











THE EPISTLES  
OF  
PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TRANSLATED.

---

VOL. III.



THE EPISTLES  
OF  
PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TRANSLATED,

WITH  
AN EXPOSITION, AND NOTES,

✓  
BY THE REV. THOMAS BELSHAM,

MINISTER OF ESSEX-STREET CHAPEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

---

*“Affer animum rectum et simplicem, veritatis supra cætera amantem,  
“præjudiciis vacuum. Ne protinus tanquam nova, tanquam inaudita et  
“absurda damnaveris, quæ tibi nova, tibi inaudita, et absurda occurrent.  
“Ea quæ dicimus, non cum aliorum judiciis, non cum vulgi inveteratis  
“opinionibus compone, ut inde rem æstimes, sed cum auctoris divini verbis,  
“scopo, ipsoque rationis filo. Hinc tibi veritas petenda est: hinc de nobis  
“ferenda sententia. Equidem nos sicubi lapsi, aut D. Auctoris mentem non  
“satis assecuti sumus, amice admoniti, ultro manus dabimus, gratesque in-  
“super accumulabimus.”*

---

SLICHTINGIUS Præf. ad Heb.

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR R. HUNTER,  
(Successor to Mr. Johnson,)  
NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

1822.

PRINTED BY R. AND A. TAYLOR,  
SHOE-LANE.

---

THE EPISTLE  
OF  
PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO  
THE GALATIANS.

---

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS is one of those compositions of the apostle Paul the genuineness of which has never been disputed in ancient or in modern times. The external evidence of this epistle is the same with that of the most authentic and approved ancient writings. It professes at its very commencement to have been written by Paul the apostle; who had been invested with his high and honourable office, not by men, but by Christ himself, who had appeared to him for that express purpose, and by God, who had raised Jesus from the dead. It appears to have been received as the production of that apostle by the whole primitive church without a dissenting voice: it is quoted by the early

ecclesiastical writers under the apostle's name ; and the passages they cite from it are to be found in our present copies.

This epistle also contains every internal character of authenticity. It treats largely of a controversy, viz. the obligation of converted Gentiles to observe the Mosaic ritual, which could have had no existence later than the apostolic age. It recites many events in the life of the apostle, which are also related in Luke's history, with the addition of some incidental circumstances which are not noticed in the Acts of the Apostles, omitting others, which, though mentioned by Luke, were not necessary to be introduced into the epistle. The writer also alludes to many circumstances relating to the state of the Galatian churches, and to occurrences which took place while he exercised his office among them, which would be fully understood by those to whom the epistle was addressed, though necessarily obscure to others. To which may be added, that the unusual brevity of style, and the elliptical mode of expression and reasoning observable in this epistle, which render it peculiarly obscure to common readers, would probably be not unintelligible to those who were familiar with the apostle's phraseology and manner of speaking; and would therefore create no objection to the authenticity of the epistle, but rather the contrary. It may also be remarked, that the train of thought and the mode of reasoning, which the apostle has adopted in this epistle, are very similar to those which occur in his other writings, and particularly in the epistle

to the Romans. Thus, he argues the right of the Gentiles to be admitted into the church, from the call of Abraham; he represents the Christian church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, as one mystical body, of which Christ is the head; and he zealously defends the liberties of the Gentile church, in opposition to those who would subject converted heathen to the yoke of the Mosaic law. These peculiar topics and modes of argument occurring in different epistles, constitute a presumptive proof that they were all of them the productions of the same individual.

GALATIA was a province of the Lesser Asia, which was inhabited by a colony of the Gauls. In this country the gospel had been preached by Paul with great success, and several churches had been formed by him, about A.D. 50, Acts xvi. 6. Soon after he had left the country, some bigots to the Mosaic ritual intruded themselves into the church, who zealously insisted upon a strict conformity to the law of Moses, as essential to obtaining an interest in the blessings of the gospel. These men represented the apostle Paul as a teacher of inferior rank, subordinate to the apostles, and who had no authority from them to teach the abolition of the law. And what was worse, they charged him with gross inconsistency, both in doctrine and practice: for that though, in order to ingratiate himself with the converted Gentiles, he had insisted upon the abrogation of the Jewish ritual while he was teaching in



Galatia, he nevertheless taught the contrary doctrine at other places ; submitting to all the rigour of the law himself, and enforcing it strictly upon others. These assertions, which were repeated with great confidence and warmth by the false teachers and their adherents, had made a considerable impression upon the unstable minds of the simple Galatians, and had thrown their churches into great confusion. Their affections were greatly alienated from the apostle, and his authority among them was much diminished. Many had adopted the doctrine of the false apostle, and had submitted to the yoke of the law ; and the introduction of these doctrines and rites had been the source of much violent animosity and contention, so that the genuine spirit of Christianity was in danger of being lost in the heat and bitterness of controversy.

Of this state of things in the Galatian churches the apostle was probably informed during his short residence at Ephesus, in his way to Jerusalem, Acts xviii. 19—21 ; and to remedy the growing evil he wrote this epistle immediately, which, next to the two epistles to the Thessalonians, is of the earliest date of any that are now extant. It was probably written before he left Ephesus, A.D. 53, previously to his second visit to Galatia, which he made at the latter end of that year or the beginning of the next. Acts xviii. 23.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Learned men are much divided in their opinions as to the date of the epistle to the Galatians. I have adopted the opinion of Dr. Lardner ; which agrees in the main with that of L'Enfant,

Contrary to the apostle's usual custom, and in order to show his earnestness in the cause, and his great affection to the Galatians, this epistle was written with his own hand, Gal. vi. 11; and as writing was probably an irksome employment to him, who was engaged so much in travelling and public speaking, this circumstance may account for the many instances which occur of elliptical forms of expression, and for an unusual brevity and obscurity in the style.

The main design of the apostle was to reclaim the Christians of Galatia from their novel and unreasonable attachment to the Mosaic ritual, to the pure and simple doctrine of the gospel which they had learned from him; to restore peace and concord to the church; to vindicate his own apostolical authority, the simplicity of his character, and the consistency of his conduct, in opposition to the calumnies of the false apostle and his faction; to reinstate

---

Beausobre, Lord Barrington, Dr. Benson, and Dr. Doddridge. Most of these learned writers seem indeed to think it probable, that the apostle had heard at Corinth of the defection of the Galatian churches, and that he wrote his letter a little before he left that city in the spring of A.D. 53. From the warmth of style, and the marks of haste which appear in it, we may conclude that it was written under the impression of the first intelligence; and as it is not unlikely that the apostle received the first tidings of these unpleasant circumstances at Ephesus in his way from Corinth to Jerusalem the same year, it is probable that he immediately wrote the epistle to the Galatians, intending to make them a visit in his return from Jerusalem to Ephesus, at the end of the year, or the beginning of the year following. Gal. iv. 20; Acts xviii. 23.

himself in their esteem; to recover the ground which he had lost in their affections by the base artifices of his opponent; and, finally, to expose this deceiver and his doctrine to the contempt and detestation which they deserved. In pursuance of this design, after having addressed them in a suitable introduction, ch. i. 1—5,

I. The apostle establishes his own authority, and repels the charges of inconsistency in his character and conduct. Ch. i. 6—ii. 21.

1. He expresses his great surprise and concern at the change which had taken place in the views and conduct of the Galatian churches since his departure, and denounces a solemn anathema upon any one who should presume to teach a doctrine different from that in which he had instructed them; and even upon himself, if he should be found guilty of this glaring inconsistency, ver. 6—10.

2. He proves by an induction of facts that he had received his commission from, and had been instructed in the Christian doctrine by, Christ alone; it was not therefore probable that he would be induced to betray his trust, ver. 11—24.

3. He alleges that in all his interviews with the apostles, and in all his intercourse with the church at Jerusalem, he had upon every occasion asserted his plenary apostolical authority, and defended the liberties of the Gentile churches; and that these claims had been allowed by the apostles themselves, ch. ii. 1—10.

4. As a further proof both of his authority and

his consistency, he relates the reproof which he administered to Peter in public at Antioch, for the duplicity of his conduct, and comments upon the speech which he delivered on the occasion, ver. 11—21.

II. The apostle urges a variety of arguments to reclaim the Galatians from their attachment to their new teacher and to his judaizing doctrine, and to recover their affections to himself and to the simplicity of the gospel. Ch. iii. 1—v. 12.

1. He produces many reasons to prove that the obligations of the Mosaic law did not extend to the converted Gentiles, ch. iii. 1—iv. 7.

2. He expostulates with them concerning the unreasonableness of their apostasy from the truth and the alienation of their affections from himself, ver. 8—20.

3. He illustrates his argument by an allegory taken from the history of Hagar and Sarah, ver. 24—v. 1.

4. He faithfully warns them of the dangerous consequences of a blind attachment to the law of Moses, ver. 2—12.

III. The apostle suggests many pertinent advices to promote a spirit of peace and love, and universal virtue, ver. 13—vi. 10.

IV. He closes the epistle with a solemn protest against the extension of the Mosaic ritual to the Gentile churches, and with a general apostolical benediction, ver. 11—18.

Many of the same thoughts and arguments occur in this epistle which are introduced in the epistle to

the Romans ; which, as I have already remarked, is a strong presumption that they were indited by the same author. But it has been observed, that the apostle treats the Romans with a considerable degree of deference and ceremony, as not being personally acquainted with them, that church not having been planted by him. But he expostulates with the Galatians with the freedom of a parent and a teacher, to whom they were indebted for all they knew of the Christian religion, who possessed authority and a right to remonstrate freely, and even sharply, with them, for the errors and faults into which they had been betrayed, and for the diminution of their affection and regard to him for whom they had so lately, and indeed justly, professed the highest veneration and gratitude. But these paternal and apostolical rebukes are softened and qualified by many expressions of affection and tenderness, and there can be little doubt that they produced the desired effect ; so that when he visited them in the course of the following year, he probably found them in that state in which he had left them, and to which it was his desire to recover them.

---

# THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

---

## THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

### CHAP. I. 1—5.

**THE** apostle, intent upon silencing the objections Ch. I.  
which had been made to his authority, solemnly as-  
serts his apostolical commission in his introductory  
salutation to the Galatian churches. Ch. i. 1—5.

*PAUL an apostle*<sup>1</sup>, *not from men nor by any man*, Ver. 1.  
*but by Jesus Christ, and from God the Father*<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Paul an apostle.*] The apostle here evidently alludes to the calumnies which had been circulated to injure his character and to lessen his influence, viz. that he was no apostle, that he was a missionary from, and subordinate to, the apostles at Jerusalem, &c. He begins with a solemn assertion of his own apostolical rank and authority. He was no apostle of theirs or of any man's: they had not even been instrumental in investing him with the office, as in the case of Matthias, Acts i. On the contrary he received his commission from God alone, and had been invested with it by Christ himself; he was therefore inferior to none of the apostles, nor did he hold himself accountable to any. With Le Clerc I understand *απο* before *Θεο* to correspond with *απ' ανθρωπων* in the preceding clause. See Bowyer.

<sup>2</sup> *God the Father.*] “Here again you see how Jesus Christ is distinguished from God, to whom he was subordinate, and by whose power, and not his own, he was raised from the dead.” Dr. Priestley.

Ch. I. *who raised him from the dead, and all the brethren*<sup>1</sup>  
 Ver. 2. *who are with me, to the churches of Galatia*<sup>2</sup>: *fa-*  
 3. *vour be to you and peace, from God our Father and*  
*from our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This epistle is written by Paul, who, whatever insinuations may have been circulated to the contrary, most assuredly is an authorized and duly qualified apostle: an apostle not indeed of men, let their rank and station in the church be what it may. I received my commission from none of them: I am the delegate of none, I am subordinate to none, I am accountable to none. They were not even employed as the instruments of setting me apart to the office. I am the apostle and messenger of God himself, from whom alone I derive my authority and qualifications; who having raised his holy servant Jesus Christ from the dead, appointed him to appear personally to me to invest me with the office and the powers of an apostle to the Gentiles. This epistle, thus written by Paul the apostle, is addressed by him to those churches which a few years ago he planted in the province of Galatia; and to which he and all his associates who are at present with him

---

<sup>1</sup> *All the brethren.*] *i. e.* his associates who had accompanied him from Greece; or, as Dr. Chandler apprehends, the whole congregation of Christians in the place from whence he wrote his epistle, that the Galatians might understand that they had seen the epistle and unanimously approved of it.

<sup>2</sup> *Churches of Galatia.*] Dr. Macknight remarks that these churches “are not in the apostle’s usual manner designed churches of God, or of Christ; perhaps to signify that they did not deserve these honourable appellations on account of their great defection from the truth of the gospel.”



unite in affectionate salutations, and earnest wishes that they may abundantly participate in the blessings of that gospel which is the free gift of God our adorable Father ; through Jesus, the true Messiah, our Master and Lord.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 3.

*Who gave himself for our sins<sup>3</sup>, that he might deliver us from the present evil age<sup>4</sup>, according to the will of God our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

4.

5.

Great indeed are our obligations to our gracious Master, who voluntarily, and while we were yet sin-

<sup>3</sup> *For our sins.*] “ i. e. *pro nobis peccatoribus.*” Rosenmuller. “ for us sinners.”

<sup>4</sup> *From the present evil age.*] Mr. Locke, to whom we are indebted more than to any other commentator for the great light which he has thrown upon this obscure and difficult epistle, understands the “ present evil age,” *ενεστωτος αιωνος πονηρης*, of the Jewish dispensation ; which in the New Testament is designated as *αιων ετος*, 1 Cor. ii. 6—8, in opposition to that of the gospel, which is *αιων μελλων*, the age to come. The principal objection against this interpretation, which so well accords with the connexion, is from the use of the word *πονηρος*, *evil* ; to obviate which Mr. Locke observes, that the law is said to be contrary to us, Col. ii. 14, and to work wrath, Rom. iv. 15 ; also, that the apostle speaks diminishingly of it in many places. He might have added that the apostle in his epistle to the Romans proves at large that the law leaves men under a sentence of death, Rom. ii. iii. with an utter incapacity to extricate themselves from it. See chap. vii. Upon these principles we easily explain the phrase of Christ giving himself for our sins : a sacrificial phrase, which signifies that by the death of Christ a new covenant was ratified by which all former legal incapacities and disabilities were abrogated, and Gentiles, who were formerly sinners and enemies, as well as Jews, the ancient people of God, are now admitted to a free participation of the blessings of the gospel, upon the condition of faith only, without subjection to the yoke of the law. This is the doctrine which the writer to the Hebrews argues at large, chap. ix. x.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 5.

ners, gave himself up as a sacrifice for us, to purify us from the incapacities of our heathen state, and to qualify us for admission among the people of God, and for a participation of the privileges of the gospel, without submitting to the yoke of the law. For, indeed, though this dispensation was originally of divine authority, and well adapted to the circumstances in which it was given, its impositions are so burdensome, and the state in which it leaves us as sinners is so imperfect, and indeed deplorable, that it may justly be called evil in comparison with the new and glorious dispensation of the gospel. For this happy state of things we are wholly indebted to the rich mercy of God, our kind and compassionate Father, to whom we can never be sufficiently grateful; and to whom we ascribe never-ending praise.

## PART THE FIRST.

THE APOSTLE VINDICATES HIS OWN AUTHORITY, Ch. I.  
 AND REPELS THE CHARGE OF INCONSISTENCY IN  
 HIS CHARACTER AND CONDUCT. Ch. i. 6—ii. 21.

## SECTION I.

*THE APOSTLE expresses his great surprise and concern at the change which had taken place in the views and conduct of the Galatian churches since his departure, and denounces a solemn anathema upon every one who should presume to teach a doctrine different from that in which he had instructed them, and even upon himself if he should be found guilty of this glaring inconsistency. Ch. i. 6—10.*

*I am astonished<sup>1</sup> that you have so soon<sup>2</sup> transferred yourselves from him who invited you into* Ver. 6.

---

<sup>1</sup> *I am astonished.*] θαυμαζω expresses great surprise at something very extraordinary and unexpected. So the people were astonished at the miracles of Christ, Matt. viii. 27; Mark vi. 51; Luke viii. 25; and of the apostles, Acts iii. 12. It sometimes expresses wonder mixed with indignation, Mark vi. 6; John v. 28, vii. 21. See Schleusner.

<sup>2</sup> *So soon.*] The gospel was preached in Galatia, A.D. 50; and this epistle was written, probably from Ephesus, A.D. 53, pre-

Ch. I.  
Ver. 7.

*the favour of Christ*<sup>1</sup>, to a different gospel, which is nothing else than this<sup>2</sup>, that there are some who trouble you, and who are desirous to subvert the gospel of Christ.

I am perfectly amazed, my Christian friends, and can hardly give credit to the reports which I hear of your general defection from the plain and simple doctrine, and from the gentle and easy service of Christ; of the alienation of your affections from me, who was your first instructor in the Christian religion; and of your conversion to a system which you may, if you please, call a gospel, but which I can assure you is very different, both in its doctrine and its spirit, from the gospel of Christ. And what renders this apostasy and alienation the more extraordinary is, the short space of time in which it

vously to his second visit to them, A.D. 54, Acts xviii. 23. Saurin observes, that the Galatians were a colony of the Gauls, who have always been reproached with taking impressions easily, and as easily suffering them to be effaced.

<sup>1</sup> *Who invited you into.*] “The apostle probably means himself. See ch. v. 8. *εν χαριτι Χριστου* may either signify, *by the favour of Christ*, which is the literal rendering; or, see ver. 15, *into the grace of Christ*, i. e. the gracious dispensation of God by Christ.” Chandler.—“*εν* is often put for *εις*.” Newcome.—“The word *Χριστου* is omitted in some MSS. of good authority.” Griesbach.—Mr. Wakefield renders the passage, “I wonder that ye are so soon transferring yourselves from Christ, who called you with favour,” &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Is nothing else than this, that, &c.*] This, I think with Mr. Locke and Dr. Chandler, to be the true rendering of the words *ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὶν ἄλλο· εἰ μὴ*, &c. q. d. Your removal from me, who have called you to the grace of Christ, is owing to nothing but this: the crafty endeavours of designing men, &c. Mr. Locke justly remarks that if *ὁ* had referred to *ευαγγελιον*, it would have been more natural to have kept the word *ἐτερον*.

has taken place ; as it is no more than two or three years since I left you in a very promising state. But I know how it happens. I see that some evil-minded persons have introduced themselves into your society, who are determined to disturb the harmony of the church, and, if possible, to overturn and to abolish the genuine gospel of Christ, by substituting in its place a system of useless and burdensome ceremonies.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 7.

*But if even we, or an angel from heaven, preach to you any gospel different from that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema<sup>3</sup>. What I have already said<sup>4</sup> I now repeat: If any man<sup>5</sup> preach a gospel to you different from that which you have received, let him be anathema.*

8.

9.

The gospel of Christ is, I assure you, one and the same without any variation. If, therefore, the reports which you have heard of me should have

---

<sup>3</sup> *Let him be anathema.*] αναθεμα εγω, “let him be rejected.” Wakefield. “This word,” says Dr. Chandler, “does not signify accursed, or condemned of God to the punishment of another world. This the apostle would not wish to the worst of men. The meaning is, Let him be as a person excommunicated, or wholly cut off from the synagogue or church; with whom it is unlawful to have any commerce or correspondence whatsoever. It is not properly a wish of the apostle, but a direction to the Galatians how to behave.” “*Excludatur a cœtu vestro.* Theodoret ad 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Suicer. Thesaur. ad voc.” Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> *I have already said.*] Some copies with the Syriac and Æthiopic versions read προειρηνα. The received text reads, *We have*, &c.

<sup>5</sup> *If any man.*] Mr. Locke thinks that in the former verse the apostle insinuates that they might as soon suspect an angel from heaven of corrupting the gospel as himself; and that in this verse he lays the anathema wholly and solely upon the Jewish seducers.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 9.

been true: if I had actually taught a doctrine at other places different from that which I taught in Galatia; yea, if even a messenger, professing to be a celestial spirit, should presume to teach a doctrine different from that which I taught you at first, it would be your duty to regard us as impostors, and to expel us from your community as enemies to the doctrine and to the church of Christ. I repeat it again, that what I now denounce may appear to be a deliberate act, and not the hasty ebullition of a momentary feeling; and I wish you seriously to weigh the solemn admonition, If any one should presume to teach a doctrine different from that which you have already learned, and to call this corrupt doctrine the gospel of Christ, let such a teacher, whatever be his talents or pretensions, be expelled forthwith from your society, and hold no brotherly intercourse with him, lest you should be corrupted by him.

10. *For am I now<sup>1</sup> endeavouring to conciliate men<sup>2</sup>, or God? or am I seeking to please men<sup>3</sup>? If, indeed, I were still a pleaser of men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Am I now.*] This refers to his former life, when he was employed by men in their designs, and made it his business to please them, Acts ix. 1, 2. See Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *Endeavouring to conciliate.*] *πειθω* "this word frequently signifies, to obtain by entreaty, or to endeavour after the friendship or goodwill of any person, Matt. xxviii. 14; Acts xii. 20. *πεισσαντες*, having made Blastus their friend. See also 2 Mac. iv. 45. to persuade God, i. e. to endeavour to secure his approbation." Chandler.

<sup>3</sup> *Or am I seeking to please men?*] "This clause is omitted in

Is it possible, my friends, that you can give such easy credit, as I find that you do, to the reports to my disadvantage which are so industriously circulated by my enemies? Is it for me, at this time of life, after all my professions, after all my labours, after all my sufferings in the cause of truth, so far to contradict my character as to make it my prime object, as I once did, to conciliate the favour of men, by teaching doctrines that will be agreeable to their prejudices, rather than approve myself to God, whose messenger I am, and to whom I must render my account? Can you believe so improbable a calumny as that the object of my ministry is to gain human applause? There was indeed a time when I was ambitious of popularity. But if this were still my object, I should justly forfeit all claim to that which I now regard as the most honourable of all distinctions, to be acknowledged as the faithful servant, the zealous apostle of Jesus Christ.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 10.

---

the Æthiopic with the approbation of Dr. Mill, Dr. Owen, and Mr. Wakefield. Dr. Owen thinks it probable it was a marginal explanation of *ἄνθρωπος πειθω*." Newcome.



