of sinners in all subsequent times. It was that to which they might look when they desired forgiveness and salvation. It furnished all the illustration and argument which they would need to show that they might be forgiven. It settled the question for ever that the greatest sinners might be pardoned; for as he was "the chief of sinners," it proved that a case could not occur which was beyond the possibility of mercy. ¶ *Which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* All might learn from the mercy shown to him that salvation could be obtained. From this verse we may learn (1.) that no sinner should despair of mercy. No one should say that he is *so great* a sinner that he cannot be forgiven. One who regarded himself as the "chief" of sinners was pardoned, and pardoned for the very purpose of illustrating this truth, that *any* sinner might be saved. His example stands as the illustration of this to all ages; and were there no other, *any* sinner might now come and hope for mercy. But there *are* other examples. Sinners of all ranks and descriptions have been pardoned. Indeed, there is no form of depravity of which men can be guilty, in respect to which there are not instances where just such offenders have been forgiven. The persecutor may reflect that great enemies of the cross like him have been pardoned; the profane man and the blasphemer, that many such have been forgiven; the murderer, the thief, the sensualist, that many of the same character have found mercy, and have been admitted to heaven. (2.) The fact that great sinners have been pardoned, is a proof that others of the same description may be also. The same mercy that saved them can save us—for mercy is not exhausted by being frequently exercised. The blood of atonement which has cleansed so many can cleanse us—for its efficacy is not destroyed by being once applied to the guilty soul. Let no one then despair of obtaining mercy because he feels that his sins are too great to be forgiven. Let him look to the past, and remember what God *has* done. Let him remember the case of Saul of Tarsus; let him think of David and Peter; let him recall the names of Augustine, and Col. Gardiner, and the Earl of Rochester, and John Newton, and John Bunyan — and thousands like them, who have found mercy; and in *their* examples let him see a full proof that God is willing to save any sinner, no matter how vile, provided he is penitent and believing.

17. *Now unto the king eternal.* This ascription of praise is offered to God in view of the mercy which he had shown to so great a sinner. It is the outbreak of that grateful emotion which swelled his bosom, and which would not be denied expression, when Paul recalled his former life and the mercy of God to his soul. It somewhat interrupts indeed the train of his remarks, but the heart was so full that it demanded utterance. It is just an instance of the joy and gratitude which fill the soul of a Christian

only wise [a] God, *be* honour [b] and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[a] Ro.16.27. [b] 1 Ch.29.11. [c] chap.4.14.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according [c] to the prophecies which went before

when he is led along in a train of reflections which conduct him to the recollections of his former sin and danger, and to the fact that he has obtained mercy and has now the hope of heaven. The apostle Paul not unfrequently, in accordance with a mode of writing that was common among the Hebrews, interposes an expression of praise in the midst of his reasonings; comp. Rom. i. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 31. God is called *King* here, as he is often in the Scriptures, to denote that he *rules* over the universe. A literal translation of the passage would be, "To the King of ages, who is immortal," &c. The meaning of this expression—"the King of ages"—*βασιλει των αιωνων*—is, that he is a king who rules throughout all ages. This does not mean that he himself lives for ever, but that his dominion extends over all ages or generations. The rule of earthly monarchs does not extend into successive ages; his does. Their reign is temporary; his is enduring, and continues as one generation after another passes on, and thus embraces them all. ¶ *Immortal.* This refers to God himself, not to his reign. It means that he does not die, and it is given to him to distinguish him from other sovereigns. All other monarchs but God expire—and are just as liable to die at any moment as any other men. ¶ *Invisible;* chap. vi. 16; see Notes on John i. 18. ¶ *The only wise God.* Notes, Rom xvi. 27. The word "*wise*" is wanting in many MSS., and in some editions of the New Testament. It is omitted by Griesbach; marked as doubtful by Tittman, and rejected in the valuable edition of Hahn. Erasmus conjectures that it was added against the Arians, who maintained that the Father only was God, and that as he is here mentioned as such, the word *wise* was interpolated to denote merely that the attribute of perfect wisdom belonged only to him. Wetstein regards the reading as genuine, and suspects that in some of the early manuscripts where it is wanting it was omitted by the transcriber, because it was regarded as inelegant for two adjectives to be united in this manner. It is not easy to determine as to the genuineness of the reading. The sense is not materially affected, whichever view be adopted. It is true that Jehovah is the only God; it is also true that he is the only *wise* God. The gods of the heathen are "vanity and a lie," and they are wholly destitute of wisdom; see Ps. cxv. 3—8; cxxxv. 15—18; Isa. xl. 18—20; xliv. 10—17. ¶ Be *honour.* Let there be all the respect and veneration shown to him which is his due. ¶ *And glory.* Praise. Let him be praised by all for ever. ¶ *Amen.* So be it; an expression of strong affirmation; John iii. 3. Here it is used to denote the solemn assent of the heart to the sentiment conveyed by the words used; see Notes on Matt. vi. 13; 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

18. *This charge.* This command or injunction. It does not refer to any "charge," or "cure," which he had as bishop or minister, as the word is sometimes used now, but to the commands or injunctions which he was delivering to him. The command particularly referred to is that in ver. 8. ¶ *According to the prophecies which went before on thee.* The general meaning of this is plain. It is, that Paul was committing to him an important trust, and one that required great wisdom and fidelity; and that in doing it he was acting in conformity with the hopes which had been cherished respecting Timothy, and with certain expressed anticipations about his influence in the church. From early life the hope had been entertained that he would be a man to whom important trusts might be committed; and it had been predicted that he would be distinguished as a friend of religion. These hopes seem to have been cherished in consequence of the careful training in religion which he had had (2 Tim. ii.

on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding [a] faith, and a good conscience, which some having put

[a] chap.3.9.

1; iii. 15), and probably from the early indications of seriousness, prudence, and piety, which he manifested. It was natural to entertain such hopes, and it seems, from this place, that such hopes had even assumed the form of predictions. It is not absolutely necessary to suppose that these predictions referred to by the word *prophecies* were inspired, for the word *may* be used in a popular sense, as it is often now. We speak now familiarly of *predicting* or *foretelling* the future usefulness of a serious, prudent, studious, and pious youth. We argue from what he is, to what he will be, and we do not deem it unsafe or improper to hazard the prediction that, if he lives, he will be a man to whom important interests may be intrusted. As there were, however, prophets in the Christian church (Notes, Acts xi. 27; 1 Cor. xiv.), and as it is possible that in some cases they were inspired to foretell future events, it cannot be regarded as improper to suppose that some of them had foretold the future usefulness of this religiously educated youth.—Whatever may be meant by the expression, this general observation may be made, that when a young man enters on the active duties of life, and when great interests are intrusted to him, it is not improper to remind him of the hopes which had been cherished of him; of the anticipations which had been formed of his future usefulness; and of the expressions which have been used by the pious and the discerning respecting his future character. This is a kind of reminiscence which will rather increase his sense of responsibility than flatter his vanity; and it may be made a means of exciting him to diligence and fidelity. A virtuous young man will not willingly disappoint the long-cherished hopes of his friends. He will be likely to be made more diligent by the remembrance of all their fond anticipations of his future success. ¶ *That thou by them.* By those prophecies. That is, that being stimulated and excited by those predictions and hopes, you might be led to fidelity and usefulness. ¶ *Mightest war a good warfare.* The Christian life is often compared to a warfare or struggle for victory (comp. Eph. vi. 10—17; 1 Cor. ix. 7; 2 Cor. iv. 4), and the services of the Christian ministry especially are likened to those of a soldier; 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4; iv. 7. The meaning here is, that he should contend with earnestness as a Christian and a minister in that holy service in which he was engaged, and endeavour to secure the victory. He "wars a good warfare" who is engaged in a righteous cause; who is faithful to his commander and to his post; who is unslumbering in observing the motions of the enemy, and fearless in courage in meeting them; who never forsakes his standard, and who continues thus faithful till the period of his enlistment has expired, or till death. *Such* a soldier the Christian minister should be.

19. *Holding faith.* Fidelity to the cause in which you are enlisted—as a good soldier should do. This does not mean, as it seems to me, that Timothy should hold to the system of doctrines revealed in the gospel, but that he should have that fidelity which a good soldier should have. He should not betray his trust. He should adhere to the cause of his master with unwavering steadfastness. This would include, of course, a belief of the truth, but this is not the leading idea in the phrase ¶ *And a good conscience;* see Notes, Acts xxiii. 1. A good conscience, as well as fidelity, is necessary in the service of the Redeemer. A good conscience is that which is well informed in regard to what is right, and where its dictates are honestly followed. ¶ *Which some having put away.* That is, *which good conscience* some have put from them, or in other words, have not followed its dictates. The truth thus taught is, that men make

away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered [a] unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

[a] 1 Co. 5. 5.

shipwreck of their faith by not keeping a good conscience. They love sin. They follow the leadings of passion. They choose to indulge in carnal propensities. As a matter of course, they must, if they will do this, reject and renounce the gospel. Men become infidels because they wish to indulge in sin. No man can be a sensualist, and yet love that gospel which enjoins purity of life. If men would keep a good conscience, the way to a steady belief in the gospel would be easy. If men will not, they must expect sooner or later to be landed in infidelity. ¶ *Concerning faith.* In respect to the whole subject of faith. They are unfaithful to God, and they reject the whole system of the gospel. "Faith" is sometimes used to denote the gospel—as faith is the principal thing *in* the gospel. ¶ *Have made shipwreck.* There is an entire destruction of faith—as a ship is wholly ruined that strikes on a rock and sinks.

20. *Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander.* Hymeneus is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament, except in 2 Tim. ii. 17, where he is mentioned in connection with Philetus as a very dangerous man. An Alexander is mentioned in Acts xix. 33, which some have supposed to be the same as the one referred to here. It is not certain, however, that the same person is intended; see Notes on that verse. In 2 Tim. iv. 14, Alexander the coppersmith is mentioned as one who had done the apostle "much evil," and there can be little doubt that he is the same person who is referred to here. One of the doctrines which Hymeneus held was, that the "resurrection was past already" (2 Tim. ii. 18); but what doctrine Alexander held is unknown. It is not improbable, as he is mentioned here in connection with Hymeneus, that he maintained the same opinion, and in addition to that he appears to have been guilty of some personal injury to the apostle. Both also were guilty of blasphemy. ¶ *Whom I have delivered unto Satan.* On the meaning of this expression, see Notes on 1 Cor. v. 5. ¶ *That they may learn not to blaspheme.* It cannot be supposed that Satan would undertake to *teach* them not to blaspheme, or that Paul put them under him as an *instructor* on that subject. The instructions of Satan tend rather to teach his followers to blaspheme, and none in his school fail to be apt scholars. The meaning here is, that Paul excommunicated them, and not improbably brought upon them, by giving them over to Satan, some physical maladies, that they might be reformed; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. v. 5. It is not entirely clear what is meant by *blaspheme* in this place; comp. Notes on ver. 13. It cannot be supposed that they were open and bold blasphemers, for such could not have maintained a place in the church, but rather that they held doctrines which the apostle regarded as amounting to blasphemy; that is, doctrines which were *in fact* a reproach on the divine character. There are many doctrines held by men which are in fact a reflection on the divine character, and which amount to the same thing as blasphemy. A blasphemer openly expresses views of the divine character which are a reproach to God; an errorist expresses the same thing in another way—by teaching as true about God that which represents him in a false light, and, to suppose which, in fact, is a reproach. The spirit with which this is done in the two cases may be different; the thing itself may be the same. Let us be careful that we hold no views about God which are reproachful to him, and which, though we do not express it in words, may lead us to blaspheme him in our hearts.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is occupied mainly in directions about the mode of conduct-

CHAPTER II.

I EXHORT, [1] therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;

1 or, *desire.*

ing public worship. Timothy had been left at Ephesus to complete the plans which the apostle had commenced in reference to the church there, but from completing which he had been unexpectedly prevented (see the Intro.), and it was important to state the views which he entertained on this subject to Timothy. It was important also that general directions on these subjects should be given, which would be useful to the church at large. The directions in this chapter relate to the following subjects:

I. Public prayer; ver. 1—8.

(1.) It was to be offered for all classes of men, without distinction of rank, sect, party, country, or name, especially for all that were in authority; ver. 1, 2. The reasons for this were,

(*a*) That God desired all men to be saved, and it was acceptable to him that prayer should be offered for all; ver. 3, 4.

(*b*) There is but one God over all the human race, and all are alike his children; ver. 5.

(*c*) There is one and the same Mediator between God and all men; ver. 5.

(*d*) The same atonement has been made for all; ver. 6, 7.

(2.) The way in which prayer should be offered. It should be with holy hands, and without the intermingling of any bad passion; ver. 8.

II. The duties of women; ver. 9—15.

(1.) Modesty in their demeanour and apparel; ver. 9.

(2.) Good works—the chief ornament of women professing piety; ver. 10.

(3.) The duty of learning from others with a gentle and quiet spirit; ver. 11.

(4.) The duty of a proper subordination and submission to man; ver. 12.

(5.) The reasons for this subordination and submission are then stated. They are,

(*a*) That Adam was first formed; ver. 13.

(*b*) That the woman had been deceived, and should be willing to occupy a subordinate place, as she was first in the transgression and was the means of leading him into sin; ver. 14.

(6.) Yet, as if to make a kind remark in favour of woman—to show that he did not intend to teach that she was degraded and abandoned of God—the apostle says that she would be under the divine protection, and that in the special sorrow and peril which had been brought upon her for her transgression, God would sustain her if she continued in faith, and evinced the spirit of a Christian in her life; ver. 15.

1. *I exhort, therefore.* Marg., *desire.* The word *exhort,* however, better expresses the sense of the original. The exhortation here is not addressed particularly to Timothy, but relates to all who were called to lead in public prayer; ver. 8. This exhortation, it may be observed, is inconsistent with the supposition that a *liturgy* was then in use, or with the supposition that there ever would be a liturgy—since, in that case, the objects to be prayed for would be prescribed. How singular would it be now for an Episcopal bishop to "exhort" his presbyters to pray "for the President of the United States and for all who are in authority." When the prayer is prescribed, do they not do this as a matter of course? ¶ *First of all.* That is, as the first duty to be enjoined; the thing that is to be regarded with primary concern; comp. Luke xii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 20. It does not mean that this was to be the first thing in public worship in the order of time, but that it was to be regarded as a duty of primary importance. The duty of praying for the salvation of the whole world was not to be regarded as a subordinate and secondary thing. ¶ *Supplications.* It is not entirely

2 For kings, [a] and *for* all that are in authority: [1] that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

a Ro. 13. 1, &c.

1 or, *eminent place.*

easy to mark the difference in the meaning of the words used here, and it is not essential. They all relate to *prayer*, and refer only to the different parts of prayer, or to distinct classes of thought and desire which come before the mind in pleading for others. On the difference between the words *supplications* and *prayers*, see Notes on Heb. v. 7. ¶ *Intercessions.* The noun used occurs only in this place and in chap. iv. 5, of this epistle. The *verb*, however (ἐντυγχάνω), occurs in Acts xxv. 4; Rom. viii. 27, 34; xi. 2; Heb. vii. 25. See the meaning explained in the Notes on Rom. viii. 26; Heb. vii. 25. There is one great Intercessor between God and man, who pleads for our salvation on the ground of what he himself has done, but we are permitted to intercede for others, not on the ground of any merit which they or we possess, but on the ground of the merit of the great Advocate and Intercessor. It is an inestimable privilege to be permitted to plead for the salvation of our fellow-men. ¶ *Giving of thanks.* That is, in behalf of others. We ought to give thanks for the mercy of God to ourselves; it is right and proper also that we should give thanks for the goodness of God to others. We should render praise that there is a way of salvation provided; that no one is excluded from the offer of mercy; and that God is using so many means to call lost sinners to himself. ¶ *For all men.* Prayers should be made for all men—for all need the grace and mercy of God; thanks should be rendered for all, for all may be saved. Does not this direction imply that Christ died for all mankind? How could we give thanks in their behalf if there were no mercy for them, and no way had been provided by which they could be saved? It may be observed here, that the direction to pray and to give thanks for all men, showed the large and catholic nature of Christianity. It was opposed entirely to the narrow and bigoted feelings of the Jews, who regarded the whole Gentile world as excluded from covenant mercies, and as having no offer of life. Christianity threw down all these barriers, and all men are on a level; and since Christ has died for all, there is ample ground for thanksgiving and praise in behalf of the whole human race.

[See Supplementary Note, 2 Cor. v. 14.]

2. *For kings.* On the respect due to rulers, see Notes on Rom. xiii. 1—7. The meaning here is, that while all men should be the subjects of prayer, those should be particularly remembered before the throne of grace who are in authority. The reason is, that so much depends on their character and plans; that the security of life, liberty, and property, depends so much on them. God has power to influence their hearts, and to incline them to what is just and equal; and hence we should pray that a divine influence may descend upon them. The salvation of a king is of itself of no more importance than that of a peasant or a slave; but the welfare of thousands may depend on him, and hence he should be made the special subject of prayer. ¶ *All that are in authority.* Marg., or, "*eminent place.*" This does not necessarily mean those who hold office, but refers to any of elevated rank. The happiness of all who are under their control depends greatly on them, and hence we should pray for them that they may be converted men, and inclined to do that which is right. ¶ *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.* That their hearts may be so inclined to what is right that they may protect us in the enjoyment of religion, and that we may not be opposed or harassed by persecution This does not mean that their protection would *dispose* us to lead quiet and peaceful lives, but that under their protection we may be saved from oppression on account of our religion. Christians are disposed of themselves to be peaceful and orderly; they ask of their rulers only that they may not

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

4 Who [a] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

[a] John 3.15,16; 2 Pe.3.9.

be harassed in the enjoyment of their rights. ¶ *In all godliness and honesty.* In the practice of all our duties towards God, and of all the duties which we owe to men. The word *godliness* here denotes *piety*—or the duty which we owe to God; the word *honesty* refers to our duties to our fellow-men. The Christian asks from civil rulers such protection that he may be enabled quietly to perform both these classes of duties.

3. *For this* is *good and acceptable.* That is, it is good and acceptable to God that we should pray for all men. The reason is, that he desires their salvation, and hence it is agreeable to him that we should pray for it. If there were no provision made for their salvation, or if he was unwilling that they should be saved, it could not be agreeable to him that we should offer prayer for them.

4. *Who will have all men to be saved.* That is, it is in accordance with his nature, his feelings, his desires. The word *will* cannot be taken here in the absolute sense, denoting a decree like that by which he willed the creation of the world, for then it would certainly be done. But the word is often used to denote a desire, wish, or what is in accordance with the nature of any one. Thus it may be said of God that he "wills" that his creatures may be happy—because it is in accordance with his nature, and because he has made abundant provision for their happiness—though it is not true that he *wills* it in the sense that he exerts his absolute power to make them happy. God wills that sickness should be relieved, and sorrow mitigated, and that the oppressed should go free, because it is agreeable to his nature; though it is not true that he wills it in the sense that he exerts his absolute power to produce it. A parent wills the welfare of his child. It is in accordance with his nature, his feelings, his desires; and he makes every needful arrangement for it. If the child is not virtuous and happy, it is his own fault. So God wills that all men should be saved. It would be in accordance with his benevolent nature. He has made ample provision for it. He uses all proper means to secure their salvation. He uses *no* positive means to prevent it, and if they are *not* saved it will be their own fault. For places in the New Testament where the word here translated "will" (θέλω), means *to desire* or *wish*, see Luke viii. 20; xxiii. 8; John xvi. 19; Gal. iv. 20; Mark xvii. 24; 1 Cor. vii. 7; xi. 3; xiv. 5; Matt. xv. 28. This passage cannot mean, as many have supposed, that God wills that all *kinds* of men should be saved, or that some sinners of every rank and class may be saved, because (1.) the natural and obvious interpretation of the language is opposed to such a sense. The language expresses the desire that "*all men*" should be saved, and we should not depart from the obvious sense of a passage unless necessity requires it. (2.) Prayer and thanksgiving (ver. 1) are directed to be offered, not for *some* of all ranks and conditions, but for all mankind. No exception is made, and no direction is given that we should exclude any of the race from the expressions of our sympathy, and from an interest in our supplications. The reason given *here* for that prayer is, that God desires that all men should be saved. But how could this be a reason for praying for *all*, if it means that God desired only the salvation of some of *all* ranks? (3.) In ver. 5 and 6, the apostle gives reasons showing that God wished the salvation of all men, and those reasons are such as to prove that the language here is to be taken in the most unlimited sense. Those reasons are, (*a*) that there is one God over all, and one Mediator between God and men—showing that God is the Father of all, and has the same interest in all; and (*b*) that Christ gave himself a ransom for all

5 For *there is* one God,[a] and one mediator [b] between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

a Ro.3.30. *b* He.9.15.

6 Who gave himself a ransom[c] for all, to [1] be testified in due time.

c Mat.20.28. 1 or, *a testimony.*

—showing that God desired their salvation. This verse proves (1.) that salvation is provided for all—for if God wished all men to be saved, he would undoubtedly make provision for their salvation; and if he had *not* made such provision, it could not be said that he desired their salvation, since no one can doubt that he has *power* to provide for the salvation of all; (2.) that salvation should be offered to all men—for if God desires it, it is right for his ministers to announce that desire, and if he desires it, it is *not* proper for them to announce anything contrary to this; (3.) that men are to blame if they are not saved. If God did not wish their salvation, and if he had made no provision for it, they could not be to blame if they rejected the gospel. If God wishes it, and has made provision for it, and they are *not* saved, the sin must be their own—and it is a *great* sin, for there is no greater crime which a man can commit than to destroy his own soul, and to make himself the eternal enemy of his Maker. ¶ *And to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* The truth which God has revealed; the "truth as it is in Jesus." Notes, Eph. iv. 21.

5. *For* there is *one God.* This is a reason for offering prayer for all men, and for the declaration (ver. 4) that God desires that all men should be saved. The reason is founded in the fact that he is the common Father of all the race, and that he must have the same desire for the welfare of all his children. He has made them of one blood (Acts xvii. 26), and he must have the same interest in the happiness of all; comp. Notes, Eph. iv. 6; Rom. iii. 30. ¶ *And one Mediator between God and men;* see Notes on Gal. iii. 19, 20; Heb. ix. 15. This also is given as a reason why prayer should be offered for all, and a proof that God desires their salvation. The argument is, that there is the same Mediator between God and *all* men. He is not the Mediator between God and *a part* of the human race, but between "God and *men*," implying that He desired the salvation of the race. Whatever love there was in giving the Mediator at all, was love for all the race; whatever can be argued from that about the interest which God has in man, is proof of his interest in the race at large. It is proper, therefore, to pray for all. It may be remarked here that there is but *one* Mediator. There is not one for kings and another for their subjects; one for the rich and another for the poor; one for the master and another for the slave. All are on the same level, and the servant may feel that, in the gift of a Mediator, God regarded him with the same interest that he did his master. It may be added also that the doctrine of the Papists that the saints or the Virgin Mary may act as mediators to procure blessings for us, is false. There is but "one Mediator;" and but one is necessary. Prayer offered to the "saints," or to the "Virgin," is idolatry, and at the same time removes the one great Mediator from the office which he alone holds, of making intercession with God. ¶ *The man Christ Jesus.* Jesus was truly and properly a man, having a perfect human body and soul, and is often called *a man* in the New Testament. But this does not prove that he was not also divine—any more than his being called *God* (John i. 1; xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; 1 John v. 20; Heb. i. 8), proves that he was not also a man. The use of the word *man* here was probably designed to intimate that though he was divine, it was in his human nature that we are to consider him as discharging the office. *Doddridge.*

6. *Who gave himself a ransom for all.* This also is stated as a reason why prayer should be offered for all, and a proof that God desires the salvation of all. The argument is, that as Christ died for all, it is proper to pray for all, and that the fact that he died

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 I will therefore that men

for all is proof that God desired the salvation of all. Whatever proof of his desire for their salvation can be derived from this in relation to *any* of the race, is proof in relation to all. On the meaning of the phrase "he gave himself a ransom," see Notes on Matt. xx. 28; Rom. iii. 25; on the fact that it was for "*all*," see Notes on 2 Cor. v. 14.

[See also the Supp. Note on the same passage.]

¶ *To be testified in due time.* Marg., *a testimony.* The Greek is, "the testimony in its own times," or in proper times — τὸ μαρτύριον καιροῖς ἰδίοις. There have been very different explanations of this phrase. The common interpretation, and that which seems to me to be correct, is, that "the testimony of this will be furnished in the proper time; that is, in the proper time it shall be made known through all the world;" see *Rosenmüller.* Paul affirms it as a great and important truth that Christ gave himself a ransom for all mankind—for Jews and Gentiles; for all classes and conditions of men alike. This truth had not always been understood. The Jews had supposed that salvation was designed exclusively for their nation, and denied that it could be extended to others, unless they became Jews. According to them, salvation was not provided for, or offered to heathens *as such,* but only on condition that they became Jews. In opposition to this, Paul says that it was a doctrine of revelation that redemption was to be provided for all men, and that it was intended that the testimony to this should be afforded at the proper time. It was not fully made known under the ancient dispensation, but now the period had come when it should be communicated to all; comp. Notes on Rom. v. 6, and Gal. iv. 4.

7. *Whereunto.* Gr., "Unto which;" that is, to the bearing of which testimony I am appointed. ¶ *I am ordained.* Gr., "I am placed or constituted"—ἐτέθην. The word "ordain" has now acquired a technical signification, meaning to set apart solemnly to a sacred office by the imposition of hands; but it has not that meaning here. It does not refer to the *manner* in which he was set apart, or to any act of others in consecrating him to this work, but merely to the fact that he had been placed in this office, or appointed to it. He refers doubtless to the fact that the Lord Jesus had designated him to this work. ¶ *A preacher and an apostle;* see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 1—6; Gal. i. 11, 12. ¶ *I speak the truth in Christ,* and *lie not.* That is, *by* Christ; or I solemnly appeal to Christ—a form of an oath; Notes, Rom. ix. 1. Paul makes a solemn declaration similar to this in regard to his call to the apostleship, in Gal. i. 20. For the *reasons* why he did it, see Notes on that verse. It is probable that there were those in Ephesus who denied that he *could* be an apostle, and hence his solemn declaration affirming it. ¶ *A teacher of the Gentiles.* Specially appointed to carry the gospel to the Gentiles or the heathen; see Notes on Rom. xi. 13; Gal. ii. 7. ¶ *In faith and verity.* These words mean that he was appointed to instruct the Gentiles in faith and the knowledge of the truth.

8. *I will therefore.* The Greek word here (βούλομαι) is different from the word rendered *will*—θέλω—in ver. 4. The distinction is, that the word there used—θέλω—denotes an active volition or purpose; the word here used—βούλομαι—a mere passive desire, propensity, willingness. *Rob. Lex.* The meaning here is, "it is my will"—expressing his wish in the case, or giving direction — though using a milder word than that which is commonly employed to denote an act of will. ¶ *That men pray everywhere.* Not merely in the temple, or in other sacred places, but in all places. The Jews supposed that there was special efficacy in prayers offered at the temple in Jerusalem; the heathen also had the same view in regard to

pray [a] every where, lifting up holy [b] hands, without wrath and doubting.

[a] John 4.21. [b] He.10.22.

their temples—for both seemed to suppose that they came *nearer* to God by approaching his sacred abode. Christianity teaches that God may be worshipped in any place, and that we are at all times equally near him; see Notes on John iv. 20—24; Acts xvii. 25. The direction here given that *men* should pray, in contradistinction from the duties of *women*, specified in the next verse, may be intended to imply that men should conduct the exercises of public worship. The duties of women pertain to a different sphere; comp. ver. 11, 12. ¶ *Lifting up holy hands.* To lift up the hands denotes supplication, as it was a common attitude of prayer to spread abroad the hands towards heaven; comp. Ps lxviii. 31; Ex. xix. 29, 33; 1 Kings viii. 22; 2 Chron. vi. 12, 13; Isa. i. 15; see also Horace Odes, III. xxiii. 1; Ovid, M. ix. 701; Livy, v. 21; Seneca, Ep. 21. "Holy hands" here, mean hands that are not defiled by sin, and that have not been employed for any purpose of iniquity. The idea is, that when men approach God they should do it in a pure and holy manner. ¶ *Without wrath.* That is, without the intermingling of any evil passion; with a calm, peaceful, benevolent mind. There should be nothing of the spirit of contention; there should be no anger towards others; the suppliant should be at peace with all men. It is impossible for a man to pray with comfort, or to suppose that his prayers will be heard, if he cherishes anger. The following exquisite and oft-quoted passage from Jeremy Taylor, is a more beautiful and striking illustration of the effect of anger in causing our prayers to return unanswered than was probably ever penned by any one else. Nothing could be more true, beautiful, and graphic. "Anger sets the house on fire, and all the spirits are busy upon trouble, and intend propulsion, defence, displeasure, or revenge. It is a short madness, and an eternal enemy to discourse and a fair conversation; it intends its own object with all the earnestness of perception or activity of design, and a quicker motion of a too warm and distempered blood; it is a fever in the heart, and a calenture in the head, and a fire in the face, and a sword in the hand, and a fury all over; and therefore can never suffer a man to be in a disposition to pray. For prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, and singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and rise above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconsistent, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel." *The Return of Prayers*, Works, vol. i. 638. Ed. Lond. 1835. ¶ *And doubting.* This word, as used here, does not mean, as our translation would seem to imply, that we are to come before God without any doubts of our own piety, or in the exercise of perfect faith. The word used (διαλογισμός) means, properly, computation, adjustment of accounts; then reflection, thought; then reason-

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with [1] broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

1 or, *plaited*, 1 Pe.3.3.

ing, opinion; then debate, contention, strife; Luke ix. 46; Mark ix. 33, 34; Phil. ii. 14. This is the sense evidently in this place. They were not to approach God in prayer in the midst of clamorous disputings and angry contentions. They were not to come when the mind was heated with debate, and irritated by strife for victory. Prayer was to be offered in a calm, serious, sober state of mind, and they who engaged in polemical strife, or in warm contention of any kind, are little fitted to unite in the solemn act of addressing God. How often are theologians, when assembled together, so heated by debate, and so anxious for party victory, that they are in no suitable state of mind to pray! How often do even good men, holding different views on the disputed points of religious doctrine, suffer their minds to become so excited, and their temper so ruffled, that they are conscious they are in an unfit state of mind to approach the throne of grace together! That theological debate has gone too far; that strife for victory has become too warm, when the disputants are in such a state of mind that they cannot unite in prayer; when they could not cease their contentions, and with a calm and proper spirit, bow together before the throne of grace.

9. *In like manner also.* That is, with the same propriety; with the same regard to what religion demands. The apostle had stated particularly the duty of *men* in public worship (ver. 8), and he now proceeds to state the duty of *women*. All the directions here evidently refer to the proper manner of conducting public worship, and not to private duties; and the object here is to state the way in which he would have the different sexes appear. He had said that he would have prayers offered for all men (ver. 1, seq.), and that in offering such petitions he would have the men on whom devolved the duty of conducting public devotion, do it with holy hands, and without any intermingling of passion, and with entire freedom from the spirit of contention. In reference to the duty of females in attendance on public worship, he says that he would have *them* appear in apparel suitable to the place and the occasion—adorned not after the manner of the world, but with the zeal and love in the cause of the Redeemer which became Christians. He would not have a woman become a public teacher (ver. 12), but would wish her ever to occupy the place in society for which she was designed (ver. 11), and to which she had shown that she was adapted; ver. 13, 14. The direction in ver. 9—12, therefore, is to be understood particularly of the proper deportment of females in the duties of public worship. At the same time, the principles laid down are doubtless such as were intended to apply to them in the other situations in life, for if modest apparel is appropriate in the sanctuary, it is appropriate everywhere. If what is here prohibited in dress is *wrong* there, it would be difficult to show that it is *right* elsewhere. ¶ *That women adorn themselves.* The words "I will" are to be understood here as repeated from ver. 8. The apostle, by the use of the word *adorn* (κοσμεῖν), shows that he is not opposed to *ornament* or *adorning*, provided it be of the right kind. The world, as God has made it, is full of beauty, and he has shown in each flower that he is not opposed to true ornament. There are multitudes of things which, so far as we can see, appear to be designed for *mere* ornament, or are made merely *because* they are beautiful. Religion does not forbid true adorning. It differs from the world only on the question what *is* true ornament, or what it becomes us, all things considered, to do in the situation in which we are placed, the character which we sustain, the duties which we have

to perform, and the profession which we make. It may be that there are ornaments in heaven which would be anything but appropriate for the condition of a poor, lost, dying sinner on earth. ¶ *In modest apparel.* The word here rendered *modest* (κόσμιος), properly relates to ornament, or decoration, and means that which is *well-ordered, decorous, becoming.* It does not, properly, mean *modest* in the sense of being opposed to that which is *immodest,* or which tends to excite improper passions and desires, but that which is *becoming* or *appropriate.* The apostle does not positively specify what this would be, but he mentions some things which are to be excluded from it, and which, in his view, are inconsistent with the true adorning of Christian females—"broidered hair, gold, pearls, costly array." The sense here is, that the apparel of females should be such as becomes them, or is appropriate to them. The word here used (κόσμιος), shows that there should be due attention that it may be *truly* neat, fit, decorous. There is no religion in a negligent mode of apparel, or in inattention to personal appearance—any more than there is in wearing gold and pearls; and a female may as truly violate the precepts of her religion by neglecting her personal appearance as by excessive attention to it. The true idea here is, that her attention to her appearance should be such that she will be offensive to no class of persons; such as to show that her mind is supremely fixed on higher and more important things, and such as to interfere with no duty which she owes, and no good which she can do, either by spending her time needlessly in personal adorning, or by lavishing that money for dress which might do good to others, or by neglecting the proprieties of her station, and making herself offensive to others. ¶ *With shamefacedness.* With modesty of appearance and manner—an eminent female virtue, whether in the sanctuary or at home. ¶ *And sobriety.* The word here used means, properly, *sanity;* then sobermindedness, moderation of the desires and passions. It is opposed to all that is frivolous, and to all undue excitement of the passions. The idea is, that in their apparel and deportment they should not entrench on the strictest decorum. *Doddridge.* ¶ *Not with broidered hair.* Marg., *plaited.* Females in the East pay much more attention to the hair than is commonly done with us. It is plaited with great care, and arranged in various forms, according to the prevailing fashion, and often ornamented with spangles or with silver wire or tissue interwoven; see Notes on Isa. iii. 24. The sense here is, that Christian females are not to imitate those of the world in their careful attention to the ornaments of the head. It cannot be supposed that the mere *braiding* of the hair is forbidden, but only that careful attention to the manner of doing it, and to the ornaments usually worn in it, which characterized worldly females. ¶ *Or gold, or pearls.* It is not to be supposed that *all* use of gold or pearls as articles of dress is here forbidden; but the idea is, that the Christian female is not to seek these as the adorning which she desires, or is not to imitate the world in these personal decorations. It may be a difficult question to settle how *much* ornament is allowable, and when the true line is passed. But though this cannot be settled by any exact rules, since much must depend on age, and on the relative rank in life, and the means which one may possess, yet there is one general rule which is applicable to all, and which might regulate all. It is, that the true line is passed when more is thought of this external adorning, than of the ornament of the heart. Any external decoration which occupies the mind more than the virtues of the heart, and which engrosses the time and attention more, we may be certain is wrong. The apparel should be *such* as not to attract attention; such as becomes our situation; such as will not be particularly singular; such as shall leave the impression that the heart is not fixed on it. It is a poor ambition to decorate a dying body with gold and pearls. It

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

11 Let the woman [a] learn in silence with all subjection.

[a] 1 Co.14.34

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived,

should not be forgotten that the body thus adorned will soon need other habiliments, and will occupy a position where gold and pearls would be a mockery. When the *heart* is right; when there is true and supreme love for religion, it is usually not difficult to regulate the subject of dress. ¶ *Costly array.* Expensive dress. This is forbidden—for it is foolish, and the money thus employed may be much more profitably used in doing good. "Costly array" includes that which can be ill afforded, and that which is inconsistent with the feeling that the principle ornament is that of the heart.

10. *But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.* That is, it is not appropriate for women who profess to be the followers of the Saviour, to seek to be distinguished for personal, external decorations. If they are Christians, they have seen the vanity of these things, and have fixed the heart on more substantial realities. They are professed followers of Him "who went about doing good," and the performance of good works especially becomes them. They profess to have fixed the affections on God their Saviour, and to be living for heaven; and it is not becoming in them to seek such ornaments as would indicate that the heart is supremely attached to worldly things. There is great beauty in this direction. Good works, or deeds of benevolence, eminently become a Christian female. The nature of woman seems to be adapted to the performance of all deeds demanding kindness, tenderness, and gentleness of feeling; of all that proceeds from pity, sympathy, and affection; and we feel instinctively that while acts of hardy enterprise and daring in a good cause peculiarly become a Christian man, there is something exquisitely appropriate to the female character in deeds of humble and unobtrusive sympathy and benevolence. God seems to have formed her mind for just such things, and in such things it occupies its appropriate sphere rather than in seeking external adorning.

11. *Let the woman learn in silence.* Listen attentively to instruction, without attempting to teach in public; see Notes on 1 Cor. xiv. 35. ¶ *With all subjection.* With due subjection to those who are in authority, and who are appointed to minister in holy things; Notes, 1 Cor. xiv. 34.

12. *But I suffer not a woman to teach;* see Notes on 1 Cor. xiv. 34. ¶ *Nor to usurp authority over the man;* Notes, 1 Cor. xi. 3.

13. *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.* The apostle, in this verse, and the following, gives reasons why a woman should occupy a subordinate situation, and not usurp authority. The first is, that she was second in the act of creation, or was made subsequent to man. The reason here assigned cannot be understood to be *merely* that of priority of existence—for then it would give every old person authority over a younger one; but it must refer to the circumstances of the case as detailed in the history of the creation; Gen. i., ii. Man was made as the lord of this lower creation and placed in the garden, and then the woman was made of a rib taken from his side, and given to him, not as a lord, but as a companion. All the circumstances combine to show the subordinate nature of her rank, and to prove that she was not designed to exert authority over the man; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

14. *And Adam was not deceived.* This is the second reason why the woman should occupy a subordinate rank in all things. It is, that in the most important situation in which she was ever placed she had shown that she

but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

was not qualified to take the lead. She had evinced a readiness to yield to temptation; a feebleness of resistance; a pliancy of character, which showed that she was not adapted to the situation of headship, and which made it proper that she *should* ever afterwards occupy a subordinate situation. It is not meant here that Adam did not sin, nor even that he was not deceived by the tempter, but that the woman opposed a feebler resistance to the temptation than he would have done, and that the temptation as actually applied to *her* would have been ineffectual on *him*. To tempt and seduce *him* to fall, there were needed all the soft persuasions, the entreaties, and example of his wife. Satan understood this, and approached man not with the specious argument of the serpent, but through the allurements of his wife. It is undoubtedly implied here that man in general has a power of resisting certain kinds of temptation superior to that possessed by woman, and hence that the *headship* properly belongs to him. This is, undoubtedly, the general truth, though there may be many exceptions, and many noble cases to the honour of the female sex, in which they evince a power of resistance to temptation superior to man. In many traits of character, and among them those which are most lovely, woman is superior to man; yet it is undoubtedly true that, as a general thing, temptation will make a stronger impression on her than on him. When it is said that "Adam was not deceived," it is not meant that when he partook actually of the fruit he was under no deception, but that he was not deceived by the serpent; he was not first deceived, or first in the transgression. The woman should remember that sin *began* with her, and she should therefore be willing to occupy an humble and subordinate situation. ¶ *But the woman being deceived.* She was made to suppose that the fruit would not injure her, but would make her wise, and that God would not fulfil his threatening of death. Sin, from the beginning, has been a process of delusion. Every man or woman who violates the law of God is deceived as to the happiness which is expected from the violation, and as to the consequences which will follow it.

15. *Notwithstanding she shall be saved.* The promise in this verse is designed to alleviate the apparent severity of the remarks just made about the condition of woman, and of the allusion to the painful facts of her early history. What the apostle had just said would carry the mind back to the period in which woman introduced sin into the world, and by an obvious and easy association, to the sentence which had been passed on her in consequence of her transgression, and to the burden of sorrows which she was doomed to bear. By the remark in this verse, however, Paul shows that it was not his intention to overwhelm her with anguish. He did not design to harrow up her feelings by an unkind allusion to a melancholy fact in her history. It was necessary for him to state, and for her to know, that her place was secondary and subordinate, and he wished this truth ever to be kept in memory among Christians. It was not unkind or improper also to state the reasons for this opinion, and to show that her own history had demonstrated that she was not designed for *headship*. But she was not to be regarded as degraded and abandoned. She was not to be overwhelmed by the recollection of what "the mother of all living" had done. There were consolations in her case. There was a special divine interposition which she might look for, evincing tender care on the part of God in those deep sorrows which had come upon her in consequence of her transgression; and instead of being crushed and broken-hearted on account of her condition, she should remember that the everlasting arms of God would sustain her

in her condition of sorrow and pain. Paul, then, would speak to her the language of consolation, and while he would have her occupy her proper place, he would have her feel that *God was her Friend.* In regard to the *nature* of the consolation referred to here, there has been a considerable variety of opinion. Some have held, that by the expression "she shall be saved in child-bearing," the apostle designs to include all the duties of the maternal relation, meaning that she should be saved through the faithful performance of her duties as a mother. *Robinson, Lex.* Rosenmüller regards the words rendered "child-bearing" (τεκνογονία), as synonymous with *education*, and supposes that the meaning is, that a woman, by the proper training of her children, can obtain salvation as well as her husband, and that her appropriate duty is not public teaching, but the training of her family. Wetstein supposes that it means "she shall be saved from the arts of impostors, and from the luxury and vice of the age, if, instead of wandering about, she remains at home, cultivates modesty, is subject to her husband, and engages carefully in the training of her children." This sense agrees well with the connection. Calvin supposes that the apostle designs to console the woman by the assurance that, if she bears the trials of her condition of sorrow with a proper spirit, abiding in faith and holiness, she will be saved. She is not to regard herself as cut off from the hope of heaven. Doddridge, Macknight, Clarke, and others, suppose that it refers to the promise in Gen. iii. 15, and means that the woman shall be saved through, or by means of bearing a child, to wit, the Messiah; and that the apostle means to sustain the woman in her sorrows, and in her state of subordination and inferiority, by referring to the honour which has been put upon her by the fact that a woman gave birth to the Messiah. It is supposed also that he means to say that special honour is thus conferred on her over the man, inasmuch as the Messiah had no human father. *Doddridge.* The objections to this interpretation, however, though it is sustained by most respectable names, seem to me to be insuperable. They are such as these: (1.) The interpretation is too refined and abstruse. It is not that which is obvious. It depends for its point on the fact that the Messiah had no human father, and if the apostle had intended to refer to that, and to build an argument on it it may be doubted whether he would have done it in so obscure a manner. But it may reasonably be questioned whether he would have made that fact a point on which his argument would turn. There would be a species of refinement about such an argument, such as we should not look for in the writings of Paul. (2.) It is not the obvious meaning of the word "child-bearing." There is nothing in the word which requires that it should have any reference to the birth of the Messiah. The word is of a general character, and properly refers to child-bearing in general. (3.) It is not true that woman would be "saved" merely by having given birth to the Messiah. She will be saved, as man will be, as a consequence of his having been born; but there is no evidence that the *mere fact* that woman gave birth to him, and that he had no human father, did anything to save Mary herself, or any one else of her sex. If, therefore, the word refers to the "bearing" of the Messiah, or to the fact that he was born, it would be no more proper to say that this was connected with the salvation of *woman* than that of *man.* The true meaning, it seems to me, has been suggested by Calvin, and may be seen by the following remarks. (1.) The apostle designed to comfort woman, or to alleviate the sadness of the picture which he had drawn respecting her condition. (2.) He had referred, incidentally, as a proof of the subordinate character of her station, to the first apostasy. This naturally suggested the sentence which was passed on her, and the condition of sorrow to which she was doomed, particularly in child-birth. *That* was the standing demonstration of her guilt; that the condition in which she suffered

most; that the situation in which she was in greatest peril. (3.) Paul assures her, therefore, that though she *must* thus suffer, yet that she ought not to regard herself in her deep sorrows and dangers, though on account of sin, as necessarily under the divine displeasure, or as excluded from the hope of heaven. The way of salvation was open to her as well as to men, and was to be entered in the same manner. If *she* had faith and holiness, even *in* her condition of sorrow brought on by guilt, she might as well hope for eternal life as man. The object of the apostle seems to be to guard against a *possible* construction which might be put on his words, that he did not regard the woman as in circumstances as favourable for salvation as those of man, or as if he thought that salvation for her was more difficult, or perhaps that she could not be saved at all. The general sentiments of the Jews in regard to the salvation of the female sex, and their exclusion from the religious privileges which men enjoy; the views of the Mohammedans in reference to the inferiority of the sex; and the prevalent feelings in the heathen world, degrading the sex and making their condition, in regard to salvation, far inferior to that of man, show the propriety of what the apostle here says, and the fitness that he should so guard himself that his language could not possibly be construed so as to give countenance to such a sentiment. According to the interpretation of the passage here proposed, the apostle does not mean to teach that a Christian female would be certainly saved from death in childbirth—for this would not be true, and the proper construction of the passage does not require us to understand him as affirming this. Religion is not designed to make any immediate and direct change in the laws of our physical being. It does not of itself guard us from the pestilence; it does not arrest the progress of disease; it does not save us from death; and, as a matter of fact, woman, by the highest degree of piety, is not necessarily saved from the perils of that condition to which she has been subjected in consequence of the apostasy. The apostle means to show this—that in all her pain and sorrow; amidst all the evidence of apostasy, and all that reminds her that she was "*first*" in the transgression, she may look up to God as her Friend and strength, and may hope for acceptance and salvation. ¶ *If they continue.* If woman continues—it being not uncommon to change the singular form to the plural, especially if the subject spoken of have the character of a noun of multitude. Many have understood this of children, as teaching that if the mother were faithful, so that her children continued in faith, she would be saved. But this is not a necessary or probable interpretation. The apostle says nothing of children, and it is not reasonable to suppose that he would make the prospect of *her* salvation depend on *their* being pious. This would be to add a hard condition of salvation, and one nowhere else suggested in the New Testament. The object of the apostle evidently is, to show that woman must *continue* in the faithful service of God if she would be saved—a doctrine everywhere insisted on in the New Testament in reference to all persons. She must not imitate the example of the mother of mankind, but she must faithfully yield obedience to the laws of God till death. ¶ *Faith.* Faith in the Redeemer and in divine truth, or a life of fidelity in the service of God. ¶ *Charity.* Love to all; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. xiii. ¶ *Holiness.* She must be truly righteous. ¶ *With sobriety.* All these things must be united with a becoming soberness or seriousness of deportment; Notes, ver. 9. In such a life, woman may look to a world where she will be for ever free from all the sadnesses and sorrows of her condition here; where, by unequalled pain, she will be no more reminded of the time when

——"her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she ate;"

and when before the throne she shall be admitted to full equality with all the redeemed of the Lord. Religion meets all the sadnesses of her condi-

CHAPTER III.

THIS *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, [a] he desireth a good work.

[a] Ph. 1.1.

tion here; pours consolation into the cup of her many woes; speaks kindly to her in her distresses; utters the language of forgiveness to her heart when crushed with the remembrance of sin—for "she loves much" (Luke vii. 37—48); and conducts her to immortal glory in that world where all sorrow shall be unknown.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

The object of this chapter is to give directions respecting the qualifications and duties of the officers of the Christian church. As it is evident that Timothy was to be partly employed in the appointment of suitable officers for the church at Ephesus, and as the kinds of officers here referred to were to be permanent in the church, it was important that a full statement should be put on record, under the influence of inspiration, respecting their qualifications and duties. The chapter embraces the following subjects:—

I. The qualifications of a bishop; ver. 1—7. The enumeration of his qualifications is preceded by a general statement that the office was an honourable one, and that he who aspired to it sought an employment that was, in itself, to be regarded as desirable; ver. 1. The qualifications specified for this office, are the following:—

(1.) He must be a man of good private character; possessing and illustrating the Christian virtues, or, as we would say now, an upright man, and a Christian gentleman; ver. 2, 3.

(2.) He must be a man who ruled his own house well, and who thus showed that he was qualified to preside as the first officer in the church of God; ver. 4, 5.

(3.) He must be a man of suitable age and experience—one who would not be likely to fall into the temptations that are laid for the young; ver. 6.

(4.) He must have a fair reputation among those who were not Christians—as it is intended that the influence of his ministry shall reach them, and as it is impossible to do them good unless he is believed to be a man of integrity; ver. 7.

II. The qualifications of deacons; ver. 8—10, 12, 13. They must be,

(1.) Men of fair character—serious, temperate, candid; ver. 8.

(2.) Men who hold to the doctrines of the gospel with a pure conscience; ver. 9.

(3.) Men who have been proved, and who have shown that they are qualified to serve the church; ver. 10.

(4.) Men whose wives are of such a character that their example will contribute to the promotion of the common cause; ver 11.

(5.) Men not living in polygamy, and who exercise exemplary family government; ver. 12, 13.

III. The reason why Paul gave these instructions to Timothy; ver. 14, 15. It was, that he might know how he ought to demean himself in the important station which he was called to occupy. Paul hoped to be able to come to him before long, and to complete the work which he had commenced at Ephesus, but, in the mean time, he gave him these written councils, that he might understand particularly the duty which was required of him.

IV. The chapter closes with a statement which seems to have been intended to impress the mind of Timothy with the importance of the duties in which he was engaged; ver. 15, 16. The statement is, that the church is the great defender of the truth in the world (ver. 15), and that the truth which the church is to maintain is of the greatest importance. It relates to the incarnation of the Son of God, and to the work which he accomplished on earth—a work which excited the deepest interest in heaven, and the true doctrine respecting which it was of the utmost importance to keep up among men; ver. 16. This reason is further urged in the following chapter, by showing that the time would come when, under the influence of

Satan, these great doctrines would be denied, and the truth be corrupted and perverted.

1. *This* is *a true saying.* Gr., "Faithful is the word"—the very phrase which is used in chap. i. 15; see Notes on that verse. The idea here is, that it was worthy of credence; it was not to be doubted. ¶ *If a man desire.* Implying that there would be those who would wish to be put into the ministry. The Lord, undoubtedly, by his Spirit, often excites an earnest and irrepressible desire to preach the gospel—a desire so strong, that he in whom it exists can be satisfied in no other calling. In such a case, it should be regarded as one evidence of a call to this work. The apostle, however, by the statements which follow, intimates that wherever this desire exists, it is of the utmost importance to have just views of the nature of the office, and that there should be other qualifications for the ministry than a mere desire to preach the gospel. He proceeds, therefore, to state those qualifications, and no one who "desires" the office of the ministry should conclude that he is *called* to it, unless these qualifications substantially are found in him. The word rendered *desire* here (ὀρέγω), denotes properly, *to reach* or *stretch out*—and hence to reach after anything, to long after, to try to obtain; Heb. xi. 16. ¶ *The office of a bishop.* The Greek here is a single word—ἐπισκοπῆς. The word ἐπισκοπή—*Episcope*—whence the word *Episcopal* is derived—occurs but four times in the New Testament. It is translated *visitation* in Luke xix. 44, and in 1 Pet. ii. 12; *bishoprick*, Acts. i. 20; and in this place *office of a bishop.* The verb from which it is derived (ἐπισκοπέω), occurs but twice, In Heb. xii. 15, it is rendered *looking diligently*, and in 1 Pet. v. 2, *taking the oversight.* The noun rendered *bishop* occurs in Acts xx. 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 25. The verb means, properly, to look upon, behold; to inspect, to look after, see to, take care of; and the noun denotes the office of overseeing, inspecting, or looking to. It is used to denote the care of the sick, Xeno. Oec. 15, 9; comp. *Passow;* and is of so general a character that it may denote any office of overseeing, or attending to. There is nothing in the word itself which would limit it to any class or grade of the ministry, and it is, in fact, applied to nearly all the officers of the church in the New Testament, and, indeed, to Christians who did not sustain *any* office. Thus it is applied (*a*) to believers in general, directing them to "*look diligently*, lest any one should fail of the grace of God," Heb. xii. 15; (*b*) to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*," Acts xx. 28; (*c*) to the elders or presbyters of the church in 1 Pet. v. 2, "Feed the flock of God, *taking the oversight thereof;* (*d*) to the officers of the church in Philippi, mentioned in connection with deacons as the only officers of the church there, "to the saints at Philippi, with the *bishops* and deacons," Phil i. 1; (*e*) to Judas, the apostate, Acts i. 20; and (*f*) to the great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 25, "the Shepherd and *Bishop* of your souls." From this use of the term it follows, (1.) That the word is never used to designate the *peculiarity* of the apostolic office, or so as to have any special applicability to the apostles. Indeed, the term *bishop* is *never* applied to any of them in the New Testament; nor is the word in any of its forms ever used with reference to them, except in the single case of *Judas*, Acts i. 20. (2.) It is never employed in the New Testament to designate an order of men superior to presbyters, regarded as having any other functions than presbyters, or being in any sense "successors" to the apostles. It is so used now by the advocates of prelacy; but this is a use wholly unknown to the New Testament. It is so undeniable that the name is never given in the New Testament to those who are now called "bishops," that even Episcopalians concede it. Thus, Dr. Onderdonk (Tract on Episcopacy, p. 12) says, "ALL that we read in the New Testament concerning 'bishops' is to be regarded as pertaining to the 'middle

2 A bishop [a] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife,

[a] Tit. 1. 6, &c.

grade;' that is, to those who are now regarded as 'priests.'" This is not strictly correct, as is clear from the remarks above respecting what is called the "middle grade;" but it *is* strictly correct, so far as it affirms that it is *never* applied to prelates. (3.) It is used in the New Testament to denote ministers of the gospel who had the care or oversight of the churches, without any regard to grade or rank. (4.) It has now, as used by Episcopalians, a sense which is wholly unauthorised by the New Testament, and which, indeed, is entirely at variance with the usage there. To apply the term to a pretended superior order of clergy, as designating their peculiar office, is wholly to depart from the use of the word as it occurs in the Bible. (5.) As it is never used in the Scriptures with reference to *prelates*, it *should* be used with reference to the pastors, or other officers of the church; and to be a *pastor*, or *overseer* of the flock of Christ, should be regarded as being a scriptural *bishop*. ¶ *He desireth a good work.* An honourable office; an office which it is right for a man to desire. There are some stations in life which ought never to be desired; it is proper for any one to desire the office of a bishop who has the proper qualifications; comp. Notes on Rom. xi. 13.

2. *A bishop.* A minister of religion, according to the foregoing remarks, who has the charge or oversight of any Christian church. The reference here is doubtless to one who had the government of the church intrusted to him (ver. 4, 5), and who was also a preacher of the gospel. ¶ *Must be blameless.* This is a different word (ἀνεπίλημπτος) from that rendered *blameless* in Luke i. 6; Phil. ii. 15; iii. 6 (ἄμεμπτος); comp. however, Notes on Luke i. 6; Phil. iii. 6. The word here used does not mean that, as a necessary qualification for office, a bishop should be *perfect;* but that he should be a man against whom no charge of immorality, or of holding false doctrine, is alleged. His conduct should be irreprehensible or irreproachable. Undoubtedly it means that if *any* charge could be brought against him implying moral obliquity, he is not fit for the office. He should be a man of irreproachable character for truth, honesty, chastity, and general uprightness. ¶ *The husband of one wife.* This need not be understood as requiring that a bishop *should be* a married man, as Vigilantius, a presbyter in the church at Barcelona in the fourth century, supposed, however desirable in general it may be that a minister of the gospel should be married. But, while this interpretation is manifestly to be excluded as false, there has been much difference of opinion on the question whether the passage means that a minister should not have more than one wife at the same time, or whether it prohibits the marriage of a second wife after the death of the first. On this question, the Notes of Bloomfield, Doddridge, and Macknight, may be consulted. That the former is the correct opinion, seems to me to be evident from the following considerations: (1.) It is the most obvious meaning of the language, and it would doubtless be thus understood by those to whom it was addressed. At a time when polygamy was not uncommon, to say that a man should "have but *one wife*" would be naturally understood as prohibiting polygamy. (2.) The marriage of a second wife, after the death of the first, is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as wrong. The marriage of a widow to a second husband is expressely declared to be proper (1 Cor. vii. 39); and it is not unfair to infer from that permission that it is equally lawful and proper for a man to marry the second time. But if it is lawful for any man, it is right for a minister of the gospel. No reason can be assigned against such marriages in his case, which would not be equally valid in any other. Marriage is as honourable for a minister of the gospel as for any other man (comp. Notes on Heb. xiii. 4);

vigilant, sober, of [1] good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach:

[1] or, *modest.*

and, as Doddridge has well remarked, "Circumstances may be so adjusted that there may be as much reason for a second marriage as for the first, and as little inconvenience of any kind may attend it." (3.) There was a special propriety in the prohibition, if understood as prohibiting polygamy. It is known that it was extensively practised, and was not regarded as unlawful. Yet one design of the gospel was to restore the marriage relation to its primitive condition; and though it might not have seemed absolutely necessary to require of every man who came into the church to divorce his wives, if he had more than one, yet, in order to fix a brand on this irregular practice, it might have been deemed desirable to require of the ministers of the gospel that they should have but one wife. Thus the practice of polygamy would gradually come to be regarded as dishonourable and improper, and the example and influence of the ministry would tend to introduce correct views in regard to the nature of this relation. One thing is clear from this passage, that the views of the Papists in regard to the celibacy of the clergy are directly at variance with the Bible. The declaration of Paul in Heb. xiii. 4, is, that "marriage is honourable in *all;*" and here it is implied that it was proper that a minister should be married. If it were not, why did not Paul prohibit it altogether? Instead of saying that it was improper that a bishop should have more than one wife, why did he not say that it was improper that he should be married at all? Would not a Romanist say so now? ¶ *Vigilant.* This word (νηφάλιος) occurs only here and in 1 Tim. iii. 11; Titus ii. 2. It means, properly, *sober, temperate, abstinent,* especially in respect to wine; then *sober-minded, watchful, circumspect. Robinson.* A minister should have a watchful care over his own conduct. He should be on his gaurd against sin in any form. ¶ *Sober.* σώφρονα. Properly, a man of *a sound mind:* one who follows sound reason, and who is not under the control of passion. The idea is, that he should have his desires and passions well regulated. Perhaps the word *prudent* would come nearer to the meaning of the apostle than any single word which we have. ¶ *Of good behaviour.* Marg., *modest.* Coverdale renders it, *mannerly.* The most correct rendering, according to the modern use of language, would be, that he should be *a gentleman.* He should not be slovenly in his appearance, or rough and boorish in his manners. He should not do violence to the usages of refined intercourse, nor be unfit to appear respectable in the most refined circles of society. Inattention to personal neatness, and to the rules which regulate refined intercourse, is indicative neither of talent, learning, nor religion; and though they are occasionally — not often — connected with talent, learning, and religion, yet they are never the fruit of either, and are always a disgrace to those who exhibit such incivility and boorishness, for such men *ought* to know better. A minister of the gospel should be a finished gentleman in his manners, and there is no excuse for him if he is not. His religion, if he has any, is adapted to make him such. He has usually received such an education as ought to make him such, and in all cases *ought* to have had such a training. He is admitted into the best society, and has an opportunity of becoming familiar with the laws of refined intercourse. He should be an example and a pattern in all that goes to promote the welfare of mankind, and there are few things so easily acquired that are fitted to do this, as refinement and gentility of manners. No man can do good, on the whole, or in the "long run," by disregarding the rules of refined intercourse; and, other things being equal, the refined, courteous, polite gentleman in the ministry, will always do more good than he who neglects the rules of good-breeding. ¶ *Given to hospitality*

3 Not [1] given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, [a] not a brawler, not coveteous.

1 or, *not ready to quarrel and offer wrong, as one in wine.*

a 2 Ti. 2. 24.

This is often enjoined on all Christians as a duty of religion. For the reasons of this, and the nature of the duty, see Notes on Rom. xii. 13; Heb. xiii. 2. It was a special duty of the ministers of religion, as they were to be examples of every Christian virtue. ¶ *Apt to teach.* Gr., *Didactic;* that is, capable of instructing, or qualified for the office of a teacher of religion. As the principal business of a preacher of the gospel is to *teach*, or to communicate to his fellow-men the knowledge of the truth, the necessity of this qualification is obvious. No one should be allowed to enter the ministry who is not qualified to impart *instruction* to others on the doctrines and duties of religion; and no one should feel that he ought to continue in the ministry, who has not industry, and self-denial, and the love of study enough to lead him constantly to endeavour to *increase* in knowledge, that he may be qualified to teach others. A man who would *teach* a people, must himself keep in *advance* of them on the subjects on which he would instruct them.

3. *Not given to wine.* Marg., "*Not ready to quarrel and offer wrong, as one in wine.*" The Greek word (πάροινος) occurs in the New Testament only here and in Titus i. 7. It means, properly, *by wine; i. e.*, spoken of what takes place *by* or *over* wine, as revelry, drinking songs, &c. Then it denotes, as it does here, one who sits *by* wine; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it. It cannot be inferred, from the use of the word here, that wine was absolutely and entirely prohibited; for the word does not properly express that idea. It means that one who is in the *habit* of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulge in it, should not be admitted to the ministry. The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded its use as dangerous, and that he would wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether. In regard to its use at all, except at the communion or as a medicine, it may be remarked, that a minister will do no injury to himself or others by letting it entirely alone; he *may* do injury by indulging in it. No man is under any *obligation* of courtesy or Christian duty to use it; thousands of ministers of the gospel have brought ruin on themselves, and disgrace on the ministry, by its use; comp. Notes on Matt. xi. 9, and 1 Tim. v. 23. ¶ *No striker.* He must be a peaceable, not a quarrelsome man. This is connected with the caution about the use of wine, probably, because that is commonly found to produce a spirit of contention and strife. ¶ *Not greedy of filthy lucre.* Not contentious or avaricious. Gr., Not desirous of base gain. The desire of this is condemned everywhere in the New Testament; but it is especially the duty of a minister of the gospel to be free from it. He has a right to a support (see Notes on 1 Cor. ix.); but there is nothing that more certainly paralyzes the usefulness of a minister of the gospel than the love of money. There is an instinctive feeling in the human bosom that such a man ought to be actuated by a nobler and a purer principle. As avarice, moreover, is the great sin of the world—the sin that sways more hearts, and does more to hinder the progress of the gospel, than all others combined—it is important in the highest degree that the minister of religion should be an example of what men *should* be, and that he, by his whole life, should set his face against that which is the main obstruction to the progress of that gospel which he is appointed to preach. ¶ *But patient.* Modest, mild, gentle. See the word (Gr.) in Phil. iv. 5; Titus iii. 2; James iii. 17, and 1

4 One that ruleth well [a] his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity:

[a] Ps.101.2.

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Pet. ii. 18, where it is rendered *gentle*. The word means that the minister of the gospel should be a man of mild and kind demeanour, such as his Master was. ¶ *Not a brawler;* comp. 2 Tim. ii. 24. That is, he should not be a man given to contention, or apt to take up a quarrel. The Greek is, literally, *Not disposed to fight.* ¶ *Not covetous.* Gr., *Not a lover of silver;* that is, of money. A man should not be put into the ministry who is characteristically a lover of money. Such a one, no matter what his talents may be, has no proper qualification for the office, and will do more harm than good.

4. *One that ruleth well his own house.* This implies that a minister of the gospel would be, and ought to be, a married man. It is everywhere in the New Testament supposed that he would be a man who could be an example in all the relations of life. The position which he occupies in the church has a strong resemblance to the relation which a father sustains to his household; and a qualification to govern a family well, would be an evidence of a qualification to preside properly in the church. It is probable that, in the early Christian church, ministers were not unfrequently taken from those of mature life, and who were, at the time, at the head of families; and, of course, such would be men who had had an opportunity of showing that they had this qualification for the office. Though, however, this cannot be insisted on now as a *previous* qualification for the office, yet it is still true that, if he has a family, it *is* a necessary qualification, and that a man in the ministry *should be* one who governs his own house well. A want of this will always be a hindrance to extensive usefulness. — ¶ *Having his children in subjection with all gravity.* This does not mean that his *children* should evince gravity, whatever may be true on that point; but it refers *to the father.* He should be a grave or serious man in his family; a man free from levity of character, and from frivolity and fickleness, in his intercourse with his children. It does not mean that he should be severe, stern, morose—which are traits that are often mistaken for gravity, and which are as inconsistent with the proper spirit of a father as frivolity of manner—but that he should be a serious and sober-minded man. He should maintain proper *dignity* (σεμνότης); he should maintain self-respect, and his deportment should be such as to inspire others with respect for him.

5. *For if a man know not how to rule.* This is a beautiful and striking argument. A church resembles a family. It is, indeed, larger, and there is a greater variety of dispositions in it than there is in a family. The authority of a minister of the gospel in a church is also less absolute than that of a father. But still there is a striking resemblance. The church is made up of an assemblage of brothers and sisters. They are banded together for the same purposes, and have a common object to aim at. They have common feelings and common wants. They have sympathy, like a family, with each other in their distresses and afflictions. The government of the church also is designed to be *paternal.* It should be felt that he who presides over it has the feelings of a father; that he loves all the members of the great family; that he has no prejudices, no partialities, no selfish aims to gratify. Now, if a man cannot govern his own family well; if he is severe, partial, neglectful, or tyrannical at home, how can he be expected to take charge of the more numerous 'household of faith" with proper views and feelings? If, with all the natural and strong ties of affection which bind a father to his own children; if, when they are few comparatively in number, and where

6 Not [1] a novice, least being lifted up with pride [a] he fall into the condemnation of the devil. [b]

7 Moreover he must have a

[1] or, *one newly come to the faith.* [a] Pr. 16. 18.

[b] Jude 6.

his eye is constantly upon them, he is unable to govern them aright, how can he be expected to preside in a proper manner over the larger household where he will be bound with comparatively feebler ties, and where he will be exposed more to the influence of passion, and where he will have a much less constant opportunity of supervision? Confucius, as quoted by Doddridge, has a sentiment strikingly resembling that before us: "It is impossible that he who knows not how to govern and reform his own family, should rightly govern and reform a people." We may remark, also, in this verse, a delicate and beautiful use of words by the apostle to prevent the possibility of misapprehension. While he institutes a comparison between the government of a family and that of the church, he guards against the possibility of its being supposed that he would countenance *arbitrary* authority in the church, even such authority as a father must of necessity employ in his own family. Hence he uses different words. He speaks of the father as "*ruling*" over his own family, or *presiding over it*—προστῆναι; he describes the minister of religion as *having a tender care for the church*—ἐπιμελήσεται.

6. *Not a novice.* Marg., *one newly come to the faith.* The Greek word, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, means, properly, that which is *newly planted.* Thus it would mean a plant that was not strong, or not fitted to bear the severity of storms; that had not as yet struck its roots deep, and could not resist the fierceness of a cold blast. Then the word comes to mean a new convert; one who has had little opportunity to test his own faith, or to give evidence to others that he would be faithful to the trust committed to him. The word does not refer so much to one who is young *in years,* as one who is young *in faith.* Still, all the reasons which apply against introducing a very recent convert into the ministry, will apply commonly with equal force against introducing one young in years. ¶ *Lest being lifted up with pride.* We are not to suppose that this is the *only* reason against introducing a recent convert into the ministry, but it is a *sufficient* reason. He would be likely to be elated by being intrusted at once with the highest office in the church, and by the commendations and flattery which he might receive. No condition is *wholly* proof against this; but he is much less likely to be injured who has had much experience of the depravity of his own heart, and whose mind has been deeply imbued with the spirit of the gospel. ¶ *He fall into the condemnation of the devil.* That is, the same kind of condemnation which the devil fell into; to wit, condemnation on account of pride. It is here intimated that the cause of the apostasy of Satan was pride—a cause which is as likely to have been the true one as any other. Who can tell but it may have been produced by some new honour which was conferred on him in heaven, and that his virtue was not found sufficient for the untried circumstances in which he was placed? Much of the apostasy from eminent virtue in this world, arises from this cause; and possibly the case of Satan may have been the most signal instance of this kind which has occurred in the universe. The idea of Paul is, that a young convert should not suddenly be raised to an exalted station in the church. Who can doubt the wisdom of this direction? The word rendered *lifted up* (τυφωθείς), is from a verb which means to smoke, to fume, to surround with smoke; then to *inflate*—as a bladder is with air; and then to be conceited or proud; that is, to be *like* a bladder filled, not with a solid substance, but with air.

7. *Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without.* Who are without the church; that is, of those who are not Christians.

good report of them [a] which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare [b] of the devil.

8 Likewise *must* the deacons

[a] Ac.22.12; 1 Th.4.12.

[c] *be* grave, not doubled-tongued, not [d] given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

[b] chap.6.9; 2 Ti.2.26. [c] Ac.6.3. [d] ver.3; Le.10.9.