## SECTION II.

Ch. I. *THE APOSTLE to obviate the charge of his being a subordinate teacher of Christianity, and of inconsistency in his conduct, proves, by an induction of facts, that from having been a bigoted persecutor, he became a zealous teacher of the gospel, having received instruction and authority from Christ alone. Ch. i. 11—24.*

1. The apostle solemnly avers that he received his doctrine from Christ only, ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *But I declare to you, brethren, that the gospel*

12. *preached by me is not according to man<sup>1</sup>; for I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but<sup>2</sup> by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

You have been told, my brethren, that I am only a missionary from the apostles at Jerusalem; and that, in denying the obligation of Gentile converts to submit to the Jewish ceremonial, I have greatly exceeded my commission. In contradiction to this charge, I solemnly declare, that the doctrine I have

---

<sup>1</sup> *According to man.*] “of human origin.” Newcome. “pliant to human interest.” Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *Nor was I taught it, but &c.*] “I have removed the point from *εδιδαχθην*, though contrary to the authority of the best editions.” Newcome; whose punctuation I follow. Mr. Wakefield’s translation is, “indeed I did not receive it from man, nor from mine own knowledge.”

taught you, and which I still continue to preach, is no human invention, nor is it pliant to views of secular interest. I am no man's missionary; nor is there a person upon earth who can say that he was my instructor in the Christian religion. I was honoured with the personal intercourse of my Master, Jesus Christ himself; and by immediate illumination from him alone, I learned all I know, and all I teach.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 12.

2. To establish this fact, the apostle gives a brief account of his proceedings and removals for three years after his conversion: from which it appears impossible that he should have derived either his authority or his instructions from the other apostles, ver. 13—24.

1.) He reminds them that he was once a bigoted persecuting pharisee, ver. 13, 14.

*For ye have heard of my former way of life in the profession of Judaism<sup>3</sup>, that I outrageously persecuted the church of God, and laid it waste: and made proficiency in Judaism above many of the same age in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous<sup>4</sup> for the traditions of my fathers<sup>5</sup>.*

13.

14.

<sup>3</sup> *Judaism.*] “Mr. L’Enfant well observes, that this does not signify the religion taught by Moses, but that which was practised among the Jews at this time, and much of it built upon the traditions of the elders.” Doddridge. “*Ἰεδαϊσμος est studium Judaicorum rituum.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> *More exceedingly zealous.*] “*ζηλωτης, i. e. studiosissimus religionis. ζηλος, emulatio, est acré studium rei impensum. περισσοτερως, plus quam alii.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>5</sup> *Traditions of my fathers.*] “*traditiones patriæ sunt partim,*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 14.

To prove that the charges alleged against me are totally destitute of foundation, I will briefly recapitulate a few of the most material circumstances of my former life. You must have heard from myself and others what I originally was : a Jew, educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the tenets both of the written and the oral law ; a bigoted persecuting pharisee, who, filled with rage against the disciples of Christ, thought I could not exert myself too strenuously, nor too barbarously, for the extirpation of that holy community, which the most high God acknowledges as his own ; and which he has taken under his immediate and powerful protection. And you have certainly heard how much I distinguished myself above other young men who were my associates, by the progress which I made in the pharisaic doctrine ; by an earnest attachment to rites and ceremonies ; and by a furious zeal for those traditions which, being transmitted, as they pretend, from our ancestors, are enjoined by them as of equal obligation with, if not superior to, and even occasionally superseding, the written law. Judge, then, whether such a zealot as I have formerly been to all the erroneous notions and burdensome superstitions of pharisaic Judaism, should have been likely to have abandoned them completely and at once, without some very sufficient and cogent reason.

---

*ipsa doctrina. Lex et prophetæ : partim, doctrinæ humanæ, quæ ore traduntur et ad conservandam legis olim civilis auctoritatem perpetuam, sensim a magistris inventæ erant.*" Rosenmuller.

2.) The apostle relates that after his conversion Ch. I.  
he passed some time in Arabia; and opened his  
ministry at Damascus previously to his return to Je-  
rusalem, ver. 15—17.

*But when it pleased God, who set me apart from Ver. 15.  
my birth<sup>1</sup>, and called me by his favour, to reveal 16.  
his son to me<sup>2</sup> that I might preach his gospel to  
the Gentiles; immediately<sup>3</sup>, without consulting any  
one<sup>4</sup>, or going up to Jerusalem to those who were 17.  
apostles before me, I went away into Arabia and  
returned again to Damascus.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Who set me apart from my birth.*] Gr. from my mother's  
womb. See Dr. Symonds's Observ. p. 32. The apostle means  
to say, that he was originally intended for the office which he  
then held: it was not his intention to express himself with phi-  
losophical accuracy concerning the divine eternal decrees.—  
There is, therefore, no foundation for the remark of Dr. Chan-  
dler, that God is sometimes pleased to separate persons, even  
before their birth, for particular offices and duties, as if he did  
not always do this; and as if all events were not equally under  
the direction and controul of Divine Providence.

<sup>2</sup> *To reveal his son to me*] “by a miraculous vision from hea-  
ven.” Dr. Chandler. *ἐν ἐμοί*, to me, that I might preach his  
gospel, *ἐν τοῖς ἐθνεσιν*, to the Gentiles. So Locke, Chandler, Mac-  
knight, Symonds.—“to reveal his son by me.” Tyndal, Wake-  
field, Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Immediately without consulting, &c.*] I take this construction  
of the passage from Mr. Wakefield. Literally, *I consulted not—  
I went not up.* Luke in his history takes no notice of this jour-  
ney to Arabia; but it is highly probable that it took place before  
Paul opened his ministry at Damascus; and that during his re-  
tirement in Arabia, Jesus Christ appeared to him and commu-  
nicated the doctrine which he was commissioned to teach.

<sup>4</sup> *Without consulting any one.*] In the original, *flesh and blood*.  
See Matt. xvi. 17; Eph. vi. 12. “I did not confer immediately  
with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem,” &c. New-  
come.—“immediately, without having recourse to flesh and  
blood, or going up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles be-  
fore me.” Wakefield.—“I applied not myself to any man for

Ch. I.  
Ver. 17.

Bigot and cruel persecutor as I was, the mercy of God was nevertheless extended to me; and by that sovereign goodness which selects what instruments it pleases for carrying on its own designs, I was from my birth set apart in the divine councils, as one who was afterwards to be employed as a teacher of the gospel; and in due time I was, as you very well know, by a merciful and most extraordinary interposition of Divine providence in my way to Damascus, invited into the Christian church and converted to the Christian faith. But as soon as it had pleased God in his abundant mercy thus to change my heart by the personal appearance of Christ from heaven, and in general terms to give me a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, what was then my conduct? Did I converse with, or desire information from, the Christians at Damascus? or did I go up to Jerusalem, to learn the doctrine of Christ from those who had been first appointed to the apostolic office? and to request instructions and authority from them? Far from it. I went immediately away to a great distance into Arabia; where, in an obscure retirement for many months, my mind was fully enlightened in the plain and

---

advice what to do." Locke; who in his note observes, "This and what the apostle says in the following verse, is to evidence to the Galatians the full assurance he had of the truth and perfection of the gospel, which he had received from Christ by immediate revelation; and how little he was disposed to have any regard to the pleasing of men in preaching it, that he did not so much as communicate or advise with any of the apostles about it, to see whether they approved of it."

simple truths of the gospel, and my heart weaned from pharisaic prejudices, by communications from Christ himself. After this I returned to Damascus, and there I opened my apostolical commission, and preached the gospel with great freedom and success ; till at length, a persecution having been instigated against me by my unbelieving countrymen, I was compelled to flee for my life.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 17.

3.) The apostle gives an account of a short visit which he made to Peter at Jerusalem, which was not till three years after his conversion, ver. 18—20.

*Then, after three years<sup>1</sup>, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter<sup>2</sup>, and I abode with him fifteen days. But I saw none other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother<sup>3</sup>. Now as to what I am writing to you, behold, in the presence of God, I falsify not<sup>4</sup>.*

18

19.

20.

<sup>1</sup> *After three years.*] The apostle is generally understood to mean three years after his conversion, about A.D. 39. Acts ix. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *To visit Peter.*] *ἰσπερῆσαι*, “to inquire for Peter.” Mr. Wakefield.—If the apostle had been converted, and had preached or at least learned the gospel, three years before he saw Peter, it is plain that he did not derive his instructions from him. If he saw no apostles but Peter and James, it was evident that he did not act under a commission from them, and that his authority was independent.—“That I might see Peter, not learn of him, not consult him.” Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *The Lord's brother.*] This was James the son of Alphaeus and Mary the sister of our Lord's mother : so that James was cousin-german to Christ. See Doddridge. “This James,” says Dr. Priestley, “from his residing all his lifetime in Jerusalem, is often considered as the bishop of that place. None of the apostles, however, were properly bishops of any particular place, but had a general superintendence over all Christian churches wherever they went.”

Ch. I.  
Ver. 20.

It was about three years after my conversion that I was compelled to quit Damascus. I then came directly to Jerusalem; and having with some difficulty, by means of Barnabas, obtained access to the believers there, I made a visit to that eminent apostle Peter, who entertained me hospitably in his house. But from him I could not learn much during the short visit of fifteen days which I passed with him: much less could I have received a commission from the original apostles, as some would have you believe; for in truth, and I most solemnly appeal to an omniscient God in attestation of my veracity, I at that time saw no apostle besides, excepting James the son of Alphaeus, the near relation of Jesus, all the other apostles happening then to be absent from Jerusalem; nor was I permitted to prolong my residence there, being warned in a vision to depart and preach the gospel in other places where my ministry would be more useful. My life also was in imminent danger from the malice of my enemies, which made it necessary for me to hasten my departure.

4.) The apostle therefore went down immediately into Syria and Cilicia, without making himself known to the churches in Judea, ver. 21—24.

21. *Afterwards I went into the regions of Syria*

---

\* *In the presence of God.*] As this was not a fact of public notoriety like the rest, the apostle solemnly appeals to God in attestation of his veracity. It was probably during this visit that he had the trance mentioned Acts xxii. 17. See Doddridge *in loc.*



*and Cilicia; and I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea which were in Christ*<sup>1</sup>. *But they only heard that he who formerly persecuted us, now preacheth the faith which he formerly extirpated; and they glorified God on my account.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 22.  
23.

24.

Being obliged to leave Jerusalem, and the Jews being greatly exasperated against me, it was thought prudent for me not to preach in Judea, and therefore I went down immediately to Syria and Cilicia, to preach the gospel to my fellow citizens at Tarsus and in the neighbouring regions. All this time, so far was I from acting in subordination to the churches in Judea, and deriving my instructions from them, that I was not even personally known to them. They had only heard that Saul of Tarsus, who had been a few years before the malignant and unwearied persecutor of the disciples of Jesus, is now by a signal interposition of divine mercy converted to the Christian faith, and is become the zealous teacher of that holy doctrine which he once threatened and laboured to exterminate. And hearing this, so far from calling me to account for preaching the gospel without permission from them, they rejoiced in my conversion, and gave thanks to God for his great mercy to me, and for employing me as an instrument in this honourable and glorious work.

Having thus proved that I received my doctrine

---

<sup>1</sup> *Churches in Christ,*] i. e. "believing in Christ. Rom. xvi. 7." Locke. "which had acknowledged Christ." Wakefield. Or, as we should say, the Christian churches.

Ch. I. and my commission from Christ alone, and from no  
Ver. 24. human authority, I shall next show that many years afterwards, when these were called in question, their validity and divine authority were fully acknowledged by the apostles themselves.

### SECTION III.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE vindicates the independence of his apostolical authority, the consistency of his character, and the truth of his doctrine, by an account of his conduct at another visit which he made at Jerusalem, and by the public concessions of the apostles themselves.* Ch. ii. 1—10.

1. Having by divine direction taken a journey to Jerusalem, he communicated privately and fully to the apostles of greatest eminence the doctrine which he taught, ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *Then, after fourteen years<sup>1</sup>, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took with me Titus*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Fourteen years.*] That is, according to the generality of commentators, after his conversion; and the visit to which the apostle here refers is that which is mentioned Acts xv., when Paul and Barnabas were deputed by the church at Antioch to go up to Jerusalem to consult the apostles there, concerning the obligation of the Gentile converts to submit to circumcision. Grotius and others for *fourteen* read *four*, by conjecture, supposing the apostle to allude to his second journey to Jerusalem, Acts xi. 30; when, together with Barnabas, he carried up a collection from the Christians at Antioch for the relief of the indi-

also<sup>2</sup>. *And I went up by revelation*<sup>3</sup>, *and communicated to them that gospel which I preach to the Gentiles; but separately*<sup>4</sup> *to those who were of reputation*<sup>5</sup>, *lest I might run, or might have run, in vain*<sup>6</sup>.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 2.

gent believers at Jerusalem under the pressure of the famine predicted by Agabus. But this is expressly said to have been remitted to the elders of the church, so that it is possible that Paul might not then even have seen any of the apostles. It is not, however, likely that all the apostles would be absent from Jerusalem at the same time, Acts xii. The fact seems to be, that the question concerning circumcision does not appear to have been started, or at least to have attracted much notice, at the time of the second visit; which was antecedent to the mission of Paul and Barnabas into the Lesser Asia, and to the conversion of such large numbers of heathen idolaters to the Christian faith. See Acts xiii. xiv. *After fourteen years: δια δεκατεσσαρων.* “δια is used for μετὰ Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark ii. 1.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Took with me Titus.*] This, as Dr. Doddridge observes, is the first mention of Titus in the New Testament, Luke having, for whatever reason, wholly omitted the mention of him in his history, though he was an eminent Gentile convert, a proselyte, a friend and a frequent associate of Paul. The apostle gives him a very high character, 2 Cor. viii., and it is even conjectured that the brother whom he speaks of ver. 18, as associated with Titus in collecting the charitable donations of the Corinthian Christians, was Luke himself. See 2 Cor. xii. 18. It is uncertain when Titus was converted.

<sup>3</sup> *By revelation.*] This circumstance is omitted by Luke. The apostle might perhaps demur to accept the commission from the church at Antioch to consult the apostles at Jerusalem, lest it should appear as the acknowledgement of an authority superior to his own, till his objection was overruled by a divine communication. That his missions were frequently undertaken by a special direction from heaven, is evident to all who read the apostolic history. See Acts xvi. 7, 10, 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Separately.*] κατ' ἰδιαν, severally, individually. See Chandler.

<sup>5</sup> *To those of reputation.*] τοῖς δοκασί see ver. 6, 9. to those who were pillars of the church, to James, Peter, and John.

<sup>6</sup> *Lest I might, &c.*] See Newcome: *i. e.* I communicated to the apostles the whole doctrine I had taught, lest they, being

Ch. II.  
Ver. 2.

To confound the ignorance and malignity of those who presume to give out that I am no apostle, and that neither my mission nor my doctrine was approved by the true apostles of Christ, I will now mention some important circumstances which occurred in a visit to the church at Jerusalem fourteen years after my conversion to the Christian religion, being the first which I made to the apostles, after having by divine appointment fulfilled a mission to the Lesser Asia, for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. And Barnabas my fellow-labourer accompanied me: I also thought fit to take with us Titus, an eminent convert from heathenism. This journey we undertook at the desire of the church at Antioch, in order to settle a question which had been moved concerning the obligation of the Mosaic ritual. And for this purpose I was permitted and even commanded to go to Jerusalem by an express revelation from Christ, by whose direction I act in all the steps which I take relative to the purposes of my apostolical mission. Now when I came to Jerusalem, knowing the prejudices which existed against me, I fully communicated to the apostles of greatest note whom I found there, the whole of the doctrine which I preached to the Gentiles, without omitting the circumstance of their entire exemption from the yoke of the ceremonial

---

misled by the false reports of others, should oppose my doctrine and obstruct my usefulness. Dr. Mangey, in Bowyer's *Conjectures*, proposes to read  $\omega\varsigma$  for  $\pi\omega\varsigma$ , *not as though*, &c. Mr. Wakefield adopts this reading, and Dr. Priestley approves it.

law. This communication, however, was made to them individually and in private, to avoid the noise and clamour of prejudiced persons, and to secure the countenance and support of these apostles, without which I was apprehensive that my past and future labours might be rendered in a great measure fruitless.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 2.

2. The apostle shows in the case of Titus, that the apostles at Jerusalem did not insist upon the subjection of Gentile believers to the yoke of the law, ver. 3.

*But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.*

3.

Much as I wished to conciliate the affections of the apostles and Jewish Christians, I would not upon any account sacrifice the liberties of the Gentile church to this object. Nor was it indeed expected, or at least insisted upon; for, whatever might be their secret wishes, they by no means absolutely required that Titus should submit to the institutions of Moses, though they knew that he was a Gentile born, and not only a proselyte to, but a teacher of, the Christian religion.

3. The apostle further declares his determined opposition to the demands of Judaizing bigots, ver. 4, 5.

*And with regard to the false brethren' who were*

4.

<sup>1</sup> With regard to, &c.] *δια δε τας ψευδαδελφους.* “*δια regit accusativum, et valet quod attinet ad, Rom. iii. 27, viii. 10.*”

Schleusner.

- Ch. II. *clandestinely introduced, who privily slipped in<sup>1</sup>,  
as spies upon that liberty which we have in Christ*  
Ver. 5. *Jesus, that they might enslave us, to these we  
yielded subjection no not for an instant<sup>2</sup>, that the  
truth of the gospel might continue with you.*

I have constantly withstood every attempt to impose the Jewish ceremonial upon the Gentile believers. Some half-Christians, bigots to the law, had come down to Antioch with great professions of regard for the new converts, but in fact with no other view but to see whether we complied with the Mosaic ritual, to deprive the Gentiles of their liberty, and to insist upon their subjection to the law of Moses. And some of this description, and with

---

Schleusner. This appears to me to be the easiest construction and explanation of the words; but I am inclined to think that in fact the apostle in the hurry of writing having introduced a parenthesis, forgot, and altered the construction of this sentence, as he certainly did of the next.

<sup>1</sup> *Who privily slipped in.*] οἵτινες παρεισήλθον. These words are omitted by Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Coptic versions. They appear like a marginal explanation of παρεισακτες. They *privily slipped in*: at Antioch, Acts xv. 1, they introduced themselves, probably pretending a mission from James (see Gal. ii. 12); and the other apostles at Jerusalem, to inquire after the welfare of the Gentile church and to promote their edification, when their real purpose was, to enforce subjection to the ceremonial law. And it is not unlikely that some of these zealots had contrived to get themselves nominated among the messengers who were sent to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Acts xv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Not for an instant.*] προς ὥραν, for an hour. "with whom we complied not even for a moment." Wakefield.—"ne ad breve tempus quidem, h. e. nunquam." Schleusner; who, however, gives the sense of "*momentum, punctum temporis, minima quævis temporis particula*;" and refers to Matt. viii. 13, ix. 22; Luc. xii. 39, 46.

the same design, had artfully introduced themselves among the messengers who were deputed from Antioch to apply to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the decision of this question. But I have uniformly and invariably opposed them, and have never upon any occasion, even for a moment, acquiesced in their impositions. For I was determined that the gospel should be offered to the Gentiles in its truth and purity, as I had received it from Christ, unincumbered with the burdensome ceremonies of the Jewish law.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 5.

4. His knowledge of the Christian doctrine was so complete, that the most eminent of the apostles at Jerusalem could make no addition to it, ver. 6.

*Moreover those who were<sup>3</sup> of consideration<sup>4</sup>, whatever they formerly were<sup>5</sup> it maketh no difference to me, God accepteth no man's person: even*

6

---

<sup>3</sup> *Those who were.*] In the original, *from those*, ἀπο δὲ τῶν. The apostle evidently intended to say, *from those*, &c. *I received* no information: but having inserted a parenthesis, he changes the structure of his sentence, and concludes with, “*they added* no information to me.”

<sup>4</sup> *Who were of consideration.*] τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι τι. Literally, *who appeared to be somewhat*: i. e. by a well known elegance of the Attic dialect in the use of the word δοκεῖν, *who actually were somewhat*, who were persons of note and eminence in the church; pillars, as he afterwards expresses himself, ver. 9. “The Greek is equivalent to τῶν οὐτῶν τι.” Newcome.—“Δοκεῖν, solet interdum eleganter pleonasticè poni.” Schleusner. See Marc. x. 42; Luc. xxii. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *They formerly were.*] ὅποιοι ποτε ἦσαν. “however some would set them up above me, as having conversed with Christ on earth, and been apostles long before me.” Doddridge.



Ch. II. *those who were of the greatest consideration com-*  
 Ver. 6. *municated to me no instruction*<sup>1</sup>.

Are there any among you who presume to charge me with not being so well informed concerning the doctrine of the gospel as the apostles at Jerusalem? Nothing can be more remote from truth than this accusation. There was a time, indeed, when they were greatly my superiors in Christian knowledge, but that makes no difference at present; they are not my superiors now. For God, with whom there is no partiality, and who disposes of his favours as he pleases, has vouchsafed to place me upon a level with the most eminent of them all; so that when I came to converse even with men of the greatest estimation in the church, so complete had my instructions been, that it was not in their power to communicate any new information to me, nor did they discover any error which required to be corrected.

5. So far were the other apostles from affecting any superiority over him, that after having conversed with him, they readily acknowledged him as their colleague, upon a footing of perfect equality with themselves, ver. 7—10.

7. *But on the contrary, when they saw that I was*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Communicated to me no instruction.*] εθεν προσανεθεντο. “Πρ. *facta collatione addo aliquid, examine habito corrigo, meliora doceo.*” Schleusner; who renders the words, “*me inquam apostoli, quorum maxima erat auctoritas, nihil novi docuerunt, aut correxerunt.*—“in conference added nothing to me.” Newcome.—“they, I SAY, who had this character gave me no instructions.” Wakefield.



*intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, as Peter was with that of the circumcision; for he who exerted his energy<sup>2</sup> in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision, exerted also his energy in me for that to the Gentiles; and perceiving the favour<sup>3</sup> which had been conferred upon me, James<sup>4</sup> and Cephas, and John, who were pillars, gave unto me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we indeed<sup>5</sup> might go as apostles<sup>6</sup> to the Gentiles, but they to the circumcision.*

Ch. II.

Ver. 8.

9.

The persons of eminence to whom I particularly allude, were James and Peter and John, who then resided at Jerusalem; and who, being looked up to

<sup>2</sup> *He who exerted his energy.*] ενεργησας. “who wrought powerfully in Peter,” &c. Newcome.—“who gave Peter the authority of an apostle to the Jews, gave me also a commission to the Gentiles.” Wakefield. The apostle means to say that his commission to the Gentiles was established by miracles as clearly as that of Peter to preach the gospel to the Jews; and that the other apostles were perfectly satisfied with this evidence. See Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *The favour, &c.*] την χαριν. “This word,” says Dr. Taylor, “is put for the apostolic office, Rom. i. 5, xii. 3, xv. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 10: and in general may signify any office, &c. which is the effect of favour.”

<sup>4</sup> *James, &c.*] Of the three apostles who are here mentioned as the pillars, that is, the supports and ornaments of the church at Jerusalem, James is mentioned first. He was probably the bishop or president of the church at Jerusalem: an honour assigned to him, perhaps, from his near relationship to our Lord, Gal. i. 19. It is observable that he was the person who spoke last, and summed up the arguments, in the council which was held upon the question of circumcision, Acts xv. 13—21.

<sup>5</sup> *We indeed.*] ἡμεῖς μὲν. or, “that we on our part.” This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and other ancient copies. See Griesbach.—αὐτοὶ δέ, “but they on their part.”

<sup>6</sup> *Might go as apostles.*] The ellipsis is the same as in ver. 8, and ought to be supplied in the same manner.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 9.

as the heads and pillars of the church, its best ornaments and supports, took particular cognizance of the cause referred to them by the Christians at Antioch. These apostles, therefore, having conversed with me concerning the nature and objects of my mission, and my qualifications for it, soon discovered and ingenuously acknowledged my equality with them. For they found that as Peter and others were commissioned to preach the gospel to the Jews, to work miracles in confirmation of it, and to impart spiritual gifts to believers, God had also given to me a similar commission, confirmed by similar powers, to teach the gospel to the heathen. Most readily, therefore, they acknowledged my apostolical authority; they received me as an associate and an equal, and agreed that each of us should labour in the province respectively assigned to us: so that, while they continued for the present to exercise their mission among the Jews, Barnabas and I should go on with plenary apostolical authority to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; in the conversion of whom they greatly rejoiced, and to our arduous labours for whose benefit they cordially wished success.

10. *Only they desired that we should remember the poor, which very thing I also was earnest to do<sup>1</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Earnest to do.*] Not only from sympathy and compassion to the indigent Christians at Jerusalem, who are probably the persons intended, but from the hope that the generosity of the Gentile Christians might gradually soften the prejudices of the Jewish bigots. "All that they proposed was, that we should

So far were these distinguished men from desiring to innovate upon our doctrine, or to impose a burdensome ritual upon the Gentile converts, that they assumed no authority whatever ; but only requested that we would not forget the indigent believers in Jerusalem, who stood in great need of relief : an object which I was myself particularly anxious to promote, not merely from sympathy in their distresses, and a sincere desire to supply their wants, but from the hope that the liberality of the Gentile converts might gradually soften the prejudices of the Hebrew Christians, and reconcile them to the liberal spirit of the new dispensation.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 10.

At the close of this interesting Section, it may be of use to compare the accounts which are given by Luke and Paul of this celebrated interview with the apostles at Jerusalem, when the liberties of the Gentile church were fully and authoritatively established : in which we cannot fail to remark the difference between the narrative of the calm impartial historian, and that of the party personally and deeply concerned. Luke, Acts xv., relates that certain Jewish zealots visited the Gentile church at Antioch, and troubled its peace by insisting upon the indispensable necessity of circumcision ; that Paul and Barnabas warmly opposed this unauthorized en-

---

remember to make collections among the Gentiles for the poor Christians of Judea, which was a thing that of myself I was forward to do." Locke.

Ch. II. croachment upon the liberty of the Gentile church ; that the dissensions rose to such a height that it was thought advisable to depute Paul and Barnabas, in company with other members of the church, to go up to Jerusalem to consult the apostles upon the case ; that the apostles and elders, being assembled to deliberate upon the subject, after hearing the account which Paul and Barnabas gave of their great success in converting the Gentiles, came to an unanimous resolution, at the suggestion of James, that the Gentiles who believed were not subject to circumcision, nor to the yoke of the ceremonial law ; but that they should be advised, out of regard to the prejudices of the Jews, to abstain from certain kinds of food which were forbidden by the law of Moses. And with this answer they returned to Antioch, and restored peace to the divided church. This is Luke's account.

The apostle Paul, as one personally concerned and deeply interested in the business, gives a narrative of the same journey with much greater animation than the historian ; and details many circumstances which Luke omits. In the first place, he expresses great indignation at the intrusion of these unwelcome visitors from Jerusalem, who had artfully insinuated themselves into the society, in order to abridge the liberties of the Gentile converts, and to sow discord in the church. He further remarks, that he did not consent to undertake this journey at the request, much less at the bidding, of the church at Antioch. No : he would not compromise the au-

thority which he derived from Christ: nor would he go, till he was directed by Christ himself, to accept of the mission from the brethren at Antioch. Neither would he for a moment give place to the intruders: and to exemplify the right which he claimed, he took Titus, a converted Gentile, with him to Jerusalem, whom he protected by his own authority from the imposition of the ceremonial law. Ch. II.

The apostle further relates, that in his intercourse with his elder brethren, the apostles of the greatest note in the church at Jerusalem, he did not profess to ask their advice, to apply for instruction, or to solicit approbation: he simply communicated the doctrine he had taught, the rules which he had observed, the injunctions he had imposed, the authority under which he had acted, the power which he had exercised, and the success which had followed his preaching. If they approved his proceedings, it was well: if not, he should still go on as he had been directed by him from whom he had received his commission. He communicated this information in private, that the multitude might not take offence. And as he expected, so it happened. In the first place, the apostles could make no addition to his instructions; and in the second place, they were delighted with his narrative, rejoiced in his success, and cordially received and acknowledged him as their equal and associate, commending him and his labours to the blessing of God.

These circumstances, so vividly described, give interest and credibility to the narrative; and con-

- CH. II. tribute powerfully to his main design, of convincing the Galatians that he was truly an apostle of Jesus Christ, entirely independent of the other apostles, and equal in all respects to those who had been honoured with the apostleship many years before him.

## SECTION IV.

*THE APOSTLE, as a further proof of his independent authority, and of the consistency of his character, mentions the rebuke which he administered publicly to Peter at Antioch for the timidity and duplicity of his conduct; and comments upon the speech which he then delivered. Ch. ii. 11—21.*

1. He states the misconduct of the apostle Peter, ver. 11—13.

- Ver. 11. *Moreover, when Peter came to Antioch<sup>1</sup>, I opposed him to the face because he was to be blamed<sup>2</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Peter came to Antioch.*] This was probably soon after the council at Jerusalem; and the first time that Peter had ever visited a Gentile church. Dr. Lardner observes, that this is the last time that Peter is mentioned in the New Testament, except in his own epistles, and 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 22. Luke takes no notice of this journey.

<sup>2</sup> *To be blamed.*] κατεγνωσμενος, the participle for the adjective. The apostle uses a strong expression. Peter's behaviour deserved "not only a gentle reproof, but to be entirely condemned, as being contrary to his own knowledge, and tending to subvert the simplicity of the gospel." Chandler.

*For before certain persons came from James<sup>3</sup> he used to eat<sup>4</sup> with the Gentiles; but when they came he withdrew<sup>5</sup>, and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision<sup>6</sup>. And the rest of the Jews also acted hypocritically<sup>7</sup> with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with them<sup>8</sup> in this their hypocrisy.* Ch. II.  
Ver. 12.  
  
13.

Having represented the independence of my cha-

---

<sup>3</sup> *From James.*] As it is mentioned that they came from James, it is probable that these officious zealots either had, or pretended that they had, authority from that apostle for the advice they gave. And though, after what had passed at the council, neither James nor the rest of the Jewish Christians could insist upon the subjection of the believing Gentiles to the yoke of the law, they might still think it inexpedient to associate familiarly with them.

<sup>4</sup> *He used to eat.*] So Wakefield. This cannot, as Dr. Priestley observes, be understood of his eating any thing forbidden by the laws of Moses, but probably of familiarly associating with them at their meals. See Acts x. 28. Dr. Chandler, however, thinks that the apostle, having been taught by vision that nothing was unclean, esteemed it no sin to eat of their meats without distinction.

<sup>5</sup> *He withdrew.*] “ ὑπεσέλλε, se subduxit, subtraxit furtim id agens.” Newcome; who justly adds, “ his reason was an undue fear of the converted Jews: from which unworthy motive he acted contrary to the revelation made to him, and to his declared sentiments; and thus obstructed the progress of Christianity among the Gentiles.” See Acts x. 15, 28, 34, 35.

<sup>6</sup> *Of the circumcision.*] τῶν ἐκ περιτομῆς. Jewish Christians, zealots for the law, who came from Jerusalem, who would be offended at his familiar intercourse with the Gentile believers, and would report it to his disadvantage.

<sup>7</sup> *Acted hypocritically.*] “ contrary to their better judgement and conviction; concealing their real sentiments through fear.” Newcome.

<sup>8</sup> *Was carried away.*] “ ἀπαγω signifies to carry or drive a person away against his will; here it signifies to be carried away by the force of authority and example, in opposition to conviction and judgement.” Chandler.



Ch. II.  
Ver. 13.

racter and conduct with respect to the apostles in circumstances in which we perfectly harmonized with each other, I will now show how little I was disposed to make improper concessions where our conduct differed. Soon after the important question concerning the obligation of the Mosaic law had been decided in favour of the Gentile believers by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, Peter made a visit to the church at Antioch; and here I was under the painful necessity of administering to him publicly, and in the presence of the whole assembled church, a severe rebuke, and of remonstrating with him against the duplicity of his behaviour; for indeed his conduct was most inexcusable, and deserving of condemnation. It was this: When Peter first came to Antioch he associated familiarly with the Gentile converts, and made no scruple of eating with them; knowing that under the gospel dispensation ritual distinctions are set aside. But afterwards, when some troublesome zealots came down from Jerusalem, and pretended that James, and the most respectable members of the Hebrew church, though they did not insist upon imposing the Mosaic ritual upon Gentile Christians, nevertheless held it to be inexpedient to associate familiarly with those who declined subjection to the law, Peter, instead of boldly adhering to his principles, and rebuking the false maxims and unauthorized intrusion of these officious bigots, meanly submitted to them, and acquiesced in their illiberal suggestions. So that, lest he should give offence



to these narrow-minded Jews, he suddenly broke off his connexion with the Gentile converts; to the great surprise and discouragement of that numerous and respectable body of believers. The other Jewish Christians naturally followed Peter's example; and, like him, in order to silence the clamours of unreasonable men, they acted contrary to the conviction of their better judgement. But what is most astonishing, even Barnabas himself, my friend and associate in the mission to the Gentiles, was carried away with the stream, and had not firmness sufficient to avow his principles, and to maintain his ground against the general defection.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 13.

2. The apostle states the reproof which, under these circumstances, he administered to Peter, ver. 14—17.

*But when I saw that they were not walking in the straight path of the true gospel<sup>1</sup>, I said to Peter<sup>2</sup> before them all;*

14.

When I saw them all deviating from the right line of duty, departing from the genuine principles

---

<sup>1</sup> *In the straight path.*] *ορθοποδοσι.* “directly according to the truth of the gospel.” Chandler; who observes, that “the truth of the gospel was the gospel unmixed with the Jewish law.” “keeping the straight path of the truth of the gospel.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *I said to Peter.*] Dr. Doddridge observes, that “had this been matter only of private offence, Paul would have known that duty required him to expostulate with Peter privately upon it; but as it was a public affair, this method was the most proper. Probably this happened after public worship; and it would seem the less surprising, considering the conferences which were

Ch. II.  
Ver. 14.

and spirit of the gospel, impeding its progress, wronging their own consciences, and grieving and discouraging the Gentile converts, so far from submitting to the authority of Peter, or being restrained by an ill-timed complaisance to the age, character, and station of this distinguished apostle, I made no hesitation to address him in public, in the presence of the whole assembled church, in the language which I shall now repeat.

—14. *When thou who art a Jew livest according to the manner of the Gentiles, and not according to that of the Jews, how is it<sup>1</sup> that thou compellest the Gentiles<sup>2</sup> to observe Jewish rites<sup>3</sup>?*

It is but lately, my venerable brother, that you associated without scruple with the Gentile converts; and, though a Jew yourself, yet having been instructed from above to esteem nothing unclean which God had purified, you hesitated not to live as

---

held in the Jewish synagogues before the assembly was broke up. It is a very just observation of Mr. Jeffery here, that had any imposture been carried on, the contention of these two great managers would probably have been an occasion of discovering it."

<sup>1</sup> *How is it.*] The best copies read  $\pi\omega\varsigma$ , instead of  $\tau\iota$ . See Griesbach.

<sup>2</sup> *Compellest the Gentiles.*]  $\alpha\nu\alpha\gamma\chi\alpha\zeta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ . "Though this word," says Dr. Chandler, "frequently signifies to compel by force and violence, yet it is as frequently used to denote moral compulsion." Matt. xiv. 22; Acts xxviii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *To observe Jewish rites.*]  $\iota\sigma\delta\alpha\iota\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$ , to judaize. "to live like the Jews." Wakefield. "Why, by an inconsistent conduct, and by the influence of a great example, do you induce the Gentiles to think that Jewish rites and customs are of indispensable obligation; those very rites with which you have occasionally dispensed?" Newcome.

the Gentiles do, notwithstanding the rigour of the ceremonial precept. What, then, can be the meaning of this sudden change? What can induce you, as far at least as your example goes, to compel the Gentile believers to submit to a yoke from which you know they are exempt; and to lead them to conclude, that unless they subject themselves to the ceremonial law, they are not worthy to be acknowledged by you as Christian brethren?

Ch. II.  
Ver. 14.

*We who are Jews by birth<sup>4</sup>, and not sinners of the Gentiles<sup>5</sup>, yet convinced<sup>6</sup> that no man is justi-*

15.

16.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Jews by birth.*] *φύσει*, by nature. “What the Jews thought of themselves in contradistinction to the Gentiles, see Rom. ii. 17—23.” Locke.

<sup>5</sup> *Sinners of the Gentiles.*] The apostle, by this expression, does not appear to have any reference to the moral but to the ceremonial state of the Gentiles: what they were by birth, not by practice. We who are Jews by nature, *i. e.* by birth, God’s peculiar people, and not Gentiles, who are by birth sinners, out of covenant, unholy, ceremonially unclean. In this sense the word occurs very frequently in the New Testament, as must be evident to all who read with attention and impartiality. See ver. 17: *while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners*; surely, not profligate and abandoned, but in an unholy state, ceremonially impure, and out of covenant with God, like the Gentiles themselves. “*Sinners*: such terms are applied to the whole body of the Gentiles, as *ἀγίος* is to that of Christians.” Newcome. The word ‘sinners’ occurs in a national and not a moral sense in many passages in the New Testament. See Luke vii. 39, xix. 7; Matt. ix. 10, xi. 19, xxvi. 45; Luke vi. 32. The Gentiles, as Archbishop Newcome observes, “were idolatrous and immoral from their very religion; and therefore the terms sinners and Gentiles are often used as synonymous.”

<sup>6</sup> *Convinced.*] *εἰδότες*, *knowing*. “convinced that no man can be acquitted.” Wakefield.—“since we know that a man is not justified.” Newcome; who in his note adds, “cannot be accepted of God, so as to enter into the new covenant with him on a plea of obedience to the law of Moses.”

Ch. II.  
Ver. 16.

*fied*<sup>1</sup> by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ; even we have believed<sup>2</sup> in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no man can be justified<sup>3</sup>.

You and I are descendants of Abraham, born under the Mosaic covenant, subject to its authority, and by birth-right entitled to its blessings; not like these poor heathen who know nothing of the promises, and have no share in them. And yet so sensible are we that we have forfeited all claim by law to an interest in the promises, that we have professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah, in order to secure a title to covenant blessings, independently upon our observance of the ceremonial law. For, to say the truth, the law is so strict in its injunctions, and so merciless in its penalties, that no individual can ever say that he has fully come up to

---

<sup>1</sup> *No man is justified.*] δικαιωται. The word 'justified' is used in contradistinction to 'sinners' in the preceding clause, and is to be understood accordingly. To be *sinners* is to be out of covenant with God; to be *justified* is to be in covenant with him, to be in the number of his peculiar people. No man can be justified by law, because the law makes no provision for repentance; but believers are justified by faith in Christ, *i. e.* they become members of the Christian community, holy and consecrated to God by faith in Christ, as they formerly became members of the Jewish community by submission to circumcision. See Taylor's Key to the apostolical Epistles, chap. xii. xvi. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Even we have believed,*] and by our faith have acknowledged the incompetency, and therefore the inutility, of the law. "*Even we, &c., and much more should the Gentiles, whose religious advantages are so far inferior to what we enjoy.*" Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *No man can be justified.*] "St. Paul gives the reason, Rom. iii. 20; because the law multiplied offences. See also Rom. iv. 15, v. 20, vii. 7, viii. 3; Gal. iii. 10." Newcome.

its requisitions, and is upon that ground strictly entitled to its rewards. Shall we, then, send these poor heathen converts to seek for justification, for pardon, and for life, upon the very ground which we have ourselves abandoned?

Ch. II.  
Ver. 16.

*Now, if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are still found to be sinners<sup>4</sup>, then Christ is the minister of a dispensation of sin<sup>5</sup>: which can by no means be allowed<sup>6</sup>.*

17.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Sinners.*] See note, ver. 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Then Christ.*] ἀπα Χριστος. Literally, “then Christ is the minister of sin.” See Taylor on Rom. v. 20, p. 296. The particle ἀπα is so frequently used by the apostle to introduce an inference, (see ver. 21, where the very same expression occurs without any suspicion of an interrogation,) that it seems surprising that so many learned expositors should understand it in this case as interrogatory; especially as the sense is so much more clear and easy if the words are taken in their proper illative signification. If, believing in Christ, we are still sinners, *then* Christ is a minister of sin. Which God forbid. By a minister of sin the apostle means not, as it is commonly understood, a dispensation which allows and encourages sin, but a dispensation which while it professes to justify leaves men in an unholy unjustified state. So that, upon this supposition, believers in Christ would be no more the people of God than heathen themselves. And Christ, who taught them that by faith in him they would become the covenant people of God, equally with the Jews, would, upon this supposition, be a liar and impostor.

<sup>6</sup> *Which can by no means be allowed.*] μη γενοιτο, *let it not be*: the form of expression which the apostle uses when he rejects a conclusion as utterly inadmissible and absurd: as a mathematician would say, Q. E. A., *Quod est absurdum*.

Here the address to Peter ends, as is evident from the change of persons in the next verse, where he proceeds to comment upon the rebuke he administered to Peter. There can be no doubt that this reproof, so ably and faithfully administered, produced its proper effect. This open rebuke was more honourable, and more truly friendly, than it would have been to have opposed and blamed him in private, while he abstained from

Ch. II.  
Ver. 17.

Consider, my brother, the tendency of your conduct, and the dishonour which it entails upon our great Master and his gospel. We who are Jews believe in Christ for justification ; a plain proof that we regard the law as incompetent to this end. But your example leads the Gentile believer to conclude, that faith will not justify him independently of submission to the law. Thus, according to the obvious tenor of your conduct, the dispensation of Christ is also imperfect ; and Christ is the minister and medium of a dispensation which, while it professes to justify, leaves men in the same unpardoned and unholy state in which it found them. So that, in fact, our Master is a deceiver, an impostor, who makes pretensions which he cannot substantiate. But God forbid, my dear brother and associate in the gospel, that you or I should ever, by our language or example, give countenance to so false and dangerous a conclusion. Such, my friends, was the reproof which I administered to Peter ; and which, upon the ingenuous mind of that holy and generous apostle, produced an immediate and beneficial effect. But you will plainly see from this history that I neither needed instruction from him, nor yielded subjection to him.

### 3. The apostle argues that it was not likely that

---

public censure. That it left no unfavourable impression upon the mind of the apostle Peter, is evident from the kind and respectful manner in which he mentions Paul in his second epistle, 2 Pet. iii. 15.

after this rebuke of Peter he should himself become an advocate for the law, ver. 18. Ch. II.

*Now, if I build up again what I have destroyed, I acknowledge myself a transgressor*<sup>1</sup>. Ver. 18.

I must be very weak indeed if I should now become, as some report of me, an advocate for Jewish rites, after having so publicly remonstrated against them; for it would be making a confession that I never have made, and never will, that I acted wrong in the rebuke which I administered to Peter.

4. He avers that the law had itself taught him to renounce all dependance upon it, ver. 19.

*Moreover, I through the law am dead to the law*<sup>2</sup>, 19.  
*that I may live to God.*

The law itself teaches me its own inefficacy. It pronounces the sentence of death upon every act of disobedience. I have fallen under its condemnation, and can derive no hope from it. If I live at all, it must be by the mercy of God, and to his service must my restored life be devoted.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Now if, &c.*] The sense I have given to this passage appears to me to be the most just, though it is not the most common.

<sup>2</sup> *I through the law.*] The law foretells its own dissolution, by the introduction of a superior dispensation, Rom. iii. 21; Gal. iii. 24, 25, iv. 21. Perhaps the sense will be more clear if the phrase is considered as a hypallage not unusual with the apostle. To avoid the offensive expression, 'the law is dead,' he says, I am dead to the law; meaning that with respect to himself the law had ceased to exist, and he was now at liberty to enter into the service of a new master, *i. e.* the gospel; in the profession of which he was devoted to the service of God. See a form of expression exactly parallel to this, Rom. vii. 4; with Dr. Taylor's note.



Ch. II. 5. By faith in Christ he was become a new person; nor would he degrade the gospel by having recourse to the law, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 20. *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live<sup>1</sup>. Yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me<sup>2</sup>. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God<sup>3</sup>, who loved me and delivered up himself for me.*

Professing to believe in Christ, I am become dead to the law. My expectations from it and my subjection to it are as much at an end as those of a dead man with respect to the living world. But though crucified like Christ, like him I am raised to life! I am introduced into a new state of existence. I was formerly the poor, devoted, condemned slave of the law: I am now the pardoned, free, and happy believer in the gospel. So that I am not the

<sup>1</sup> *I am crucified, &c.]* The apostle often represents conversion to the Christian religion under the emblem of death to a former state and dispensation, and of a resurrection to a new life and state of being, with new views, hopes, duties, and ends, so as to be quite different from his former self. See Rom. vi. 2—14, vii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Yet no longer I.]* I am no longer the same self, *οὐκ ἐτι ἐγώ*, but I am one with Christ, a portion, a limb of his mystical person. It is a favourite figure of the apostle to represent the whole Christian church as one body, of which Christ is the head. It is an idea which occurs in almost every epistle, and plainly appears to have been always uppermost in his mind. See Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12—27, vi. 15; Eph. i. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *By faith in the Son of God.]* i. e. in other words, faith in the resurrection of Jesus, by which he was declared to be the son of God, Rom. i. 4. Righteous men are called sons of God, as they are to be raised to an immortal life, Luke xx. 36. And Christ is called the first born, as having been first raised to immortality. Col. i. 18.



same self, I am a new being, a member of Christ, a living portion of his mystical body. And the vital principle which animates the whole system, and pervades every individual member, that principle, which in my present new state of existence is the master spring of my whole character, and of every particular action, is faith; faith in that glorious event by which Christ was declared to be the Son of God; his resurrection from the dead. And this principle induces me to consecrate my renewed life, and all its faculties and powers, to him who loved us, and who died for all mankind, without excepting even me, who am the chief of sinners.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 20.

*I do not contemptuously reject<sup>4</sup> the favour of God; for if justification come by the law, then Christ died in vain.* 21.