This includes, of course, *all* classes of those who are not Christians—heathens, infidels, Jews, moral men, and scoffers. The idea is, that he must have a fair reputation with them for integrity of character. His life must be in their view upright. He must not be addicted to anything which they regard as inconsistent with good morals. His deportment must be such that they shall regard it as not inconsistent with his profession. He must be true and just and honest in his dealings with his fellow-men, and so live that they cannot say that he has wronged them. He must not give occasion for scandal or reproach in his intercourse with the other sex, but must be regarded as a man of a pure life and of a holy walk. The *reason* for this injunction is obvious. It is his business to endeavour to do such men good, and to persuade them to become Christians. *But no minister of the gospel can possibly do such men good, unless they regard him as an upright and honest man.* No matter how he preaches or prays; no matter how orthodox, learned, or apparently devout he may be, all his efforts will be in vain unless *they* regard him as a man of incorruptible integrity. If they hate religion themselves, they insist justly that since *he* has professed it he shall be governed by its principles; or if they feel its importance, they will not be influenced to embrace it by a man that they regard as hypocritical and impure. Go to a man whom you have defrauded, or who regards you as having done or attempted wrong to any other one, and talk to him about the necessity of religion, and he will instinctively say that he does not *want* a religion which will not make its professor true, honest, and pure. It is impossible, therefore, for a minister to over-estimate the importance of having a fair character in the view of the world, and no man should be introduced into the ministry, or sustained in it, who has not a fair reputation; comp. Notes on Col. iv. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 12. ¶ *Lest he fall into reproach.* That is, in such a way as to bring dishonour on the ministerial character. His life will be such as to give men occasion to reproach the cause of religion. ¶ *And the snare of the devil.* The snare which the devil lays to entrap and ruin the ministers of the gospel and all good men. The snare to which reference is here made, is that of *blasting the character and influence of the minister of the gospel.* The idea is, that Satan lays this snare so to entangle him as to secure this object, and the means which he uses is the vigilance and suspicion of those who are out of the church. If there is anything of this kind in the life of a minister which they can make use of, they will be ready to do it. Hence the necessity on his part of an upright and blameless life. Satan is constantly aiming at this thing; the world is watching for it, and if the minister has any *propensity* which is not in entire accordance with honesty, Satan will take advantage of it and lead him into the snare.

8. *Likewise* must *the deacons.* On the meaning of the word *deacons*, see Notes on Phil. i. 1. On their appointment, see Notes, Acts vi. 1. The word here evidently denotes those who had charge of the temporal affairs of the church, the poor, &c. No qualifications are mentioned, implying that they were to be preachers of the gospel. In most respects, except in regard to preaching, their qualifications were to be the same as those of the *bishops.* ¶ Be *grave.* Serious, sober-minded men. In Acts vi. 3, it is said that they should be men *of honest report.* On the meaning of the word *grave*, see Notes on ver. 4. They should be men who by their serious deportment will inspire respect. ¶ *Not double-tongued.* The word here used

9 Holding [a] the mystery [b] of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

[a] Ep. I 9.

[b] ver. 16.

—δίλογος—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means, properly, uttering the same thing twice (from δίς and λέγω), and then deceitful, or speaking one thing and meaning another. They should be men who can be relied on for the exact truth of what they say, and for the exact fulfilment of their promises. ¶ *Not given to much wine;* see ver. 3. The word *much* is added here to what is said (ver. 2) of the qualification of a bishop. It is not affirmed that it would be proper for the deacon, any more than the bishop, to indulge in the use of wine in small quantities, but it *is* affirmed that a man who is much given to the use of wine ought not, on any consideration, to be a deacon. It may be remarked here, that this qualification was everywhere regarded as necessary for a minister of religion. Even the heathen priests, on entering a temple, did not drink wine. *Bloomfield.* The use of wine, and of strong drinks of all kinds, was absolutely prohibited to the Jewish ministers of every rank when they were about to engage in the service of God; Lev. x. 9. Why should it then be any more proper for a Christian minister to drink wine than for a Jewish or a heathen priest? Shall a minister of the gospel be less holy than they? Shall he have a feebler sense of the purity of his vocation? Shall he be less careful lest he expose himself to the possibility of conducting the services of religion in an irreverent and silly manner? Shall he venture to approach the altar of God under the influence of intoxicating drinks, when a sense of propriety restrained the heathen priest, and a solemn statute of Jehovah restrained the Jewish priest from doing it? ¶ *Not greedy of filthy lucre;* Notes, ver. 3. The special reason why this qualification was important in the deacon was, that he would be intrusted with the funds of the church, and might be tempted to appropriate them to his own use instead of the charitable purposes for which they were designed; see this illustrated in the case of Judas, John xii. 6.

9. *Holding the mystery of the faith.* On the word *mystery*, see Notes on 1 Cor. ii. 7. It means that which had been concealed, or hidden, but which was now revealed. The word *faith* here, is synonymous with *the gospel;* and the sense is, that he should hold firmly the great doctrines of the Christian religion which had been so long concealed from men, but which were now revealed. The reason is obvious. Though not a preacher, yet his influence and example would be great, and a man who held material error ought not to be in office. ¶ *In a pure conscience.* A mere orthodox faith was not all that was necessary, for it was possible that a man might be professedly firm in the belief of the truths of revelation, and yet be corrupt at heart.

10. *And let these also be first proved.* That is, tried or tested in regard to the things which were the proper qualifications for the office. This does not mean that they were to be employed as *preachers*, but that they were to undergo a proper trial in regard to their fitness for the office which they were to fill. They were not to be put into it without any opportunity of knowing what they were. It should be ascertained that they were grave, serious, temperate, trustworthy men; men who were sound in the faith, and who would not dishonour the office. It is not said here that there should be a *formal* trial, as if they were candidates for this office; but the meaning is, that they should have had an opportunity of making their character known, and should have gained such respect for their piety, and their other qualifications, that there would be reason to believe that they would perform the functions of the office well. Thus, in Acts vi. 3, when deacons were first appointed,

11 Even so *must their* wives [a] *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling [b] their children and their own houses well.

13 For they that have [1] used the office of a deacon well, [c] purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith [d] which is in Christ Jesus.

a Tit.2.3. *b* ver. 4. 1 or. *ministered.*
c Mat.25.21. *d* 2 Ti.2.1.

the church was directed to "look out seven men *of honest report,*" who might be appointed to the office. ¶ *Then let them use the office of a deacon.* Let them be appointed to this office, and fulfil its duties. ¶ *Being* found *blameless.* If nothing can be alleged against their character; see Notes on ver. 2.

11. *Even so* must their *wives* be *grave.* Chrysostom, Theophylact, Grotius, Bloomfield, and many others, suppose that by the word *wives*, here, (γυναῖκας), the apostle means *deaconesses.* Clarke supposes that it refers to women in general. The reason assigned for supposing that it does not refer to the wives of deacons, as such, is, that nothing is said of the qualifications of the wives of bishops—a matter of as much importance as that of the character of the wife of a deacon; and that it cannot be supposed that the apostle would specify the one without some allusion to the other. But that the common interpretation, which makes it refer to the wives of deacons, as such, is to be adhered to, seems to me to be clear. For (1.) it is the obvious and natural interpretation. (2.) The word here used—*wives*—is never used of itself to denote deaconesses. (3.) If the apostle had meant deaconesses, it would have been easy to express it without ambiguity; comp. Notes, Rom. xvi. 1. (4.) What is here mentioned is important, whether the same thing is mentioned of bishops or not. (5.) In the qualifications of bishops, the apostle had made a statement respecting his family, which made any specification about the particular members of the family unnecessary. He was to be one who presided in a proper manner over his own house, or who had a well-regulated family; ver. 4, 5. By a comparison of this passage, also, with Titus ii. 3, 4, which bears a strong resemblance to this, it would seem that it was supposed that the deacons would be taken from those who were advanced in life, and that their wives would have some superintendence over the younger females of the church. It was, therefore, especially important that they should be persons whose influence would be known to be decidedly favourable to piety. No one can doubt that the character of a woman may be such, that it is not desirable that her husband should be an officer in the church. A bad woman ought not to be intrusted with any additional power or influence. ¶ *Grave;* Notes, ver. 4. ¶ *Not slanderers;* comp. Titus ii. 3, "Not false accusers." The Greek word is διαβόλους—*devils.* It is used here in its original and proper sense, to denote a *calumniator, slanderer,* or *accuser.* It occurs in the same sense in 2 Tim. iii. 3, and Titus ii. 3. Elsewhere in the New Testament, it is uniformly rendered *devil* (comp. Notes, Matt. iv. 1), and is given to Satan, the prince of the fallen angels (Matt. ix. 34), by way of eminence, as *the accuser;* comp. Notes on Job i. 6–11, and Rev. xii. 10. Here it means that they should not be women who were in the habit of calumniating others, or aspersing their character. Mingling as they would with the church, and having an opportunity to claim acquaintance with many, it would be in their power, if they chose, to do great injury to the character of others. ¶ *Sober;* Notes, ver. 2. ¶ *Faithful in all things.* To their husbands, to their families, to the church, to the Saviour.

12. *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife;* Notes, ver 2. ¶ *Ruling their children and their own houses well;* Notes, ver. 4, 5.

13. *For they that have used the*

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house [a] of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and [1] ground of the truth,

[a] 2 Ti. 2. 20. [1] or, *stay.*

office of a deacon well. Marg., *ministered.* The Greek word is the same as deacon, meaning ministering, or serving in this office. The sense would be well expressed by the phrase, *deaconizing well.* The *word* implies nothing as to the exact nature of the office. ¶ *Purchase to themselves.* Procure for themselves; see this word explained in the Notes on Acts xx. 28. ¶ *A good degree.* The word here used (βαθμός) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *a step,* as of a stair; and the fair meaning is that of going up higher, or taking an additional step of dignity, honour, or standing. So far as the *word* is concerned, it may mean either an advance in office, in dignity, in respectability, or in influence. It cannot certainly be inferred that the apostle referred to a higher grade of *office;* for all that the word essentially conveys is, that, by exercising this office well, a deacon would secure additional respectability and influence in the church. Still, it is possible that those who had performed the duties of this office well were appointed to be preachers. They may have shown so much piety, prudence, good sense, and ability to preside over the church, that it was judged proper that they should be advanced to the office of bishops or pastors of the churches. Such a course would not be unnatural. This is, however, far from teaching that the office of a deacon is a subordinate office, *with a view* to an ascent to a higher grade. ¶ *And great boldness in the faith.* The word here rendered *boldness* properly refers to boldness *in speaking;* see it explained in the Notes on Acts iv. 13; 2 Cor. iii. 12; Phil. i. 20. But the word is commonly used to denote boldness of any kind —openness, frankness, confidence, assurance; John viii. 13, 26; Mark viii. 32; 2 Cor. vii. 4. As it is here connected with *faith*—"boldness in the faith"—it means, evidently, not so much public speaking, as a manly and independent exercise of faith in Christ. The sense is, that by the faithful performance of the duties of the office of a deacon, and by the kind of experience which a man would have in that office, he would establish a character of firmness in the faith, which would show that he was a decided Christian. This passage, therefore, cannot be fairly used to prove that the deacon was *a preacher,* or that he belonged to a grade of ministerial office from which he was regularly to rise to that of a presbyter.

14. *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly.* That is, he hoped to come there to give instructions personally, or to finish, himself, the work which he had commenced in Ephesus, and which had been interrupted by his being driven so unexpectedly away. This verse PROVES that the apostle Paul did not regard Timothy as the permanent diocesan bishop of Ephesus. Would any Episcopal bishop write this to another bishop? If Timothy were the permanent prelate of Ephesus, would Paul have intimated that he expected soon to come and take the work of completing the arrangements there into his own hands? In regard to his expectation of going soon to Ephesus, see Notes on chap. i. 3; comp. the Introduction to the epistle.

15. *But if I tarry long.* Paul appears to have been uncertain how long circumstances would require him to be absent. He expected to return, but it was possible that his hope of returning soon would be disappointed. ¶ *That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself.* That is, that he might have just views about settling the affairs of the church. ¶ *In the house of God.* This does not mean in a place of public worship, nor does it refer to propriety of deportment there. It refers rather to the

church as a body of believers, and to intercourse with them. The church is called the "house of God," because it is that in which he dwells. Formerly, his peculiar residence was in the temple at Jerusalem; now that the temple is destroyed, it is the church of Christ, among his people. ¶ *Which is the church of the living God.* This seems to have been added to impress the mind of Timothy with the solemn nature of the duty which he was to perform. What he did pertained to the honour and welfare of the church of the living God, and hence he should feel the importance of a correct deportment, and of a right administration of its affairs. ¶ *The pillar and ground of the truth.* There has been no little diversity of opinion among critics whether this phrase is to be taken in connection with the preceding, meaning that *the church* is the pillar and ground of the truth; or whether it is to be taken in connection with what follows, meaning that the principal support of the truth was the doctrine there referred to—that God was manifest in the flesh. Bloomfield remarks on this: "It is surprising that any who have any knowledge or experience in Greek literature could tolerate so harsh a construction as that which arises from the latter method." The more natural interpretation certainly is, to refer it to the former; and this is supported by the consideration that it would then fall in with the object of the apostle. His design here seems to be, to impress Timothy with a deep sense of the importance of correct conduct in relation to the church; of the responsibility of those who presided over it; and of the necessity of care and caution in the selection of proper officers. To do this, he reminded him that the truth of God—that revealed truth which he had given to save the world—was intrusted to the church; that it was designed to preserve it pure, to defend it, and to transmit it to future times; and that, therefore, every one to whom the administration of the affairs of the church was intrusted, should engage in this duty with a deep conviction of his responsibility. On the construction of the passage, Bloomfield Rosenmüller, and Clarke, may be consulted. The word "pillar" means a column, such as that by which a building is supported, and then any firm prop or support; Gal. ii. 9; Rev. iii. 12. If it refers to the church here, it means that that is the support of the truth, as a pillar is of a building. It sustains it amidst the war of elements, the natural tendency to fall, and the assaults which may be made on it, and preserves it when it would otherwise tumble into ruin. Thus it is with the church. It is intrusted with the business of maintaining the truth, of defending it from the assaults of error, and of transmitting it to future times. The truth *is*, in fact, upheld in the world by the church. The people of the world feel no interest in defending it, and it is to the church of Christ that it is owing that it is preserved and transmitted from age to age. The word rendered "ground" — ἑδραίωμα — means, properly, a basis, or foundation. The figure here is evidently taken from architecture, as the use of the word pillar is. The proper meaning of the one expression would be, that truth is supported by the church, as an edifice is by a pillar; of the other, that the truth rests *on* the church, as a house does on its foundation. It is that which makes it fixed, stable, permanent; that on which it securely stands amidst storms and tempests; that which renders it firm when systems of error are swept away as a house that is built on the sand; comp. Notes on Matt. vii. 24—27. The meaning then is, that the stability of the truth on earth is dependent on the church. It is owing to the fact that the church is itself founded on a rock, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, that no storms of persecution can overthrow it, that the truth is preserved from age to age. Other systems of religion are swept away; other opinions change; other forms of doctrine vanish; but the knowledge of the great system of redemption is preserved on earth unshaken, because the church is pre-

16 And, without controversy, great is the mystery [a] of godliness: God was manifest [1] in the flesh, [b] justified in the Spirit, [c]

a 1 Co.2.7. 1 *manifested.*

b John 1.14; 1 John 1.2. c Mat.3.16; John 16.8,9; Ro. 1.4; 1 Pe.3.18; 1 John 5.6.

served, and because its foundations cannot be moved. This does not refer, I suppose, to creeds and confessions, or to the decisions of synods and councils; but to the living spirit of truth and piety *in* the church itself. As certainly as the church continues to live, so certain it will be that the truth of God will be perpetuated among men.

16. *And, without controversy.* Undeniably, certainly. The object of the apostle is to say that the truth which he was about to state admitted of no dispute. ¶ *Great is the mystery.* On the meaning of the word *mystery*, see Notes on 1 Cor. ii. 7. The word means that which had been hidden or concealed. The meaning here is not that the proposition which he affirms was mysterious in the sense that it was unintelligible, or impossible to be understood; but that the doctrine respecting the incarnation and the work of the Messiah, which had been so long *kept hidden* from the world, was a subject of the deepest importance. This passage, therefore, should not be used to prove that there is anything unintelligible, or anything that surpasses human comprehension, in that doctrine, whatever may be the truth on that point; but that the doctrine which he now proceeds to state, and which had been so long concealed from mankind, was of the utmost consequence. ¶ *Of godliness.* The word *godliness* means, properly, piety, reverence, or religiousness. It is used here, however, for the gospel scheme, to wit, that which the apostle proceeds to state. This "mystery," which had "been hidden from ages and from generations, and which was now manifest" (Col. i. 26), was the great doctrine on which depended *religion* everywhere, or was that which constituted the Christian scheme. ¶ *God.* Probably there is no passage in the New Testament which has excited so much discussion among critics as this, and none in reference to which it is so difficult to determine the true reading. It is the only one, it is believed, in which the microscope has been employed to determine the lines of the letters used in a manuscript; and, after all that has been done to ascertain the exact truth in regard to it, still the question remains undecided. It is not the object of these Notes to enter into the examination of questions of this nature. A full investigation may be found in Wetstein. The question which has excited so much controversy is, whether the original Greek word was Θεὸς, *God*, or whether it was ὅς, *who*, or ὁ, *which*. The controversy has turned, to a considerable degree, on the reading in the *Codex Alexandrinus;* and a remark or two on the method in which the manuscripts in the New Testament were written, will show the true nature of the controversy. Greek manuscripts were formerly written entirely in capital letters, and without breaks or intervals between the words, and without accents; see a full description of the methods of writing the New Testament, in an article by Prof. Stuart in Dr. Robinson's Biblotheca Sacra, No. 2, pp. 254, seq. The small, cursive Greek letters which are now used, were not commonly employed in transcribing the New Testament, if at all, until the ninth or tenth centuries. It was a common thing to abridge or contract words in the manuscript. Thus, πρ would be used for πατηρ, *father;* κς for κυριος, *Lord;* ϑς for ϑεος, *God*, &c. The words thus contracted were designated by a faint line or dash over them. In this place, therefore, if the original were ΘC, standing for ϑεὸς, *God*, and the line in the Θ, and the faint line over it, were obliterated from any cause, it would easily be mistaken for OC—ὅς,—*who*. To ascertain which of these is the true reading, has been the great question; and it is with reference to this that the microscope has been resorted to in the examination of the Alexandrian manuscript. It is now generally admitted that the faint line

seen of angels, [a] preached unto the Gentiles, [b] believed on [c] in the world, received up [d] into glory.

[a] Mat.4.11; Lu.2.13; Ep.3.10; 1 Pe.1.12.
[b] Ac.13.46,48; Ro.10.12,18. [c] Col.1.6.
[d] Lu.24,51; Ac.1.9.

over the word has been added by some later hand, though not improbably by one who found that the line was nearly obliterated, and who meant merely to restore it. Whether the letter O was originally written with a line *within* it, making the reading *God*, it is now said to be impossible to determine, in consequence of the manuscript at this place having become so much worn by frequent examination. The Vulgate and the Syriac read it, *who*, or *which*. The Vulgate is, "Great is the sacrament of piety which was manifested in the flesh." The Syriac, "Great is the mystery of godliness, that he was manifested in the flesh." The *probability* in regard to the correct reading here, as it seems to me, is, that the word, as originally written, was Θεὸς—*God*. At the same time, however, the evidence is not so clear that it can be properly used in an argument. But the passage is not *necessary* to prove the doctrine which is affirmed, on the supposition that that is the correct reading. The same truth is abundantly taught elsewhere; comp. Matt. i. 23; John i. 14. ¶ *Was manifest.* Marg., *Manifested.* The meaning is, *appeared* in the flesh. ¶ *In the flesh.* In human nature; see this explained in the Notes on Rom. i. 3. The expression here looks as though the true reading of the much-disputed word was *God*. It could not have been, it would seem evident, ὅ, *which*, referring to "mystery;" for how could a mystery "be manifested in the flesh?" Nor could it be ὅς, *who*, unless that should refer to one who was more than a man; for how absurd would it be to say that "a man was manifested, or appeared in the flesh!" How else could a man appear? The phrase here means that God appeared in human form, or with human nature; and this is declared to be the "great" truth so long concealed from human view, but now revealed as constituting the fundamental doctrine of the gospel. The expressions which follow in this verse refer to God *as* thus manifested in the flesh; to the Saviour as he appeared on earth, regarded as a divine and human being. It was the fact that he thus appeared and sustained this character, which made the things which are immediately specified so remarkable, and so worthy of attention. ¶ *Justified in the Spirit.* That is, the incarnate person above referred to; the Redeemer, regarded as God and man. The word *Spirit*, here, it is evident, refers to the Holy Spirit; for (1.) it is not possible to attach any intelligible idea to the phrase, "he was justified by his own spirit, or soul;" (2.) as the Holy Spirit performed so important a part in the work of Christ, it is natural to suppose there would be some allusion here to him; and (3.) as the "angels" are mentioned here as having been with him, and as the Holy Spirit is often mentioned in connection with him, it is natural to suppose that there would be some allusion to Him here. The word *justified*, here, is not used in the sense in which it is when applied to Christians, but in its more common signification. It means to *vindicate*, and the sense is, that he was shown to be the Son of God by the agency of the Holy Ghost; he was thus vindicated from the charges alleged against him. The Holy Spirit furnished the evidence that he was the Son of God, or *justified* his claims. Thus he descended on him at his baptism, Matt. iii. 16; he was sent to convince the world of sin because it did not believe on him, John xvi. 8, 9; the Saviour cast out devils by him, Matt. xii. 28; the Spirit was given to him without measure, John iii. 34, and the Spirit was sent down in accordance with his promise, to convert the hearts of men; Acts ii. 33. All the manifestations of God to him; all the power of working miracles by his agency; all the influences imparted to the man Christ

Jesus, endowing him with such wisdom as man never had before, may be regarded as an attestation of the Holy Ghost to the divine mission of the Lord Jesus, and of course as a vindication from all the charges against him. In like manner, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and his agency in the conversion of every sinner, prove the same thing, and furnish the grand argument in vindication of the Redeemer that he was sent from God. To this the apostle refers as a part of the glorious truth of the Christian scheme now revealed —the "mystery of religion;" as a portion of the amazing records, the memory of which the church was to preserve as connected with the redemption of the world. ¶ *Seen of angels.* They were attendants on his ministry, and came to him in times of distress, peril, and want; comp. Luke ii. 9—13; xxii. 43; xxiv. 4; Heb. i. 6; Matt. iv. 11. They felt an interest in him and his work, and they gladly came to him in his sorrows and troubles. The design of the apostle is to give an impressive view of the grandeur and glory of that work which attracted the attention of the heavenly hosts, and which drew them from the skies that they might proclaim his advent, sustain him in his temptations, witness his crucifixion, and watch over him in the tomb. The work of Christ, though despised by men, excited the deepest interest in heaven; comp. Notes on 1 Pet. i. 12. ¶ *Preached unto the Gentiles.* This is placed by the apostle among the "great" things which constituted the "mystery" of religion. The meaning is, that it was a glorious truth that salvation might be, and should be, proclaimed to all mankind, and that this was a part of the important truths made known in the gospel. Elsewhere this is called, by way of eminence, "*the* mystery of the gospel;" that is, the grand truth which had not been known until the coming of the Saviour; see Notes on Eph. vi. 19; Col. i. 26, 27; iv. 3. Before his coming, a wall of partition had divided the Jewish and Gentile world. The Jews regarded the rest of mankind as excluded from the covenant mercies of God, and it was one of the principal stumbling-blocks in their way, in regard to the gospel, that it proclaimed that all the race was on a level, that that middle wall of partition was broken down, and that salvation might now be published to all men; comp. Acts xxii. 21; Eph. ii. 14, 15; Rom. iii. 22; x. 11—20. The Jew had no peculiar advantage for salvation by being a Jew; the Gentile was not excluded from the hope of salvation. The plan of redemption was adapted *to man* as such —without regard to his complexion, country, customs, or laws. The blood of Christ was shed for all, and wherever a human being could be found, salvation might be freely offered him. This *is* a glorious truth; and taken in all its bearings, and in reference to the views which then prevailed, and which have always more or less prevailed about the distinctions made among men by caste and rank, there is scarcely any more glorious truth connected with the Christian revelation, or one which will exert a wider influence in promoting the welfare of man. It is a great privilege to be permitted to proclaim that all men, in one respect—and that the most important—are on a level; that they are all equally the objects of the divine compassion; that Christ died for one as really as for another; that birth, wealth, elevated rank, or beauty of complexion, contribute nothing to the salvation of one man; and that poverty, a darker skin, slavery, or a meaner rank, do nothing to exclude another from the favour of his Maker. ¶ *Believed on in the world.* This also is mentioned among the "great" things which constitute the mystery of revealed religion. But why is this regarded as so remarkable as to be mentioned thus? In point of importance, how can it be mentioned in connection with the fact that God was manifest in the flesh; that he was vindicated by the Holy Ghost; that he was an object of intense interest to angelic hosts, and that his coming had broken down the walls which had separated the world, and placed them now on a level? I answer, perhaps

the following circumstances may have induced the apostle to place this among the remarkable things evincing the greatness of this truth: (1.) The strong *improbability* arising from the greatness of the "mystery," that the doctrines respecting the incarnate Deity *would be* believed. Such is the incomprehensible nature of many of the truths connected with the incarnation; so strange does it seem that God *would* become incarnate; so amazing that he should appear in human flesh and blood, and that the incarnate Son of God should die, that it might be regarded as a wonderful thing that such a doctrine had in fact obtained credence in the world. But it was a glorious truth that all the natural improbabilities in the case had been overcome, and that men had accredited the announcement. (2.) The strong improbability that his message would be believed, arising from the *wickedness of the human heart.* Man, in all his history, had shown a strong reluctance to believe *any* message from God, or *any* truth whatever revealed by him. The Jews had rejected his prophets and put them to death (Matt. xxiii., Acts vii.); and had at last put his own Son—their Messiah—to death. Man everywhere had shown his strong inclination to unbelief. There is in the human soul no elementary principle or germ of faith in God. Every man is an unbeliever by nature—an infidel first; a Christian afterwards; an infidel as he comes into the world; a believer only as he is made so by grace. The apostle, therefore, regarded it as a glorious fact that the message respecting the Saviour *had been* believed in the world. It overcame such a strong and universal reluctance to confide in God, that it showed that there was more than human power in operation to overcome this reluctance. (3.) The *extent* to which this had been done may have been a reason why he thought it worthy of the place which he gives it here. It had been embraced, not by a few, but by thousands in all lands where the gospel had been published; and it was proof of the truth of the doctrine, and of the great power of God, that such high mysteries as those relating to redemption, and so much opposed to the natural feelings of the human heart, should have been embraced by so many. The same thing occurs now. The gospel makes its way against the native incredulity of the world, and every new convert is an additional demonstration that it is from God, and a new illustration of the greatness of this mystery. ¶ *Received up into glory.* To heaven; comp. John xvii. 5; see Notes on Acts i. 9. This is mentioned as among the "great" or remarkable things pertaining to "godliness," or the Christian revelation, because it was an event which had not elsewhere occurred, and was the crowning grandeur of the work of Christ. It was an event that was fitted to excite the deepest interest in heaven itself. No event of more importance has ever occurred in the universe, of which we have any knowledge, than the re-ascension of the triumphant Son of God to glory after having accomplished the redemption of a world.

In view of the instructions of this chapter, we may make the following remarks.

1. The word *bishop* in the New Testament never means what is now commonly understood by it—a *Prelate.* It does not denote here, or anywhere else in the New Testament, one who has charge over a *diocese* composed of a certain district of country, embracing a number of churches with their clergy.

2. There are not "three orders" of clergy in the New Testament. The apostle Paul in this chapter expressly designates the characteristics of those who should have charge of the church, but mentions only two, "bishops" and "deacons." The former are ministers of the word, having charge of the spiritual interests of the church; the other are deacons, of whom there is no evidence that they were appointed to preach.—There is no "third" order. There is no allusion to any one who was to be "superior" to the "bishops" and "deacons." As the apostle Paul was expressly giving instructions in regard to the organiza-

tion of the church, such an omission is unaccountable if he supposed there was to be an order of "prelates" in the church. Why is there no allusion to them? Why is there no mention of their qualifications? If Timothy was himself a prelate, was he to have nothing to do in transmitting the office to others? Were there no peculiar qualifications required in such an order of men which it would be proper to mention? Would it not be *respectful*, at least, in Paul to have made some allusion to such an office, if Timothy himself held it?

3. There is only one order of preachers in the church. The qualifications of that order are specified with great minuteness and particularity, as well as beauty; ver. 2—7. No man really needs to know more of the qualifications for this office than could be learned from a prayerful study of this passage.

4. A man who enters the ministry *ought* to have high qualifications; ver. 2—7. No man *ought*, under any pretence, to be put into the ministry who has not the qualifications here specified. Nothing is gained in any department of human labour, by appointing incompetent persons to fill it. A farmer gains nothing by employing a man on his farm who has no proper qualifications for his business; a carpenter, a shoemaker, or a blacksmith, gains nothing by employing a man who knows nothing about his trade; and a neighbourhood gains nothing by employing a man as a teacher of a school who has no qualifications to teach, or who has a bad character. Such a man would do more mischief on a farm, or in a workshop, or in a school, than all the good which he could do would compensate. And so it is in the ministry. The true object is not to increase the *number* of ministers, it is to increase the number of those who are *qualified* for their work, and if a man has *not* the qualifications laid down by the inspired apostle, he had better seek some other calling.

5. The church is the guardian of the truth; ver. 15. It is appointed to preserve it pure, and to transmit it to future ages. The world is dependent on it for any just views of truth. The church has the power, and is intrusted with the duty, of preserving on earth a just knowledge of God and of eternal things; of the way of salvation; of the requirements of pure morality:—to keep up the knowledge of that truth which tends to elevate society and to save man. It is intrusted with the Bible, to preserve uncorrupted, and to transmit to distant ages and lands. It is bound to maintain and assert the truth in its creeds and confessions of faith. And it is to preserve the truth by the holy lives of its members, and to show in their walk what is the appropriate influence of truth on the soul. Whatever religious truth there is now on the earth, has been thus preserved and transmitted, and it still devolves on the church to bear the truth of God on to future times, and to diffuse it abroad to distant lands.

6. The closing verse of this chapter (ver. 16) gives us a most elevated view of the plan of salvation, and of its grandeur and glory. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to condense more interesting and sublime thought into so narrow a compass as this. The great mystery of the incarnation; the interest of angelic beings in the events of redemption; the effect of the gospel on the heathen world; the tendency of the Christian religion to break down every barrier among men, and to place all the race on a level; its power in overcoming the unbelief of mankind; and the re-ascension of the Son of God to heaven, present a series of most wonderful facts to our contemplation. These things are found in no other system of religion, and these are worthy of the profound attention of every human being. The manifestation of God in the flesh! What a thought! It was worthy of the deepest interest among the angels, and it *claims* the attention of men, for it was *for* men and not for angels that he thus appeared in human form; comp. Notes on 1 Pet. i. 12.

7. How strange it is that *man* feels no more interest in these things! God was manifest in the flesh for his

CHAPTER IV.

NOW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that [a] in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, [b] and doctrines of devils;

a Da.11.35; Mat.24.5-12; 2 Pe.2.1.

b Re.16.14.

salvation, but he does not regard it. Angels looked upon it with wonder; but man, for whom he came, feels little interest in his advent or his work! The Christian religion has broken down the barrier among nations, and has proclaimed that all men may be saved; yet the mass of men look on this with entire unconcern. The Redeemer ascended to heaven, having finished his great work; but how little interest do the mass of mankind feel in this! He will come again to judge the world; but the race moves on, regardless of this truth; unalarmed at the prospect of meeting him; feeling no interest in the assurance that he *has* come and died for sinners, and no apprehension in view of the fact that he *will* come again, and that they must stand at his bar. All heaven was moved with his first advent, and will be with his second; but the earth regards it with unconcern. Angelic beings look upon this with the deepest anxiety, though they have no personal interest in it; man, though all his great interests are concentrated on it, regards it as a fable, disbelieves it all, and treats it with contempt and scorn. Such is the difference between heaven and earth—angels and men!

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

There is, in many respects, a strong resemblance between the first part of this chapter and 2 Thess. ii.; comp. Notes on that chapter. The leading object of this chapter is to state to Timothy certain things of which he was constantly to remind the church; and having done this, the apostle gives him some directions about his personal deportment. The chapter may be conveniently divided into three parts:

I. Timothy was to put the church constantly in remembrance of the great apostasy which was to occur, and to guard them against the doctrines which would be inculcated under that apostasy; ver. 1—6.

(*a*) There was to be, in the latter days, a great departing from the faith; ver. 1.

(*b*) Some of the characteristics of that apostasy were these; there would be a giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; ver. 1. Those who taught would hypocritically speak what they knew to be falsehood, having their own consciences seared; ver. 2. They would forbid to marry, and forbid the use of certain articles of food which God had appointed for man; ver. 3—5.

II. Timothy was to warn the churches against trifling and superstitious views, such as the apostle calls "old wives'" fables; ver. 7—11.

(*a*) He was not to allow himself to be influenced by such fables, but at once to reject them; ver. 7.

(*b*) The bodily exercise which the friends of such "fables" recommended was of no advantage to the soul, and no stress ought to be laid on it, as if it were important; ver. 8.

(*c*) That which was truly profitable, and which ought to be regarded as important, was godliness; for *that* had promise of the present life, and of the life to come; ver. 8.

(*d*) Timothy must expect, in giving these instructions, to endure labour and to suffer reproach; nevertheless, he was faithfully to inculcate these important truths; ver. 10, 11.

III. Various admonitions respecting his personal deportment; ver. 12—16.

(*a*) He was so to live that no one would despise him or his ministry because he was young; ver. 12.

(*b*) He was to give a constant attention to his duties until the apostle should himself return to him; ver. 13.

(*c*) He was carefully to cultivate

the gift which had been conferred by his education, and by his ordination to the work of the ministry; ver. 14.

(*d*) He was to meditate on these things, and to give himself wholly to the work, so that his profiting might appear to all; ver. 15.

(*e*) He was to take good heed to himself, and to the manner and matter of his teaching, that he might save himself and those who heard him; ver. 16.

1. *Now the Spirit.* Evidently the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of inspiration. It is not quite certain, from this passage, whether the apostle means to say that this was a revelation *then* made to him, or whether it was a well-understood thing as taught by the Holy Spirit. He himself elsewhere refers to this same prophecy, and John also more than once mentions it; comp. 2 Thess. ii.; 1 John ii. 18; Rev. xx. From 2 Thess. ii. 5, it would seem that this was a truth which had before been communicated to the apostle Paul, and that he had dwelt on it when he preached the gospel in Thessalonica. There is no improbability, however, in the supposition that so important a subject was communicated directly by the Holy Ghost to others of the apostles.—¶ *Speaketh expressly.* In express words, ῥητῶς. It was not by mere hints, and symbols, and shadowy images of the future; it was in an open and plain manner—in so many words. The object of this statement seems to be to call the attention of Timothy to it in an emphatic manner, and to show the importance of attending to it. ¶ *That in the latter times.* Under the last dispensation, during which the affairs of the world would close; see Notes on Heb. i. 2. It does not mean that this would occur *just before* the end of the world, but that it would take place during *that last dispensation*, and that the end of the world would not happen *until* this should take place; see Notes on 2 Thess. ii. 3. ¶ *Some shall depart from the faith.* The Greek word here—ἀποστήσονται, *apostesontai*—is that from which we have derived the word *apostatize*, and would be properly so rendered here. The meaning is, that they would *apostatize* from the belief of the truths of the gospel. It does not mean that, as individuals, they would have been true Christians; but that there would be a departure from the great doctrines which constitute the Christian faith. The *ways* in which they would do this are immediately specified, showing what the apostle meant here by departing from the faith. They would give heed to seducing spirits, to the doctrines of devils, &c. The use of the word "*some*," here—τινες—does not imply that the number would be small. The meaning is, that *certain persons* would thus depart, or that *there would be* an apostasy of the kind here mentioned, in the last days. From the parallel passage in 2 Thess. ii. 3, it would seem that this was to be an extensive apostasy. ¶ *Giving heed to seducing spirits.* Rather than to the Spirit of God. It would be a part of their system to yield to those spirits that led astray. The spirits here referred to are any that cause to err, and the most obvious and natural construction is to refer it to the agency of fallen spirits. Though it *may* apply to false teachers, yet, if so, it is rather to them as under the influence of evil spirits. This may be applied, so far as the phraseology is concerned, to *any* false teaching; but it is evident that the apostle had a specific apostasy in view—some great *system* that would greatly corrupt the Christian faith; and the words here should be interpreted with reference to that. It is true that men in all ages are prone to give heed to seducing spirits; but the thing referred to here is some grand apostasy, in which the characteristics would be manifested, and the doctrines held, which the apostle proceeds immediately to specify; comp. 1 John iv. 1. ¶ *And doctrines of devils.* Gr., "Teachings of demons"—διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων. This may either mean teachings *respecting* demons, or teachings *by* demons. The particular sense must be determined by the connection. Ambiguity of this kind in the construction of words, where one

is in the genitive case, is not uncommon; comp. John xv. 9, 10; xxi. 15. Instances of the construction where the genitive denotes the *object*, and should be translated *concerning*, occur in Matt. ix. 25, "The gospel *of* the kingdom," *i. e.*, concerning the kingdom; Matt. x. 1, "Power *of* unclean spirits," *i. e.*, over or concerning unclean spirits; so, also, Acts iv. 9; Rom xvi. 15; 2 Cor. i. 5; Eph. iii. 1; Rev. ii. 13. Instances of construction where the genitive denotes the *agent*, occur in the following places: Luke i. 69, "A horn *of* salvation," *i. e.*, a horn which produces or causes salvation; John vi. 28; Rom. iii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 10; Eph. iv. 18; Col. ii. 11. Whether the phrase here means that, in the apostasy, they would give heed to doctrines *respecting* demons, or to doctrines which demons *taught*, cannot, it seems to me, be determined with certainty. If the previous phrase, however, means that they would embrace doctrines taught by evil spirits, it can hardly be supposed that the apostle would immediately repeat the same idea in another form; and then the sense would be, that one characteristic of the time referred to would be the prevalent teaching *respecting* demons. They would "give heed to," or embrace, some peculiar views respecting demons. The word here rendered *devils* is δαιμονία — *demons*. This word, among the Greeks, denoted the following things: (1.) A god or goddess, spoken of the heathen gods; comp. in New Testament, Acts xvii. 18. (2.) A divine being, where no particular one was specified, the agent or author of good or evil fortune; of death, fate, &c. In this sense it is often used in Homer. (3.) The souls of men of the golden age, which dwelt unobserved upon the earth to regard the actions of men, and to defend them—tutelary divinities, or geniuses—like that which Socrates regarded as his constant attendant. Xen. Mem. 4. 8. 1. 5; Apol. Soc. 4. See *Passow*. (4.) To this may be added the common use in the New Testament, where the word denotes a demon in the Jewish sense—a bad spirit, subject to Satan, and under his control; one of the host of fallen angels — commonly, but not very properly rendered *devil* or *devils*. These spirits were supposed to wander in desolate places, Matt. xii. 43; comp. Isa. xiii. 21; xxxiv. 14; or they dwell in the air, Eph. ii. 2. They were regarded as hostile to mankind, John viii. 44; as able to utter heathen oracles, Acts xvi. 17; as lurking in the idols of the heathen, 1 Cor. x. 20; Rev. ix. 20. They are spoken of as the authors of evil, James ii. 19; comp. Eph. vi. 12, and as having the power of taking *possession* of a person, of producing diseases, or of causing mania, as in the case of the demoniacs, Luke iv. 33; viii. 27; Matt. xvii. 18; Mark vii. 29, 30; and often elsewhere. The doctrine, therefore, which the apostle predicted would prevail, might, *so far as the word used is concerned*, be either of the following: (1.) Accordance with the prevalent notions of the heathen respecting false gods; or a falling into idolatry similar to that taught in the Grecian mythology. It can hardly be supposed, however, that he designed to say that the common notions of the heathen would prevail in the Christian church, or that the worship of the heathen gods *as such* would be set up there (2.) An accordance with the Jewish views respecting demoniacal possesions and the power of exorcising them. If this view should extensively prevail in the Christian church, it would be in accordance with the language of the prediction. (3.) Accordance with the prevalent heathen notions respecting the departed spirits of the good and the great, who were exalted to the rank of demi-gods, and who, though invisible, were supposed still to exert an important influence in favour of mankind. To these beings, the heathen rendered extraordinary homage. They regarded them as demi-gods. They supposed that they took a deep interest in human affairs. They invoked their aid. They set apart days in honour of them. They offered sacrifices, and performed rites and ceremonies to propitiate their favour. They were regarded as a

sort of mediators or intercessors between man and the superior divinities. If these things are found anywhere in the Christian church, they may be regarded as a fulfilment of this prediction, for they were not of a nature to be foreseen by any human sagacity. Now it so happens, that they are in fact found in the Papal communion, and in a way that corresponds fairly to the meaning of the phrase, as it would have been understood in the time of the apostle. There is, *first*, the worship of the Virgin and of the saints, or the extraordinary honours rendered to them—corresponding almost entirely with the reverence paid by the heathen to the spirits of heroes or to demi-gods. The saints are supposed to have extraordinary power with God, and their aid is implored as intercessors. The Virgin Mary is invoked as "the mother of God," and as having power still to command her Son. The Papists do not, indeed, offer the same homage to the saints which they do to God, but they ask their aid; they offer prayer to them. The following extracts from the catechism of Dr. James Butler, approved and recommended by Dr. Kenrick, "Bishop of Philadelphia," expresses the general views of Roman Catholics on this subject. "Q. How do Catholics distinguish between the honour they give to God, and the honour they give to the saints, when they pray to God and the saints? A. Of God alone they beg grace and mercy; and of the saints they only ask the assistance of their prayers? Q. Is it lawful to recommend ourselves to the saints, and ask their prayers A. Yes; as it is lawful and a very pious practice to ask the prayers of our fellow-creatures on earth, and to pray for them." In the "Prayer to be said before mass," the following language occurs: "In union with the holy church and its minister, and invoking the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and all the angels and saints, we now offer the adorable sacrifice of the mass," &c. In the General Confession, it is said—"I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly." So also, the council of Trent declared, Sess. 25, *Concerning the invocation of the saints*, "that it is good and useful to supplicate them, and to fly to their prayers, power, and aid; but that they who deny that the saints are to be invoked, or who assert that they do not pray for men, or that their invocation of them is idolatry, hold an impious opinion. See also Peter Den's Moral Theology, translated by the Rev. J. F. Berg, pp. 342—356. *Secondly*, in the Papal communion the doctrine of *exorcism* is still held—implying a belief that evil spirits or demons have power over the human frame—a doctrine which comes fairly under the meaning of the phrase here—"*the doctrine respecting demons.*" Thus, in Dr. Butler's Catechism: "Q. What do you mean by exorcism? A. The rites and prayers instituted by the church for the casting out devils, or restraining them from hurting persons, disquieting places, or abusing any of God's creatures to our harm. Q. Has Christ given his church any such power over devils? A. Yes, he has; see St. Matt. x. 1; St. Mark iii. 15; St. Luke ix. 1. And that this power was not to die with the apostles, nor to cease after the apostolic age, we learn from the perpetual practice of the church, and the experience of all ages." The characteristic here referred to by the apostle, therefore, is one that applies precisely to the Roman Catholic communion, and cannot be applied with the same fitness to any other association calling itself Christian on earth. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Holy Spirit designed to designate that apostate church.

2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy.* Ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων. Or rather, "by, or through the hypocrisy of those speaking lies. So it is rendered by Whitby, Benson, Macknight, and others. Our translators have rendered it as if the word translated "speaking lies"—ψευδολόγων—referred to *demons*, or, *devils*,—δα-

2 Speaking [a] lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron ;

[a] Mat.7.15; Ro 16.18.

μονίων—in the previous verse. But there are two objections to this. One is, that then, as Koppe observes, the words would have been inverted—ψευδολόγων ἐν ὑποκρίσει. The other is, that if that construction is adopted, it must be carried through the sentence, and then all the phrases "speaking lies," "having their conscience seared," "forbidding to marry," &c., must be referred to demons. The preposition ἐν, *in*, may denote *by* or *through*, and is often so used. If this be the true construction, then it will mean that those who departed from the faith did it *by* or *through* the hypocritical teachings of those who spoke lies, or who knew that they were inculcating falsehoods ; of those whose conscience was seared ; of those who forbade to marry, &c. The meaning then will be, "In the last days certain persons will depart from the faith of the gospel. This apostasy will essentially consist in their giving heed to spirits that lead to error, and in embracing corrupt and erroneous views on demonology, or in reference to invisible beings between us and God. This they will do through the hypocritical teaching of those who inculcate falsehood ; whose consciences are seared," &c. The series of characteristics, therefore, which follow, are those of the *teachers*, not of *the taught ;* of the ministers of the church, not of the great body of the people. The apostle meant to say that this grand apostasy would occur under the influence of a hypocritical, hardened, and arbitrary ministry, teaching their own doctrines instead of the divine commands, and forbidding that which God had declared to be lawful. In the clause before us—"*speaking lies in hypocrisy*"—two things are implied, *first*, that the characteristic of those referred to would be that they would "*speak lies ;*" *second*, that this would be done *hypocritically*. In regard to the first, there can be no doubt among Protestants of its applicability to the Papal communion. The entire series of doctrines respecting the authority of the Pope, purgatory, the mass, the invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, the seven sacraments, the authority of tradition, the doctrine of merit, &c., is regarded as false. Indeed, the system could not be better characterized than by saying that it is a system "speaking lies." The entire scheme attempts to palm falsehood upon the world, in the place of the simple teaching of the New Testament. The only question is, whether this is done "in hypocrisy," or hypocritically. In regard to this, it is not necessary to maintain that there is *no* sincerity among the ministers of that communion, or that *all* are hypocritical in their belief and their teaching. The sense is, that this is the general characteristic, or that this is understood by the leaders or prime movers in that apostasy. In regard to the ap plicability of this to the ministers of the Papal communion, and the question whether they teach what they know to be false, we may observe, (1.) that many of them are men of eminent learning, and there can be no reason to doubt that they *know* that many of the Catholic legends are false, and many of the doctrines of their faith contrary to the Bible. (2.) Not a few of the things in that communion *must* be known by them to be false, though not known to be so by the people. Such are all the pretended miracles wrought by the relics of the saints ; the liquefying of the blood of St. Januarius, &c.; see Notes on 2 Thess. ii. 9. As the working of these tricks depends wholly on the priesthood, they must know that they are "speaking lies in hypocrisy." (3.) The matter of fact seems to be, that when young men who have been trained in the Catholic church, first turn their attention to the ministry, they are sincere. They have not yet been made acquainted with the "mysteries of iniquity" in the communion in which

3 Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats,

they have been trained, and they do not suspect the deceptions that are practised there When they pass through their course of study, however, and become acquainted with the arts and devices on which the fabric rests, and with the scandalous lives of many of the clergy, they are shocked to find how corrupt and false the whole system is. But they are now committed. They have devoted their lives to this profession. They are trained now to this system of imposture, and they must continue to practise and perpetuate the fraud, or abandon the church, and subject themselves to all the civil and ecclesiastical disabilities which would now follow if they were to leave and reveal all its frauds and impostures. A gentleman of high authority, and who has had as good an opportunity as any man living to make accurate and extensive observations, stated to me, that this was a common thing in regard to the Catholic clergy in France and Italy. No one can reasonably doubt that the great body of that clergy *must* be apprized that much that is relied on for the support of the system is mere legend, and that the miracles which are pretended to be wrought are mere trick and imposture.—¶ *Having their conscience seared with a hot iron.* The allusion here is doubtless to the effect of applying a hot iron to the skin. The cauterized part becomes rigid and hard, and is dead to sensibility. So with the conscience of those referred to. It has the same relation to a conscience that is sensitive and quick in its decisions, that a cauterized part of the body has to a thin, delicate, and sensitive skin. Such a conscience exists in a mind that will practise delusion without concern; that will carry on a vast system of fraud without wincing; that will incarcerate, scourge, or burn the innocent without compassion; and that will practise gross enormities, and indulge in sensual gratifications under the mask of piety. While there are many eminent exceptions to an application of this to the Papal communion, yet this description will apply better to the Roman priesthood in the time of Luther—and in many other periods of the world—than to any other *body of men* that ever lived.

3. *Forbidding to marry.* That is, "They will depart from the faith through the hypocritical teaching—of those who forbid to marry;" see Notes on ver. 2. This does not necessarily mean that they would prohibit marriage altogether, but that it would be a characteristic of their teaching that marriage *would be forbidden*, whether of one class of persons or many. They would *commend* and *enjoin* celibacy and virginity. They would regard such a state, for certain persons, as more holy than the married condition, and would consider it as *so* holy that they would absolutely prohibit those who wished to be most holy from entering into the relation. It is needless to say how accurately this applies to the views of the papacy in regard to the comparative purity and advantages of a state of celibacy, and to their absolute prohibition of the marriage of the clergy. The tenth article of the decree of the Council of Trent, in relation to marriage, will show the general view of the papacy on that subject.—"Whosoever shall say that the married state is to be preferred to a state of virginity, or celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity, or celibacy, than to be joined in marriage; let him be accursed!" Comp. Peter Dens' Moral Theology, pp. 497—500. ¶ And commanding *to abstain from meats*, &c. The word *meat* in the Scriptures, commonly denotes *food* of all kinds; Matt. iii. 4; vi. 25; x. 10; xv. 37. This was the meaning of the word when the translation of the Bible was made. It is now used by us, almost exclusively, to denote animal food. The word here used—βρῶμα—means, properly, whatever is eaten, and may refer to animal flesh, fish, fruit, or vegetables. It is often, however, in the New Testament, employed particularly to denote the flesh

which God hath created to be received [a] with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

[a] Ec. 5. 18.

of animals; Heb, ix. 10; xiii. 9; Rom. xiv. 15, 20; 1 Cor. viii. 8, 13. As it was animal food particularly which was forbidden under the Jewish code, and as the questions on this subject among Christians would relate to the same kinds of prohibition, it is probable that the word has the same limited signification here, and should be taken as meaning the same thing that the word *meat* does with us. To forbid the use of certain meats, is here described as one of the characteristics of those who would instruct the church in the time of the great apostasy. It is not necessary to suppose that there would be an *entire* prohibition, but only a prohibition of certain kinds, and at certain seasons. That *this* characteristic is found in the papacy more than anywhere else in the Christian world, it is needless to prove. The following questions and answers from Dr. Butler's Catechism, will show what is the sentiment of Roman Catholics on this subject. "Q. Are there any other commandments besides the Ten Commandments of God? A. There are the commandments or precepts of the church, which are chiefly six. Q. What are we obliged to do by the second commandment of the church? A. To give part of the year to fast and abstinence. Q. What do you mean by fast-days? A. Certain days on which we are allowed but one meal, *and forbidden flesh meat.* Q. What do you mean by days of abstinence? A. Certain days on which *we are forbidden to eat flesh meat;* but are allowed the usual number of meals. Q. Is it strictly forbidden by the church to eat flesh meat on days of abstinence? A. Yes; and to eat flesh meat on any day on which it is forbidden, without necessity and leave of the church, is very sinful." Could there be a more impressive and striking commentary on what the apostle says here, that "in the latter days some would depart from the faith, under the hypocritical teaching of those who *commanded to abstain from meats?*" The authority claimed by the papacy to issue *commands* on this subject, may be seen still further by the following extract from the same catechism, showing the gracious permission of the church to the "faithful." "The abstinence on Saturday is dispensed with, for the faithful throughout the United States, for the space of ten years (from 1833), except when a fast falls on a Saturday. The use of flesh meat is allowed at present by dispensation in the diocess of Philadelphia, on all the Sundays of Lent, except Palm Sunday, and once a day on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday in each week, except the Thursday after Ash Wednesday, and also excepting Holy-week." Such is the Roman Catholic religion! See also Peter Dens' Moral Theology, pp. 321—330. It is true that what is said here *might* apply to the Essenes, as Koppe supposes, or to the Judaizing teachers, but it applies more appropriately and fully to the Papal communion than to any other body of men professing Christianity, and taken in connection with the other characteristics of the apostasy, there can be no doubt that the reference is to that. ¶ *Which God hath created.* The articles of food which he has made, and which he has designed for the nourishment of man. The fact that God had *created* them was proof that they were not to be regarded as evil, and that it was not to be considered as a religious duty to abstain from them. All that *God* has made is good in its place, and what is adapted to be food for man is not to be refused or forbidden; comp. Eccl. v. 18. There can be no doubt that in the apostasy here referred to, those things would be forbidden, not because they were injurious or hurtful in their nature, but because it might be made a part of a system of religion of self-righteousness and because there might be connected with such a prohibition the belief of special merit."

4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up [a] in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained

a Je.15.16; 1 Pe.2.2.

4. *For every creature of God* is *good.* Gr., *all the creatures*, or *all that God has created*—πᾶν κτίσμα: that is, as he made it; comp. Gen. i. 10, 12, 18, 31. It does not mean that every moral agent *remains* good as long as he is *a creature of God*, but moral agents, men and angels, *were* good as they were made at first; Gen. i. 31. Nor does it mean that all that God has made is good *for every object to which it can be applied.* It is good in its place; good for the purpose for which he made it. But it should not be inferred that a thing which is poisonous in its nature is good for food, *because* it is a creation of God. It is good only in its place, and for the ends for which he intended it. Nor should it be inferred that what God has made is necessarily good *after* it has been perverted by man. As God made it originally, it might have been used without injury. Apples and peaches were made good, and are still useful and proper as articles of food; rye and Indian-corn are good, and are admirably adapted to the support of man and beast, but it does not follow that all that *man* can make of them is necessarily good. He extracts from them a poisonous liquid, and then says that "*every creature* of God is good, and nothing to be refused." But is this a fair use of this passage of Scripture? True, they *are* good—they *are* to be received with gratitude as he made them, and as applied to the uses for which he designed them; but why apply this passage to prove that a deleterious beverage, which *man* has extracted from what God has made, is good also, and good for all the purposes to which it can be applied? As *God* made these things, they are good. As man perverts them, it is no longer proper to call them the "creation of God," and they may be injurious in the highest degree. This passage, therefore, should not be adduced to vindicate the use of intoxicating drinks. As employed by the apostle, it had no such reference, nor does it contain any *principle* which can properly receive any such application. ¶ *And nothing to be refused.* Nothing that God has made, for the purposes for which he designed it. The necessity of the case—the "exigency of the passage"—requires this interpretation. It *cannot* mean that we are not to refuse poison if offered in our food, or that we are never to refuse food that is to us injurious or offensive; nor can it any more mean that we are to receive *all* that may be offered to us as a beverage. The sense is, that as God made it, and for the purposes for which he designed it, it is not to be held to be evil; or, which is the same thing, it is not to be prohibited as if there were merit in abstaining from it. It is not to be regarded as a religious duty to abstain from food which God has appointed for the support of man. ¶ *If it be received with thanksgiving;* see Notes on 1 Cor. x. 31; Eph. v. 20; Phil. iv. 6.

5. *For it is sanctified by the word of God.* By the authority or permission of God. It would be profane or unholy if he had forbidden it; it is made holy or proper for our use by his permission, and no command of *man* can make it unholy or improper; comp. Gen. i. 29; ix. 3. ¶ *And prayer.* If it is partaken of with prayer. By prayer we are enabled to receive it with gratitude, and everything that we eat or drink may thus be made a means of grace.

6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things.* Of the truths just stated. They are, therefore, proper subjects to preach upon. It is the duty of the ministry to show to the people of their charge what *is*

7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, [a] and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth [1] little; but godliness [b] is profitable unto all things, having promise [c] of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

[a] Ti.1.14. [1] or, *for a little time.* [b] chap.6.6. [c] Ps.84.11.

error and where it may be apprehended, and to caution them to avoid it. ¶ *Nourished up in the words of faith.* That is, you will be then "a good minister of Jesus Christ, as becomes one who has been nourished up in the words of faith, or trained up in the doctrines of religion." The apostle evidently designs to remind Timothy of the manner in which he had been trained, and to show him how he might act in accordance with that. From one who had been thus educated, it was reasonable to expect that he would be a faithful and exemplary minister of the gospel. ¶ *Whereunto thou hast attained.*—The word used here means, properly, to accompany side by side; to follow closely; to follow out, trace, or examine. It is rendered *shall follow*, in Matt. xvi. 17; *having had understanding*, in Luke i. 3; and *hast fully known*, in 2 Tim. iii. 10. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The meaning here seems to be, that Timothy had followed out the doctrines in which he had been trained to their legitimate results; he had accurately seen and understood their bearing, as leading him to embrace the Christian religion. His early training in the Scriptures of the Old Testament (2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15), he had now fully carried out, by embracing the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, and by evincing the proper results of the early teaching which he had received in connection with that religion. If he now followed the directions of the apostle, he would be a minister of the Lord Jesus, worthy of the attainments in religious knowledge which he had made, and of the expectations which had been formed of him. No young man should, by neglect, indolence, or folly, disappoint the reasonable expectations of his friends. Their cherished hopes are a proper ground of appeal to him, and it may be properly demanded of every one that he shall carry out to their legitimate results all the principles of his early training, and that he shall be in his profession all that his early advantages make it reasonable to *expect* that he will be.

7. *But refuse.* That is, refuse to pay attention to them, or reject them. Do not consider them of sufficient importance to occupy your time. ¶ *Profane.* The word here used does not mean that the fables here referred to were blasphemous or impious in their character, but that they had not the character of true religion; 2 Tim. ii. 16. ¶ *And old wives'.* Old women's stories; or such as old women held to be important. The word is used here, as it is often with us, in the sense of silly. ¶ *Fables.* Fictions, or stories that were not founded on fact. The heathen religion abounded with fictions of this kind, and the Jewish teachers were also remarkable for the number of such fables which they had introduced into their system. It is probable that the apostle referred here particularly to the Jewish fables, and the counsel which he gives to Timothy is, to have nothing to do with them. ¶ *And exercise thyself* rather *unto godliness.* Rather than attempt to understand those fables. Do not occupy your time and attention with them, but rather cultivate piety, and seek to become more holy.

8. *For bodily exercise profiteth little.* Marg., *for a little time.* The Greek will admit of either interpretation, and what is here affirmed is true in either sense. The bodily exercise to which the apostle refers is of little advantage compared with that piety which he recommended Timothy to cultivate, and whatever advantage could be derived from it, would be but of short duration. "Bodily exercise" here refers, doubtless, to the mortifications of the body by abstinence and penance which the ancient devotees, and particularly the Essenes, made so important as a part of their religion.

The apostle does not mean to say that bodily exercise is in itself improper, or that no advantage can be derived from it in the preservation of health, but he refers to it solely as a means of religion; as supposed to promote holiness of heart and of life. By these bodily austerities it was supposed that the corrupt passions would be subdued, the wanderings of an unholy fancy fettered down, and the soul brought into conformity to God. In opposition to this supposition, the apostle has here stated a great principle which experience has shown to be universally correct, that such austerities do little to promote holiness, but much to promote superstition. There must be a deeper work on the soul than any which can be accomplished by the mere mortification of the body; see Notes on Col. ii. 23, and comp. 1 Cor. ix. 25—27. ¶ *But godliness.* Piety or religion. ¶ *Is profitable unto all things.* In every respect. There is not an interest of man, in reference to this life, or to the life to come, which it would not promote. It is favourable to health of body, by promoting temperance, industry, and frugality; to clearness and vigour of intellect, by giving just views of truth, and of the relative value of objects; to peace of conscience, by leading to the faithful performance of duty; to prosperity in business, by making a man sober, honest, prudent, and industrious; to a good name, by leading a man to pursue such a course of life as shall deserve it; and to comfort in trial, calmness in death, and immortal peace beyond the grave. Religion injures no one. It does not destroy health; it does not enfeeble the intellect; it does not disturb the conscience; it does not pander to raging and consuming passions; it does not diminish the honour of a good name; it furnishes no subject of bitter reflection on a bed of death. It makes no one the poorer; it prompts to no crime; it engenders no disease. If a man should do that which would most certainly make him happy, he would be decidedly and conscientiously religious; and though piety promises no earthly possessions directly as its reward, and secures no immunity from sickness, bereavement, and death, yet there is nothing which so certainly secures a steady growth of prosperity in a community as the virtues which it engenders and sustains, and there is nothing else that will certainly meet the ills to which man is subject. I have no doubt that it is the real conviction of every man, that if he ever becomes certainly *happy*, he will be a Christian; and I presume that it is the honest belief of every one that the true and consistent Christian is the most happy of men. And yet, with this conviction, men seek everything else rather than religion, and in the pursuit of baubles, which they know cannot confer happiness, they defer religion—the only certain source of happiness at any time—to the last period of life, or reject it altogether. ¶ *Having promise of the life that now is.* That is, it furnishes the promise of whatever is really necessary for us in this life. The promises of the Scriptures on this subject are abundant, and there is probably not a want of our nature for which there might not be found a specific promise in the Bible; comp. Ps. xxiii. 1; lxxxiv. 11; Phil. iv. 19. Religion promises us needful food and raiment, Matt. vi. 25—33; Isa. xxxiii. 16; comfort in affliction, Deut. xxxiii. 27; Job v. 19; Ps. xlvi; Heb. xiii. 5; support in old age and death, Isa. xlvi. 4; Ps. xxiii. 4; comp. Isa. xliii. 2; and a good reputation, an honoured name when we are dead; Ps. xxxvii. 1—6. There is nothing which man really *needs* in this life, which is not promised by religion; and if the inquiry were made, it would be surprising to many, even with our imperfect religion, how literally these promises are fulfilled. David, near the close of a long life, was able to bear this remarkable testimony on this subject: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread;" Ps. xxxvii. 25. And now, of the beggars that come to our doors, to how few of them can we give a cup of cold water, feeling that we are giving

9 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

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it to a disciple! How rare is it that a true Christian becomes a beggar! Of the inmates of our alms-houses, how very few give any evidence that they have religion! They have been brought there by vice, not by religion. True piety sends none to the alms-house; it would have saved the great mass of those who are there from ever needing the charity of their fellow-men. ¶ *And of that which is to come.* Eternal life. And it is the only thing that *promises* such a life. Infidelity makes no *promise* of future happiness. Its business is to take away all the comforts which religion gives, and to leave men to go to a dark eternity with no promise or hope of eternal joy. Vice *promises* pleasures in the present life, but only to disappoint its votaries here; it makes no promise of happiness in the future world. There is nothing that furnishes any certain *promises* of happiness hereafter, in this world or the next, but religion. God makes no promise of such happiness to beauty, birth, or blood; to the possession of honours or wealth; to great attainments in science and learning, or to the graces of external accomplishment. All these, whatever flattering hopes of happiness they may hold out here, have no assurance of future eternal bliss. It is not by such things that God graduates the rewards of heaven, and it is only *piety* or *true religion* that furnishes any assurance of happiness in the world to come.

9. *This* is *a faithful saying;* see Notes on chap. i. 15.

10. *For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach.* In making this truth known, that all might be saved, or that salvation was offered to all. The *labour* was chiefly experienced in carrying this intelligence abroad among the Gentiles; the *reproach* arose chiefly from the Jews for doing it. ¶ *Because we trust in the living God.* This does not mean, as our translation would seem to imply, that he laboured and suffered *because* he confided in God, or that this was the *reason* of his sufferings, but rather that this trust in the living God was his *support* in these labours and trials. "We labour and suffer reproach, *for* we have hope in God. Through him we look for salvation. We believe that he has made this known to men, and believing this, we labour earnestly to make it known, even though it be attended with reproaches." The sentiment is, that the belief that God has revealed a plan of salvation for all men, and invites all men to be saved, will make his friends willing to *labour* to make this known, though it be attended with reproaches. ¶ *Who is the Saviour of all men.* This must be understood as denoting that he is the Saviour of all men in some sense which differs from what is immediately affirmed—"*especially* of those that believe." There is something pertaining to *them* in regard to salvation which does not pertain to "*all* men." It cannot mean that he brings all men to heaven, *especially* those who believe—for this would be nonsense. And if he brings all men actually to heaven, how can it be *especially* true that he does this in regard to those who believe? Does it mean that he saves others *without* believing? But this would be contrary to the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures; see Mark xvi. 16. When, therefore, it is said that he "is the Saviour of *all* men, *especially* of those who believe," it must mean that there is a sense in which it is true that he may be called the Saviour of all men, while, at the same time, it is *actually* true that those only are saved who believe. This may be true in two respects. (1.) As he is the *Preserver* of men (Job vii. 20), for in this sense he may be said to *save* them from famine, and war, and peril—keeping them from day to day; comp. Ps. cvii. 28; (2.) as he has *provided* salvation for all men. He is thus their Saviour—and

11 These things command and
each.
12 Let [a] no man despise thy

[a] Ti. 2.7,15.

youth; but be thou an example of
the believers, in word, in conver-
sation, in charity, in spirit, in faith,
in purity.

may be called the common Saviour of all; that is, he has confined the offer of salvation to no one class of men; he has not limited the atonement to one division of the human race; and he actually saves all who are willing to be saved by him.

[See supplementary Note 2 Cor. v. 24. This passage however is not regarded a proof text now on the extent of the atonement, as the fair rendering of σωτὴρ is "Preserver." Dr. Wardlaw has accordingly excluded it in his recent work.]

¶ *Specially of those that believe.* This is evidently designed to limit the previous remark. If it had been left there, it might have been inferred that he would *actually save* all men. But the apostle held no such doctrine, and he here teaches that salvation is *actually* limited to those who believe. This is the speciality or the peculiarity in the salvation of those who actually reach heaven, that they are *believers;* see Notes on Mark xvi. 16. All men, therefore, do not enter heaven, unless all men have faith. But is this so? What evidence is there that the great mass of mankind die believing on the Son of God?

11. *These things command and teach.* As important doctrines, and as embracing the sum of the Christian system. It follows from this, that a minister of the gospel is solemnly bound to teach that there is a sense in which God is the Saviour of all men. He is just as much bound to teach this, as he is that only those will be saved who believe. It is a glorious truth—and it is a thing for which a man should unceasingly give thanks to God that he may go and proclaim that He has provided salvation for all, and is willing that all should come and live.

12. *Let no man despise thy youth.* That is, do not act in such a manner that any shall despise you on account of your youth. Act as becomes a minister of the gospel in all things, and in such a way that men will respect you as such, though you are young. It is clear from this that Timothy was then a young man, but his exact age there is no means of determining. It is implied here, (1.) that there was danger that, by the levity and indiscretion to which youth are so much exposed, the ministry might be regarded with contempt; and (2.) that it was possible that his deportment should be so grave, serious, and every way appropriate, that the ministry would not be blamed, but honoured. The *way* in which Timothy was to live so that the ministry would not be despised on account of his youth, the apostle proceeds immediately to specify. ¶ *But be thou an example of the believers.* One of the constant duties of a minister of the gospel, no matter what his age. A minister should so live, that if all his people should closely follow his example, their salvation would be secure, and they would make the highest possible attainments in piety. On the meaning of the word rendered *example,* see Notes on Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 7. ¶ *In word.* In *speech,* —that is, your manner of conversation. This does not refer to his *public teaching*—in which he could not probably be an *example* to them—but to his usual and familiar conversation. ¶ *In conversation.* In general deportment. See this word explained in the Notes on Phil. i. 27. ¶ *In charity.* Love to the brethren, and to all; see Notes on 1 Cor. xiii. ¶ *In spirit.* In the government of your passions, and in a mild, meek, forgiving disposition. ¶ *In faith.* At all times, and in all trials show to believers by your example, how they ought to maintain unshaken confidence in God. ¶ *In purity.* In chasteness of life; see chap. v. 2. There should be nothing in your intercourse with the other sex that would give rise to scandal. The Papists, with great impropriety, understand this as enjoining celibacy —as if there could be no *purity* in

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine,
14 Neglect [a] not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, [b] with the laying on [c] of the hands of the presbytery.

[a] 2 Ti. 1. 6. [b] chap. 1 18. [c] Ac. 13 3.

that holy relation which God appointed in Eden, and which he has declared to "be honourable in all" (Heb. xiii. 4), and which he has made so essential to the wellbeing of mankind. If the apostle had wished to produce the highest possible degree of corruption in the church, he would have enjoined the celibacy of the clergy and the celibacy of an indefinite number of nuns and monks. There are no other institutions on the earth which have done so much to corrupt the chastity of the race, as those which have grown out of the doctrine that celibacy is more honourable than marriage.

13 *Till I come;* Notes, chap. iii. 14, 15. ¶ *Give attendance to reading.* The word here used may refer either to public or to private reading; see Acts xiii. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 14; comp. Esdr. ix. 48. The more obvious interpretation here is to refer it to private reading, or to a careful perusal of those books which would qualify him for his public work. The then written portions of the sacred volume —the Old Testament—are doubtless specially intended here, but there is no reason to doubt that there were included also such other books as would be useful, to which Timothy might have access. Even those were then few in number, but Paul evidently meant that Timothy should, as far as practicable, become acquainted with them. The apostle himself, on more than one occasion, showed that he had some acquaintance with the classic writings of Greece; Acts xvii. 28; Titus i. 12. ¶ *To exhortation;* see Notes on Rom. xii. 8. ¶ *To doctrine.* To teaching—for so the word means; comp. Notes on Rom. xii. 7.