If I submitted to the Mosaic ritual as matter of obligation, and enforced it upon others, I should treat the mercy of God in the gospel with indignity and contempt: for, if the law could justify, the gospel were needless, and the death of Christ of no use. So that the whole Christian dispensation would be marked with consummate folly. But such a conclusion would be absurd and impious. Let us then seek for justification only by faith in Christ, wholly renouncing every expectation from the ceremonial law.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Contemptuously reject.*] “*αθερω* signifies to reject or contemn; and this sense seems to be the best here, as it best suits the scope of the apostle’s argument.” Chandler.

## PART THE SECOND.

Ch. III. THE APOSTLE OFFERS MANY CONSIDERATIONS TO RECLAIM THE AFFECTIONS OF THE GALATIAN CHURCHES FROM THEIR FALSE TEACHER, AND FROM HIS PHARISAIC DOCTRINE, AND TO RECOVER THEM TO THE SAME PRINCIPLES AND SPIRIT IN WHICH HE HAD LEFT THEM. Gal. iii. 1—v. 12.

### SECTION I.

*THE APOSTLE urges a variety of arguments<sup>1</sup> to prove that the Mosaic ritual was in no degree obligatory upon, or beneficial to, the Gentile Christians. Ch. iii. 1—iv. 7.*

#### 1. The apostle apostrophizes the Christians of

---

<sup>1</sup> *Urges arguments.*] It may perhaps be asked why the apostle condescends to argue upon a point of pure revelation, when it would have been quite sufficient, and perhaps most satisfactory, to have appealed to inspiration only? But, admitting his inspiration, the tenor of his argument is perfectly just: for his first object is to establish his own apostolical authority by an appeal to his miraculous powers, ch. iii. 1—5, and then to reconcile his readers to the gospel mode of justification, by showing that it had a precedent in the case of Abraham, and that it was even the subject of a promise to Abraham's spiritual posterity: so that the gospel mode of justification by faith, without regard to the ceremonial law, was not only consistent with the divine au-

Galatia upon their infatuation in forsaking the doctrine of Christ, which had been so fully explained to them, ch. iii. ver. 1. Ch. III.]

*O thoughtless Galatians! who has fascinated you<sup>2</sup>, before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified has been so clearly represented<sup>3</sup>?* Ver. 1.

Thus have I ever maintained, and ever will, the inutility and absolute nullity of the Mosaic ritual with respect to the believing Gentiles. This was the doctrine which I inculcated upon you, and to which I have ever most firmly adhered. And, O thoughtless Galatians! what powerful magician can have so blinded your eyes and stupified your understandings as to have induced you to depart so widely

---

thority of the Mosaic dispensation, but was actually foretold, introduced and supported by it. It may indeed be allowed, that where reasoning is introduced, the claim to inspiration is in that instance waved, and the apostle's doctrine may be true and his conclusion just, though his reasoning may be sometimes illogical, and his premises doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> *Who has fascinated, or enchanted you?*] It seems strange that the converted Gentiles should be so easily seduced, and so strongly attached to the burdensome ritual of the ceremonial law. But they might perhaps hope to escape persecution by passing for Jews, ch. v. 10, 11. Also, having been accustomed before their conversion to the pomp and ceremony of idolatrous rites, their minds might not be sufficiently purified and elevated, to relish the simplicity of the Christian religion. And finally, some even of the first converts to the Christian religion might entertain the notion, too generally prevalent, that a deficiency in moral virtue might be compensated by a rigid adherence to ceremonial institutions. N.B. The words "that ye should not obey the truth," are omitted in the most approved manuscripts and versions, and in the editions of Griesbach and Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Represented.*] The words *εν υμιν*, among you, obscure the sense, and are omitted in the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, and in Mr. Wakefield's version.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 1.

from the plain simple doctrine of a crucified Master which I so clearly defined to you, and to fancy that faith in a once dead but now risen and exalted Messiah is not of itself sufficient to entitle you to an interest in the blessings of the gospel, without subjecting yourselves to the grievous and intolerable yoke of the law?

2. He reminds them that the gospel was first preached to them by himself, who had therefore a prior claim to their regard, ver. 2.

2. *This only I desire to learn from you, Did ye receive the spirit<sup>1</sup> from him who insisted upon the works of the law, or from him who taught the doctrine of faith<sup>2</sup>?*

Tell me truly which of the two is most entitled to your regard, your new teachers or myself? Which of us first instructed you in the spiritual, refined, and liberal doctrine of Christianity? Was it the man

---

<sup>1</sup> *Receive the spirit.*] The expression, owing to the apostle's haste, and the brevity which he affects in this epistle, is ambiguous and obscure. The word *spirit* probably in this verse, and unquestionably in the following, signifies the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, in opposition to the law; and I conceive the argument to stand as I have explained it in the commentary. This distinguishes it from the argument in the fifth verse, where an appeal is made to miraculous powers.

<sup>2</sup> *From him who insisted, &c.*] By the phrases ἐξ ἐργων νόμου, ἐξ ἀκούης πίστεως, the apostle undoubtedly means to designate himself, who taught justification by faith, and the false teachers, who insisted upon justification by law. It is to be remembered, that the apostle wrote this whole epistle with his own hand, and that writing Greek was difficult to him, Gal. vi. 11. This led him to study brevity and an elliptical mode of expression, which throws great obscurity over a considerable part of this epistle.

who insists upon the expediency of Jewish ceremonies, or was it he who told you that faith alone was sufficient? And surely some little deference is due to him to whom you are indebted for all you know of the gospel of Christ.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 2.

3. He urges the folly and absurdity of supposing that the superior dispensation could need the aid of a subordinate ritual, ver. 3.

*Are ye so inconsiderate? having begun with the spirit<sup>3</sup>, are ye now seeking to be made perfect by the flesh?*

3.

Can you possibly be so absurd as to believe that the gospel needs the aid of the law to make up for its defects? Can you suppose that, if you act up to the dictates and spirit of the gospel, you will not be accepted by God if you do not add to them the low, and comparatively puerile, rigours of the law?

4. The apostle pleads the inconsistency of deserting a doctrine which they had openly professed, and for which they had even suffered persecution, ver. 4.

*Have ye suffered<sup>4</sup> so many things in vain? if, indeed, it be in vain?*

4.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Spirit—flesh?*] i. e. the gospel and the law. This, as Mr. Locke observes, is a way of speaking very familiar to St. Paul. As this great commentator saw the true meaning of the word *spirit* in this verse, it is the more surprising that he should have understood it differently in the preceding, where he interprets it of spiritual gifts; which confounds the argument with that in ver. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Have ye suffered, &c.*] Mr. Wakefield observes, that the

Ch. III.  
Ver. 4.

Have not you been persecuted for your profession of the Christian religion, and by whom? By the Jews chiefly; the bigoted adherents to the institutes of Moses? Are you now gone over to the party of your persecutors; and virtually acknowledging, that your firmness and fortitude when suffering in the cause of truth and liberty was folly and enthusiasm? Let me hope that matters are not carried to this disgraceful and dangerous extreme, but that you may still be reclaimed from this strange delusion.

5. He appeals to the miracles wrought, and to the miraculous gifts imparted, as decisive in favour of the doctrine which he had taught, ver. 5.

5. *He who supplied you<sup>1</sup> with the spirit<sup>2</sup>, and who*

---

word *παροχω* is what grammarians call a middle verb; and he renders the clause, "Have so many things been done for you in vain?" The apostle is generally understood to allude to their past firmness in bearing persecution, from which they now desire to shield themselves by assuming the character of Judaism. "If, indeed, the event shall prove that they have been suffered in vain; which I will not suppose, but rather trust that you will see your errors and amend them." Newcome.

<sup>1</sup> *He who supplied you.*] *q. d.* Was it my opponent or myself? This is a direct appeal to the existence and exercise of miraculous powers in circumstances in which an appeal to them would be infatuation and insanity, if they did not actually exist. Historic evidence can hardly be even conceived to rise to a higher degree than that which proves the existence of these supernatural qualifications; and consequently of the truth of the Christian religion, which they were intended to establish. It may seem surprising that the false teachers, who performed no miracles, should be more attended to than the apostle, who exercised and even communicated miraculous powers; but it is to be considered that these false teachers represented themselves as commissioned by the apostles at Jerusalem, whom they represented as Paul's superiors, from whom he had derived his authority and

*performed miracles among you, was he the teacher<sup>3</sup> of the works of the law? or of the doctrine of faith?* Ch. III.  
Ver, 5.

I will at once appeal to the most decisive evidence. You know that when the gospel was first preached to you, miracles of an extraordinary kind were wrought among you, and spiritual gifts were imparted to many of you upon your profession of the gospel. Tell me plainly, was it my opponent or myself who produced these high credentials? Did he or I work miracles among you? Did you receive your extraordinary powers from the man who tells you that you must submit to the ceremonial law; or from him who assures you that faith alone will entitle you to all the privileges of the go-

---

instructions. And they affirmed that the apostle had greatly exceeded his instructions, in teaching the inutility of the Mosaic ritual: for that the apostles at Jerusalem required the observance of it as absolutely necessary; and that Paul himself was so sensible of this, that he insisted upon the obligation of the law in other places, though he excused the Galatians. All this will be very evident to those who read the epistle with attention; and it easily accounts for the deference which was paid to the judaizing instructors.

<sup>2</sup> *The spirit.*] The spirit is here universally understood as signifying miraculous gifts and powers; though the same word is used immediately before, ver. 2, 3, to express the gospel, in opposition to the law. This is one instance among many, of the apostle's sudden change of the signification of his words without any previous notice. This is remarkably the case in this epistle; which being written by his own hand, he affects brevity, and uses as few words as possible.

<sup>3</sup> Was he the teacher?] The apostle's expression is so very elliptical, that it is necessary to insert some such words as these, to make it at all intelligible. Archbishop Newcome says, "I understand γῆ after each of the participles, and suppose that St. Paul speaks of himself with his usual delicacy. None but apostles could impart the spirit."



Ch. III. Ver. 5. spel? Put the question closely to your understandings and to your consciences: How can you possibly resist such cogent evidence?

6. He argues from the case of Abraham, who was justified by faith, ver. 6, 7.

6. *As Abraham believed God, and it was accounted*  
 7. *to him for righteousness; therefore know ye, that those who are of the party of faith<sup>1</sup> are the children of Abraham<sup>2</sup>.*

It is no novel doctrine which I am labouring to inculcate. You are admitted into covenant upon the same terms that Abraham was: he believed the divine promise, and by his faith obtained the blessing. And be assured, that however others may boast of their natural descent from this pious patriarch, it is upon the heirs of his faith only that the promise is entailed. They who believe in the doc-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Who are of the party of faith.*] οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, they who rely on faith for justification, in opposition to οἱ ἐκ νόμου, "they who are of the party of law:" they who seek for justification by the works of the law. These, that is, these only (see Wakefield), are children of Abraham; or, in other words, are justified after his pattern; namely, by faith. They believe in the *actual* resurrection of Jesus, and are justified thereby: he believed in the *possible* resurrection of Isaac, whom he was about to sacrifice, and his faith was imputed for righteousness, without regard to the ceremonial law. This argument, which the apostle barely glances at here, he insists upon at large Rom. iv.: a strong presumption that both the epistles were written by the same author; for a train of ideas and arguments so peculiar would hardly have entered the imagination of two different writers.

<sup>2</sup> *Children of Abraham.*] "His imitators, and heirs of the promise made to him." Newcome. With Locke and others I join the seventh verse to the sixth, from which it appears to be an inference. See Worsley and Rosenmuller.



trine of the gospel, and who expect its blessings exclusively of all regard to legal rites, are the true descendants of Abraham, and heirs with him of the divine inheritance, upon the same terms on which he obtained the blessing.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 7.

7. The scriptures had foretold to Abraham that all nations should be accepted by God, upon the same terms with himself, ver. 8, 9.

*Now the scripture, having foreseen that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, prophetically announced<sup>3</sup> the glad tidings to Abraham: "In thee shall all the nations be blessed<sup>4</sup>." So then, they who are of the party of faith<sup>5</sup> are blessed with Abraham, who believed.*

<sup>3</sup> *Prophetically announced, &c.]* προευγγελισατο "proclaimed before glad tidings to Abraham." Newcome. "gave this joyful promise long ago." Wakefield. "he gave Abraham a foreknowledge of the gospel." Locke.

<sup>4</sup> *In thee, &c.]* This promise first occurs Gen. xii. 3, when Abraham was required to leave his native country and to reside in Canaan; and was repeated several times afterwards to Abraham, and to his son Isaac and to his grandson Jacob. It is generally understood as referring to the descent of the Messiah from him, whose doctrine would be a blessing to the whole world: nor do I see any reason to recede from this acceptation of the promise. It is so explained by the apostle Peter, Acts-iii. 25, and by the apostle Paul in this place. Some expositors understand the promise as signifying nothing more than this, that the posterity of Abraham should become so prosperous, that their prosperity should become proverbial; so that others should bless themselves in them, or wish themselves as happy as the descendants of Abraham. See Dr. Priestley on the text. Observe here, that the scripture is personified, yet who supposes the scripture to be a real person? so the gifts of the spirit may also be personified, without implying that the holy spirit is a distinct intelligent agent.

<sup>5</sup> *Who are of the party of faith.]* "of faith and of the

Ch. III.  
Ver. 9.

Believers under the gospel are not only justified, after the example of Abraham, without regard to ceremonial institutions, but it is expressly foretold that they should be so. For God, foreseeing and intending that under the gospel dispensation believers should be admitted into covenant without submitting to Jewish ceremonies, was pleased to announce this his kind design repeatedly to Abraham, in the promise recorded in the Jewish scriptures: the purport of which is, that at some future period all the nations of the earth should be admitted to share the privileges of the covenant, upon the same easy terms with himself. This happy period is now arrived; and all who believe the gospel are now admitted into the same state of privilege and favour which he enjoyed as the reward of his strong and operative faith. But if Jewish rites were also made necessary, the promise of God would in this instance have been violated.

8. The law condemns all who seek for justification by it, ver. 10.

10. *Moreover*<sup>1</sup>, *as many as are for the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed be every one who continueth not in the performance*

---

works of the law, spoken of two races of men; the one as the genuine posterity of Abraham, heirs of the promise, the other not." Locke.

<sup>1</sup> *Moreover.*] *γὰρ* here introduces a collateral argument, not an inference; in the second clause it assigns a reason for the preceding affirmation, and is properly translated *for*.

*of all things which are written in the book of the law*<sup>2</sup>. Ch. III.  
Ver. 10.

It is quite absurd for any one to expect advantage by adherence to the ceremonial law. For, allowing that much benefit might be derived from perfect obedience, this itself is morally impossible. And the law denounces a solemn curse upon all who disobey it in any particular; and makes no provision for the forgiveness of the penitent. Every one, therefore, who, rejecting the mercy of the gospel, hopes to obtain the blessing by adherence to the law, is, by that very circumstance, a convicted and condemned culprit, utterly destitute of help and hope.

9. The prophetic scriptures announce a mode of acceptance with God different from that which the law prescribes, ver. 11, 12.

*But that by the law no one is justified before God, is evident; for the just by faith shall live*<sup>3</sup>. 11.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Cursed, &c.*] See Deut. xxvii. 26. The apostle's mind was possessed with the idea that no one could be justified, or obtain the favour of God by claim of right, as having fulfilled the law; because no one had, in every particular, fulfilled its injunctions, and the law made no provision for penitents. He treats of this argument at large in the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans.

<sup>3</sup> *The just by faith shall live.*] This is a quotation from Hab. ii. 4, where it is translated by Archbishop Newcome, "the just shall live by his faith:" though he acknowledges that there is an ambiguity in the original, as well as in the passages where it is cited by the apostle. "The meaning of the prophet is," says the learned prelate, "The good, or the righteous man, who believes in my prophets, and obeys their directions, shall live at

Ch. III. *Now the law is not of faith, but saith, He who*  
 Ver. 12. *performeth these things shall live by them*<sup>1</sup>.

The prophets concur with the Mosaic writings in predicting that the time would come when faith alone, exclusive of ritual performances, should be made the condition of participation in the blessings of the covenant. Such is the language of the prophet Habakkuk. Not he who is perfect in obedience, but he who is faithful and sincere, shall escape with life. But the unrelenting language of the law is, He, and he only, who performs all duties, without any exception, may claim a right to safety and impunity.

---

the time of the Babylonish invasion. See Jer. xxi. 9, xxxviii. 2, 17, 18. In the New Testament the words are accommodated."

Archbishop Secker observes, that "the English word *faith* is only used here, and Deut. xxxii. 20, in all the Old Testament. And the Hebrew word denotes many times an attribute of God, but never a quality in man, except 1 Sam. xxvi. 23, where it means *fidelity*; Prov. xxviii. 20, *a man of truth*; and Deut. xxxii. 20, *there is no truth in them*. But it never means *faith*, or credit given to testimony. It may be translated here, *by his faithfulness*." See Newcome on the Minor Prophets, Appendix, p. 240.

Upon the whole, it is very evident that the apostle only uses the text by way of accommodation; the words suiting his purpose, he cites them without any regard to their original connexion or primary signification. And this is one instance among many where the doctrine of the apostle is true and of divine authority, though the argument which he alleges in support of it seems to be infirm and irrelevant, and to amount to nothing more than a mere verbal coincidence. See Rom. i. 17; Heb. x. 38.

<sup>1</sup> *He who performeth, &c.*] See Lev. xviii. 5: *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgements, which if a man do, he shall live in them. I am the Lord.*

10. The apostle further declares, that the time referred to by the prophets must be the advent of Christ, who by his death has superseded the old dispensation, and introduced the new, ver. 13, 14. Ch. III.  
Ver. 13.

*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us<sup>2</sup>, (for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree,) that the blessing of Abraham<sup>3</sup> might come* 13.  
  
14.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Having been made a curse for us.*] The apostle immediately explains what he means by Christ being made a curse; namely, that he was crucified, because crucifixion was a kind of death which the law pronounces accursed; Deut. xxi. 23, *he that is hanged is accursed of God*. It was a death which the law inflicted upon outlaws and the worst of criminals. The apostle having thus explained his meaning, it is evident that when it is said that Christ was made a curse, he could not mean to say that Christ bore the wrath and curse of God for the sins of the elect, as some have strangely taught. See Beza *in loc*.

*He was made a curse for us:* that is, for our benefit. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. How? By ratifying with his blood that new covenant, by which faith is made the condition of justification, which supersedes the old covenant, the law of Moses and its condemning sentence. This is the doctrine which pervades all the apostle's writings, as every unprejudiced reader must perceive, who is well acquainted with them.

“In this sense,” (says Dr. Chandler in his excellent note upon this passage,) “the innocent Jesus was made a curse by God, as his heavenly Father permitted him to die that ignominious death which the law of Moses pronounced accursed, and which was inflicted only on the vilest and most accursed malefactors. But how are we delivered from the curse of the law by Christ's being made a curse, or dying an accursed death? Why, plainly thus: As he hereby put an end to the obligation of the Jewish law, which pronounced a curse on every one who did not in all things continue to observe it, by introducing and establishing a better covenant into the world, even that covenant which God made with Abraham, of which this was the principal article, that faith should be imputed to him for righteousness.”

<sup>3</sup> *The blessing of Abraham*] “was evidently his justification

Ch. III. *unto the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that we*  
 Ver. 14. *through faith might receive the spirit promised*<sup>1</sup>.

Christ has delivered us from the curse of the law, by delivering us from the obligation to obey it. And this he has done by being himself, if I may so express it, made a curse for us ; or, in other words, by being put to death upon the cross, a death which the law pronounces accursed. And Christ delivers us by his death, because that event is the ratification of the new dispensation, which supersedes the dispensation of rites and ceremonies, and which abrogates the law and its condemning power. And thus he introduces that new covenant which was the object of the divine promise to Abraham, the gracious purport of which is to communicate to believing Gentiles all its invaluable promises and blessings, upon condition of faith alone, exclusive of all regard to the ceremonial law.

11. The apostle argues that, upon principles of common equity, the law of Moses could not vacate

---

and acceptance with God through faith : this God himself imputed to him for righteousness, and signally rewarded and blessed him on account of it. And therefore the coming of Abraham's blessing upon the Gentiles was their being justified and accepted of God upon the same principle of faith as he was." Chandler.

<sup>1</sup> *The spirit promised.*] Gr. "the promise of the spirit," or, "the promised spirit." See Rosenmuller ; who rightly interprets the phrase, "*dona spiritus sancti, omnibus Christianis communia.*" The word spirit is here used in the same sense as in ver. 2 and 3, for the gospel and its blessings, which are common to all who believe ; and not for supernatural gifts and powers, which were necessarily limited to a small number.

the promise which had been made to Abraham and to his spiritual posterity long before, ver. 15—18. Ch. III.

*Brethren, I reason upon common principles*<sup>2</sup>. Ver. 15.  
*No one cancelleth or altereth*<sup>3</sup> *a covenant which hath been ratified, though it be only between man and man*<sup>4</sup>.

I will now show you, upon principles of common equity, that it is impossible that the ceremonial law should be obligatory upon Gentile believers in Christ. You well know, that among men a covenant, when it is once solemnly ratified, cannot be abrogated or changed; and no new conditions can be added to it without the consent of both the contracting parties.

*Now the promises were made to Abraham and his offspring*<sup>5</sup>. 16. The promise saith not, *And to*

<sup>2</sup> *I reason, &c.*] Literally, “I speak according to man. I am speaking of a common custom.” Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *Altereth.*] *επιδιατάσσεται*. See Newcome and Chandler. “*Insuper novas et contrarias conditiones addit.*” Schleusner.

<sup>4</sup> *Only between man and man.*] “*ὁμως ἀνθρώπων*” though it be but a man’s covenant.” Newcome.

<sup>5</sup> *To Abraham and his offspring.*] It is difficult to make out, and still more to vindicate, the apostle’s reasoning. This, however, does not at all affect his doctrine, that the Gentiles should be admitted to the privileges of the gospel, without submitting to the yoke of the law; a doctrine which he was taught by revelation, and which he confirmed by miracle. He is also right in arguing from the case of Abraham, that as this patriarch was justified by faith, it was in strict analogy that believers under the gospel should be justified in the same way. But how far the apostle’s argument holds good in detail may be doubted. The steps of his proof are the following: 1. God promises to Abraham and his offspring, that all nations shall be blessed in him, *i. e.* should be justified as he was, see ver. 8, 9. 2. This promise being made to Abraham’s offspring in the singular, and not in the plural number, it is thereby limited to one class only



Ch. III. *thine offsprings, as concerning many; but To*  
 Ver. 16. *thine offspring, as concerning one; which person*  
*is Christ.*

of the descendants of Abraham, ver. 16. 3. This class, to which the promise is limited, consists of believers in Christ, who are by faith sons of Abraham, ver. 6; and who, together, constitute Christ's mystical body, ver. 28. See Locke. 4. This promise, so made to Abraham's spiritual offspring, could not be vacated by the Mosaic law, which was not given till upwards of four hundred years afterwards, and to which the subjects of the promise were not parties, ver. 17. 5. Therefore God is by irrevocable promise bound to justify believing Gentiles; that is, to admit them to the privileges of the gospel, without subjecting them to the yoke of the law. The principal objections to this argument are: 1.) The limitation of the promise, which seems indefinitely to express the great benefits which mankind would ultimately enjoy from the posterity of Abraham, *i. e.* from the Messiah, see Acts iii. 25, to the circumstance of emancipation from the ceremonial law: and 2.) The extraordinary method by which he proves that Christ or believers are the offspring to which the promise is limited; it being notorious that the original word, in the singular number, is commonly used to express all the descendants of a common ancestor.