14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee.* An important question arises here, to what the word *gift* refers;—whether to natural endowment; to office; or to some supposed virtue which had been conferred by ordination—some transmitted influence which made him holy as a minister of religion, and which was to continue to be transmitted by the imposition of apostolic hands.—The word which is here used, is rendered *gift* in every place in which it occurs in the New Testament. It is found in the following places, and with the following significations:—deliverance from peril, 2 Cor. i. 11; a gift or quality of the mind, 1 Cor. vii. 7; gifts of Christian knowledge or consolation, Rom. i. 11; 1 Cor. i. 7; redemption or salvation through Christ, Rom. v. 15, 16; vi. 23; xi. 29; the miraculous endowments conferred by the Holy Spirit, Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 4, 9, 28, 30, 31, and the special gift or endowment for the work of the ministry, 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 10. The *gift* then referred to here was that by which Timothy was qualified for the work of the ministry. It relates to his office and qualifications — to *every thing* that entered into his fitness for the work. It does not refer *exclusively* to any influence that came upon him in virtue of his ordination, or to any new grace that was infused into him by that act, making him either officially or personally more holy than other men, or than he was before—or to any efficacy in the mere act of ordination—but it comprised *the whole train of circumstances* by which he had been qualified for the sacred office and recognised as a minister of religion. All this was regarded as a *gift*, a *benefit*, or a *favour*—χαρισμα,—and he was not to neglect or disregard the responsibilities and advantages growing out of it. In regard to the manner in which this gift or favour was bestowed, the following things are specified. (1.) It was the gift of God; 2 Tim. i. 6. He was to be recognised as its source; and it was not therefore conferred merely by human hands. The call to the ministry, the qualifications for the office, and the whole arrangement by which one is endowed for the work, are primarily

to be traced to him as the source. (2.) It was given to Timothy in accordance with certain predictions which had existed in regard to him—the expectations of those who had observed his qualifications for such an office, and who had expressed the hope that he would one day be permitted to serve the Lord in it. (3.) It was sanctioned by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The call of God to the work thus recognised by the church, and the approbation of the Presbytery expressed by setting him apart to the office, should be regarded by Timothy as a part of the "gift" or *benefit (charisma)* which had been conferred on him, and which he was not to neglect. (4.) An additional circumstance which might serve to impress the mind of Timothy with the value of this endowment, and the responsibility of this office, was, that Paul himself had been concerned in his ordination; 2 Tim. i. 6. He who was so much more aged (Philem. 9; comp. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7); he who had been a father to him, and who had adopted him and treated him as a son had been concerned in his ordination; and this fact imposed a higher obligation to perform aright the functions of an office which had been conferred on him in this manner. We are not to suppose, therefore, that there was any mysterious influence—any *virus*—conveyed by the act of ordination, or that that act imparted any additional degree of holiness. The endowment for the ministry; the previous anticipations and hopes of friends; and the manner in which he had been inducted into the sacred office, should all be regarded as a *benefit* or *favour* of a high order, and as a reason why the gift thus bestowed should not be neglected—and the same things now should make a man who is in the ministry deeply feel the solemn obligations resting on him to cultivate his powers in the highest degree, and to make the most of his talents. ¶ *Which was given thee by prophecy.* That is, the prophetic declarations and the hopes of pious friends in regard to your future usefulness, have been among the means by which you have been introduced to the ministry, and should be a reason why you should cultivate your powers, and perform faithfully the duties of your office; see Notes on chap. i. 18. ¶ *With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.* It was common to lay on the hands in imparting a blessing, or in setting apart to any office; see Matt. xix. 15; Mark vi. 5; Luke iv. 40; xiii. 13; Lev. viii. 14; Num. xxvii. 23; Acts xxviii. 8; vi. 6; viii. 17; xiii. 3. The reference here is undoubtedly to the act by which Timothy was set apart to the office of the ministry. The word rendered *presbytery* — πρεσβυτέριον — occurs only in two other places in the New Testament—Luke xxii. 66, where it is rendered *elders;* and Acts xxii. 5, where it is rendered "*estate of the elders.*" It properly means *an assembly of aged men; council of elders.* In Luke xxii. 66, and Acts xxii. 5, it refers to the Jewish *sanhedrim;* see Notes on Matt. v. 22. In the passage before us, it cannot refer to that body—for they did not ordain men to the Christian ministry—but to some association, or council, or body of elders of the Christian church. It is clear from the passage (1.) that there was more than *one person* engaged in this service, and taking part in it when Timothy was ordained, and therefore it could not have been by a *prelate* or *bishop* alone. (2.) That the power conferred, whatever it was, was conferred by the whole body constituting the presbytery—since the apostle says that the "gift" was imparted, not in virtue of any particular power or eminence in any one individual, but by the "laying on of the hands *of the presbytery.*" (3.) The statement here is just such a one as would be made now respecting a Presbyterian ordination; it is not one which would be made of an Episcopal ordination. A Presbyterian would choose *these very words* in giving an account of an ordination to the work of the ministry; an Episcopalian *would not.* The former speaks of an ordination by a *presbytery;* the latter of ordination by a *bishop.* The former can use the account of the apostle Paul here as applicable to an ordination, without

15 Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear [1] to all.

1 or, *in all things.*

16 Take heed [a] unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save [b] thyself, and them that hear thee.

a Eze.44.21. *b* Ja.5.20.

explanations, comments, new versions or criticisms; the latter cannot. The passage, therefore, is full proof that, in one of the most important ordinations mentioned in the New Testament, it was performed by an association of men, and not by a prelate, and *therefore*, that this was the primitive mode of ordination. Indeed, there is not a single instance of ordination to an office mentioned in the New Testament which was performed *by one man alone.* See this passage examined at greater length in my "Enquiry into the organization and government of the apostolic church," pp. 208—221.

15. *Meditate upon these things.* Upon the train of events by which you have been led into the ministry, and upon the responsibilities and duties of the office. Let your mind be deeply impressed with these things; make them the subject of profound and serious thought. ¶ *Give thyself wholly to them.* Gr. "Be in them"—a phrase similar to that of Horace—*totus in illis.* The meaning is plain. He was to devote his life wholly to this work. He was to have no other grand aim of living. His time, attention, talents, were to be absorbed in the proper duties of the work. He was not to make that subordinate and tributary to any other purpose, nor was he to allow any other object to interfere with the appropriate duties of that office. He was not to live for money, fame, or pleasure; not to devote his time to the pursuits of literature or science for their own sakes; not to seek the reputation of an elegant or profound scholar; not to aim to be distinguished merely as an accomplished gentleman, or as a skilful farmer, teacher, or author. Whatever was done in any of these departments, was to be wholly consistent with the direction, ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι—"*be in these things*"—be absorbed in the appropriate duties of the ministerial office. It may be remarked here that no man will ever make much of himself, or accomplish much in any profession, who does not make this the rule of his life. He who has one great purpose of life to which he patiently and steadily devotes himself, and to which he makes every thing else bend, will uniformly rise to high respectability, if not to eminence. He who does not do this can expect to accomplish nothing. ¶ *That thy profiting.* Gr. Thy going forward; that is, thy advancement, or progress. A minister of the gospel ought to make steady improvement in all that pertains to his office. No man ought to be satisfied with present attainments. ¶ *To all.* Marg. *in all things.* The margin is the more correct rendering, but either of them makes good sense. It *should be* apparent to all persons who attend on the stated preaching of a minister of the gospel, that he is making steady advances in knowledge, wisdom, and piety, and in *all* things that pertain to the proper performance of the duties of his office. If a man really makes progress, it will be seen and appreciated by others; if he does not, *that* will be as well understood by his hearers.

16. *Take heed unto thyself.* This may be understood as relating to everything of a personal nature that would qualify him for his work. It may be applied to personal piety; to health; to manners; to habits of living; to temper; to the ruling purposes; to the intercourse with others. In relation to personal religion, a minister should take heed (1.) that he has true piety; and (2.) that he is advancing in the knowledge and love of God. In relation to morals, he should be upright; to his intercourse with others, and his personal habits, he should be correct, consistent, and gentlemanly, so as to give needless offence to none. The person of a

minister should be neat and cleanly; his manners such as will show the fair influence of religion on his temper and deportment; his style of intercourse such as will be an example to the old and the young, and such as will not offend against the proper laws of courtesy and urbanity. There is no religion in a filthy person; in uncouth manners; in an inconvenient and strange form of apparel; in bad grammar, and in slovenly habits—and to be a real gentleman should be as much a matter of conscience with a minister of the gospel as to be a real Christian. Indeed, under the full and fair influence of the gospel, the one always implies the other. Religion refines the manners—it does not corrupt them; it makes one courteous, polite, and kind—it never produces boorish manners, or habits that give offence to the well-bred and the refined. ¶ *And unto the doctrine.* The kind of *teaching* which you give, or to your public instructions. The meaning is, that he should hold and teach only the truth. He was to "take heed" to the whole business of public instruction; that is, both to the matter and the manner. The great object was to get as much truth as possible before the minds of his hearers, and in such a way as to produce the deepest impression on them. ¶ *Continue in them.* That is, in *these things* which have been specified. He was ever to be found perseveringly engaged in the performance of these duties. ¶ *For so doing thou shalt both save thyself.* By holding of the truth, and by the faithful performance of your duties, you will secure the salvation of the soul. We are not to suppose that the apostle meant to teach that this would be the meritorious cause of his salvation, but that these faithful labours would be regarded as an evidence of piety, and would be accepted as such. It is equivalent to saying, that an unfaithful minister of the gospel cannot be saved; one who faithfully performs all the duties of that office with a right spirit, *will be.* ¶ *And them that hear thee.* That is, you will be the *means* of their salvation. It is not necessary to suppose that the apostle meant to teach that he would save *all* that heard him. The declaration is to be understood in a popular sense, and it is undoubtedly true that a faithful minister will be the means of saving many sinners. This assurance furnishes a ground of encouragement for a minister of the gospel. He may hope for success, and should look for success. He has the promise of God that if he is faithful he shall see the fruit of his labours, and this result of his work is a sufficient reward for all the toils and sacrifices and self-denials of the ministry. If a minister should be the means of saving but one soul from the horrors of eternal suffering and eternal sinning, it would be worth the most self-denying labours of the longest life. Yet what minister of the gospel is there, who is at all faithful to his trust, who is not made the honoured instrument of the salvation of many more than one? Few are the devoted ministers of Christ who are not permitted to see evidence even here, that their labour has not been in vain. Let not, then, the faithful preacher be discouraged. A single soul rescued from death will be a gem in his eternal crown brighter by far than ever sparkled on the brow of royalty.

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter embraces the following subjects:—

(1.) The proper method of admonition when others err—to wit, an aged man should be *entreated* as a father, younger men as brethren, the aged women as mothers, and the younger with the pure feelings which one has for a sister; ver. 1, 2.

(2.) Instructions respecting the proper treatment of widows; ver. 3—16.

(*a*) Those who were true widows were to be regarded with honour and respect.

(*b*) Who sustained this character; ver. 4—7. Those who had evinced piety at home in taking charge of those who were dependent on them, and who were steady in their devotions.

CHAPTER V.

REBUKE not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father;

No one was to be received into this number who was not of the age of sixty, who had been married to more than one man, and who had not given evidence in all the duties of domestic fidelity and charity, that she was imbued with the spirit of religion; ver. 9, 10.

(*c*) Those who were young were not to be admitted into this class; ver. 11—15. The reasons given are, that they would marry again, or that they would be idle, and would be intermeddlers in the affairs of others. It was better, therefore, that they should marry, and have charge of a family of their own; ver. 14, 15.

(*d*) The duty of the individual members of the church to sustain helpless and dependent widows, if they had such among their relations; ver. 16. In these verses (3—16) it is evident that the apostle had his eye on a *class* of widows that sustained some such relation to other females as the elders did to the whole church. They were aged women to whom was intrusted the superintendence of the females of the church—probably because from the customs then prevalent, men had much less liberty of access to the other sex, and much less freedom of intercourse was allowable, than now.

(3.) The duty of supporting and honouring those who ruled in the church; ver. 17, 18.

(4.) The suitable guarding of the rights of the elders in the church. No accusation was to be received, unless it was sustained by two or three witnesses; ver. 19.

(5.) No one who was guilty was to be spared. All who sinned were to be publicly rebuked; ver. 20.

(6.) A solemn charge is given to Timothy to keep these commandments; ver. 21.

and the younger men as brethren;

2 The elder women as mothers;

(7.) The statement of his duty not to ordain any person rashly or hastily to the sacred office; ver. 22.

(8.) To guard his health; ver. 23.

(9.) A declaration respecting sin—that sometimes it is open beforehand, and sometimes it is concealed till it is revealed at the judgment, closes the chapter; ver. 24, 25.

The design of this closing statement seems to be, to show Timothy that he should not judge men by appearances, but that he should evince great caution in forming his estimate of their character.

1. *Rebuke not an elder.* The word *elder* here is not used in the sense in which it often is, to denote an officer of the church, *a presbyter*, but in its proper and usual sense, to denote *an aged man.* This is evident, because the apostle immediately mentions in contradistinction from the *elder*, "the younger men," where it cannot be supposed that he refers to them as officers. The command to treat the "elder" as a "father," also shows the same thing. By the direction not to *rebuke*, it is not to be supposed that the minister of the gospel is not to admonish the aged, or that he is not to show them their sins when they go astray, but that he is to do this as he would to a father. He is not to assume a harsh, dictatorial, and denunciatory manner. The precepts of religion always respect the proprieties of life, and never allow us to transgress them, even when the object is to reclaim a soul from error, and to save one who is wandering. Besides, when this *is* the aim, it will always be most certainly accomplished by observing the respect due to others on account of office, relation, rank, or age. ¶ *But entreat* him *as a father.* As you would a father. That is, do not harshly denounce him. Endeavour to *persuade* him to lead a more holy life. One of the things for which the ancients were remarkable above most of the moderns, and for which the Orientals

the younger as sisters, with all purity.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.[a]

a ver.5,16.

are still distinguished, was respect for age. Few things are enjoined with more explicitness and emphasis in the Bible than this; Lev. xix. 32; Job xxix; Prov. xx. 20; xxx. 17; comp. Dan. vii. 9, 10; Rev. i. 14, 15. The apostle would have Timothy, and, for the same reason, every other minister of the gospel, a model of this virtue. ¶ And *the younger men as brethren.* That is, treat them as you would your own brothers. Do not consider them as aliens, strangers, or enemies, but entertain towards them, even when they go astray, the kindly feelings of a brother. This refers more particularly to his private intercourse with them, and to his personal efforts to reclaim them when they had fallen into sin. When these efforts were ineffectual, and they sinned openly, he was to "rebuke them before all" (ver. 20), that others might be deterred from following their example.

2. *The elder women as mothers.* Showing still the same respect for age, and for the proprieties of life. No son who had proper feelings would *rebuke* his own mother with severity. Let the minister of religion evince the same feelings if he is called to address a "mother in Israel" who has erred. ¶ *The younger as sisters.* With the feelings which you have towards a sister. The tender love which one has for a beloved sister would always keep him from using harsh and severe language. *The same* mildness, gentleness, and affection should be used towards a sister in the church. ¶ *With all purity.* Nothing could be more characteristic of Paul's manner than this injunction; nothing could show a deeper acquaintance with human nature. He knew the danger which would beset a youthful minister of the gospel when it was his duty to admonish and entreat a youthful female; he knew, too, the scandal to which he might be exposed if, in the performance of the necessary duties of his office, there should be the slightest departure from purity and propriety. He was therefore to guard his heart with more than common vigilance in such circumstances, and was to indulge in no word, or look, or action, which could by any possibility be construed as manifesting an improper state of feeling. On nothing else do the fair character and usefulness of a youthful minister more depend, than on the observance of this precept. Nowhere else does he more need the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the exercise of prudence, and the manifestation of incorruptible integrity, than in the performance of this duty. A youthful minister who fails here, can never recover the perfect purity of an unsullied reputation, and never in subsequent life be wholly free from suspicion; comp. Notes, Matt. v. 28.

3. *Honour widows.* The particular attention and respect which are enjoined here, seem to refer to the *class* of widows who were supported by the church, and who were intrusted with the performance of certain duties towards the other female members, see ver. 9. It is to be remembered that the intercourse of the sexes was much more circumscribed in Oriental countries than it is among us; that access to the female members of the church would be much less free than it is now, and that consequently there might have been a special propriety in intrusting the duty of watching over the younger among them to the more aged. This duty would be naturally intrusted to those who had not the care of families. It would also be natural to commit it, if they were qualified, to those who had not the means of support, and who, while they were maintained by the church, might be rendering a valuable service to it. It would seem, therefore, that there was a *class* of this description, who were intrusted with these duties, and in regard to whose qualifications it was proper that Timothy should be instructed. The change of customs

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show [1] piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

1 or, *kindness.*

in society has made this class less necessary, and probably the arrangement was never designed to be permanent, but still it may be a question whether such an arrangement would not now be wise and useful in the church. On this subject, see Notes on Rom. xvi. 1. ¶ *That are widows indeed.* Who are *truly* widows. We associate with the word *widow*, commonly, not only the idea of the loss of a husband, but many other things that are the usual accompaniments of widowhood—a poor and dependent condition; care and solicitude; sadness and sorrow. This idea is implied in the use of the word employed here—χήρα—which means properly one who is *bereaved*, (from the adjective χήρος, *bereaved*), and which, as Calvin says, conveys the idea of one in distressed circumstances. What Paul regarded as constituting true widowhood, he specifies in verses 4, 5, 9, 10. He connects with it the idea that she had no persons dependent on her; that she was desolate, and evinced true trust in God; that she was so aged that she would not marry again; and that by her life she had given evidence of possessing a heart of true benevolence; ver. 10.

4. *But if any widow have children.* Who would be dependent on her care, and who might themselves contribute to her support. ¶ *Or nephews.* The word *nephew* now commonly means the son of a brother or sister. Formerly the English word also meant grandchildren, or descendants of any description. *Webster.* The Greek word here—ἔκγονα—has the latter meaning. It denotes those *sprung from* or *born of;* and then descendants of any kind—sons, daughters, grandchildren. The Greek word would not, in fact, properly include *nephews* and *nieces.* It embraces only those in a direct line. ¶ *Let them learn first to show piety at home.* Marg., "or *kindness.*" That is, let the *children* and *grandchildren* learn to do this. Let them have an opportunity of performing their duty toward their aged parent or grandparent. Do not receive such a widow among the poor and dependent females of the church, to be maintained at public expense, but let her children support her. Thus they will have an opportunity of evincing Christian kindness, and of requiting her for her care. This the apostle calls "*showing piety*"—εὐσεβεῖν—that is, *filial piety;* piety towards a parent by providing for the wants of that parent in advanced age. The word is commonly used to denote piety towards God, but it is also used to denote proper reverence and respect for a parent. *Robinson.* ¶ *And to requite their parents.* To repay them, as far as possible, for all *their* kindness. This debt can *never* be wholly repaid, but still a child should feel it a matter of sacred obligation to do as much towards it as possible. ¶ *For that is good and acceptable before God.* It is a duty everywhere enjoined; comp. Notes on Matt. xv. 5—7; Eph. vi. 1, 2.

5. *A widow indeed and desolate.* The word rendered *desolate* means *solitary, alone.* It does not *necessarily* imply the idea of *discomfort* which we attach to the word *desolate.* The sense is, that she had no children or other descendants; none on whom she could depend for support. ¶ *Trusteth in God.* She has no one else to look to but God. She has no earthly reliance, and, destitute of husband, children, and property, she feels her dependence, and steadily looks to God for consolation and support. ¶ *And continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.* Continually; comp. Notes on chap. ii. 1; see also the description of Anna in Luke ii. 36, 37. The apostle regards this as one of the characteristics of those who were

6 But she that liveth [1] in pleasure is dead [a] while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially [b] for those of his own [2] house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

1 or, *deliciately.* a Re.3.1.
b Is.58.7. 2 or, *kindred.*

"widows indeed," whom he would have received into the *class* to be maintained by the church, and to whom the charge of younger members of the church might be intrusted.

6. *But she that liveth in pleasure.* Marg., *delicately.* The Greek word (σπαταλάω) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in James v. 5, "*Ye have lived in pleasure* on the earth." It properly means to live in luxury, voluptuously; to indulge freely in eating and drinking; to yield to the indulgence of the appetites. It does not indicate grossly criminal pleasures; but the kind of pleasure connected with luxurious living, and with pampering the appetites. It is probable that in the time of the apostle, there were professedly Christian widows who lived in this manner—as there are such professing Christians of all kinds in every age of the world. ¶ *Is dead while she liveth.* To all the proper purposes of life she is as if she were dead. There is great emphasis in this expression, and nothing could convey more forcibly the idea that true happiness is not to be found in the pleasure of sense. There is nothing in them that answers the purposes of life. They are not the objects for which life was given, and as to the great and proper designs of existence, such persons might as well be dead.

7. *And these things give in charge.* Announce, or declare these things, to wit, particularly respecting the duty of children to their widowed mothers, and the proper duty of those who are widows.

8. *But if any provide not for his own.* The apostle was speaking (ver. 4) particularly of the duty of children towards a widowed mother. In enforcing that duty, he gives the subject, as he often does in similar cases, a *general* direction, and says that *all* ought to provide for those who were dependent on them, and that if they did not do this, they had a less impressive sense of the obligations of duty than even the heathen had. On the duty here referred to, comp. Notes, Rom. xii. 17; 2 Cor. viii. 21. The meaning is, that the person referred to is to *think beforehand* (προνοεῖ) of the probable wants of his own family, and make arrangements to meet them. God thus *provides* for our wants; that is, he sees *beforehand* what we shall need, and makes arrangements for those wants by long preparation. The food that we eat, and the raiment that we wear, he foresaw that we should need, and the arrangement for the supply was made years since, and to meet these wants he has been carrying forward the plans of his providence in the seasons; in the growth of animals; in the formation of fruit; in the bountiful harvest. So, according to *our* measure, *we* are to anticipate what will be the probable wants of our families, and to make arrangements to meet them. The words "*his own,*" refer to those who are naturally dependent on him, whether living in his own immediate family or not. There may be many distant relatives naturally dependent on our aid, besides those who live in our own house. ¶ *And specially for those of his own house.* Marg., *kindred.* The word *house*, or *household*, better expresses the sense than the word *kindred.* The meaning is, those who live in his own family. They would naturally have higher claims on him than those who did not. They would commonly be his nearer relatives, and the fact, from whatever cause, that they constituted his own family, would lay the foundation for a strong claim upon him. He who neglected his own immediate family would be more guilty than he who neglected a more remote relative. ¶ *He hath denied the faith.* By

9 Let not a widow be [1] taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

[1] or, *chosen.*

his *conduct*, perhaps, not openly. He may be still a *professor* of religion and do this; but he will show that he is imbued with none of the spirit of religion, and is a stranger to its real nature. The meaning is, that he would, by such an act, have practically renounced Christianity, since it enjoins this duty on all. We may hence learn that it is possible to deny the faith by *conduct* as well as by words; and that a *neglect* of doing our duty is as real a denial of Christianity as it would be openly to renounce it. Peter denied his Lord in one way, and thousands do the same thing in another. He did it in *words;* they by neglecting their duty to their families, or their duty in their closets, or their duty in attempting to send salvation to their fellow-men, or by an openly irreligious life. *A neglect of any duty is so far a denial of the faith.* ¶ *And is worse than an infidel.* The word here does not mean an *infidel*, technically so called, or one who openly professes to disbelieve Christianity, but any one who does *not believe;* that is, any one who is not a sincere Christian. The word, therefore, would include the heathen, and it is to them, doubtless, that the apostle particularly refers. *They* acknowledged the obligation to provide for their relatives. This was one of the great laws of nature written on their hearts, and a law which they felt bound to obey. Few things were inculcated more constantly by heathen moralists than this duty. Galgacus, in Tacitus, says, "Nature dictates that to every one, his own children and relatives should be most dear." Cicero says, "Every man should take care of his own family"—suos quisque debet tueri; see Rosenmüller, *in loc.*, and also numerous examples of the same kind quoted from Apuleius, Cicero, Plutarch, Homer, Terence, Virgil, and Servius, in *Pricœus, in loc.* The doctrine here is, (1.) that a Christian ought not to be inferior to an unbeliever in respect to any virtue; (2.) that in all that constitutes true virtue he ought to surpass him; (3.) that the duties which are taught by nature ought to be regarded as the more sacred and obligatory from the fact that God has given us a better religion; and (4.) that a Christian ought never to give occasion to an enemy of the gospel to point to a man of the world and say, "there is one who surpasses you in *any* virtue."

9. *Let not a widow be taken into the number.* Marg., *chosen.* The margin expresses the sense of the Greek more accurately, but the meaning is not materially different. Paul does not here specify into *what* "number" the widow is to be "taken," or for what purpose she is to be "chosen," but he speaks of this as a thing that was well understood. There can be no doubt, however, what he means. In the Acts of the Apostles (chap. vi. 1) we have this account: "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, *because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.*" "It appears that from the first formation of the Christian church, provision was made out of the public funds of the society for the indigent *widows* who belonged to it;" see Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, on 1 Tim. No. 11. To this, as to a well-known practice, Paul here evidently refers. The *manner* in which he refers to it is such as to show that the custom had an existence. All that was necessary in the case, was, not to speak of it as if it were a *new* arrangement, but to mention those who ought to be regarded as proper subjects of the charity. It would seem, also, that it was understood that such widows, according to their ability, should exercise a proper watch over the younger females of the church. In this way, while they were supported by the church, they might render themselves useful. ¶ *Under threescore years old.* For such reasons as those mentioned

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged [a] strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

a Ac.16.15.

in ver. 11—14. ¶ *Having been the wife of one man.* There has been much diversity of opinion whether this means that she had never had but one husband, or whether she had been the wife of but one man at a time; that is, whether she had cast off one and married another; see *Whitby, in loc.* The same difficulty has been felt in regard to this as on the passage in chap. iii. 2; see Notes on that verse. Doddridge, Clarke, and others, suppose that it means, "who had lived in conjugal fidelity to her husband." The reason assigned for this opinion by Doddridge, is, that the apostle did not mean to condemn second marriages, since he expressly (ver. 14) commends it in the younger widows. The correct interpretation probably is, to refer it to one who had been married *but once*, and who, after her husband had died, had remained a widow. The reasons for this opinion briefly are—(1.) That this is the interpretation most naturally suggested by the phrase; (2.) that it agrees better with the description of the one that was to be enrolled among the "number"—those who were "*widows indeed*"—as we should more naturally apply this term to one who had remained unmarried after the death of her husband, than to one who had been married again; (3.) that, while it was not unlawful or improper in itself for a widow to marry a second time, there was a degree of respect and honour attached to one who did not do it, which would not be felt for one who did; comp. Luke ii. 36, 37, "She was a widow of great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; *and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years.*" The same is true now. There is a higher degree of respect felt for *such* a widow than there is for one who has been married again, though she may be again a widow. (4.) Among the heathens, it was regarded as especially honourable to have been married to but one man, and such widows wore the *Pudicitiæ Coronam*, or crown of chastity; Val. Max. L. i. c. ii.; comp. Livy, L. x. c. 23; see Whitby. (5.) As these persons were not only to be maintained by the church, but appear also to have been intrusted with an office of guardianship over the younger females, it was of importance that they should have such a character that no occasion of offence should be given, even among the heathen; and, in order to that, Paul gave direction that only those should be thus enrolled who were in all respects *widows*, and who would be regarded, on account of their age and their whole deportment, as "widows indeed." I cannot doubt, therefore, that he meant to exclude those from the number here referred to who had been married the second time.

10. *Well reported of for good works.* Of good character or reputation; see Notes on chap. iii. 7. ¶ *If she have brought up children.* Either her own or others. The idea is, if she has done this in a proper manner. ¶ *If she have lodged strangers.* If she has been characterized by hospitality—a virtue greatly commended in the Scriptures; comp. Notes on chap. iii. 2. ¶ *If she have washed the saints' feet.* It is not certain whether this is to be understood literally, or whether it merely denotes that she had performed offices of a humble and self-denying kind,—such as would be shown by washing the feet of others. It was one of the rites of hospitality in the East to wash the feet of the guest (Gen. xviii. 4), and Paul *might* have spoken of this as having been literally performed. There is not the slightest evidence that he refers to it as a *religious rite*, or *ordinance*, any more than he does to the act of bringing up children as a religious rite; comp. Notes on John xiii. 1—10. ¶ *If she have relieved the afflicted.* If it has been her character that she was ready to furnish relief to those who

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

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were in distress. ¶ *If she have diligently followed every good work.* This is one of the characteristics of true piety. A sincere Christian will, like God, be the friend of all that is good, and will be ready to promote every good object according to his ability. He will not merely be the friend of *one* good cause, to the neglect of others, but he will endeavour to promote every good object, and though from peculiar circumstances, and peculiar dealings of Providence, he may have been *particularly* interested in some one object of charity, yet every good object will find a response in his heart, and he will be ready to promote it by his influence, his property, and his prayers.

11. *But the younger widows refuse.* That is, in respect to the matter under discussion. Do not admit them into the class of widows referred to. It cannot mean that he was to reject them as members of the church, or not to treat them with respect and kindness. ¶ *For when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ.* There is probably a thought conveyed by these words to most minds which is by no means in the original, and which does injustice both to the apostle and to the "younger widows" referred to. In the Greek there is no idea of *wantonness* in the sense of lasciviousness or lewdness; nor was this, though now a common idea attached to the word, by any means essential to it when our translation was made. The word *wanton* then meant *wandering* or *roving in gayety or sport; moving* or *flying loosely; playing in the wind;* then, *wandering from moral rectitude, licentious, dissolute, libidinous.*—Webster. The Greek word here used, καταστρηνιάζω, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The word στρηνιάω—*streniao*,—however, is used twice, and is in both cases translated *lived deliciously;* Rev. xviii. 7, 9. The word is derived from στρῆνος—*strenos*—(whence *strenuous*), properly meaning *rudeness, insolence, pride,* and hence, *revel, riot, luxury;* or from—στρηνής—*strenes*, the adjective,—*strong, stiff, hard, rough.* The verb then means "*to live strenuously, rudely,*" as in English, "*to live hard;*" also, to live wild, or without restraint; to run riot, to live luxuriously. The idea of *strength* is the essential one, and then of strength that is not subordinate to law; that is wild and riotous; see Passow and Robinson, *Lex.* The sense here is, that they would not be subordinate to the restraints implied in that situation; they would become impatient, and would marry again. The idea is not that of wantonness or lewdness, but it is that of a mind not subdued by age and by trials, and that would be impatient under the necessary restraints of the condition which was contemplated. They could not be depended on with certainty, but they might be expected again to enter into the married relation. ¶ *They will marry.* It is clear, from this, that the apostle did not contemplate any *vows* which would prevent their marrying again; nor does he say that it would be absolutely wrong for them to marry, even if they were admitted into that rank; or as if there were any vows to restrain them from doing it. This passage, therefore, can never be adduced in favour of that practice of taking the veil in nunneries, and of a vow of perpetual seclusion from the world.

12. *Having damnation.* Or, rather, having *condemnation;* or incurring guilt. This does not mean of necessity that they would lose their souls; see the phrase explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. xi. 29. The meaning is, that they would contract guilt, if they had been admitted among this class of persons, and then married again. The apostle does not say that that would be wrong in itself (comp. Notes on ver. 14), or that they would be absolutely prohibited from it, but

13 And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and [a] not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.

[a] 2 Th. 3. 11.

that injury would be done if they were admitted among those who were "widows indeed"—who were supported by the church, and who were intrusted with a certain degree of care over the more youthful females—and then should leave that situation. It might give occasion for scandal; it might break in upon the arrangements; it would show that there was a relaxing of the faith, and of the deadness to the world, which they were supposed to have; and it was better that they should be married (ver. 14), without having been thus admitted. ¶ *Because they have cast off their first faith.* This does not mean that they would lose all their religion, or wholly fall away, but that this would show that they had not the strong faith, the deadness to the world, the simple dependence on God (ver. 5), and the desire which they had to be weaned from worldly cares and influences, which they once had. When they became widows, all their earthly hopes seemed to be blasted. They were then dead to the world, and felt their sole dependence on God. But if, under the influence of these strong emotions, they were admitted to the "class of widows" in the church, there was no certainty that they would continue in this state of mind. Time would do much to modify their grief. There would be a reviving love of the world, and under the influence of this they would be disposed to enter again into the marriage relation, and thus show that they had not the strong and simple *faith* which they had when the blow which made them widows fell heavily upon them.

13. *And withal.* In addition to the prospect that they may marry again, there are other disadvantages which might follow from such an arrangement, and other evils to be feared, which it is desirable to avoid. ¶ *They learn* to be *idle.* That is, if supported by the church, and if without the settled principles which might be expected in those more aged and experienced, it may be feared that they will give themselves up to an indolent life. There would be a security in the age and established habits of those more advanced in life, which there could *not* be in their case. The apostle does not mean that widows are naturally *disposed* to be idle, but that in the situation referred to there would be danger of it. ¶ *Wandering about from house to house.* A natural consequence of supposing that they had nothing to do, and a practice not only profitless, but always attended with mischief. ¶ *Tattlers also.* Literally, *overflowing;* then overflowing with talk; praters, triflers. They would learn all the news; become acquainted with the secrets of families, and of course indulge in much idle and improper conversation. Our word *gossippers* would accurately express the meaning here. The *noun* does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The *verb* occurs in John iii. 10; rendered, *prating against.* ¶ *And busy-bodies;* see Notes on 2 Thess. iii. 11. The word means, probably, *working all round, overdoing,* and then *an intermeddler.* Persons who have nothing to do of their own, commonly find employment by interesting themselves in the affairs of their neighbours. No one likes to be wholly idle, and if any one is not found doing what he *ought* to do, he will commonly be found engaged in doing what he ought *not.* ¶ *Speaking things which they ought not.* Revealing the concerns of their neighbours; disclosing secrets; magnifying trifles, so as to exalt themselves into importance, as if they were intrusted with the secrets of others; inventing stories and tales of gossip, that they may magnify and maintain their own consequence in the community. No persons are commonly more dangerous to the peace of a neighbourhood than those who have nothing to do.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary [1] to speak reproachfully.

[1] *for their railing.*

14. *I will therefore.* I give it as my opinion; or this is my counsel; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. vii. 6, 10, 40. ¶ *That the younger women marry.* The word *women* is not expressed or necessarily implied in the original—νεωτέρας—and it is evident that the apostle here had particular reference to *widows*, and that the injunction should be understood as relating to them. We are not to suppose that he gives this as an absolute and universal command, for it might not always be at the option of the widow to marry again, and it cannot be doubted that there may be cases where it would be unadvisable. But he speaks of this as a general rule. It is better for such persons to have domestic concerns that require their attention, than it is to be exposed to the evils of an idle life.—We may learn from this (1.) that second marriages are not improper or unlawful, but that in some circumstances they may be preferable to widowhood; (2.) that marriage itself is in a high degree honourable. How different are the views of the inspired apostle Paul about marriage from those of the Papists! ¶ *Bear children, guide the house.* These words signify, says Bloomfield, to "exercise and occupy themselves in the duties of a wife." It is better to be employed in the duties growing out of the cares of a family, than to lead a life of celibacy. ¶ *Give none occasion to the adversary.* The enemy of religion—the heathen or the infidel. ¶ *To speak reproachfully.* Marg. *for their railing.* That is, on account of a life which would do no honour to religion. In the performance of domestic duties, when fully employed, they would avoid the evils specified in ver. 13. Every one who professes religion should so live as to give no occasion to an infidel or a man of the world to speak reproachfully of the cause of the Redeemer.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may re-

15. *For some are already turned aside after Satan.* That is, some young widows. The meaning is, that in the respects above mentioned (ver. 13), they had followed the great Tempter, rather than the Lord Jesus. This is stated as a reason why they should not be admitted into the number of the widows who were to be maintained at the expense of the church, and to whom the care of the younger female members was to be committed.

16. *If any man or woman that believeth.* Christians are often simply called *believers*, because faith is the leading and most important act of their religion. ¶ *Have widows.* Widowed mothers, or grandmothers, or any other widows whose support would naturally devolve on them. ¶ *Let them relieve them.* That is, let them support them. This was an obvious rule of duty; see Notes on ver. 8. Nothing can be more unreasonable than to leave those who are properly dependent on us to be supported by others, when we are able to maintain them ourselves. ¶ *That it may relieve, &c.* That it may have the means of supporting those who are truly dependent. To require or expect the Church, therefore, to support those whom *we* ought ourselves to support, is, in fact, to rob the poor and friendless.—In regard to these directions respecting widows (ver. 3—16), we may remark in general, as the result of the exposition which has been given, (1.) they were to be *poor* widows, who had not the means of support themselves. (2.) They were, probably, to be not merely *supported*, but to be usefully employed in the service of the church, particularly in overseeing the conduct, and imparting instruction to the female members. (3.) They were to be of such age and character that there would be security of stability and correctness

lieve them that are widows indeed.

17 Let [a] the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

[a] 1 Th. 5. 12, 13.

of deportment; such that they would not be tempted to leave the situation, or to act so as to give occasion of reproach. (4.) It is by no means certain that this was intended to be a permanent arrangement. It grew probably out of the peculiar customs respecting intercourse between the sexes in the Oriental world, and would undoubtedly be proper now in similar circumstances. But it by no means follows that this arrangement is binding on the churches where the customs of society are different. Yet (5.) the passage inculcates the general principle that the poor widows of the church are to be assisted when they have no relatives on whom they can naturally depend. No class of people are more helpless than aged widows, and for that class God has always shown a special concern, and his people should do so likewise.

17. *Let the elders that rule well.* Gr., πρεσβύτεροι, *Presbyters.* The apostle had given full instructions respecting bishops (chap. iii. 1—7); deacons (chap. iii. 8—13); widows (chap. v. 3—16); and he here proceeds to prescribe the duty of the church towards those who sustain the office of elder. The word used—*elder* or *presbyter*—properly refers to *age*, and is then used to denote the officers of the church, probably because the *aged* were at first intrusted with the administration of the affairs of the church. The word was in familiar use among the Jews to denote the body of men that presided in the synagogue; see Notes on Matt. xv. 2; Acts xi. 30; xv. 2. ¶ *That rule well.* Presiding well, or well managing the spiritual interests of the church. The word rendered *rule*—προεστῶτες—is from a verb meaning to be over; to preside over; to have the care of. The word is used with reference to bishops, Titus i. 5, 7; to an apostle, 1 Pet. v. 1; and is such a word as would apply to any officers to whom the management and government of the church was intrusted. On the general subject of the rulers in the church; see Notes on 1 Cor. xii. 28. It is probable that not precisely the same organization was pursued in every place where a church was established; and where there was a Jewish synagogue, the Christian church would be formed substantially after that model, and in such a church there would be a bench of presiding elders; see, on this subject, Whately's "Kingdom of Christ delineated," pp. 84—86. The language here seems to have been taken from such an organization. On the Jewish synagogue, see Notes on Matt. iv. 23. ¶ *Be counted worthy of double honour.* Of double respect; that is, of a high degree of respect; of a degree of respect becoming their age and office; comp. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. From the quotation which is made in ver. 18, in relation to this subject, it would seem probable that the apostle had some reference also to their support, or to what was necessary for their maintenance. There is no improbability in supposing that *all* the officers of the church, of whatever grade or rank, may have had some compensation, corresponding to the amount of time which their office required them to devote to the service of the church. Nothing would be more reasonable than that, if their duties in the church interfered with their regular employments in their secular calling, their brethren should contribute to their support; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. ¶ *Especially they who labour in word and doctrine.* In preaching and instructing the people. From this it is clear that, while there were "elders" who laboured "in the word and doctrine," that is, in preaching, there were also those who did *not* labour "in the word and doctrine," but who were nevertheless appointed to rule in the church. Whether, however, they were regarded as a separate and distinct class of officers, does not ap-

18 For the scripture saith, [a] Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: And, [b] The labourer is worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but [1] before two [c] or three witnesses.

a De.25.4. b Lu.10.7. 1 or, *under*. c De.19.15.

pear from this passage. It may have been that there was a bench of elders to whom the general management of the church was confided, and that a part of them were engaged in preaching; a part may have performed the office of "teachers" (see Notes on Rom. xii. 7; 1 Cor. xii. 28), and a part may have been employed in managing other concerns of the church, and yet *all* were regarded as the προιστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι—or "*elders presiding over the church.*" It cannot, I think, be certainly concluded from this passage, that the ruling elders who did *not* teach or preach were regarded as a separate class or order of permanent officers in the church. There seems to have been a bench of elders selected on account of age, piety, prudence, and wisdom, to whom was intrusted the whole business of the instruction and government of the church, and they performed the various parts of the duty as they had ability. Those among them who "laboured in the word and doctrine," and who gave up all their time to the business of their office, would be worthy of special respect, and of a higher compensation.

18. *For the Scripture saith.* This is adduced as a reason why a church should show all due respect and care for its ministers. The reason is, that as God took care to make provision for the labouring ox, much more should due attention be paid to those who labour for the welfare of the church. ¶ *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox;* see this passage explained, and its bearing on such an argument shown, in the Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 8—10. ¶ *And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.* This expression is found substantially in Matt. x. 10, and Luke x. 7. It does not occur in so many words in the Old Testament, and yet the apostle adduces it evidently as a quotation from the Scriptures, and as authority in the case. It would seem probable, therefore, that he had seen the Gospel by Matthew or by Luke, and that he quoted this as a part of Scripture, and regarded the Book from which he made the quotation as of the same authority as the Old Testament. If so, then this may be regarded as an attestation of the apostle to the inspiration of the "Gospel" in which it was found.

19. *Against an elder.* The word *elder* here seems to be used in the sense in which it is in the previous verse as relating to *office*, and not in the sense of an aged man, as in ver. 1. The connection demands this interpretation. ¶ *Receive not an accusation.* He was not to regard such a charge as well founded unless sustained by two or three witnesses. It is clear from this, that Paul supposed that Timothy would be called on to hear charges against others who were in the ministerial office, and to express his judgment on such cases. There is no reason, however, to suppose that he meant that he should hear them *alone*, or as a "bishop," for this direction does not make the supposition improper that others would be associated with him. It is just such counsel as would now be given to a Presbyterian or Congregational minister, or such as would be given to an associate justice in a court, on the supposition that a brother judge was at any time to be tried by him and his colleagues. ¶ *But before two or three witnesses.* Marg. *under.* The meaning is, unless supported by the testimony of two or three persons. He was not to regard an accusation against a presbyter as proved, if there was but one witness in the case, however positive he might be in his testimony. The *reasons* for this direction were probably such as these: (1.) This was the requirement of the Jewish law in all cases, which had thus settled a *principle* which the apostle seems to have regarded as important, if not obligatory, under

20 Them that sin rebuke [a] before all, that [b] others also may fear.

[a] Le.19.17. [b] De.13.11.

21 I charge [c] *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and

[c] 2 Ti.4.1

the Christian dispensation; see Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15; comp. Notes on John viii. 17; 2 Cor. xiii. 1. (2.) There would be much greater reason to apprehend that one person might be deceived in the matter on which he bore witness, or might do it from malignant motives, or might be bribed to give false testimony, than that two or three would give such testimony; and the arrangement, therefore, furnished important security for the innocent. (3.) There might be reason to apprehend that evil-minded persons might be disposed to bring charges against the ministers of the gospel or other officers of the church, and it was important, therefore, that their rights should be guarded with anxious care. The ministers of religion often give offence to wicked men by their rebukes of sin (comp. Mark vi. 17—20); wicked men would rejoice to see an accusation against them sustained; the cause of religion would be liable to suffer much when its ministers were condemned as guilty of gross offences, and it is right, therefore, that the evidence in the case should be as free as possible from all suspicion that it is caused by malignity, by hatred of religion, or by conspiracy, or by a desire to see religion disgraced. (4.) The character of a minister of the gospel is of value, not only to himself and family, as is the case with that of other men, but is of special value to the church, and to the cause of religion. It is the property of the church. The interests of religion depend much on it, and it should not be wantonly assailed; and every precaution should be adopted that Christianity should not be deprived of the advantage which may be derived in its favour from the piety, experience, and talents of its public defenders. At the same time, however, the wicked, though in the ministry, should not be screened from the punishment which they deserve. The apostle gave no injunction to attempt to cover up their faults, or to save them from a fair trial. He only demanded such security as the nature of the case required, that the trial *should be fair*. If a minister of the gospel has been proved to be guilty of crime, the honour of religion, as well as simple justice, requires that he shall be punished as he deserves. He sins against great light; he prostitutes a holy office, and makes use of the very reputation which his office gives him, that he may betray the confidence of others; and such a man *should not escape*. There should be no "benefit of clergy," and neither a black coat, nor bands, nor the lawn should save a villain.

20. *Them that sin.* That have been proved to have committed sin—referring probably to the elders mentioned in the previous verse, but giving the direction so general a form that it might be applicable to others. ¶ *Rebuke before all.* Before all the church or congregation. The word *rebuke* properly denotes to reprove or reprehend. It means here that there should be a public statement of the nature of the offence, and such a censure as the case demanded. It extends only to *spiritual* censures. There is no power given of inflicting any punishment by fine or imprisonment. The power of the church, in such cases, is only to express its strong and decided disapprobation of the wrong done, and, if the case demands it, of disowning the offending member or minister. This direction to "rebuke an offender before all," may be easily reconciled with the direction in ver. 1, "Rebuke not an elder." The latter refers to the private and pastoral intercourse with an elder, and to the method in which he should be treated in such intercourse—to wit, with the feelings due to a father; the direction here refers to the manner in which an offender should be treated who has been *proved* to be guilty, and where the case has become public. Then there is to be a public expression of disapprobation. ¶ *That*

the elect [a] angels, that thou observe these things without [1] preferring one [b] before another, doing nothing by partiality.

[a] Re.12.7-9. [1] or *prejudice.* [b] De.1.17.

others also may fear. That they may be kept from committing the same offence; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 14. The end of punishment is not the gratification of the private feelings of him who administers it, but the prevention of crime.

21. *I charge* thee *before God;* comp. Luke xvi. 28; Acts ii. 20. The word rendered *charge* means, properly, to call to witness; then to affirm with solemn attestations; and then to admonish solemnly, to urge upon earnestly. It is a word which implies that the subject is of great importance Paul gives *this* charge as in the presence of God, of the Redeemer, and of the elect angels, and wishes to secure that sense of its solemnity which must arise from the presence of such holy witnesses. ¶ *And the Lord Jesus Christ.* As in the presence of the Lord Jesus; with his eye resting upon you. ¶ *And the elect angels.* It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to speak as if we were in the presence of holy angels, and of the disembodied spirits of the good; comp. Notes on Heb. xii. 1. No one can *prove* that the angels, and that the departed spirits of holy men, are *not* witnesses of what we do. At all events, it is right to urge on others the performance of duty *as if* the eye of a departed father, mother, or sister were fixed upon us, and *as if* we were encompassed by all the holy beings of heaven. Sin, too, should be avoided *as if* every eye in the universe were upon us. How many things do we do which we would not; how many feelings do we cherish which we would at once banish from our minds, if we felt that the heavens above us were as transparent as glass, and that all the holy beings around the throne were fixing an intense gaze upon us! The word "elect" here seems to imply that there had been some influence used to keep them, and some purpose respecting them, which had not existed in regard to those who had fallen. Saints are called *elect* because they are chosen of God unto salvation (Notes on Eph. i. 4, 5), and it would appear that it is a great law extending through the universe, that both those who *remain* in a state of holiness, and those who are *made* holy, are the subjects of purpose and choice on the part of God. The *fact* only is stated; the *reasons* which led to the choice, alike in regard to angels and men, are unknown to us; comp. Notes on Matt. xi. 25. ¶ *That thou observe these things.* Probably referring to *all* the things which he had enjoined in the previous parts of the epistle. ¶ *Without preferring one before another.* Marg., *prejudice.* The meaning is, *without previous judgment*—χωρὶς προκρίματος—without any prejudice on account of rank, wealth, personal friendship, or predilection of any sort. Let there be entire impartiality in all cases. Justice was beautifully represented by the ancients as holding a pair of scales equally balanced. It is as important that there should be entire impartiality in the church as in civil transactions, and though it is not wrong for a minister of the gospel to have his personal friends, yet in the administration of the affairs of the church he should remember that all are brethren, and all, of whatever rank, colour, sex, or age, have equal rights. ¶ *Partiality.* Gr., *inclination,* or *proclivity*—that is, without being *inclined* to favour one party or person more than another. There should be no *purpose* to find one guilty and another innocent; no *inclination* of heart towards one which would lead us to resolve to find him innocent; and no *aversion* from another which would make us resolve to find him guilty.

22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man.* Some have understood this of laying on hands to heal the sick (*Koppe*); others of the laying on of hands to absolve penitents, but the obvious meaning is to refer it to ordination. It was usual to lay the hands on the

22 Lay hands [a] suddenly on no man, neither be partaker [b] of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine [c] for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

a Ac.13.3. *b* 2 John 11. *c* Pr.31.6.

heads of those who were ordained to a sacred office, or appointed to perform an important duty; Notes, chap. iv. 14; comp. Acts vi. 6; viii. 17. The idea here is, that Timothy should not be *hasty* in an act so important as that of introducing men to the ministry. He should take time to give them a fair trial of their piety; he should have satisfactory evidence of their qualifications. He should not at once introduce a man to the ministry because he gave evidence of piety, or because he burned with an ardent zeal, or because he thought himself qualified for the work. It is clear from this that the apostle regarded Timothy as having the right to *ordain* to the ministry; but not that he was to ordain alone, or *as a prelate.* The injunction would be entirely proper on the supposition that others were to be associated with him in the act of ordaining. It is just such as a Presbyterian father in the ministry would give in a charge to his son now; it is in fact just the charge which is now given *by* Presbyterians and Congregationalists to those who are set apart to the sacred office, in reference to ordaining others. ¶ *Neither be partakers of other men's sins.* This is evidently to be interpreted in connection with the injunction "to lay hands suddenly on no man." The meaning, in this connection, is, that Timothy was not to become a participant in the sins of another by introducing him to the sacred office. He was not to invest one with a holy office who was a wicked man or a heretic, for this would be to sanction his wickedness and error. If we ordain a man to the office of the ministry who is known to be living in sin, or to cherish dangerous error, we become the patrons of the sin and of the heresy. We lend to it the sanction of our approbation; and give to it whatever currency it may acquire from the reputation which *we* may have, or which it may acquire from the influence of the sacred office of the ministry. Hence the importance of caution in investing any one with the ministerial office. But while Paul meant, doubtless, that this should be applied particularly to ordination to the ministry, he has given it a *general* character. *In no way* are we to participate in the sins of other men. We are not to be engaged with them in doing wrong; we are not to patronize them in a wicked business; we are not to be known as their companions or friends; and we are not to partake of their unlawful gains. We are not to lend money, or a boat, or a horse, or a pistol, or a bowie-knife, for an unlawful business; we are not to furnish capital for the slave-trade, or for manufacturing intoxicating drinks, or for an enterprise that contemplates the violation of the Sabbath ¶ *Keep thyself pure.* Particularly, in regard to participation in the sins of others; generally, in all things—in heart, in word, in conduct.

23. *Drink no longer water.*—There has been much difficulty felt in regard to the *connection* which this advice has with what precedes and what follows. Many have considered the difficulty to be so great that they have supposed that this verse has been displaced, and that it should be introduced in some other connection. The true connection, and the reason for the introduction of the counsel here, seems to me to be this: Paul appears to have been suddenly impressed with the thought—a thought which is very likely to come over a man who is writing on the duties of the ministry—of the arduous nature of the ministerial office. He was giving counsels in regard to an office which required a great amount of labour, care, and anxiety. The labours enjoined were such as to demand all the time; the care and anxiety incident to such a charge would be very likely to prostrate the frame, and to injure the health. Then he remembered that Timothy was yet but a youth; he re-

called his feebleness of constitution and his frequent attacks of illness; he recollected the very abstemious habits which he had prescribed for himself, and, in this connection, he urges him to a careful regard for his health, and prescribes the use of a small quantity of wine, mingled with his water, as a suitable medicine in his case. Thus considered, this direction is as worthy to be given by an inspired teacher as it is to counsel a man to pay a proper regard to his health, and not needlessly to throw away his life; comp. Matt. x. 23. The phrase, "drink no longer water," is equivalent to, "drink not water *only*;" see numerous instances in Wetstein. The Greek word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. ¶ *But use a little wine.* Mingled with the water—the common method of drinking wine in the East; see Robinson's Bibliotheca Sacra, i. 512, 513. ¶ *For thy stomach's sake.* It was not for the pleasure to be derived from the use of wine, or because it would produce hilarity or excitement, but solely because it was regarded as necessary for the promotion of health; that is, as a medicine. ¶ *And thine often infirmities.* ἀσθενείας—Weaknesses or sicknesses. The word would include all infirmities of body, but seems to refer here to some attacks of sickness to which Timothy was liable, or to some feebleness of constitution; but beyond this we have no information in regard to the *nature* of his maladies. In view of this passage, and as a further explanation of it, we may make the following remarks: (1.) The use of wine, and of all intoxicating drinks, was solemnly forbidden to the priests under the Mosaic law, when engaged in the performance of their sacred duties; Lev. x. 9, 10. The same was the case among the Egyptian priests. *Clarke;* comp. Notes on chap. iii. 3. It is not improbable that the same thing would be regarded as proper among those who ministered in holy things under the Christian dispensation. The natural feeling would be, and not improperly, that a Christian minister should not be less holy than a Jewish priest, and especially when it is remembered that the *reason* of the Jewish law remained the same—"that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and clean and unclean." (2.) It is evident from this passage that *Timothy* usually drank water *only*, or that, in modern language, he was a "*tee-totaller.*" He was, evidently, not in the *habit* of drinking wine, or he could not have been exhorted to do it. (3.) He must have been a remarkably temperate youth to have required the authority of an apostle to induce him to drink even a *little* wine; see *Doddridge.* There are few young men so temperate as to require *such* an authority to induce them to do it. (4.) The exhortation extended only to a *very moderate* use of wine. It was not to drink it *freely;* it was not to drink it at the tables of the rich and the great, or in the social circle; it was not even to drink it by itself; it was to use "a *little,*" mingled with water—for this was the usual method; see Athæneus, Deipno. lib. ix. x. c. 7. (5.) It was not as a common drink, but the exhortation or command extends *only* to its use as a medicine. All the use which can be legitimately made of this injunction—whatever conclusion may be drawn from other precepts—is, that it is proper to use a small quantity of wine for medicinal purposes. (6.) There are many ministers of the gospel, now, alas! to whom under no circumstances could an apostle apply this exhortation—"Drink no longer water only." They would ask, with surprise, what he meant? whether he intended it in irony, and for banter—for they need no apostolic command to drink wine. Or if he should address to them the exhortation, "use a *little* wine," they could regard it only as a reproof for their usual habit of drinking much. To many, the exhortation would be appropriate, if they ought to use wine at all, only because they are in the habit of using so *much* that it would be proper to restrain them to a much smaller quantity. (7.) This whole passage is one of great value to the cause of temperance. Timothy was undoubtedly in the habit of abstaining wholly from the use of wine. Paul

24 Some men's sins are [a] open beforehand, going before to judgment: and some *men* they follow after.

25 Likewise also the good works *of some* are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

[a] Ga.5.19.

knew this, and he did not reprove him for it. He manifestly favoured the general habit, and only asked him to depart in some small degree from it, in order that he might restore and preserve his health. So far, and no farther, is it right to apply this language in regard to the use of wine; and the minister who should follow this injunction would be in no danger of disgracing his sacred profession by the debasing and demoralizing sin of intemperance.

24. *Some men's sins are open beforehand.* This declaration, though it assumes a general form, is to be taken evidently in connection with the general subject of introducing men to the ministry (ver. 22); and ver. 23 is to be regarded as a parenthesis. The apostle had given Timothy a charge (ver. 22) respecting the character of those whom he should ordain. He here says, in reference to that, that the character of some men was manifest. There was no disguise. It was evident to all what it was, and there could be no danger of mistake respecting it. Their conduct was apparent to all. About *such* men he ought not to hesitate a moment, and, no matter what their talents, or learning, or rank in the community, he ought to have no participation in introducing them to the ministry. ¶ *Going before to judgment.* Their character is well understood. There is no need of waiting for the day of judgment to know what they are. Their deeds so precede their own appearance at the judgment-bar, that the record and the verdict can be made up before they arrive there, and there will be scarcely need even of the formality of a trial. The meaning here is, that there could be no doubt about the character of such men, and Timothy should not be accessory to their being introduced into the office of the ministry. ¶ *And some* men *they follow after.* That is, their character is not fully understood here. They conceal their plans They practise deception. They appear different from what they really are. But the character of such men will be developed, and they will be judged according to their works. They cannot hope to escape with impunity. Though they have endeavoured to hide their evil deeds, yet they will follow after them to the judgment-bar, and will meet them there. The meaning, in this connection, seems to be, that there ought to be circumspection in judging of the qualifications of men for the office of the ministry. It ought not to be inferred from favourable appearances at once, or on slight acquaintance, that they are qualified for the office—for they may be of the number of those whose characters, now concealed or misunderstood, will be developed only on the final trial.

25. *Likewise also the good works* of some *are manifest beforehand.* The character of some men is clear, and accurately understood. There can be no doubt, from their works, that they are good men. We need not wait for the day of judgment to determine that, but may treat them here *as* good men, and introduce them to offices which only good men can fill. The idea here is, that their character may be so certain and undoubted that there need be no hesitation in setting them apart to the office of the ministry. ¶ *And they that are otherwise cannot be hid.* That is, they cannot be ultimately concealed or misunderstood. There are arrangements in the divine government for bringing out the character of every man so that it may be clearly understood. The expression here refers to good men. The idea is, that there are *some* good men whose character is known to all. Their deeds spread a glory around them, so that no one can mistake what they are. *They* correspond, in respect to the publicity of their character with those mentioned

in ver. 24, whose "*sins* are open beforehand;" for the good deeds of the one are as manifest as the sins of the other. But there are those who are "*otherwise*." They are modest, retiring, unobtrusive, unknown. They may live in obscurity; may have slender means for doing good; may be constitutionally so diffident that they never appear on the stage of public action. What they do is concealed from the world. *These* correspond in respect to publicity with those mentioned in ver. 24, "whose deeds follow after them." Yet, says the apostle, *these* cannot always be hid. There are arrangements for developing every man's character, and it will be ultimately known what he is. The connection here, seems to be this. As Timothy (ver. 24) was to be on his guard in introducing men into the ministry, against those whose character for evil was not developed, but who might be concealing their plans and practising secret sins, so he was to endeavour to search out the modest, the unobtrusive, and those who, though now unknown, were among the excellent of the earth, and bring them forward to a station of usefulness where their virtues might shine on the world.

Apart from the reference of this beautiful passage (ver. 24, 25) to the ministry, it contains truth important to all.

(1.) The character of many wicked men is now clearly known. No one has any doubt of it. Their deeds have gone before them, and are recorded in the books that will be open at the judgment. They might even *now* be judged without the formality of appearing there, and the universe would acquiesce in the sentence of condemnation.

(2.) The character of many wicked men is concealed. They hide their plans. They are practising secret iniquity. They do not mean that the world shall know what they are. More than half the real depravity of the world is thus concealed from human view, and in regard to more than half the race who are going up to the judgment there is an entire mistake as to their real character. If all the *secret* wickedness of the earth were disclosed, no one would have any doubt about the doctrine of human depravity.

(3.) There is a process steadily going forward for bringing out the real character of men, and showing what they are. This process consists, *first*, in the arrangements of Providence for developing their character *here*. Many a man, who was supposed to be virtuous, is shown, by some sudden trial, to have been all along a villain at heart. Many a minister of the gospel, a lawyer, a physician, an officer in a bank, a merchant, whose character was supposed to stand fair, has been suffered to fall into open sin, that he might develope the long-cherished secret depravity of his soul. *Secondly*, the process will be completed on the final trial. Then *nothing* will be concealed. Every man will been seen as he is. All they whose characters were understood to be wicked here, will be seen then also to be wicked, and many who were supposed on earth to have a good character, will be seen there to have been hollow-hearted and base hypocrites.

(4.) Every man in the last day will be judged according to his real character. No one, however successful he may have been here, can hope to practise a deception on his final Judge.

(5.) There is a fitness and propriety in the fact that there will be a final judgment. Indeed, there *must* be such a judgment, in order that God may be just. The characters of men are not fully developed here. The process is not completed. Many are taken away before their schemes of iniquity are accomplished, and before their real characters are understood. If they were to live long enough on the earth, their characters would be ultimately developed here, but the divine arrangement is, that man shall *not* live long here, and the development, therefore, must be in the future world.

(6.) The modest, the retiring, the humble, and those here unknown, will

CHAPTER VI.

LET as many servants [a] as are under the yoke count their

[a] Ep.6.5.

not be overlooked in the last great day. There is much *good*, as there is much *evil* in the world, that is now concealed. There are many plans of benevolence formed which they who formed them are not permitted to complete; many desires of benefiting others are cherished which there are no means of gratifying; many a deed of kindness is performed which is not blazoned abroad to the world; and many a wish is entertained for the progress of virtue, the freedom of the enslaved, the relief of the oppressed, and the salvation of the world, which can find expression only in prayer. We are not to suppose then that all that is concealed and unknown in the world is *evil*.

(7.) There will be amazing developments in the last great day; and as it will then be seen in the revelations of the secret deeds of evil that human nature is corrupt, so it will be seen that there was much more good in the world than was commonly supposed. As a large portion of the wickedness of the earth is concealed, so, from the necessity of the case, it is true that no small portion of the goodness on earth is hidden. *Wickedness* conceals itself from shame, from a desire better to effect its purposes, from the dread of punishment; *goodness*, from its modesty, its retiring nature, and from the want of an opportunity of acting out its desires; but whatever may have been the cause of the concealment, in all cases all will be made known on the final trial—to the shame and confusion of the one class; to the joy and triumph of the other.

CHAPTER VI.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter embraces the following subjects of counsel and exhortation:—

(1.) The kind of instruction which was to be given to servants; ver. 1—5. They were to treat their masters with all proper respect, ver. 1; if their masters were Christians, they

own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

were, on that account, to serve them with the more fidelity, ver. 2; and any opposite kind of teaching would tend only to stir up strife and produce dissatisfaction and contention, and could proceed only from a proud and self-confident heart.

(2.) The advantage of piety and of a contented mind; ver. 6—8. The *argument* for this is, that we brought nothing into the world, and can carry nothing out; that our essential wants here are food and raiment, and that, having enough to make us comfortable, we should be content.

(3.) The evils of a desire to be rich (ver. 9, 10)—evils seen in the temptations to which it leads; the passions which it fosters, and the danger to religion itself.

(4.) An exhortation to Timothy, as a minister of religion, to pursue higher and nobler objects; ver. 11—16. He was (*a*) to avoid these worldly things; he was (*b*) to pursue nobler objects. He was to follow after righteousness, and to fight the good fight of faith. To do this, he was to be encouraged by the assurance that the Great and only Potentate would, in due time, place the crown on his head.

(5.) The duty of those who were rich—for it is supposed that some Christians will be rich — either by inheritance, or by prosperous business; ver. 17—19. They are (*a*) not to be proud; (*b*) nor to trust in their riches so as to forget their dependence on God; (*c*) to do good with their property; and (*d*) to make their wealth the means of securing eternal life.

(6.) A solemn charge to Timothy to observe these things, and not to be turned from them by any of the arguments and objections of pretended science; ver. 20, 21.

1. *Let as many servants.* On the word here rendered *servants*—δοῦλοι—see Notes on Eph. vi. 5. The word is that which was commonly applied to a *slave*, but it is so extensive in its

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are [1] faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

1 or, *believing.*

signification as to be applicable to *any* species of servitude, whether voluntary or involuntary. If slavery existed in Ephesus at the time when this epistle was written, it would be applicable to slaves; if any other kind of servitude existed, the word would be equally applicable to that. There is nothing *in the word itself* which essentially limits it to *slavery;* examine Matt. xiii. 27; xx. 27; Mark x. 44; Luke ii. 29; John xv. 15; Acts ii. 18; iv. 29; xvi. 17; Rom. i. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 5; Jude 1; Rev. i. 1; ii. 20; vii. 3. The addition of the phrase "under the yoke," however, shows undoubtedly that it is to be understood here of slavery. ¶ *As are under the yoke.* On the word *yoke*, see Notes on Matt. xi. 29. The phrase here properly denotes slavery, as it would not be applied to any other species of servitude; see Lev. xxvi. 13; Dem. 322, 12. ζεῦγος δουλοσύνης. *Rob. Lex.* It sometimes denotes the bondage of the Mosaic law as being a severe and oppressive burden; Acts xv. 10; Gal. v. 1. It may be remarked here that the apostle did not regard slavery as a *light* or *desirable* thing. *He would not have applied this term to the condition of a wife or of a child.* ¶ *Count their own masters worthy of all honour.* Treat them with all proper respect. They were to manifest the *right spirit themselves*, whatever their masters did; they were not to do anything that would dishonour religion. The injunction *here* would seem to have particular reference to those whose masters were not Christians. In the following verse, the apostle gives particular instructions to those who had pious masters. The meaning here is, that the slave ought to show the Christian spirit towards his master who was not a Christian; he ought to conduct himself so that religion would not be dishonoured; he ought not to give his master occasion to say that the only effect of the Christian religion on the mind of a servant was to make him restless, discontented, dissatisfied, and disobedient. In the humble and trying situation in which he confessedly was —*under the yoke of bondage*—he ought to evince patience, kindness, and respect for his master, and as long as the relation continued he was to be obedient. This command, however, was by no means inconsistent with his desiring his freedom, and securing it, if the opportunity presented itself; see Notes on 1 Cor. vii. 21; comp., on the passage before us, the Notes on Eph. vi. 5—8, and 1 Pet. ii. 18. ¶ *That the name of God and* his *doctrine be not blasphemed.* That religion be not dishonoured and reproached, and that there may be no occasion to say that Christianity tends to produce discontent and to lead to insurrection. If the effect of religion had been to teach all who were servants that they should no longer obey their masters, or that they should rise upon them and assert their freedom by violence, or that their masters were to be treated with indignity on account of their usurped rights over others, the effect would have been obvious. There would have been a loud and united outcry against the new religion, and it could have made no progress in the world. Instead of this, Christianity taught the necessity of patience, and meekness, and forbearance in the endurance of *all wrong*—whether from private individuals (Matt. v. 39—41; 1 Cor. vi. 7), or under the oppressions and exactions of Nero (Rom. xiii. 1—7), or amidst the hardships and cruelties of slavery. These peaceful injunctions, however, did not demonstrate that Christ approved the act of him "that smote on the one cheek," or that Paul regarded the government of Nero as a good government,—and as little do they prove that Paul or the Saviour approved of slavery.

2. *And they that have believing masters.* Masters who are Christians. It is clear from this, that Paul sup-

posed that, at that time, and under those circumstances, a man might *become* a Christian who had slaves under him. How long he might *continue* to hold his fellow-men in bondage, and yet be a Christian, is, however, quite a different question. It is quite clear, from the New Testament, as well as from facts now, that God may convert men when pursuing any kind of wickedness. The effect of religion, however, in all cases, will be to lead them to cease to do wrong. It is by no means improbable that many of those who *had* owned slaves, in accordance with the prevailing custom in the Roman empire, may have been converted—for the fact that a man has been living a life of sin does not prevent the possibility of his conversion. There is no evidence that Paul refers here to any who had *bought* slaves *after* they were converted; nor is there any intimation of any such transaction among Christians in the New Testament. Nor is there any intimation that he regarded it as right and best that they should *continue* to hold slaves; nor that he would approve their making arrangements to persevere in this as a permanent institution. Nor is it to be fairly inferred from this passage that he meant to teach that they might *continue* this, and yet be entitled to all the respect and confidence due to the Christian name, or be regarded as maintaining a good standing in the church. Whatever may be true on these points, the passage before us only proves that Paul considered that a man who was a slaveholder *might* be converted, and be spoken of as a "believer," or a Christian. Many have been converted in similar circumstances, as many have in the practice of all other kinds of iniquity. What was their duty *after* their conversion, was another question; and what was the duty of their "servants" or slaves, was another question still. It is only this latter question which the apostle is here considering. ¶ *Not despise* them, *because they are brethren.* Not treat them with any want of the respect which is due to their station. The word here used sometimes denotes *to neglect*, or, *not to care for*; Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13. Here it is not necessary to suppose that it denotes actual *contempt*, but only that want of respect which might possibly spring up in the mind if not well instructed, or not on its guard, among those who were servants or slaves. It was to be apprehended that the effect of the master and the slave having both embraced religion, would be to produce in the mind of the servant a want of respect and deference for his master. This danger was to be apprehended from the following causes:—(1.) Christianity taught that all men were made of "one blood," and were by nature *equal*; Acts xvii. 26 It was natural, therefore for the slave to infer that by nature he was equal to his master, and it would be easy to pervert this truth to make him disrespectful and insubordinate. (2.) They were equal to them as Christians. Christianity taught them that they were all "brethren" in the Lord, and that there was no distinction before God. It might be natural to infer from this, that *all* distinctions in society were to be abolished, and that, *in all respects*, the slave was to regard himself as on a level with his master. (3.) Some, who did not well understand the nature of Christianity, or who might have been disposed to cause trouble, may have taken advantage of the undeniable truths about the equality of men by nature and by redemption, to produce discontent on the part of the slave. They may have endeavoured to embitter the feelings of the slaves towards their masters who held them in bondage. The effect, it is easy to see, may have been to lead those who were in a state of servitude to manifest open and marked disrespect. In opposition to this, the apostle would have Timothy teach that Christianity did not rudely assail the existing institutions of society, and especially did not teach those who were in subordinate ranks to be disrespectful to those above them. ¶ *But rather do* them *service.* That is, serve them with more cheerfulness and alacrity than they did before the master was converted; or serve them with the more cheerfulness *because* they

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome [a] words *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according [b] to godliness,

[a] 2 Ti.1.13.

[b] Ti.1.1.

were Christians. The reasons for this were, because the master was now more worthy of affectionate regard, and because the servant might look for better treatment at his hands; comp. Notes on Eph. vi. 6. ¶ *Because they are faithful.* That is, *because* they are *believers*, or are Christians—πιστοί; the same word which in the beginning of the verse is rendered *believing*. It does not here mean that they were "faithful" to their servants or their God, but merely that they were *Christians*. ¶ *And beloved.* Probably, "beloved *of God*;" for so the word is often used. As they are the friends of God, they who are servants should show them the more respect. The idea is, simply, that one whom God loves should be treated with more respect than if he were *not* thus beloved; or, a good man deserves more respect than a wicked man. In all the relations of life, we should respect those above us the more in proportion to the excellency of their character. ¶ *Partakers of the benefit.* That is, the benefit which the gospel imparts—for so the connection requires us to understand it. It cannot mean, as many have supposed, that they were "partakers of the benefit of the labours of the servant," or enjoyed the fruits of their labours,—for how could this be a reason for their treating them with the more respect? It would be rather a reason for treating them with *less* respect, because they were living on the avails of unrequited toil. But the true reason assigned is, that the master had been, by the grace of God, permitted to participate in the same benefits of salvation as the servant; he had received, like him, the pardon of sin, and he was to be regarded as a fellow-heir of the grace of life. The expression here might be rendered, "they are *partakers of*, or are *devoted to, the good cause*." *Rob. Lex.* The argument is, that they were not infidels, or strangers to religion, or those who would try to hinder the progress of that which was dear to the heart of the servant, but were united with them in that same good work; they participated in the blessings of the same salvation, and they were really endeavouring to further the interests of religion. There ought, therefore, to be the more respect shown to them, and the more cheerful service rendered them.

3. *If any man teach otherwise.* Any otherwise than that respect should be shown to masters; and that a more cheerful and ready service should be rendered *because* they were Christians It is evidently implied here that some might be disposed to inculcate such views of religion as would produce discontent and a spirit of insubordination among those who were held to servitude. *Who* they were is not known, nor is it known what arguments they would employ to do it. It would seem probable that the arguments which would be employed would be such as these:—that God made all men equal; that all had been redeemed by the same blood; that all true Christians were fellow-heirs of heaven; and that it was wrong to hold a Christian brother in bondage, &c. From undeniable principles it would seem that they drew the inference that slaves ought at once to assert their freedom; that they should refuse obedience to their masters; and that the tendency of their teaching was, instead of removing the evil by the gradual and silent influence of Christian principles, to produce discontent and insurrection. From some of the expressions here used by the apostle, as characteristic of these teachers, it would seem to be probable that these persons were Jews. They were men given to subtle disputations, and those who doted about questions and verbal disputes, and who were intent on gain, supposing that that which conduced to mere worldly prosperity was of course religion. These characteristics apply well to Jewish

4 He is proud, [1] knowing [a] nothing, but [2] doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof com-

1 or, *a fool.* *a* 1 Co. 8. 2. 2 or, *sick.*

eth envy, strife, railings evil surmisings,

5 Perverse [3] disputings of men

3 or, *gallings one of another.*

teachers. ¶ *And consent not to wholesome words.* Words conducing to a healthful state of the church; that is, doctrines tending to produce order and a due observance of the proprieties of life; doctrines leading to contentment, and sober industry, and the patient endurance of evils. ¶ Even *the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The doctrines of the Saviour—all of which tended to a quiet life, and to a patient endurance of wrongs. ¶ *And to the doctrine which is according to godliness.* Which tends to produce piety or religion; that is, the doctrine which would be most favourable to an easy and rapid propagation of the gospel. The idea seems to be, that such a state of insubordination and discontent as they would produce, would be unfavourable to the promotion of religion. Who can doubt it?

4. *He is proud.* That is, he is lifted up with his fancied superior acquaintance with the nature of religion. The Greek verb means, properly, *to smoke, to fume;* and then to be *inflated,* to *be conceited,* &c. The idea is, that he has no proper knowledge of the nature of the gospel, and yet he values himself on a fancied superior acquaintance with its principles. ¶ *Knowing nothing.* Marg., *a fool.* That is, that he does not understand the nature of religion as he supposes he does. His views in regard to the relation of masters and servants, and to the bearing of religion on that relation, show that he does not understand the genius of Christianity. The apostle expresses this in strong language, by saying that he knows *nothing;* see Notes on 1 Cor. viii. 2. ¶ *But doting.* Marg., *sick.* The Greek word—νοσέω—means properly to be sick; then to languish, to pine after. The meaning here is, that such persons had a *sickly* or *morbid* desire for debates of this kind. They had not a sound and healthy state of mind on the subject of religion. They were like a sickly man, who has no desire for solid and healthful food, but for that which will gratify a diseased appetite. They desired not sound doctrine, but controversies about unimportant and unsubstantial matters—things that bore the same relation to important doctrines which the things that a sick man pines after do to substantial food. ¶ *Questions and strifes of words.* The Jews abounded much in disputes of this sort, and it would seem probable that the persons here referred to were Jewish teachers; comp. Notes, chap. i. 6, 7, and Acts xviii. 15. ¶ *Whereof cometh envy.* The only fruit of which is to produce envy. That is, the appearance of superior knowledge; the boast of being profoundly acquainted with religion, and the show of an ability for subtle argumentation, would produce in a certain class *envy.* Envy is uneasiness, pain, mortification, or discontent, excited by another's prosperity, or by his superior knowledge or possessions; see Notes on Rom. i. 29. ¶ *Strife* Or contentions with those who will not readily yield to their opinions. ¶ *Railings.* Harsh and abusive language towards those who will not concede a point—a common effect of disputes, and more commonly of disputes about small and unimportant matters, than of those which are of magnitude. Such railings often attend disputes that arise out of nice and subtle distinctions. ¶ *Evil surmisings.* Suspicions that they are led to hold their views, not by the love of the truth, but from sordid or worldly motives. Such suspicions are very apt to attend an angry debate of any kind. It might be expected peculiarly to exist on such a question as the apostle refers to here—the relation of a master and a slave. It is always very hard to do justice to the motives of one who seems to *us* to be living in sin, or to believe it to be *possible* that he acts from right motives.

5. *Perverse disputings.* Marg.,

of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such [a] withdraw thyself.

[a] 2 Ti. 3 5.

gallings one of another. In regard to the correct *reading* of this passage, see Bib. Repository, vol. iii. pp. 61, 62. The word which is here used in the Received Text — παραδιατρίβη — occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *mis-employment;* then *idle occupation.* (*Rob. Lex.*) The verb from which this is derived means to *rub in pieces, to wear away;* and hence the word here used refers to what was a mere *wearing away* of time. The idea is that of employments that merely consumed time without any advantage. The notion of *contention* or *dispute* is not necessarily implied in this passage, but the allusion is to inquiries or discussions that were of no practical value, but were a mere consumption of *time;* comp. Koppe on the passage. The reading in the margin is derived from the common usage of the verb *to rub*, and hence our translators attached the idea of *rubbing against* each other, or of *galling* each other, as by rubbing. This is not, however, the idea in the Greek word. The phrase "*idle employments*" would better suit the meaning of the Greek than either of the phrases which our translators have employed. ¶ *Of men of corrupt minds.* That is, of wicked hearts. ¶ *And destitute of the truth.* Not knowing the truth; or not having just views of truth. They show that they have no correct acquaintance with the Christian system. ¶ *Supposing that gain is godliness.* That that which contributes to an increase of property is of course true religion; or that it is proper to infer that any course which contributes to worldly prosperity must be sanctioned by religion. They judge of the consistency of any course with religion by its tendency to promote outward prosperity. This they have exalted into a maxim, and this they make the essential thing in religion. But how could any man do this? And what connection would this have with the subject under consideration — the kind of instruction that was to be given to servants? The *meaning* of the maxim seems to be, that religion must necessarily promote prosperity by its promoting temperance, and industry, and length of days; and that since this was the case, it was fair to infer that anything which would *not* do this could not be consistent with religion. They adopted it, therefore, as a general rule of judging, and one in entire accordance with the wishes of their own hearts, that any course of life that would *not* do this must be contrary to the true spirit of religion. This maxim, it would seem, they applied to the relation of the slave and his master, and as the tendency of the system was always to keep the servant poor and in an humble condition, they seem to have inferred that the relation was contrary to Christianity, and hence to have excited the servant to disaffection. In their *reasoning* they were not far out of the way, for it *is* fair to infer that a system that tends to produce uniform poverty, and to perpetuate a degraded condition in society, is contrary to the genius of Christianity. They were *wrong* (1.) in making this a *general* maxim by which to judge of everything in religion; and (2.) in so applying it as to produce insubordination and discontent in the minds of servants towards their masters; and (3.) in supposing that *everything* which produced gain was consistent with religion, or that they could infallibly judge of the moral quality of any course of life by its contributing to outward prosperity. Religion will uniformly lead to that which conduces to prosperity, but it does not follow that every way of making money is therefore a part of piety. It is possible, also, that in some way they hoped for "gain" to themselves by inculcating those principles. It may be remarked here, that this is not an uncommon maxim practically among men—that "gain is godliness." The whole object of life with them is to make money; the rule by which they judge of every-

thing is by its tendency to produce gain; and their whole religion may be summed up in this, that *they live for gain*. Wealth is the real object of pursuit; but it is often with them cloaked under the pretence of piety. They have no more religion than they suppose will contribute to this object; they judge of the nature and value of every maxim by its tendency to make men prosperous in their worldly business; they have as much as they suppose will promote their pecuniary interest, and they sacrifice every principle of religion which they suppose would conflict with their earthly advancement. — ¶ *From such withdraw thyself*. That is, have no communion or fellowship with them. Do not recognise them as religious teachers; do not countenance their views. Timothy was, in no way, to show that he regarded them as inculcating truth, or to patronize their doctrines. From such men, as having any claim to the character of Christians, every man *should* withdraw with feelings of unutterable pity and loathing.—This passage (ver. 1—5) is often appealed to by the advocates and apologists for slavery, to prove that Christianity countenances that institution, and that no direct attempt should be made by the ministers of the gospel, or other Christians, to show the evil of the institution, and to promote its abolition, and to prove that we have no right to interfere in any way with what pertains to these "domestic relations." It is of importance, therefore, in view of the exposition which has been given of the words and phrases in the passage, to sum up the truths which it inculcates. From it, therefore, the following lessons may be derived: (1.) That those who are slaves, and who have been converted to Christianity, should not be indolent or disorderly. If their masters are Christians, they should treat them with respect, and all the more because they are fellow-heirs of the grace of life. If they are *not* Christians, they should yet show the nature of religion on *themselves*, and bear the evils of their condition with patience—showing how religion teaches them to endure wrong. In either case, they are to be quiet, industrious, kind, meek, respectful. This Christianity everywhere enjoins while the relation continues. At the same time, however, it does not forbid the slave earnestly to desire his freedom, or to use all proper measures to obtain it; see 1 Cor. vii. 21. (2.) That the ministers of religion should not labour to produce a spirit of discontent among slaves, or excite them to rise upon their masters. This passage would undoubtedly forbid all *such* interference, and all agencies or embassies sent *among slaves themselves* to inflame their minds against their masters, in view of their wrongs; to put arms into their hands; or to induce them to form combinations for purposes of insurrection. It is not so much in the true spirit of Christianity to go to those who *are wronged*, as to those who *do the wrong*. The primary message in such cases is to the latter; and when it does go to the former, it is to teach them to be patient under their wrongs, to evince the Christian spirit there, and to make use only of those means which are consistent with the gospel to free themselves from the evils under which they suffer. At the same time, nothing in this passage, or in any other part of the New Testament, forbids us to go to the *master himself*, and to show him the evil of the system, and to enjoin upon him to let the oppressed go free. Nothing in this passage can be reasonably construed as teaching that an appeal of the most earnest and urgent kind may not be made to him; or that the wrongs of the system may not be fully set before him, or that any man or set of men may not lawfully lift up in his hearing a loud and earnest voice in favour of the freedom of all. And in like manner there is nothing which makes it improper that the slave himself should be put fully in possession of that gospel which will apprize him of his rights as a man, and as redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Every human being, whether held in bondage or not, has a *right* to be made acquainted with all the pro-

visions and truths of that gospel, nor has any man or class of men a right to withhold such knowledge from him. No *system* of things *can* be right which contemplates that that gospel shall be withheld, or under which it is necessary to withhold it in order to the perpetuity of the system. (3.) The passage teaches that it is possible that a man who is a slaveholder may become a Christian. But it does *not* teach that, though he may become a Christian while he is a slaveholder, that it is proper for him to continue this relation after he becomes such. It does *not* teach that a man can be a Christian and yet go into the business of buying and selling slaves. It does not teach that a man can be a Christian and *continue* to hold others in bondage, whatever may be true on that point. It does not teach that he ought to be considered as maintaining a "good standing" in the church, if he *continues* to be a slaveholder; and whatever may be the truth on these points, *this* passage should not be adduced as demonstrating them. It settles one point only in regard to these questions—that a case was supposable in which a slave had a Christian master. It settles the duty *of the slave* in such a case; it says nothing about the duty *of the master*. (4.) This passage does *not* teach that slavery is either a *good* thing, or a *just* thing, a *desirable* relation in life, or an institution that God wishes to be *perpetuated* on the earth. The injunctions to slaves to be patient, meek, industrious, and respectful, no more demonstrate this, than the command to subjects to be obedient to the laws proves that God regarded the government of Nero as such an administration as he wished to be perpetuated on the earth. To exhort a slave to manifest a Christian spirit under his oppressions and wrongs, is not to justify the system that does him wrong, nor does it prohibit us from showing to masters that the system is contrary to the gospel, and that it ought to be abandoned. (5.) This passage, therefore, furnishes no real support for slavery. It can no more be adduced in favour of it than any exhortation to those who are oppressed, or in any degrading situation in life, to be patient, proves that the system which oppresses and degrades them, is a good one. Nor does the fact that a man might be converted who was a slaveholder, and might be spoken of as a πιστός, or *believer*, prove that it would be right and desirable that he should *continue* that relation, any more than the fact that Saul of Tarsus became a Christian when engaged in persecution, proves that it would have been right for him to continue in that business, or than the conversion of the Ephesians who "used curious arts" (Acts xix. 19), proved that it would have been proper for them to continue in that employment. Men who are doing wrong are converted in order to turn them *from* that course of life, not to justify them *in* it.

6. *But godliness.* Piety; religion. The meaning is, that real religion should be regarded as the greatest and most valuable acquisition. ¶ *With contentment.* This word, as now used, refers to a state of mind; a calm and satisfied feeling; a freedom from murmuring and complaining. The idea is, that "piety, connected with a contented mind,—or a mind acquiescing in the allotments of life,—is to be regarded as the *real* gain." Tindal gives substantially the same interpretation. "Godliness is great riches, if a man be content with that he hath." — Coverdale,—"Howbeit, it is of great advantage, who is so godly, and holdeth him content with that he hath." The word which is used here—αὐτάρκεια—means, properly, *self-sufficiency*, and is used here, in a good sense, to denote a mind satisfied with its lot. If there be true religion, united with its proper accompaniment, peace of mind, it is to be regarded as the true riches. The object of the apostle seems to be, to rebuke those who supposed that *property* constituted everything that was worth living for. He tells them, therefore, that the true gain, the real riches which we ought to seek, is religion, with a contented mind. This does more to promote happiness than

6 But godliness [a] with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain [b] we can carry nothing out.

a Pr.15.16. b Ps.49.17. c Ge.28.20.

8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. [c]

9 But they that will [d] be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful

d Pr.28.20.

wealth can ever do, and this is what should be regarded as the great object of life.

7. *For we brought nothing into this world, &c.* A sentiment very similar to this occurs in Job i. 21,—and it would seem probable that the apostle had that passage in his eye; see Notes on that passage. Numerous expressions of this kind occur in the classic writers; see Wetstein, *in loc.*, and Pricæus, *in loc.* in the Critici Sacri. Of the *truth* of what is here said, there can be nothing more obvious. It is apparent to all. We bring no property with us into the world,—no clothing, no jewels, no gold,—and it is equally clear that we can take nothing with us when we leave the earth. Our coming into the world introduces no additional property to that which the race before possessed, and our going from the world removes none that we may have helped the race to accumulate. This is said by the apostle as an obvious reason why we should be contented if our actual wants are supplied,—for this is really all that we need, and all that the world is toiling for. ¶ *We can carry nothing out;* comp. Ps. xlix. 17. "For when he [the rich man] dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him."

8. *And having food and raiment.* "Food and raiment, here, seem to be used to denote supplies for our wants in general. It is not uncommon to denote the whole by a part, and, as these are the *principal* things which we really need, and without which life could not be sustained, the apostle uses the phrase to denote all that is really necessary for us. We cannot suppose that he would forbid a desire of a comfortable habitation, or of the means of knowledge, or of conveniences for worshipping God, &c. The idea is, that having those things which meet the actual necessities of our nature, and save us from distress, we should not strive after "uncertain riches," or make wealth the object of our anxious pursuit; comp. Notes on Phil. iv. 11, 12.

9. *But they that will be rich.* Further to enforce the duty of contentment, the apostle refers to some of the evils which necessarily attend a desire to be rich. Those evils have been so great and uniform in all ages, and are so necessary accompaniments of that desire, that, even amidst many inconveniences which may attend the opposite condition, we should be contented with our lot. Indeed, if we could see all, it would only be necessary to see the evils which the desire of wealth produces in the world, to make us contented with a most lowly condition of life. Perhaps nothing more would be necessary to make a poor man satisfied with his lot, and grateful for it, than to be acquainted with the perplexities and cares of a rich man. There is more emphasis to be placed on the word *will*, here, in the phrase, "*will* be rich," than might be supposed from our translation. It is not the sign of the future tense, but implies an actual *purpose* or *design* to become rich—*οἱ βουλόμενοι*. The reference is to those in whom this becomes the object of earnest desire, and who lay their plans for it. ¶ *Fall into temptation.* That is, they are tempted to do wicked things in order to accomplish their purposes. It is *extremely* difficult to cherish the desire to be rich, as the leading purpose of the soul, and to be an honest man. ¶ *And a snare.* Birds are taken in a snare, and wild beasts were formerly; see Notes on Job xviii. 8, 9. The net was sprung suddenly upon them, and they could not escape. The idea here is, that they who have this desire become so *entangled*, that they cannot easily escape. They be-

lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For [a] the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have [1] erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

a Ex. 23. 8.

1 *been seduced.*

come involved in the meshes of worldliness and sin; their movements are so fettered by cares, and inordinate desires, and by artificial wants, that they are no longer freemen. They become so involved in these things, that they cannot well break away from them if they would; comp. Prov. xxviii. 20. ¶ *And into many foolish and hurtful lusts.* Desires, such as the love of wealth creates. They are *foolish*—as being not such as an intelligent and immortal being should pursue; and they are *hurtful*—as being injurious to morals, to health, and to the soul. Among those desires, are the fondness for display; for a magnificent dwelling, a train of menials, and a splendid equipage; for sumptuous living, feasting, the social glass, company, and riotous dissipation. ¶ *Which drown men in destruction and perdition.* The word which is here rendered, *drown*—βυθίζω—means, to *sink in the* deep, or, *to cause to sink;* and the meaning here is, that they become submerged as a ship that sinks. The idea of *drowning* is not properly that of the apostle, but the image is that of a wreck, where a ship and all that is in it go down together. The destruction is complete. There is a total ruin of happiness, of virtue, of reputation, and of the soul. The ruling desire to be rich leads on a train of follies which ruins everything here, and hereafter. — How many of the human family have thus been destroyed!

10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil.* That is, of all *kinds* of evil. This is evidently not to be understood as *literally* true, for there *are* evils which cannot, be traced to the love of money—the evils growing out of ambition, and intemperance, and debasing lusts, and of the hatred of God and of goodness. The expression here is evidently a popular saying—"all sorts of evils grow out of the love of money." Similar expressions often occur in the classic writers; see *Wetstein, in loc.*, and numerous examples quoted by Pricæus. Of the *truth* of this, no one can doubt. No small part of the crimes of the world can be traced to the love of gold. But it deserves to be remarked here, that the apostle does not say that "*money* is the root of all evil," or that it is an evil at all. It is the "*love*" of it which is the source of evil. ¶ *Which while some coveted after.* That is, some who were professing Christians. The apostle is doubtless referring to persons whose history was known to Timothy, and warning him, and teaching him to warn others, by their example. ¶ *They have erred from the faith.* Marg., *been seduced.* The Greek is, they have been led astray from; that is, they have been so deceived as to depart from the faith. The notion of *deception* or *delusion* is in the word, and the sense is, that, deceived by the promises held out by the prospect of wealth, they have apostatized from the faith. It is not implied of necessity that they were ever real Christians They have been led off from truth and duty, and from all the hopes and joys which religion would have imparted. ¶ *And have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* With such sorrows as remorse, and painful reflections on their folly, and the apprehension of future wrath. Too late they see that they have thrown away the hopes of religion for that which is at best unworthy the pursuit of an immortal mind; which leads them on to a life of wickedness; which fails of imparting what it promised when its pursuit is successful, and which, in the great majority of instances, disappoints its votaries in respect to its attainment. The word rendered "pierced themselves through"—περιέπειραν—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

11 But thou, O man [a] of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight [b] the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed [c] a good profession before many witnesses.

13 I give thee charge [d] in the

[a] De.33.1. [b] 2 Ti.4.7. [c] He.13.23. [d] chap.5.21.

and is a word whose force and emphasis cannot be well expressed in a translation. It is from πείρω, *peiro*, and is made more emphatic by the addition of the preposition περι, *peri*. The word πείρω, *peiro*, means, properly, *to pierce through from one end to another*, and is applied to meat that is *pierced through* by the spit when it is to be roasted (*Passow*); then it means to pierce through and through. The addition of the preposition (περι) to the word, conveys the idea of doing this *all round;* of piercing everywhere. It was not a single thrust which was made, but they are gashed all round with penetrating wounds. Such is the effect on those who cast off religion for the sake of gold. None can avoid these consequences who do this. Every man is in the hands of a holy and just God, and sooner or later he *must* feel the effects of his sin and folly.

11. *But thou, O man of God, flee these things.* These allurements of wealth, and these sad consequences which the love of gold produces. ¶ *But follow after righteousness*, &c. Make these the grand object of your pursuit. On the virtues here enumerated, see Notes on Gal. v. 22, 23.

12. *Fight the good fight of faith.* The noble conflict in the cause of religion; see Notes on Eph. vi. 10—17; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. The allusion is to the contests at the Grecian games. ¶ *Lay hold on eternal life.* As the crown of victory that is held out to you. Seize this as eagerly as the competitors at the Grecian games laid hold on the prize; see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 25. ¶ *Whereunto thou art also called.* That is, by the Spirit of God, and by the very nature of your profession. God does not "*call*" his people that they may become rich; he does not convert them in order that they may devote themselves to the business of gain. They are "called" to a higher and nobler work. Yet how many professing Christians there are who seem to live *as if* God had "called" them to the special business of making money, and who devote themselves to it with a zeal and assiduity that would do honour to such a calling, if this had been the grand object which God had in view in converting them! ¶ *And hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.* That is, either when he embraced the Christian religion, and made a public profession of it in the presence of the church and of the world; or when he was solemnly set apart to the ministry; or as he in his Christian life had been enabled publicly to evince his attachment to the Saviour. I see no reason to doubt that the apostle may have referred to the former, and that in early times a profession of religion may have been openly made before the church and the world. Such a method of admitting members to the church would have been natural, and would have been fitted to make a deep impression on others. It is a good thing often to remined professors of religion of the feelings which they had when they made a profession of religion; of the fact that the transaction was witnessed by the world; and of the promises which they then made to lead holy lives. One of the best ways of stimulating ourselves or others to the faithful performance of duty, is the remembrance of the vows then made; and one of the most effectual methods of reclaiming a backslider is to bring to his remembrance that solemn hour when he publicly gave himself to God.

13. *I give thee charge in the sight of God;* see Notes on chap. v. 21. ¶ *Who quickeneth all things.* Who gives *life* to all; Notes on Eph. ii. 1. It is not quite clear why the apostle refers to this attribute of God as en-

sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who [a] before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good [1] confession;

14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukable [b] until the appearing [c] of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 Which in his times he shall show *who is* the blessed [d] and only Potentate, the [e] King of kings, and Lord of lords;

[a] John 18.36,37. [1] *profession.* [b] Ph.2.15. [c] 1 Th.5.23. [d] chap.1.18. [e] Re.17.14.

forcing the charge which he here makes. Perhaps he means to say that God is the source of life, and that as he had given life to Timothy —natural and spiritual—he had a right to require that it should be employed in his service; and that, if, in obedience to this charge and in the performance of his duties, he should be required to lay down his life, he should bear in remembrance that God had power to raise him up again. This is more distinctly urged in 2 Tim. ii. 8—10. ¶ *And* before *Christ Jesus.* As in the presence of Christ, and stimulated by his example. ¶ *Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.* Marg., *profession.* The same Greek word is used which in ver. 12 is translated *profession.* The reference is to the fact that the Lord Jesus, when standing at the bar of Pilate who claimed to have power over his life, did not shrink from an open avowal of the truth; John xviii. 36, 37. Nothing can be better fitted to preserve our minds steadfast in the faith, and to enable us to maintain our sacred vows in this world when allured by temptation, or when ridiculed for our religion, than to remember the example of the Lord Jesus. Let us place him before us as he stood at the bar of Pilate—threatened with death in its most appalling form, and ridiculed for the principles which he maintained; let us look on him, friendless and alone, and see with what seriousness, and sincerity, and boldness he stated *the simple truth* about himself, and we shall have one of the best securities that we can have, that we shall not dishonour our profession. A clear view of the example of Christ our Saviour, in those circumstances, and a deep conviction that his eye is upon us to discern whether we are steadfast as he was, will do more than all abstract precepts to make us faithful to our christian calling.

14. *That thou keep* this *commandment.* Referring particularly to the solemn injunction which he had just given him, to "fight the good fight of faith," but perhaps also including all that he had enjoined on him. ¶ *Without spot.* It seems harsh, and is unusual, to apply the epithet, "*without spot*" — ἄσπιλος — to a *command* or *doctrine,* and the passage may be so construed that this may be understood as referring to Timothy himself—"That thou keep the commandment so that thou mayest be without spot and unrebukable." See Bloomfield, Crit. Dig., *in loc.* The word here rendered "without spot," occurs in the New Testament only here and in James i. 27; 1 Pet. i. 19; 2 Pet. iii. 14. It means without any *stain* or *blemish; pure.* If applied here to *Timothy,* it means that he should so keep the command that there would be no stain on his moral character; if to the *doctrine,* that that should be kept pure. ¶ *Unrebukable.* So that there be no occasion for reproach or reproof; see Notes on Phil. ii. 15. ¶ *Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;* see Notes on 1 Thess. ii. 19; iv. 16; v. 23.

15. *Which in his times he shall show.* Which God will reveal at such times as he shall deem best. It is implied here that the time is unknown to men; see Notes on Acts i. 7. ¶ Who is *the blessed and only Potentate.* God, who is the ruler over all. The word used here—δυνάστης—means one who is *mighty* (Luke i. 22), then a prince or ruler; comp. Acts viii. 27. It is applied here to God as the mighty ruler over the universe. ¶ *The King of kings.* Who claims dominion over all the kings of the earth. In Rev. vii 14, the same appellation is

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which [a] no man can approach unto; whom [b] no man hath seen nor can see: to whom [c] *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

[a] Re.1.16,17. [b] Ex.33.20. [c] Jude 25; Re.1.6.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust [d] in [1] uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; [e]

[d] Ps.62.10. [1] *the uncertainty of.* [e] Ec.5.18,19

applied to the Lord Jesus, ascribing to him universal dominion. ¶ *Lord of lords.* The idea here is, that all the sovereigns of the earth are under his sway; that none of them can prevent the accomplishment of his purposes; and that he can direct the winding up of human affairs when he pleases.

16. *Who only hath immortality.* The word here—ἀθανασία—properly means *exemption from death*, and seems to mean that God, in his own nature, enjoys a perfect and certain exemption from death. Creatures have immortality only as they derive it from him, and of course are dependent on him for it. He has it by his very nature, and it is in his case underived, and he cannot be deprived of it. It is one of the essential attributes of his being, that he will always exist, and that *death* cannot reach him; comp. the expression in John v. 26, "The Father hath life in himself," and the Notes on that passage. ¶ *Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.* Gr., "Inhabiting inapproachable light." The light where he dwells is so brilliant and dazzling that mortal eyes could not endure it. This is a very common representation of the dwelling place of God. See examples quoted in Pricæus, *in loc.* Heaven is constantly represented as a place of the most pure and brilliant light, needing not the light of the sun, or the moon, or the stars (Rev. xxi. 23, 24; xxii. 5), and God is represented as dwelling in that light, surrounded by amazing and inapproachable glory; comp. Rev. iv. 6; Ezek. i 4; Heb. i. 3. ¶ *Whom no man hath seen nor can see;* Notes on John i. 18. ¶ *To whom* be *honour and power everlasting. Amen;* see Notes on Rom. xi. 36.

17. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded.* One of the evils to which they are particularly exposed. The idea is, that they should not value themselves on account of their wealth, or look down with pride and arrogance on their inferiors. They should not suppose that they are any better men or any nearer heaven, because they are wealthy. Property really makes no distinction in the great things that pertain to character and salvation. It does not necessarily make one wise, or learned, or great, or good. In all these things, the man who has not wealth may be vastly the superior of him who has; and for so slight and unimportant a distinction as gold can confer, no man should be proud. Besides, let such a man reflect that his property is the gift of God; that he is made rich because God has chosen to arrange things so that he should be; that it is not primarily owing to any skill or wisdom which he has; that his property only increases his responsibility, and that it must all soon be left, and he be as poor as the "beggar that lies at his gate;" and he will see ample reason why he should not be proud. ¶ *Nor trust in uncertain riches.* Marg., *The uncertainty of.* The margin expresses the meaning of the Greek more accurately than the text, but the sense is not materially varied. Riches are uncertain because they may soon be taken away. No dependence can be placed on them in the emergencies of life. He who is rich to-day, has no security that he will be to-morrow; and if he *shall* be rich to-morrow, he has no certainty that his riches will meet his necessities then. A man whose house is in flames, or who is shipwrecked, or whose child lies dying, or who is himself in the agonies of death, can derive no advantage

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing [1] to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay [a] hold on eternal life.

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding

[1] or, *sociable.*

[a] Ph 3.14.

from the fact that he is richer than other men; see Notes on Luke xii. 16—21. That against which Paul here directs Timothy to caution the rich, is that to which they are most exposed. A man who is rich, is very liable to "trust" in his riches, and to suppose that he needs nothing more; comp. Luke xii. 19. He feels that he is not dependent on his fellow-men, and he is very likely to feel that he is not dependent on God. It is for this cause that God has recorded so many solemn declarations in his word respecting the instability of riches (comp. Prov. xxiii. 5), and that he is furnishing so many instructive lessons in his providence, showing how easily riches may suddenly vanish away. ¶ *But in the living God.* (1.) He is able to supply *all* our wants, and to do for us what riches cannot do; and (2.) he never changes, or leaves those who put their trust in him. He is able to meet our wants if in the flames, or in a storm at sea, or when a friend dies, or when we lie down on a bed of death, or wherever we may be in the eternal world. ¶ *Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.* The meaning of this seems to be, that God permits us to enjoy everything. Everything in the works of creation and redemption he has given to man for his happiness, and he should therefore trust in him. He has not merely given wealth for the comfort of men, but he has given everything, and he on whom so many and so great blessings have been bestowed for his comfort, should trust in the great Benefactor himself, and not rely merely on one of his gifts; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

18. *That they do good.* On the duty enjoined in this verse, see Notes on Gal. vi. 10; Heb. xiii. 16. ¶ *That they be rich in good works.* "That their good works may be as abundant as their riches." ¶ *Ready to distribute.* To divide with others; comp. Acts iv. 34. The meaning is, that they should be liberal, or bountiful. ¶ *Willing to communicate.* Marg., or *sociable.* The translation in the text is a more correct rendering of the Greek. The idea is, that they should be willing to share their blessings with others, so as to make others comfortable; see Notes on Heb. xiii. 16; comp. the argument of Paul in 2 Cor. viii. 13—15, and the Notes on that passage.

19. *Laying up in store for themselves, &c.* The meaning of this verse is, that they were to make such a use of their property that it would contribute to their eternal welfare. It might be the means of exalted happiness and honour in heaven, if they would so use it as not to interfere with religion in the soul, and so as to do the most good possible. See the sentiment in this verse explained at length in the Notes on Luke xvi. 9.

20. *Keep that which is committed to thy trust. All* that is entrusted to you, and to which reference has been particularly made in this epistle. The honour of the gospel, and the interests of religion, had been specially committed to him; and he was sacredly to guard this holy trust, and not suffer it to be wrested from him. ¶ *Avoiding profane and vain babblings.* Gr., "Profane, empty words." The reference is to such controversies and doctrines as tended only to produce strife, and were not adapted to promote the edification of the church; see Notes on chap. i. 4; iv. 7. ¶ *And oppositions of science falsely so called.* Religion has nothing to fear from *true* science, and the minister of the gospel is not exhorted to dread that. Real science, in all its advances, contributes to the support of religion; and just in proportion as that is promoted will it be found to sustain the Bible, and to confirm the claims of religion to the faith of mankind. See

profane [a] *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 Which some professing have [b] erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana.

a Tit. 1. 14. b 2 Ti. 2. 18.

this illustrated at length in Wiseman's Lectures on the connection between science and religion. It is only false or pretended science that religion has to dread, and which the friend of Christianity is to avoid. The meaning here is, that Timothy was to avoid everything which *falsely* laid claim to being "knowledge" or "science."— There was much of this in the world at the time the apostle wrote; and this, more perhaps than anything else, has tended to corrupt true religion since.

21. *Which some professing* Evidently some who professed to be true Christians. They were attracted by false philosophy, and soon, as a consequence, were led to deny the doctrines of Christianity. This result has not been uncommon in the world. ¶ *Have erred concerning the faith;* see Notes on chap. i. 6, 7; vi. 10. ¶ *Grace* be *with thee;* see Notes Rom. i. 7.

On the subscription at the close of this epistle, see Intro., § 2. It is, like the other subscriptions at the close of the epistles, of no authority.

THE SECOND

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *Time and place of writing the Epistle.*

THERE has been much diversity of sentiment on the question when this epistle was written. That it was written at Rome, and when the apostle was imprisoned there, is the unanimous opinion of all who have written on the epistle, and indeed is apparent on the face of it; see chap. i. 8, 16; iv. 6. But whether it was written during his first imprisonment there, or during a second imprisonment, is a question, on which critics even now are by no means agreed. The most respectable names may be found on each side of this question, though the common opinion has been that it was during a second imprisonment. Of this opinion are Mosheim, Michaelis, Benson, Mill, Macknight, Le Clerc, Paley, Stuart, Clarke, and Doddridge. The reasons for this may be seen at length in Hug's Introduction, pp. 761—763, Macknight, and in Paley's Horæ Paulinæ. Dr. Lardner, Baronius, Witsius, Lightfoot, Hammond, Hug, Hemsen, and others, maintain that it was written during the first imprisonment, and that it was sent about the same time as the epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. The reasons for this opinion may be found in Hug's Introduction, pp. 556—559, and in Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 38—72. It is not consistent with the design of these Notes to go at length into an examination of this question, and it is not material in order to an exposition of the epistle.

After considering the reasonings of Lardner and Hug to prove that this epistle was written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome—that is, as they suppose, during his *only* imprisonment there, and not long after the first epistle was written—it seems to me still that there are insuperable difficulties in such a view, and that the evidence is clear that it was during a second imprisonment. The reasons for this are briefly the following:

(1.) In the epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, written during his first imprisonment, Paul confidently looked forward to a release, and to a

speedy departure from Rome. In this, he had no such expectation. Thus, he tells the Philippians (ii. 24), "I trust in the Lord, that I myself shall come shortly;" see also chap. i. 24. In the epistle to Philemon (ver. 22), he says, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." In this epistle, however, the author had no such expectation; chap. iv. 6, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

(2.) In chap. iv. 16, the apostle uses the following language: "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all forsook me." It is true that this *may* refer to a hearing which he had had before Nero during the same imprisonment at Rome in which this second epistle was written; but the most natural interpretation is to suppose that he had had one hearing, and had been discharged, and that the imprisonment of which he speaks in this epistle was a second one. This seems to me to be confirmed by what he says in the next verse: "Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Here it appears (*a*) that he had been delivered, on that occasion, from death—"I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," which is equivalent to saying that he was discharged; (*b*) that after that discharge he was permitted to preach the gospel—"that by me the preaching might be fully known;" (*c*) that he had been permitted after that to travel and preach—"and that all the Gentiles might hear," which is just such an expression as he would use on the supposition that he had been discharged, and been permitted to go abroad and preach the gospel extensively, and is *not* such an expression as he could have used if he had been imprisoned but once.

(3.) The expression occurring in chap. iv. 20, "Erastus *abode* at Corinth," implies that he had made a second journey to Rome. The word rendered "abode"—ἔμεινεν—is such as would be used where two were travelling together, and where one of them chose to *remain* at a certain place. It implies that, at the time referred to, the two were together, and that one chose to go on, and the other to remain. But it is capable of very clear proof that, when Paul was sent to Rome by Festus (Acts xxvi. xxvii.), he did not stop at Corinth; and if Erastus had been with him then, he would have passed by that place with him on his way to Rome. Further, when Paul left Corinth, as related in Acts xx., on his way to Jerusalem, Timothy was with him. This is the last time that Paul is mentioned as having been at Corinth before coming to Rome, and there could have been no need of informing Timothy of the fact that Erastus remained there, if this were so, because that fact would be known to Timothy as well as Paul. Besides, that departure from Corinth took place some five years before Paul wrote this second epistle to Timothy; and what would be the use of his reminding Timothy of this after so long an interval? It is clear, moreover, that Paul refers to some *recent* transaction. He is urging Timothy to use all diligence to come to him before winter; that is, as soon as possible; chap. iv. 21. But how could it be a reason for this urgency to say that, *some five years before*, he had been forsaken by one fellow-labourer, and had been obliged to leave another one sick on the way?

(4.) Similar remarks may be made respecting what Paul says in the close of the same verse (chap. iv. 20): "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Paul, when sent by Festus to Rome, did not stop at Miletus; for the course which the ship took on that occasion is minutely described (Acts xxvii.), and there is every certainty that there can be that it did not put in at that place. The time, then, to which Paul must refer here, unless he made a second journey to Rome after he had been once discharged, must have been

several years before; certainly as far back as when he took leave of the elders of the church of Ephesus, as recorded in Acts xx. But this was about five years before; and what would have been the pertinency of informing Timothy that, some five years before, he had left a fellow-labourer sick there, as a reason why he should then hasten to Rome as soon as possible? It was evidently a recent occurrence to which the apostle refers here; and the only natural supposition is, that, not long before his arrival at Rome, he had parted with both these friends, and now needed, in consequence, especially the presence of Timothy. Of course, if this be so, Paul must have made another circuit through these countries, of which the Acts of the Apostles gives us no account, and which must have been after his first imprisonment It is true that Hug suggests that the word rendered "I have left"—ἀπέλιπον—may be in the third person plural, and may be rendered "*they* have left." But, who left him there? We are not told; and as "nothing is suggested in the context which would supply us with a subject of the verb in the *third person plural*, we are led naturally to construe it of the *first* person singular, and, consequently, to apply it to Paul."—*Prof. Stuart*, in *Hug's Intro.*

(5.) With this supposition of a second and recent journey, agrees the passage in 2 Tim. iv. 13, "The cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." This evidently refers to some recent affair. Can it be believed that these had been there for some five years, and that Paul had not needed them before? He was two years at Cæsarea. He had abundant opportunity of sending for them. An article of wearing apparel, or books to study, or his own writings, he would be likely to need long before, and it is highly improbable that he should have suffered them to remain during this long period without sending for them.

(6.) In the epistles which were written during Paul's first imprisonment, certain persons are referred to as being then with him, who are in this epistle mentioned as absent. It is almost beyond a doubt that the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon, were written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome; see the Introduction to those epistles. In the epistle to the Colossians (i. 1), Timothy is mentioned as being then with the apostle. When this was written, of course he was absent. In the same epistle, Mark is mentioned as with Paul, and unites with him in the salutation to the Colossians (chap. iv. 10); when this epistle was written, he was absent, for Timothy is ordered to bring him with him (chap. iv. 11). Demas was then with him (Col. iv. 14); now he was absent, for Paul says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica;" chap. iv. 10. These circumstances make it quite clear that the second epistle to Timothy was not written during the imprisonment at Rome in which the epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, &c., were written, unless a change had taken place in the circumstances of the apostle, which we have no reason to suppose occurred. The probability, then, seems to be strong, that the apostle was imprisoned there a second time, and that the things referred to in this epistle occurred then.

(7.) To these circumstances should be added the fact, that many of the Fathers say that Paul was liberated from his *first* imprisonment, and afterwards travelled extensively in preaching the gospel. This testimony is borne by Eusebius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others; see Calmet's Dictionary, and Lives of the Apostles, by D. F. Bacon, New Haven, pp. 619—621.—If the supposition of a second imprisonment at Rome, during which this epistle was written, is correct, then it was written probably not far from the year 65. Lardner, however, who supposes it was written during the first imprisonment, places its date in May, A. D. 61; Hug, also, in the same year.

§ 2. *The Place where Timothy was when the Epistle was addressed to him.*

There can be little doubt that Timothy was at Ephesus at the time when this epistle was addressed to him. The evidence for this opinion is thus stated by Lightfoot and others.—(1.) Paul directs Timothy to salute the household of Onesiphorus, chap. iv. 19. But it is evident, from chap. i. 18, that Onesiphorus was an Ephesian, and, as the direction is to salute his "*household*," it may be argued with the more certainty that Timothy was then at Ephesus, the ordinary residence of the family of Onesiphorus. (2.) He directs Timothy to take Troas in the way as he came to him at Rome (chap. iv. 13), which was the way that Paul had gone to Ephesus (2 Cor. ii. 12; Acts xx. 5), thus showing that this was the usual route of travel, and was a way which Timothy would naturally take in passing from Ephesus to Rome. It is true that this does not absolutely prove that he was at *Ephesus*,—since, if he had been in any other part of the western portion of Asia Minor, the direction would have been the same—but it is a slight circumstance corroborating others. (3.) He warns him to beware of Alexander (chap. iv. 14), who we know was an Ephesian;—1 Tim. i. 20; Acts xix. 33. (4.) In chap. iv. 9, he gives direction to Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, and then adds (ver. 12), "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus." From this it would seem that one reason why he wished him then to come was, that he had appointed one to occupy his place there, so that he could leave without injury to the cause. But it would seem also probable that Paul was not in the habit of calling away a labourer from an important station without supplying his place. Thus, in Titus iii. 12, he says, "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me." It may thence be inferred that Timothy was at Ephesus at the time when Paul wrote to him, and that he had taken care that his place should not be left vacant, by the appointment of Tychicus to fill it when he should leave. (5.) It may be added, that the errors and vices which Timothy is directed to oppose, are the same which are referred to in the first epistle, and it may be hence inferred that he was at the same place.

How long Timothy had been in Ephesus is not certainly known, and is not material to be known in order to a proper understanding of the epistle. It does not appear, from the Acts, that he was with Paul during the two years in which he was in Cæsarea, nor during his voyage to Rome; yet it is certain that he was in Rome when Paul wrote to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon, because he is named in the titles to those epistles. In Heb. xiii. 23, Paul says that Timothy was "set at liberty," or, more probably, "sent away" (see Notes on that verse), but to what place he had gone is not mentioned. Nothing would be more natural, however, than that he should visit Ephesus again, and it is not improbable that Paul would leave him there when he again visited Rome.

§ 3. *The occasion on which the Epistle was written.*

The epistle was evidently written when the apostle was expecting soon to be put to death; chap. iv. 6—8. The main object of writing it seems to have been to request Timothy to come to him as speedily as possible; chap. iv. 9. But, in doing this, it was natural that Paul should accompany the request with such counsel as Timothy needed, and such as it was proper for Paul to give in probably the last letter that he would write to him. The particular *reason* why the apostle desired the presence of Timothy seems to have been, that nearly all the others on whom he might have supposed he could rely in a time of trial, had left him. Thus he says that Demas had

forsaken him; Crescens had gone to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia, and Tychicus he had himself sent to Ephesus; chap. iv. 10—12. No one remained with him but Luke (chap. iv. 11), and he was, therefore, desirous that Timothy and Mark should be with him; chap. iv. 11. He did not ask their presence merely that they might sustain him in his trials, but that they might aid him in the work of the ministry (chap. iv. 11), for it would seem that all hope of doing good in Rome was not closed.

If the view of the time when this epistle was written which has been taken in this introduction, is correct, and if this is the last epistle which was written by the apostle Paul before his martyrdom, then it occupies a very important place in sacred canon, and is invested with great interest. It may be regarded as the dying counsels of the most eminent of the apostles to one who had just entered on the ministerial life. We should read it with the interest with which we do the last words of the great and the good. Then we feel that every word which they utter has a weight which demands attention. We feel that, whatever a man might do at other times, he will not trifle then.—We feel that, having little time to express his wishes, he will select topics that lie nearest his heart, and that he deems most important. There is no more interesting position in which we can be placed, than when we sit down at such a man's feet, and listen to his parting counsels. To a young minister of the gospel, therefore, this epistle is invaluable; to any and every Christian, it cannot fail to be a matter of interest to listen to the last words of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and to ponder his last written testimony in favour of that religion to the promulgation of which he had devoted his talents and his life.

THE SECOND

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the [a] promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

[a] Ep. 3. 6.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

The principal design of this chapter is to exhort Timothy to steadfastness and fidelity as a Christian and a minister; and to entreat him to adhere to the truth, and live as became a Christian, in the midst of all the temptations by which he was surrounded, and while so many were turning away from the Christian faith. Timothy was young; he was exposed, like others, to trials; he could not be unaware that not a few had apostatized; he knew that his father in Christ was in bonds, and he was liable to become disheartened, or to be led astray. In these circumstances, the apostle seems to have resolved to place before him strong reasons to induce him to devote himself steadfastly to the cause of religion, and not to allow those things which might tend to alienate him from Christianity to have any effect on his mind. After the usual salutations, therefore (ver. 1, 2), he proceeds to present these considerations to the mind of Timothy: (1.) He commences the chapter with *delicate praise* of his young friend — one of the most happy methods of inducing him to persevere in the course of life on which he had entered; ver. 3 — 5. We naturally desire to perfect that in which we already excel; we feel encouraged for future efforts in a cause in which we have already been successful. The apostle, therefore, reminds Timothy of the manner in which he had been trained; of the piety of his mother and grandmother, and assures him of his belief that their efforts to train him up in the ways of religion had not been in vain. (2.) He urges various considerations to induce him not to turn away from that holy purpose to which he had devoted himself. The considerations which he urges, are these: (*a*) he had been solemnly consecrated to the work of preaching the gospel, ver. 6; (*b*) God had imparted to him, as to others, a spirit of love and power, and a sound mind, ver. 7; (*c*) the grace of God had called him to his great work, and he possessed that gospel by which life and immortality are brought to light, ver. 8—11; (*d*) Paul urges his own example, and says that, amidst all his own trials, he had never seen occasion to be ashamed of the gospel, ver. 12—14; and (*e*) he reminds Timothy that all his other friends in Asia had turned away from him, specifying two of them, and urges him, therefore, to maintain a steadfast attachment to the principles which he had professed, ver. 15. (3.) The chapter closes with the expression of an earnest prayer that the Lord would bless the family of Onesiphorus, and with a grateful mention of his kindness to him, ver. 16—18.

1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ,* Notes, Rom. i. 1. ¶ *By the will of God.* Called to be an apostle in accordance with the divine will and purpose; Notes, Gal. i. 1. ¶ *According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.* In accordance with the great promise of eternal life through the Saviour; that is, he was called to be

2 To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: [a] Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I [b] serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, [c] that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring [d] to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith [e] that is in thee,

[a] 1 Ti. 1.2. [b] Ac. 23.1. [c] He.13.18. [d] chap. 4.9,21. [e] 1 Ti. 4.6.

an apostle to carry out the great purpose of human salvation; comp Eph. iii. 6. God has made a promise of life to mankind through faith in the Lord Jesus, and it was with reference to this that he was called to the apostleship.

2. *To Timothy*, my *dearly beloved son;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 2. ¶ *Grace, mercy*, and *peace*, &c.; see Notes on Rom. i. 7.

3. *I thank God, whom I serve from* my *forefathers.* Paul reckoned among his forefathers the patriarchs and the holy men of former times, as being of the same nation with himself, though it may be that he also included his more immediate ancestors, who, for anything known to the contrary, may have been distinguished examples of piety. His own parents, it is certain, took care that he should be trained up in the ways of religion; comp. Notes on Phil. iii. 4, 5; Acts xxvi. 4, 5. The phrase "from my forefathers," probably means, after the *example* of my ancestors. He worshipped the same God; he held substantially the same truths; he had the same hope of the resurrection and of immortality; he trusted to the same Saviour *having come*, on whom they relied as *about to come*. His was not, therefore, a different religion from theirs; it was the same religion carried out and perfected. The religion of the Old Testament and the New is essentially the same; see Notes on Acts xxiii. 6. ¶ *With pure conscience;* see Notes on Acts xxiii. 1. ¶ *That without ceasing;* comp. Notes on Rom. xii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 17. ¶ *I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;* see Notes, Phil. i. 3, 4.

4. *Greatly desiring to see thee;* see chap. iv. 9. 21. It was probably on account of this earnest desire that this epistle was written. He wished to see him, not only on account of the warm friendship which he had for him, but because he would be useful to him in his present circumstances; see Intro., § 3. ¶ *Being mindful of thy tears.* Alluding probably to the tears which he shed at parting from him. The occasion to which he refers is not mentioned; but nothing is more probable than that Timothy would weep when separated from *such* a father and friend. It is not wrong thus to weep, for religion is not intended to make us stoics or savages. ¶ *That I may be filled with joy.* By seeing you again. It is easy to imagine what joy it would give Paul, then a prisoner, and forsaken by nearly all his friends, and about to die, to see a friend whom he loved as he did this young man. Learn hence, that there *may be* very pure and warm friendship between an old and young man, and that the warmth of true friendship is not diminished by the near prospect of death.

5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 5. On the faith of Timothy, see Notes on 1 Tim. iv. 6. ¶ *Which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois.* That is, the same faith dwelt in her; or, she was a sincere believer in Christ. It would seem probable, from this, that she was the first of the family who had been converted. In the Acts of the apostles (xvi. 1), we have an account of the family of Timothy:—"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra; and behold a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek." In this account no mention is made of the grandmother Lois, but there is no improbability in supposing that Paul was better acquainted with the family than Luke.

which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother [a] Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

a Ac. 16.1.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God [b] which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

b 1 Ti.4.14.

There is, at any rate, no contradiction between the two accounts; but the one confirms the other, and the "undesigned coincidence" furnishes an argument for the authenticity of both. See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ, in loc.* As the mother of Timothy was a Hebrew, it is clear that his grandmother was also. Nothing more is known of her than is here mentioned. ¶ *And in thy mother Eunice.* In Acts xvi. 1, it is said that the mother of Timothy was "a Jewess, and believed;" but her name is not mentioned. This shows that Paul was acquainted with the family, and that the statement in the epistle to Timothy was not forged from the account in the Acts. Here is another "undesigned coincidence." In the history in the Acts, nothing is said of the father, except that he was "a Greek, but it is implied that he was not a believer. In the epistle before us, nothing *whatever* is said of him. But the piety of his mother *alone* is commended, and it is fairly implied that his father was *not* a believer. This is one of those coincidences on which Paley has constructed his beautiful argument in the Horæ Paulinæ in favour of the genuineness of the New Testament.

6. *That thou stir up the gift of God.* Gr., That thou *kindle up* as a fire. The original word used here denotes the kindling of a fire, as by bellows, &c. It is not uncommon to compare piety to a flame or a fire, and the image is one that is obvious when we speak of causing that to burn more brightly. The idea is, that Timothy was to use all proper means to keep the flame of pure religion in the soul burning, and more particularly his zeal in the great cause to which he had been set apart. The agency of man himself is needful to keep the religion of the heart warm and glowing. However rich the gifts which God has bestowed upon us, they do not grow of their own accord, but need to be cultivated by our own personal care. ¶ *Which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* In connection with the presbytery; see Notes on 1 Tim. iv. 14. This proves that Paul took part in the ordination of Timothy; but it does *not* prove either that he performed the duty alone, or that the "ordaining virtue," whatever that was, was imparted by him only; for (1.) it is expressly said (1 Tim. iv. 14), that he was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, of which Paul was doubtless one; and (2.) the language here used, "by the putting on of *my* hands," is just such as Paul, or any other one of the presbytery, would use in referring to the ordination of Timothy, though they were all regarded as on a level. It is such an expression as an aged Presbyterian, or Congregational, or Baptist minister would address to a son whom he had assisted to ordain. Nothing would be more natural than to remind him that *his own* hands had been laid on him when he was set apart to the work of the ministry. It would be in the nature of a tender, pathetic, and solemn appeal, bringing all that there was in his own character, age, and relation to the other, to bear on him, in order to induce him to be faithful to his trust. On other occasions, he would naturally remind him that *others* had united with him in the act, and that he had derived his authority through the presbytery, just as Paul appeals to Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 14. But no one would now think of inferring from this, that he meant to be understood as saying that he alone had ordained him, or that all the authority for preaching the gospel had been imparted through *his* hands, and that those who were associated with him only expressed "*concurrence*;" that

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; [a] but of power, [b] and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker [c] of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved [d] us, and called [e] us with an holy calling,

[a] Ro. 8.15; 1 John 4.18. [b] Lu.24.49. [c] Col.1.24. [d] Mat.1.21. [e] Ro.8.28,30.

is, that their presence there was only an unmeaning ceremony. What *was* the "gift of God" which had been conferred in this way, Paul specifies in the next verse. It is "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The meaning is, that these had been conferred by God, and that the gift had been recognised by his ordination. It does not imply that any mysterious influence had gone from the hands of the ordainers, imparting any holiness to Timothy which he had not before.

7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear.* A timorous and servile spirit. This is said in order to encourage Timothy, who was not improbably modest and diffident. ¶ *But of power.* Power to encounter foes and dangers; power to bear up under trials; power to triumph in persecutions. That is, it is the nature of the gospel to inspire the mind with holy courage; comp. however, Luke xxiv. 49. ¶ *And of love.* Love to God and to the souls of men. The tendency of *this*, also, is to "cast out fear" (1 John iv. 18), and to make the mind bold and constant. Nothing will do more to inspire courage, to make a man fearless of danger, or ready to endure privation and persecution, than *love*. The love of country, and wife, and children, and home, makes the most timid bold when they are assailed; and the love of Christ and of a dying world nerves the soul to great enterprises, and sustains it in the deepest sorrows. ¶ *And of a sound mind.* The Greek word denotes one of sober mind; a man of prudence and discretion. The state referred to here is that in which the mind is well balanced, and under right influences; in which it sees things in their just proportions and relations; in which it is not feverish and excited, but when everything is in its proper place. It was this state of mind which Timothy was exhorted to cultivate; this which Paul regarded as so necessary to the performance of the duties of his office. It is as needful now for the minister of religion as it was then.

8. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.* Do not be ashamed to bear your testimony to the doctrines taught by the Lord Jesus; John iii. 11, 32, 33; vii. 7; comp. Acts x. 22; xx. 24; 1 Cor. i. 6; Rev. xxii. 16. Paul seems to have apprehended that Timothy was in some danger of being ashamed of this gospel, or of shrinking back from its open avowal in the trials and persecutions to which he now saw it exposed him. ¶ *Nor of me his prisoner.* Of the testimony which I have borne to the truth of the gospel. This passage proves that, when Paul wrote this epistle, he was in confinement; comp. Eph. iii. 1; vi. 20; Phil. i. 13, 14, 16; Col. iv. 3, 18; Philem. 9. Timothy knew that he had been thrown into prison on account of his love for the gospel. To avoid that himself, there might be some danger that a timid young man might shrink from an open avowal of his belief in the same system of truth. ¶ *But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.* The sufferings to which the profession of the gospel may expose you; comp. Notes on Col. i. 24. ¶ *According to the power of God.* That is, according to the power which God gives to those who are afflicted on account of the gospel. The apostle evidently supposes that they who were subjected to trials on account of the gospel, might look for divine strength to uphold them, and asks him to endure those trials, relying on that strength, and not on his own.

9. *Who hath saved us;* Notes Matt

not [a] according to our works, but according to his own purpose [b] and grace. which was given us

[a] Tit.3.5. [b] De.7.7,8; Ep.1.9,11.

i. 21. He has brought us into a state in which salvation is so certain, that Paul could speak of it as if it were already done. ¶ *And called us;* Notes, Rom. viii. 28, 30. ¶ *With an holy calling.* A calling which is in its own nature holy, and which leads to holiness; comp. Notes on Eph. iv. 1; Phil. iii. 14; Heb. iii. 1. ¶ *Not according to our works;* Titus iii. 5; Notes, Eph. ii. 8,9. The idea is, that our own works have nothing to do in inducing God to call us. As, when we *become* Christians, he does not choose us *because* of our works, so the eternal purpose in regard to our salvation could not have been formed because he foresaw that we *would* perform such works as would be a reason why he should choose us. The whole arrangement was irrespective of our deserts. ¶ *But according to his own purpose and grace;* see Notes on Rom. ix. 11—13, 16; Eph. i. 4, 5. ¶ *Which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* That is, which he *intended* to give us, for it was not then *actually* given. The thing was so certain in the divine purposes, that it might be said to be already done; comp. Notes, Rom. iv. 17.

10. *But is now made manifest.* The purpose to save us was long concealed in the divine mind, but the Saviour came that he might make it known. ¶ *Who hath abolished death.* That is, he has made it so certain that death *will be* abolished, that it may be spoken of as already done. It is remarkable how often, in this chapter, Paul speaks of what God *intends* to do as so certain, that it may be spoken of as a thing that is already done. In the meaning of the expression here, see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 54; comp. Notes on Heb. ii. 14. The meaning is, that, through the gospel, death will cease to reign, and over those who are saved there will be no such thing as we now understand by dying. ¶ *And hath brought*

in Christ Jesus, before [c] the world began;

10 But is now made manifest

[c] Ep.i.4.

life and immortality to light through the gospel. This is one of the great and glorious achievments of the gospel, and one of the things by which it is distinguished from every other system. The word rendered "hath brought to light"—φωτίζω—means to give light, to shine; then to give light to, to shine upon; and then to bring to light, to make known. *Rob. Lex.* The sense is, that these things were before obscure or unknown, and that they have been disclosed to us by the gospel. It is, of course, not meant that there were *no* intimations of these truths before, or that *nothing* was known of them—for the Old Testament shed some light on them; but that they are fully disclosed to man in the gospel. It is there that all ambiguity and doubt are removed, and that the evidence is so clearly stated as to leave no doubt on the subject. The intimations of a future state, among the wisest of the heathen, were certainly very obscure, and their hopes very faint. The hope of a future state is styled by Cicero, Futurorum quoddam augurium sæculorum—*a conjecture* or *surmise of future ages. Tusc. Q.* 1. Seneca says it is "that which our wise men do promise, but they do not prove." *Epis.* 102. Socrates, even at his death, said, "I hope to go hence to good men, but of that I am not very confident; nor doth it become any wise man to be positive that so it will be. I must now die, and you shall live; but which of us is in the better state, the living or the dead, God only knows." Pliny says, "Neither soul nor body has any more sense after death, than before it was born." Cicero begins his discourse on the subject with a profession that he intended to deliver nothing as fixed and certain, but only as probable, and as having some likelihood of truth. And, having mentioned the different sentiments of philosophers, he concludes, —"Which of these opinions is true,

by the appearing [a] of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished [b] death, and hath brought life [c] and immortality to light through the gospel:

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless

a 1 Pe.1.20. *b* 1 Co.15.54. *c* John 5.24-29.

some god must tell us; which is most like to truth, is a great question." See Whitby, *in loc.* Such doubts existed in regard to the immortality of the *soul;* but of the resurrection and future life of the *body,* they had no conception whatever; comp. Acts xvii. 32. With what propriety, then, may it be said that these doctrines were brought to light through the gospel! Man would never have known them if it had not been for revelation. The word "*life,*" here, refers undoubtedly to life in the future world. The question was, whether man would live at all; and that question has been determined by the gospel. The word "immortality" means, properly, *incorruption, incapacity of decay;* and may be applied either to the body or the soul. See it explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 42. It is used in reference to the *body,* in 1 Cor. xv. 42, 53, 54; in Rom. ii. 7, it is applied to the future state of rewards, without special reference to the body or soul. Here it seems to refer to the future state as that in which there will be no corruption or decay. Many suppose that the phrase "life and immortality," here, is used by hendiadys (two things for one), as meaning immortal or incorruptible life. The gospel thus has truths not found in any other system, and contains what man never would have discovered of himself. As fair a trial had been made among the philosophers of Greece and Rome as could be made, to determine whether the unaided powers of the human mind could arrive at these great truths; and their most distinguished philosophers confessed that they could arrive at no certainty on the subject. In this state of things, the gospel comes and reveals truths worthy of all acceptation; sheds light where man had desired it; solves the great problems which had for ages perplexed the human mind, and discloses to man all that he could wish—that not only the soul will live for ever, but that the body will be raised from the grave, and that the entire man will become immortal. How strange it is that men will not embrace the gospel! Socrates and Cicero would have hailed its light, and welcomed its truths, as those which their whole nature panted to know.

11. *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher.* That is, I am appointed to make these truths known; see Notes on Eph. iii. 7, 8.

12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things.* That is, I suffer on account of my purpose to carry the gospel to the Gentiles; see Notes on Col. i. 24. ¶ *Nevertheless I am not ashamed;* comp. Notes on Rom. i. 16. ¶ *For I know whom I have believed.* Marg., *trusted.* The idea is, that he understood the character of that Redeemer to whom he had committed his eternal interests, and knew that he had no reason to be ashamed of confiding in him. He was able to keep all that he had intrusted to his care, and would not suffer him to be lost; see Isa. xxviii. 16. ¶ *And am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.* That is, the soul, with all its immortal interests. A man has nothing of higher value to intrust to another than the interests of his soul, and there is no other act of confidence like that in which he intrusts the keeping of that soul to the Son of God. Learn hence, (1.) that religion consists in committing the soul to the care of the Lord Jesus; because (*a*) we feel that we cannot secure its salvation ourselves; (*b*) it is by nature in danger; (*c*) if not saved by him, it will not be saved at all. (2.) That it is a great and invaluable treasure which is committed to him. (*a*) No higher treasure can be committed to an-

I am not ashamed: [a] for I know whom I have [1] believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep

a Ro.1.16. 1 or, *trusted*. b 1 Pe.4.19.

other; (*b*) in connection with that the whole question of our happiness on earth and in heaven is intrusted to him, and all depends on his fidelity. (3.) It is done by the true Christian with the most entire confidence, so that the mind is at rest. The *grounds* of this confidence are (*a*) what is said of the mighty *power* of the Saviour; (*b*) his promises that he *will* keep all who confide in him (comp. John x. 27—29; (*c*) experience—the fact that those who *have* trusted in him have found that he is able to keep them. (4.) This act of committing the soul, with all its interests, to the Saviour, is the true source of peace in the trials of life. This is so because, (*a*) having done this, we feel that our *great* interests are secure. If the *soul* is safe, why need we be disturbed by the loss of health, or property, or other temporal comforts? Those are secondary things. A man who is shipwrecked, and who sees his son or daughter safe with him on the shore, will be little concerned that a casket of jewels fell overboard —however valuable it might be. (*b*) All those trials will soon pass away, and he will be safe in heaven. (*c*) These very things *may* further the great object—the salvation of the soul. A man's great interests *may* be more safe when in a prison than when in a palace; on a pallet of straw than on a bed of down; when *constrained* to say, "Give us this day our daily bread," than when encompassed with the wealth of Crœsus. ¶ *Against that day.* The day of judgment—called "*that* day," without anything further to designate it, because it is *the* great day; "the day for which all others days were made." It seems to have been so much the object of thought and conversation among the early Christians, that the apostle supposed that he would be understood by merely referring to it as "*that* day;" that is, the day which they

that which I have [b] committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold fast [c] the form [d] of

c Re.2.25. d Ro.6.17.

were always preaching about, and talking about, and thinking about.

13. *Hold fast the form of sound words;* see Notes, 1 Tim. i. 3. On the Greek word here rendered "*form*," see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 16, where it is rendered *pattern*. The word means a form, sketch, or imperfect delineation—an outline. Grotius says that it here means "an exemplar, but an exemplar fixed in the mind—an idea." Calvin says that the command is that he should adhere to the doctrine which he had learned, not only in its substance, but in its form. Archbishop Tillotson explains this as meaning the profession of faith which was made by Christians at baptism. There seems to be an allusion to some summary or outline of truth which Paul had given to Timothy, though there is no evidence that it was written. Indeed, there is every presumption that, if it refers to such a summary, it was *not* committed to writting. If it had been, it would have been regarded as inspired, and would have taken its place in the canon of Scripture. It may be presumed that almost none of the sacred writings would have been more sacredly preserved than such a condensed summary of Christian truth. But there is no improbability in supposing that Paul, either at his ordination, or on some other occasion, may have stated the outlines of the Christian religion to Timothy, that he might have a clear and connected view of the subject. The passage, therefore, may be used as an argument for the propriety of some brief summary of doctrine as a matter of convenience, though not as having binding authority on the consciences of others. ¶ *Of sound words;* comp. Notes on 1 Tim. vi. 3. The Greek is the same in both places. ¶ *Which thou hast heard of me.* This proves that he does not refer to a *written* creed, since what he refers to was something which he had *heard*. ¶ *In faith and love*

sound [a] words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That [b] good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 This thou knowest, that all [c] they which are in Asia be turned [d] away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; [e] for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. [f]

a 1 Ti.6.3. *b* 1 Ti.6.20. *c* Ac.19.10. *d* chap.4.10,16. *e* chap.4.19. *f* Ac.28.20.

which is in Christ Jesus. Hold these truths with sincere faith in the Lord Jesus, and with that love which is the best evidence of attachment to him.

14. *That good thing which was committed unto thee;* see Notes, 1 Tim. vi. 20. The reference here in the phrase, "that good thing committed to thee," is to the sound Christian doctrine with which he had been intrusted, and which he was required to transmit to others. ¶ *Keep by the Holy Ghost.* By the aid of the Holy Ghost. One of the best methods of preserving the knowledge and the love of truth is to cherish the influences of the Holy Spirit.

15. *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.* That is, in that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. The name Asia was often given particularly to that part of Asia Minor; see Notes on Acts ii. 9; xvi. 6. This passage proves that Timothy was somewhere in that region when this epistle was written to him, for otherwise he could not be supposed to "know" what is here said. When Paul says that "*all*" were turned away from him, he must use the word in a general sense, for he immediately specifies *one* who had been faithful and kind to him. ¶ *Of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.* We know nothing of these individuals but what is here mentioned. It would seem that they were prominent persons, and those from whom the apostle had a right to expect other treatment. "The ecclesiastical traditions allege that they were of the seventy disciples, and in the end became followers of Simon Magus. We imagine that this is little more than conjecture." *Pict. Bib.* It is a sad thing when the *only* record made of a man—the only evidence which we have that he ever lived at all—is, that he turned away from a friend, or forsook the paths of true religion. And yet there are many men of whom the only thing to be remembered of them is, that they lived to do wrong.

16. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus.* The *family* of Onesiphorus—for so the word *house* is often used. He was himself still living (ver. 18), but not improbably then absent from his home; comp. chap. iv. 19. He was evidently of Asia, and is the only one who is mentioned from that region who had showed the apostle kindness in his trials. He is mentioned only in this epistle, and nothing more is known of him. The record is entirely honourable to him, and for his family the apostle felt a warm interest on account of the kindness which he had showed to him in prison. The ecclesiastical traditions also state that *he* was one of the seventy disciples, and was ultimately bishop of Corone. But there is no evidence of this. There is much force in the remark of the Editor of the Pictorial Bible, that "the pretended lists of the seventy disciples seem to have been made out on the principle of including all the names incidentally mentioned in the sacred books, and not otherwise appropriated." ¶ *For he oft refreshed me.* That is, showed me kindness, and ministered to my wants. ¶ *And was not ashamed of my chain.* Was not ashamed to be known as a friend of one who was a prisoner on account of religion. Paul was bound with a chain when a prisoner at Rome; Phil. i. 13, 14, 16; Col. iv. 3, 18: Philem. 10; Notes, Acts xxviii. 20.

17 But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found *me*.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in [a] that day: and in how many things he [b] ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

a Mat.25.34-40. *b* He.6.10.

17. *But when he was in Rome.* What was the employment of Onesiphorus is not known. It may have been that he was a merchant, and had occasion to visit Rome on business. At all events, he was at pains to search out the apostle, and his attention was the more valuable because it cost him trouble to find him. It is not every one, even among professors of religion, who in a great and splendid city would be at the trouble to search out a Christian brother, or even a minister, who was a prisoner, and endeavour to relieve his sorrows. This man, so kind to the great apostle, will be among those to whom the Saviour will say, at the final judgment, "I was in prison, and ye came unto me;" Matt. xxv. 36.

18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.* The day of judgment; Notes on ver. 12. This proves that Onesiphorus was then alive, as Paul would not offer prayer for him if he was dead. The Papists, indeed, argue from this in favour of praying for the dead—*assuming* from chap. iv. 19, that Onesiphorus was then dead. But there is no evidence of that. The passage in chap. iv. 19, would prove only that he was then absent from his family. ¶ *And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus.* This was the home of Onesiphorus, and his family was still there; chap. iv. 19. When Paul was at Ephesus, it would seem that Onesiphorus had showed him great kindness. His affection for him did not change when he became a prisoner. True friendship, and especially that which is based on religion, will live in all the vicissitudes of fortune, whether we are in prosperity or adversity; whether in a home of plenty, or in a prison.

This chapter is full of interest, and may suggest many interesting reflections. We see,

(1.) A holy man imprisoned and about to die. He had nearly finished his course, and had the prospect of soon departing.

(2.) He was forsaken by his friends, and left to bear his sorrows alone. They on whom he might have relied, had left him; and to all his outward sufferings, there was added this, one of the keenest which his Master endured before him, that his friends forsook him, and left him to bear his sorrows alone.

(3.) Yet his mind is calm, and his faith in the gospel is unshaken. He expresses no regret that he had embraced the gospel; no sorrow that he had been so zealous in it as to bring these calamities upon himself. That gospel he still loves, and his great solicitude is, that his young friend may never shrink from avowing it, though it may call him also to pass through scenes of persecution and sorrow.

(4.) In the general apostasy, the turning away of those on whom he might have relied, it is refreshing and interesting, to find mention made of *one* unshaken friend; ver. 16. He never swerved in his affections. He had been kind to him in former years of comparative honour, and he did not leave him now in the dark day of adversity. It is always interesting to find true friendship in this world—friendship that survives all reverses, and that is willing to manifest itself when the great mass turn coldly away. There *is* such a thing as friendship, and there *is* such a thing as religion, and when they meet and mingle in the same heart, the one strengthens the other; and *then* neither persecution, nor poverty, nor chains, will prevent our doing good to him who is in prison and is about to die; see Notes on chap. iv. 16.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is made up of vari

CHAPTER II.

THOU therefore, my son, be [a] strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me [1] among many witnesses, the same commit [b] thou

a Jos.1.7; Ep.6.10. 1 or, *by*. b 1 Ti.1.18.

ous exhortations and encouragements to duty. The apostle exhorts Timothy to be strong in the Christian graces (ver. 1); to commit the great trust which he had received to faithful men (ver. 2); to endure hardships like a good soldier (ver. 3—7), and refers him (*a*) to the case of one who goes to war, whose great business it is to please him in whose service he is (ver. 4); (*b*) to the case of one who strives for a crown at the games (ver. 5), and (*c*) to the husbandman who looks onward for the reward of his labour; ver. 6. He then, in order to encourage him to be patient in enduring the trials to which he would be exposed, refers him (*a*) to the certainty of the truth of that religion in whose cause he would suffer (ver. 8); (*b*) to his own case, reminding him how much *he* had endured in that cause (ver. 9, 10); (*c*) to the fact that our sufferings here will be crowned with certain glory hereafter (ver. 11, 12); and (*d*) to the assurance that the Lord Jesus will be faithful to all his promises to his people; ver. 13. These things the apostle then exhorts him to press upon the hearts of others, that they might not waste their time in unprofitable pursuits, but might engage in the same great and arduous struggle for securing the reward; ver. 14. He then exhorts Timothy to study to perform his duties in such a way that he would not be ashamed, and to avoid the unimportant strifes which were then raging; and to enforce this, he refers to a real case with which Timothy was acquainted—that of Hymeneus and Philetus, who, by unprofitable speculations, had been led to deny a fundamental doctrine of religion; ver. 15—18. Yet, Paul says, he should not be discouraged because some had been led into dangerous errors. The foundation of God remained firm. Those that were truly his were known, and would not apostatize; ver. 19. In illustration of this, and to show that it was to be expected that *all* would not honour religion, the apostle refers to a house in which there were all sorts of vessels, some to honour and some to dishonour, and says that, if any one would endeavour to free himself from all that was base and impure, he would be a vessel meet for the use of the Master; ver. 20, 21. To accomplish this, he gives Timothy various directions respecting his conduct. He was to flee from youthful lusts; he was to follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace; he was to avoid foolish questions; he was to be an example of gentleness and meekness, and he was patiently to instruct those that were of a different character; ver. 22—26.

1. *Thou therefore.* In view of the fact stated in the previous chapter, that many had turned away from the apostle, and had forsaken the paths of truth. ¶ *Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus;* comp. Notes on Eph. vi. 10. The meaning is, Be strong, relying on the grace which the Lord Jesus only can impart.

2. *And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses.* Marg., *by*. Before, or in the presence of, many witnesses. Perhaps he refers to a solemn charge which he gave him, in the presence of the church, when he was ordained. It is by no means improbable that such a charge was given then to a newly ordained minister, as it is now. On such an occasion, the apostle would be likely to state a summary of Christian doctrine,—(comp. Notes on chap. i. 13), —and to exhort Timothy to a faithful adherence to it. ¶ *The same commit thou to faithful men.* In the same way as those things have been committed to you. The reference is undoubtedly to ordination to the ministerial office. Timothy was to see that those only were admitted to the ministry who were qualified to understand the truths of religion, and to

to faithful men, who shall be able [a] to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure [b] hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

a Tit.1.9. b chap.4.5.

communicate them to others. This is a clear warrant for ministers to set apart others to the same sacred office. It does not prove that the people are not at liberty to choose their own pastor, but only that those in the ministry are to set apart others to the same office with themselves. There is, doubtless, to be a "succession" of ministers in the church; but the true line of the "succession" is to be found in good men who are qualified to teach, and who have the spirit of Christ, and not merely in those who have been ordained. ¶ *Who shall be able to teach others also.* On the qualifications of ministers, see Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 2—7.

3. *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.* Such hardships as a soldier is called to endure. The apostle supposes that a minister of the gospel might be called to endure hardships, and that it is reasonable that he should be as ready to do it as a soldier is. On the hardships which *he* endured himself, see Notes on 2 Cor. xi. 23—29. Soldiers often endure great privations. Taken from their homes and friends; exposed to cold, or heat, or storms, or fatiguing marches; sustained on coarse fare, or almost destitute of food, they are often compelled to endure as much as the human frame can bear, and often indeed, sink under their burdens, and die. If, for reward or their country's sake, they are willing to do this, the soldier of the cross should be willing to do it for his Saviour's sake, and for the good of the human race. Hence, let no man seek the office of the ministry as a place of ease. Let no one come into it merely to enjoy himself. Let no one enter it who is not prepared to lead a soldier's life, and to welcome hardship and trial as his portion. He would make a bad soldier, who, at his enlistment, should make it a condition that he should be

4 No man that warreth [c] entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

c 1 Co.9.25,26.

permitted to sleep on a bed of down, and always be well clothed and fed, and never exposed to peril, or compelled to pursue a wearisome march. Yet do not some men enter the ministry, making these the conditions? And *would* they enter the ministry on any other terms?

4. *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of* this *life.* Having alluded to the soldier, and stated one thing in which the Christian minister is to resemble him, another point of resemblance is suggested to the mind of the apostle. Neither the minister nor the soldier is to be encumbered with the affairs of this life, and the one should not be more than the other. This is always a condition in becoming a soldier. He gives up his own business during the time for which he is enlisted, and devotes himself to the service of his country. The farmer leaves his plough, and the mechanic his shop, and the merchant his store, and the student his books, and the lawyer his brief; and neither of them expect to pursue these things while engaged in the service of their country. It would be wholly impracticable to carry on the plans of a campaign, if each one of these classes should undertake to prosecute his private business. See this fully illustrated from the Rules of War among the Romans, by Grotius, *in loc.* Roman soldiers were not allowed to marry, or to engage in any husbandry or trade; and they were forbidden to act as tutors to any person, or curators to any man's estate, or proctors in the cause of other men. The general principle was, that they were excluded from those relations, agencies, and engagements, which it was thought would divert their minds from that which was to be the sole object of pursuit. So with the ministers of the gospel. It is *equally* improper for them to

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman [1] that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

1 *labouring first, must be partaker.*

"entangle" themselves with the business of a farm or plantation; with plans of speculation and gain, and with any purpose of worldly aggrandizement. The minister of the gospel accomplishes the design of his appointment only when he can say in sincerity, that he "is not entangled with the affairs of this life;" comp. Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 25—27. ¶ *That he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.* That is, him who has enlisted him, or in whose employ he is. His great object is to approve himself to him. It is not to pursue his own plans, or to have his own will, or to accumulate property or fame for himself. His will is absorbed in the will of his commander, and his purpose is accomplished if he meet with his approbation. Nowhere else is it so true that the will of one becomes lost in that of another, as in the case of the soldier. In an army it is contemplated that there shall be but one mind, one heart, one purpose —that of the commander; and that the whole army shall be as obedient to that as the members of the human body are to the one will that controls all. The application of this is obvious. The grand purpose of the minister of the gospel is to please Christ. He is to pursue no separate plans, and to have no separate will, of his own; and it is contemplated that the whole *corps* of Christian ministers and members of the churches shall be as entirely subordinate to the will of Christ, as an army is to the orders of its chief.

5. *And if a man also strive for masteries.* As in the Grecian games. See this favourite illustration of Paul explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 24, seq. ¶ Yet *is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* In conformity with the rules of the games. See Grotius, *in loc.* No one could obtain the prize unless he had complied with all the laws of the games, and had thus given to those with whom he contended, a fair opportunity to succeed. "In those contests, he who transgressed the rules in the least matter, not only failed of the prize, even though the apparent victor, but was sometimes disgraced and punished." *Pict. Bib.* So the apostle here represents the Christian minister as engaged in a struggle or conflict for the crown. He says that he could not hope to win it unless he should comply with all the laws by which it is conferred; unless he should subdue every improper propensity, and make an effort like that evinced by the combatants at the Olympic games; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.

6. *The husbandman that laboureth* The margin is, "*labouring first, must be partaker.*" The idea, according to the translation in the text, is, that there is a fitness or propriety (δει) that the man who cultivates the earth, should enjoy the fruits of his labour. See the same image explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 10. But if this be the meaning here, it is not easy to see why the apostle introduces it. According to the marginal reading, the word "*first*" is introduced in connection with the word *labour*—"*labouring first, must be partaker.*" That is, it is a great law that the husbandman must work before he receives a harvest. This sense will accord with the purpose of the apostle. It was to remind Timothy that *labour* must precede reward; that if a man would reap, he must sow; that he could hope for no fruits, unless he toiled for them. The point was not that the husbandman would be *the first one* who would partake of the fruits; but that he must *first labour* before he obtained the reward. Thus understood, this would be an encouragement to Timothy to persevere in his toils, looking onward to the reward. The Greek will bear this construction, though it is not the most obvious one.

7 Consider [a] what I say; and the [b] Lord give thee understanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ, [c] of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble,

[a] 1 Ti. 4.15. [b] Pr.2.6. [c] Ro.1.3,4.

7. *Consider what I say;* see Notes, 1 Tim. iv. 15. The sense is, "Think of the condition of the soldier, and the principles on which he is enlisted; think of the aspirant for the crown in the Grecian games; think of the farmer, patiently toiling in the prospect of the distant harvest; and then go to *your* work with a similar spirit." These things *are* worth attention. When the minister of the gospel thinks of his hardships, of his struggles against an evil world, and of his arduous and constant discouraging toil, let him think of the soldier, of the man who struggles for this world's honours, and of the patient farmer—*and be content.* How patiently do they bear all, and yet for what inferior rewards! ¶ *And the Lord give thee understanding in all things.* Enable you to see the force of these considerations, and to apply them to your own case. Such are often the discouragements of the ministry; so prone is the mind to despondency, that we need the help of the Lord to enable us to apply the most obvious considerations, and to derive support from the most plain and simple truths and promises.

8. *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead.* Or rather, perhaps, "Remember Jesus Christ; him who was raised from the dead." The idea seems not to be, as our translators supposed, that he was to reflect on the fact that he was raised from the dead; but rather that he was to think of the Saviour himself. "Think of the Saviour, now raised up from the dead after all the sorrows of this life, and let this encourage you to bear *your* trials." There is nothing better fitted to enable us to endure the labours and trials of this life, than to think of the Saviour. On the phrase "seed of David," see Notes on Rom. i. 3. ¶ *According to my gospel.* The gospel which I preach; Notes, 2 Thess. ii. 14.

9. *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer. As if* I were a violator of the laws. That is, I am treated as if I were a criminal. ¶ Even *unto bonds.* As if I were one of the worst kind of malefactors; Notes, Eph. vi. 20. During the apostle's first imprisonment at Rome, he was permitted to "dwell in his own hired house," though guarded by a soldier, and probably chained to him; see Notes on Acts xxviii. 16, 30. What was his condition in his second imprisonment, during which this epistle was written, we have no means of knowing with certainty. It is probable, however, that he was subjected to much more rigid treatment than he had been in the first instance. The tradition is, that he and Peter were together in the Mamertine prison at Rome; and the place is still shown in which it is said that they were confined. The Mamertine prisons are of great antiquity. According to Livy, they were constructed by Ancus Martius, and enlarged by Servius Tullius. The lower prison is supposed to have been once a quarry, and to have been at one time occupied as a granary. These prisons are on the descent of the Capitoline Mount, towards the Forum. They consist of two apartments, one over the other, built with large, uncemented stones. There is no entrance to either, except by a small aperture in the roof, and by a small hole in the upper floor, leading to the cell below, without any staircase to either. The upper prison is twenty-seven feet long, by twenty wide; the lower one is elliptical, and measures twenty feet by ten In the lower one is a small spring, which is said at Rome to have arisen at the command of Peter, to enable him to baptize his keepers, Processus and Martianus, with forty-seven companions, whom

as an evil-doer, *even* unto bonds ; [a] but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the [b] elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 *It is* a faithful saying: For

[a] Ep.6.20. [b] 2 Co.1.6. [c] Ro.6.5,8.

if [c] we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him :*

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him :* If we deny [d] *him*, he also will deny us :

13 If [e] we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful : he [f] cannot deny himself.

[d] Mat. 10.33. [e] Ro.3.3. [f] Nu.23.19.

he converted. No certain reliance can be placed on any part of this tradition, though in itself there is no improbability in supposing that these prisons may have been used for confining Christians, and the apostle Paul among others. Dr. Burton says that a more horrible place for the confinement of a human being can scarcely be conceived. ¶ *But the word of God is not bound.* This is one of Paul's happy turns of thought ; comp. Acts xxvi. 29. The meaning is plain. The gospel was prospered. *That* could not be fettered and imprisoned. It circulated with freedom, even when he who was appointed to preach it was in chains ; see Phil. i. 13, 14. As this was the great matter, his own imprisonment was of comparatively little consequence. What may befall *us* is of secondary importance. The grand thing is the triumph of truth on the earth ; and well may *we* bear privations and sorrows, if the gospel moves on in triumph.

10. *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes;* see Notes on 2 Cor. i. 6. The sense is, What I suffer is in the cause of the church, spoken of here, as it is often, as *chosen*, or *elected;* Notes on Eph. i. 4. ¶ *That they may also obtain the salvation*, &c. Their salvation, though they were elected, could not be secured without proper efforts. The meaning of the apostle here is, that he was willing to suffer if he might save others ; and any one *ought* to be willing to suffer in order to secure the salvation of the elect—for it was an object for which the Redeemer was willing to lay down his life.

11. It is *a faithful saying*. Or, rather, that which he was about to say was worthy of entire credence and profound attention ; see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 15. The object is to encourage Timothy to bear trials by the hope of salvation. ¶ *For if we be dead with* him ; see Notes on Rom. vi. 8. ¶ *We shall also live with* him. This was a sort of maxim, or a settled point, which is often referred to in the Bible ; see Notes on Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5 ; John xi. 25 ; 1 Thess. iv. 14.

12. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with* him. The meaning is, that the members will be treated as the Head is. We become united with him by faith, and, if we share his treatment on earth, we shall share his triumphs in heaven ; see Notes, Rom. viii. 17. ¶ *If we deny* him, *he also will deny us;* see Notes on Matt. x. 32, 33.

13. *If we believe not*, yet *he abideth faithful.* This cannot mean that, if we live in sin, he will certainly save us, as if he had made any promise to the elect, or formed any purpose that he would save them, whatever might be their conduct ; for (1.) he had just said that if we deny him he will deny us ; and (2.) there is no such promise in the Bible, and no such purpose has been formed. The promise is, that he that is a believer shall be saved, and there is no purpose to save any but such as lead holy lives. The meaning must be, that if we are unbelieving and unfaithful, Christ will remain true to his word, and we cannot hope to be saved. The object of the apostle evidently is, to excite Timothy to fidelity in the performance of duty, and to encourage him to bear trials, by the assurance that we cannot hope to escape if we are not faithful to the cause of the Saviour. This interpretation accords

14 Of these things put [a] *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive [b] not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

[a] 2 Pe.1.13. [b] Tit.3.9,10.

15 Study [c] to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly [d] dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane *and* vain

[c] 2 Pe.1.10. [d] Mat.13.52.

with the design which he had in view. ¶ *He cannot deny himself.* Implying that it would be a denial of his very nature to save those who are unfaithful. He is holy; and how can he save one who is unholy? His very nature is purity; and how can he save one who has no purity? Let no one, then, suppose that, because he is elected, he is safe, if he lives in sin. The electing purpose of God, indeed, makes salvation sure; but it is only for those who lead righteous lives. Nothing would be more dishonourable for God than to resolve to save a man that lived habitually in sin; and if that were the doctrine of election, it would deserve all the opprobrium that has ever been heaped upon it.

14. *Of these things put* them *in remembrance.* These great principles in regard to the kingdom of Christ. They would be as useful to others as they were for Timothy, to whom they were specially addressed. ¶ *Charging* them *before the Lord.* In the presence of the Lord, implying that it was a very important matter; Notes, 1 Tim. i. 18. ¶ *That they strive not about words to no profit;* see Notes, 1 Tim. i. 6; vi. 4. ¶ But *to the subverting of the hearers.* Turning them away from the simplicity of faith. It is rare, indeed, that a religious controversy does not produce this effect, and this is commonly the case, where, as often happens, the matter in dispute is of little importance.

15. *Study to show thyself approved unto God.* Give diligence (2 Pet. ii. 10), or make an effort so to discharge the duties of the ministerial office as to meet the divine approbation. The object of the ministry is not to please men. Such doctrines should be preached, and such plans formed, and such a manner of life pursued, as God will approve. To do this demands *study* or *care*—for there are many temptations to the opposite course; there are many things the tendency of which is to lead a minister to seek popular favour rather than the divine approval. If *any* man please God, it will be as the result of deliberate intention and a careful life. ¶ *A workman that needeth not to be ashamed.* A man faithfully performing his duty, so that when he looks over what he has done, he may not blush. ¶ *Rightly dividing the word of truth.* The word here rendered "rightly dividing," occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *to cut straight, to divide right;* and the allusion here may be to a steward who makes a proper distribution to each one under his care of such things as his office and their necessities require; comp. Notes on Matt. xiii. 52. Some have supposed that there is an allusion here to the Jewish priest, cutting or dividing the sacrifice into proper parts; others, that the allusion is to the Scribes dividing the law into sections; others, to a carver distributing food to the guests at a feast. Robinson (*Lex.*) renders it, "rightly proceeding as to the word of truth;" that is, rightfully and skilfully teaching the word of truth. The idea seems to be, that the minister of the gospel is to make a proper distribution of that word, adapting his instructions to the circumstances and wants of his hearers, and giving to each that which will be fitted to nourish the soul for heaven.

16. *But shun profane* and *vain babblings,* Notes, 1 Tim. vi. 20. ¶ *For they will increase unto more ungodliness.* Their tendency is to alienate the soul from God, and to lead to impiety. Such kinds of disputation are not merely a waste of time, they are productive of positive mischief. A man fond of contention in religious things is seldom one who

babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness;

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker; [1] of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, [a] saying [b] That the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation

1 *gangrene.*

a 1 Ti.6.21. *b* 1 Co.15.12.

has much love for the practical duties of piety, or any very deep sense of the distinction between right and wrong. You will not usually look for him in the place of prayer, nor can you expect his aid in the conversion of sinners, nor will you find that he has any very strict views of religious obligation.

17. *And their word.* The word, or the discourses of those who love vain and idle disputations. ¶ *Will eat as doth a canker.* Marg., *gangrene.* This word —γάγγραινα—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is derived from γραιω, γραινω, *graio* or *graino, to devour, corrode,* and means *gangrene* or *mortification*—the death of a part, spreading, unless arrested, by degrees over the whole body. The words rendered "will eat," mean *will have nutriment;* that is, will spread over and consume the healthful parts. It will not merely destroy the parts immediately affected, but will extend into the surrounding healthy parts and destroy them also. So it is with erroneous doctrines. They will not merely eat out the truth in the particular matter to which they refer, but they will also spread over and corrupt other truths. The doctrines of religion are closely connected, and are dependent on each other—like the different parts of the human body. One cannot be corrupted without affecting those adjacent to it, and unless checked, the corruption will soon spread over the whole. ¶ *Of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus.* In regard to Hymenæus, see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 20. Of Philetus nothing more is known. They have gained an undesirable immortality, destined to be known to the end of time only as the advocates of error.

18. *Who concerning the truth have erred.* To what extent they had erred is unknown. Paul mentions only one point—that pertaining to the resurrection; but says that this was like a gangrene. It would certainly, unless checked, destroy all the other doctrines of religion. No man can safely hold a single error, any more than he can safely have one part of his body in a state of mortification. ¶ *Saying that the resurrection is past already.* It is not known in what *form* they held this opinion. It may have been, as Augustine supposes, that they taught that there was no resurrection but that which occurs in the soul when it is recovered from the death of sin, and made to live anew. Or it may be that they held that those who had died had experienced all the resurrection which they ever would, by passing into another state, and receiving at death a spiritual body fitted to their mode of being in the heavenly world. Whatever was the form of the opinion, the apostle regarded it as a most dangerous error, for just views of the resurrection undoubtedly lie at the foundation of correct apprehensions of the Christian system; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 12—19. ¶ *And overthrow the faith of some.* That is, on this point, and as would appear on all the correlative subjects of Christian belief; comp. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.

19. *Nevertheless the foundation of God is sure.* Marg., *steady.* The meaning is, that though some had been turned away by the arts of these errorists, yet the foundation of the church which God had laid remained firm; comp. Eph. ii. 20, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." As long as this foundation remained firm, there was no reason to be troubled from the few instances of apostasy which had occurred; comp. Ps. xi. 3. It is not uncommon to com-

[a] of God standeth [1] sure, having this seal, The Lord [b] knoweth them that are his. And, Let [c] every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

[a] Pr.10.25. [1] or, *steady*
[b] Na.1.7; John10.14,27. [c] Ps.97.10.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels [d] of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

[d] Ro.9.21.

pare the church to a building erected on a solid foundation; Eph. ii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10; Matt. xvi. 18. ¶ *Having this seal.* Or rather a seal with this inscription. The word *seal* is sometimes used to denote the instrument by which an impression is made, and sometimes the impression or inscription itself. A seal is used for security (Matt. xxvii. 66), or as a mark of genuineness; Rev. ix. 4. The seal here is one that was affixed to the *foundation*, and seems to refer to some inscription *on* the foundation-stone which always remained there, and which denoted the character and design of the edifice. The allusion is to the custom, in rearing an edifice, of inscribing the name of the builder and the design of the edifice on the corner-stone. See Rosenmüller, Alte undneue Morgenland, No. 405. So the church of Christ is a building reared by the hands of God. Its foundation has been firmly and securely laid, and *on* that foundation there is an inscription always remaining which determines the character of the edifice. ¶ *The Lord knoweth them that are his.* This is one of the inscriptions on the foundation-stone of the church, which seems to mark the character of the building. It always stands there, no matter who apostatizes. It is at the same time a fearful inscription—showing that no one can deceive God; that he is intimately acquainted with all who enter that building; and that in the multitudes which enter there, the friends and the foes of God are intimately known. He can separate his own friends from all others, and his constant care will be extended to all who are truly his own, to keep them from falling. This has the *appearance* of being a quotation, but no such passage is found in the Old Testament in so many words. In Nahum i. 7, the following words are found: "And he knoweth them that trust in him;" and it is possible that Paul may have had that in his eye; but it is not necessary to suppose that he designed it as a quotation. A phrase somewhat similar to this is found in Num. xvi. 5, "the Lord will show who are his," rendered in the Septuagint, "God knoweth who are his;" and Whitby supposes that this is the passage referred to. But whether Paul had these passages in view or not, it is clear that he meant to say that it was one of the fundamental things in religion, that God knew who were his own people, and that he would preserve them from the danger of making shipwreck of their faith. ¶ *And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.* This is the other seal or inscription which is made on the foundation which God has laid. The foundation has two inscriptions—the first implying that God knows all who are his own people; the other, that all who are his professed people should depart from evil. This is not found in so many words in the Old Testament, and, like the former, it is not to be regarded as a quotation. The meaning is, that it is an elementary principle in the true church, that all who become members of it should lead holy lives. It was also true that they *would* lead holy lives, and amidst all the defections of errorists, and all their attempts to draw away others from the true faith, those might be known to be the true people of God who *did* avoid evil.

20. *But in a great house.* Still keeping up the comparison of the church with a building. The idea is, that the church is a *large* edifice, and that in such a building we are not to expect entire uniformity in all the articles which it contains. ¶ *There*

21 If [a] a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared [b] unto every good work.

[a] Je.15.19. [b] chap.3.17.

22 Flee [c] also youthful lusts: but [d] follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call [e] on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned

[c] Ec.11.9,10. [d] He.12.14. [e] 1 Co.1.2.

are not only vessels of gold and of silver, &c. You are not to expect to find all the articles of furniture alike, or all made of the same material. Variety in the form, and use, and material, is necessary in furnishing such a house. ¶ *And some to honour, and some to dishonour.* Some to most honourable uses—as drinking-vessels, and vessels to contain costly viands, and some for the less honourable purposes connected with cooking, &c. The same thing is to be expected in the church. See this idea illustrated at greater length under another figure in the Notes on 1 Cor. xii. 14—26; comp. Notes, Rom. ix. 21. The *application* here seems to be, that in the church it is to be presumed that there will be a great variety of gifts and attainments, and that we are no more to expect that all will be alike, than we are that all the vessels in a large house will be made of gold.

21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour.* If a man *cleanse* or *purify* himself; comp. Notes on John xv. 2. The word "*these*" refers, here, to the persons represented by the vessels of wood and of earth—the vessels made to dishonour, as mentioned in the previous verse. The idea is, that if one would preserve himself from the corrupting influence of such men, he would be fitted to be a vessel of honour, or to be employed in the most useful and honourable service in the cause of his Master. On the word *vessel*, see Notes on Acts ix. 15. ¶ *And meet for the master's use.* Fit to be employed by the Lord Jesus in promoting his work on earth.

22. *Flee also youthful lusts.* Such passions as youth are subject to. On the word *flee*, and the pertinency of its use in such a connection, see Notes on 1 Cor. vi. 18. Paul felt that Timothy, then a young man, was subject to the same passions as other young men; and hence his repeated cautions to him to avoid all those things, arising from his youth, which might be the occasion of scandal; comp. Notes on 1 Tim. iv. 12; v. 2. It is to be remembered that this epistle is applicable to other ministers, as well as to Timothy; and, to a young man in the ministry, no counsel could be more appropriate than to "FLEE *from youthful lusts;*" not to indulge for a moment in those corrupt passions to which youth are subject, but to cultivate the pure and sober virtues which become the ministerial office. ¶ *But follow righteousness*, &c.; comp. Notes on Heb. xii. 14. The general meaning here is, that he was to practise all that is good and virtuous. He was to practise *righteousness*, or justice and equity, in all his dealings with men; *faith*, or fidelity in his duties; *charity*, or love to all men (Notes, 1 Cor. xiii.); *peace*, or harmony and concord with all others. What virtues could be more appropriate for a minister of the gospel? ¶ *With them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.* That is, with all Christians, who are often characterized as those who call on the Lord; 1 Cor. i. 2; comp. Acts ix. 11. In all his intercourse with them, Timothy was to manifest the virtues above recommended. But not with them alone. It would be incumbent on him to exhibit the same virtues in his intercourse with all.

23. *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid;* see Notes on ver. 16; comp. Notes on 1 Tim. i. 4, 6; iv. 7. The word *unlearned*, here, means *trifling; that which does not tend to edification; stupid.* The Greeks and the Hebrews were greatly given to controversies of various

questions [a] avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, [1] patient,

25 In meekness [b] instructing

a ver. 16

1 or, *forbearing.* b Ga. 6. 1.

kinds, and many of the questions discussed pertained to points which could not be settled, or which, *if* settled, were of no importance. Such has been the character of no small part of the disputes which have agitated the world. Paul correctly says that the only effect of such disputes is to engender harsh contention. Points of *real* importance can be discussed with no injury to the temper; but men cannot safely dispute about rifles.

24. *And the servant of the Lord.* Referring here primarily to the Christian minister, but applicable to all Christians; for all profess to be the servants of the Lord. ¶ *Must not strive.* He may calmly inquire after truth; he may discuss points of morals, or theology, if he will do it with a proper spirit; he may "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3); but he may *not* do that which is here mentioned as *strife.* The Greek word—μάχεσθαι—commonly denotes, *to fight, to make war, to contend.* In John vi. 52; Acts vii. 26; 2 Tim. ii. 24, it is rendered *strove*, and *strive;* in James iv. 2, *fight.* It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The meaning is, that the servant of Christ should be a man of peace. He should not indulge in the feelings which commonly give rise to contention, and which commonly characterize it. He should not struggle for mere victory, even when endeavouring to maintain truth; but should do this, in all cases, with a kind spirit, and a mild temper; with entire candour; with nothing designed to provoke and irritate an adversary; and so that, whatever may be the result of the discussion, "the bond of peace" may, if possible, be preserved; comp. Notes, Rom. xii. 18. ¶ *But be gentle unto all* men; Notes, 1 Thess. ii. 7. The word rendered *gentle*, does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means that the Christian minister is to be meek and mild towards all, not disputatious and quarrelsome. ¶ *Apt to teach:* Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 2. ¶ *Patient.* Marg., *forbearing.* The Greek word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, patient under evils and injuries. *Robinson, Lex.* Comp. Notes on Eph. iv. 2; Col. iii. 13.

25. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* That is, those who embrace error, and array themselves against the truth. We are not to become angry with such persons, and denounce them at once as heretics. We are not to hold them up to public reproach and scorn; but we are to set about the business of patiently *instructing them.* Their grand difficulty, it is supposed in this direction, is, that they are ignorant of the truth. Our business with them is, *calmly to show them what the truth is.* If *they* are angry, *we* are not to be. If they oppose the truth, we are still calmly to state it to them. If they are slow to see it, we are not to become weary or impatient. Nor, if they do not embrace it at all, are we to become angry with them, and denounce them. We may pity them, but we need not use hard words. This is the apostolic precept about the way of treating those who are in error; and can any one fail to see its beauty and propriety? Let it be remembered, also, that this is not only beautiful and proper in itself; it is the *wisest* course, if we would bring others over to our opinions. You are not likely to convince a man that you are right, and that he is wrong, if you first make him angry; nor are you very likely to do it, if you enter into harsh contention. You then put him on his guard; you make him a party, and, from self-respect, or pride, or anger, he will endeavour to defend his own opinions, and will *not* yield to yours. *Meekness* and *gentleness* are the very best things, if you wish to convince another that he

those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure [a] will give them repentance to the acknowledging [b] of the truth;

a Ac.8.22. *b* Tit.1.1.

26 And *that* they may [1] recover themselves out of the snare [c] of the devil, who are taken [2] captive by him at his will.

1 *awake.* *c* 1 Ti.3.7. 2 *alive.*

is wrong. Win his *heart* first, and then modestly and kindly show him *what the truth is,* in as few words, and with as unassuming a spirit, as possible, *and you have him.* ¶ *If God peradventure will give them repentance,* &c. Give them such a view of the error which they have embraced, and such regret for having embraced it, that they shall be willing to admit the truth. After all our care in teaching others the truth, our only dependence is on God for its success. We cannot be absolutely certain that they will see their error; we cannot rely certainly on any power which argument will have; we can only hope that *God* may show them their error, and enable them to see and embrace the truth; comp. Acts xi. 18. The word rendered *peradventure,* here —μήποτε—means, usually, *not even, never;* and then, *that never, lest ever*—the same as *lest perhaps.* It is translated *lest at any time,* Matt. iv. 6; v. 25; xiii. 15; Mark iv. 12; Luke xxi. 34; *lest,* Matt. vii. 6; xiii. 29; xv. 32, *et al.*; *lest haply,* Luke xiv. 12; Acts v. 39. It does not imply that there was *any chance* about what is said, but rather that there was uncertainty in the mind of the speaker, and that there was need of caution *lest* something should occur; or, that anything was done, or should be done, to prevent something from happening. It is not used elsewhere in the New Testament in the sense which our translators, and all the critics, so far as I have examined, give to it here—as implying *a hope* that God *would* give them repentance, &c. But I may be permitted to suggest another interpretation, which will accord with the uniform meaning of the word in the New Testament, and which will refer the matter to those who had embraced the error, and not to God. It is this: "In meekness instructing *those that oppose themselves* (ἀντιδιατιθεμένους) *lest*—μήποτε—God should give them repentance, and they should recover themselves out of the snare of the devil," &c. That is, they put themselves in this posture of opposition so that they shall not be brought to repentance, and recover themselves. They do it with a precautionary view that they *may not* be thus brought to repentance, and be recovered to God. They take this position of opposition to the truth, intending not to be converted; and this is the reason why they are not converted.

26. *And* that *they may recover themselves.* Marg., *awake.* The word which is rendered *recover* in the text, and *awake* in the margin—ἀνανήψωσιν—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, to become sober again, as from inebriation; to awake from a deep sleep, and then, to come to a right mind, as one does who is aroused from a state of inebriety, or from sleep. The representation in this part of the verse implies that, while under the influence of error, they were like a man intoxicated, or like one in deep slumber From this state they were to be roused as one is from sleep, or as a man is recovered from the stupor and dullness of intoxication. ¶ *Out of the snare of the devil.* The snare which the devil has spread for them, and in which they have become entangled. There is a little confusion of metaphor here, since, in the first part of the verse, they are represented as asleep, or intoxicated; and, here, as taken in a snare. Yet the general idea is clear. In one part of the verse, the influence of error is represented as producing sleep, or stupor; in the other, as being taken in a snare, or net; and, in both, the idea is, that an effort was to be made that they might be rescued from this perilous condition. ¶ *Who are taken captive by him at his will.* Marg., *alive.* The Greek word means, pro-

CHAPTER III.

THIS know also, that [a] in the last days [b] perilous times shall come.

[a] 1 Ti.1.4; 2 Pe.3.3; 1John2.18; Jude17.18.

[b] Re.vi.viii ix.xi.—xiii.xviii.

perly, to take alive; and then, to take captive, to win over (Luke v. 10); and then, to ensnare, or seduce. Here it means that they had been ensnared by the arts of Satan *unto* (εἰς) *his will;* that is, they were so influenced by him, that they complied with his will. Another interpretation of this passage should be mentioned here, by which it is proposed to avoid the incongruousness of the metaphor of *awaking* one from a *snare*. It is adopted by Doddridge, and is suggested also by Burder, as quoted by Rosenmüller, *A. u. n. Morgenland.* According to this, the reference is to an artifice of fowlers, to scatter seeds impregnated with some intoxicating drugs, intended to lay birds asleep, that they may draw the snare over them more securely. There can be no doubt that such arts were practised, and it is possible that Paul may have alluded to it. Whatever is the allusion, the general idea is clear. It is an affecting representation of those who have fallen into error. They are in a deep slumber. They are as if under the fatal influence of some stupefying potion. They are like birds taken alive in this state, and at the mercy of the fowler. They will remain in this condition, unless they shall be roused by the mercy of God; and it is the business of the ministers of religion to carry to them that gospel call, which God is accustomed to bless in showing them their danger. That message should be continually sounded in the ears of the sinner, with the prayer and the *hope* that God will make it the means of arousing him to seek his salvation.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

In the first part of this chapter (ver. 1—8), Paul reminds Timothy of the great apostasy which was to be expected in the church, and states some of the characteristics of it. In ver. 9, he says that that apostasy would not always continue; but would be at some time arrested, and so arrested as to show to all men the folly of those who were concerned in it. In ver. 11, 12, he refers Timothy to his own manner of life in the midst of persecutions, as an encouragement to him to bear the trials which might be expected to occur to him in a similar manner. "Perilous times" were to come, and Timothy might be expected to be called to pass through trials similar to those which Paul himself had experienced. *In* those times the remembrance of his example would be invaluable. In ver. 12, 13, he assures Timothy that persecutions and trials were to be expected by *all* who aimed to lead holy lives, and that it was as certainly to be expected that evil men would become worse and worse. And in ver. 14—17, he exhorts him to be steadfast in maintaining the truth; and, to encourage him to do this, reminds him of his early training in the Holy Scriptures, and of the value of those Scriptures. To the Scriptures he might repair in all times of trial, and find support in the divine promises. What he had learned there was the inspired truth of God, and was able to make him wise, and to furnish him abundantly for all that he was to do or to suffer.

1. *This know also.* The *object* of this reference to the perilous times which were to occur, was evidently to show the necessity of using every precaution to preserve the purity of the church, from the fact that such sad scenes were to open upon it. The apostle had dwelt upon this subject in his first epistle to Timothy (chap. iv.), but its importance leads him to advert to it again. ¶ *In the last days* Under the gospel dispensation; some time in that period during which the affairs of the world will be closed up; see Notes, 1 Tim. iv. 1, and Heb. i. 2. ¶ *Perilous times shall come.* Times of danger, of persecution, and of trial. On the general meaning of this passage, and the general characteristics

2 For [a] men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, [1] false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, [b] heady, high-mind-

a Ro.1.29-31.

1 or, *makebates*. b 2 Pe. 2.10, &c.

of those times, the reader may consult the Notes on 2 Thess. ii. 1—12, and 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. There can be no doubt that in all these passages the apostle refers to the same events.

2. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves.* It shall be one of the characteristics of those times that men shall be eminently selfish—evidently under the garb of religion; ver. 5. The word here used—φίλαυτος—does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means a lover of one's self, *selfish.* Such a love of *self* as to lead us to secure our salvation, is proper. But this interferes with the rights and happiness of no other persons. The selfishness which is condemned, is that regard to our own interests which interferes with the rights and comforts of others; which makes *self* the central and leading object of living; and which tramples on all that would interfere with that. As such, it is a base, and hateful, and narrow passion; but it has been so common in the world that no one can doubt the correctness of the prophecy of the apostle that it would exist "*in the last times.*" ¶ *Covetous.* Gr., Lovers of silver; i. e., of money; Luke vi. 14; Notes, 1 Tim. vi. 20. ¶ *Boasters;* Notes, Rom. i. 30. ¶ *Proud;* Notes, Rom. i. 30. ¶ *Blasphemers;* see Notes, Matt. ix. 3. ¶ *Disobedient to parents;* see Notes on Rom. i. 30. ¶ *Unthankful;* see Luke vi. 35. The word here used occurs in the New Testament only in these two places. Ingratitude has always been regarded as one of the worst of crimes. It is said here that it would characterize that wicked age of which the apostle speaks, and its prevalence would, as it always does, indicate a decline of religion. Religion makes us grateful to every benefactor—to God, and to man. ¶ *Unholy;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 9.

3. *Without natural affection;* see Notes on Rom. i. 31. ¶ *Truce-breakers.* The same word in Rom. i. 31, is rendered *implacable;* see Notes on that verse. It properly means *without treaty;* that is, those who are averse to any treaty or compact. It may thus refer to those who are unwilling to enter into any agreement; that is, either those who are unwilling to be reconciled to others when there is a variance—*implacable;* or those who *disregard* treaties or agreements. In either case, this marks a very corrupt condition of society. Nothing would be more indicative of the lowest state of degradation, than that in which all compacts and agreements were utterly disregarded. ¶ *False accusers.* Marg., *makebates.* The word *makebate* means one who excites contentions and quarrels. *Webster.* The Greek here is διάβολοι—*devils*—the primitive meaning of which is, *calumniator, slanderer, accuser;* comp. Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 11, where the word is rendered *slanderers.* ¶ *Incontinent;* 1 Cor. vii. 5. Literally, *without strength;* that is, without strength to resist the solicitations of passion, or who readily yield to it. ¶ *Fierce.* The Greek word used here—ἀνήμερος—does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *ungentle, harsh, severe,* and is the opposite of gentleness and mildness. Religion produces gentleness; the want of it makes men rough, harsh, cruel; comp. Notes on chap. ii. 24. ¶ *Despisers of those that are good.* In Titus i. 8, it is said of a bishop that he must be "a lover of good men." This, in every condition of life, is a virtue, and hence the opposite of it is here set down as one of the characteristics of that evil age of which the apostle speaks.

4. *Traitors.* This word is used in the New Testament only here and in

ed, [a] lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having [b] a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they

[a] Ph.3.19.

[b] Tit.1.16.

Luke vi. 16, Acts vii. 52. It means any one who betrays—whether it be a friend or his country. *Treason* has been in all ages regarded as one of the worst crimes that man can commit. ¶ *Heady.* The same word in Acts xix. 36, is rendered *rashly.* It occurs only there and in this place in the New Testament. It properly means *falling forwards; prone, inclined, ready to do anything;* then *precipitate, headlong, rash.* It is opposed to that which is deliberate and calm, and here means that men would be ready to do anything without deliberation, or concern for the consequences. They would engage in enterprises which would only disturb society, or prove their own ruin. ¶ *High-minded.* Literally, *puffed up;* comp. Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 6, where the same word is rendered *lifted up with pride.* The meaning is, that they would be inflated with pride or self-conceit. ¶ *Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.* That is, of sensual pleasures, or vain amusements. This has been, and is, the characteristic of a great part of the world, and has often distinguished even many who profess religion. Of a large portion of mankind it may be said that this is their characteristic, that they live for pleasure; they have no serious pursuits; they brook no restraints which interfere with their amusements, and they greatly prefer the pleasures to be found in the gay assembly, in the ball-room, or in the place of low dissipation, to the friendship of their Creator.

5. *Having a form of godliness.* That is, they profess religion, or are in connection with the church. This shows that the apostle referred to some great corruption in the church; and there can be little doubt that he had his eye on the same great apostasy to which he refers in 2 Thess. ii., and 1 Tim. iv. All these things to which he refers here have been practised and tolerated in that apostate church, while no body of men, at any time, have been more zealous in maintaining *a form of godliness;* that is, in keeping up the *forms* of religion. ¶ *But denying the power thereof.* Opposing the real power of religion; not allowing it to exert any influence in their lives. It imposes no restraint on their passions and carnal propensities, but in all respects, except in the *form* of religion, they live as if they had *none.* This has been common in the world. The most regular and bigoted adherence to the *forms* of religion furnishes no evidence in itself that there is any true piety at heart, or that true religion has any actual control over the soul. It is much easier for men to observe the forms of religion than it is to bring the heart under its controlling influence. ¶ *From such turn away.* Have no intercourse with them as if they were Christians; show no countenance to their religion; do not associate with them; comp. 2 John 10, 11; Notes, 2 Cor. vi. 17.

6. *For of this sort are they which creep into houses.* Who go slyly and insidiously into families. They are not open and manly in endeavouring to propagate their views, but they endeavour by their address to ingratiate themselves first with weak women, and through them to influence men; comp. Titus i. 11. The word translated "creep into," is rendered by Doddridge, *insinuate themselves;* by Bloomfield, *wind their way into,* in the manner of serpents; by Bretschneider, *deceitfully enter;* by Robinson and Passow, *go in, enter in.* It is not certain that the idea of *deceit* or *cunning* is contained in this *word,* yet the whole complexion of the passage implies that they made their way by art and deceitful tricks. ¶ *And lead captive silly women.* One of the tricks always played by the advocates of error, and one of the ways by which they seek to promote their purposes. Satan began his work of temptation

which [a] creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres [b] withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men [c] of cor-

[a] Tit 1.11 [b] Ex.7.11. [c] 1 Ti.6.5.

with Eve rather than with Adam, and the advocates of error usually follow his example. There are always weak-minded women enough in any community to give an opportunity of practising these arts, and often the aims of the impostor and deceiver can be best secured by appealing to them. Such women are easily flattered; they are charmed by the graceful manners of religious instructors; they lend a willing ear to anything that has the appearance of religion, and their hearts are open to anything that promises to advance the welfare of the world. At the same time, they are just such persons as the propagators of error can rely on. They have leisure; they have wealth; they are busy; they move about in society, and by their activity they obtain an influence to which they are by no means entitled by their piety or talents. There *are*, indeed, very many women in the world who cannot be so easily led away as men; but it cannot be denied also that there are those who are just adapted to the purposes of such as seek to spread plausible error. The word rendered *silly women*, means properly *little women*, and then *weak women*. ¶ *Laden with sins.* With so many sins that they seem to be *burdened* with them. The idea is, that they are under the influence of sinful desires and propensities, and hence are better adapted to the purposes of deceivers. ¶ *Led away with divers lusts.* With various kinds of passions or desires—ἐπιθυμίαις—such as pride, vanity, the love of novelty, or a susceptibility to flattery, so as to make them an easy prey to deceivers.

7. *Ever learning.* That is, these "silly women;" for so the Greek demands. The idea is, that they *seem* to be disciples. They put themselves wholly under the care of these professedly religious teachers, but they never acquire the true knowledge of the way of salvation. ¶ *And never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* They may learn many things, but the true nature of religion they do not learn. There are many such persons in the world, who, whatever attention they may pay to religion, never understand its nature. Many obtain much speculative acquaintance with the *doctrines* of Christianity, but never become savingly acquainted with the system; many study the constitution and government of the church, but remain strangers to practical piety; many become familiar with the various philosophical theories of religion, but never become truly acquainted with what religion is; and many embrace visionary theories, who never show that they are influenced by the spirit of the gospel. Nothing is more common than for persons to be very busy and active in religion, and even to *learn* many things about it, who still remain strangers to the saving power of the gospel.

8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses.* The names of these two men are not elsewhere mentioned in the Bible. They are supposed to have been two of the magicians who resisted Moses (Ex. vii. 11, *et al.*), and who opposed their miracles to those of Moses and Aaron. It is not certain where the apostle obtained their names; but they are frequently mentioned by the Hebrew writers, and also by other writers; so that there can be no reasonable doubt that their names were correctly handed down by tradition. Nothing is more probable than that the names of the more distinguished magicians who attempted to imitate the miracles of Moses, would be preserved by tradition; and though they are not mentioned by Moses himself, and the Jews have told many ridiculous stories respecting them, yet this should not

rupt minds, [1] reprobate concerning the faith.

[1] or, *of no judgment.*

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be

lead us to doubt the truth of the tradition respecting their names. A full collection of the Jewish statements in regard to them may be found in Wetstein, *in loc.* They are also mentioned by Pliny, Nat. Hist. xxx. 7; and by Numenius, the philosopher, as quoted by Eusebius, ix. 8, and Origen, against Celsus, p. 199. See Wetstein. By the rabbinical writers, they are sometimes mentioned as Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses in Egypt, and sometimes as the sons of Balaam. The more common account is, that they were the princes of the Egyptian magicians. One of the Jewish rabbins represents them as having been convinced by the miracles of Moses, and as having become converts to the Hebrew religion. There is no reason to doubt that these were in fact the leading men who opposed Moses in Egypt, by attempting to work counter-miracles. The *point* of the remark of the apostle here, is, that they resisted Moses by attempting to *imitate* his miracles, thus *neutralizing* the evidence that he was sent from God. In like manner, the persons here referred to, opposed the progress of the gospel by setting up a similar claim to that of the apostles; by pretending to have as much authority as they had; and by thus neutralizing the claims of the true religion, and leading off weak-minded persons from the truth. This is often the most dangerous kind of opposition that is made to religion. ¶ *Men of corrupt minds;* comp. Notes, 1 Tim. vi. 5. ¶ *Reprobate concerning the faith.* So far as the Christian faith is concerned. On the word rendered *reprobate,* see Notes on Rom. i. 28; 1 Cor. ix. 27, rendered *cast-away;* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. The margin here is, "of no judgment." The meaning is, that in respect to the Christian faith, or the doctrines of religion, their views could not be approved, and they were not to be regarded as true teachers of religion.

9. *But they shall proceed no further.* There is a certain point beyond which they will not be allowed to go. Their folly will become manifest, and the world will understand it. The apostle does not say *how far* these false teachers would be allowed to go, but that they would not be suffered always to prosper and prevail. They might be plausible at first, and lead many astray; they might, by art and cunning, cover up the real character of their system; but there would be a fair development of it, and it would be seen to be folly. The apostle here may be understood as declaring a general truth in regard to error. It often is so plausible at first, that it seems to be true. It wins the hearts of many persons, and leads them astray. It flatters them personally, or it flatters them with the hope of a better state of things in the church and the world. But the time will *always* come when men will see the folly of it. Error will advance only to a certain point, when it will be *seen* to be falsehood and folly, and when the world will arise and cast it off. In some cases, this point may be slower in being reached than in others; but there *is* a point, beyond which error will not go. At the reformation under Luther, that point had been reached, when the teachings of the great apostasy were seen to be "folly," and when the awakened intellect of the world would allow it to "proceed no farther," and aroused itself and threw it off. In the workings of society, as well as by the direct appointment of God, there *is* a point beyond which error cannot prevail; and hence there is a certainty that truth will finally triumph. ¶ *For their folly shall be manifest unto all* men. The world will see and understand what they are, and what they teach. By smooth sophistry, and cunning arts, they will not be able always to deceive mankind. ¶ *As their's also was.* That

manifest unto all *men*, as their's also was.

10 But thou hast [1] fully known

[1] or, *been a diligent follower of.*

my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,

of Jannes and Jambres. That is, it became manifest to all that they could not compete with Moses and Aaron; that their claims to the power of working miracles were the mere arts of magicians, and that they had set up pretensions which they could not sustain; comp. Ex. viii. 18, 19. In regard to the *time* to which the apostle referred in this description, it has already been observed (Notes on ver. 1), that it was probably to that great apostasy of the "latter days," which he has described in 2 Thess. ii. and 1 Tim. iv. But there seems to be no reason to doubt that he had his eye immediately on some persons who had appeared then, and who had evinced some of the traits which would characterize the great apostasy, and whose conduct showed that the great "falling away" had already commenced. In 2 Thess. ii. 7, he says that the "mystery of iniquity" was already at work, or was even then manifesting itself; and there can be no doubt that the apostle saw that there had then commenced what he knew would yet grow up into the great defection from the truth. In some persons, at that time, who had the form of godliness, but who denied its power; who made use of insinuating arts to proselyte the weak and the credulous; who endeavour to imitate the true apostles, perhaps by attempting to work miracles, as Jannes and Jambres did, he saw the *germ* of what was yet to grow up into so gigantic a system of iniquity as to overshadow the world. Yet he consoled Timothy with the assurance that there was a point beyond which the system of error would not be allowed to go, but where its folly must be seen, and where it would be arrested.

10. *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, &c.* Marg., *been a diligent follower of.* The margin is more in accordance with the usual meaning of the Greek word, which means, properly, to accompany side by side; to follow closely; to trace out; to examine (Luke i. 3), and to conform to. The meaning here, however, seems to be, that Timothy had an opportunity to follow out; *i. e.*, to examine closely the manner of life of the apostle Paul. He had been so long his companion, that he had had the fullest opportunity of knowing how he had lived and taught, and how he had borne persecutions. The *object* of this reference to his own life and sufferings is evidently to encourage Timothy to bear persecutions and trials in the same manner; comp. ver. 14. He saw, in the events which began already to develope themselves, that trials must be expected; he knew that all who would live holy lives must suffer persecution; and hence he sought to prepare the mind of Timothy for the proper endurance of trials, by a reference to his own case. The word *doctrine*, here, refers to his *teaching*, or manner of giving instruction. It does not refer, as the word now does, to the *opinions* which he held; see Notes on 1 Tim. iv. 16. In regard to the opportunities which Timothy had for knowing the manner of Paul's life, see the introduction to the epistle, and Paley, Hor. Paul., *in loc.* Timothy had been the companion of Paul during a considerable portion of the time after his conversion. The *persecutions* referred to here (ver. 11) are those which occurred in the vicinity of Timothy's native place, and which he would have had a particular opportunity of being acquainted with. This circumstance, and the fact that Paul did not refer to *other* persecutions in more remote places, is one of the "*undesigned coincidences*," of which Paley has made so much in his incomparable little work—the *Horæ Paulinæ*. ¶ *Manner of life.* Literally, *leading, guidance;* then, the method in which one is led—his manner of life; comp. Notes, 1 Thess. ii. 1. ¶ *Purpose.* Plans, or designs.

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, [a] at Iconium, [b] at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all [c] the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live

[a] Ac.13.45,50. [b] Ac.14.5,6,19. [c] Ps.34.19.

¶ *Faith.* Perhaps fidelity, or faithfulness. ¶ *Long-suffering.* With the evil passions of others, and their efforts to injure him. See the word explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. xiii. 4. ¶ *Charity;* Notes, 1 Cor. xiii. ¶ *Patience.* "A calm temper, which suffers evils without murmuring or discontent." *Webster.*

11. *Persecutions.* On the meaning of this word, see Notes on Matt. v. 10. ¶ *Afflictions.* Trials of other kinds than those which arose from persecutions. The apostle met them everywhere; comp. Notes, Acts xx. 23. ¶ *Which came unto me at Antioch.* The Antioch here referred to is not the place of that name in Syria (Notes, Acts xi. 19); but a city of the same name in Pisidia, in Asia Minor; Notes, Acts xiii. 14. Paul there suffered persecution from the Jews; Acts xiii. 45. ¶ *At Iconium;* Notes, Acts xiii, 50. On the persecution there, see Notes on Acts xiv. 3—6. ¶ *At Lystra;* Acts xiv. 6. At this place, Paul was stoned; Notes, Acts xiv. 19. Timothy was a native of either Derbe or Lystra, cities near to each other, and was doubtless there at the time of this occurrence; Acts xvi. 1. ¶ *But out of* them *all the Lord delivered me.* See the history in the places referred to in the Acts.

12. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* Paul takes occasion from the reference to his own persecutions, to say that his case was not peculiar. It was the common lot of all who endeavoured to serve their Redeemer faithfully; and Timothy himself, therefore, must not hope to escape from it. The apostle had a particular reference, doubtless, to his own times; but he has put his remark into the most general form, as applicable to all periods. It is undoubtedly true at all times, and will ever be, that they who are devoted Christians—who live as the Saviour did—and who carry out his principles always, will experience some form of persecution. The *essence* of persecution consists in *subjecting a person to injury or disadvantage on account of his opinions.* It is something more than meeting his opinions by argument, which is always right and proper; it is inflicting some injury on him; depriving him of some privilege, or right; subjecting him to some disadvantage, or placing him in less favourable circumstances, on account of his sentiments. This may be either an injury done to his feelings, his family, his reputation, his property, his liberty, his influence; it may be by depriving him of an office which he held, or preventing him from obtaining one to which he is eligible; it may be by subjecting him to fine or imprisonment, to banishment, torture, or death. If, in any manner, or in any way, he is subjected to disadvantage on account of his religious opinions, and deprived of any immunities and rights to which he would be otherwise entitled, this is persecution. Now, it is doubtless as true as it ever was, that a man who will live as the Saviour did, will, like him, be subjected to some such injury or disadvantage. On account of his opinions, he may be held up to ridicule, or treated with neglect, or excluded from society to which his attainments and manners would otherwise introduce him, or shunned by those who might otherwise value his friendship. These things may be expected in the best times, and under the most favourable circumstances; and it is known that a large part of the history of the world, in its relation to the church, is nothing more than a history of persecution. It follows from this, (1.) that they who make a profession of religion, should come prepared to be persecuted. It should be considered as one of the proper qualifications for membership in the church, to be *willing* to bear persecu-

godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being [a] deceived.

[a] 2 Th.2.11.

tion, and to *resolve* not to shrink from any duty in order to avoid it. (2.) They who *are* persecuted for their opinions, should consider that this *may be* one evidence that they have the spirit of Christ, and are his true friends. They should remember that, in this respect, they are treated as the Master was, and are in the goodly company of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs; for they were *all* persecuted. Yet, (3.) if we are persecuted, we should carefully inquire, before we avail oureselves of this consolation, whether we are persecuted *because* we "live godly in Christ Jesus," or for some other reason. A man may embrace some absurd opinion, and call it religion; he may adopt some mode of dress irresistibly ludicrous, from the mere love of singularity, and may call it *conscience;* or he may be boorish in his manners, and uncivil in his deportment, outraging all the laws of social life, and may call this "deadness to the world;" and for these, and similar things, he may be contemned, ridiculed, and despised. But let him not infer, *therefore*, that he is to be enrolled among the martyrs, and that he is certainly a real Christian. That persecution which will properly furnish any evidence that we are the friends of Christ, must be *only* that which is "for righteousness sake" (Matt. v. 10), and must be brought upon us in an honest effort to obey the commands of God. (4.) Let those who have never been persecuted in any way, inquire whether it is not an evidence that they have no religion. If they had been more faithful, and more like their Master, would they have always escaped? And may not their freedom from it prove that they have surrendered the principles of their religion, where they should have stood firm, though the world were arrayed against them? It is easy for a professed Christian to avoid persecution, if he *yields* every point in which religion is opposed to the world. But let not a man who will do this, suppose that he has any claim to be numbered among the martyrs, or even entitled to the Christian name.

13. *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.* That is, it is the character of such men to do this; they may be expected to do it. This is the general law of depravity—that if men are not converted, they are always growing worse, and sinking deeper into iniquity. Their progress will be certain, though it may be gradual, since *nemo repente turpissimus.* The *connection* here is this: that Timothy was not to expect that he would be exempt from persecution (ver. 12), by any change for the better in the wicked men referred to. He was to anticipate in them the operation of the general law in regard to bad men and seducers—that they would grow worse and worse. From this fact, he was to regard it as certain that he, as well as others, would be liable to be persecuted. The word rendered *seducers*—γόης—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, a *juggler*, or *diviner;* and then, a *deceiver*, or *impostor.* Here it refers to those who, by seductive arts, lead persons into error. ¶ *Deceiving.* Making others believe that to be true and right, which is false and wrong. This was, of course, done by seductive arts. ¶ *And being deceived.* Under delusion themselves. The advocates of error are often themselves as really under deception, as those whom they impose upon. They are often sincere in the belief of error, and then they are under a delusion; or, if they are insincere, they are equally deluded in supposing that they can make error pass for truth before God, or can deceive the Searcher of hearts. The worst victims of delusion are those who attempt to delude others.

14. *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of.* To wit, the truths of religion. Timothy had been taught

14 But continue [a] thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them;*

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures,

[a] chap. 1. 13.

those truths when a child, and he had been confirmed in them by the instructions of Paul. Amidst the errors and seductions of false teachers, Paul now exhorts him to hold fast those doctrines, whoever might oppose them, or whatever might be the consequence; comp. Notes, chap. i. 13. ¶ *Knowing of whom thou hast learned* them. To wit, of his mother (chap. i. 5), and of Paul; chap. i. 13. The reference seems to be particularly to the fact that he had learned these truths first from the lips of a mother (see ver. 15); and the *doctrine* taught here is, *that the fact that we have received the views of truth from a parent's lips, is a strong motive for adhering to them.* It is not to be supposed, indeed, that this is the *highest* motive, or that we are always to adhere to the doctrines which have been taught us, if, on maturer examination, we are convinced they are erroneous; but that this is a strong reason for adhering to what we have been taught in early life. It is so, because, (1.) a parent has no motive for deceiving a child, and it cannot be supposed that he would teach him what he knew to be false; (2.) a parent usually has had much more experience, and much better opportunities of examining what is true, than his child has; (3.) there is a degree of respect which nature teaches us to be due to the sentiments of a parent. A child should depart very slowly from the opinions held by a father or mother; and, when it *is* done, it should be only as the result of prolonged examination and prayer. These considerations should have the greater weight, if a parent has been eminent for piety, and especially if that parent has been removed to heaven. A child, standing by the grave of a pious father or mother, should reflect and pray much, before he deliberately adopts opinions which he knows that father or mother would regard as wrong.

15. *And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures.* That is, the Old Testament; for the New Testament was not then written; Notes, John v. 39. The mother of Timothy was a pious Hebrewess, and regarded it as one of the duties of her religion to train her son in the careful knowledge of the word of God. This was regarded by the Hebrews as an important duty of religion, and there is reason to believe that it was commonly faithfully performed. The Jewish writings abound with lessons on this subject. Rabbi Judah says, "The boy of five years of age ought to apply to the study of the sacred Scriptures." Rabbi Solomon, on Deut. xi. 19, says, "When the boy begins to talk, his father ought to converse with him in the sacred language, and to teach him the law; if he does not do that, he seems to bury him." See numerous instances referred to in Wetstein, *in loc.* The expression used by Paul—*from a child* (ἀπὸ βρέφους)—does not make it certain at precisely *what* age Timothy was first instructed in the Scriptures, though it would denote an *early* age. The word used—βρέφος—denotes, (1.) a babe unborn, Luke i. 41, 44; (2.) an infant, babe, suckling. In the New Testament, it is rendered *babe* and *babes*, Luke i. 41, 44; ii. 12, 16; 1 Pet. ii. 2; *infants*, Luke viii. 15; and *young children*, Acts vii. 19. It does not elsewhere occur, and its current use would make it probable that Timothy had been taught the Scriptures as soon as he was capable of learning anything. Dr. Doddridge correctly renders it here "*from infancy.*" It may be remarked then, (1.) that it is proper to teach the Bible to children at as early a period of life as possible. (2.) That there is reason to hope that such instruction will not be forgotten, but will have a salutary influence on their future lives. The piety of Timothy is traced by the apostle to the fact that he had been early taught to read the Scrip-

which [a] are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All [b] Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and [c] *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

[a] John 5.39. [b] 2 Pe.1.21. [c] Ro.15.4.

tures, and a great proportion of those who are in the church have been early made acquainted with the Bible. (3.) It is proper to teach the *Old* Testament to children — since this was all that Timothy had, and this was made the means of his salvation. (4.) We may see the utility of Sabbath-schools. The great, and almost the sole object of such schools is to teach the Bible, and from the view which Paul had of the advantage to Timothy of having been early made acquainted with the Bible, there can be no doubt that if Sunday-schools had then been in existence, he would have been their hearty patron and friend. ¶ *Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.* So to instruct you in the way of salvation, that you may find the path to life. Learn, hence, (1.) that the plan of salvation may be learned from the Old Testament. It is not as clearly revealed there as it is in the New, but *it is there;* and if a man had only the Old Testament, he might find the way to be saved. The Jew, then, has no excuse if he is not saved. (2.) The Scriptures have *power*. They are "*able* to make one wise to salvation." They are not a cold, tame, dead thing. There is no book that has so much *power* as the Bible; none that is so efficient in moving the hearts, and consciences, and intellects of mankind. There is no book that *has* moved so many minds; none that has produced so deep and permanent effects on the world. (3.) To find the way of salvation, is the best kind of wisdom; and none are wise who do not make that the great object of life. ¶ *Through faith which is in Christ Jesus;* Notes, Mark xvi. 16; Rom. i. 17. Paul knew of no salvation, except through the Lord Jesus. He says, therefore, that the study of the Scriptures, valuable as they were, would not save the soul unless there was faith in the Redeemer; and it is implied, also, that the proper effect of a careful study of the *Old* Testament, would be to lead one to put his trust in the Messiah.

16. *All Scripture.* This properly refers to the Old Testament, and should not be applied to any part of the New Testament, unless it can be shown that that part was then written, and was included under the general name of *the Scriptures;* comp 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. But it includes the *whole* of the Old Testament, and is the solemn testimony of Paul that it was *all* inspired. If now it can be proved that Paul himself was an inspired man, this settles the question as to the inspiration of the Old Testament. ¶ Is *given by inspiration of God.* All this is expressed in the original by one word—θεόπνευστος—*theopneustos.* This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, *God-inspired*—from θεός, *God,* and πνέω, *to breathe, to breathe out.* The idea of *breathing upon,* or *breathing into the soul,* is that which the word naturally conveys. Thus God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life (Gen. ii. 7), and thus the Saviour breathed on his disciples, and said, "receive ye the Holy Ghost;" John xx. 22. The idea seems to have been, that the life was in the breath, and that an intelligent spirit was communicated with the breath. The expression was used among the Greeks, and a similar one was employed by the Romans. Plutarch ed. R. ix. p. 583. 9. τοὺς ὀνείρους τοὺς θεοπνεύστους. Phocylid. 121. τῆς δὲ θεοπνεύστου σοφίης λόγος ἐστὶν ἄριστος. Perhaps, however, this is not an expression of Phocylides, but of the pseudo Phocylides. So it is understood by Bloomfield. Cicero, pro Arch. 8. *poetam—quasi divino quodam spiritu inflari.* The word does not occur in the Septuagint, but is found in Josephus, C. Ap. i. 7.

17 That the man of God may be perfect, [a] thoroughly [1] furnished unto all good works.

[a] Ps. 119. 98-100. [1] or, *perfected.*

"The Scripture of the prophets who were taught according to the inspiration of God—*κατὰ τὴν ἐπίπνοιαν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.* In regard to the manner of inspiration, and to the various questions which have been started as to its nature, nothing can be learned from the use of this word. It asserts a *fact*—that the Old Testament was composed under a divine influence, which might be represented by *breathing on one*, and so imparting life. But the language *must* be figurative; for God does not *breathe*, though the fair inference is, that those Scriptures are as much the production of God, or are as much to be traced to him, as life is; comp. Matt. xxii. 43; 2 Pet. i. 21. The question as to the *degree* of inspiration, and whether it extends to the *words* of Scripture, and how far the sacred writers were left to the exercise of their own faculties, is foreign to the design of these Notes. All that is necessary to be held is, that the sacred writers were kept from error on those subjects which were matters of their own observation, or which pertained to memory; and that there were truths imparted to them directly by the Spirit of God, which they could never have arrived at by the unaided exercise of their own minds. Comp. Intro. to Isaiah and Job. ¶ *And* is *profitable.* It is useful; it is adapted to give instruction, to administer reproof, &c. If "*all*" Scripture is thus valuable, then we are to esteem no part of the Old Testament as worthless. There is no portion of it, even now, which may not be fitted, in certain circumstances, to furnish us valuable lessons, and, consequently, no part of it which could be spared from the sacred canon. There is no part of the human body which is not useful in its place, and no part of it which can be spared without sensible loss. ¶ *For doctrine.* For teaching or communicating instruction; comp. Notes on 1 Tim. iv. 16. ¶ *For reproof.* On the meaning of the word here rendered *reproof*—ἔλεγχος—see Notes on Heb. xi. 1. It here means, probably, for *convincing;* that is, convincing a man of his sins, of the truth and claims of religion, &c.; see Notes on John xvi. 8. ¶ *For correction.* The word here used—ἐπανόρθωσις—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *a setting to rights, reparation, restoration,* (from ἐπανορθόω, to right up again, to restore); and here means, the leading to a correction or amendment of life—*a reformation.* The meaning is, that the Scriptures are a powerful means of reformation, or of putting men into the proper condition in regard to morals. After all the means which have been employed to reform mankind; all the appeals which are made to them on the score of health, happiness, respectability, property, and long life, the word of God is still the most powerful and the most effectual means of recovering those who have fallen into vice. No reformation can be permanent which is not based on the principles of the word of God. ¶ *For instruction in righteousness.* Instruction in regard to the principles of justice, or what is right. Man needs not only to be made acquainted with truth, to be convinced of his error, and to be reformed; but he needs to be taught what is right, or what is required of him, in order that he may lead a holy life. Every reformed and regenerated man needs instruction, and should not be left merely with the evidence that he is *reformed,* or *converted.* He should be followed with the principles of the word of God, to show him how he may lead an upright life. The Scriptures furnish the rules of holy living in abundance, and thus they are adapted to the whole work of recovering man, and of guiding him to heaven.