Archbishop Newcome suspects that this sentence is a marginal note inserted into the text. St. Jerom says that St. Paul made use of a false argument, which, though it might do well enough with the stupid Galatians, yet would not be approved by any wise or learned men. And Le Clerc says it is an allegorical kind of argument, which the apostle made use of for the conviction of the Jews, who were used to such methods of reasoning. Dr. Chandler thinks these suppositions injurious to Paul's character; and endeavours to explain and justify his reasoning, by observing, "that after God made the promise to Abraham, he limited the blessing to his posterity by Isaac; for though he promises to make Ishmael a great nation, *because he is thy seed*, yet he restricts the covenant to the descendants of Isaac: *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12, 13. Therefore the promise, *in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed*, could refer to no other of the *seeds* or *sons* of Abraham but Isaac only. So that the apostle makes out that this promise relates to a single person, or son of Abraham, exclusive of all his other posterity."

N. B. Mr. Wakefield, with the Syriac, Coptic, and Æthiopic translators, reads *σοις σπερμασι*, the offsprings.



It was promised to Abraham that he should be justified by faith; and to believers, his spiritual offspring (ver. 6), that they should be blessed in him, or like him; that is, should be justified by faith only (ver. 8, 9). And, if I may be permitted to use a verbal argument in the case, you may observe that the word offspring, in connexion with the promise, always occurs in the singular and not in the plural number; which may be understood as signifying that only one class of Abraham's posterity is entitled to the blessing. The promise, therefore, must be limited to his spiritual descendants, the heirs of Abraham's faith, the great body of believers consisting of Jews and Gentiles, of which Christ is the head; to the entire exclusion of the patriarch's natural descendants, as long as they rely for justification upon the ceremonial law.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 16.

*And I say this, that the covenant which had been previously ratified by God concerning Christ<sup>1</sup>, the law, which was given four hundred and thirty years afterwards<sup>2</sup>, could not cancel, so as to make*

17.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Concerning Christ.*] These words are omitted in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and in the Æthiopic, Vulgate, and other versions. See Griesbach and Wakefield. *Concerning Christ*: "*pertinens ad Christum.*" Grotius. See Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Four hundred and thirty years afterwards.*] The first promise was made to Abraham when he was 75 years old, Gen. xii. 3, 4; from this date to the birth of Isaac was 25 years, Gen. xxi. 5; Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born, Gen. xxv. 26; Jacob went into Egypt at 130, Gen. xlvii. 9; and the Israelites sojourned there, according to the Septuagint, 215 years: which completes the number. See Whitby and Doddridge.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 18.

*void the promise. For if the inheritance<sup>1</sup> be by law, it is no more by promise; whereas God freely gave it to Abraham by promise.*

No covenant, as I have just observed, can be cancelled without the consent of both the contracting parties; nor can a promise be revoked but with the permission of the promisee. I conclude, therefore, with confidence, that the first covenant which God had made with Abraham, and with his spiritual offspring, could not possibly be vacated by another covenant which he made with another party many centuries afterwards, so as to change the terms of the original agreement for conditions less favourable, and that without the consent of the parties concerned. Such conduct would be no less than flagrant injustice, and a palpable violation of a previous promise, which cannot, therefore, be imputed to God. It is in vain to plead that the promised blessing may be imparted upon both conditions; these conditions are absolutely incompatible with each other. If men are justified by law, they are not justified by faith; if the blessing is obtained by faith, it is not acquired by law. But it is evident, that to Abraham and to his believing posterity it was promised freely as the reward of faith, exclusive of the ceremonial law; and from this promise God cannot and will not recede.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Inheritance,*] *i. e.* says Dr. Chandler, the blessedness entailed on Abraham and his seed, of being justified by faith. It comes to them by descent and birthright.

12. Nevertheless the law was not without its use, Ch. III.  
though it did not supersede the previous promise,  
ver. 19, 20.

To *what* purpose, then, served the law? It was Ver. 19.  
added because of transgressions<sup>2</sup>; being admini-  
stered by messengers<sup>3</sup> under the direction of a me-  
diator, till that offspring should come to whom the  
promise belonged. But this mediator was not a 20.  
mediator for one of the parties, and God is but  
one of the two<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Because of transgressions.*] The expression is very elliptical, and must be explained by comparing it with other passages in the apostle's writings. The law declared the nature of sin; passed sentence of death upon every sin; it showed no mercy, and drove men to despair. In this way it guarded man against the commission of sin, and made a merciful dispensation more welcome. See Gal. iii. 23—25; Rom. vii. 7, &c., iii. 20, iv. 15, v. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Administered by messengers.*] διαταγεις, “through the ministry of angels.” Wakefield.—“ διατασσω respondet Latino constituere, et ita latè patet, ut de quovis, sive propria sive aliena auctoritate aliquid præcipiente, jubente, mandante, accurante, usurpetur. 1 Cor. xi. 34.” Schleusner. I have given to this passage the sense which appears to me most natural and intelligible. Of the existence and ministry of angels we know nothing; nor does it concern us to know any thing. But that the law was communicated to Israel by Moses, as the medium of divine communications; and that the observation of it was enforced from age to age by a succession of prophets or divine messengers, till the coming of Christ, is a fact perfectly intelligible, and much to the apostle's purpose. That the word αγγελος will bear this sense, it would be superfluous to prove; and there can be little doubt that it is used in the same sense through the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. See Mr. Wakefield's translation.

<sup>4</sup> *God is but one of the two.*] This is the reading of the Æthiopic, and adopted by Wakefield. This sense of the passage makes it very pertinent to the apostle's purpose, so that there is no occasion, with Michaelis and Newcome, to consider this

Ch. III.  
Ver. 20.

Now, if any one should be inclined to ask What is the use of the law, if it does not justify ; and if the observation of its ceremonial precepts is not necessary to acceptance with God ? I answer briefly, that the principal use of the law was, by its strict and holy precepts, and by the irrevocable sentence of condemnation which it passes upon every offence, to convince those who were under its jurisdiction of their guilt and danger, and to render a more merciful dispensation welcome. This ceremonial and moral law, which was first communicated to the Israelites by the instrumentality of Moses, was confirmed and administered from generation to generation, by a succession of priests and prophets ; till it was eventually superseded by the introduction of the new dispensation ; under which, agreeably to the divine promise, all who believe are to be justified by faith, that is, they are to be admitted to all the blessings of the gospel, without regard to the ceremonial law. And here, in confirmation of my preceding argument, I would remind you, that the covenant, of which Moses was the mediator, could not vacate the covenant made with Abraham. For the parties in the Mosaic covenant were God and the children of Israel ; whereas the parties in the former covenant were God and believers ; and for the latter of these contracting parties Moses had no authority to act, and consequently they are not

---

verse as a marginal gloss. “ The Æthiopic translator has *Dominus unus est duorum*, interpreting, as I suppose.” Newcome. The apostle’s brevity creates obscurity.

bound by the contract of which he was, if I may so express it, the negotiator.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 20.

13. The law, in its place, was so far from being hostile to the divine promise, that it was even subservient to the introduction of the new and better dispensation, ver. 21—24.

*Is the law, then, contrary to the promises of God? Far from it. If, indeed, a law had been given which could have conferred life, certainly justification would have been by that law*<sup>1</sup>. *But the scripture hath included all under sin*<sup>2</sup>, *so that the promise of justification by faith*<sup>3</sup> *is extended*<sup>4</sup> *to believers only.*

21.  
22.

<sup>1</sup> *Justification would have been by that law.*] “The apostle argues, that if such a law had been given to the Jews as could have secured justification, then righteousness would have been by the law; and thus the promise of God would have been of no effect, which expressly declared that acceptance and pardon should be the consequence of true faith.” Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Included all under sin.*] “*ταπαντα*, all things, i.e. all men.” Locke. “The apostle,” says Dr. Chandler, “uses the most general expression that can be, that the Jews might not think themselves excepted from the common charge.”

<sup>3</sup> *By faith.*] The received text adds the words of *Jesus Christ*, which are omitted in the Æthiopic and by Mr. Wakefield; and which are not necessary to the sense.

<sup>4</sup> *Is extended.*] *iva δοθη*, is given. *iva* does not always introduce the final cause, but is sometimes used to express an inference only. So *iva πληρωθη* does not always signify that it *might be* fulfilled, but that by such an event such a prophecy *was actually* fulfilled. And here the apostle does not mean to say, that the scriptures represent men as sinners, *in order* to their being justified by faith; but that, in consequence of all being sinners, the claim of law is wholly excluded, and justification can only be obtained by faith, agreeably to the divine promise. “*Ut felicitas promissa intelligeretur dari per doctrinam Jesu Christi*

Ch. III.  
Ver. 22.

Some may be disposed to ask, Whether this state of the case is not in fact setting up two dispensations in opposition to each other; one of which justifies by faith, and the other by works? But I can assure such objectors, that there is no contrariety in the divine dispensations. They are all harmonious and consistent with each other. If, indeed, the Mosaic law had been such that its terms might have been easily fulfilled, and its blessings easily attained, this would have been a different mode of justification; and law and promise would have been at variance with each other. But, in fact, the conditions of the Mosaic covenant are so strict, and its condemning sentence is so severe and irreversible, that none ever were or could be justified by it; nor could any ever lay claim to life upon the ground of right and of perfect obedience. Accordingly, it is evident to every one who reads the Jewish scriptures, that all men, Jew and Gentile without exception, are in a state of condemnation. So that there is no hope for any but for those who take the benefit of the promise; and all who are justified

---

*credentibus. ἵνα δοθῇ*, logic: *ut intelligamus, perspiciamus.*" Rosenmuller. Dr. Macknight says, "that though *ἵνα* commonly denotes the end for which the thing is done, it often signifies the effect or consequence of an action simply, without expressing the intention of the agent; and therefore, in such cases, it ought to be translated *so, so as*, Luke ix. 45; Rom. v. 20; 1 Cor. xiv. 13; Gal. v. 17; Rom. xi. 11." *Prel. Ess. No. 4.*—"The scriptures of the Old Testament represent all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, to be in a state of sin and guilt, and set forth the Messiah promised to Abraham as the only Saviour by whom their pardon and salvation is to be obtained." Pyle.

obtain this favour by faith alone, without any claim from law. Ch. III.

*Moreover, before this faith came, we were kept in custody<sup>1</sup> under the law, confined together until faith<sup>2</sup> should be revealed. So that the law was our conductor<sup>3</sup> to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* Ver. 23. 24.

And truly those of us who lived under the law were in a state of very severe pupillage, which might well render the liberal and merciful spirit of the gospel acceptable and welcome. We were like children confined together in a school, under the tuition of a very harsh and severe master, looking and longing for the coming of the time when we should be set at liberty, and be at our own disposal. The gospel dispensation is that free and happy state which was the object of our earnest desire and joyful anticipation. And the severe discipline which we endured under our former rigid tutor the law,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Kept in custody under the law.*] “The word signifies to be kept in custody or durance. The Jews were in the condition of children not arrived to years of maturity, and kept in custody under the discipline of the law, that chastised them for every offence, and rigorously exacted punishment without hope of pardon.” Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Faith should be revealed.*] *i. e.* the dispensation of faith. “The thing promised in this chapter, sometimes called *blessing*, ver. 9, 14; sometimes *inheritance*, ver. 18; sometimes *justification*, ver. 11, 24; sometimes *righteousness*, ver. 21; and sometimes *life*, ver. 11, 21.” Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *Conductor.*] In the original, *pædagogus*, a “conductor *qui puerum in ludum ducebat et reducerebat*. It was a name given likewise to the servant who taught the children letters and superintended their behaviour. They were generally persons of rigid manners.” Newcome, Macknight.



Ch. III. has taught us the unspeakable value of the privileges of the gospel.  
Ver. 24.

14. Believers are released from the restrictions of the law, as children when declared of age, from the authority of a guardian, ver. 25, 26.

25. *But faith being come, we are no longer under a*  
26. *conductor: for ye are all the acknowledged sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.*

While law retained its authority, we remained in a state of childhood and pupillage, subject to severe discipline and restraint; but the new dispensation having superseded the Mosaic law, these rigours have ceased: and law, having performed his office, resigns his charge. You, who believe in Christ, are declared of age; you are taken from school, you are delivered from the tyranny of law, and are owned and treated as children of God, living at liberty in your father's house.

15. Believers are free from the yoke of the law, inasmuch as in a body they form one mystical person; which is that very offspring of Abraham to whom the promise is made, ver. 27—29.

27. *Moreover, as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Have put on Christ.*] This is a very bold, not to say a very harsh figure; but it is a very familiar one to the mind of the apostle, and very necessary to be kept in view by all who are desirous thoroughly to understand his writings. All who by baptism have made a public profession of faith in the gospel have "put on Christ:" so that, as Mr. Locke justly explains the



Let me call your attention to another consideration. By being baptized into the name of Christ, you publicly avow yourselves to be the disciples of Christ. And as such you are, if I may so express it, clothed with Christ; so that you lose as it were your separate personality, and become one with him: you constitute a part of that great body of which he is the head.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 27.

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye all are one person<sup>2</sup> in Christ Jesus. But if ye*

28.

29.

phrase, "to God now looking upon them there appears nothing but Christ; they are, as it were, covered all over with him, as a man is with the clothes he has put on; and hence he says in the next verse, they are all one in Christ Jesus, as if there were but that one person." The apostle here, and in many other passages of his writings, considers the great body of believers as constituting one mystical person, of which Christ is the head. It is a favourite comparison with him, to which he often alludes, and upon which he loves to dilate. See Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12—27; Eph. i. 23, v. 29—31. It may however be proper to observe, that this symbolical and highly figurative mode of expression gives no countenance to the modern and extravagant doctrine of the sinner being clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ, in order to his justification: a notion than which nothing can be more foreign to the apostle's mind, or more inconsistent with reason and with Christianity; and which indeed never occurred to any one's imagination till many centuries after the mission and ministry of the apostles had been concluded.

<sup>2</sup> *Ye all are one person.*] All believers make one person, and that person is the true and sole offspring of Abraham, to whom the promise was made, which the law, delivered long afterwards, could not disannul: a promise which never has been repealed, and which, without the consent of the promisee, could not in equity be made void. "Under the dispensation of the gospel (as Dr. Chandler expounds the text), there is no distinction of nation, or condition, or sex: Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, male and female, are all considered as one person in Christ." It may be observed here, that the apostle expressly

Ch. IH. *are one person in Christ Jesus*<sup>1</sup>, *then are ye the*  
 Ver. 29. *offspring of Abraham, and heirs in virtue of the*  
*promise.*

Bold as the figure may be, I will pursue it still further. The gospel of Jesus is offered to all persons of all ranks and of all countries, and some of all descriptions have embraced it. But when they become believers, all these distinctions cease: Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, all are united in Christ, all become portions of his mystical body; all are so knit and blended together that they constitute only one person. That person is Christ mystical; and this symbolical person is the true offspring of Abraham, that one descendant to whom the promise was made, and by virtue of that promise they are entitled to the character of sons of God, and to a share in that inheritance which was promised to their spiritual ancestor, namely, that he and his descendants should partake of the blessing in consequence of faith only, without being subjected to the yoke of the ceremonial law.

---

speaks of all believers as constituting one person, but no one is so weak as to understand this declaration in a literal sense. How unreasonable then is it to interpret a similar phraseology literally when applied to Jesus and his heavenly Father! See John x. 30. The union of Jesus with the Father is the same as the union of all his disciples with him, with God, and with each other: a union, not of nature, but of will and purpose, a mutual co-operation in promoting the cause of truth and virtue. See John xvii. 21, 22.

<sup>1</sup> *But if ye are, &c.*] *ἐἰς ἑστὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* this is the reading of the Clermont and Corbey manuscripts, and is approved by Mr. Locke as most suitable to the apostle's argument.

16. In the prosecution of his argument the apostle further pleads, that under the legal dispensation the heirs of the promise were not only kept under restraint as children, but were treated with harshness as slaves, from which servitude they are redeemed by Christ, ch. iv. 1—5. Ch. IV.

*Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a slave<sup>2</sup>, though he be proprietor of all : but is under guardians and stewards<sup>3</sup> until the time appointed by the father. So likewise we, when we were children, were in bondage under the rudiments of this world<sup>4</sup>.* Ver. 1.  
2.  
3.

I am speaking now, my friends, of the great body of those who were interested in the covenant which God made with Abraham, from the time of that

---

<sup>2</sup> *Slave :*] “ so (says Mr. Locke) δσλος signifies ; and St. Paul’s sense will be lost to one who by *servant* understands not one in a state of bondage.” The apostle, speaking of all the covenanted descendants of Abraham as one person, represents this person as in a state of minority, and consequent servitude under the tuition of the law ; and pursues this allegory into detail.

<sup>3</sup> *Guardians and stewards.*] “ επιτροπος is one who is both a guardian of the person and estate, and an instructor : οικονομος is a person who has the care of the estate.” Chandler.

<sup>4</sup> *Under the rudiments of this world.*] The rites and ceremonies of the law are called by the apostle rudiments of this world. See Col. ii. 8, 20. These are called rudiments or elements, because the law was a sort of preparatory school for the gospel : see ch. iii. 24. And the Mosaic dispensation is here and elsewhere called the world, see Gal. vi. 14, Col. ii. 20, probably because its precepts and sanctions related chiefly to worldly objects. See Locke ; and Chandler, who supposes there is an allusion to the pomp of the temple service, as resembling that of the heathen mythology. The law was upon the whole a burdensome service ; and therefore the Jews under it are represented as in bondage, like an heir while in a state of pupillage.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 3.

eminent patriarch to the present day: all were heirs of the promise, and entitled, in due time, to the possession of this fair inheritance. But those who lived under the law were in the state of children under age; and you know that in this situation a child, though he be heir to a very large estate, is in no better condition than a slave, that he is no more at his own disposal, and has no more power over his property than the meanest servant; but that both his person and his property are under the sole direction and management of those whom his father has appointed to be his guardians and tutors, and the stewards and managers of his estate, till the time comes when by the will of his father, or by the customs and laws of his country, he is declared of age; at which time he is immediately exempted from all controul, he enjoys his liberty, and takes possession of his property. Exactly so, the posterity of Abraham under the former dispensation, though heirs of the promise, were heirs in a state of pupillage; in bondage to that severe guardian the law, subjected to a harsh discipline, and required to learn a hard lesson; destitute of liberty, and compelled to perform a task of rites and ceremonies which constituted the essentials of a dispensation resembling, in the pomp of its external form, the rituals of heathen nations; and which only entailed temporal blessings.

4. *But when the full time<sup>1</sup> was come, God sent forth*

---

<sup>1</sup> *The full time.*] These words refer to ver. 2, and signify the

*his son, born of a woman*<sup>2</sup>, (*born under the law*<sup>3</sup>, *that he might redeem*<sup>4</sup> *those who were under the law,*) *that we might receive the adoption of sons*<sup>5</sup>.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 5.

This state of subjection and servitude was however intended to continue only for a limited time; and when that time expired, which had been wisely fixed in the unsearchable counsels of heaven, God, faithful to his promise, gave an express commission to a person, chosen for this purpose out of the human race; and who, on account of the distinguished honour conferred upon him, is called the first-born son of God, to declare that the season of minority

time "when the heir is declared of age and becomes *sui juris*, and takes the estate into his own hands." Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Born of a woman.*] There is no reason to imagine a reference here to the supposed miraculous conception of Jesus Christ; for the expression, *born of a woman*, is a common periphrasis to express a human being. See Job xiv. 1, xv. 14, xxv. 4; Matt. xi. 11; Luke vii. 23. With Wakefield, Newcome, and others, I translate γεννημενον, *born*, in preference to *made*. Some copies read γενημενον.

<sup>3</sup> *Born under the law, &c.*] This clause I include in a parenthesis, with Castellio and Bengelius. See Bowyer.

<sup>4</sup> *That he might redeem, &c.*] "When persons are freed from slavery, they are properly said to be redeemed. The law of Moses was a yoke upon the necks of the Jews. Now Christ came to redeem them from it, by declaring them of full age, and that the time was come for their being put into possession of the promised inheritance." Chandler.

The apostle is here speaking, not of the Jews only, though they are particularly alluded to in this parenthesis, but of all the spiritual posterity of Abraham collectively, the people of God in all ages and nations, under different dispensations of law and gospel. *We* all, whether Jews or Gentiles, under the gospel dispensation, are declared of age, and are acknowledged as sons. See Macknight.

<sup>5</sup> *The adoption of sons.*] "that we who believe might be put out of the state of bondage into that of sons." Locke.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 5.

and pupillage is at an end, and that all who receive his message are now released from the stern guardianship of the law, are acknowledged as sons of God, and are admitted to the privileges and the freedom of heirs who are declared of age and put into possession of their inheritance. And to the end that those who were before in immediate subjection to the law might learn that even they are released from its burdensome yoke, this great deliverer was selected from the Jewish nation; and having himself lived in subjection to the law, he by his death put an end to the legal dispensation, introducing and ratifying a new and better covenant. So that Jews and Gentiles are now alike free from the tyranny of the law, and are equally entitled by faith to the privileges of the gospel.

17. The apostle concludes his argument by referring to that filial spirit which the gospel produces in the heart, as an incontestable proof of the truth of his doctrine, ver. 6, 7.

6. *Now, to prove that ye are sons<sup>1</sup>, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son<sup>2</sup> into our hearts, crying*

---

<sup>1</sup> To prove that ye are sons.] “as the evidence and demonstration that ye are thus constituted sons of God.” Chandler.—“to show that ye are sons.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> God hath sent forth the spirit of his son.] “By the Spirit,” says Dr. Chandler, “is here unquestionably meant the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which were given in confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, and as an immediate token from God of the acceptance of all who believed in Christ, and their being constituted through him heirs of eternal life.”—“The same argument,” says Mr. Locke, “of proving their sonship



out, *Abba! Father*<sup>3</sup>. So then, thou art no longer a slave, but a son<sup>4</sup>: and if a son, then an heir of God, through Christ.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 7.

from having the spirit, St. Paul uses to the Romans, Rom. viii. 16. And he that will read 2 Cor. iv. 17 to v. 6, and Eph. i. 11—14, will find, that the *spirit* is looked on as the seal and assurance of the inheritance of life to those who have received the adoption of sons."