17. *That the man of God may be perfect.* The object is not merely to convince and to convert him; it is to furnish all the instruction needful for his entire perfection. The idea here is, not that any one *is* ab-

solutely perfect, but that the Scriptures have laid down the way which leads to perfection, and that, if any one *were* perfect, he would find in the Scriptures all the instruction which he needed in those circumstances. There is no deficiency in the Bible for man, in any of the situations in which he may be placed in life; and the whole tendency of the book is to make him who will put himself fairly under its instructions, absolutely perfect.—¶ *Thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* Marg., *perfected.* The Greek means, to bring to an end; to make complete. The idea is, that whatever good work the man of God desires to perform, or however perfect he aims to be, he will find no deficiency in the Scriptures, but will find there the most ample instructions that he needs. He can never advance so far, as to become forsaken of his guide. He can never make such progress, as to have gone in advance of the volume of revealed truth, and to be thrown upon his own resources in a region which was not thought of by the Author of the Bible. No new phase of human affairs can appear in which it will not direct him; no new plan of benevolence can be started, for which he will not find principles there to guide him; and he can make no progress in knowledge or holiness, where he will not feel that his holy counsellor is in advance of him still, and that it is capable of conducting him even yet into higher and purer regions. Let us, then, study and prize the Bible. It is a holy and a safe guide. It has conducted millions along the dark and dangerous way of life, and has never led one astray. The human mind, in its investigations of truth, has never gone beyond its teachings; nor has man ever advanced into a region so bright that its light has become dim, or where it has not thrown its beams of glory on still far distant objects. We are often in circumstances in which we feel that we have reached the outer limit of what man can teach us; but we never get into such circumstance in regard to the word of God.

How precious is the book divine,
By inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine
To guide our souls to heaven.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts
In this dark vale of tears;
Life, light, and joy, it still imparts,
And quells our rising fears.

This lamp, through all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide our way;
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter comprises the following subjects:

1. A solemn charge to Timothy, to be faithful in preaching the gospel, and in the whole work of the ministry, ver. 1—5. The particular *reason* given for this charge was, that the time was approaching when men would not endure sound doctrine, but would turn away from the truth. Hence, Timothy is exhorted to be faithful in his work, and to be prepared to endure the trials which, in such circumstances, a faithful minister must be expected to meet.

2. A statement of Paul that his own work was nearly done, and that the hour of his departure drew near; ver. 6—8. This statement, also, seems to be made in order to excite Timothy to increased fidelity in the ministry. His teacher, guide, father, and friend, was about to be withdrawn, and the great work of preaching was to be committed to other hands. Hence, in view of his own departure, Paul exhorts Timothy to fidelity when he himself should be removed.

3. An exhortation to Timothy to come to him as soon as practicable; ver. 9—15. Paul was then in bonds, and was expecting soon to die. He was alone. For various reasons, those who had been with him had left him, and he needed some companion and friend. He therefore exhorts Timothy to come to him as soon as possible.

4. Paul refers now to his first trial before the emperor, and to the fact that then no one stood by him; ver. 16—19. The *reason* of his referring to this seems to be, to induce Timothy to come to him in view of his an-

CHAPTER IV.

[CHARGE[a] *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,

a 1 Ti.5.21; 6.13. *b* Re.20.12,13.

who shall judge[b] the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant

ticipated *second* trial. The *Lord*, he says, *then* stood by him, and he had confidence that he would continue to do it; yet who is there that does not feel it desirable to have some dear earthly friend to be with him when he dies?

5. The epistle is closed, in the usual manner, with various salutations, and with the benediction; ver. 19—22.

1. *I charge* thee *therefore before God;* Notes on 1 Tim. v. 21. ¶ *Who shall judge the quick and the dead.* That is, the Lord Jesus; for he is to be the judge of men; Matt. xxv. 31—46; 2 Cor. v. 10. The word *quick* means *living* (Notes, Acts x. 42; Eph. ii. 1); and the idea is, that he would be alike the judge of all who were alive when he should come, and of all who had died; see Notes on 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. In view of the fact that *all*, whether preachers or hearers, must give up their account to the final Judge, Paul charges Timothy to be faithful; and what is there which will more conduce to fidelity in the discharge of duty, than the thought that we must soon give up a solemn account of the manner in which we have performed it? ¶ *At his appearing.* That is, the judgment shall then take place. This must refer to a judgment yet to take place, for the Lord Jesus has not yet "appeared" the second time to men; and, if this be so, then there is to be a resurrection of the dead. On the meaning of the word rendered *appearing*, see Notes on 2 Thess. ii. 8. It is there rendered *brightness;* comp. 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10; Tit. ii. 13. ¶ *And his kingdom.* Or, at the setting up of his kingdom. The idea of his *reigning*, or setting up his kingdom, is not unfrequently associated with the idea of his *coming;* see Matt. xvi. 28. The meaning is, that, at his second advent, the extent and majesty of his kingdom will be fully displayed. It will be seen that he has control over the elements, over the graves of the dead, and over all the living. It will be seen that the earth and the heavens are under his sway, and that all things there acknowledge him as their sovereign Lord. In order to meet the full force of the language used by Paul here, it is not necessary to suppose that he will set up a visible kingdom on the earth, but only that there will be an illustrious display of himself as a king, and of the extent and majesty of the empire over which he presides: comp. Notes on Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 10.

2. *Preach the word.* The word of God; the gospel. This was to be the main business of the life of Timothy, and Paul solemnly charges him in view of the certain coming of the Redeemer to judgment, to be faithful in the performance of it. ¶ *Be instant:* see Notes, Rom. xii. 12. The meaning here is, that he should be constant in this duty. Literally, *to stand by*, or *to stand fast by;* that is, he was to be pressing or urgent in the performance of this work. He was always to be at his post, and was to embrace every opportunity of making known the gospel. What Paul seems to have contemplated was not merely that he should perform the duty at stated and regular times; but that he should press the matter as one who had the subject much at heart, and never lose an opportunity of making the gospel known. ¶ *In season.* εὐκαίρως. In good time; opportunely; comp. Matt. xxvi. 16; Luke xxii. 6; Mark xiv. 11. The sense is, when it could be *conveniently* done; when all things were favourable, and when there were no obstructions or hindrances. It may include the *stated* and *regular* seasons for public worship, but is not confined to them. ¶ *Out of season.* ἀκαίρως. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is the opposite of the former, and means that a

in season, out of season; reprove,[a] rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

[a] Tit. 2. 15.

minister is to seek opportunities to preach the gospel even at such periods as might be inconvenient to himself, or when there might be hindrances and embarrassments, or when there was no stated appointment for preaching. He is not to confine himself to the appointed times of worship, or to preach only when it will be perfectly convenient for himself, but he is to have such an interest and earnestness in the work, that it will lead him to do it in the face of embarrassments and discouragements, and whenever he can find an opportunity. A man who is greatly intent on an object will seek every opportunity to promote it. He will not confine himself to stated times and places, but will present it everywhere, and at all times. A man, therefore, who merely confines himself to the stated seasons of preaching the gospel, or who merely preaches when it is convenient to himself, should not consider that he has come up to the requirement of the rule laid down by the apostle. He should preach in his private conversation, and in the intervals of his public labours, at the side of the sick bed, and wherever there is a prospect of doing good to any one. If his heart is full of love to the Saviour and to souls, he cannot help doing this. ¶ *Reprove.* Or *convince;* Notes, chap. iii. 16. The meaning is that he was to use such arguments as would *convince* men of the truth of religion, and of their own need of it. ¶ *Rebuke.* Rebuke offenders; Titus ii. 15; see the use of the word in Matt. viii. 26; xii. 16, (rendered *charged*); xvi. 22; xvii. 18; xix. 13; xx. 31; Luke iv. 35, 39; xvii. 13; xviii. 15; Jude 9. In the New Testament the word is used to express a judgment of what is wrong or contrary to one's will, and hence to admonish or reprove. It implies our conviction that there is something evil, or some fault in him who is rebuked. The word in this verse rendered *reprove*, does not imply this, but merely that one may be in error, and needs to have *arguments* presented to convince him of the truth. That word also implies no superior *authority* in him who does it. He presents *reasons*, or *argues* the case, for the purpose of *convincing*. The word here rendered *rebuke*, implies authority or superiority, and means merely that we may *say* that a thing is wrong, and administer a rebuke for it, as if there were no doubt that it was wrong. The propriety of the rebuke rests on our *authority* for doing it, not on the *arguments* which we present. This is based on the presumption that men often *know* that they are doing wrong, and need no arguments to *convince* them of it. The idea is, that the minister is not merely to *reason* about sin, and *convince* men that it is wrong, but he may solemnly admonish them not to do it, and warn them of the consequences. ¶ *Exhort.* Notes, Rom. xii. 8. ¶ *With all long-suffering.* That is, with a patient and persevering spirit if you are opposed; see Notes on chap. ii. 25; comp. Notes, Rom. ii. 4; comp. Rom. ix. 22; 2 Cor. vi. 6; Gal. v. 22; Eph. iv. 2; Col. i. 11; iii. 12; 1 Tim. i. 16. ¶ *And doctrine.* Teaching, or patient instruction.

3. *For the time will come,* &c. Probably referring to the time mentioned in chap. iii. 1, seq. ¶ *When they will not endure sound doctrine.* Greek, *healthful doctrine;* i. e., doctrine contributing to the health of the soul, or to salvation. At that time they would seek a kind of instruction more conformable to their wishes and feelings. ¶ *But after their own lusts.* They will seek such kind of preaching as will accord with their carnal desires; or such as will palliate their evil propensities, and deal gently with their vices; comp. Isa. xxx. 10. "Speak unto us smooth things; pro-

4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. [a]

[a] 1 Ti.1.4.

phesy deceits." ¶ *Shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.* The word rendered *heap*—ἐπισωρεύω—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means *to heap up upon, to accumulate;* and here *to multiply.* The word rendered *itching*—κνήθω—also occurs only in this place in the New Testament. It means *to rub, to scratch;* and then *to tickle,* and here to feel an *itching* for something pleasing or gratifying. The image is derived from the desire which we have when there is an itching sensation, to have it rubbed or scratched. Such an uneasiness would these persons have to have some kind of instruction that would allay their restless and uneasy desires, or would gratify them. In explanation of this passage we may observe, (1.) that there will be always religious teachers of some kind, and that in proportion as error and sin abound, they will be multiplied. The apostle here says, that by turning away from Timothy, and from sound instruction, they would not abandon *all* religious teachers, but would rather increase and multiply them. Men often declaim much against a regular ministry, and call it *priest-craft;* and yet, if they were to get rid of *such* a ministry, they would by no means escape from *all* kinds of religious teachers. The deeper the darkness, and the more gross the errors, and the more prevalent the wickedness of men, the more will a certain kind of religious teachers abound, and the more it will cost to support them. Italy and Spain swarm with priests, and in every heathen nation they constitute a very numerous class of the population. The *cheapest* ministry on the earth is a well-educated Protestant clergy, and if society wishes to free itself from swarms of preachers, and prophets, and exhorters, it should secure the regular services of an educated and pious ministry. (2.) In such classes of persons as the apostle here refers to, there is a restless, uneasy desire to *have* some kind of preachers They have "itching ears." They will be ready to run after all kinds of public instructors. They will be little pleased with any, and this will be one reason why they will have so many. They are fickle, and unsettled, and never satisfied. A desire to hear the *truth,* and to learn the way of salvation, is a good desire. But this can be better gratified by far under the patient and intelligent labour of a single religious teacher, than by running after many teachers, or than by frequent changes. How much would a child learn if he was constantly running from one school to another? (3.) Such persons would have teachers according to "their own lusts;" that is, their own tastes, or wishes. They would have those who would coincide with their whims; who would foster every vagary which might enter their imagination; who would countenance every wild project for doing good; who would be the advocates of the errors which they held; and who would be afraid to rebuke their faults. These are the principles on which many persons choose their religious teachers. The *true* principle should be, to select those who will faithfully declare the truth, and who will not shrink from exposing and denouncing sin, wherever it may be found.

4. *And they shall turn away* their *ears from the truth.* That is, the people themselves will turn away from the truth. It does not mean that the teachers would turn them away by the influence of their instructions. ¶ *And shall be turned unto fables;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 4.

5 But watch thou in all things, [b] endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make [1] full proof [c] of thy ministry.

[b] chap.2.3.
[c] 1 Ti.4.12,15.
[1] or, *fulfil.*

5. *But watch thou in all things.* Be vigilant against error and against sin, and faithful in the performance of duty; Notes, Matt. xxv. 13; 1 Cor. xvi. 13. ¶ *Endure afflictions:* Notes, chap. ii. 3. The Greek word here is

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure [a] is at hand.
Ph.1.23 ; 2 Pe.1.14.

the same which is there rendered "*endure hardness.*" ¶ *Do the work of an evangelist.* On the word *evangelist,* see Notes on Acts xxi. 8. The phrase here means, *do the work of preaching the gospel,* or of one appointed to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. This is the proper business of all ministers, whatever other rank they may maintain. Whether it was ever regarded as the proper duty of a separate class of men to do this, see Notes on Eph. iv. 11. ¶ *Make full proof of thy ministry.* Marg., *fulfil ;* comp. Notes, Rom. xiv. 5. The word here used denotes, properly, to bear or bring fully ; then to persuade fully ; and then to make fully assured of, to give full proof of. The meaning here seems to be, *to furnish full evidence of what is the design of the Christian ministry, and of what it is adapted to accomplish,* by the faithful performance of all its duties. Timothy was so to discharge the duties of his office as to furnish *a fair illustration* of what the ministry could do, and thus to show the wisdom of the Saviour in its institution. This should be the aim of all the ministers of the gospel. Each one should resolve, by the blessing of God, that the ministry, in his hands, shall be allowed, *by a fair trial,* to show to the utmost what it is adapted to do for the welfare of mankind.

6. *For I am now ready to be offered.* This conviction of the apostle that he was about to die, is urged as a reason why Timothy should be laborious and faithful in the performance of the duties of his office. His own work was nearly done. He was soon to be withdrawn from the earth, and whatever benefit the world might have derived from his experience or active exertions, it was now to be deprived of it. He was about to leave a work which he much loved, and to which he had devoted the vigour of his life, and he was anxious that they who were to succeed him should carry on the work with all the energy and zeal in their power. This expresses the common feeling of aged ministers as death draws near. The word "*ready*" in the phrase "ready to be offered," conveys an idea which is not in the original. It implies a *willingness* to depart, which, whether true or not, is not the idea conveyed by the apostle. His statement is merely of *the fact* that he was *about* to die, or that his work was drawing to a close. No doubt he *was* "ready," in the sense of being willing and prepared, but this is not the idea in the Greek. The single Greek word rendered "I am ready to be offered "—σπένδομαι—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Phil. ii. 17, where it is translated "if I *be offered ;*" see it explained in the Notes on that place. The allusion here, says Burder (in Rosenmüller's A. u. n. Morgenland), is to the custom which prevailed among the heathen generally, of pouring wine and oil on the head of a victim when it was about to be offered in sacrifice. The idea of the apostle then is, that he was in the condition of the victim on whose head the wine and oil had been already poured, and which was just about to be put to death ; that is, he was about to die. Every preparation had been made, and he only awaited the blow which was to strike him down. The meaning is not that he was to be a *sacrifice;* it is that his death was about to occur. Nothing more remained to be done but to die. The victim was all ready, and he was sure that the blow would soon fall. What was the *ground* of his expectation, he has not told us. Probably there were events occurring in Rome which made it morally certain that though he had once been acquitted, he could not now escape. At all events, it is interesting to contemplate an aged and experienced Christian on the borders of the grave, and to learn what were his feelings in the prospect of his departure to the eternal world. Happily, Paul has in more places than one (comp. Phil. i. 23), stated his views in such circumstances, and we know

7 I have fought [a] a good fight,
I have finished [b] *my* course, I have
kept [c] the faith:
8 Henceforth there is laid up
for me a crown [d] of righteousness,

[a] 1 Ti.6.12. [b] Ac.20.24.
[c] Pr.23.23; Re.3.10.

which the Lord, the righteous
judge, shall give me at that day;
and not to me only, but unto all
them [e] also that love his appear-
ing.

[d] 1 Co.9.25; 1 Pe.5.4; Re.2.10.
[e] 1 Co.2.9.

that his religion then did not fail him. He found it to be in the prospect of death what he had found it to be through all his life—the source of unspeakable consolation—and he was enabled to look calmly onward to the hour which should summon him into the presence of his Judge. ¶ *And the time of my departure is at hand.* Gr., *dissolving*, or *dissolution*. So we speak of the *dissolution* of the soul and body. The verb from which the noun (ἀνάλυσις), is derived (ἀναλύω), means to loosen again; to undo. It is applied to the act of unloosing or casting off the fastenings of a ship, preparatory to a departure. The proper idea in the use of the word would be, that he had been bound to the present world, like a ship to its moorings, and that death would be a release. He would now spread his sails on the broad ocean of eternity. The true idea of death is that of loosening the bands that confine us to the present world; of setting us free, and permitting the soul to go forth, as with expanded sails, on its eternal voyage. With such a view of death, why should a Christian fear to die?

7. *I have fought a good fight.* The Christian life is often represented as a conflict, or warfare; see Notes on 1 Tim. vi. 12. That noble conflict with sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil, Paul now says he had been able to maintain. ¶ *I have finished* my *course.* The Christian life, too, is often represented as a *race* to be run; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 24—26. ¶ *I have kept the faith.* I have steadfastly maintained the faith of the gospel; or, have lived a life of fidelity to my Master. Probably the expression means that he had kept his plighted faith to the Redeemer, or had spent a life in faithfully endeavouring to serve his Lord.

8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me.* At the end of my race, as there was a crown in reserve for those who had successfully striven in the Grecian games; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 25. The word *henceforth*—λοιπὸν—means *what remains*, or *as to the rest;* and the idea is, that that was what *remained* of the whole career. The race had been run; the conflict had been waged; and all which was now necessary to complete the whole transaction, was merely that the crown be bestowed. ¶ *A crown of righteousness.* That is, a crown won in the cause of righteousness, and conferred as the reward of his conflicts and efforts in the cause of holiness. It was not the crown of ambition; it was not a garland won in struggles for earthly distinction; it was that which was the appropriate reward of his efforts to be personally holy, and to spread the principles of holiness as far as possible through the world. ¶ *Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me.* The Lord Jesus, appointed to judge the world, and to dispense the rewards of eternity. It will be seen in the last day that the rewards of heaven are not conferred in an arbitrary manner, but that they are bestowed because they *ought* to be, or that God is righteous and just in doing it. No man will be admitted to heaven who *ought not*, under all the circumstances of the case, to be admitted there; no one will be excluded who *ought* to have been saved. ¶ *At that day.* That is, the time when he will come to judge the world; Matt. xxv. ¶ *And not to me only.* "Though my life has been spent in laboriously endeavouring to spread his religion; though I have suffered much, and laboured long; though I have struggled hard to win the prize, and now have it full in view, yet I do not suppose that it is to be conferred on me alone. It is not like the wreath of

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved [a] this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

[a] 1 John 2.15.

olive, laurel, pine, or parsley (Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 25), which could be conferred only on one victor (Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 24); but here every one may obtain the crown who strives for it. The struggle is not between me and a competitor in such a sense that, if *I* obtain the crown, *he* must be excluded; but it is a crown which *he* can obtain as well as *I*. As many as run—as many as fight the good fight—as many as keep the faith—as many as love his appearing, may win the crown as well as I." Such is religion, and such is the manner in which its rewards differ from all others. At the Grecian games, but one could obtain the prize; 1 Cor. ix. 24. All the rest who contended in those games, no matter how numerous they were, or how skilfully they contended, or how much effort they made, were of course subjected to the mortification of a failure, and to all the ill-feeling and envy to which such a failure might give rise. So it is in respect to all the prizes which this world can bestow. In a lottery, but one can obtain the highest prize; in a class in college, but one can secure the highest honour; in the scramble for office, no matter how numerous the competitors may be, or what may be their merits, but one can obtain it. All the rest are liable to the disappointments and mortifications of defeat. Not so in religion. No matter how numerous the competitors, or how worthy any one of them may be, or how pre-eminent above his brethren, yet all may obtain the prize; all may be crowned with a diadem of life, of equal brilliancy. No one is excluded because another is successful; no one fails of the reward because another obtains it. Who, then, would not make an effort to win the immortal crown? ¶ *Unto all them also that love his appearing.* That is, unto all who *desire* his second coming. To believe in the second advent of the Lord Jesus to judge the world, and to desire his return, became a kind of a criterion by which Christians were known. No others but true Christians were supposed to believe in that, and no others truly desired it; comp. Rev. i. 7; xxii. 20. It is so now. It is one of the characteristics of a true Christian that he sincerely *desires* the return of his Saviour, and would *welcome* his appearing in the clouds of heaven.

9. *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.* As soon as possible. Timothy had been Paul's travelling companion, and was his intimate friend. The apostle was now nearly forsaken, and was about to pass through severe trials. It is not certainly known for what purpose he wished him to come to him, but perhaps he desired to give him some parting counsels; perhaps he wished him to be near him when he died. It is evident from this that he did not regard him as the prelatical "bishop of the church of the Ephesians," or consider that he was so confined to that place in his labours, that he was not also to go to other places if he was called in the providence of God. It is probable that Timothy would obey such a summons, and there is no reason to believe that he ever returned to Ephseus.

10. *For Demas hath forsaken me.* Demas is honourably mentioned in Col. iv. 14; but nothing more is known of him than what can be gathered from that place and this—that he was at first a friend and fellow-labourer of Paul, but that, under the influence of a desire to live, he afterwards forsook him, even in circumstances where he greatly needed the presence of a friend. ¶ *Having loved this present world.* This does not mean, necessarily, that he was an avaricious man, or that, in itself, he loved the honours or wealth of this world; but it means that he desired to live. He was not willing to stay with Paul, and subject him-

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry

self to the probabilities of martyrdom; and, in order to secure his life, he departed to a place of safety. The Greek is, ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα—having loved the world that now is; that is, this world as it is, with all its cares, and troubles, and comforts; having desired to remain in this world, rather than to go to the other. There is, perhaps, a slight censure here in the language of Paul—*the censure of grief;* but there is no reason why Demas should be held up as an example of a worldly man. That he desired to live longer; that he was unwilling to remain and risk the loss of life, is indeed clear. That Paul was pained by his departure, and that he felt lonely and sad, is quite apparent; but I see no evidence that Demas was influenced by what are commonly called *worldly* feelings, or that he was led to this course by the desire of wealth, or fame, or pleasure. ¶ *And is departed unto Thessalonica.* Perhaps his native place. *Calmet.* ¶ *Crescens.* Nothing more is known of Crescens than is here mentioned. "He is thought by Eusebius and others to have preached in Gaul, and to have founded the church in Vienne, in Dauphiny." *Calmet.* ¶ *To Galatia.* See Intro. to the epistle to the Galatians, § 1. It is not known to what part of Galatia he had gone, or why he went there. ¶ *Titus into Dalmatia.* Dalmatia was a part of Illyricum, on the gulf of Venice, or the Adriatic sea. On the situation of Illyricum, see Notes on Rom. xv. 19. Paul does not mention the reason why Titus had gone there; but it is not improbable that he had gone to preach the gospel, or to visit the churches which Paul had planted in that region. The apostle does not suggest that he was deserving of blame for having gone, and it can hardly be supposed that *Titus* would have left him at this time without his concurrence. Perhaps, when he permitted him to go, he did not know how soon events would come to a crisis with him; and as a letter would more readily reach Timothy at Ephesus, than Titus in Dalmatia, he requested him to come to him, instead of directing Titus to return.

11. *Only Luke is with me.* Luke, the author of the gospel which bears his name, and of the Acts of the Apostles. For a considerable part of the ministry of Paul, he was his travelling companion (comp. Notes on Acts xvi. 10), and we know that he went with him to Rome; Acts xxvii. 1. ¶ *Take Mark.* John Mark, Notes, Acts xv. 37. He was the son of a sister of Barnabas, and had been the travelling companion of Barnabas and Paul. There had been a temporary alienation between Paul and him (Acts xv. 38); but this passage proves that that had been removed, and that Paul was reconciled to him. ¶ *For he is profitable to me for the ministry.* In what way he would be profitable, he does not say; nor is it known why Mark was at that time with Timothy. It may be observed, however, that this is such language as Paul might be expected to use of Mark, after what had occurred, as recorded in Acts xv. 38. He felt that he was now about to die. If he suspected that there was on the part of Mark any lingering apprehension that the great apostle was not entirely reconciled to him, or retained a recollection of what had formerly occurred, nothing would be more natural than that, at this trying time of his life, Paul should summon him to his side, and express towards him the kindest emotions. It would soothe *any* lingering irritation in the mind of Mark, to receive such a message.

12. *And Tychicus.* See Acts xx. 4. In Eph. vi. 21, Paul calls him "a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord." But it may be asked why he did not retain him with him, or why should he have sent him away, and then call Timothy to him? The probability is, that he had sent him before he had seen reason to apprehend that he would be put to death; and now, feeling the need of a friend to be with him, he sent to Timothy, rather

12 And Tychicus [a] have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments.

[a] Tit.3.12.

than to him, because Tychicus had been employed to perform some service which he could not well leave, and because Paul wished to give some some special instructions to Timothy before he died. ¶ *Have I sent to Ephesus.* Why, is not certainly known; comp. Intro. § 2.

13. *The cloak that I left at Troas.* On the situation of Troas, see Notes on Acts xvi. 8. It was not on the most direct route from Ephesus to Rome, but was a route frequently taken; comp. the Map in the Notes on the Acts of the Apostles. See also the Intro., § 2. In regard to what the "cloak" here mentioned was, there has been considerable difference of opinion. The Greek word used (φαιλόνης,—variously written φαιλόνης, φελόνης, and φελώνης), occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is supposed to be used for a similar Greek word (φαινόλης,) to denote a cloak, or great-coat, with a hood, used chiefly on journeys, or in the army: Latin, *penula.* It is described by Eschenberg (Man. Class. Lit., p. 209) as a "cloak without sleeves, for cold or rainy weather." See the uses of it in the quotations made by Wetstein, *in loc.* Others, however, have supposed that the word means a travelling-case for books, &c. So Hesychius understands it. Bloomfield endeavours to unite the two opinions by suggesting that it may mean a *cloak-bag*, and that he had left his books and parchments in it. It is impossible to settle the precise meaning of the word here, and it is not material. The common opinion that it was a wrapper or travelling-cloak, is the most probable; and such a garment would not be undesirable for a prisoner. It should be remembered, also, that winter was approaching (ver. 21), and such a cloak would be particularly needed. He had probably passed through Troas in summer, and, not needing the cloak, and not choosing to encumber himself with it, had left it at the house of a friend. On the meaning of the word, see Wetstein, Robinson, *Lex.*, and Schleusner, *Lex.* Comp., also, Suic. Thess. ii. 1422. The doubt in regard to what is here meant, is as old as Chrysostom. He says (Hom. x. on this epistle), that the word (φελόνην) denotes a garment—τὸ ἱματίον. But some understood by it a capsula, or bag—γλωσσόκομον," (comp. Notes on John xii. 6), "in which books, &c. were carried." ¶ *With Carpus.* Carpus is not elsewhere mentioned. He was evidently a friend of the apostle, and it would seem probable that Paul had made his house his home when he was in Troas. ¶ *And the books.* It is impossible to determine what books are meant here. They may have been portions of the Old Testament, or classic writings, or books written by other Christians, or by himself. It is worthy of remark that even *Paul* did not travel without *books*, and that he found them in some way necessary for the work of the ministry. ¶ *Especially the parchments.* The word here used (μεμβράνας, whence our word *membrane*), occurs only in this place in the New Testament, and means skin, membrane, or parchment. Dressed skins were among the earliest materials for writing, and were in common use before the art of making paper from rags was discovered. These "parchments" seem to have been something different from "books," and probably refer to some of his own writings. They may have contained notes, memorandums, journals, or unfinished letters. It is, of course, impossible now to determine what they were. Benson supposes they were letters which he had received from the churches; Macknight, that they were the originals of the letters which he had written; Bishop Bull, that they were a kind of common-place book, in which he inserted hints

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord [a] reward him according to his works:

[a] Ps 28.4.

15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our [1] words.

1 or, *preachings*.

and extracts of the most remarkable passages in the authors which he read. All this, however, is mere conjecture.

14. *Alexander the coppersmith.* Or, rather, *the brazier*—ὁ χαλκεύς. The word is used, however, to denote a worker in any kind of metals. This is probably the same person who is mentioned in 1 Tim. i. 20, and perhaps the same as the one mentioned in Acts xix. 33; see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 20. ¶ *Did me much evil.* In what way this was done, is not mentioned If this is the same person who is referred to in 1 Tim. i. 20, it is probable that it was not evil to Paul personally, so much as embarrassment to the cause of religion which he advocated; comp. 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. ¶ *The Lord reward him according to his works;* comp. Notes, 1 Tim. i. 20. This need not be regarded as an expression of private feeling; still less should it be understood as expressing a desire of revenge. It is the language of one who wished that God would treat him exactly as he ought to be treated, and might be in accordance with the highest benevolence of any heart. It is the aim of every just government that every one should be treated exactly as he deserves; and every good citizen should desire and pray that exact justice may be done to all. It is the business of a police officer to ferret out the guilty, to bring them to trial, to secure a just sentence; and any police officer might *pray*, with the utmost propriety, that God would assist him in his endeavours, and enable him to perform his duty. This might be done with no malevolent feeling toward any human being, but with the purest love of country, and the most earnest desire for the welfare of all. *If* such a police officer, or *if* a judge, or a juryman, were heard thus to pray, who would dare to accuse him of having a vindictive spirit, or a malevolent heart? And why should Paul be so charged, when his prayer amounts to no more than this? For it remains yet to be proved that he refers to any *private* wrong which Alexander had done him, or that he was actuated by any other desire than that the sacred interests of truth should be guarded, and equal justice done to all. Why is it wrong to desire or to pray that universal justice may be done, and that every man may be treated as, under all the circumstances of the case, he *ought* to be treated? On the subject of the "Imprecations in the Scriptures," the reader may consult an article in the Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. 1, pp. 97—110. It should be added here, that some manuscripts, instead of ἀποδώη, "*may* the Lord reward," read it in the future—ἀποδώσει, "*will* reward." See Wetstein. The future is also found in the Vulgate, Coptic, and in Augustine, Theodoret, and Chrysostom. Augustine says (on the Sermon on the Mount), "He does not say, may he reward (*reddat*); but, he will reward (*reddet*), which is a verb of prophecy, not of imprecation. The authority, however, is not sufficient to justify a change in the present reading. These variations have doubtless arisen from a belief that the common reading expresses a sentiment inconsistent with the true spirit of a Christian, and a desire to find a better. But there is no reason *for desiring* a change in the text.

15. *Of whom be thou ware also.* It would seem from this that Alexander was still a public teacher, and that his discourses were plausible and artful. The best and the wisest of men need to be on their guard against the efforts of the advocates of error. ¶ *For he hath greatly withstood our words.* Marg., *preachings.* The Greek is, *words;* but the reference is doubtless to the public teachings of Paul. This verse makes it clear that it was no *private* wrong that Paul re-

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all [a] *men* forsook me; *I pray God* that it may not be laid [b] to their charge.

[a] chap. 1. 15.

[b] Ac. 7. 60.

ferred to, but the injury which he was doing to the cause of truth as a professed public teacher.

16. *At my first answer.* Gr., *apology* (ἀπολογία), *plea*, or *defence*. This evidently refers to some trial which he had had before the Roman emperor. He speaks of a *first* trial of this kind; but whether it was on some former occasion, and he had been released and permitted again to go abroad, or whether it was a trial which he had already had during his second imprisonment, it is not easy to determine. The former is the most natural supposition; for, if he had had a trial during his present imprisonment, it is difficult to see why he was still held as a prisoner. See this point examined in the Intro., § 1. ¶ *No man stood with me.* Paul had many friends in Rome (ver. 21; comp. Rom. xvi.); but it seems that they did not wish to appear as such when he was put on trial for his life. They were doubtless afraid that they would be identified with him, and would endanger their own lives. It should be said that some of the friends of the apostle, mentioned in Rom. xvi., and who were there when that epistle was written, may have died before the apostle arrived there, or, in the trials and persecutions to which they were exposed, may have left the city. Still, it is remarkable that those who *were* there should have all left him on so trying an occasion. But to forsake a friend in the day of calamity is not uncommon, and Paul experienced what thousands before him and since have done. Thus Job was forsaken by friends and kindred in the day of his trials; see his pathetic description in Job xix. 13—17:

He hath put my brethren far from me,
And mine acquaintance verily are estranged from me.
My kinsfolk have failed,
And my familar friends have forgotten me.
They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger,
I am an alien in their sight.
I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.
My breath is strange to my wife,
Though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body.

Thus the Psalmist was forsaken by his friends in the time of calamity; Ps. xxxv. 12—16; xxxviii. 2; xli. 9; lv. 12. And thus the Saviour was forsaken in his trials; Matt. xxvi. 56; comp., for illustration, Zech. xiii. 6. The world is full of instances in which those who have been overtaken by overwhelming calamities, have been forsaken by professed friends, and have been left to suffer alone. This has arisen, partly from the circumstance that many *sincere* friends are timid, and their courage fails them when their attachment for another would expose them to peril; but more commonly from the circumstance that there is much professed friendship in the world which is false, and that calamity becomes a test of it which it cannot abide. There is professed friendship which is caused by wealth (Prov. xiv. 20; xix. 4); there is that which is cherished for those in elevated and fashionable circles; there is that which is formed for beauty of person, or graceful manners, rather than for the solid virtues of the heart; there is that which is created in the sunshine of life—the affection of those "swallow friends, who retire in the winter, and return in the spring." Comp. the concluding remarks on the book of Job. Such friendship is always tested by calamity; and when affliction comes, they who in the days of prosperity were surrounded by many flatterers and admirers, are surprised to find how few there were among them who truly loved them.

"In the wind and tempest of his frown,
Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;
And what hath mass or matter by itself,
Lies, rich in virtue and unmingled."
Troilus and Cressida.

So common has this been—so little confidence can be placed in professed friends in time of adversity, that we are sometimes disposed to believe

17 Notwithstanding the Lord [a] stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth [b] of the lion.

[a] Mat.10.19; Ac.23.11.

[b] Ps.22.21.

that there is more truth than fancy in the representation of the poet when he says—

"And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?"

Yet *there is* true friendship in the world. It existed between Damon and Pythias, and its power and beauty were still more strikingly illustrated in the warm affection of David and Jonathan. In the trials of David—though raised from the condition of a shepherd boy—and though having no powerful friends at court, the son of Saul never forsook him, and never gave him occasion to suspect the sincerity or the depth of his affection. With what exquisite beauty he sang of that attachment when Jonathan was dead!

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan.
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women."

2 Sam. i.26.

True friendship, founded on sincere love, so rare, so difficult to be found, so little known among the gay and the great, is one of the richest of Heaven's blessings to man, and *when* enjoyed, should be regarded as more than a compensation for all of show, and splendour, and flattery that wealth can obtain.

"Though choice of follies fasten on the great,
None clings more obstinate, than fancy fond
That sacred friendship is their easy prey;
Caught by the wafture of a golden lure,
Or fascination of a high-born smile.
Their smiles, the great, and the coquette, throw out
For other's hearts, tenacious of their own,
And we no less of ours, when such the bait,
Ye fortune's cofferers? ye powers of wealth!
Can gold gain friendship! Impudence of hope!
As well mere man an angel might beget.
Love, and love only, is the loan for love.
Lorenzo! pride repress; nor hope to find
A friend, but what has found a friend in thee.
All like the purchase; few the price will pay,
And this makes friends such miracles below.
A friend is worth all hazards we can run.
Poor is the friendless master of a world;
A world in purchase of a friend is gain."
Night Thoughts, Night 2.

¶ I pray God *that it may not be laid to their charge.* That it may not be *reckoned,* or imputed to them—λογισθείη. On the meaning of this word, see Notes on Rom. iv. 3, and Philem. 18. The prayer of the apostle here breathes the very spirit of Christ; see Notes on Luke xxiii. 34; comp. Acts vii. 60.

17. *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me.* Though all *men* forsook me, yet *God* did not. This expresses a universal truth in regard to the faithfulness of God; see Psalm xxvii. 10; comp. Job v. 17—19; Isa xliii. 1, 2. ¶ *That by me the preaching might be fully known.* The word *preaching,* here probably means *the gospel as preached by him.* The word rendered "might be fully known"—πληροφορηθῇ—means *might obtain full credence;* that is, might be fully confirmed, so that others might be assured of its truth. The apostle doubtless means that on his trial, though forsaken by all men, he was enabled to be so steadfast in his profession of the truth, and so calm in the prospect of death, that all who witnessed his trial saw that there was a reality in religion, and that the gospel was founded in truth. He had maintained as a preacher that the gospel was able to support the soul in trial, and he was now able to illustrate its power in his own case. He had proclaimed the gospel as the true system of religion, and he was now able to bear testimony to it with the prospect of approaching martyrdom. The sentiment of this passage then is, that the truth of the gospel is made known, or that men may become fully assured of it, by the testimony which is borne to it by its friends in the near prospect of death. One of the most important means of establishing the truth of the gospel in the world has been the testimony borne to it by martyrs, and the

18 And the Lord [a] shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[a] Ps.121.7.

spirit of unwavering confidence in God which they have evinced. And now, one of the most important methods of keeping up the knowledge of the value of religion in the world, and of convincing men of the truth of Christianity, is the spirit evinced by its friends when they are about to die. Men judge much, and justly, of the value of a system of religion by its power to comfort in the day of calamity, and to sustain the soul when about to enter on an untried state of being. That system is of little value to mankind which leaves us in the day of trial; that is of inestimable worth which will enable us to die with the firm hope of a brighter and better world. A Christian, having served his God faithfully in life, may, therefore, be eminently useful when he comes to die. ¶ *And* that *all the Gentiles might hear.* Paul was at this time in Rome. His trial was before a heathen tribunal, and he was surrounded by Pagans. Rome, too, was then the centre of the world, and at all times there was a great conflux of strangers there. His trial, therefore, gave him an opportunity of testifying to the truth of Christianity before Gentile rulers, and in such circumstances that the knowledge of his sufferings, and of the religion for which he suffered, might be conveyed by the strangers who witnessed it to the ends of the world. His main object in life was to make the gospel known to the Gentiles, and he had thus an opportunity of furthering that great cause, even on what he supposed might be the trial which would determine with him the question of life or death; comp. Notes on Rom. i. 10. ¶ *And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* This may either mean that he was delivered from Nero, compared with a lion, or literally that he was saved from being thrown to lions in the amphitheatre, as was common in Rome; see Notes on 1 Cor. xv. 32. (3.) It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to compare tyrants and persecutors with ravenous wild beasts; comp. Ps. xxii. 13, 21; Jer. ii. 30. Nero is called a *lion* by Seneca, and it was usual among heathen writers to apply the term in various senses to princes and warriors; see Grotius, *in loc.* The common interpretation here has been, that this refers to Nero, and there is no improbability in the interpretation. Still, it is quite as natural to suppose that the punishment which had been appointed for him, or to which he would have been subjected, was to be thrown to lions, and that in some way, now unknown to us, he had been delivered from it. Paul attributes his deliverance entirely to the Lord—but what instrumental agency there may have been, he does not specify. It seems probable that it was his own defence; that he was enabled to plead his own cause with so much ability that he found favour even with the Roman emperor, and was discharged. If it had been through the help of a friend at court, it is hardly to be supposed that he would not have mentioned the name of him to whom he owed his deliverance.

18. *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.* He does not say from *death*, for he expected now to die; see ver. 6. But he was assured that God would keep him from shrinking from death when the hour approached; from apostasy, and from the manifestation of an improper spirit when he came to die. ¶ *And will preserve* me *unto his heavenly kingdom.* So keep me from evil that I shall reach his heavenly kingdom; see ver. 8. ¶ *To whom* be *glory for ever and ever.* Paul was accustomed to introduce a doxology in his writings when his heart was full (comp. Rom. ix. 5), and in no place could it be more appropriate than here, when he had the fullest confidence that he was soon to be brought to heaven. If man is ever disposed to ascribe glory to God, it is on such an occasion.

19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with thy spirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

The second *epistle* unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before [1] Nero the second time.

1 *Cæsar Nero*, or *the Emperor Nero*.

19. *Salute Prisca and Aquila.* Prisca, or Priscilla, was the wife of Aquila, though her name is sometimes mentioned first. In regard to their history, see Notes, Rom. xvi. 3. They were at Rome when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, but afterwards went into Asia Minor, which was the native place of Aquila (Acts xviii. 2), and where they probably died. ¶ *And the household of Onesiphorus;* Notes, chap. i. 16.

20. *Erastus;* see Notes on Rom. xvi. 23. ¶ *Abode at Corinth.* This was his home, where he filled an important office; Notes, Rom. xvi. 23. It would seem that when Paul went to Rome, there was some expectation that he would accompany him, but that reasons had occurred for his remaining in Corinth. His doing so is referred to without blame. ¶ *But Trophimus;* see Acts xx. 4. He was a native of Asia Minor. ¶ *Have I left at Miletum sick.* Probably he designed to accompany him to Rome, as he had been often with him in his journeys. On the situation of Miletus, or Miletum, see Notes on Acts xx. 15.

21. *Do thy diligence;* ver. 9. ¶ *To come before winter.* Probably because of the dangers of the navigation then, and because the circumstances of the apostle were such as to demand the presence of a friend. ¶ *Eubulus,* &c. These names are of common occurrence in the works of the classic writers, but of the persons here referred to we know nothing.

22. *The Lord Jesus Christ* be *with thy spirit;* see Gal. vi. 18; Rom. xv. 20. The subscription to this epistle was not added by Paul himself, nor is there any evidence that it was by an inspired man, and it is of no authority. There is not the slightest evidence that Timothy was "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians," or that he was a "bishop" there at all. There is no reason to believe that he was even a *pastor* there, in the technical sense; see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 3. Compare the remarks on the subscriptions to the Epistle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, and especially Titus.

THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The History of Titus.*

Of Titus nothing more is certainly known than what we find in the epistles of Paul. It is somewhat remarkable that there is no mention of him in the Acts of the Apostles, nor does his name occur in the New Testament anywhere, except in the writings of the apostle Paul. From his incidental allusions to him, we learn the following particulars respecting him.

(1.) He was by birth a Gentile. In Gal. ii. 3, he is called a Greek, and it is certain from that passage that he had not been circumcised, and the probability is, that up to the time of his conversion he had lived as other Gentiles, and had not been converted to the Jewish faith. His father and mother were, doubtless, both Greeks, and thus he was distinguished from Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess, but whose father was a Greek; Acts xvi. 3; comp. Notes on Gal. ii. 3. If Titus had been proselyted to the Jewish faith, it is to be presumed that he would have been circumcised.

(2.) He had been converted to Christianity by the instrumentality of Paul himself. This is clear from the epistle, chap. i. 4, "To Titus, *mine own son*, after the common faith;" see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 2. This is language which the apostle would not have used of one who had been converted by the instrumentality of another. But where he lived, and when or how he was converted, is wholly unknown. As to *the time* when he was converted, it is known only that this occurred before the fourteenth year after the conversion of Paul, for at that time Titus, a Christian, was with Paul at Jerusalem; Gal. ii. 1. As to *the place* where he lived, there seems some reason to suppose that it was in some part of Asia Minor—for the Greeks abounded there; Paul laboured much there; and there were numerous converts made there to the Christian faith. Still this is not by any means certain.

(3.) Titus went with Paul to Jerusalem when he was deputed by the church at Antioch with Barnabas, to lay certain questions before the apostles and elders there in reference to the converts from the Gentiles; Acts xv; comp. Gal. ii. 1. It is not known *why* he took Titus with him on that occasion, and the reasons can be only conjectural; see Notes on Gal. ii. 1.

It is possible that he was taken with him to Jerusalem because his was *a case in point* in regard to the question which was to come before the apostles and elders there. It is not improbable, from an expression which Paul uses in describing his visit there—"neither was Titus *compelled* to be circumcised"—that the case came up for discussion, and that strenuous efforts were made by the Judaizing portion there (comp. Gal. ii. 4), to have him circumcised. Paul and Barnabas, however, so managed the cause that the principle was settled that it was not necessary that converts from the heathen should be circumcised; Acts xv. 19, 20.

(4.) After the council at Jerusalem, it seems probable that Titus returned with Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Silas and Judas (Acts xv. 23), and that afterwards he attended the apostle for a considerable time in his travels and labours. This appears from a remark in 2 Cor. viii. 23; "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you." From this it would seem, that he had been with Paul; that he was as yet not well known; and that the fact that he had been seen with him had led to inquiry who he was, and what was the office which he sustained. That he was also a companion of Paul, and quite essential to his comfort in his work, is apparent from the following allusions to him in the same epistle—2 Cor. vii. 6—"God, that comforteth those who are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;" ii. 13. "I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus my brother;" vii. 13. "Yea and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus;" comp. 2 Tim. iv. 10; 2 Cor. xii. 18.

(5.) There is reason to believe that Titus spent some time with the apostle in Ephesus. For the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus, and was sent by the hand of Titus; Intro. to 1 Cor. § 3. 6 It is to be presumed also, that he would on such an occasion send some one with the epistle in whom he had entire confidence, and who had been so long with him as to become familiar with his views. For Titus, on this occasion, was sent not only to bear the epistle, but to endeavour to heal the divisions and disorders there, and to complete a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem which the apostle had himself commenced; comp. Notes on 2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 6; viii. 6. After this he met Paul in Macedonia (2 Cor. vii. 5, 6), but whether he was with him when he went with the collection to Jerusalem, and during his imprisonment in Cesarea, or on his voyage to Rome, we have no information.

(6.) We next hear of him as being left by the apostle in the island of Crete, that he might "set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city;" Titus i. 5. This is supposed to have occurred about the year 62, and after the first imprisonment of the apostle at Rome. It is evidently implied that the apostle had been himself there with him, and that he had undertaken to accomplish some important object there, but that something had prevented his completing it, and that he had left Titus to finish it. This was clearly a temporary arrangement, for there is no evidence that it was designed that Titus should be a permanent "bishop" of Crete, or that he remained there long. That he did not design that he should be a permanent bishop of that island, is clear from chap. iii. 12, where the apostle directs him, when he should send Artemas to take his place, to come to him to Nicopolis. If Titus was a prelatical bishop, the apostle would not in this summary manner have superseded him, or removed him from his diocese.

(7.) He was with Paul in Rome during his second imprisonment there. He did not, however, remain with him until his trial, but left him and went into Dalmatia; 2 Tim. iv. 10. For the probable reason why he had gone there, see Notes on that place. What became of him afterward, we are not informed. The tradition is, that he returned to Crete, and preached the

gospel there and in the neighbouring islands, and died at the age of 94 But this tradition depends on no certain evidence.

§ 2. *The island of Crete.*

As Paul (chap. i. 5) says that he had left Titus in Crete to perform an important service there, and as the instructions in this epistle doubtless had some peculiar applicability to the state of things existing there, it is of importance, in order to a correct understanding of the epistle, to have some knowledge of that island, and of the circumstances in which the gospel was introduced there.

The island of Crete, now Candia, is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean, at the south of all the Cyclades. See the Map of Asia Minor, prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles. Its name is said by some to have been derived from the Curetes, who are supposed to have been its first inhabitants; by others, from the nymph Crete, daughter of Hesperus; and by others, from Cres, a son of Jupiter and the nymph Idæa. The ancient authors in general say that Crete was originally peopled from Palestine. According to Bochart (Lib. 5, c. 15), that part of Palestine which lies by the Mediterranean was called by the Arabs *Keritha*, and by Syrians *Creth;* and the Hebrews called the inhabitants *Cresthi*, or *Crethim*, which the LXX. have rendered Κρητας—*Cretans;* Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5. It would be easy to pass from Palestine to the island of Crete. Sir Isaac Newton, also, is of opinion that Crete was peopled from Palestine. He says, "Many of the Phœnicians and Syrians, in the year before Christ 1045, fled from Zidon, and from king David, into Asia Minor, *Crete*, Greece, and Libya, and introduced letters, music, poetry, the *Octœteris*, metals and their fabrication, and other arts, sciences, and customs of the Phœnicians. Along with these Phœnicians came a sort of men skilled in religious mysteries, arts, and sciences of Phœnicia, and settled in several places, under the names of Curetes, Idæi, Dactyli," &c. According to Pliny, the extent of Crete from east to west is about 270 miles, but its breadth nowhere exceeds fifty miles. The early inhabitants are generally supposed to be the Eteocretes of Homer; but their origin is unknown. Minos, who had expelled his brother Sarpedon from the throne, first gave laws to the Cretans, and, having conquered the pirates who infested the Ægean sea, established a powerful navy. In the Trojan war, Idomeneus, sovereign of Crete, led its forces to war in eighty vessels—a number little inferior to those commanded by Agamemnon himself. At this period, the island appears to have been inhabited by a mixed population of Greeks and barbarians. After the Trojan war, the principal cities formed themselves into several republics, for the most part independent, while some of them were connected with federal ties. The Cretan code of laws was supposed by many to have furnished Lycurgus with the model of his most salutary regulations. It was founded on the just basis of liberty and an equality of rights, and its great aim was to promote social harmony and peace, by enforcing temperance and frugality. In regard to this code, see Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. *Creta.* In the time of Polybius (B. C. 203), the Cretans had much degenerated from their ancient character; for he charges them repeatedly with the grossest immorality, and the basest vices. Polyb. 4, 47, 53; *Id.* 6, 46. We know, also, with what severity they are reproved by Paul, in the words of Epimenides; see Notes on chap. i. 12. Crete was subdued by the Romans, and became a part of a Roman province. The interior of the island is very hilly and woody, and intersected with fertile valleys. Mount Ida, in the centre of the island, is the principal mountain, and surpasses all the others in elevation. The island contains no lakes, and its rivers are mostly mountain torrents, which are dry during the summer season. The valleys, or sloping plains, in the island are represented as very

fertile. The greater portion of the land is not cultivated; but it might produce sugar-cane, excellent wine, and the best kind of fruit. It has a delightful climate, and is remarkably healthful. The ancients asserted that this delightful island, the birth-place of Jupiter, was freed, by the indulgence of the gods, from every noxious animal. No quadrupeds of a ferocious character belong to it. The wild goat is the only inhabitant of the forest and the lofty mountains, and sheep overspread the plains, and graze undisturbed by ravenous enemies. The island now is under Turkish rule, and is divided into three pachaliks; but the inhabitants are mostly Greeks, who are kept in a state of great depression. The native Candians are of the Greek church, and are allowed the free exercise of their religion. The island is divided into twelve bishoprics, the bishop of one of which assumes the title of archbishop, and is appointed by the patriarch of Constantinople. The situation of this island for commerce can scarcely be surpassed. It is at an almost equal distance from Asia, Europe, and Africa, and might be made the emporium for the manufactures and agricultural productions of each; but, from the oppressive nature of the government, the indolence of the Turks, and the degraded state of the Greeks, those advantages are not improved, and its condition partakes of that of the general condition of the Turkish empire.

This island was formerly famous for its hundred cities; it is distinguished in the ancient fabulous legends for the arrival there of Europa, on a bull, from Phœnicia; for the laws of Minos; for the labyrinth, the work of Dædalus; and, above all, as the place where Jupiter was born and was buried. According to the fables of mythology, he was born in a cavern near Lyctus, or Cnosus; was rocked in a golden cradle; was fed with honey, and with the milk of the goat Amalthea, while the Curetes danced around him, clashing their arms, to prevent his cries from being heard by Saturn. He became, according to the legend, the king of Crete, and was buried on the island. See *Anthon, Class. Dic., Art. Jupiter.*

§ 3. *The introduction of the gospel into Crete.*

We have no certain information in regard to the time when the gospel was first preached in Crete, nor by whom it was done. There are some circumstances mentioned, however, which furnish all the light which we need on this point, in order to an understanding of the epistle before us. Among the persons who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and who were converted there, *Cretans* are mentioned (Acts ii. 11); and it is highly probable that, when they returned to their homes, they made the gospel known to their countrymen. Yet history is wholly silent as to the method by which it was done, and as to the result on the minds of the inhabitants. As no visit of any of the apostles to that island is mentioned by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, it may be presumed that the gospel there had not produced any very marked success; and the early history of Christianity there is to us unknown.

It is clear from the epistle before us (chap. i. 5), that the apostle Paul was there on some occasion, and that the gospel, either when he was there or before, was attended with success. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." Here it is manifest that Paul had been there with Titus; that he had commenced some arrangements which he had not been able himself to complete; and that the gospel had had an effect extensively on the island, since he was to ordain elders "*in every city.*"

It is not certainly known, however, when Paul was there. There is no mention in the Acts of the Apostles of his having been there, except when he was on his way to Rome (Acts xxvii. 7, 8); and this was in such circumstances as to preclude the supposition that that was the time referred

to in this epistle, for (1.) Titus was not then with him; (2.) there is no reason to suppose that he remained there long enough to preach the gospel to any extent, or to establish churches. He was sailing to Rome as a prisoner, and there is no probability that he would be permitted to go at large and preach for any considerable time. There is, therefore, a moral certainty that it must have been on some other occasion. "It is striking," says Neander (History of the Planting of the Christian Church, vol. 1, pp. 400, 401), "that while Luke in the Acts reports so fully and circumstantially the occurrences of the apostle s last voyage to Rome, and mentions his stay in Crete, he says not a word (contrary to his usual practice in such cases) of the friendly reception given to him by the Christians there, or even of his meeting them at all. Hence we may conclude that no Christian churches existed in that island, though that transient visit would naturally give rise to the intention of planting the gospel there, which he probably fulfilled soon after he was set at liberty, when he came into these parts."

There is reason to believe that Paul, after his first imprisonment at Rome, was released, and again visited Asia Minor and Macedonia. See Intro. to 2 Timothy. On this journey, it is not improbable that he may have visited Crete, having, as Neander supposes, had his attention called to this island as a desirable place for preaching the gospel, when on his way to Rome. "If we may be allowed to suppose," says Dr. Paley (*Hor. Paul.*), "that St. Paul, after his liberation at Rome, sailed into Asia, taking Crete in his way; that from Asia, and from Ephesus, the capital of that country, he proceeded into Macedonia, and, crossing the peninsula in his progress, came into the neighbourhood of Nicopolis, we have a route which falls in with everything. It executes the intention expressed by the apostle of visiting Colosse and Philippi, as soon as he should be set at liberty at Rome. It allows him to leave 'Titus at Crete,' and 'Timothy at Ephesus, as he went into Macedonia,' and to write to both, not long after, from the peninsula of Greece, and probably from the neighbourhood of Nicopolis, thus bringing together the dates of these two letters" (1 Tim. and Titus), "and thereby accounting for that affinity between them, both in subject and language, which our remarks have pointed out. I confess that the journey which we have thus traced out for St. Paul is in a great measure hypothetic; but it should be observed that it is a species of consistency which seldom belongs to falsehood, to admit of an hypothesis which includes a great number of remote and independent circumstances without contradiction." See Neander, History of the Planting of the Churches, i. 401. Comp., however, Intro. to 1 Tim., § 2.

Why Paul left Crete without completing the work which was to be done, and especially without ordaining the elders himself, is not certainly known. There is evidently a striking resemblance between the circumstances which induced him to leave Titus there, and those which existed at Ephesus when he left Timothy there to complete an important work; 1 Tim. i. 3, 4. We know that Paul was driven away from Ephesus before he had finished the work there which he had purposed to accomplish (Acts xix., xx. 1); and it is not at all improbable that some such disturbance took place in Crete. Comp. Koppe, Proleg. p. 194. When he thus left, he committed to Titus the work which he had designed to accomplish, with instructions to finish it as soon as possible, and then to come to him at Nicopolis; chap. iii. 12.

§ 4. *The place, time, and occasion of writing the epistle.*

There has been much diversity of opinion as to the time and place of writing this epistle.

In regard to the *place*, there can be little doubt that it was at *a* Nicopolis; for the apostle, in chap. iii. 12, directs Titus to come to him at that place. But it is not easy to determine *what* Nicopolis is meant, for there were many cities of that name. The person who affixed the subscription at the end of the epistle, affirms that it was "Nicopolis of Macedonia;" but, as has been frequently remarked in these Notes, these subscriptions are of no authority. The name *Nicopolis* (meaning, properly, *a city of victory*—νίκη and πόλις) was given to several places. There was a city of this name in Thrace, on the river Nessus, now called Nikopi. There was also a city of the same name in Epirus, two in Mœsia, another in Armenia, another in Cilicia, and another in Egypt, in the vicinity of Alexandria. It is by no means easy to ascertain which of these cities is meant, though, as Paul was accustomed to travel in Greece and Asia Minor, there seems to be a probability that one of those cities is intended. The only way of determining this with any degree of probability, is, to ascertain what city was *best known* by that name at the time when the epistle was written, or what city one would be likely to go to, if he were directed to go to Nicopolis, without any further specification—as if one were directed to go to Philadelphia, London, or Rome. In such a case, he would go to the principal city of that name, though there might be many other smaller places of that name also. But even this would not be absolutely certain, for Paul may have specified to Titus the place where he *expected* to go before he left him, so that he would be in no danger of doubt where the place was. But if we were to allow this consideration to influence us in regard to the place, there can be little doubt that the city which he meant was Nicopolis in Epirus, and the common opinion has been that the apostle alludes to this city. This Nicopolis was situated in Epirus, in Greece, north-west of Corinth and Athens, on the Ambracian gulf, and near its mouth. See the Map prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles. On the same gulf, and directly opposite to Nicopolis, is Actium, the place where Augustus achieved a signal victory over Mark Antony; and the city of Nicopolis he built in honour of that victory. Augustus was anxious to raise this city to the highest rank among the cities of Greece, and caused games to be celebrated there, with great pomp, every few years. Having afterwards fallen into decay, the city was restored by the emperor Julian. Modern travellers describe the remains of Nicopolis as very extensive; the site which they now occupy is called *Prevesa Vecchia*. See *Anthon's Class. Dic.* It should be said, however, that there is no absolute certainty about the place where the epistle was written. Macknight and Benson suppose it was at Colosse; Lardner supposes it was in or near Macedonia; Hug, at Ephesus.

If the epistle was written from the Nicopolis referred to, then it was probably after Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. If so, it was written about the year 63 or 64. But there is great diversity of opinion as to the time. Lardner and Hug place it in the year 56. It is of no material importance to be able to determine the exact time.

The occasion on which it was written is specified by the apostle himself, with such clearness, that there can be no doubt on that point. Paul had left Titus in Crete, to "set in order the things which were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city" (chap. i. 5); and as he had himself, perhaps, been called to leave suddenly, it was important that Titus should have more full instructions than he had been able to give him on various points of duty, or, at any rate, that he should have *permanent* instructions to which he could refer. The epistle is occupied, therefore, mainly with such counsels as were appropriate to a minister of the gospel engaged in the duties which Titus was left to discharge.

The principal difficulties which it was apprehended Titus would meet with in the performance of his duties there, and which in fact made his labours

there desirable, arose from two sources: (1.) the character of the Cretans themselves; and (2.) the influence of Judaizing teachers.

(1.) The character of the Cretans themselves was such as to demand the vigilance and care of Titus. They were a people characterized for insincerity, falsehood, and gross living; chap. i. 12. There was great danger, therefore, that their religion would be hollow and insincere, and great need of caution lest they should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity required in the gospel; chap. i. 13.

(2.) The influence of Judaizing teachers was to be guarded against. It is evident from Acts ii. 11, that there were Jews residing there; and it is probable that it was by those who had gone from that island to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Pentecost, and who had been converted on that occasion, that the gospel was first introduced there. From this epistle, also, it is clear that one of the great dangers to piety in the churches of Crete, arose from the efforts of such teachers, and from the plausible arguments which they would use in favour of the Mosaic law; see chap. i. 10, 14—16; iii. 9. To counteract the effect of their teaching, it was necessary to have ministers of the gospel appointed in every important place, who should be qualified for their work. To make these arrangements, was the great design for which Titus was left there; and to give him full information as to the kind of ministers which was needed, this epistle was written.

There is a very striking resemblance between this epistle and the first epistle to Timothy. See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*. "Both letters were addressed to persons left by the writer to preside in their respective churches during his absence. Both letters are principally occupied in describing the qualifications to be sought for in those whom they should appoint to offices in the church; and the ingredients of this description are, in both letters, nearly the same. Timothy and Titus, likewise, are cautioned against the same prevailing corruptions, and, in particular, against the same misdirection of their cares and studies." *Paley*. This similarity is found, not only in the general structure of the epistles, but also in particular phrases and expressions; comp 1 Tim. i. 2, 3, with Titus i. 4, 5; 1 Tim. i. 4, with Titus i. 14, iii. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 12, with Titus iii. 7, and ii. 15; 1 Tim. iii. 2—4, with Titus i. 6—8.

It is evident, from this, that the epistles were written by the same person, and to those who were in substantially the same circumstances. They are incidental proofs that they are genuine, and were written by the person, and to the persons, whose names appear, and on the occasions which are said in the epistle to have existed. On the subjects in this introduction, the reader may consult Macknight's Introduction to the Epistle; Michaelis's Introduction; Benson, Koppe, and especially Paley's Horæ Paulinæ—a work which will never be consulted without profit.

THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging [a] of the truth which [b] is after godliness;

a 2 Ti.2.25. *b* 1 Ti.6.3.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter embraces the following points:—

1. The usual inscription and salutation; ver. 1—4. In this Paul declares himself to be the author of the epistle, and asserts in the strongest manner his claims to the apostleship. He alludes to the great cause in which, as an apostle, he was engaged—as acting under the eternal plan of God for the salvation of the elect, and appointed to communicate the glorious truths of that system which had been now revealed to mankind. The object of this seems to be to impress the mind of Titus with his right to give him instruction.

2. A statement of the object for which Titus had been left in Crete, and the general character of the work which he was to perform there; ver. 5.

3. The qualifications of those who were to be ordained to the ministry; ver. 6—9. The characteristics laid down are substantially the same as in 1 Tim. iii.

4. Reasons for great caution and prudence in thus appointing elders over the churches; ver. 10—13. Those reasons arose from the character of the Cretans. There were many deceivers there, and the character of the Cretans was such that there was great danger that they who professed to be Christians would be hypocritical, and if put into the eldership that they would do great injury to the cause.

5. A solemn charge to Titus to rebuke them faithfully for their prevailing and characteristic vices, and to avoid giving any countenance to that for which they were so much distinguished; ver. 13—16.

1. *Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ;* see Notes, Rom. i. 1; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 1—5. ¶ *According to the faith of God's elect;* comp. Notes, Rom. viii. 33; Eph. i. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 10. The meaning of the word rendered here, "according to"—κατὰ—is, probably, *with reference to;* that is, he was appointed to be an apostle *with respect to the faith of* those whom God had chosen, or, *in order* that they might be led to believe the gospel. God had chosen them to salvation, but he intended that it should be in connection with their believing, and, *in order to that,* he had appointed Paul to be an apostle that he might go and make known to them the gospel. It is the purpose of God to save his people, but he does not mean to save them as infidels, or unbelievers. He intends that they shall be believers first—and hence he sends his ministers that they may become such. ¶ *And the acknowledging of the truth.* In order to secure the acknowledgment or recognition of the truth. The object of the apostleship, as it is of the ministry in general, is to secure the proper acknowledgment of the *truth* among men. ¶ *Which is after godliness.* Which tends to promote piety towards God. On the word rendered *godliness,* see Notes on 1 Tim. ii. 2; iii. 16.—The truth, the acknowledg-

2 [1] In hope of eternal life, which God, that [a] cannot lie, promised before [b] the world began;

3 But [c] hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, [d] which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

1 or, *For.* *a* 1 Sa.15.29. *b* Mat.25.34.

4 To Titus, *mine* own son [e] after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in

c 2 Ti.1.10; He.6.18. *d* Ro.10.14,15. *e* 1 Ti.1.1,2.

ment of which Paul was appointed to secure, was not scientific, historical, or political truth: it was that of religion—that which was adapted to lead men to a holy life, and to prepare them for a holy heaven.

2. *In hope of eternal life.* Marg., *for.* Gr., Ἐπ' ἐλπίδι. This does not mean that Paul cherished the hope of eternal life, but that the "faith of the elect," which he aimed to secure, was *in order* that men might have the hope of eternal life. The whole system which he was appointed to preach was designed to secure to man a well-founded hope of salvation; comp. Notes, 2 Tim. i. 10. ¶ *Which God, that cannot lie.* On the phrase "cannot lie," see Notes on Heb. vi. 13. The fact that God cannot lie; that it is his nature always to speak the truth; and that no circumstances can ever occur in which he will depart from it, is the foundation of all our hopes of salvation. ¶ *Promised.* The only hope of salvation is in the *promise* of God. It is only as we can have evidence that he has assured us that we may be saved, that we are authorized to cherish any hope of salvation. That promise is not made to us as individuals, or by name, but it becomes ours, (1.) because he has made a general promise that they who repent and believe shall be saved; and (2.) because we may have evidence that we have repented, and do believe the gospel. If this be so, we fairly come under the promise of salvation, and may apply it to ourselves. ¶ *Before the world began.* That is, the purpose was then formed, and the promise may be considered as in fact then made;—for a purpose in the mind of God, though it is not as yet made known, is equivalent to a promise; comp. Notes on Matt. xxv. 34; 2 Tim. i. 9.

3. *But hath in due times.* At the proper time; the time which he had intended; the best time: see Notes on 1 Tim. ii. 6; comp. Notes on Matt. ii. 2. ¶ *Manifested his word through preaching;* see Notes on 2 Tim. ii 10. The meaning here is, that he has made known his eternal purpose through the preaching of the gospel; comp. Notes on Rom. x. 14, 15. ¶ *Which is committed unto me.* Not exclusively, but in common with others; see Notes on 2 Tim. i. 11. ¶ *According to the commandment of God our Saviour.* Paul always claimed to be divinely commissioned, and affirmed that he was engaged in the work of preaching by the authority of God; see Gal. i. 1—11, 12; 1 Cor. i. 1; Rom. i. 1—4.

4. *To Titus;* see the Intro. § 1. ¶ Mine *own son;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 2. ¶ *After the common faith.* The faith of all Christians;—equivalent to saying "my son in the gospel." That is, Paul had been the means of converting him by preaching that gospel which was received by all who were Christians. ¶ *Grace, mercy, and peace,* &c.; see Notes on Rom. i. 7.

5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete;* comp. Notes, 1 Tim. i. 3. On the situation of Crete, see the Intro. § 2. ¶ *That thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting.* Marg., *left undone.* The Greek is, "the things that are left;" that is, those which were left unfinished; referring, doubtless, to arrangements which had been commenced, but which for some cause had been left incomplete. Whether this had occurred because he had been driven away by persecution, or called away by important duties demanding his attention elsewhere, cannot now be determined. The word rendered

order [a] the things that are [1] want-
[a] 1 Co.11.34. [1] or, *left undone.*
[b] Ac.14.23; 2 Ti.2.2.
ing, and ordain [b] elders in every city as I had appointed thee:

"set in order"—ἐπιδιορθώσῃ—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *to make straight upon*, and then to put further to rights, to arrange further. *Robinson, Lex.* —There were things left unfinished which he was to complete. One of these things, and perhaps the principal, was, to appoint elders in the various cities where the gospel had been preached. ¶ *And ordain.* The word *ordain* has now acquired a technical signification which it cannot be shown that it has in the New Testament. It means, in common usage, to "invest with a ministerial function or sacerdotal power; to introduce, and establish, and settle in the pastoral office with the customary forms and solemnities" (Webster); and it may be added, with the idea always connected with it, of the imposition of hands. But the word used here does not necessarily convey this meaning, or imply that Titus was to go through what would now be called *an ordination service.* It means to set, place, or constitute; then, to set over any thing, as a steward or other officer (see Matt. xxiv. 45; Luke xii. 42; Acts vi. 3), though without reference to any particular mode of investment with an office; see the word, *ordain*, explained in the Notes on Acts i. 22; xiv. 23. Titus was to appoint or set them over the churches, though with what ceremony is now unknown. There is no reason to suppose that he did this except as the result of the choice of the people; comp. Notes on Acts vi. 3. ¶ *Elders.* Gr., Presbyters; see the word explained in the Notes on Acts xiv. 23. These *elders*, or *Presbyters*, were also called *bishops* (comp. Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 1), for Paul immediately, in describing their qualifications, calls them bishops:—"ordain elders in every city—if any be blameless—FOR *a bishop* must be blameless," &c. If the elders and bishops in the times of the apostles were of different ranks, this direction would be wholly unmeaning. It would be the same as if the following direction were given to one who was authorized to appoint officers over an army: "Appoint *captains* over each company, who shall be of good character, and acquainted with military tactics, FOR *a brigadier-General* must be of good character, and acquainted with the rules of war."—That the same rank is denoted also by the terms *Presbyter* and *Bishop* here, is further apparent because the qualifications which Paul states as requisite for the "bishop" are not those which pertain to a prelate or a diocesan bishop, but to one who was a pastor of a church, or an evangelist. It is clear, from ver. 7, that those whom Titus was to appoint were "bishops," and yet it is absurd to suppose that the apostle meant *prelatical* bishops, for no one can believe that such bishops were to be appointed in "every city" of the island. According to all modern notions of Episcopacy, one such bishop would have been enough for such an island as Crete, and indeed it has been not unfrequently maintained that Titus himself was in fact the bishop of that diocese. But if these were not prelates who were to be ordained by Titus, then it is clear that the term "bishop" in the New Testament is given to the Presbyters or elders; that is, to all ministers of the gospel. That usage should never have been departed from. ¶ *In every city.* Crete was anciently celebrated for the number of its cities. In one passage Homer ascribes to the island an hundred cities (*Il.* ii. 649), in another ninety (*Od.* xix. 174). It may be presumed that many of these cities were towns of no very considerable size, and yet it would seem probable that each one was large enough to have a church, and to maintain the gospel. Paul, doubtless, expected that Titus would travel over the whole island, and endeavour to introduce the gospel in every important place. ¶ *As I had appointed thee.* As I *commanded* thee, or gave thee direction

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.

7 For a bishop [a] must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a

[a] 1 Ti. 3. 2, &c.

—διαταξάμην.—This is a different word from the one used in the former part of the verse,—and rendered *ordain*—καθίστημι. It does not mean that Titus was to ordain elders in the same manner as Paul had ordained him, but that he was to set them over the cities as he had *directed* him to do. He had, doubtless, given him oral instructions, when he left him, as to the way in which it was to be done.

6. *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife;* Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 2. ¶ *Having faithful children;* Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5. That is, having a family well-governed, and well-trained in religion. The word here—πιστὰ—applied to the children, and rendered *faithful,* does not necessarily mean that they should be truly pious, but it is descriptive of those who had been well-trained, and were in due subordination. If a man's family were not of his character—if his children were insubordinate, and opposed to religion—if they were decided infidels or scoffers, it would show that there was such a deficiency in the head of the family that he could not be safely intrusted with the government of the church; comp. Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 5. It is probably true, also, that the preachers at that time would be selected, as far as practicable, from those whose families were all Christians. There might be great impropriety in placing a man over a church, a part of whose family were Jews or heathens. ¶ *Not accused of riot.* That is, whose *children* were not accused of riot. This explains what is meant by *faithful.* The word rendered *riot*—ἀσωτία—is translated *excess* in Eph. v. 18, and *riot* in Tit. i. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 4. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, though the word *riotous* is found in Luke xv. 13; see it explained in the Notes on Eph. v. 18. The meaning here is, that they should not be *justly* accused of this; this should not be their character. It would, doubtless, be a good reason now why a man should not be ordained to the ministry that he had a dissipated and disorderly family. ¶ *Or unruly.* Insubordinate; ungoverned; see Notes, 1 Tim i. 9; and iii. 4.

7. *For a bishop must be blameless;* 1 Tim. iii. 2. ¶ *As the steward of God;* see Notes, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. A man, in order to perform the duties of such an office, should be one against whom no accusation could lie. ¶ *Not self-willed;* comp. 2 Pet. ii. 10. The word—αὐθάδης—does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, properly, *self-complacent;* and then, *assuming. arrogant, imperious; Rob. Lex.*—The *gist* of the offence—the very "head and front"—is that of being *self-complacent;* a trait of character which, of necessity, makes a man imperious, dogmatical, impatient of contradiction, and unyielding. Such a man, evidently, is not fit for the office of a minister of the gospel. ¶ *Not soon angry;* see Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 2, and the margin there. ¶ *Not given to wine;* Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 3. ¶ *No striker;* Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 3. ¶ *Not given to filthy lucre.* In 1 Tim. iii., "Not *greedy* of filthy lucre." The same Greek word is used.

8. *But a lover of hospitality;* Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 2. ¶ *A lover of good men;* Marg., "or *things.*" The Greek (φιλάγαθος) means, *a lover of good,* and may apply to any thing that is good. It may refer to good men, as included under the general term *good;* and there is no more essential qualification of a bishop than this. A man who sustains the office of a minister of the gospel, should love every good object, and be ever ready to promote it; and he should love every good man, no matter in what denomination or country he may be found—no matter what his complexion, and no matter what his rank in life; comp. Notes

lover of good [1] men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 Holding [a] fast the faithful word, [2] as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

1 or, *things.* *a* 2 Th. 2. 15. 2 or, *in teaching.*

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers [b] and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert [c] whole houses, teaching things which

b Ja.1.26. *c* Mat.23.14.

on Phil. iv. 8. ¶ *Sober;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 2. ¶ *Just.* Upright in his dealings with all. A minister can do little good who is not; comp. Notes on Phil. iv. 8. ¶ *Holy.* Pious, or devout. Faithful in all his duties to God; Notes, 1 Tim. ii. 8. ¶ *Temperate.* εγκρατῆ. Having power or control over all his passions. We apply the term, now, with reference to abstinence from intoxicating liquors. In the Scriptures, it includes not only that, but also much more. It implies control over *all* our passions and appetites. See it explained in the Notes on Acts xxiv. 25; comp. 1 Cor. vii. 9; ix. 25; Gal. v. 23.

9. *Holding fast the faithful word.* That is, the true doctrines of the gospel. This means that he is to hold this fast, in opposition to one who would wrest it away, and in opposition to all false teachers, and to all systems of false philosophy. He must be a man who is firm in his belief of the doctrines of the Christian faith, and a man who can be relied on to maintain and defend those doctrines in all circumstances; comp. Notes, 2 Thess. ii. 15. ¶ *As he hath been taught.* Marg., *in teaching.* Gr. "According to the teaching." The sense is, according to that doctrine as taught by the inspired teachers of religion. It does not mean as *he* had individually been taught; but he was to hold the faith as it was delivered by those whom the Saviour had appointed to make it known to mankind. The phrase "*the* doctrine," or "*the* teaching," had a sort of technical meaning, denoting the gospel as that which had been communicated to mankind, not by human reason, but by *teaching.* ¶ *That he may be able by sound doctrine.* By sound *teaching,* or *instruction;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 10; iv. 16. He was not to *dictate,* or to *denounce;* but to seek to *convince* by the statement of the truth; see Notes, 2 Tim. ii. 25.— ¶ *Both to exhort and to convince.* To persuade them, or to bring them over to your views by kind exhortation, and by the instruction which shall convince. The former method is to be used where men *know* the truth, but need encouragement to follow it; the latter, where they are ignorant, or are opposed to it. Both exhortation and argument are to be used by the ministers of religion. ¶ *The gainsayers.* Opposers. Literally, *those who speak against;* that is, against the truth; Notes, Rom. x. 21.

10. *For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers.* There are many persons who are indisposed to submit to authority (see the word *unruly* in ver. 6); many who are *vain talkers*—who are more given to *talk* than to the duties of practical religion (see the character of "*Talkative,*" in the Pilgrim's Progress); and many who live to deceive others under the mask of religion. They make great pretensions to piety; they are fluent in argument, and they urge their views in a plausible manner. ¶ *Specially they of the circumcision.* Jews, spoken of here as "of the circumcision" particularly, because they urged the necessity of circumcision in order that men might be saved; Notes, Acts xv. 1. This proves that there were not a few Jews in the island of Crete.

11. *Whose mouths must be stopped.* The word here rendered *stopped*—ἐπιστομίζειν—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, to check, or curb, as with a bridle; to restrain, or bridle in; and then, to put to silence. It is, of course, implied here that this was to be done in a proper way, and in accordance with the spirit of the gospel. The apostle gives Timothy no *civil* power to do it,

they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

12 One [a] of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

a Ac.17.28.

nor does he direct him to call in the aid of the civil arm. All the agency which he specifies as proper for this, is that of argument and exhortation. These are the proper means of silencing the advocates of error; and the history of the church shows that the ministers of religion can be safely intrusted with no other; comp. Ps. xxxii. 8, 9. ¶ *Who subvert whole houses.* Whole families; comp. Matt. xxiii. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 6. That is, they turn them aside from the faith. ¶ *Teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.* For gain. That is, they inculcate such doctrines as will make themselves popular, and as will give them access to the confidence of the people. They make it their first object to acquire influence as ministers of religion, and then abuse that in order to obtain money from the people. This they would doubtless do under many pretences; such as that it was needful for the support of the gospel, or for the relief of the poor, or perhaps for the assistance of distant Christians in persecution. Religion is the most powerful principle that ever governs the mind; and if a man has the control of *that*, it is no difficult thing to induce men to give up their worldly possessions. In all ages, there have been impostors who have taken advantage of the powerful principle of religion to obtain money from their deluded followers. No people can be too vigilant in regard to pretended religious teachers; and while it is undoubtedly their duty to contribute liberally for the support of the gospel, and the promotion of every good cause, it is *no less* their duty to examine with care every proposed object of benevolence, and to watch with an eagle eye those who have the disbursement of the charities of the church. It is very rare that ministers ought to have much to do with disposing of the funds given for benevolent purposes; and *when* they do, they should in all cases be associated with their lay brethren; see Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. iv., No. 1, 3, note; comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 3. On the phrase "filthy lucre," see Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 3.

12. *One of themselves.* That is, one of the Cretans. The quotation here shows that Paul had his eye not only on the *Jewish* teachers there, but on the native Cretans. The meaning is, that, alike in reference to Jewish teachers and native-born Cretans, there was need of the utmost vigilance in the selection of persons for the ministry. They all had well-known traits of character, which made it proper that no one should be introduced into the ministry without extreme caution. It would seem, also, from the reasoning of Paul here, that the trait of character here referred to pertained not only to the native Cretans, but also to the character of the Jews residing there; for he evidently means that the caution should extend to all who dwelt on the island. ¶ Even *a prophet of their own.* Or, a *poet;* for the word *prophet*—προφήτης—like the Latin word *vates*, was often applied to poets, because they were supposed to be *inspired* of the muses, or to write under the influence of inspiration. So Virgil, Ecl. 9. 32: Et me fecere poetam Pierides . . . me quoque dicunt vatem pastores. Varro, Ling. Lat. 6. 3: Vates poetæ dicti sunt. The term *prophet* was also given by the Greeks to one who was regarded as the *interpreter* of the gods, or who explained the obscure responses of the oracles. As such an interpreter—as one who thus saw future events, he was called a *prophet;* and as the poets claimed much of this kind of knowledge, the name was given to them. It was also given to one who was regarded as eminently endowed with *wisdom*, or who had that kind of sagacity by which the results of present conduct might be foreseen, as if he was under the influence of a kind of inspiration. The word might have been applied to the person here referred to—Epime-

nides—in this latter sense, because he was eminently endowed with wisdom. He was one of the seven wise men of Greece. He was a contemporary of Solon, and was born at Phæstus, in the island of Crete, B.C. 659, and is said to have reached the age of 157 years. Many marvellous tales are told of him (see Anthon, *Class. Dic.*) which are commonly supposed to be fabulous, and which are to be traced to the invention of the Cretans. The event in his life which is best known is, that he visited Athens, at the request of the inhabitants, to prepare the way by sacrifices for the introduction of the laws of Solon. He was supposed to have intercourse with the gods, and it was presumed that a peculiar sacredness would attend the religious services in which he officiated. On this account, also, as well as because he was a poet, the name *prophet* may have been given him. Feuds and animosities prevailed at Athens, which it was supposed such a man might allay, and thus prepare them for the reception of the laws of Solon. The Athenians wished to reward him with wealth and public honours; but he refused to accept of any remuneration, and only demanded a branch of the sacred olive tree, and a decree of perpetual friendship between Athens and his native city. After his death, divine honours were paid to him by the Cretans. He wrote a poem on the Argonautic expedition, and other poems, which are now entirely lost. The quotation here is supposed to be made from a treatise on oracles and responses, which is also lost. ¶ *The Cretians are always liars.* This character of the Cretans is abundantly sustained by the examples adduced by Wetstein. *To be a Cretan*, became synonymous with being a liar, in the same way as *to be a Corinthian*, became synonymous with living a licentious life; comp. Intro. to 1 Cor., § 1. Thus the scholiast says, παροιμία ἐστι τὸ κρητίζειν ἐπὶ τοῦ ψεύδεσθαι—*to act the Cretan, is a proverb for to lie.* The particular *reason* why they had this character abroad, rather than other people, is unknown. Bishop Warburton supposes that they acquired it by claiming to have among them the tomb of Jupiter, and by maintaining that *all* the gods, like Jupiter, were only mortals who had been raised to divine honours. Thus the Greeks maintained that they *always* proclaimed a falsehood by asserting this opinion. But their reputation for falsehood seems to have arisen from some deeper cause than this, and to have pertained to their general moral character. They were only more eminent in what was common among the ancient heathen, and what is almost universal among the heathen now; comp. Notes on Eph. iv. 25. ¶ *Evil beasts.* In their character, beasts or brutes of a ferocious or malignant kind. This would imply that there was a great want of civilization, and that their want of refinement was accompanied with what commonly exists in that condition—the unrestrained indulgence of wild and ferocious passions. See examples of the same manner of speaking of barbarous and malicious men in Wetstein. ¶ *Slow bellies.* Mere gormandizers. Two vices seem here to be attributed to them, which indeed commonly go together—*gluttony* and *sloth.* An industrious man will not be likely to be a gormandizer, and a gormandizer will not often be an industrious man. The mind of the poet, in this, seems to have conceived of them first as an indolent, worthless people; and then immediately to have recurred to the cause—that they were a race of gluttons, a people whose only concern was the stomach; comp. Phil. iii. 19. On the connection between gluttony and sloth, see the examples in Wetstein. Seldom have more undesirable, and, in some respects, incongruous qualities, been grouped together in describing any people. They were false to a proverb, which was, indeed, consistent enough with their being ferocious—though ferocious and wild nations are sometimes faithful to their word; but they were at the same time ferocious and lazy, fierce and gluttonous—qualities which are not often found together. In some respects, therefore, they surpassed the common depravity of human nature, and blended in themselves ignoble properties which,

13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them [a] sharply; that they may be sound in the faith.

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, [b] and commandments of men that turn from the truth.

15 Unto [c] the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled

[a] 2 Ti. 4. 2. [b] 1 Ti. 1. 4. [c] Ro. 14, 14, 20.

among the worst people, are usually found existing alone. To mingle apparently contradictory qualities of wickedness in the same individual or people, is the height of depravity; as to blend in the same mind apparently inconsistent traits of virtuous character, or those which exist commonly, in their highest perfection, only alone, is the highest virtue.

13. *This witness is true.* That is, this testimony long before borne by one of their own number, was true when the apostle wrote to Titus. The fact that this was the general character of the people, was a reason why he should be on his guard in introducing men into the ministry, and in the arrangement of affairs pertaining to the church. That it *was* true, see proofs in Wetstein. ¶ *Wherefore rebuke them.* Notes, 2 Tim. iv. 2. ¶ *Sharply.* ἀποτόμως — *cuttingly, severely* — from ἀποτέμνω, *to cut off.* The word is used here in the sense of severity, meaning that the reproof should be such as would be understood, and would show them plainly the wickedness of such traits of character. He was not to be *mealy-mouthed*, but he was to call things by their right names, and not to spare their faults. When men *know* that they are doing wrong, we should tell them so in few words; if they do not know it, it is necessary to *teach* them, in order to convince them of their error. ¶ *That they may be sound in the faith.* That they may not allow the prevailing vices to corrupt their views of religion.

14. *Not giving heed to Jewish fables,* &c.; see Notes, 1 Tim. i. 4. ¶ *And commandments of men that turn from the truth;* Notes, Matt. xv. 3—5.

15. *Unto the pure all things* are *pure;* see Notes on Rom. xiv. 14, 20. There is probably an allusion here to the distinctions made in respect to meats and drinks among the Jews. Some articles of food were regarded as "clean," or allowed to be eaten, and some as "unclean," or forbidden. Paul says that those distinctions ceased under the Christian dispensation, and that to those who had a conscience not easily troubled by nice and delicate questions about ceremonial observances, all kinds of food might be regarded as lawful and proper; comp. Notes, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. If a man habitually maintains a good conscience in the sight of God, it will be accepted of him whether he do or do not abstain from certain kinds of food; comp. Notes on Col. ii. 16. This passage, therefore, should not be interpreted as proving that all things are right and lawful for a Christian, or that whatever he may choose to do will be regarded as pure, but as primarily referring to distinctions in food, and meaning that there was no sanctity in eating one kind of food, and no sin in another, but that the mind was equally pure whatever was eaten. The phrase has a proverbial cast, though I know not that it was so used. The *principle* of the declaration is, that a pure mind—a truly pious mind—will not regard the distinctions of food and drink; of festivals, rites, ceremonies, and days, as necessary to be observed in order to promote its purity. The conscience is not to be burdened and enslaved by these things, but is to be controlled only by the moral laws which God has ordained. But there may be a somewhat higher application of the words —that *every* ordinance of religion, every command of God, every event that occurs in divine Providence, tends to promote the holiness of one who is of pure heart. He can see a sanctifying tendency in everything, and can derive from all that is commanded, and all that occurs, the means of making the heart more holy. While a depraved mind will turn every such thing to a pernicious use, and make it the means of augmenting its malignity and corruption, to the pure

and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess *a* that they know

a 2 Ti. 3.5,7.

God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work [1] reprobate.

1 or, *void of judgment.*

mind it will be the means of increasing its confidence in God, and of making itself more holy. To such a mind everything may become a means of grace. ¶ *But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving* is *nothing pure.* Everything is made the means of increasing their depravity. No matter what ordinances of religion they observe; what distinctions of meats, or drinks, or days they regard, and what events of Providence occur, all are the occasion of augmented depravity. Such distinctions in food they make the means of fostering their pride and producing self-righteousness; the mercies of God they abuse to pamper their own lusts, and the afflictive events of divine Providence they make the occasion of murmuring and rebellion. Naturally corrupt at heart, no ordinances of religion, and no events of Providence, make them any better, but all tend to deepen their depravity. A sentiment similar to this is found in the classic writers. Thus Seneca, Epis. 98. Malus animus omnia in malum vertit, etiam quæ specie optimi venerunt. So again (de Beneficiis v. 12), Quemadmodum stomachus morbo vitiatus, et colliques bilem, quoscunque acceperit cibos mutat—ita animus cæcus, quicquid illi commiseris, id onus suum et perniciem facit. ¶ *But even their mind and conscience is defiled.* It is not a mere external defilement—a thing which they so much dread—but a much worse kind of pollution, that which extends to the soul and the conscience. Everything which they do tends to corrupt the inner man more and more, and to make them really more polluted and abominable in the sight of God. The wicked, while they remain impenitent, are constantly becoming worse and worse. They make everything the means of increasing their depravity, and even those things which seem to pertain only to outward observances are made the occasion of the deeper corruption of the heart.

16. *They profess that they know God.* That is, the Jewish teachers particularly, who are referred to in ver. 14. All those persons were professors of religion, and claimed that they had a peculiar knowledge of God. ¶ *But in works they deny him.* Their conduct is such as to show that they have no real acquaintance with him. ¶ *Being abominable.* In their conduct. The word here used—βδελυκτοὶ—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means that which is detestable, or to be held in abhorrence. ¶ *And disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* Marg., *void of judgment.* On the word here used—ἀδόκιμος—see Notes on Rom. i. 28; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. It means here that in reference to everything that was good, their conduct was such that it could not be approved, or deserved disapprobation. It was for this reason; from the character of the people of the island of Crete, and of those who claimed to be teachers there enforcing the obligation of the Mosaic law, that it was so important for Titus to exercise special care in introducing men into the ministry, and in completing the arrangements contemplated in the organization of the churches there. Yet is this character confined to them? Are there none now who profess that they know God, but in works deny him; whose conduct is such that it ought to be abhorred; who are disobedient to the plain commands of God, and whose character in respect to all that pertains to true piety is to be disapproved by the truly pious, and will be by God at the last day? Alas, taking the church at large, there are many such, and the fact that there are such persons is the grand hindrance to the triumphs of religion on the earth. "*The way to heaven is blocked up by dead professors of religion.*"

CHAPTER II.

BUT speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged [a] men be [1] sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith in charity, in patience.

a Pr. 16. 31. 1 or, *vigilant.*

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

In the previous chapter, the apostle had directed Titus what to do in the organization of churches in the various cities of Crete, and had put him on his guard in doing it, by showing the character of the people he had to deal with. In this chapter he gives him various instructions as to his *own* method of teaching, showing what kind of doctrines he should inculcate, and what kind of instructions he should give to the various *classes* of his hearers. He was, in general, to speak only such things as became sound doctrine; ver. 1. In particular he was to instruct aged men to be sober, grave, and temperate—acting in a manner that became their time of life, ver. 2; the aged women to be a proper example to the younger females, and to exercise a proper care over them, ver. 3—5; the young men to be sober-minded, ver. 6; Titus himself, who evidently came under the class of young men, was to be an example to them in all things, ver. 7, 8; and servants were to be instructed to perform their duty to their masters with fidelity, ver. 9, 10. The duty of giving these instructions is then enforced by a reference to the nature and design of the gospel; ver. 11—15. That grace which brings salvation has appeared to all mankind, and its design is to make all holy who embrace it, and to teach all to live for a higher and a better world.

1. *But speak thou.* In thine own ministry. In the previous chapter he had given him instructions as to the kind of persons who were to be put into the sacred office. Here he gives him special instructions in regard to his own preaching. ¶ *The things which become sound doctrine.* To wit, those which he proceeds immediately to specify. On the phrase *sound doctrine*, see Notes, 1 Tim. i. 10; comp. 2 Tim. iv. 3.

2. *That the aged men.* *All* aged men—for there is no reason to suppose that the apostle refers particularly to those who were in office, or who were technically *elders*, or *Presbyters.* If he had, he would have used the common word—πρεσβύτερος—*Presbyter* (see Matt. xv. 2; xvi. 21; xxi. 23; xxvi. 3, 47, 57, 59; 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19; Titus i. 5; James v. 14; 1 Pet. v. 1), instead of the unusual word—πρεσβύτης—an old or aged man—a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except in Luke i. 18, "For I am *an old man*," and Philem. 9, "being such an one as Paul *the aged.*" It is in no instance applied to *an office.* Besides, the instructions which Titus was to give to such men was not that which peculiarly pertained to *elders* as officers in the church, but to *all* old men. The idea is, that he was to adapt his instructions to the peculiar character of different classes of his hearers. The *aged* needed special instructions, and so did the *young.* ¶ *Be sober.* Marg., *vigilant.* See the word explained in the Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 2, where it is rendered *vigilant.* In 1 Tim. iii. 11, the same word is rendered *sober.*—¶ *Grave.* Serious; see Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 8; comp. Notes on Phil. iv. 8, where the same word is rendered *honest.* ¶ *Temperate.* σώφρονας. Rather, *prudent*, or *sober-minded.* See it explained in the Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 2, where it is rendered *sober.* Also Titus i. 8. ¶ *Sound in faith;* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 10; Titus i. 13. ¶ *In charity.* In love; Notes, 1 Cor. xiii. The meaning is, that an old man should evince love for all, especially for those who are good. He should have overcome, at his time of life, all the fiery, impetuous, envious, wrathful passions of his early years, and his mind should be subdued into sweet benevolence to all mankind. ¶ *In patience.* In the infirmities of old age—in the trials resulting from the loss of the friends of their early years—in

3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh [1] holiness, not [2] false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

1 or, *holy women.* 2 or, *make-bates.*

4 That they may teach the [a] young women to be [3] sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 *To be* discreet, chaste, keep-

a 1 Ti. 5 14 3 or, *wise.*

their loneliness in the world, they should show that the effect of all God's dealings with them has been to produce patience. The aged should submit to the trials of their advanced years, also, with resignation—for they will soon be over. A few more sighs, and they will sigh no more; a little longer bearing up under their infirmities, and they will renew their youth before the throne of God.

3. *The aged women likewise.* Not only those who may have the office of deaconesses, but all aged females. ¶ *That* they be *in behaviour as becometh holiness.* Marg, *holy women.* The Greek word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It means appropriate to a sacred place or person, or becoming to religion Their conduct should be such as the gospel requires. ¶ *Not false accusers.* —Marg., *make-bates.* Gr., διαβόλου—the word commonly applied to the devil—*as the accuser.* See it explained in the Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 11, where it is rendered *slanderers.* ¶ *Not given to much wine.* Notes, 1 Tim. 3. ¶ *Teachers of good things.* That is instructing the younger—whether their own children, or whether they sustain the office of deaconness, and are appointed to give instruction to younger females; comp. Notes on 1 Tim. v. 2—6.

4. *That they may teach the young women to be sober.* Marg., *wise*—a word similar to that which in ver. 2 is rendered *temperate,* and in 1 Tim. iii. 2, *sober.* The meaning is, that they should instruct them to have their desires and passions well regulated, or under proper control. ¶ *To love their husbands,* φιλάνδρους. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. In Eph. v. 25, Paul directs husbands to love their wives, and in ver. 33, the wife to reverence her husband, and here he says that it should be one of the first duties enjoined on the wife that she should love her husband. All happiness in the marriage relation is based on mutual love. When that departs, happiness departs. No wealth or splendour in a dwelling —no gorgeousness of equipage or apparel—no magnificence of entertainment or sweetness of music—and no forms of courtesy and politeness, can be a compensation for the want of affection. Mutual love between a husband and wife will diffuse comfort through the obscurest cottage of poverty; the want of it cannot be supplied by all that can be furnished in the palaces of the great. ¶ *To love their children.* Nature prompts to this, and yet there are those so depraved that they have no maternal affection; Notes, Rom. i. 31. Religion re-produces natural affection when sin has weakened or destroyed it, and it is the design of Christianity to recover and invigorate all the lost or weakened sensibilities of our nature.

5. To be *discreet.* The same word rendered, in ver. 2, *temperate,* and explained in ver. 4. ¶ *Chaste.* Pure —in heart, and in life. ¶ *Keepers at home.* That is, characteristically attentive to their domestic concerns, or to their duties in their families. A similar injunction is found in the precepts of the Pythagoreans—τὰν γὰρ γύναικα δεῖ οἰκουρεῖν καὶ ἔνδον μίνειν. See Creuzer's Symbolik, iii. 120. This does not mean, of course, that they are *never* to go abroad, but they are not to neglect their domestic affairs; they are not to be better known abroad than at home; they are not to omit their own duties and become "busy-bodies" in the concerns of others. Religion is the patron of the domestic virtues, and regards the appropriate duties in a family as those most intimately connected with its own progress in the world. It looks benignly on all which makes *home* a place of contentment, intelligence,

ers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober [1] minded :

7 In all things showing thyself [a] a pattern of good works : in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

[1] or, *discreet.* [a] 1 Ti.4.12.

and peace. It does not flourish when domestic duties are neglected;—and whatever may be done abroad, or whatever self-denial and zeal in the cause of religion may be evinced there, or whatever call there may be for the labours of Christians there, or however much good may be actually done abroad, religion has *gained nothing*, on the whole, if, in order to secure these things, the duties of a wife and mother at home have been disregarded. Our first duty is *at home*, and all other duties will be well performed just in proportion as that is. ¶ *Good.* In all respects, and in all relations. To a wife, a mother, a sister, there can be no higher characteristic ascribed, than to say that she is *good.* What other trait of mind will enable her better to perform her appropriate duties of life? What other will make her more like her Saviour? ¶ *Obedient to their own husbands.* Notes, Eph. v. 22—24; Col. iii. 18. ¶ *That the word of God be not blasphemed.* That the gospel may not be *injuriously spoken of* (Notes, Matt. ix. 3), on account of the inconsistent lives of those who profess to be influenced by it. The idea is, that religion *ought* to produce the virtues here spoken of, and that when it does not, it will be reproached as being of no value.

6. *Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.* Marg., *discreet.* On the meaning of the Greek word used here (σωφρονεῖν), see Notes on ver. 2 and 4. The idea is, that they should be entreated to be prudent, discreet, serious in their deportment; to get the mastery over their passions and appetites; to control the propensities to which youth are subject; and that there should be such self-government, under the influence of, religion, as to avoid excess in everything. A well-governed mind, superior to the indulgence of those passions to which the young are prone, will express the meaning of the word here. They should be "steady in their behaviour, superior to sensual temptations, and constant in the exercise of every part of self-government." *Doddridge.* The *reasons* for this are obvious: (1.) The hopes of the church depend much on them. (2.) A young man who cannot govern himself, gives little promise of being useful or happy. (3.) Indulgence in the propensities to which young men are prone, will, sooner or later, bring ruin to the body and the soul. (4.) They are just at the period of life when they are exposed to peculiar temptations, and when they need to exercise a peculiar guardianship over their own conduct. (5.) Like others, they may soon die; and they should be habitually in such a frame of mind, as to be prepared to stand before God. A young man who feels that he may be soon in the eternal world, cannot but be sensible of the propriety of having a serious mind, and of living and acting as in the immediate presence of his Maker and Judge.

7. *In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works.* Not merely *teaching* others, but showing them by *example* how they ought to live. On the word rendered *pattern* (τύπον, *type*), see Notes on Heb. ix. 5; 1 Cor. x. 6; Phil. iii. 17. ¶ *In doctrine.* In your manner of teaching; Notes, 1 Tim. iv. 16. ¶ Showing *uncorruptness.* The word here used does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means, here, the same as *purity*—that which is not erroneous, and which does not tend to corrupt or vitiate the morals of others, or to endanger their salvation. Everything in his teaching was to be such as to make men purer and better. ¶ *Gravity.* See this word explained in the Notes on 1 Tim. ii. 2, where it is rendered *honesty;* comp. Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 4, where it is rendered *gravity.* It does not elsewhere occur; see the use of the adjective, however, in

8 Sound [a] speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

[a] 1 Ti.6.3.

9 *Exhort* servants [b] to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things;* not [1] answering again;

10 Not purloining, but showing

[b] Ep.6.5,&c. [1] or, *gainsaying.*

Phil. iv. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11; Titus ii. 2. The word properly means *venerableness;* then, whatever will insure respect, in character, opinions, deportment. The sense here is, that the manner in which a preacher delivers his message, should be such as *to command respect.* He should evince good sense, undoubted piety, an acquaintance with his subject, simplicity, seriousness, and earnestness, in his manner. ¶ *Sincerity.* See this word (ἀφθαρσία) explained in the Notes on Eph. vi. 24. It is rendered *immortality* in Rom. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 10; *incorruption,* in 1 Cor. xv. 42, 50, 53, 54; and *sincerity,* Eph. vi. 24, and in the place before us. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *incorruption, incapacity of decay;* and, therefore, would be here synonymous with *purity.* It should be said, however, that it is wanting in many MSS., and is rejected in the later editions of the New Testament by Wetstein, Tittman, and Hahn.

8. *Sound speech.* Notes, 1 Tim. i. 10. He was to use language that would be spiritually *healthful* (ὑγιῆ); that is, true, pure, uncorrupted.—This word, and its correlatives, is used in this sense, in the New Testament, only by the apostle Paul. It is commonly applied to the body, meaning that which is *healthful,* or *whole;* see Luke v. 31; vi. 10; vii. 10; xv. 27; Matt. xii. 13; xv. 31; Mark iii. 5; v 34; John v. 4, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15; vii. 23; Acts iv. 10; 3 John 2. For *Paul's* use of the word, see 1 Tim. i. 10; vi. 3; 2 Tim. i. 13; iv. 3; Tit. i. 9, 13; ii. 1, 2, 8. It does not elsewhere occur. ¶ *That cannot be condemned.* Such as cannot be shown to be weak, or unsound; such that no one could find fault with it, or such as an adversary could not take hold of and blame. This direction would imply purity and seriousness of language, solidity of argument, and truth in the doctrines which he maintained. ¶ *That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed,* &c. Ashamed that he has opposed such views.

9. Exhort *servants to be obedient to their own masters.* See this explained in the Notes on Eph. vi. 5, seq., and 1 Tim. vi. 1—4. ¶ And *to please* them *well in all* things. That is, so far as they lawfully may, or in those things which are not contrary to the will of God; comp. Eph. vi. 6. It should be an object with one who is a servant, to meet the approbation of his master, as long as this relation continues. This rule would not, however, go to the extent to require him to please his master in doing anything that is contrary to the law of God, or that is morally wrong. ¶ *Not answering again.* Marg., *gainsaying.* Not contradicting, or not disobeying. They were to do what the master required, if it did not interfere with the rights of conscience, without attempting to argue the matter—without disputing with the master—and without advancing their own opinions. Where this relation exists, no one can doubt that this is a proper frame of mind for a servant. It may be observed, however, that all that is here said would be equally appropriate, whether the servitude was voluntary or involuntary. A man who becomes voluntarily a servant, binds himself to obey his master cheerfully and quietly, without gainsaying, and without attempting to reason the matter with him, or propounding his own opinions, even though they may be much wiser than those of his employer. He makes a contract to *obey* his master, not to *reason* with him, or to *instruct* him.

10. *Not purloining.* Not to appropriate to themselves what belongs to their masters. The word *purloin* means, literally, to take or carry away for one's self; and would be ap-

all good fidelity; that [a] they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

11 For the grace [b] of God that bringeth salvation [1] hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us, that, denying [c] ungodliness and worldly lusts, [d]

a Mat.5.16. b Ro.5.15.

1, or, *to all men hath appeared.*

c Ro.8.13. d 1 Pe.2.11.

plied to an approbation to one's self of what pertained to a common stock, or what belonged to one in whose employ we are—as the embezzlement of public funds. Here it means that the servant was not to apply to his own use what belonged to his master; that is, was not to *pilfer*—a vice to which, as all know, servants, and especially slaves, are particularly exposed; see the word explained in the Notes on Acts v. 2. ¶ *But showing all good fidelity.* In labouring, and in taking care of the property intrusted to them. ¶ *That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* That they may show the fair influence of religion on them, in all respects, making them industrious, honest, kind, and obedient. They were to show that the effect of the religion which they professed was to make them better fitted to discharge the duties of their station in life, however humble; or that its influence on them was desirable in every respect. In this way, they might hope also that the minds of their masters might be reached, and that they might be brought to respect and love the gospel. Learn hence, (1.) that one in the most humble walk of life *may* so live as to be an *ornament* to religion, as well as one favoured with more advantages. (2.) That servants *may* do much good, by so living as to show to all around them that there is a reality in the gospel, and to lead others to love it. (3.) If, in this situation of life, it is a duty so to live as to adorn religion, it cannot be less so in more elevated situations. A master should feel the obligation not to be surpassed in religious character by his servant.

11. *For the grace of God.* The *favour* of God, shown to the undeserving; see Notes on Rom. i. 7. ¶ *That bringeth salvation.* Marg., *to all men, hath appeared.* That is, in the margin, "the grace which brings salvation to all men has been revealed." The marginal reading is most in accordance with the Greek, though it will bear either construction. If that which is in the text be adopted, it means that the plan of salvation has been revealed to all classes of men; that is, that it is *announced* or *revealed* to all the race that they may be saved; comp. Notes on Col. i. 23. If the other rendering be adopted, it means that that plan was fitted to secure the salvation of *all men*; that none were excluded from the offer; that provision had been made for all, and all might come and be saved. Whichever interpretation be adopted, the sense here will not be essentially varied. It is, that the gospel was adapted *to man as man*, and therefore might include servants as well as masters; subjects, as well as kings; the poor, as well as the rich; the ignorant, as well as the learned; see Notes on 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; Acts xvii. 26.

12. *Teaching us.* That is, the "grace of God" so teaches us; or that system of religion which is a manifestation of the grace of God, inculcates the great and important duties which Paul proceeds to state. ¶ *That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.* "That by denying ourselves of these, or refusing to practise them, we should lead a holy life." The word *ungodliness* here means all that would be included under the word *impiety;* that is, all failure in the performance of our proper duties towards God; see Notes, Rom. i. 18. The phrase "worldly lusts" refers to all improper desires pertaining to this life—the desire of wealth, pleasure, honour, sensual indulgence. It refers to such passions as the men of this world are prone to, and would include all those things which cannot be indulged in with a proper reference to the world to come. The gross passions would

we [a] should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

a Lu.1.75.

13 Looking [b] for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing

b 2 Pe.3.12.

be of course included, and all those more refined pleasures also which constitute the characteristic and peculiar enjoyments of those who do not live unto God. ¶ *We should live soberly.* See the word *soberly* (σωφρόνως) explained in the Notes on ver. 2, 4. It means that we should exercise a due restraint on our passions and propensities. ¶ *Righteously.* Justly—δικαίως. This refers to the proper performance of our duties to our fellow-men; and it means that religion teaches us to perform those duties with fidelity, according to all our relations in life; to all our promises and contracts; to our fellow-citizens and neighbours; to the poor, and needy, and ignorant, and oppressed; and to all those who are providentially placed in our way who need our kind offices. *Justice* to them would lead us to act as we would wish that they would towards us. ¶ *And godly.* Piously; that is, in the faithful performance of our duties to God. We have here, then, an epitome of all that religion requires: (1.) Our duty to ourselves—included in the word "soberly" and requiring a suitable control over our evil propensities and passions; (2.) our duty to our fellow-men in all the relations we sustain in life; and (3.) our duty to God—evinced in what will be properly regarded as *a pious life.* He that does these things, meets all the responsibilities of his condition and relations; and the Christian system, requiring the faithful performance of these duties, shows how admirably it is adapted to man. ¶ *In this present world.* That is, as long as we shall continue in it. These are the duties which we owe in the present life.

13. *Looking for.* Expecting; waiting for. That is, in the faithful performance of our duties to ourselves, to our fellow-creatures, and to God, we are patiently to wait for the coming of our Lord. (1.) We are to believe that he will return; (2.) we are to be in a posture of expectation, not knowing *when* he will come; and (3.) we are to be ready for him whenever he shall come; see Notes on Matt. xxiv. 42—44; 1 Thess. v. 4; Phil. iii. 20. ¶ *That blessed hope.* The fulfilment of that hope so full of blessedness to us. ¶ *The glorious appearing.* Notes, 2 Thess. ii. 8; comp. 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10; iv. i. 8. ¶ *Of the great God.* There can be little doubt, if any, that by "the great God" here, the apostle referred to the Lord Jesus, for it is not a doctrine of the New Testament that God himself *as such,* or in contradistinction from his incarnate Son, will appear at the last day. It is said, indeed, that the Saviour will come "in the glory of his Father, with his angels" (Matt. xvi. 27), but that God as such will appear is not taught in the Bible. The doctrine there is, that God will be manifest in his Son; that the divine approach to our world be through him to judge the race; and that though he will be accompanied with the appropriate symbols of the divinity, yet it will be the Son of God who will be visible. No one, accustomed to Paul's views, can well doubt that when he used this language he had his eye throughout on the Son of God, and that he expected no other manifestation than what would be made through him. In no place in the New Testament is the phrase ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ θεοῦ—"the manifestation or appearing of God"—applied to any other one than Christ. It is true that this is spoken of here as the "appearing of *the glory*—τῆς δόξης—of the great God," but the idea is that of such a manifestation as *became* God, or would appropriately display his glory. It is known to most persons who have attended to religious controversies, that this passage has given rise to much discussion. The ancients, in general, interpreted it as meaning "The glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." This sense has been vindicated by the labours of Beza, Whitby, Bull, Matthæi, and Middleton (on the Greek article),

[a] of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave [b] himself for us, that he might redeem us from all [c] iniquity, and purify [d] unto himself a peculiar [e] people, zealous [f] of good works.

15 These things speak, and

a Re.1.7. *b* Ep.5.2. *c* Ps.130.8. *d* He.9.14. *e* De.7.6; 1Pe.2.9. *f* Ep.2.10.

and is the common interpretation of those who claim to be orthodox; see Bloomfield, Rec. Syn., and Notes, *in loc.* He contends that the meaning is, "the glorious appearance of *that* GREAT BEING *who is our* GOD AND SAVIOUR." The arguments for this opinion are well summed up by Bloomfield. Without going into a critical examination of this passage, which would not be in accordance with the design of these Notes, it may be remarked in general, (1.) that no plain reader of the New Testament, accustomed to the common language there, would have any doubt that the apostle referred here to the coming of the Lord Jesus (2.) That the "coming" of God, as such, is not spoken of in this manner in the New Testament. (3.) That the expectation of Christians was directed to the advent of the ascended Saviour, not to the appearing of God as such. (4.) That this is just such language as one would use who believed that the Lord Jesus is divine, or that the name God might properly be applied to him. (5.) That it would naturally and obviously convey the idea that he was divine, to one who had no theory to defend. (6.) That if the apostle did *not* mean this, he used such language as was fitted to lead men into error. And (7.) that the fair construction of the Greek here, according to the application of the most rigid rules, abundantly sustains the interpretation which the plain reader of the New Testament would affix to it. The names above referred to are abundant proof that no violation is done to the rules of the Greek language by this interpretation, but rather that the fair construction of the original demands it. If this be so, then this furnishes an important proof of the divinity of Christ.

14. *Who gave himself for us.* See Notes, Eph. v. 2. ¶ *That he might redeem us from all iniquity.* The word here rendered *redeem*—λυτρόω—*lutroō*, occurs only here and in Luke xxiv. 21; 1 Pet. i. 18. The *noun*, however—λύτρον, *lutron*, occurs in Matt. xx. 28; and Mark x. 45; where it is rendered *ransom;* see it explained in the Notes on Matt. xx. 28. It is here said that the *object* of his giving himself was to save his people from all iniquity; see this explained in the Notes on Matt. i. 21. ¶ *And purify unto himself.* (1.) *Purify* them, or make them holy. This is the first and leading object; see Notes, Heb. ix. 14. (2.) *Unto himself;* that is, they are no longer to be regarded as their own, but as redeemed for his own service, and for the promotion of his glory;—Notes, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. ¶ *A peculiar people.* 1 Pet. ii. 9. The word here used (περιούσιος) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *having abundance;* and then *one's own, what is special,* or *peculiar* (*Rob. Lex.*), and here means that they were to be regarded as *belonging* to the Lord Jesus. It does not mean, as the word would *seem* to imply—and as is undoubtedly true—that they are to be *a peculiar people* in the sense that they are to be *unlike others,* or to have views and principles *peculiar to themselves;* but that they belong to the Saviour in contradistinction from belonging to themselves—"peculiar" or his own in the sense that a man's property is his own, and does not belong to others. This passage, therefore, should not be used to prove that Christians should be *unlike others* in their manner of living, but that *they belong to Christ* as his redeemed people. From that it may indeed be *inferred* that they should be unlike others, but that is not the direct teaching of the passage. ¶ *Zealous of good works.* As the result of their redemption; that is, this is one object of their having been redeemed; Notes, Eph. ii. 10.

15. *These things speak and exhort*

exhort; and rebuke with all authority. Let [a] no man despise thee.

CHAPTER III.

PUT them in mind to be subject [b] to principalities and

[a] 1 Ti.4.12. [b] Ro.13.1.

powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all [c] meekness unto all men.

[c] Ep.4.2.

Notes, 1 Tim. vi. 2. ¶ *And rebuke with all authority.* Notes, 1 Tim. v. 1, 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2. The word *authority* here means *command*—ἐπιταγῇ; 1 Cor. vii. 6, 25; 2 Cor. viii. 8; 1 Tim. *i.* 1; Tit. i. 3. The sense here is, he was to do it decidedly, without ambiguity, without compromise, and without keeping any thing back. He was to state these things not as being advice or counsel, but as the requirement of God. ¶ *Let no man despise thee.* That is, conduct yourself, as you may easily do, so as to command universal respect as a minister of God; see Notes on 1 Tim. iv. 12.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter comprises the following subjects:—

(1.) Titus was to instruct his hearers to be subject to lawful authority, and in general to manifest meekness and gentleness towards all classes of men; ver. 1, 2.

(2.) A *reason* is assigned why they should do this; ver. 3—8. They who were Christians were once, indeed, like others, disobedient and unholy; they were regardless of law, and gave free indulgence to their evil propensities, but they had been redeemed for a better purpose, and it was the design of God in redeeming them, that they should manifest every kind of virtue.

(3.) Titus was to avoid foolish questions, and contentions, and strifes about the law; ver. 9.

(4.) He who was a heretic was to be rejected after suitable admonitions; ver. 10, 11.

(5.) Paul directs Titus to come to him at Nicopolis, and to bring Zenas and Apollos with him; ver. 12—14.

(6.) He closes with the customary salutations; ver. 15.

1. *Put them in mind to be subject,* &c. See the duty here enjoined, explained in the Notes on Rom. xiii. 1, seq. ¶ *Principalities and powers.* See these words explained in the Notes on Rom. viii. 38. The word here rendered *powers* (ἐξουσίαις), is not, indeed, the same as that which is found there (δυνάμεις), but the same idea is conveyed; comp. Notes on Eph. i. 21. ¶ *To obey magistrates.* That is, to obey them in all that was not contrary to the word of God; Notes, Rom. xiii. 1, seq; Acts iv. 19, 20. ¶ *To be ready to every good work.* To be *prepared for* (ἑτοίμους); prompt to perform all that is good; Notes, Phil. iv. 8. A Christian should be always *ready* to do good as far as he is able. He should not need to be urged, or coaxed, or persuaded, but should be so ready always to do good that he will count it a privilege to have the opportunity to do it.

2. *To speak evil of no man.* Gr., "to *blaspheme* (βλασφημεῖν, comp. Notes on Matt. ix. 3) no one." Doddridge renders it, "calumniate no one." The idea is, that we are not to slander, revile, or defame any one. We are not to say anything *to* any one, or *of* any one, which will do him injury. We are never to utter anything which we know to be false about him or to give such a colouring to his words or conduct as to do him wrong in any way. We should always so speak *to* him and *of* him in such a way that he will have no reason to complain that he is an injured man. It may be necessary, when we are called to state what we know of his character, to say things which are not at all in his favour, or things which he has said or done that were wrong; but (1.) we should never do this *for the purpose* of doing him injury, or so as to find a pleasure in it; and (2.) where it is necessary to make the statement, it should be so as to do him no injustice. We should give no improper colouring. We should exaggerate no circumstances. We should never attempt to express ourselves about his

3 For we [a] ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

[a] 1 Co.6.11; 1Pe.4.3.

motives, or charge on him bad motives —for we know not what his motives were. We should state every palliating circumstance of which we have knowledge, and *do entire justice to it.* We should not make the bad traits of his character prominent, and pass over all that is good. In a word, we should show that we would rather find him to be a good man than a bad man—*even if the result should be that we had been mistaken in our opinions.* It is better that *we* should have been mistaken, than that he should be a bad man. ¶ *To be no brawlers.* See Notes, 1 Tim. iii. 3. The same Greek word occurs in both places. It is not elsewhere found in the New Testament. ¶ But *gentle.* The word here used is rendered *moderation* in Phil. iv. 5, *patient* in 1 Tim. iii. 3, and elsewhere *gentle;* see Notes on 1 Tim. iii. 3. ¶ *Showing all meekness unto all men.* In the reception of injuries; see Notes on Matt. v. 5; Eph. iv. 2.

3. *For we ourselves.* We who are Christians. There is no reason for supposing, as Benson does, that this is to be understood as confined to Paul himself. There are some things mentioned here which were not probably true of him before his conversion, and the connection does not require us to suppose that he referred particularly to himself. He is stating a reason why those to whom Titus was appointed to preach should be urged to lead holy lives, and especially to manifest a spirit of order, peace, kindness, and due subordination to law. In enforcing this, he says, that those who were now Christians had formerly been wicked, disorderly, and sensual, but that under the influence of the gospel, they had been induced to lead better lives. The same gospel which had been effectual in their case, might be in others. To others it would be an encouragement to show that there were cases in which the gospel *had* been thus efficacious, and they who were appointed to preach it might refer to their own example as a reason why others should be persuaded to lead holy lives. In preaching to others, also, they were not to be proud or arrogant. They were to remember that they were formerly in the same condition with those whom they addressed, and whom they exhorted to reformation. They were not to forget that what they had that was superior to others they owed to the grace of God, and not to any native goodness. He will exhort the wicked to repentance most effectually who remembers that his own former life was wicked; he will evince most of the proper spirit in doing it who has the deepest sense of the errors and folly of his own past ways. ¶ *Foolish.* See this word explained in the Notes on Luke xxiv. 25, where it is rendered *fools;* comp. Rom. i. 14, where it is rendered *unwise,* and Gal. iii. 1, 3; 1 Tim. vi. 9, where it is rendered *foolish.* ¶ *Disobedient.* To law, to parents, to civil authority, to God. This is the natural character of the human heart; see Luke i. 17; Rom. i. 30; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 16, where the same word occurs. ¶ *Deceived.* By the great enemy, by false teachers, by our own hearts, and by the flattery of others. It is a characteristic of man by nature that he sees nothing in its true light, but walks along amidst constant, though changing and very beautiful illusions; comp. Matt. xxiv. 4, 5, 11; 2 Tim. iii. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 25; Rev. xii. 9; xviii. 23, where the same word occurs; see also Rev. xx. 3, 8, 10, where the same word is applied to that great deceiver who has led the world astray. Every one who is converted feels, and is ready to confess, that before conversion he was deceived as to the comparative value of things, as to the enjoyment which he expected to find in scenes of pleasure and riot, and often in what seemed to him well-formed plans. ¶ *Serving divers lusts and pleasures.* Indulging in the various corrupt passions and propensities of

4 But after that the kindness and [1] love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not [a] by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

1 or, *pity*.

a Ep.2.4,8,9.

the soul. We were so under their influence that it might be said we were their *servants*, or were *slaves* to them (δουλεύοντες); that is, we implicitly obeyed them; see Notes, Rom. vi. 16, 17. ¶ *Living in malice.* Gr., *in evil*—ἐν κακίᾳ; that is, in all kinds of evil; see Notes on Rom. i. 29, where the word is rendered *maliciousness*. ¶ *And envy.* Displeasure at the happiness and prosperity of others; Notes, Rom. i. 29. ¶ *Hateful.* στυγητοὶ. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means that our conduct was such as to be worthy of the hatred of others. Of whom, before his conversion, is not this true? ¶ And *hating one another.* There was no brotherly love; no true affection for others. There was ill-will felt in the heart, and it was evinced in the life. This is an apt description of the state of the heathen world before the gospel shines on it, and it may be regarded as the characteristic of all men before conversion. They have no true love for one another, such as they ought to cherish, and they are liable constantly to give indulgence to feelings which evince hatred. In contentions, and strifes, and litigations, and wars, this feeling is constantly breaking out. All this is suggested here as a *reason* why Christians should now be gentle and mild toward those who are evil. Let us remember what we were, and we shall not be disposed to treat others harshly. When a Christian is tempted to unkind thoughts or words towards others, nothing is more appropriate for him than to reflect on his own past life.

4. *But after that.* Gr., *when*—ὅτε. The meaning is, that "when the love of God was manifested in the plan of salvation, he saved us from this state by our being washed and purified." The idea is not, that "the love of God appeared" *after* we had sinned in this way, but that *when* his mercy was thus displayed we were converted from our sins, and made pure in his sight. ¶ *The kindness.* χρηστότης—*the goodness*, or *the benignity*. The word is rendered *goodness* and *good* in Rom. ii. 4; iii. 12; xi. 22, thrice; *kindness*, 2 Cor. vi. 6; Eph. ii. 7; Col. iii. 12; Titus iii. 4; and *gentleness*, Gal. v. 22. The act of redeeming us was one *of great kindness*, or *goodness*. ¶ *And love of God.* Marg., *pity*. The Greek word is φιλανθρωπία—*philanthropy—the love of man*. The plan of salvation was founded on love to man, and was the highest expression of that love; Notes on John iii. 16. The Greek of this verse is, "When the kindness and love of God our Saviour to man was manifested, he saved us" (ver. 5), to wit, from those sins of which we had before been guilty.

5. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done.* The plan was not based on our own good works, nor are our own good works now the cause of our salvation. If men could have been saved by their own good works, there would have been no need of salvation by the Redeemer; if our own deeds were now the basis of our title to eternal life, the work of Christ would be equally unnecessary. It is a great and fundamental principle of the gospel that the good works of men come in for no share in the justification of the soul. They are in no sense a *consideration* on account of which God pardons a man, and receives him to favour. The only basis of justification is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the matter of justification before God, all the race is on a level; see Notes on Eph. ii. 8, 9. ¶ *But according to his mercy.* (1.) It had its origin in mercy; (2.) it is by *mere* mercy or compassion, and not by justice; (3.) it is an expression of *great* mercy, and (4.) it is now *in fact* conferred only by mercy.

Whatever we have done or can do, when we come to receive salvation from the hand of God, there is no other element which enters into it *but* mercy. It is not because our deeds deserve it; it is not because we have by repentance and faith wrought ourselves into such a state of mind that we can *claim* it; but, after all our tears, and sighs, and prayers, and good deeds, it is a mere favour. Even then God might justly withhold it if he chose, and no blame would be attached to him if he should suffer us to sink down to ruin. ¶ *He saved us.* That is, he *began* that salvation in us which is to be *completed* in heaven. A man who is already renewed and pardoned may be spoken of as *saved*—for (1.) the work of salvation is *begun*, and (2.) when begun it will certainly be completed; see Notes on Phil. i. 6. ¶ *By the washing of regeneration.* In order to a correct understanding of this important passage, it is necessary to ascertain whether the phrase here used refers to *baptism*, and whether anything different is intended by it from what is meant by the succeeding phrase—"renewing of the Holy Ghost." — The word rendered *washing* (λουτρὸν —*loutron*) occurs in the New Testament only in this place and in Eph. v. 26, where also it is rendered *washing*—"That he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the *washing* of water by the word." The word properly means *a bath;* then water for bathing; then the act of bathing, washing, ablution. *Passow* and *Robinson.* It is used by Homer to denote a warm or cold bath; then a washing away, and is thus applied to the drink-offerings in sacrifice, which were supposed to purify or wash away sin. *Passow.* The word here does not mean *laver*, or the vessel for washing in, which would be expressed by λουτὴρ, *loutēr*, and this word cannot be properly applied to the baptismal font. The word in itself would naturally be understood as referring to baptism (comp. Notes on Acts xxii. 16), which was regarded as the emblem of washing away sins, or of cleansing from them. I say it was the *emblem*, not the *means* of purifying the soul from sin. If this be the allusion, and it seems probable, then the phrase "washing of regeneration" would mean "that outward washing or baptism which is *the emblem* of regeneration," and which is appointed as one of the ordinances connected with salvation; see Notes, Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth and *is baptized* shall be saved." It is not affirmed in this phrase that baptism is the *means* of regeneration; or that grace is *necessarily* conveyed by it; and still less that baptism *is* regeneration, for no one of these is a *necessary* interpretation of the passage, and should not be *assumed* to be the true one. The full force of the language will be met by the supposition that it means that baptism is the *emblem* or *symbol* of regeneration, and, if this is the case, no one has a right to assume that the other *is* certainly the meaning. And that this *is* the meaning is further clear, because it is nowhere taught in the New Testament that baptism *is* regeneration, or that it is *the means* of regeneration. The word rendered *regeneration* (παλιγγενεσία—*palingenesia*) occurs in the New Testament only here and in Matt. xix. 28,—"in the *regeneration* when the Son of man," &c. It means, properly, a new birth, reproduction, or renewal. It would properly be applied to one who should be begotten again in this sense, that a new life was commenced in him in some way corresponding to his being made to live at first. To the proper idea of the word, it is essential that there should be connected the notion of the commencement of life in the man, so that he may be said to live anew; and as religion is in the Scriptures represented as *life*, it is properly applied to the *beginning* of that kind of life by which man may be said to live anew. This word, occurring only here and in Matt. xix. 28, and there indubitably *not* referring to baptism, should not be here understood as referring to that, or be applied to that, for (1.) that is not the proper meaning of the word; (2.) there is no Scripture usage to sanction it; (3.) the connection here does

6 Which he shed on us [1] abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

[1] or, *richly*.

7 That being justified [a] by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

[a] Ro. 3. 24.

not demand it; (4.) the correlatives of the word (see John iii. 3, 5, 6, 8; 1 Pet. i. 3,) are applied only to that great moral change which is produced by the Holy Ghost, and (5.) it is a dangerous use of the word. Its use in this sense leaves the impression that the *only* change needful for man is that which is produced by being regularly baptized. On almost no point has so much injury been done in the church as by the application of the word *regeneration* to baptism. It affects the beginning of religion in the soul, and if a mistake is made there, it is one which must pervade all the views of piety. ¶ *And renewing of the Holy Ghost.* This is an important clause, added by Paul apparently to save from the possibility of falling into error. If the former expression, "the washing of regeneration," had been left to stand by itself, it might have been supposed possibly that *all* the regeneration which would be needed would be that which would accompany baptism. But he avoids the possibility of this error, by saying that the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is an indispensable part of that by which we are saved. It is necessary that this should exist *in addition* to that which is the mere emblem of it —the washing of regeneration—for without this the former would be unmeaning and unavailing. It is important to observe that the apostle by no means says that this *always* follows from the former, nor does he affirm that it *ever* follows from it—whatever may be the truth on that point—but he asserts that this is that on which our salvation depends.—The word rendered *renewing* (ἀνακαίνωσις — *anakainosis*) occurs only here and in Rom. xii. 2, where it is also rendered *renewing;* comp. Note on that place The *verb* (ἀνακαινόω— *anakainoō*) occurs in 2 Cor. iv. 15, and Col. iii. 19, in both which places it is rendered *renewed*, and the corresponding word, ἀνακτιν͂ζω — *anakainidzo*, in Heb. vi. 6. The noun properly means *making new again; a renewing; a renovation;* comp. H. Planck in Bib. Repos. i. 677. It is a word which is found only in the writings of Paul, and in ecclesiastical Greek writers. It would be properly applied to such a change as the Holy Spirit produces in the soul, making one a *new* man; that is, a man *new*, so far as religion is concerned—new in his views, feelings, desires, hopes, plans, and purposes. He is so far different from what he was before, that it may be said he enters on a new life; see Notes on Eph. iv. 23, 24. The "renewing *of the Holy Ghost*" of course means that which the Holy Ghost produces, recognizing the fact, everywhere taught in the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the new creation. It cannot mean, as Koppe supposes, the renewing of the mind itself, or producing *a* holy spirit in the soul.

6. *Which he shed on us.* Gr., "Which he *poured out* on us" — ἐξέχεεν; see Notes on Acts ii. 17. The same Greek word is used there as here. It occurs also in the same sense in Acts ii. 18, 33. ¶ *Abundantly.* Marg., as in Gr., *richly.* The meaning is, that the Holy Spirit had been imparted in copious measure in order to convert them from their former wickedness. There is no particular allusion here to the day of Pentecost, but the sense is, that the Holy Spirit had been imparted richly to *all* who were converted, at any time or place, from the error of their ways. What the apostle says here is true of all who become Christians, and can be applied to all who become believers in any age or land. ¶ *Through Jesus Christ our Saviour;* see Notes, Acts ii. 33.

7. *That being justified by his grace.* Not by our own works, but by his favour or mercy; see Notes, Rom. iii. 24. ¶ *We should be made heirs;* see Notes, Rom. viii. 15, 17. ¶ *Ac-*

8 *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful [a] to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

[a] ver. 1, 14.

9 But [b] avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition [c] reject;

[b] 2 Ti. 2. 23. [c] Mat. 18. 17.

cording to the hope of eternal life. In reference to the hope of eternal life; that is, we have that hope in virtue of our being adopted with the family of God, and being made heirs. He has received us as his children, and permits us to hope that we shall live with him forever.

8. This is *a faithful saying;* see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 15. The reference here is to what he had been just saying, meaning that the doctrine which he had stated about the method of salvation was in the highest degree important, and entirely worthy of belief. ¶ *And these things I will that thou affirm constantly.* Make them the constant subject of your preaching. ¶ *That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.* This shows that Paul supposed that the doctrines of the gospel were fitted to lead men to holy living; comp. ver. 1, and Notes, Phil. iv. 8. The "good works" here refer not merely to acts of benevolence and charity, but to all that is upright and good—to an honest and holy life. ¶ *These things are good and profitable unto men.* That is, these doctrines which he had stated were not mere matters of speculation, but they were fitted to promote human happiness, and they should be constantly taught.

9. *But avoid foolish questions and genealogies;* see Notes on 1 Tim. i. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 16, 23. ¶ *And contentions, and strivings about the law.* Such as the Jews started about various matters connected with the law—about meats and drinks, &c.; Notes on 1 Tim. i. 4; comp. Notes on Acts xviii. 15. ¶ *For they are unprofitable and vain.*—They disturb and embitter the feelings; they lead to the indulgence of a bad spirit; they are often difficult to be settled, and are of no practical importance if they could be determined. The same thing might be said of multitudes of things about which men dispute so earnestly now.

10. *A man that is an heretic.* The word *heretic* is now commonly applied to one who holds some fundamental error of doctrine, "a person who holds and teaches opinions repugnant to the established faith, or that which is made the standard of orthodoxy." *Webster.* The Greek word here used (αἱρετικὸς—*haireticos*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The corresponding noun (αἵρεσις—*hairesis*) occurs in the following places: Acts v. 17; xv. 5; xxiv. 5; xxvi. 5; xxviii. 22, where it is rendered *sect;* and Acts xxv. 14; 1 Cor. xi. 19; Gal. v. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 1, where it is rendered *heresy,* and *heresies;* see Notes on Acts xxiv. 14. The true notion of the word is that of one who is a promoter of a sect or party. The man who makes divisions in a church, instead of aiming to promote unity, is the one who is intended. Such a man may form sects and parties on some points of doctrine on which he differs from others, or on some custom, religious rite, or peculiar practice; he may make some unimportant matter a ground of distinction from his brethren, and may refuse to have fellowship with them, and endeavour to get up a new organization. Such a man, according to the Scripture usage, is *a heretic,* and not merely one who holds a different doctrine from that which is regarded as orthodoxy. The spirit of the doctrine here is the same as in Rom. xvi. 17, and the same class of persons is referred to. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have received; and avoid

11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being [a] condemned of himself.

[a] Acts xiii 46.

them." See Notes on that passage. The word here used is defined by Robinson, (*Lex.*), "one who creates dissensions, introduces errors, a factious person." It is not found in classic Greek, but often in ecclesiastical writers; see Suicer's Thesau.— ¶ *After the first and second admonition.* Comp. Matt. xviii 15—17. That is, do not do it hastily and rashly. Give him an opportunity to explain himself, and to repent and abandon his course. No man is to be cut off without giving him a proper opportunity to vindicate his conduct, and to repent if he has done wrong. If after the first and second admonition a man who is undoubtedly doing wrong, will not repent, then he is to be cut off. The apostle does not say in what *way* this admonition is to be given, or whether it should be public or private. The language which he uses would justify either, and the method which is to be adopted is doubtless to be determined by circumstances. The *thing* which is to be reached is, that *his fault is to be fairly set before his mind.* ¶ *Reject.* παραιτοῦ. This word is rendered *excuse* in Luke xiv. 18, 19; *refuse,* Acts xxv. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 7; v. 11; Heb. xii. 25; *avoid,* 2 Tim. ii. 23, and *entreated,* Heb. xii. 19. Its prevailing meaning, as used in connections like the one before us, is to reject *in relation to an office;* that is, to decline appointing one to an office. It probably had a primary reference to that here, and meant that a man who was given to making dissensions, or who was a factious person, should not be admitted to an office in the church. The general direction would also include this,—that he should not be admitted to the church. He is neither to be owned as a member, nor admitted to office; comp. Matt. xviii. 17. "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." In regard to this passage, then, we may observe, (1.) that the utmost limit which this allows is *mere exclusion.* It does not allow us to follow the offender with injury. (2.) It does not authorize us to oppose one on account of his mere private opinions. The essential idea is that of a *factious, division-making man;* a man who aims to form sects and parties, whether on account of opinions, or from any other cause. (3.) It does not make it right to deliver such a man over to the "secular arm," or to harm him in body, soul, property, or reputation. It gives no power to torture him on the rack, or with thumb-screws, or to bind him to the stake. It authorizes us *not* to recognize him as a Christian brother, or to admit him to an office in the church—but beyond this it gives us no right to go. He has a right to his own opinion still, so far as *we* are concerned, and we are not to molest him in the enjoyment of that right. (4.) It demands that, when a man is undoubtedly a heretic in the sense here explained, there should be the utmost kindness towards him, in order if possible to reclaim him. We should not *begin* by attacking and denouncing his opinions; or by formally arraigning him; or by blazoning his name *as* a heretic; but he is to be dealt with in all Christian kindness and brotherly fidelity. He is to be admonished *more than once* by those who have the right to admonish him; and then, and then only, if he does not repent, he is *to be simply avoided.* That is to be an end of the matter so far as we are concerned. The power of the church there ceases. It has no power to deliver him over to any one else for persecution or punishment, or *in any way to meddle with him.* He may live where he pleases; pursue his own plans; entertain his own opinions or company, provided he does not interfere with us; and though we have a right to examine the *opinions* which he may entertain, yet our work with *him* is done. If these plain principles had been observed, what scenes of bloody and cruel persecution in the church would have been avoided!

11. *Knowing that he that is such is subverted.* Literally, *is turned out;* or,

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

14 And let ours also learn to [1] maintain good [a] works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

1 or, *profess honest trades.* a ver. 8.

is changed, i. e., for the worse. He has gone from the right way, and therefore he should be rejected. ¶ *And sinneth, being condemned of himself.* His own conscience condemns him. He will approve the sentence, for he knows that he is wrong; and his self-condemnation will be punishment sufficient. His own course, in attempting a division or schism in the church, shows him that it is right that *he* should be separated from the communion of Christians. He that attempts to rend the church, without a good reason, should himself be separated from it.

12. *When I shall send Artemas unto thee.* This person is not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, and nothing more is known of him. ¶ *Or Tychicus.* Notes, Acts xx. 4. ¶ *Be diligent.* Notes, 2 Tim. iv. 9. ¶ *To come unto me to Nicopolis.* It was at this place, probably, that this epistle was written. In regard to its situation, see Intro. § 4. ¶ *For I have determined there to winter. Why* Paul designed to spend the winter there, or what he purposed to do there, are questions on which no light can now be thrown. There is no *evidence* that he organized a church there, though it may be *presumed* that he preached the gospel, and that he did not do it without success. His requesting Titus to leave his important post and to come to him, looks as if his aid were needed in the work of the ministry there, and as if Paul supposed there was a promising field of labour there.

13. *Bring Zenas the lawyer.*—This person is not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, and nothing more is known of him. He belonged doubtless to that class of persons so often mentioned in the New Testament as *lawyers;* that is, who were regarded as qualified to expound the Jewish laws; see Notes, Matt. xxii. 35. It does not mean that he practised law, in the modern sense of that phrase. He had doubtless been converted to the Christian faith, and it is not improbable that there were Jews at Nicopolis, and that Paul supposed he might be particularly useful among them. ¶ *And Apollos.* Notes, Acts xviii. 24. He was also well-skilled in the laws of Moses, being "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts xviii. 24), and he and Zenas appear to have been travelling together. It would seem that they had been already on a journey, probably in preaching the gospel, and Paul supposed that they would be in Crete, and that Titus could aid them. ¶ *Diligently.* 2 Tim. iv. 9; Gr. Speedily; i. e., facilitate their journey as much as possible ¶ *That nothing be wanting unto them.* Nothing necessary for their journey. Paul desired that they might meet with hospitable treatment from Christians in Crete, and might not be embarrassed for the want of that which was needful for their journey. It would seem most probable that they had been *sent* by Paul on a visit to the churches.

14. *And let ours.* Our friends; that is, those who were Christians. Paul had just directed Titus to aid Zenas and Apollos himself, and he here adds that he wished that others who were Christians would be characterized by good works of all kinds ¶ *To maintain good works.* Marg. *profess honest trades.* The Greek will admit of the interpretation in the margin, or will *include* that, but there is no reason why the direction should be supposed to have any peculiar reference to an honest mode of livelihood, or why it should be confined to that. It rather means, that they should be

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

It was written to Titus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia.

distinguished for good works, including benevolent deeds, acts of charity, honest toil, and whatever would enter into the conception of an upright life; see Notes on ver. 8. ¶ *For necessary uses.* Such as are required by their duty to their families, and by the demands of charity; see ver. 8. ¶ *That they be not unfruitful.*—That it may be seen that their religion is not barren and worthless, but that it produces a happy effect on themselves and on society; comp. Notes on John xv. 16; Eph. iv. 28.