It cannot be doubted that the gifts of the holy spirit were universally regarded as undeniable proofs that those who were favoured with them were in covenant with God, his people, his sons, and heirs of the promise: nevertheless, the number of those who were favoured with these gifts must have been comparatively small. But the spirit of his son, of which the apostle here speaks, he mentions as an universal quality, common to all believers. This, therefore, I conceive to be that filial spirit and disposition which the gospel produces in the hearts of those who practically believe; and which teach them to regard the Supreme Being in the character of a Father, benefactor, and friend, and to hold communion with him as such. This spirit, so opposite to that spirit of terror and alarm which was the natural effect of the law, might justly be considered as an irresistible proof of the divine authority of the gospel, and is with great propriety introduced by the apostle as the last and most substantial and affecting proof of the divinity of his doctrine. See the exposition of Rom. viii. 26, 27. The expression "God hath sent forth the spirit," does not necessarily imply any supernatural interposition to produce a change in the heart. God is said to do that which he accomplishes by second causes; and if the principles of the gospel cordially received produce a filial spirit in the heart, God may be said to have sent forth his spirit for that purpose.—"That Christians are the genuine sons of God," says Dr. Priestley, "the apostle proves by their having the spirit or dispositions of his sons, which they show by addressing him as their Father, which slaves would not do." *Our hearts*, is the reading of the best copies: the received text reads, *your*.

<sup>3</sup> *Abba! Father.*] Dr. Doddridge mentions, that "the learned Selden has brought a very pertinent quotation from the Babylonian Gemara to prove that it was not allowed to slaves to use the title of *Abba* in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged, or the correspondent title of *Imma*, or mother, when speaking to the mistress of it."

<sup>4</sup> *No longer a slave.*] He is now of age, no longer in the

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 7.

To conclude: That I may remove all doubt upon the subject of your acceptance with God by faith in Christ, exclusive of the ceremonial law, I must again appeal to those miraculous powers which I exercised among you, to those spiritual gifts which I imparted to you, and which you possessed long before you thought of subjecting yourselves to the yoke of Moses, when you had heard of no conditions of acceptance but those of faith in Christ. These precious gifts, which Jesus himself possessed, which he is authorized to bestow, and which God by him has imparted to us, are substantial indisputable proofs that we are accepted by him upon the condition of faith only; and that upon this ground he acknowledges us as his children, and permits us all, whether Jews or Gentiles, to address him under the endearing character of a Father. Let every one of you therefore be assured, that being a believer in Christ, he is no longer a pupil in his minority, a slave to a harsh pedagogue, but an acknowledged son of God, an heir at age, entitled to receive the promised inheritance, to be blessed with believing Abraham, to be accepted of God by faith alone, without the works of the law; which has now no more power over the disciple of Christ than a guardian possesses over a pupil who is declared of age and released from his wardship. For this free and happy state

---

condition of a pupil or a ward, subject like a slave to the controul of another. The gifts of the spirit, and the filial spirit of the gospel, prove that he is a son, an heir, and in possession of the inheritance. See Rom. viii. 14—17.



you are indebted to the mercy and faithfulness of God revealed to us by Jesus Christ; and when the new and encouraging views of the divine character which the Christian doctrine imparts, the hope of mercy which it inspires, and the glorious prospects of immortality which it opens to view, produce their natural effects upon the heart, which they do in all true believers, and I trust in yours, exciting supreme love to God as a father and a friend, and entire devotedness to his will, a spirit so opposite to the servile spirit of the law, this affectionate filial spirit is itself the best possible proof that you are in the noblest sense sons of God, and heirs of the promised inheritance.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 7.

## SECTION II.

*THE APOSTLE expostulates with the Galatians concerning the unreasonableness of their apostasy from the simplicity of the gospel, and of the alienation of their affection from himself. Ch. iv. 8—20.*

1. The apostle warns them, that though ignorance might be an apology for the idolatries of their heathen state, they could avail themselves of no such excuse for their present attachment to judaical rites, ver. 8—11.

*At that time indeed, when ye knew not God, ye*

8.

Ch. IV. *were in bondage to those who by nature are not*  
 Ver. 9. *gods; but now, after ye have known God, or rather have been known by God*<sup>1</sup>, *how is it that ye turn back again to the weak and poor elements*<sup>2</sup>, *to which ye desire again to be in bondage as heretofore*<sup>3</sup>?

In your heathen state, you had no knowledge of God, of his attributes, his government, or his will, nor of the nature of that worship which would be most acceptable to him: no wonder you were then the votaries of false gods, the besotted worshippers of dumb idols, the abject slaves of superstition and folly. But, now that you have been taught by the Christian religion to form just and honourable conceptions of God, and of his government and of the spiritual worship and service which he requires, and since you have by the gift of his spirit been acknowledged by him as his genuine sons, and invested

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ye have known God, or rather have been known by God.*] The apostle in his usual manner takes up his words in a different sense: to *know God*, is to form just conceptions of the object of worship, such as the gospel inspires; to *be known by God*, is to be chosen and approved by him. Amos iii. 2; 1 Cor. viii. 3. See Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *Weak and poor elements.*] “The law was weak because it could not deliver men from bondage and death, Rom. viii. 1—3: it is called poor, because it kept men in the poor state of pupils from the full possession of the inheritance, ver. 1—3.” Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *Again as heretofore.*] “*παλιν*, again, cannot here refer to *στοιχεῖα*, elements, which the Galatians had never been under hitherto; but to bondage, which he tells them they had been in to false gods, ver. 8.” Locke. See also Wakefield. Macknight renders *ἀνωθεν* from the first: q. d. “ever since your conversion.” Newcome observes, from Wetstein, that *παλιν ἀνωθεν* is a common pleonasm.

with peculiar privileges, what pretence can there be for you to have recourse to the observation of mean and puerile ceremonies to recommend you to the divine regard? What could induce you, after you had obtained your freedom from heathen superstition, to enslave yourselves again to the burthensome ceremonies of the Jewish law; which, whatever important purpose they might once answer, are now superseded, and are of no kind of use to you whatever?

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 9.

How is it <sup>4</sup> that *ye observe days, and months, and times, and years? I am afraid concerning you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*

10.

11.

---

<sup>4</sup> How is it, &c.] *q. d.* πως ἡμερας κ. τ. λ. “Why are ye turning back again, and are observing days,” &c. Wakefield. Dr. Chandler also reads it as an interrogation: “Do ye observe days and months?” &c. He adds, “by *days* he unquestionably means their weekly sabbaths and festivals: by *months*, the festivals of the new moons; by *times*, their annual fasts and festivals; and by *years*, their sabbatical and jubilee years.” Observe here, that it is because of their strict observation of these sabbatical seasons, and the great stress laid upon them, that the apostle expresses his fears lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain. He never gives the least hint that a Christian sabbath had been substituted in the room of the Jewish sabbath which was to be observed with equal strictness; nor does he ever in any of his epistles express his disapprobation of what is called *sabbath-breaking*, or warn his readers against it. This surely must have been a very great omission, if the apostle had entertained the same ideas of the importance of sabbatizing which are inculcated by some modern Christians, who represent what they are pleased to call the *profanation of the sabbath*, as one of the greatest of crimes, which deserves the cognizance even of the civil magistrate. The plain doctrine of the New Testament is, that all sabbatical institutions without exception are completely abolished: but that seasons of religious worship should be regularly observed, and in the primitive church one of these seasons

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 11.

How comes it to pass that you, who have been so plainly taught that the spiritual and liberal genius of the Christian religion makes no distinction of days, but expressly teaches that all times are equally acceptable to God, and that the whole of every day is to be employed in his service, can so easily adopt the Jewish distinction of holy and unholy days? How is it that you can lay any stress upon such matters, or imagine that you can recommend yourselves to God by a rigid observation of sabbath-days and new moons, and annual festivals or fasts, and sabbatical years? All these distinctions were wisely appointed to the Jews to keep them separate from other nations; but under the Christian dispensation, which embraces all mankind, these and all other ceremonial distinctions are abolished. Indeed, my brethren, this servile sabbatical spirit, so widely different from the free and filial spirit of the gospel, excites in my breast the most painful apprehensions lest my labours among you should have been unavailing to your conversion to pure and practical Christianity.

2. In order to recover their alienated affections, he pleads with them their former kindness, which he had done nothing to forfeit, ver. 12—16.

12. *Brethren, I beseech you, be what I am; for I*

---

was the first day of the week. This was universally celebrated as a religious festival, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. See Evanson and Priestley on the sabbatical observation of the Lord's day.

once was *what ye now are*<sup>1</sup>. *Ye have not wronged me in any thing*<sup>2</sup>. Ch. IV.  
Ver. 12.

My dear brethren in Christ, for as such I will still address you, and believe you to be such, notwithstanding all my suspicions and fears concerning you, I earnestly entreat you to follow my example. I was once as zealous an advocate for Jewish rites and ceremonies as you now are; and even held them to be essential to the divine favour. But I now see my error. I am instructed in the true nature of Christian liberty. I am convinced that rites and ceremonies are of no use; that the law of Christ requires nothing as essential to an interest in its blessings, but love to God and benevolence to man: that nothing will be of any avail but a good heart and a virtuous life. Let me prevail upon you, my friends, to adopt the same just and generous latitude of principle. You will feel yourselves better and hap-

---

<sup>1</sup> *For I once was what ye now are.*] “*Fui aliquando qualis vos nunc estis.*” Vatablus. See also Clarius; and Doddridge, who expounds the words thus: “*I was as ye are*, as much bi-goted to the Mosaic ritual and pharisaic traditions, as any of you all can be.” See Rom. ix. 3, Wakefield’s Translation. This sense of the passage appears to me greatly preferable to that of Grotius and Locke, whose interpretation is, “*I beseech you, brethren, let you and I be as if we were all one*,” which is adopted by most modern interpreters, though Dr. Whitby acknowledges that the former is the sense in which it was understood by the fathers. Dr. Chandler’s interpretation is peculiar: “*Be ye as myself*, dear and beloved as my own person, *because I was as yourselves*, I was once as much esteemed and beloved as your own persons.”

<sup>2</sup> *Ye have not wronged me in any thing.*] Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Æthiopic version, omits this, which he calls a strange clause; but the omission is not supported by any manuscript.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 12.

pier for it. You now, indeed, regard me with a degree of coldness and suspicion very different from your former kind and fervent affection. But I know the cause, and I forgive it. You have done me no wrong; nor is the seeming asperity of my language the effect of resentment or revenge: it is the dictate of genuine friendship.

13. *Now ye know that, under bodily infirmity<sup>1</sup>, I*  
14. *preached the gospel to you at first; and my personal affliction ye did not despise, nor disdainfully reject me for it<sup>2</sup>; but ye received me as a messenger of God<sup>3</sup>, even as Christ Jesus.*

I shall never forget the kindness with which you

---

<sup>1</sup> *Under bodily infirmity.*] Literally, *through or in* (διὰ, see Macknight) *weakness of the flesh*: this he calls in the next verse a personal affliction; literally, *my trial in my flesh*. Dr. Hammond supposes that the apostle alludes to the persecutions which he underwent; but this could be no ground for contempt or scorn. There can be little doubt that he alludes to some bodily infirmity; perhaps to some paralytic affection, which, 2 Cor. xii. 7, he calls a thorn in the flesh; and which was probably a considerable disadvantage to him as a public speaker. Mr. Locke justly observes, that “this is an instance of that unavoidable obscurity of some passages in epistolary writings, without any fault in the author. For some things necessary to the understanding of what is writ are usually of course, and justly omitted, because already known to him the letter is writ to.”

<sup>2</sup> *Disdainfully reject me for it.*] ἐξέπτυσάτε. See Wakefield. Literally, “*ye did not spit me out.*” Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *A messenger of God.*] ἀγγελον Θεου. See Wakefield; *q. d.* “you received me as you would have received an acknowledged prophet of God; nay, as you would have received Jesus Christ himself; the greatest of all the prophets.” It is needless to cite authorities to prove that the word ἀγγελος, in its primary sense, signifies a messenger, and not a celestial spirit. And it is sufficiently obvious that this text gives no countenance to the popular doctrine that Jesus Christ is in his nature superior to the angels in heaven.

first received me. You recollect, my friends, the bodily infirmity under which I then laboured; how great an impediment it was to me as a public speaker; what an awkwardness it occasioned in my manner of address. Yet you neither despised nor insulted me upon that account: nor did you contemptuously reject my mission and ministry. Far from it. I well remember the avidity with which you listened to my instructions. Impressed with the proofs which I exhibited of my divine commission, you received me as a messenger of God; nor could you have shown greater attention and respect to Jesus Christ himself, had he appeared to preach the gospel to you in person.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 14.

*What were, then, your benedictions<sup>4</sup>! For I bear you witness, that had it been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.*

15.

How thankful you were for my instructions! How kindly you spake of me and to me! You thought you never could do enough to show your affection and your gratitude. I never can forget your kind

---

<sup>4</sup> *What were, then, your benedictions!* τὴς ἐν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; "What benedictions did you then pour out upon me! The context makes this sense of the words so necessary and visible, that it is to be wondered how any one could overlook it." Locke. "*What was, then, your happiness!* How great your satisfaction!" Chandler; who adds, "With what address he puts them in mind of their former affection to him, every man must see who reads the next words." Macknight says that "Locke's interpretation is unusual; and the word is used to denote 'blessedness' in other passages of the apostle's writings." Rom. iv. 6, 9.



Ch. IV. attachment. There was no sacrifice which you  
Ver. 15. would not readily have made to serve me.

16. *Am I, then, become your enemy, by continuing<sup>1</sup> to tell you the truth?*

What can be the reason of this extraordinary change? How can I account for the coldness, the unkindness, which I now experience from you? Is my constancy the cause of your change? I taught you the truth, and thereby I gained your attention and your love. I still continue to teach the same important truth; and is this the occasion of your present dislike? Can the same cause produce effects so directly opposite to each other?

3. The apostle charges his opponents with a desire to make a breach between the Galatians and himself, in which he hopes they will not succeed, though he is not wholly free from some painful suspicions, ver. 17—20.

17. *They zealously affect you, not with a good design<sup>2</sup>; yea, they desire to exclude you<sup>3</sup>, that ye may zealously affect them.*

---

<sup>1</sup> By continuing to tell you the truth? ἀληθευων. See Locke. "by dealing truly with you?" Wakefield. "Am I now become your enemy, only because I warn you against corrupting or forsaking that very gospel, and exhort you to adhere to the truth and purity of it? How severely, and yet how softly, doth he reproach them for their fickleness and inconstancy! How strong is the reproof which is thus drawn from arguments of love!" Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> Not with a good design.] καλως. "Their zeal for you is not for your good." Wakefield. "It is not with a good design, nor by lawful arts and methods, that they thus endeavour to inveigle your affections: it is not by endeavouring to promote

My opponents pretend to have a great affection for you, and to be very solicitous to make you Christians of the highest order: but they are not influenced by right motives; nor do they proceed in a right method when they expect to accomplish their design by subjecting you to the yoke of the law. In fact, they desire to exclude you from the privileges of the gospel, and to cut you off from all communication with me, that so you may be entirely devoted to them, and may submit in every thing to their direction.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 17.

*But it is honourable to be at all times zealously affected to that which is good<sup>4</sup>; and not only when I am present with you, my dear children<sup>5</sup>, of whom I labour in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.*

18.

19.

But surely, my dear children in the gospel, you, of whose conversion to the faith I was the happy and the honoured instrument; and for whose restoration to the genuine principles and spirit of

---

your salvation, or preaching the truth of the gospel of Christ." Chandler. "Ζηλεν aliquem dicitur qui valde ab eo amari affectat. Amorem vestrum captant non honestè. Sermo est de falsis illis doctoribus de quibus hacienus locutus erat; quibus autem artibus illi usi fuerint, non constat." Rosenmuller.

<sup>3</sup> To exclude you.] "They would exclude you from the privileges of Christians, or from my affections." Newcome. Some copies read ἡμας, us: q. d. they would exclude me from your affection. See Locke. Beza.

<sup>4</sup> To that which is good.] εν καλω. "towards a-good man." Locke. So Wakefield. This is, no doubt, the apostle's meaning; but the expression is purposely left ambiguous.

<sup>5</sup> My dear children.] With Beza, Bos, Bengel, and others, I connect these words with verse 18. See Bowyer.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 19.

Christianity I am at present most tenderly solicitous, and feel a truly parental anxiety, you cannot but see and acknowledge that it is right and creditable that you should be at all times equally well affected to what is excellent, either in principles or persons; and not expose yourselves to the suspicion of fickleness and caprice. If you had a well-founded attachment to me and to my doctrine while I was present with you, you ought not, without reason, to have deserted both, after I had left you to prosecute the further purposes of my mission.

20. *But I wish to be present with you now, and to change my language<sup>1</sup>; for I am in doubt concerning you.*

I have not, indeed, much hope that what I write will produce all the effect which I desire; and therefore I wish that I might be permitted, even now, to make you a visit. A personal interview would set all right; and nothing would afford me greater satisfaction than to exchange the language of suspicion and censure for that of commendation.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Change my language.*] “*φωνη* signifies not only the voice, but the thing spoken; he should be glad to be present, and to converse with them personally, instead of writing to them at a distance; because then he could be more fully informed of their true state, and better able to know how to order his discourse to them.” Chandler.

## SECTION III.

*THE APOSTLE, by a figurative application of the history of the descendants of Abraham, by Sarah and Hagar, illustrates the opposite genius and tendency of the two dispensations of the law and the gospel.* Ch. iv. 21—v. 1. Ch. IV.

1. He briefly touches upon the circumstances of the history from which his illustration is taken, ver. 21—23.

*Tell me, ye who desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?* Ver. 21.

Many of you are strangely attached to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic institution. Allow me to ask you, Do you really understand the law of Moses? Are you apprized of its nature and tendency? Are you willing to learn from the pentateuch itself the distinction, and even the opposition, which subsists between the old dispensation and the

---

\* *Do ye not hear the law?*] “The law is sometimes used for the books of the Old Testament in general. See John x. 34.” Newcome. This account is taken from the book of Genesis, ch. xvi. 15, xxi. 1. The pentateuch is usually called the law, as distinguished from the prophets and the hagiography. “*ἀνομειν, intelligere*, 1 Cor. xiv. 2. *Libri sacri, inquit Paulus, vobis noti sunt. Facile igitur intelligetis, quæ ex iis nunc proferam. Noluit autem nunc ex libris sacris argumenta petere, sed illustrare rem quam tractabat, ad oblectandum, ut tarditatem excitaret.*” Rosenmuller.

Ch. IV. new ? If you are desirous of instruction, I will put  
Ver. 21. the case in such a form that you cannot fail to understand it, and to be impressed by it.

22. *For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by a bond-woman, and another by a free-woman.*  
23. *Now the son of the bond-woman was born after the usual manner<sup>1</sup>; but the son of the free-woman in consequence of the promise<sup>2</sup>.*

The sacred historian relates, that the patriarch Abraham, when advanced in years, had two sons : the elder of whom, Ishmael, was the son of a concubine, a female slave, in the circumstances of whose birth nothing extraordinary occurred. The younger, Isaac, was the son of Sarah, a free-woman, the patriarch's lawful wife ; the child of a divine promise, born in a supernatural way, when both his parents were very far advanced in years.

2. The apostle illustrates the different genius and spirit of the two dispensations, from the incidents

<sup>1</sup> *After the usual manner.*] So Wakefield. *κατα σαρκα*, "according to the flesh." "according to the course of nature." Worsley.

<sup>2</sup> *In consequence of the promise.*] So Wakefield. *δια της επαγγελίας*, *through the promise.* "by virtue of the promise." Locke, Chandler.

"There is so great boldness," says Dr. Priestley, "in the apostle's allegorizing of the history of Sarah and Hagar, that it cannot be supposed that he really thought that it was originally intended to be applied as he does it. But he made choice of this portion of scripture, in order to express his own idea of the different states of the judaizing Christians, and the Gentile converts : the former as in a state of bondage, the latter as free."

which occur in the history of Abraham's two sons, Ch. IV. ver. 24—30.

1.) One of these sons was born under the condition of servitude, and the other of liberty, ver. 24—26.

*Which circumstances may be allegorized*<sup>3</sup>.

Ver. 24.

The historian relates a plain matter of fact; but the narrative contains incidents which, in a figurative application, so happily illustrate the subject upon which I am now treating, that I shall take the liberty of accommodating them to it, as though they had been written for that express purpose.

*For these women are two covenants*<sup>4</sup>: the one

—24.

---

<sup>3</sup> *May be allegorized.*] ἃ τινὰ ἐστὶν ἀλληγορευμένα. See Doddridge and Chandler. “are spoken by me allegorically.” Newcome; who suspects the words to be a marginal note. They are not in the Æthiopic. “which things have a further meaning.” Wakefield. It is plain that the apostle does not mean to represent the history as an allegory; or to insinuate that it was intended by the writer to contain any mystical signification. He only applies the circumstances of the history to the illustration of the subject in hand.

Mr. Peirce of Exeter, in his dissertation upon the text, translates these words “*which things are allegorized*: and his (*the apostle's*) meaning is, that the prophet Isaiah, whose words he cites, ver. 27, has from this history borrowed the terms, wherein he hath expressed himself in a very fine and noble allegory. This rendering is exactly grammatical, and sets the apostle's discourse in a different light; and offers nothing but what is familiar in all languages, and in all authors.”

<sup>4</sup> *These women are two covenants.*] Griesbach drops the article before δύο. Bishop Pearce's emendation of the text in his *Epistolæ Duæ*, Opp. ver. 2, p. 464, is, to say the least, very ingenious, and by some may be preferred.

1.) For δαλευει δε he reads δαλευει γαρ, ver. 25, upon the best authorities. 2.) For το γαρ Αγαρ he reads το δε γαρ δε is inserted and Αγαρ is wanting in many copies. See Griesbach. 3.) The word νυν is omitted before Ιερουσαλημ in the

- Ch. IV. *from Mount Sinai, bearing children to bondage,*  
 Ver. 25. *which is Hagar, (now this Sinai is a mountain in*  
*Arabia,) who answereth to the Jerusalem now ex-*  
 26. *isting, for she is in bondage with her children; but*  
*the upper Jerusalem is the free-woman, who is our*  
*mother.*
- 

Arabic and Syriac versions; and is suspected by the bishop to have been inserted by some officious scribe to correspond with *ανω* in the following verse. 4.) By conjecture he substitutes *απο* for *ανω*, ver. 26; which is a very small alteration, as the ancients commonly wrote *ο* for *ω*. And this slight change makes the two verses exactly correspond with each other; and the parallelism holds in all its parts. The following is the bishop's translation of the three verses:

*“Hæc enim sunt duo fœdera: unum quidem a monte Sina ad servitutem generans, quod est Agar (hic enim (sc. mons) Sina mons est in Arabia, et conjunctus est Hierosolymæ); servit enim cum filiis suis. Hoc autem (sc. fœdus) ab Hierosolyma est libera (sc. Sara), quæ est mater omnium nostrâ.”*

For these are two covenants: one from mount Sinai bearing children to bondage, which is Hagar (now this Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which joins to Jerusalem); for she is in bondage with her children. But the other from Jerusalem is the free-woman, which is the mother of us all, or, *our mother*. See Griesbach; who drops *παντων*. The bishop, who renders *συνιστοιχει* *conjunctus est*, according to the Vulgate and Arabic, has no doubt of the 25th verse being a marginal gloss.