15. *All that are with me salute thee.* Notes, Rom. xvi. 3. Paul, at the close of his epistles, usually mentions the *names* of those who sent affectionate salutations. Here it would seem to be implied that Titus knew who were with Paul, and also that he himself had been travelling with him. He evidently refers not to those who were *residing* in the place where he was, but to those who had gone with him from Crete as his companions.—¶ *Greet them that love us in the faith.* In the faith of the gospel, or as Christians. No names are here mentioned; comp. 1 Thess. v. 26; Col. iv. 15. ¶ *Grace* be *with you all.* Notes, Rom. i. 7; xvi. 20.

The subscription, "It was written to Titus," &c., is, like the other subscriptions at the close of the epistles, of no authority whatever; see the close of the Notes on 1 Cor. In this subscription there are probably two errors: (1.) In the statement that Titus was "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians;" for (*a*) there is no evidence that there was a church there called "*the* church of the Cretians," as there were doubtless many churches on the island; (*b*) there is no evidence that Titus was the *first* bishop of the church there, or that he was the first one there to whom might be properly applied the term *bishop* in the scriptural sense. Indeed, there is positive evidence that he was *not* the first, for Paul was there with him, and Titus was "*left*" there to complete what he had begun. (*c*) There is no evidence that Titus was "bishop" there at all in the prelatical sense of the term, or even that he was a settled pastor; see Notes on ver. 1, 5. (2.) That the epistle was written "from Nicopolis of Macedonia;" for (*a*) there is no certain evidence that it was written at Nicopolis at all, though this is probable; (*b*) there is no reason to believe that the Nicopolis referred to was in Macedonia; see Intro. § 4. These subscriptions are so utterly destitute of authority, and are so full of mistakes, that it is high time they were omitted in the editions of the Bible. They are no part of the inspired writings, but are of the nature of "notes and comments," and are constantly doing something, perhaps much, to perpetuate error. *The opinion that Timothy and Titus were prelatical bishops, the one of Ephesus and the other of Crete, depends far more on these worthless subscriptions than on any thing in the epistles themselves.* Indeed, there is *no* evidence of it in the epistles; and, if these subscriptions were removed, no man from the New Testament would ever suppose that they sustained this office at all.

THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The History of Philemon.*

Of Philemon, to whom this epistle was addressed, almost nothing more is known than can be ascertained from the epistle itself. It is short, and of a private character; but it is a bright and beautiful *gem* in the volume of inspiration.

From Col. iv. 9, it may be inferred that the person to whom it was addressed was an inhabitant of Colosse, since Onesimus, concerning whom this epistle was written, is there mentioned as "one of them." See Notes on that verse; comp. the ingenious remarks of Paley, *Hor. Paul.*, on Colossians, No. IV. He is said by Calmet and Michaelis to have been wealthy; but this cannot be determined with certainty, though it is not improbable. The only circumstances which seem to indicate this, are, that Onesimus had been his "servant," from which it has been inferred that he was an owner of slaves; and that he appears to have been accustomed to show hospitality to strangers, or, as Michaelis expresses it, "travelling Christians;" see ver. 22 of the epistle. But these circmmstances are not sufficient to determine that he was a man of property. There is no evidence, as we shall see, that he was a slave-holder; and Christians in moderate circumstances were accustomed to show hospitality to their brethren. Besides, it is not said in ver. 22 that he was accustomed to show *general* hospitality; but Paul merely asks him to provide for *him* a lodging. It is probable that he had been accustomed to remain with him when he was in Colosse.

It is quite clear that he had been converted under the ministry of the apostle himself. This appears from what is said in ver. 19: "I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self." This cannot be understood otherwise than as implying that he had been converted under his preaching, unless the apostle, on some former occasion, had been the means of saving his life, of which there is no evidence. Indeed, it is manifest, from the general tone of the epistle, that Philemon had been converted by the labours of the author. It is just such a letter as it would be natural and proper to write on such a supposition; it is not one which the apostle would have been likely to write to any one who did not sustain such a relation to him. But

where and when he was converted, is unknown. It is *possible* that Paul may have met with him at Ephesus; but it is much more probable that he had himself been at Colosse, and that Philemon was one of his converts there. See Intro. to the epistle to the Colossians.

It is evident from the epistle that Paul regarded him as a sincere Christian; as a man of strict integrity; as one who could be depended on to do right. Thus (ver. 5—7), he says that he had heard of his "love and faith toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;" thus he confidently asks him to provide for him a lodging when he should come (ver. 22); and thus he expresses the assured belief that he would do what was right towards one who had been his servant, who, having been formerly unfaithful, was now converted, and, in the estimation of the apostle, was worthy of the confidence and affection of his former master.

In regard to his rank in the Christian church, nothing whatever is known. Paul calls him (ver. 1) his "fellow-labourer;" but this appellation is so general, that it determines nothing in regard to the *manner* in which he co-operated with him in promoting religion. It is a term which might be applied to *any* active Christian, whether a preacher, an elder, a deacon, or a private member of the church. It would seem clear, however, that he was not a *travelling* preacher, for he had a home in Colosse (ver. 2, 22); and the presumption is, that he was an active and benevolent member of the church, who did not sustain any office. There are many private members of the churches, to whom all that is said of Philemon in the epistle would apply. Yet there have been various conjectures in regard to the *office* which he held. Hoffmann (Intro. ad Lection. Ep. ad Colossenses, § 18) supposes that he was *bishop* of Colosse; Michaelis supposes that he was a *deacon* in the church; but of either of these, there is no evidence whatever.

Nothing is known of his age, his profession, or of the time and circumstances of his death. Neither is it certainly known what effect this epistle had on him, or whether he again received Onesimus under his roof. It may be presumed, however, that *such* a letter, addressed to *such* a man, would not fail of its object.

§ 2. *The Occasion on which the Epistle was written.*

This can be learned only from the epistle itself, and there the circumstances are so marked as to make a mistake impossible.

(1.) Philemon had had a servant of the name of Onesimus. Of the *character* of this servant, before Paul became acquainted with him, nothing more is known than that he had been "unprofitable" to Philemon (ver. 11), and that he had probably done him some wrong, either by taking his property, or by the fact that he had escaped from him; ver. 18. It is not necessary to suppose that he was a *slave;* for all that is implied of necessity in the word which is employed to designate his condition in ver. 16 (δοῦλος), and all that is stated of him in the epistle, would be met by the supposition that he was bound to Philemon, either by his parents or guardians, or that he had bound himself to render voluntary service; see Notes on ver. 16.

(2.) For some cause, this servant had fled from his master, and had gone to Rome. The *cause* of his escaping is unknown. It may be that he had purloined the property of his master, and dreaded detection; or that he had, by his base conduct in some other way, exposed himself to punishment; or that he merely desired freedom from oppression; or that he disregarded the bonds into which he himself, or his parents or guardians, had entered, and had therefore escaped. Nothing can be inferred about his condition, or his relation to Philemon, from the fact that he ran away. It is perhaps quite

as common for *apprentices* to run away, as it is for *slaves;* and they who enter into voluntary bonds to render service to another, do not always regard them.

(3.) In some way, when at Rome, this servant had found out the apostle Paul, and had been converted by his instrumentality. Paul says (ver. 10) that he had "begotten him *in his bonds*"—ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου; which seems to imply that Onesimus had come *to him*, and not that Paul had searched him out. It does not appear that Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, was allowed to go at large (comp. Acts xxviii. 30), though he was permitted to receive all who came *to* him. *Why* Onesimus came to the apostle, is not known. It may have been because he was in want, and Paul was the only one in Rome whom he had ever seen; or it may have been because his mind had become distressed on account of sin, and he sought him out to obtain spiritual counsel. Conjecture on these points is useless, where there is not even a *hint* that can serve as a clew to find out the truth.

(4.) From some cause, equally unknown, Onesimus, when converted, was desirous of returning to his former master. It is commonly *assumed* that his returning again was at the *instigation* of the apostle, and that this furnishes an instance of his belief that runaway slaves should be sent back to their masters. But, besides that there is no certain evidence that he ever was *a slave*, there is as little proof that he returned at the instigation of Paul, or that his return was not wholly voluntary on his part. For the only expression which the apostle uses on this subject (ver. 12), "whom I have sent again"—ἀνέπεμψα—does not necessarily imply that he even *proposed* it to him, still less that he *commanded* it. It is a word of such general import, that it would be employed on the supposition that Onesimus *desired* to return, and that Paul, who had a strong wish to retain him, to aid him in the same way that Philemon himself would do if he were with him (comp. ver. 13), had, on the whole, concluded to part with him, and to send him again, with a letter, to his friend Philemon. It is just such language as he would have used of Timothy, Titus, or Epaphroditus, if employed on an important embassy at the request of the apostle; comp. Luke vii. 6, 10, 19; xx. 13; Acts x. 5; xv. 22; 1 Cor. iv. 17; 2 Cor. ix. 3; Eph. vi. 22; Phil. ii. 19, 23, 25, 28; 1 Thess. iii. 2, 5; Titus iii. 12, for a similar use of the word *send* (πέμπω). There is nothing in the statement which forbids us to suppose that Onesimus was himself *disposed* to return to Philemon, and that Paul "sent" him at his own request To this, Onesimus might have been inclined from many causes. He may have repented that he left his master, and had forsaken the comforts which he had enjoyed under his roof. It is no uncommon thing for a runaway apprentice, or servant, when he has seen and felt the misery of being among strangers and in want, to wish himself well back again in the house of his master. Or he may have felt that he had wronged his master in some way (comp. Notes on ver. 18), and, being now converted, was desirous of repairing the wrong. Or he may have had friends and kindred in Colosse whom he was desirous of seeing again. Since any one of these, or of many other supposable causes, may have induced him to *desire* to return to his master, it should not be *assumed* that Paul sent him *against his will, and thence be inferred that he was in favour of sending back runaway slaves to their masters* AGAINST *their will.* There are many points to be proved, which cannot be proved, to make that a legitimate inference; see Notes on ver. 12.

(5.) Whatever were the reasons why Onesimus desired to return to Philemon, it is clear that he was apprehensive of some trouble if he went back. What those reasons were, it is impossible now to determine with absolute certainty, but it is not difficult to conjecture what they may have been, and any of the following will account for his apprehensions—either (*a*) that he had done his master wrong by the mere act of leaving him, depriving him

of valuable services which he was bound to render; or (*b*) that he may have felt that the *mere act* of running away had injured the *character* of his master, for such an act always implies that there is something in the dealings of a master which makes it desirable to leave him; or (*c*) that he had in some way injured him in respect to property, by taking that which did not belong to him, ver. 18; or (*d*) that he owed his master, and he may have inferred from his leaving him that he meant to defraud him, ver. 18; or (*e*) that the laws of Phrygia were such that Onesimus apprehended that if he returned, even penitent, it would be judged by his master necessary to punish him, in order to deter others from committing a similar offence. The laws of Phrygia, it is said, allowed the master to punish a slave without applying to a magistrate. See Macknight. It should be said also that the Phrygians were a severe people (Curtius, Lib. v. c. 1), and it is not improbable that, from the customs there, Onesimus may have apprehended harsh treatment if he returned.—It is not proper to assume that any *one* of these was certainly the reason why he feared to return, for this cannot be absolutely determined. We should not take it for granted that he had defrauded his master—for that is not necessarily implied in what is said in ver. 18, and we should not impute crimes to men without proof; nor should we take it for granted that he feared to be punished as a runaway *slave*—for *that* cannot be proved; but some one or more of these reasons doubtless operated to make him apprehensive that if he returned he would meet with, at least, a cold reception.

(6.) To induce his master to receive him kindly again, was the main object of this courteous and kind epistle. For a view of the *arguments* on which he urges this, see the Analysis of the epistle. The arguments are such, that we should suppose they could not be resisted, and we may presume, without impropriety, that they had the desired effect on the mind of Philemon—but of that we have no certain evidence.

§ 3. *The Time and Place of writing the Epistle.*

There can be no doubt that this letter was written from Rome about the time when the epistle to the Colossians was written; comp. Intro. to that epistle. The circumstances which conduct to this conclusion are such as the following: (1.) Paul at the time when it was written was a prisoner; ver. 1. "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ;" ver. 10. "Whom I have begotten in my bonds;" comp. ver. 23. "Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus." (2.) It was written when he had hopes of obtaining his liberty, or when he had such a prospect of it that he could ask Philemon, with confidence, to "prepare him a lodging;" ver. 22. (3.) Timothy was with him at the time when it was written (ver. 1), and we know that Paul desired him to come to him to Rome when he was a prisoner there as soon as possible; 2 Tim. iv. 9. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." (4.) We know that Onesimus was actually sent by Paul to Colosse while he was a prisoner at Rome, and it would be morally certain that, under the circumstances of the case, he would send the letter to his master at that time. No other instance is mentioned in which he sent him to Colosse, and the evidence is as certain as the nature of the case admits, that that was the time when the epistle was written; see Col. iv. 9. (5.) The same persons are mentioned in the salutations in the two epistles, at least they are so far the same as to make it probable that the epistles were written at the same time, for it is not very probable that the same persons would in another place, and on another occasion, have been with the apostle. Thus Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, join in the salutations both to the church at Colosse and to Philemon. Probably at no other time in the life of Paul were all these

persons with him, than when he was a prisoner at Rome. These considerations make it clear that the epistle was written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome and at about the same time with the epistle to the Colossians. If so, it was about A. D. 62.

§ 4. *The Character of this Epistle.*

This letter is almost wholly of a private character, and yet there is scarcely any portion of the New Testament of equal length which is of more value. It is exquisitely beautiful and delicate. It is a model of courtesy and politeness. It presents the character of the author in a most amiable light, and shows what true religion will produce in causing genuine refinement of thought and language. It is gentle and persuasive, and yet the argument is one that we should suppose would have been, and probably was, irresistible. It is very easy to conceive that the task which the apostle undertook to perform was one which it would be difficult to accomplish—that of reconciling an offended master to a runaway servant. And yet it is done with so much kindness, persuasiveness, gentleness, and true affection, that, as the letter was read, it is easy to imagine that all the hostility of the master was disarmed, and we can almost see him desiring to embrace him who bore it, not now as a servant, but as a Christian brother; ver. 16. "It is impossible," says Doddridge, "to read over this admirable epistle without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address, that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true politeness is,—not only with all the warmth and sincerity of a friend, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the Apostle. And if this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed to be a master-piece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written on a similar occasion (Lib. ix. Let. 21); which, though penned by one that was reckoned to excel in the epistolary style, though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged by every impartial reader vastly inferior to this animated composition of the apostle." As a specimen of the courtesy and politeness which the Christian ought to practise at all times, as well as furnishing many valuable lessons on Christian duty (see the Remarks at the close), it deserves a place in the volume of inspiration; and a material chasm would be produced in the instructions which are needful for us, if it were withdrawn from the sacred canon.

THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

Analysis of the Epistle.

The epistle embraces the following subjects :—

I. The salutation ; ver. 1—3.

II. A mention of the excellent account which the apostle had heard of Philemon, and the occasion which he had for thankfulness on his behalf; ver. 4—7.

(*a*) He always remembered him in his prayers ; ver. 4.

(*b*) He had heard of his faith and love, and of his kindness towards those who bore the Christian name ; ver. 5.

(*c*) He desired that his goodness in making others, in common with him, partakers of the expression of his faith, might be even more effectual in securing the proper acknowledgment of it wherever it might be known ; ver. 6.

(*d*) He says that he had great joy and consolation from the happiness which he had conferred on Christians who needed his aid ; ver. 7.

III. The main subject of the epistle—the desire that he would receive his servant Onesimus again, and the arguments to persuade him to do it ; ver. 8—21.

(1.) He places it on the ground of *entreaty*, not of *command*.. He *might*, in virtue of his apostolic office, enjoin many things on him, and possibly this, yet he chooses to place it wholly on other grounds, and to make it a matter of personal friendship ; ver. 8.

(2.) Particular reasons why he should do it :—

(*a*) For love's sake—love to Paul —now an old man, and in prison on account of their common religion ; ver. 9.

(*b*) Paul regarded Onesimus as his own son, and asked that he might be received and treated as such ; ver. 10.

(*c*) He assures Philemon that, whatever he might have been formerly, he would now find him to be profitable to himself ; ver. 11.

(*d*) He assures him that Onesimus was especially dear to him, and that he would have been very useful to him in his circumstances, but that he did not think it proper to retain him with him without the consent of Philemon. Onesimus, therefore, was not sent back as a worthless vagabond, and Philemon, in receiving him, might be sure that he was receiving one who *Paul* believed was fitted to be eminently useful ; ver. 12—14.

(*e*) He suggests to Philemon that probably it was so arranged by divine Providence, that Onesimus should depart in order that he might receive him again in a far more tender and endearing relation, not as a servant, but as a Christian brother ; ver. 15, 16

(*f*) He appeals to the personal friendship of Philemon, and asks that if he regarded him as a participator with him in the hopes of the gospel, or as a fellow-labourer in a common cause, he would receive him as he would himself ; ver. 17.

(*g*) He says that he would himself become security for Onesimus if he owed Philemon anything, or had in any way wronged him ; ver. 18, 19.

(*h*) He concludes the argument by referring to the happiness

PAUL, a prisoner [a] of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer,[b]

2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus [c] our fellow-soldier, and to the church [d] in thy house:

3 Grace [e] to you, and peace, from

a Ep.3.1. *b* Ph.2.25. *c* Co.4.17 *d* Ro 16.5. *e* Ep.1.2.

which it would give him if Philemon would receive his former servant again; and with the expression of his conviction that he *would* do more than he asked in the matter, and then asks that, while he showed favour to Onesimus, he would also prepare a lodging for him, for he hoped soon to be with him; ver. 20—22. *Perhaps* by this last suggestion he hoped also to do much to favour the cause of Onesimus—for Philemon could hardly turn him away when he expected that Paul himself would soon be with him. Such an argument would be likely to be effectual in the case. We do not like to deny the request which a friend makes in a letter, if we expect soon to see the writer himself. It would be much more easy to do it if we had no expectations of seeing him very soon.

IV. The epistle closes with affectionate salutations from certain persons who were with Paul, and who were probably well known to Philemon, and with the customary benediction; ver. 23—25.

1. *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.* A prisoner at Rome in the cause of Jesus Christ; Notes, Eph. iii. 1; 2 Tim. 1. 8. ¶ *And Timothy* our *brother.* Timothy, it seems, had come to him agreeably to his request; 2 Tim. iv. 9. Paul not unfrequently joins his name with his own in his epistles; 2 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1. As Timothy was of that region of country, and as he had accompanied Paul in his travels, he was doubtless acquainted with Philemon. ¶ *Unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer.* See Intro. § 1. The word rendered *fellow-labourer* (συνεργὸς), does not determine what office he held, if he held any, or in what respects he was a fellow-labourer with Paul. It means a co-worker, or helper, and doubtless here means that he was a helper or fellow-worker in the great cause to which Paul had devoted his life, but whether as a preacher, or deacon, or a private Christian, cannot be ascertained. It is *commonly*, in the New Testament, applied to ministers of the gospel, though by no means exclusively, and in several instances it cannot be determined whether it denotes ministers of the gospel, or those who furthered the cause of religion, and co-operated with the apostle in some other way than preaching. See the following places, which are the only ones where it occurs in the New Testament: Rom. xvi. 3. 9. 21; 1 Cor. iii. 9; 2 Cor. i. 24; viii. 23; Phil. ii. 25; iv. 3; Col. iv. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 2; Philem. i. 24; 3 John 8.

2. *And to* our *beloved Apphia.* This was a female (Gr. ἀγαπητῇ), and was probably the wife of Philemon. ¶ *And Archippus our fellow-soldier.* See Notes, Col. iv. 17. It has been supposed that he was a son of Philemon, and this would appear not to be improbable, as he was one of his family. On the term "fellow-soldier," see Notes, Phil. ii. 25. It is applied here to one who was a minister of the gospel, and who is spoken of in connection with Paul as *enlisted* under the banners of the Captain of salvation, and waging a warfare with the wickedness of the world; comp. Notes, 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. That Archippus was a minister of the gospel, is clear from Col. iv. 17. ¶ *And to the church in thy house.* Either the church that commonly met in his house, or more probably that was composed of his own family; comp. Notes, Rom. xvi. 5.

3. *Grace to you, and peace,* &c. See Notes on Rom. i. 7.

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank [a] my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

a Ep.1.16.

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That [b] the communication of thy faith may become effectual [c] by

b Ph.1.9-11. c Ja.2.14,17.

4. *I thank my God.* That is, for what I hear of you. ¶ *Making mention of thee always in my prayers.* See a similar declaration respecting the church at Ephesus, Eph. i. 16. It would appear from this that Paul, in his private devotions, was in the habit of mentioning churches and individuals by name. It would seem, also, that though he was a prisoner, yet he somehow found opportunity for secret devotion. And it would appear further, that, though encompassed with many cares and sorrows, and about to be put on trial for his life, he did not forget to remember a Christian brother though far distant from him, and to bear him on his heart before the throne of grace. To remember with affectionate concern these churches and individuals, as he did, Paul must have been a man of much prayer.

5. *Hearing of thy love and faith.* Either by Onesimus, who, after his conversion, would be disposed to state all that he knew that was favourable of Philemon, or hearing it by some other persons who had come from Colosse to Rome. The *faith* which is mentioned here refers to the Lord Jesus; the *love*, to the saints. The order in the Greek is indeed the same as in our version, but it is not unusual by *synthesis*, or uniting two or more things together, to arrange words in that manner. Thus Matt. xii. 22, "The blind and dumb both spake and saw;" that is, the blind saw, and the dumb spake. The meaning is, that he had strong faith in the Lord Jesus, and ardent love towards all who were Christians. See a similar declaration in Col. i. 4.

6. *That the communication of thy faith.* That is, this was a subject of prayer on the part of the apostle, that the "communication of his faith" might receive from all the proper acknowledgment of the good which he did in the Christian cause. The phrase translated "communication of thy faith," means the making of thy faith *common* to others; that is, enabling others to partake of the fruits of it, to wit, by good deeds. On the meaning of the word here rendered "communication" (*κοινωνία, koinonia*), see Notes on Eph. iii. 9; comp. Phil. ii. 1; iii. 10. Calvin has well expressed the sense of this passage. "It is to be observed that the apostle here does not proceed in the commendation of Philemon, but rather expresses what he desires for him from the Lord. These words are connected with those in which he says that he remembered him in his prayers. What, therefore, did he desire for Philemon? That his faith, expressing itself by good fruits, might be shown to be true and not vain. For he calls that the communication of his faith when it does not remain inoperative within, but bears itself forth to benefit men by its proper effects. For although faith has its proper seat in the heart, yet it communicates itself to men by good works." The meaning is, that he desired that Philemon would so *make common* the proper fruits of faith by his good deeds towards others, that all might acknowledge it to be genuine and efficacious. ¶ *May become effectual.* Gr., "May be energetic" (*ἐνεργὴς*); may become operative, active, effective. ¶ *By the acknowledging.* That is, so as to secure from others the proper recognition of the existence of faith in your heart. In other words, so that others may see that you are truly pious, and understand to what extent you have faith. ¶ *Of every good thing which is in you.* Of every good principle, and of every benevolent trait, which is in your character. That is, the proper outward expression of his faith in Christ, by doing good to others, would be a development of the benevolence which existed in his heart. ¶ *In Christ Jesus.* Or

the acknowledging of every [a] good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed [b] by thee, brother.

a Ph.4.8; 2 Pe.1.5-8.

8 Wherefore, though [c] I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech *thee*, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

b 2 Co.7.13; 2 Ti.1.16. *c* 1 Th.2.6.

"*towards* (εἰς) Christ Jesus." The goodness in his heart had respect to the Lord Jesus as its proper object, but would be made manifest by his kindness to men. The *truth* which is taught in this passage, therefore, is, that when faith exists in the heart, it is very desirable that it should impart its proper fruits towards others in such a way that all may see that it is operative, and may recognize its power; or in other words, it is desirable that when true religion exists it should be fairly developed, that its possessor may be acknowledged to be under its influence. We should wish that he may have all the credit and honour which the goodness of his heart is entitled to. Paul supposed that a case had now occurred in which an opportunity was furnished to Philemon to show the world how much he was governed by the faith of the gospel.

7. *For we have great joy and consolation in thy love.* In thy love towards Christians. The word here rendered *joy* (χάριν), properly means *grace*. A large number of manuscripts, however, instead of this word, have χαρὰν, *Charan, joy*. See Wetstein. This reading has been adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn. ¶ *Because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.* For your kindness to them. The word *bowels* here probably means *minds, hearts*, for it is used in the Scriptures to denote the affections. The sense is, that the kindness which he had shown to Christians had done much to make them happy. On the word *refreshed*, see 2 Cor. vii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 16.

8. *Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ.* Though I might have much boldness as an apostle of Christ. He means that he was invested with authority by the Lord Jesus, and would have a right, as an apostle, to enjoin what ought to be done in the case which he is about to lay before him; comp. 1 Thess. ii. 6, 7. ¶ *To enjoin thee that which is convenient.* To command what is proper to be done. The word *convenient* here (τὸ ἀνῆκον), means that which would be fit or proper in the case; comp. Notes, Eph. v. 4. The apostle implies here that what he was about to ask, was *proper to be done* in the circumstances, but he does not put it on that ground, but rather asks it as a personal favour. It is usually not best to *command* a thing to be done if we can as well secure it by *asking* it as a favour; comp. Dan. i. 8, 11, 12.

9. *Yet for love's sake.* For the love which you bear me, and for the common cause. ¶ *I rather beseech* thee. Rather than *command* thee. ¶ *Being such an one as Paul the aged.* πρεσβύτης —*an old man.* We have no means of ascertaining the exact age of Paul at this time, and I do not recollect that he ever alludes to his age, though he often does to his infirmities, in any place except here. Doddridge supposes that at the time when Stephen was stoned, when he is called "a young man" (νεανίας, Acts vii. 58), he was twenty-four years of age, in which case he would now have been about fifty-three. Chrysostom supposes that he may have been thirty-five years old at the time of his conversion, which would have made him about sixty-three at this time. The difficult of determining with any degree of accuracy the age of the apostle at this time, arises from the indefinite nature of the word used by Luke, Acts vii. 58, and rendered *a young man*. That word, like the corresponding word νεανίσκος, *neaniskos*, was applied to men in the vigour of manhood up to the age of forty years. *Robinson, Lex.* Phavorinus says a man is called νεανίσκος, *neaniskos*,

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, [a] whom I have begotten [b] in my bonds:

[a] Co.4 9. [b] 1 Co.4.15.

11 Which [c] in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

[c] 1 Pe.2.10.

a young man, till he is twenty-eight; and πρεσβύτης, *presbytēs*, from forty-nine till he is fifty-six. Varro says that a man is young (*juvenis*,) till he is forty-five, and aged at sixty. *Whitby.* These periods of time, however, are very indefinite, but it will accord well with the usual meaning of the words to suppose that Paul was in the neighbourhood of thirty when he was converted, and that he was now not far from sixty. We are to remember also, that the constitution of Paul may have been much broken by his labours, his perils, and his trials. Not advanced probably to the usual limit of human life, he may have had all the characteristics of a very aged man; comp. the Note of *Benson.* The argument here is, that we feel that it is proper, as far as we can, to grant the request of an old man. Paul thus felt that it was reasonable to suppose that Philemon would not refuse to gratify the wishes of an aged servant of Christ, who had spent the vigour of his life in the service of their common Master. It should be a very strong case when we refuse to gratify the wishes of an aged Christian in any thing, especially if he has rendered important services to the church and the world. ¶ *And now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.* In the *cause* of Jesus Christ; or a prisoner for endeavouring to make him known to the world; comp. Notes on Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20; Col. iv. 10. The argument here is, that it might be presumed that Philemon would not refuse the request of one who was suffering in prison on account of their common religion. For such a prisoner we should be ready to do all that we can to mitigate the sorrows of his confinement, and to make his condition comfortable.

10. *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus.* That is, my son in the gospel; one to whom I sustain the relation of a spiritual father; comp. Notes on 1 Tim. i. 2. The address and *tact* of Paul here are worthy of particular observation. Any other mode of bringing the case before the mind of Philemon might have repelled him. If he had simply said, "I beseech thee *for Onesimus;*" or, "I beseech thee for *thy servant* Onesimus," he would at once have reverted to his former conduct, and remembered all his ingratitude and disobedience. But the phrase "*my son,*" makes the way easy for the mention of his name, for he had already found the way to his heart before his eye lighted on his name, by the mention of the relation which he sustained to himself. Who could refuse to such a man as Paul—a laborious servant of Christ—an aged man, exhausted with his many sufferings and toils—and a prisoner—a request which he made for one whom he regarded *as his son*? It may be added, that the delicate address of the apostle in introducing the subject, is better seen in the original than in our translation. In the original, the name Onesimus is reserved to come in last in the sentence. The order of the Greek is this: "I entreat thee concerning a son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds—Onesimus." Here the name is not suggested, until he had mentioned that he sustained to him the relation of a son, and also till he had added that his conversion was the fruit of his labours *while he was a prisoner.* Then, when the name of Onesimus *is* mentioned, it would occur to Philemon not primarily as the name of an ungrateful and disobedient servant, but as the interesting case of one converted by the labours of his own friend in prison. Was there ever more delicacy evinced in preparing the way for disarming one of prejudice, and carrying an appeal to his heart? ¶ *Whom I have begotten in my bonds.* Who has been converted by my efforts while I have been a prisoner. On the phrase "whom I have begotten," see 1 Cor. iv. 15. Nothing is said of the way in which he had become acquainted with Onesimus, or why he had put himself under the teaching of Paul; see the Intro. § 2. (3.)

11. *Which in time past was to thee*

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that [a] in thy stead he

[a] 1 Co.16.17; Ph.2.30.

unprofitable. Either because he was indolent; because he had wronged him (comp. Notes on ver. 18), or because he had run away from him. It is *possible* that there may be an allusion here to the meaning of the name *Onesimus*, which denotes *profitable* (from ὀνίημι, fut. ὀνήσω, *to be useful, to be profitable, to help*), and that Paul means to say that he had hitherto not well answered to the meaning of his own name, but that now he would be found to do so. ¶ *But now profitable to thee.* The Greek here is εὔχρηστον, *euchrēston*, but the meaning is about the same as that of the word Onesimus. It denotes *very useful.* In 2 Tim. ii. 21, it is rendered *meet for use;* in 2 Tim. iv. 11, and here, *profitable.* It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. ¶ *And to me.* Paul had doubtless found him useful to him as a Christian brother in his bonds, and it is easy to conceive that, in his circumstances, he would greatly desire to retain him with him.

12. *Whom I have sent again.* That is, to Philemon. This was, doubtless, at his own request, for (1.) there is not the slightest evidence that he *compelled* him, or even *urged* him to go. The language is just such as would have been used on the supposition either that he *requested* him to go and bear a letter to Colosse, or that Onesimus desired to go, and that Paul sent him agreeably to his request; comp. Phil. ii. 25. "Yet I suppose it necessary *to send* to you Epaphroditus my brother, and companion in labour," &c.; Col. iv. 7, 8. "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: whom I have *sent* unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate," &c. But Epaphroditus and Tychicus were not sent against their own will—nor is there any more reason to think that Onesimus was; see Intro. § 2. (4.) (2.) Paul had no power to send Onesimus back to his master unless he chose to go. He had no civil authority; he had no guard to accompany him; he could intrust him to no sheriff to convey him from place to place, and he had no means of controlling him, if he chose to go to any other place than Colosse. He could indeed have sent him away from himself; he could have *told* him to go to Colosse, but there his power ended. Onesimus then could have gone where he pleased. But there is no evidence that Paul even *told* him to go to Colosse against his own inclination, or that he would have sent him away at all unless he had himself requested it. (3.) There may have been many reasons why Onesimus desired to return to Colosse, and no one can prove that he did not express that desire to Paul, and that his "sending" him was not in consequence of such a request. He may have had friends and relatives there; or, being now converted, he may have been sensible that he had wronged his former master, and that he ought to return and repair the wrong; or he may have been poor, and a stranger in Rome, and may have been greatly disappointed in what he had expected to find there when he left Philemon, and may have desired to return to the comparative comforts of his former condition. (4.) It may be added, therefore, (*a*) that this passage should not be adduced to prove that we *ought* to send back run-away slaves to their former masters against their own consent; or to justify the laws which require magistrates to do it; or to show that they who have escaped should be arrested and forcibly detained; or *to justify any sort of influence over a run-away slave to induce him to return to his former master.* There is not the least evidence that any of these things occurred in the case before us, and if this instance is ever appealed to, it should be to justify *what Paul did*—AND NOTHING ELSE. (*b*) The passage shows that it is right to aid a servant of any kind to return to his master if he desires it. It is right to give him

might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.[a]

[a] 2 Co. 9. 7.

a "letter," and to plead earnestly for his favourable reception if he has in any way wronged his master—for Paul did this. On the same principle it would be right to give him pecuniary assistance to enable him to return—for there *may be* cases where one who has fled from servitude might wish to return. There *may* be instances where one has had a kind master, with whom he would feel that on the whole he could be more happy than in his present circumstances. Such cases, however, are exceedingly rare. Or there may be instances where one may have relatives that are in the neighbourhood or in the family of his former master, and the desire to be with them may be so strong that on the whole he would choose to be a servant as he was before, rather than to remain as he is now. In all such cases it is right to render aid—for the example of the apostle Paul goes to sustain this. But it goes no further. So far as appears, he neither *advised* Onesimus to return, nor did he *compel* him; nor did he say one word to *influence* him to do it;—nor did he *mean* or *expect* that he would be a *slave* when he should have been received again by his master; see Notes on ver. 16. ¶ *Thou, therefore, receive him, that is, mine own bowels.* There is great delicacy also in this expression. If he had merely said "receive *him*," Philemon might have thought only of him as he formerly was. Paul, therefore, adds, "that is, *mine own bowels*"—"one whom I so tenderly love that he seems to carry my heart with him wherever he goes."—*Doddridge.*

13. *Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead.* "That he might render me the service which I know you would if you were here." The Greek is, "for thee" (ὑπὲρ σοῦ); that is, what he should do for Paul might be regarded as done by Philemon himself. ¶ *He might have ministered unto me.* He might have rendered me assistance (διακονῇ); to wit, in such a way as one who was in bonds would need.

14. *But without thy mind would I do nothing.* Nothing in the matter referred to. He would not retain Onesimus in his service, much as he needed his assistance, without the cordial consent of Philemon. He would not give him occasion for hard feeling or complaint, *as if* Paul had induced him to leave his master, or *as if* he persuaded him to remain with him when he wished to return—or *as if* he kept him away from him when he owed him or had wronged him. All that is said here is entirely consistent with the supposition that Onesimus was *disposed* to return to his master, and with the supposition that Paul did not compel or urge him to do it. For it is probable that *if* Onesimus had proposed to return, it would have been easy for Paul to have retained him with him. He might have represented his own want of a friend. He might have appealed to his gratitude on account of his efforts for his conversion. He might have shown him that he was under no moral obligation to go back. He might have refused to give him this letter, and might have so represented to him the dangers of the way, and the probability of a harsh reception, as effectually to have dissuaded him from such a purpose. But, in that case, it is clear that this might have caused hard feeling in the bosom of Philemon, and rather than do that he preferred to let him return to his master, and to plead for him that he might have a kind reception. It is, therefore, by no means necessary to suppose that Paul felt that Onesimus was under *obligation* to return, or that he was disposed to *compel* him, or that Onesimus was not inclined to return voluntarily; but all the circumstances of the case are met by the supposition that, if Paul retained him, Philemon might conceive that he had

15 For [c] perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother [b] beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, [c] and in the Lord?

[a] Ge.45.5-8. [b] Mat.23.8; 1 Ti.6.2. [c] Co.3.22.

injured *him*. Suppose, as seems to have been the case, that Onesimus "owed" Philemon (ver. 18), and then suppose that Paul had chosen to retain him with himself, and had dissuaded him from returning to him, would not Philemon have had reason to complain of it? There was, therefore, on every account, great propriety in his saying that he did not wish to use any influence over him to retain him with him when he purposed to return to Colosse, and that he felt that it would be wrong for him to keep him, much as he needed him, without the consent of Philemon. Nor is it necessary, by what is said here, to suppose that Onesimus was *a slave*, and that Paul believed that Philemon had a right to him and to his services *as* such. All that he says here would be met by the supposition that he was a hired servant, and would be in fact equally proper even on the supposition that he was an apprentice. In either case, he would feel that he gave just ground of complaint on the part of Philemon if, when Onesimus desired to return, he used any influence to dissuade him from it, and to retain him with himself. It would have been a violation of the rule requiring us to do to others as we would wish them to do unto us, and Paul therefore felt unwilling, much as he needed the services of Onesimus, to make use of any influence to retain him with him without the consent of his master. ¶ *That thy benefit.* The favour which I might receive from thee by having the services of Onesimus. If Onesimus should remain with him and assist him, he would feel that the benefit which would be conferred by his services would be in fact bestowed by Philemon, for he had a right to the service of Onesimus, and, while Paul enjoyed it, he would be deprived of it. The word rendered *benefit* here—ἀγαθόν—means *good*, and the sense is, "the *good* which you would do me;" to wit, by the service of Onesimus. ¶ *Should not be as it were of necessity.* As it would be if Paul should detain Onesimus with him without affording Philemon an opportunity of expressing his assent. Paul would even then have felt that he was in fact receiving a "good" at the expense of Philemon, but it would not be a *voluntary* favour on his part. ¶ *But willingly.* As it would be if he had given his consent that Onesimus should remain with him.

15. *For perhaps he therefore departed for a season.* Perhaps *on this account*, or *for this reason*—διὰ τοῦτο—he left you for a little time. Greek, "for an hour"—πρὸς ὥραν. The meaning is, that it was possible that this was permitted in the Providence of God *in order* that Onesimus might be brought under the influence of the gospel, and be far more serviceable to Philemon as a Christian, than he could have been in his former relation to him. What appeared to Philemon, therefore, to be a calamity, and what seemed to him to be wrong on the part of Onesimus, might have been permitted to occur in order that he might receive a higher benefit. Such things are not uncommon in human affairs. ¶ *That thou shouldest receive him for ever.* That is, in the higher relation of a Christian friend and brother; that he might be united to thee in eternal affection; that he might not only be with thee in a far more endearing relation during the present life than he was before, but in the bonds of love in a world that shall never end.

16. *Not now as a servant.* The adverb rendered "*not now*" (οὐκέτι), means *no more, no further, no longer.* It implies that he had been before in this condition, but was not to be now; comp. Matt. xix. 6, "They are *no more* twain." They were once so, but they are not to be regarded as such now; Matt. xxii. 46, "Neither

durst any man, from that day forth, ask him *any more* questions." They once did it, but now they did not dare to do it; Luke xv. 19, "And am *no more* worthy to be called thy son," though I once was; John vi. 66, "And walked *no more* with him," though they once did; see also John xi. 54; xiv. 19; xvii. 11; Acts viii. 39; Gal. iv. 7; Eph. ii. 19. This passage then proves that he had been before *a servant*—δοῦλος—*doulos*. But still, it is not certain what *kind* of a servant he was. The word does not necessarily mean *slave*, nor can it be proved from this passage, or from any other part of the epistle, that he was at any time a slave; see Notes on Eph. vi. 5, and 1 Tim. vi. 1. The word denotes *servant* of any kind, and it should never be assumed that those to whom it was applied were slaves. It is true that slavery existed in the heathen nations when the gospel was first preached, and it is doubtless true that many slaves were converted (comp. Notes on 1 Cor. vii. 21), but the mere use of *the word* does not necessarily prove that he to whom it is applied was a slave. If Onesimus was a slave, there is reason to think that he was of a most respectable character (comp. Notes on Col. iv. 9), and indeed *all* that is implied in the use of the term here, and *all* that is said of him, would be met by the supposition that he was a *voluntary servant*, and that he had been in fact intrusted with important business by Philemon. It would seem from ver. 18 ("or *oweth thee ought*"), that he was in a condition which made it possible for him to hold property, or at least to be intrusted. ¶ *But above a servant, a brother beloved.* A Christian brother; comp. Notes, 1 Tim. vi. 2. He was especially dear to Paul himself as a Christian, and he trusted that he would be so to Philemon. ¶ *Specially to me.* That is, I feel a special or particular interest in him, and affection for him. This he felt not only on account of the traits of character which he had evinced since his conversion, but because he had been converted under his instrumentality when he was a prisoner. A convert made in such circumstances would be particularly dear to one. ¶ *But how much more unto thee.* Why, it may be asked, would he then be particularly dear to Philemon? I answer, because (1.) of the former relation which he sustained to him—a member of his own family, and bound to him by strong ties; (2.) because he would receive him as a penitent, and would have joy in his returning from the error of his ways; (3.) because he might expect him to remain long with him and be of advantage to him as a Christian brother; and (4.) because he had voluntarily returned, and thus shown that he felt a strong attachment to his former master. ¶ *In the flesh.* This phrase is properly used in reference to *any* relation which may exist pertaining to the present world, as contradistinguished from that which is formed primarily by religion, and which would be expressed by the subjoined phrase, "in the Lord." It might, in itself, refer to any natural relation of blood, or to any formed in business, or to any constituted by mere friendship, or to family alliance, or to any relation having its origin in voluntary or involuntary servitude. It is not necessary to suppose, in order to meet the full force of the expression, either that Onesimus had been a slave, or that he would continue to be regarded as such. *Whatever* relation of the kind, referred to above, may have existed between him and Philemon, would be appropriately denoted by this phrase. The new and more interesting relation which they were now to sustain to each other, which was formed by religion, is expressed by the phrase "in the Lord." In *both* these, Paul hoped that Onesimus would manifest the appropriate spirit of a Christian, and be worthy of his entire confidence. ¶ *In the Lord.* As a Christian. He will be greatly endeared to your heart as a consistent and worthy follower of the Lord Jesus.—On this important verse then, in relation to the use which is so often made of this epistle by the advocates of slavery, to show that Paul sanctioned it, and that it is a duty to send back those who have escaped from their masters that they

may again be held in bondage, we may remark, (1.) there is no certain evidence that Onesimus was ever a *slave* at all. *All* the proof that he was, is to be found in the word δοῦλος—*doulos*—in this verse. But, as we have seen, the mere use of this word by no means proves that. All that is necessarily implied by it is that he was in some way the *servant* of Philemon—whether hired or bought cannot be shown. (2.) At all events, even supposing that he had been a slave, Paul did not mean that he should return *as* such, or to be regarded as such. He meant, whatever may have been his former relation, and whatever subsequent relation he may have sustained, that he should be regarded *as a beloved Christian brother;* that the leading conception in regard to him should be that he was a fellow-heir of salvation, a member of the same redeemed church, a candidate for the same heaven. (3.) Paul did not send him back *in order* that he might be a slave, or with a view that the shackles of servitude should be riveted on him. There is not the slightest evidence that he *forced* him to return, or that he *advised* him to do it, or even that he expressed a *wish* that he would; and when he did send him, it was not *as a slave,* but *as a beloved brother in the Lord.* It cannot be shown that the motive for sending him back was in the slightest degree that he should be a slave. No such thing is intimated, nor is any such thing necessary to be supposed in order to a fair interpretation of the passage. (4.) It is clear that, even *if* Onesimus had been a slave before, it would have been contrary to the wishes of Paul that Philemon should now hold him as such. Paul wished him to regard him "*not* as a servant," but as a "beloved brother." If Philemon complied with his wishes, Onesimus was never afterwards regarded or treated as a slave. If he *did* so regard or treat him, it was contrary to the expressed intention of the apostle, and it is certain that he could never have shown this letter in justification of it. It cannot fail to strike any one that if Philemon followed the spirit of this epistle, he would not consider Onesimus to be a slave, but if he sustained the relation of a servant at all, it would be as a voluntary member of his household, where, in all respects, he would be regarded and treated, not as a "chattel," or a "thing," but as a Christian brother. (5.) This passage, therefore, may be regarded as full proof that it is *not* right to send a slave back, against his will, to his former master, *to be a slave.* It is right to help one if he wishes to go back; to give him a letter to his master, as Paul did to Onesimus; to furnish him money to help him on his journey if he desires to return; and to commend him as a Christian brother, if he is such; but beyond that, the example of the apostle Paul does not go. It is perfectly clear that he would *not* have sent him back to be regarded and treated as a slave, but being able to commend him as a Christian, he was willing to do it, and he expected that he *would be* treated, not as a slave, but as a Christian. The case before us does not go at all to prove that Paul would have ever sent him back to be a chattel or a thing. If, with his own consent, and by his own wish, we can send a slave back to his master, to be treated *as a Christian* and *as a man,* the example of Paul may show that it would be right to do it, but it does not go beyond that. (6.) In confirmation of this, and as a guide in duty now, it may be observed, that Paul had been educated as a Hebrew; that he was thoroughly imbued with the doctrines of the Old Testament, and that one of the elementary principles of that system of religion was, that a runaway slave was *in no circumstances* to be returned by force to his former master. "*Thou shalt* NOT *deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee;*" Deut. xxiii. 15. It cannot be supposed that, trained as he was in the principles of the Hebrew religion—of which this was a positive and unrepealed law, and imbued with the benevolent spirit of the gospel—a system so hostile to oppression, the apostle Paul would have constrained a slave

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, [a] receive him as myself.

[a] 2 Co.8.23.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account.

who had escaped from bondage to return to servitude against his will. (7.) It may be added, that if the principles here acted on by Paul were carried out, slavery would speedily cease in the world. Very soon would it come to an end if masters were to regard those whom they hold, "not as slaves," but *as beloved Christian brothers;* not as *chattels* and *things*, but as the redeemed children of God. Thus regarding them, they would no longer feel that they might chain them, and task them, and sell them as property. They would feel that as Christians and as men, they were on a level with themselves, and that they who were made in the image of God, and who had been redeemed with the blood of his Son, *ought to be* FREE.

17. *If thou count me therefore a partner.* The word rendered *partner* (κοινωνὸς), means *a partaker, a companion.* The idea in the word is that of having something *in common* (κοινὸς) with any one—as common principles; common attachments; a common interest in an enterprise; common hopes. It may be applied to those who hold the same principles of religion, and who have the same hope of heaven, the same views of things, &c. Here the meaning is, that if Philemon regarded Paul as sharing with him in the principles and hopes of religion, or as a brother in the gospel so that he would receive *him*, he ought to receive Onesimus in the same way. He was actuated by the same principles, and had the same hopes, and had a claim to be received as a Christian brother. His receiving Onesimus would be interpreted by Paul as proof that he regarded him as a partaker of the hopes of the gospel, and as a companion and friend. For a plea in behalf of another, strongly resembling this, see Horace, Epis. Lib. 1, Ep. 9.

18. *If he hath wronged thee.* Either by escaping from you, or by failing to perform what he had agreed to, or by unfaithfulness when he was with you as a servant, or by taking your property when he went away. Any of these methods would meet all that is said here, and it is impossible to determine in which of them he had done Philemon wrong. It may be observed, however, that the apostle evinces much delicacy in this matter. He does not say that he *had* wronged him, but he makes *a supposition* that he might have done it. Doubtless Philemon would suppose that he *had* done it, even if he had done no more than to escape from him, and, whatever Paul's views of that might be, he says that even *if it were so*, he would wish him to set that over to his account. He took the blame on himself, and asked Philemon not to remember it against Onesimus. ¶ *Or oweth* thee *ought.* It appears from this, that Onesimus, whatever may have been his former condition, was capable of holding property, and of contracting debts. It is possible that he might have borrowed money of Philemon, or he may have been regarded as a tenant, and may not have paid the rent of his farm, or the apostle may mean that he had owed him service which he had not performed. Conjecture is useless as to the way in which the debt had been contracted. ¶ *Put that on mine account.* Reckon, or impute that to me —ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγει. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Rom. v. 13, where it is rendered *imputed.* See Notes on that passage. It means to reckon ; to put to one's account, to wit, what properly belongs to him, or what he assumes. It never implies that that is to be charged on one which does not properly belong to him, either as his own act, or as that which he has assumed. In this case, it would have been manifestly unjust for Philemon to charge the wrong which Onesimus had done, or what he owed him,

19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it:* albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

to the apostle Paul without his consent; and it cannot be inferred from what Paul says here that it would have been right to to so. The *steps* in the case were these: (1.) Onesimus, not Paul, had done the wrong. (2.) Paul was not guilty of it, or blameworthy for it, and never in any way, or by any process, could be made to be, or conceived to be. It would be true for ever that Onesimus and not he had done the wrong. (3.) Paul *assumed* the debt and the wrong to himself. He was willing, by putting himself in the place of Onesimus, to bear the consequences, and to have Onesimus treated *as if* he had not done it. When he had voluntarily assumed it, it was right to treat him *as if* he had done so; that is, to hold him responsible. A man may *assume* a debt if he pleases, and then he may be held answerable for it. (4.) If he had *not* assumed this himself, it never could have been right for Philemon to charge it on him. No possible supposition could make it right No agency which he had in the conversion of Onesimus; no friendship which he had for him; no favour which he had shown him, could make it right. The *consent*, the *concurrence* on the part of Paul was absolutely *necessary* in order that he should be in any way responsible for what Onesimus had done. (5.) The same principle prevails in imputation everywhere. (*a*) What we have done is chargeable upon us. (*b*) If we have not done a thing, or have not assumed it by a voluntary act, it is not right to charge it upon us. (*c*) God reckons things as they are. The Saviour voluntarily *assumed* the place of man, and God *reckoned*, or considered it so. He did not hold him guilty or blameworthy in the case; but as he had voluntarily taken the place of the sinner, he was treated *as if* he had been a sinner. God, in like manner, does not charge on man crimes of which he is not guilty. He does not hold him to be blameworthy, or ill-deserving for the sin of Adam, or any other sin but his own. He reckons things as they are. Adam sinned, and *he* alone was held to be blameworthy or ill-deserving for the act. By a divine constitution (comp. Notes, Rom. v. 12, *seq.*), he had appointed that *if* he sinned, the consequences or results should pass over and terminate on his posterity—as the consequences of the sin of the drunkard pass over and terminate on his sons, and God *reckons* this to be so—and treats the race accordingly. He never reckons those to be guilty who are not guilty; or those to be ill-deserving who are not ill-deserving; nor does he punish one for what another has done. When Paul, therefore, voluntarily *assumed* a debt or an obligation, what he did should not be urged as an argument to prove that it would be right for God to charge on all the posterity of Adam the sin of their first father, or to hold them guilty for an offence committed ages before they had an existence. The case should be adduced to demonstrate *one point* only—that when a man *assumes* a debt, or voluntarily takes a wrong done upon himself, it is right to hold him responsible for it.

[See the subject of imputation discussed in the supplementary Notes, Ro. v. 12, 19; 2 Cor. v. 19, 21; Gal. iii. 13.]

19. *I Paul have written it with mine own hand.* It has been inferred from this, that Paul wrote this entire epistle with his own hand, though this was contrary to his usual practice; comp. Notes on Rom. xvi. 22; 1 Cor. xvi. 21; Gal. vi. 11. He undoubtedly meant to refer to this as a mark of special favour towards Philemon, and as furnishing security that he would certainly be bound for what he had promised. ¶ *I will repay* it. I will be security for it. It is not probable that Paul supposed that Philemon would rigidly exact it from him, but if he did, he would feel himself bound to pay it. ¶ *Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.* Paul had doubtless been the means

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh [a] my bowels in the Lord.

21 Having confidence [b] in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I [c] trust that through [d] your prayers I shall be given unto you.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, [e] my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus;

[a] ver. 7. [b] 2 Co. 7. 16. [c] Ph. 2. 24. [d] 2 Co. 1. 11. [e] Col. 1. 7.

of the conversion of Philemon, and whatever hope he cherished of eternal life, was to be traced to his instrumentality. Paul says that this was equivalent to his owing *himself* to him. His very life—his eternal welfare—was to be traced to his labours. What he asked now of him was a small matter compared with this, and he seems to have supposed—what was probably true—that for this consideration, Philemon would not think of exacting of him what he had voluntarily obligated himself to obey.

20. *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord.* "By showing me this favour in receiving my friend and brother as I request." The phrase "in the Lord," here seems to mean that, if this request was granted, he would recognise the hand of the Lord in it, and would receive it as a favour from him. ¶ *Refresh my bowels in the Lord.* The bowels, in the Scriptures, are uniformly spoken of as the seat of the affections—meaning commonly the upper viscera, embracing the heart and the lungs; comp. Notes on Isa. xvi. 11. The reason is, that in any deep emotion this part of our frame is peculiarly affected, or we *feel* it there. Comp. Robinson's Lex. on the word σπλάγχνον See this illustrated at length in Sir Charles Bell's "Anatomy of Expression," p. 85, seq. Ed. London, 1844. The idea here is, that Paul had such a tender affection for Onesimus as to give him great concern and uneasiness. The word rendered "*refresh*" —ἀνάπαυσόν—means *to give rest to, to give repose, to free from sorrow or care;* and the sense is, that by receiving Onesimus, Philemon would cause the deep and anxious feelings of Paul to cease, and he would be calm and happy; comp. Notes on ver. 7.

21. *Having confidence in thy obedience.* That you would comply with all my expressed desires. ¶ *I wrote unto thee.* "I have written to you;" to wit, in this epistle. ¶ *Knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.* In all the respects which he had mentioned — in receiving Onesimus, and in his kind treatment of him. He had asked a great favour of him, but he knew that he would go even beyond what he had asked.

22. *But withal.* Or, *at the same time*—Ἅμα. While you are granting this favour, do me also another by preparing a lodging for me. ¶ *Prepare me also a lodging.* Philemon had been accustomed to show kindness to the saints (ver. 5), and not improbably Paul had before shared his hospitality. The word rendered *lodging* (ξενία), means, properly, *guest-right, hospitality, entertainment;* and then, *a place for a guest;* comp. Acts xxviii. 23. ¶ *For I trust.* Paul had some hope of being released—an event which probably occurred; see Notes on Phil. i. 25; ii. 23, 24; comp. Intro. to 2 Timothy. ¶ *Through your prayers;* Notes, 2 Cor. i. 11. He expected release in answer to the petitions of those who loved him, and the cause in which he was engaged; comp. Notes on Acts xii. 5. ¶ *I shall be given unto you.* I shall be permitted to return to you, as a favour—χαρισθήσομαι. Paul had no doubt that Philemon would so regard it, and he had no apprehension that his abiding with him would be considered as a burden.

23. *There salute thee Epaphras.* The same persons who are here mentioned as greeting Philemon, are mentioned in the close of the epistle to the Colossians—furnishing a high degree of evidence that Philemon resided at Colosse. Epaphras was a

24 Marcus, [a] Aristarchus, [b] Demas, [c] Lucas, my fellow-labourers.
25 The [d] grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.

[a] Ac.12.12,25. [b] Ac.19.29. [c] 2 Ti.4.11. [d] 2 Ti.4.22.

member of the church there; Notes on Col. iv. 12. ¶ *My fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus.* In the cause of Christ; Notes, ver. 1. The circumstance of his being a prisoner is not mentioned in the parallel place in the epistle to the Colossians, but nothing is more probable.

24. *Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Lucas;* see Notes on the Epistle to the Colossians, iv. 10, 14.

25. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,* &c. Notes, 2 Tim. iv. 22.

The subscription to the epistle is of no authority, but in this case is undoubtedly correct. Compare the Remarks at the close of 1 Corinthians, and Titus.

REMARKS.

Having now passed through with the exposition of this epistle, it may be proper to copy, for comparison with it, one of the most beautiful specimens of epistolary composition to be found in profane literature, an epistle of Pliny, written on a similar occasion, and having a strong resemblance to this. As a matter of taste, it is of importance to show that the sacred writers do not fall behind the most favourable specimens of literary composition to be found in uninspired writings. The epistle of Pliny was directed to his friend Sabinianus, in behalf of his manumitted slave who had offended him, and who was consequently cast out of his favour. It is in the following words:

C. Plinius Sabiniano, S.

Libertus tuus, cui succensere te dixeras, venit ad me, advolutusque pedibus meis, tanquam tuis, hæsit: flevit multùm, multùm rogavit, multùm etiam tacuit: in summâ, fecit mihi fidem pœnitentiæ Verè credo emendatum, quia deliquisse sentit. Irasceris scio; et irasceris meritò, id quoque scio: sed tunc præcipua mansuetudinis laus, cum iræ causa justissima est. Amâsti hominem; et spero amabis: interim sufficit ut exorari te sinas. Licebit rursus irasci, si meruerit; quòd exoratus excusatiùs facies.

Remitte aliquid adolescentiæ ipsius; remitte lachrymis; remitte indulgentiæ tuæ; ne torseris illum, ne torseris etiam te. Torqueris enim cùm tam lenis irasceris. Vereor, ne videar non rogare, sed cogere, si precibus ejus meas junxero. Jungam tamen tanto pleniùs et effusiùs quanto ipsum acriùs severiùsque corripui, destrictè minatus, nunquam me postea rogaturum. Hoc illi, quem terreri oportebat; tibi non idem. Nam fortasse iterum rogabo, impetrabo iterum: sit modo tale, ut rogare me, ut præstare te, deceat. Vale. *Epistolar.* Lib. ix. Ep. 21.

'Caius Pliny to Sabinianus, health:

'Thy freed man, with whom thou didst say thou wert incensed, came to me, and having thrown himself at my feet, grasped them as if they had been thine. He wept much; pleaded much; and yet pleaded more by his silence. In short, he fully convinced me that he was a penitent. I do sincerely believe that he is reformed, because he perceives that he has done wrong. I know that thou art incensed against him; and I know also that thou art justly so; but then clemency has its chief praise when there is the greatest cause for anger. Thou hast loved the man; and I hope that thou wilt love him again. In the meantime, it may suffice that thou dost suffer thyself to be entreated for him. It will be right for thee again to be offended if he deserves it; because, having allowed thyself to be entreated, you will do it with greater propriety.

'Forgive something for his youth; forgive on account of his tears; forgive on account of thine own kindness: do not torment him; do not torment thyself—for thou wilt be tormented when thou, who art of so

gentle a disposition, dost suffer thyself to be angry. I fear, if I should unite my prayers to his, that I should seem not to ask, but to compel. Yet I will write them, and the more largely and earnestly, too, as I have sharply and severely reproved him; solemnly threatening him, should he offend again, never more to intercede for him. This I said to him, because it was necessary to alarm him; but I will not say the same to thee. For perhaps I may again entreat thee, and again obtain, if now that shall be done which it is fit that I should ask and you concede. Farewell."

Those who compare these two epistles, much as they may admire that of Pliny as a literary composition and as adapted to secure the end which he had in view, will coincide with the remark of Doddridge, that it is much inferior to the letter of Paul. There is less courtesy—though there is much; there is less that is touching and tender—though there is much force in the pleading; and there is much less that is affecting in the manner of the appeal than in the epistle of the apostle.

The epistle to Philemon, though the shortest that Paul wrote, and though pertaining to a private matter in which the church at large could not be expected to have any direct interest, is nevertheless a most interesting portion of the New Testament, and furnishes some invaluable lessons for the church.

I. It is a model of courtesy. It shows that the apostle was a man of refined sensibility, and had a delicate perception of what was due in friendship, and what was required by true politeness. There are turns of thought in this epistle which no one would employ who was not thoroughly under the influence of true courtesy of feeling, and who had not an exquisite sense of what was proper in intercourse with a Christian gentleman.

II. The epistle shows that he had great tact in argument, and great skill in selecting just such things as would be adapted to secure the end in view. It would be hardly possible to accumulate, even in a letter of fiction, more circumstances which would be fitted to accomplish the object which he contemplated, than he has introduced into this short letter, or to arrange them in a way better fitted to secure the desired result. If we remember the state of mind in which it is reasonable to suppose Philemon was in regard to this runaway servant, and the little probability that a man in his circumstances would receive him with kindness again, it is impossible not to admire the address with which Paul approaches him. It is not difficult to imagine in what state of mind Philemon may have been, or the obstacles which it was necessary to surmount in order to induce him to receive Onesimus again—*and especially to receive him as a Christian brother.* If, as has been commonly supposed, Onesimus had been a slave; if he had run away from him; if he had been formerly intractable and disobedient; if he had wronged him by taking property with him that did not belong to him, or if he had owed him, and had run off without paying him, it is not difficult for any one to imagine how great was the difficulty to be overcome in his mind before the object of Paul could be accomplished. This will be felt to be especially so if we bear in remembrance the repugnance necessarily felt by a slaveholder to receive one who has been a slave as an equal in any respect, or to regard and treat such an one as a Christian brother on the same level with himself. Or if we suppose that Onesimus had been a voluntary servant in the employ of Philemon, and had failed to render the service which he had contracted to perform, or had embezzled property, or had gone off in debt, greatly irritating the mind of his master, the difficulty to be overcome before he received him again would be little less. In either case, it would be necessary to soothe his irritated feelings, and to inspire confidence in one who hitherto had evinced little claim to it, and to persuade him now to receive one who had shown that he was not to be trusted, as a Christian brother. If the

epistle be examined with reference to either of these suppositions, it will be found to be composed with the most finished tact and art.

III. This epistle has been frequently appealed to by the friends and advocates of slavery as furnishing a support or apology for that institution. Indeed, it would seem to be regarded by the advocates of that system as so clear on the point, that all that they need to do is to *name* it as settling the whole matter in debate. The points which it is supposed by the advocates of that system to prove are two: *first*, that slavery is right—since it is assumed that Onesimus was a slave, and that Paul does not intimate to Philemon that the relation was contrary to the spirit of Christianity; and *second*, that it is our duty to send back a runaway slave to his master—since it is assumed that Paul did this in the case of Onesimus.—It cannot be denied that this view of the matter would be sustained by most of the *commentaries* on the epistle, but it is time to inquire whether such an exposition is the true one, and whether this epistle really gives countenance to *slavery* in respect to these points. In order to this, it is important to know exactly what was the state of the case in reference to these points—for in interpreting the New Testament it should not be *assumed* that anything is in favour of slavery, nor should anything be *admitted* to be in favour of it without applying the most rigid principles of interpretation—any more than in the case of profaneness, adultery, or any other sin As the result of the examination of the epistle, we are now prepared to inquire what countenance the epistle gives to slavery in these respects, and whether it can be fairly appealed to either in justification of the system, or in showing that it is a duty to return a runaway slave against his consent to his former master. To make out these points from the epistle, it would be necessary to demonstrate that Onesimus was certainly a slave; that Paul so treats the subject as to show that he approved of the institution; that he sent back Onesimus against his own will; that he returned him because he supposed he had done wrong by escaping from servitude; and that he meant that he should continue to be regarded as a slave, and held as a slave, after his return to Philemon. Now, in regard to these points, I would make the following remarks in view of the exposition which has been given of the epistle:—

(1.) There is no positive evidence that Onesimus was a *slave* at all; see Notes on ver. 16. Even if it should be admitted to be *probable* that he was, it would be necessary, in order that this epistle should be adduced in favour of slavery, that that fact should be made out without any ground of doubt, or the argument is worthless. It is clear that the epistle, under any circumstances, can be adduced in favour of slavery only *so far* as it is certain that Onesimus was a slave. But that is *not* certain. It cannot be made to be certain. It should not be taken for granted. Either of the suppositions that he was bound to service till he was of age by a parent or guardian, or that he had voluntarily bound himself to service for wages, will meet all that is *necessarily* implied in the epistle.

(2.) There is not the least evidence that Paul used any force or even persuasion to induce him to return to his master. It cannot be proved from the epistle that he even *advised* him to return. It is certain that he did not *compel* him to do it—for Paul had no power to do this, and no guard or civil officer accompanied Onesimus to secure him if he had chosen to escape. Every one of the circumstances mentioned in the epistle will be met by the supposition that Onesimus *desired* to return, but that there were circumstances which made him apprehensive that if he did, he would not be kindly received, and that, at his request, Paul wrote the epistle to induce Philemon to receive him kindly. Nothing more can be *proved;* nothing more is necessary to be believed, in order to a fair interpretation of the epistle. Nothing is more natural than the supposition that when Onesimus was

truly converted, he would *desire* to return to Philemon if he had in any way done him wrong. But to make it proper to adduce this epistle to show that it is a *duty* to return a runaway slave to his master, even on the supposition that Onesimus was a slave, it is necessary to *prove* either that Paul *advised* him to return, or that he *compelled* him to do it against his will. No one doubts that it would be right to help one who had escaped from slavery, if, on any proper account, he should *wish* to go back to his former master: if he felt that he had wronged him, or if he had a wife and children in the neighbourhood, or if he was satisfied that he could be more happy in his service than he could be elsewhere. To this point, and this only, this epistle goes.

(3.) There is no evidence that Paul meant that Onesimus should return *as* a slave, or with a view to be retained and treated *as* a slave. Even supposing he had been so formerly, there is not the slightest intimation in the epistle that when he sent him back to his master, he meant that he should throw himself into the chains of bondage again. Nor is there the slightest evidence that *if* he had supposed that this would be the result, he would have even *consented* that he should return to his master. No man can take this epistle and prove from it that Paul *would* have sent him at all, if he had supposed that the effect would be that he would be reduced to slavery, and held in bondage. If *such* had been his expectation, he would never have written such a letter as this. The expression of such a desire would have found a place in the epistle; or, at least, the epistle would not have been so framed as almost of necessity to lead to a different result.

(4.) There is very satisfactory evidence, besides this, that he did *not* mean that Onesimus should be regarded and treated by Philemon as a slave. It would be impossible for Philemon to comply with the wishes breathed forth in this letter, and meet exactly the desires of Paul in the case, and yet retain him as a slave, or regard him as property—as a "chattel"—as a "thing." For (*a*) *if* he had been formerly a slave; if this is the fair meaning of the word δοῦλος—*doulos*—then this is expressly declared. Thus, in ver. 16, he is commanded to receive him "NOT *now as a servant*"—οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον. *If* he had been a slave before, he did not *wish* that he should be received as such now, or regarded as such any longer. How *could* Philemon comply with the wish of the apostle, and yet regard Onesimus as a slave? The very attempt to do it would be directly in the face of the expressed desire of Paul, and every moment he held him as such he would be disregarding his wishes. (*b*) He desired him to receive and treat him, in all respects, as a Christian brother—as one redeemed—as a man:—"*Above* a servant, *a brother beloved.*" How could he do this, and yet regard and treat him as a slave? *Is* it treating one as a Christian brother to hold him as property; to deprive him of freedom; to consider him an article of merchandise; to exact his labour without compensation? Would the man himself who makes another a slave suppose that *he* was treated as a Christian brother, if *he* were reduced to that condition? Would he feel that his son was so regarded if *he* was made a slave? There are no ways of reconciling these things. It is *impossible* for a master to regard his slave as, in the proper and full sense of the phrase, "*a Christian brother.*' He may, indeed, esteem him highly as a Christian; he may treat him with kindness; he may show him many favours; *but —he regards him also* AS HIS SLAVE; and this fact makes a difference wide "as from the centre thrice to the utmost pole" in his feelings towards him and other Christians. He is *not* on a level with them *as* a Christian. The notion of his being *his slave* mingles with all his feelings towards him, and gives a colouring to all his views of him. He cannot but feel, if he himself is under the influence of religion, that that slave, if he were treated in all respects *as* a Christian, would be as free as himself; would

have a right to his time, and skill, and liberty; would be permitted to form his own plans, and to enjoy the avails of his own labour; and would be secure from the possibility of being *sold*. (*c*) Suppose now that Paul, after a short interval, had actually come to the residence of Philemon, as he expected to (ver. 22), and had found him regarding and treating Onesimus *as a slave;* would he have felt that Philemon had complied with his wishes? Did he ask this of him? Did he not request just the contrary? ver. 16. Would it not be natural for him to say to him that he had NOT received him as he wished him to? And how would Philemon reply to this?

(5.) The principles laid down in this epistle would lead to the universal abolition of slavery. If all those who are now slaves were to become Christians, and their masters were to treat them "not as slaves, but as brethren beloved," the period would not be far distant when slavery would cease. This probably will be admitted by all. But a state of things which would be destroyed by the widest prevalence of Christianity, is not right at any time. Christianity, in its highest influences, interferes with nothing that is good, and would annihilate nothing which is not wrong. That which is true, and best for the welfare of man, will survive when the true religion spreads all over the world; and to say, as is commonly admitted even by the advocates of slavery, that Christianity will ultimately destroy the system, is to say that *it is now wrong*—for Christianity destroys nothing which is in itself right, and which is desirable for the highest good of man. It will destroy intemperance, and idolatry, and superstition, and war—because they are evil and wrong—and *only* because they are so; and for the same reason, and that only, will it abolish slavery. When a man, therefore, admits that the gospel will ultimately destroy slavery, he at the same time admits that it is now an *evil* and a *sin*. The gospel is adapted and designed to put an end to the system. It *did* annihilate it in the Roman empire, and its tendency everywhere is to secure its final abolition. The system, *therefore*, is evil. It is opposed to the spirit of religion. It is destructive of the welfare of society. It is a violation of human rights. It is contrary to the will of God. The gospel everywhere teaches us to regard the slave "no longer as a slave, but as a brother;" and when this is secured, the system must speedily come to an end. For this, and for all its other anticipated influences, we should labour and pray that the gospel may be diffused as speedily as possible all over the world; that it may raise man everywhere from his degradation, and invest every human being with the dignity of a freeman; that it "may undo the heavy burden, break every yoke, and bid the oppressed go free." Isa. lviii. 6.