Upon Bishop Pearce's statement, Mr. Peirce observes, “that the bishop has given a very unusual, if not unauthorized sense to the verb *συνιστοιχει*, and that there is no authority but the Arabic for leaving out the word *νυν*. Upon which ground, a friend of Mr. Peirce has proposed the following improvement upon the bishop's version:

“The one covenant, from mount Sinai, bearing children to bondage, is Hagar, (for this mount Sinai is in Arabia, and answereth, in one part of the allegory, to the city, now called Jerusalem, in the other,) for she is in bondage with her children. But the other covenant, from Jerusalem, is the free-woman, Sarah, who is the mother of us all,” or, *our mother*, *i. e.* of us Gentiles, who are, therefore, free-born, and children of the promise.



In the parallel which I propose to draw, in order to illustrate the genius of the different dispensations, the two women stand for the two covenants, the Mosaic and the Christian. Hagar, the bond-woman, represents the Mosaic institution, delivered in solemn pomp by God himself to the children of Israel, from mount Sinai in Arabia. And, as the son of Hagar was born a slave, so all the children of the Sinai covenant, that is, all the Jewish people, and all who regard the temple at Jerusalem as the only authorized edifice for the peculiar solemnities of divine worship, are now, and ever have been, in a state of servitude; tied down to certain prescribed rites and ceremonies, some of which were painful, some expensive, and some inconvenient; and which, in themselves, were of no moral use. But, on the other hand, Sarah, the lawful wife of Abraham, the free-woman, represents the new covenant, which descended from above; and which is the charter of that holy and happy community which is justly called the new and heavenly Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>. All her

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 26.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The heavenly Jerusalem,*] or, according to the ingenious, and perhaps correct, suggestion of Bishop Pearce, the paraphrase would stand thus: "But Sarah, the free-woman, the lawful wife of Abraham, represents the other covenant, which was lately promulgated from the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus opened his gracious commission; where he lived and taught, and wrought miracles, and suffered death upon the cross, and rose again, and ascended to the right hand of God. Where he commissioned his apostles to teach his gospel to all nations, and endowed them with the gifts of the holy spirit, to confirm their doctrine. All her children are freeborn," &c.

Upon the whole, I prefer the simplicity of Bishop Pearce's interpretation; though Dr. Chandler's illustration of the common interpretation of the allegory is very beautiful.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 26.

children are born free, and are entitled to all the privileges of their high descent. They breathe the spirit of liberty, and are under no subjection to those servile conditions, to those harsh and degrading restraints to which the sons of the bond-woman were exposed. Now we, my friends, are these very persons: children of the free-woman; we are free-born, and, as believers in Christ, we are at liberty from all the restraints and burdens of the ceremonial law; and are the approved citizens of this new and glorious community.

2.) The analogy applies to the relative numbers of their respective descendants, ver. 27, 28.

27. *Moreover*<sup>1</sup>, *it is written*<sup>2</sup>, *Rejoice, thou barren,*

---

“By the heavenly Jerusalem,” says this learned and eloquent writer, “the apostle means the Christian church; which is a regular or well-ordered city or community, expressly called, Heb. xii. 22, *Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*; the inhabitants or members of which are, the *innumerable company of angels, the general assembly of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect*. The great Lord and Governor of which is *God, the judge of all*. The great Mediator, who formed this city, and established this commonwealth, and introduces that *covenant* which contains the charter of its privileges, and the laws of its government, and who rules and governs under God, is the blessed *Jesus*. Upon which account the Christian church is very beautifully denoted by the heavenly Jerusalem, as a city which hath the immediate symbols of the divine presence, and is the place of God’s residence, by his holy spirit. It is his favourite city, under his peculiar protection and government.”

For the proper explanation of these phrases in the epistle to the Hebrews, see the paraphrase and notes upon the text in that epistle.

<sup>1</sup> *Moreover*.] *γὰρ* is not here an illative particle, but introduces a collateral observation. The apostle having pointed out

*who bearest not ; break forth and shout, thou who travailest not in birth, for many more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath an husband. Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 27.

While I am writing, another circumstance of re-

---

the principal circumstances of the parallel, namely, servitude and liberty, other incidental circumstances of resemblance occur to him as he is writing, which he here notices.

<sup>2</sup> *It is written.*] The text cited is Isaiah liv. 1 ; which is thus translated by Bishop Lowth : “ Shout for joy, O thou barren, that didst not bear. Break forth into joyful shouting, and exult, thou that didst not travail ; for more are the children of the desolate than of the married woman, saith Jehovah.” “ The church of God,” says the bishop, “ under the Old Testament, confined within the narrow bounds of the Jewish nation, and still more so in respect of the small number of true believers ; and which sometimes seemed to be deserted of God, her husband, is the barren woman that did not bear, and was desolate : she is exhorted to rejoice, and to express her joy in the strongest manner, on the reconciliation of her husband, ver. 6 ; and on the accession of the Gentiles to her family. The converted Gentiles are all along considered by the prophet as a new accession of adopted children, admitted into the original church of God, and united with it. See ch. xlix. 20, 21.”

Mr. Peirce considers this text, which the apostle cites from the prophet Isaiah, as containing the allegory to which he alludes, and which he here pursues. And, in order to this, Mr. P. takes much pains to show that the females alluded to by the prophet are Sarah and Hagar. “ *Rejoice, thou barren, &c., q. d.* How earnestly was Sarah desirous of being a mother ! and how did she rejoice and triumph when she had a son ! *For the desolate hath many more children than she that hath a husband ;* She that was, with respect to having children, as if she had no husband, Abraham being superannuated, and herself being past age, hath many more children, &c. See Rom. iv. 19 ; Heb. xi. 11, 12. Hence she is spoken of as desolate, as having, in a manner, no husband. Hagar, though a bond-woman, was Abraham’s wife, Gen. xvi. 3, and there being nothing supernatural in the birth of Ishmael, she is said to have a husband. In short, therefore, the thing allegorized by the prophet is this :

CH. IV. semblance occurs strongly to my mind ; which is,  
Ver. 28. indeed, most encouraging and worthy of being mentioned. The posterity of Abraham by Ishmael were, agreeably to the divine promise, very numerous and powerful ; and this long before the descendants of Isaac made any figure in the world, or had a place among the nations : but in the end, the promise to the patriarch was completely fulfilled ; and the posterity of Sarah, though she was childless many years after the birth of Ishmael, and utterly despaired of having a son, greatly exceeded, both in numbers and in renown, the posterity of the bond-woman. Such shall be the final state of the Christian community, compared with that of Moses. To this the prophet alludes when he calls upon the desolate and childless woman to rejoice and exult ; for that in due time she shall be blessed with an offspring more numerous and prosperous than that of her who was married, and who first vaunted of a family. We, my brethren, who believe in Christ, are the promised posterity here alluded to ; and though our numbers are at present few, and apparently inconsiderable, be assured that, in due season,

---

that Sarah, who had been so long barren, did at last, by virtue of the promise of God, and his extraordinary blessing, bear a child to superannuated Abraham, contrary to the course of nature, and became the mother of a more numerous posterity than Hagar was, who had a child by him according to the course of nature."

Mr. Peirce further contends, that this prophecy properly applies to the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and consequently that the apostle " has explained this passage according to its original intent and design."

the divine promise will be amply and gloriously fulfilled, and the number of those who will be eventually admitted to share in the blessings and privileges of the gospel will greatly exceed that of the Jewish church in its most extended and prosperous state.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 28.

3.) The parallel holds still further, in respect to the unworthy treatment of the son of the free woman by the son of the slave, ver. 29.

*But as then, he that was born according to the flesh*<sup>1</sup> *persecuted him*<sup>2</sup> *that was born according to the spirit, even so it is now.*

29.

And, to pursue the allegory a little further, the history relates, Gen. xxi. 9, that Ishmael the son of Hagar, who was an insolent and haughty youth, and who, valuing himself upon being the first-born, expected no doubt the greatest share in his father's affection, and the largest portion of his wealth, treated with scorn the infant Isaac, the child of the free wo-

---

<sup>1</sup> *According to the flesh.*] *κατα σαρκα*, in the natural way. *κατα πνευμα*, in a supernatural way, and by virtue of a divine promise, see ver. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Persecuted.*] See Gen. xxi. 9. "The history tells us that he laughed at, derided, and mocked him to scorn, which is real persecution; probably through pride, and the conceit of his being Abraham's eldest son and heir." Chandler. "Hence we may learn," says Mr. Peirce, in his note on the passage, "that men may be guilty of persecuting, in the apostle's apprehension, without practising any open force and violence, when they treat others scornfully and abusively. Nor is it hard for men to be really persecutors, when they little imagine they are so; as no doubt the Jews in the apostle's time little thought they were chargeable with such a crime, when they used violence, but supposed they were doing God service."

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 29.

man, the heir of promise, as the feeble offspring of decrepit age : so do the unbelieving Jews, the parties in the first covenant, now treat their younger brethren the believers in Christ, the free-born sons of God, and the true heirs of the promises ; whom they regard with malignity and envy, and by every means of insult and injury are endeavouring to crush in its infancy the new and the chosen generation.

4.) The apostle closes the parallel with insinuating that the fate of the Jews will resemble that of the son of the bond-woman, ver. 30.

30. *But what saith the scripture*<sup>1</sup>? “ *Cast out this bond-woman and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not share the inheritance with the son of the free-woman.*”

---

<sup>1</sup> *What saith the scripture?*] i. e. what saith the history? See Gen. xxi. 10, 13. The apostle could not mean to insinuate that Sarah was inspired when she formed the cruel resolution of turning Hagar and Ishmael out of doors ; though for wise reasons God permitted the event to take place, and promised Abraham to protect both the mother and the child. The apostle touches with great delicacy upon the rejection of the Jews, and leaves his reader to draw his own conclusion from the fact which he states. Dr. Newcome observes, that “ it is probable that St. Paul thus adapted a part of the Mosaic history to his purpose, not only because it was conformable to the manner of teaching among the Jews, but that he might convey to his countrymen harsh truths indirectly and with address.”

“ Such arguing, or such a comparing of things as this,” says Peirce, “ is always reckoned allowable ; nor does any one imagine that he who uses it esteems the thing from which the argument is drawn to have been any prediction or type of that which is inferred from it ; but it is only a reasoning from the like causes in different cases, which is certainly strong and convincing.”



With reluctance I point out a fourth particular of resemblance, in which it is to be feared that the analogy will too closely apply. For, look into the sacred history, and what do you find to be the issue of the story? (Gen. xxi. 10, 12.) The mother of the free-born child, resenting the insult offered to her infant and herself, insists upon the banishment of the slave and her son as a punishment for his insolence: and this sentence, however cruel and unjustifiable in the party who pronounced it, is for wise reasons confirmed by God, who consoled the reluctant father by the promise of protection to his exiled offspring. But the decree was ratified and executed in its utmost rigour: the son of the bond-woman shall be rejected, and shall have no participation whatever in the privileges of the child of promise. How far this declaration applies to the present state of my unhappy and deluded countrymen, I must leave to your own reflections; it is a subject upon which it is too painful for me to insist.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 30.

3. The apostle concludes with an exhortation to believers to adhere to the liberty into which they have been introduced by Christ, ver. 31, ch. v. ver. 1.

*So then, brethren<sup>2</sup>, we are not children of the*

31.

---

<sup>2</sup> *So then, brethren.*] I agree with Locke, Peirce, Bowyer, Doddridge, Newcome, and other critics, in joining the first verse of the fifth chapter with the last of the fourth. It is the conclusion drawn from the preceding premises. The apostle by his allegory had been illustrating and establishing the proposition, that Christians are the free-born sons of God: he now exhorts them stedfastly to adhere to their Christian liberty.



Ch. V.  
Ver. 1.

*bond-woman, but of the free-woman: continue steadfast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free<sup>1</sup>, and do not by going backwards<sup>2</sup> encumber yourselves with a yoke of bondage<sup>3</sup>.*

By our conversion to the Christian religion we are regenerated, we are free-born, heirs of liberty and not of servitude; we are children of the promise, subject to no servile restraint or servile terror: filial obedience flowing from filial love is the only law which we are required to obey, and we are heirs of an everlasting inheritance. For this liberty we are indebted to Jesus, our Master and elder brother; who has published and sealed the charter of our freedom, and has admitted us into that free and happy community of which he is the head. Learn, therefore, the value of your privileges: hold fast your Christian liberty: let no one bring you into bondage. Submit to no human impositions inconsistent with the authority of Christ: do not voluntarily enslave yourselves: make no addition to the

<sup>1</sup> *With which Christ hath made us free.*] The gospel which Jesus published is the charter of our liberties, and by the profession of Christianity we are admitted into the freedom of that community of which he is the head.

<sup>2</sup> *By going backwards.*] “*παλιν* is used for *retrosum*, and perhaps that may better suit this place and Gal. iv. 9, and so the meaning here will be, ‘Don’t by going backwards entangle yourselves with a yoke of bondage.’” Peirce. “Be not again put under the yoke of servitude.” Newcome. “Fasten not yourselves in a yoke of slavery.” Wakefield; who with the Syriac and Coptic omits *παλιν*.

<sup>3</sup> *Encumber yourselves.*] “The original word *ενεχθε* signifies to be bound or held under a yoke,” &c. Chandler.

institutes of Christ: cherish a filial and a liberal spirit; and let your religious homage be that of love and not of terror. Ch. v.  
Ver. 1.

## SECTION IV.

*THE APOSTLE solemnly warns the Galatians, that a voluntary subjection to the ceremonial law excludes a man from the privileges of the gospel; he condemns the Judaizing teacher, and clears his own character from the imputation of preaching up the universal obligation of legal rites. Ch. v. 2—12.*

1. The apostle insists, that voluntary submission to circumcision is a virtual obligation to yield subjection to the law, and a renunciation of the privileges of the gospel, ver. 2—4.

*Behold, I Paul<sup>4</sup> declare to you, that if ye submit to circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing<sup>5</sup>.* 2.

---

<sup>4</sup> *I Paul.*] *q. d.* “who am an apostle of Christ by the special designation of God.” Chandler.—“who am falsely reported to preach up circumcision in other places.” Locke: which is the more probable interpretation.

<sup>5</sup> *Christ will profit you nothing.*] The apostle could not mean to say, that submission to the rite of circumcision would exclude men from salvation and future happiness: he must therefore be understood as speaking of a title to external privileges only. Circumcision was initiation into the Jewish covenant; to the blessings of which they would be entitled if they kept the law without any deviation. Faith was the initiation into the Christian covenant, and the title to its privileges. But they who sub-

Ch. V.  
Ver. 2.

You are free-born, you are entitled to all the privileges of children by faith in Christ; you are in want of nothing which those who lived under the Mosaic ritual could claim. Maintain firmly your invaluable rights. Beware of giving way in the first instance; for I myself, I who am represented as preaching one doctrine at one place, and another at another; I, the depreciated and calumniated Paul, do most solemnly and explicitly assure you, that if you submit to circumcision, your profession of Christianity will be of no use to you at all.

3. *Yea, I testify again<sup>1</sup> to every one who submits to circumcision, that he is bound to perform the whole law.*

As an apostle of Christ, qualified and authorized to determine the case, I give it as my decided judgment, that every one who voluntarily submits to circumcision voluntarily binds himself to observe the whole law: his conduct will admit of no other in-

---

mitted to circumcision, thereby virtually declared that they preferred the legal mode to the evangelical mode of obtaining covenant privileges: *i. e.* they renounced the gracious scheme of the gospel for the rigours of the law, and they must take the consequence; they must punctually fulfill the law, or they forfeit the blessings, the privileges of the community of the children of God.

<sup>1</sup> *I testify again, &c.*] The apostle repeats the sentiment, with some variation of phrase to increase the impression. See Newcome. Some of the most ancient copies omit *παλιν*. See Griesbach. Perhaps this is preferable: *q. d.* Christ is of no use; and, what is more, you are bound to keep the whole law, or your circumcision will do you no good. Or, the third verse is an amplification of the second: *q. d.* Christ is of no use. Why? Because you bind yourselves to keep the law, from which Christ would have set you free,

terpretation. Symbolical actions have no meaning, if they do not teach that whoever consents to be initiated into any society, or profession, does virtually oblige himself to submit to all the rules and engagements of that profession: so that you not only forfeit all your Christian privileges, but you incur obligations which it is impossible to fulfill. Christ would have set you free: but you reject his offer.

Ch. v.  
Ver. 3.

*Ye who seek to be justified<sup>2</sup> by the law have renounced Christ<sup>3</sup>; ye have fallen from the dispensation of grace<sup>4</sup>.*

4.

You cannot be both Jews and Christians: if you seek divine favour by the ceremonies of the law, you renounce your claim to it upon the ground of faith. If you choose justification by obedience to a ritual, you virtually and absolutely decline all claim to it by a method which releases you from ritual obliga-

<sup>2</sup> *Ye who seek to be justified.*] δικαιωθε, who are justified. See Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Ye have renounced Christ.*] κατηργηθητε απο του Χριστου, ye are abolished from Christ, wholly separated from him, as a woman from her husband by his death. Rom. vii. 2; 2 Tim. i. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 24—26. “κατ. απο τινος, is dicitur qui immunis, liber est ab aliqua re, non amplius rem cum aliquo habet.” Schleusner. See Chandler.—“ye have done with Christ.” Wakefield. —“Καταργειν denotat vim, pretium, auctoritatem rei detrahere, deinde etiam, cessare facere. Hinc κατ. απο τινος, alienum esse ab aliquo, nihil amplius rei cum eo habere.” Rosenmüller.

<sup>4</sup> *Fallen from grace.*] “from the covenant of grace.” Locke. Χαρις is here, as often elsewhere, put for the gospel dispensation, which is a dispensation of mercy. John i. 16, 17. They had fallen from grace, not as excluding themselves from eternal life, but as renouncing the gospel for the Jewish dispensation, and preferring the mode of justification by ceremonial institutions to justification by faith.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 4.

tion. If you rely upon the law, you have done with the gospel: it is of no more use to you than if it had never existed. You have forsaken the gentle yoke of Christ, and have subjected yourselves to the heavy and insupportable burden of the law. You have passed the sentence of exclusion upon yourselves, and you must abide by the consequences.

2. The apostle declares, that the true disciples of Christ entertain no hope but what is founded upon an operative faith, ver. 5, 6.

5. *For we*<sup>1</sup>, *by the spirit*<sup>2</sup>, *expect from faith that justification which is the object of our hope*<sup>3</sup>.

I do not speak lightly upon this subject; for, whatever you may have heard to the contrary, I persist in assuring you that I myself, and all who listen to my instructions, all in every place who are true and consistent believers in Christ, have learned from the gospel to depend upon faith alone, a sincere practical faith exclusive of all ceremonial institutes, for that acceptance with God, here and hereafter, which is the great object of our desire and hope.

6. *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avail-*

---

<sup>1</sup> *For we.*] The apostle himself, and all consistent believers together with him. See Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *By the spirit.*] *i. e.* being so taught by the gospel dispensation; which is here called the *spirit*. See ch. iii. 3, 5. Newcome, Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *Justification which is the object of our hope.*] Literally, "the hope of justification."—"We who follow the truth of the gospel and the doctrine of the spirit of God, have no other hope of justification but by faith in Christ." Locke.

*eth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which operates by love*<sup>4</sup>.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 6.

To sum up all in a few words: The truth of the case is, that to a believer in Christ it is a matter of no consequence whether antecedently to his conversion he was a Jew or a heathen. All that is now required of him is, to believe in the divine mission of Christ, and to live in the habitual exercise of love to God and benevolence to man. A lively operative faith is the essential and the only condition of securing an interest in the privileges and the promises of the gospel.

3. The apostle expostulates with the Galatians on their declension from the truth, and clears himself from the suspicion of having been the occasion of their error, ver. 7, 8.

*Ye were running well: who has intercepted you*<sup>5</sup>,  
*that ye should not continue to obey the truth?* This

7.

8.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Faith which operates by love.*] *q. d.* Under the new dispensation ceremonies are nothing, practical faith is every thing. See ch. vi. δι' ἀγαπῆς ενεργημένη, "rendered effectual or made operative by love; which shows itself to be a living active principle, by producing the fruit of obedience. *q. d.* Under the gospel, faith is all in all; even that firm belief of the Christian religion which influences to, and produces, a sincere love of God and our neighbour." Chandler.

<sup>5</sup> *Who has intercepted you.*] ἐνεκοψε this is the reading of the best copies. See Griesbach. ἐγκοπῶ, ἐμποδίζω. Hesychius, Phavorinus. "metaphorice, interpello, impedio." Schleusner.—"It is an Olympic expression, answerable to ἐπρεχέτε, and properly signifies coming across the course while another is running in it, in such a manner as to jostle and throw him out of the way." Doddridge.

Ch. V. *persuasion*<sup>1</sup> doth not come from him who called  
Ver. 8. you<sup>2</sup>.

When I left Galatia you were advancing in your Christian course with speed and vigour: you understood the principles of the Christian doctrine, and you adorned them by your practice: you valued your Christian liberty, and exulted in your freedom. How came this unhappy change to take place? What busy intruder has thrust you out of your way, and given you a bias contrary to truth? Your first instructor in the principles of Christianity is not responsible for this obliquity of conduct. I set you in the right way; it is some evil-minded person who has since perverted your steps, and turned you astray.

4. The apostle warns them against the progressive tendency of error, and expresses his hope that the Galatians will animadvert with due severity upon the corrupter of their faith and the disturber of their peace, ver. 9, 10.

---

<sup>1</sup> *This persuasion.*] ἡ πεισμογή, an allusion in St. Paul's manner to the preceding word πειθεσθαι. *q. d.* that ye should not obey the truth. This obedience, which you now pay to the law, cometh not from him who called you. See Locke. N.B. The clause *τη ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πειθεσθαι* was wanting in some of Jerome's copies, and in the Syriac, and is supposed to have been introduced from ch. iii. 1; where, however, it is wanting in the best copies. See Bowyer; and Griesbach, who also marks it as wanting in Chrysostom.

<sup>2</sup> *Him who called you.*] Meaning himself: see ch. i. 6. "The apostle argues thus: You were going on well in the liberty of the gospel: who stopped you? I, you may be sure, had no hand in it; I, you know, called you to liberty, and not to subjection to the law, and therefore you can by no means suppose that I should preach of circumcision." Locke.



*A little leaven leaveneth the whole mass*<sup>3</sup>.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 9.

Erroneous principles admitted and encouraged will gradually spread, and will diffuse their influence through the whole society; and though there may be but few at present who embrace or propagate them, yet if proper methods are not taken to check their progress, their abettors will increase, and the whole church will gradually be infected by them.

*But I have confidence in you through the Lord*<sup>4</sup>, *that ye will not think differently from me; but he who troubleth you shall bear his judgement*<sup>5</sup>, *who-soever he be.*

10.

Notwithstanding the success which erroneous doctrines have met with among you, and the

<sup>3</sup> *A little leaven, &c.*] Mr. Locke infers from this and the next verse, that all this disorder arose from one man. "A few seducers may corrupt all." Newcome. See 1 Cor. v. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Confidence in you through the Lord.*] ἐν Κυρίῳ. "the utmost confidence in you." Wakefield. He translates the next clause, "that ye will not alter your minds."—"I have confidence in you, that by the help of the Lord you will all be of this same mind with me; you will beware of this leaven, so as not to be put into a ferment, nor shaken in your liberty, which you ought to stand fast in; and to secure it, I doubt not, such confidence I have in you, will with one accord cast out him that troubles you. For, as for me, you may be sure I am not for circumcision, in that the Jews continue to persecute me. This is evidently his meaning, though not spoken out, but managed warily, with a very skilful and moving insinuation: for, as he says of himself, ch. iv. 20, he knew not at that distance what temper they were in." Locke.

<sup>5</sup> *Shall bear his judgement.*] "Such judgement might be censure, excommunication, or the infliction of some bodily disease. It might be future punishment also, the case of impenitence being supposed." Newcome. Mr. Locke understands κρίμα as signifying expulsion by church censure, as in the case of the Corinthian fornicator.

Ch. v.  
Ver. 10.

anxiety which I suffer on your account, my hopes still prevail over my apprehensions; and I entertain a sanguine expectation that you are so well founded in the principles of the Christian religion, that you will still adhere faithfully to the doctrine which you learned from me; and, as a proof of it, that you will pass a proper censure upon that seducing teacher who would pervert your faith and disturb your peace, whatever his rank, his abilities, or his influence may be.

5. The apostle appeals to his persecutions as proofs of the consistency of his doctrines, and insists upon the exclusion of the disturbers of their peace from their society, ver. 11, 12.

11. *But as for me, brethren, if I still preach circumcision<sup>1</sup>, why do I still suffer persecution? the*
12. *scandal of the cross would then be abolished. I wish that they might even be cut off<sup>2</sup> who trouble you.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *If I still, &c.]* A plain intimation that he had been misrepresented to the Galatians as having insisted upon the obligation of the law in other places, though he had held different language there. His persecutions demonstrated the falsehood of this calumny; for they were instigated by the Jews, and chiefly for this reason, that he boldly maintained the liberty of the converted Gentiles from the yoke of the law.

<sup>2</sup> *I wish that they might even be cut off.]* *Οφελον και αποκοψονται.* The apostle, ver. 10, had expressed his expectation that the false teacher should bear the merited punishment: he here speaks out and explains what that punishment is, viz. exclusion from the communion of the church. The construction of the original has divided the critics. Le Clerc contends that *οφελον* is never joined with a future tense, nor is the particle *και* ever interposed. He reads *οφελον* as if it were *ωφειλον*, and

I am represented as an advocate for the imposition of the Mosaic ritual; but of this calumny the persecutions which I endure are an ample and public refutation. My chief persecutors are my own countrymen; and the principal ground of their en-

Ch. V.  
Ver. 12.

renders the clause, "they ought to be cut off, and they shall be cut off." See Cler. Annot. and Bowyer. Bengelius and others put *οφελον* by itself, and read the preceding clause with an interrogation: "Is, then, the scandal of the cross taken away? I wish it were. And they shall be cut off that trouble you."

"*οφελον*, *proprie aoristus secundus est verbi οφειλω*, *debeo: sed sumitur etiam adverbialiter et denotat utinam: et est adverbium optandi quod construitur mox cum indicativo, (qui tamen non ab οφελον pendere videtur, sed a subintellecta particula ει, vel ειθε, quæ cum οφελον sæpe conjuncta reperitur: Vide Alex. Job. xiv. 13, et xxx. 24,) mox cum optativo. 1 Cor. iv. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 1; Gal. v. 12. Αποκοπτω, ambiguitate quadam laborat locus Gal. v. 12, ubi de doctoribus judaizantibus inter primos Christianos sermo est, et Paulus optat οφελον κ. τ. λ. h. e. e vulgari opinione, ut seipsos sejungerent a cætu Christianorum doctores cætum Christianorum turbantes: quæ explicatio nec ab usu loquendi abhorret, nec a contexta oratione aliena est. Nec tamen plane improbanda est sententia, Chrysostomi, Theodoreti, Theophylacti, et Augustini, quam inter recentiores maximè Grotius et Raphelius amplexi sunt, ex qua locus ita reddendus est: Per me, si velint, non modo circumcidant se, sed adeo genitalia sibi exsecant. Qui quidem sensus melius et contextui ipsi, et linguæ Græcæ consentire, affectui adeo Pauli contra doctores judaizantes, convenire videtur. Hesych. αποκοπος, ευνεχος." Schleusner. "I wish that they who are unsettling you may lament it." Wakefield. "*even cut off*, by the judgement of God; he inflicting diseases to the destruction of the body and the salvation of the soul. 1 Cor. v. 5. For the Greek, see Bowyer 4to, where Kuster *De Verbo Medio* is quoted, to show that the future of the middle voice signifies passively. St. Paul uses *οφελον* with an indicative mood, 1 Cor. iv. 8, and 2 Cor. xi. 1." Newcome. "I wish that they may be cut off (*from communion*, see ver. 10, note,) who trouble you about this matter: and they shall be cut off." Locke. I am unwilling to suppose that the apostle could wish his opponents any bodily harm; I cannot doubt, therefore, that Mr. Locke gives his true meaning.*

Ch. V.  
Ver. 12.

mity is the doctrine which I every where teach and inculcate, that the converted Gentile is exempted from the yoke of the law. But if I insisted on their submission to the Mosaic ritual, the chief cause of offence would be removed, and the zealots for the law would be in a degree reconciled to the progress of the gospel. Let the inventors and propagators of these injurious calumnies take the shame which they deserve ; and let the disturbers of your peace be cut off from Christian communion. They ought to be excluded from the church, as the perverters of its doctrine and the bane of its peace : and they shall be excluded. Christianity herself disowns them, and the true disciples of Christ will hold no intercourse with them.

## PART THE THIRD.

THE APOSTLE, NOW PROCEEDING TO THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE EPISTLE, EARNESTLY DISSUADES THE GALATIANS FROM THOSE VICES WHICH WERE TOO PREVALENT BOTH AMONG JEWS AND HEATHEN; AND EXHORT THEM TO LIVE IN THE HABITUAL AND UNIFORM PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE, AS THE ONLY MEANS OF ESCAPING FUTURE CONDEMNATION, AND OF SECURING THE BLESSINGS PROMISED BY THE GOSPEL. Gal. v. 13—vi. 10. Ch. v.

## SECTION I.

*THE APOSTLE recommends mutual affection, and contrasts the spirit of Judaism and heathenism with the spirit of Christianity.* Ch. v. 13—26.

1. Christians, though at liberty from ceremonial restraints, ought to regard themselves as bound to each other by the ties of mutual sympathy and affection, ver. 13—15.

*For ye, brethren<sup>1</sup>, have been invited to liberty.* Ver. 13.

---

<sup>1</sup> *For ye, brethren.*] "I wish they were cut off; for, brethren, such are enslavers of you who have been called," &c. Newcome. *Ye have been invited:* i. e. by me who received my commission for this purpose from Christ himself. See ver. 8, and ch. i. 6.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 13.

*Only abuse not liberty as an occasion to the flesh<sup>1</sup>, but in love be servants<sup>2</sup> one to another.*

You will consult your own advantage and the peace of the church, if you exclude from communion with you those who would enslave you to the yoke of the law. For indeed, my brethren, you were invited by me, who derived my authority for this purpose from Christ himself, into a state of absolute freedom from the yoke of ceremonies:

---

<sup>1</sup> *An occasion to the flesh.*] The words *flesh* and *spirit* have various significations in the apostle's writings; and that they are sometimes used in the sense of the tendencies to vice or to virtue in man, in which sense they are understood by most interpreters in this passage, cannot be denied. It appears to me however most agreeable to the apostle's design, and to the scope of his argument, to understand the word *spirit* in this connexion as expressive of the gospel, and of the state into which men were brought in consequence of their conversion to the Christian religion; and the word *flesh*, in opposition to *spirit*, as expressive of an unconverted state, whether of heathenism or Judaism, including under the latter pharisaism, or a superstitious attachment to traditionary rites. See ch. iii. 3. The tendency of both these states was to deprave the character, that of heathenism by vicious indulgence, and of Judaism by pride or despair. This idea he pursues at large, Rom. vi. vii. The vices thus generated he calls the works of the flesh, whether they consisted in intemperate pleasure, or in unreasonable affections of the mind; and this consideration easily explains what some expositors have regarded as a difficulty, namely, how it comes to pass that hatred, envy, contention, and heresy, are enumerated amongst the works of the flesh. See Chandler. In this sense liberty might be said to be abused as an occasion to the flesh, if, by conceiving themselves at liberty from moral restraint, they allowed themselves in the vicious habits and practices of their unconverted state.

<sup>2</sup> *Be servants.*] *δουλευετε* “though by the gospel they are called to a state of liberty from the law, they were still as much bound, and subjected to their brethren in all the offices and duties of love and good will, as if in that respect they were their vassals and bondmen.” Locke.

emancipated from heathen idolatry, you were and are under no obligation to submit to Jewish rites. Yet let me caution you not to mistake the nature of that freedom which you enjoy. You are not released from the moral law. You are not at liberty to indulge those licentious passions which heathenism encourages, nor to cherish that contracted and malignant spirit which distinguishes the pharisaic Jews. You are still subject to the law of love, and you are bound by the generous spirit of Christianity to exert yourselves to the utmost extent of your powers to promote the happiness of all around you, as if you were actually in bonds of servitude to each other.

*For the whole law is fulfilled in one precept, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another<sup>3</sup>, take heed that ye be not consumed by each other.*

In lieu of all ceremonial rites the Christian law prescribes one grand paramount maxim, that of doing good; of doing to others as you could reasonably desire that in an exchange of circumstances they would do to you. Observe this one precept, and be assured that you obey every law with which under the new dispensation you have any concern.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Bite and devour one another.*] “The words are used metaphorically (as they are by the best authors), to signify the contention, slander, backbiting and censuring, which arose from the differences between the Jewish and Gentile converts. Such a conduct was not only contrary to the Christian spirit and character, but the most likely method to prejudice themselves, and to destroy the church of Christ among them.” Chandler.



CH. V.  
Ver. 15.

But if, instead of loving, you hate one another, and, like wild beasts, snarl at and bite and worry each other, there is great reason to fear that you will be accessory to each others ruin; and be assured that no zeal for legal impositions, no superstitious adherence to burdensome institutions, will compensate for a temper and conduct so opposite to the spirit of the gospel.

2. The apostle strongly urges the Galatians to adhere firmly to the doctrine and spirit of the gospel, in opposition to the principles and practices of an unchristianized state, and assures them that by so doing they will be perfectly safe from condemnation, ver. 16—18.

16. *Now I say, Walk by the spirit, and by no means fulfill<sup>1</sup> the desire of the flesh<sup>2</sup>.*

I strictly charge you to act up to the precepts and

---

<sup>1</sup> *By no means fulfill.*] ε μη τελεσγητε, to be understood imperatively, not as in the common translation, *ye shall not fulfill*. See Locke, Wakefield, Newcome, &c. ε μη, a double negative: q. d. *by no means, on no account whatsoever*.

<sup>2</sup> *Spirit—flesh.*] “Flesh in the gospel language is that principle which inclines and carries men to ill. Spirit is that principle which dictates what is right, and inclines to good. See Rom. vii. 17, &c.” Locke.—“By the spirit the apostle means the reasonable principle or soul in every man, which God has given us to correct and govern the motions and tendencies of our fleshly appetites and passions. The *flesh*, the contrary principle in man, enticing men to such actions as their reason and conscience condemn.” Chandler. Notwithstanding these great authorities, I am inclined to believe that the apostle by *spirit* means the state of believers under the gospel dispensation; and by *flesh*, the state in which they were antecedent to conversion, whether of heathenism or Judaism. See ver. 13, note.

to the spirit of the gospel, and carefully abstain from the vices of unbelievers, whether Jews or heathen. CH. V.

*For the flesh hath desires contrary to the spirit, and the spirit contrary to the flesh; and these oppose each other, so that ye do not the things that ye would<sup>3</sup>.* Ver. 17.

The tendency of your former state of heathen idolatry, as well as of that state of bondage to pharisaic Judaism, into which your false teachers are now desirous to seduce you, is to betray you into gross and fatal immoralities; while that of the gospel is to inspire you with the love of purity and goodness. These states are therefore inconsistent with each other: so that, if you submit to Judaism in the expectation of attaining greater eminence in virtue, you will be miserably disappointed, and the severity of the law will first drive you to despair, and then plunge you into vice and ruin.

*But if ye be led by the spirit<sup>4</sup>, ye are not under the law.* 18.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Ye do not the things that ye would.*] Mr. Locke observes, that ours is the only translation which renders it *cannot*: *q. d.* You imagine that by submitting to the yoke of the law you will attain greater pre-eminence in virtue. In this you will be disappointed; for the spirit of the law will counteract that of the gospel. Locke, Chandler, Newcome, &c. understand the text as parallel to Rom. vii. 19. *q. d.* often ye do not practise what your mind approves.

<sup>4</sup> *If ye be led by the spirit:*] *i. e.* says Locke, “if you give yourselves up to the conduct of the gospel.” He observes in the note, “that it was natural for the apostle, having more than once mentioned the spirit, to continue the same word, though somewhat varied in the sense;” and he proceeds to show that the law and gospel are opposed by the apostle under the titles of ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit.’ 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8; Rom. vii. 5; Gal. iii. 3. But

Ch. V.  
Ver. 18.

If you are governed by the principles and the spirit of the gospel, you are no longer subject to the condemning sentence of the law, and the hope of mercy will be a continual motive to filial and cheerful obedience.

3. The apostle exposes and condemns the vices which were allowed and practised by the unchristianized world, ver. 19—21.

19. *Now the works of the flesh are evident. They are adultery<sup>1</sup>, fornication, impurity; lasciviousness,*  
 20. *idolatry<sup>2</sup>, sorcery<sup>3</sup>, enmities, strifes, emulations, animosities, quarrels, party divisions<sup>4</sup>, separa-*  
 21. *tions<sup>5</sup>, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revel-*

---

though it cannot be denied that the apostle does sometimes take up his words in a sense different from that in which he had used them before, yet it ought always to be presumed that he continues to use his words in the same sense, except where the contrary is evident; which does not appear to be the case in this context. And therefore, as it is clear that the word 'spirit' is here used for the gospel, it ought to be taken in the same sense throughout the whole paragraph; and 'flesh,' which is put in opposition to it, must signify the unchristianized state, whether Jewish or heathen.

<sup>1</sup> *Adultery.*] *μοιχεία* is wanting in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and in most of the ancient versions. See Griesbach.

<sup>2</sup> *Idolatry.*] "with its impure attendant rites. See 1 Pet. iv. 3." Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Sorcery.*] *φαρμακεία* the word signifies *poisonings*, or incantations and magic arts by means of *poisonous drugs* and ointments with which impostors were accustomed to delude the credulous and superstitious. See Chandler and Macknight.

<sup>4</sup> *Party divisions.*] *διχοστασίαι* *schisms*, which do not proceed to separation. See Doddridge and Chandler.

<sup>5</sup> *Separations.*] *αἵρεσεις*. Literally, *heresies*. The apostle's meaning seems to be separations, and the dissolution of socie-

*lings<sup>6</sup>, and such-like; concerning which I now forewarn you, as indeed I have told you before, that they who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Ch. V.  
Ver. 21.

You well know, my brethren, the vices which are openly practised by the unchristianized and unconverted world; who are strangers to the sublime principles and to the salutary restraints of the gospel. They allow themselves in the most licentious practices. They degrade themselves by the most stupid and contemptible idolatries. They pretend to curious arts, and the skill which they possess they employ to the most pernicious purposes. They disturb the peace of society by their mutual jealousies, animosities, contentions, and divisions. They carry their hatred and malice to such an extent, that they often hesitate not to take away the life of the unfortunate object of their envy, malignity, and revenge. Drunkenness, gluttony, and every species of riot is common amongst them. With regard to such characters, I now declare, as I formerly assured you while I exercised my ministry among you, that,

---

ties in consequence of quarrels and factions. There is no reference to theological disputes, or to heresies in the ecclesiastical sense of the word; for the apostle is detailing the vices of the unchristianized world. Dr. Chandler has introduced here a long and judicious note upon the meaning of the word heresy as used in scripture; but, for the reason above assigned, it is irrelevant to the occasion and the subject.

<sup>6</sup> *Revellings.*] *χαῖροι* “were, amongst the Greeks, disorderly spending of the night in feasting, with a licentious indulging to wine, music, dancing, &c.” Locke. See Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 3.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 21.

let them make what pretensions they will of strict conformity to ceremonial institutions, they are not, and while they continue in these practices they never can be, the genuine children of God, and heirs of the privileges of his kingdom. Ceremonial institutions, however rigorous, however regular, will never be accepted as a substitute for moral duties.

4. The apostle represents the opposite tendency of the principles and of the spirit of the gospel, ver. 22, 23.

22. *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace,*  
23. *long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance: against such things<sup>1</sup> there is no law.*

The principles of the gospel, when thoroughly understood, and carried into practical effect, will produce love to God and benevolence to man, habitual cheerfulness of mind, an earnest desire and endeavour to live in peace with all men, unwilling-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Against such things.*] “Non admodum probandam reor quorundam anxiam diligentiam, qui in hujusmodi catalogis solent et numero laborare, et in distinguendis singulis superstitiose torqueri: cum probabile sit Paulum congeriem quandam malorum et bonorum produxisse, quæ ferè consequi solent: non quod hæc sola sint, sed quod in his sit summa.” Erasmus. Hence, adds Dr. Newcome, after having made this quotation, “we may account for the addition of ἀγνεία in some manuscripts and versions, ver. 23; and perhaps for that of μωχεῖα, ver. 19. Against such like dispositions and actions there is no prohibiting or condemning law; no stern law like that of Moses, 1 Tim. i. 9.” “Tales lege non damnantur. Est meiiosis. Tantum abest, ut iis legis Mosaicæ, terrores sint metuendi, ut potius Deo sint grati, et accepti, licet non circumcisi.” Rosenmuller.

ness to resent injuries received, a mild and gentle carriage in all the intercourses of society; habitual, active, disinterested benevolence; faithfulness in the performance of promises and the execution of trusts, and uniform integrity in all transactions of business; mildness in administering reproof, and resolute government of the appetites and passions. There can be no law to punish men who live in the practice of these virtues. And they who thus adorn their profession, need be under no anxiety lest they should incur the divine displeasure by declining to connect the rites of Judaism with the precepts of Christianity.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 23.

5. The disciples of Christ, having entered upon a new life, are bound to renounce the principles and vices of their former condition, ver. 24—26.

*Now they who are Christ's<sup>2</sup> have crucified the flesh, with its passions and desires.*

24.

What I have before said of myself, individually, may justly be applied to all who believe in Christ, and who profess to be his disciples. They, like him, have died and been raised to life again. Their former idolatrous or pharisaic selves are crucified; and

---

<sup>2</sup> *Who are Christ's.*] “who belong to Christ, and are his members.” Locke. The apostle seems to allude to ch. ii. 20. It is a familiar comparison with the apostle. The believer, in his converted state, resembles a person in a former state of existence; by conversion he becomes crucified to it; by the gospel he is raised, like Christ, to a new life; and he is, therefore, bound to regulate his conduct by the laws of his new state of existence. See this thought pursued at large, Rom. vii. A strong presumption that these epistles had the same author.

Ch. V. all the evil principles, all the criminal habits and  
Ver. 24. affections, all the gross prejudices and the vicious practices of their former state are condemned to death, never to appear again.

25. *Seeing that we live by the spirit*<sup>1</sup>, *let us also*  
26. *walk by the spirit. Let us not be vain-glorious*<sup>2</sup>, *provoking one another, envying one another.*

Crucified like Christ to our former state, like him we are also raised to a new life. This great change is produced in us by the spiritual dispensation of the gospel; by the profession of which we are introduced into a new state of existence at present, and raised to the hope of eternal life hereafter. But, since this privilege is the gift of the gospel, let our conduct be governed by the maxims and spirit of the gospel; and not by the principles of our former unregenerate and unholy state. Let our characters be adorned with Christian virtue. And particularly, let us cherish a humble, gentle, and disinterested

---

<sup>1</sup> *We live by the spirit.*] The gospel introduces us into a new life; it raises us from the dead; it behoves us, therefore, to adhere to it as a rule of life. "As Christians, as new men, we live by that spirit which raises us from the death of sin." Newcome. Observe throughout, the word 'spirit' is used to signify the gospel dispensation. This shows the true meaning of the word 'flesh,' which is used in opposition to it.

<sup>2</sup> *Vain-glorious.*] "like your ambitious leader." Newcome. — "nor provoke one another by insolent boasts of our Christian liberty, or by censuring others for the use of it; nor envy one another on account of any superior advantages and abilities with which the providence of God may have favoured us." Chandler. "Whether the vain-glory and envying here were about their spiritual gifts, a fault which the Corinthians were guilty of, or upon any other occasion, I shall not curiously examine." Locke.



spirit; let us entertain a just sense of our own imperfections, not thinking too highly of our own attainments, nor too meanly and contemptuously of those of others. But while, in our respective spheres of service, we are faithful and diligent in the performance of our own duty, let us not repine, but rejoice, if any of our fellow-labourers are honoured with superior talents, and crowned with more abundant success.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 26.

## SECTION II.

*THE APOSTLE recommends gentleness in reproof; humility, liberality to Christian instructors, and perseverance in doing good.* Ch. VI.  
Ch. vi. 1—10.

1. The apostle recommends prudence and gentleness in administering reproof; sympathy, humility, and self-examination, ver. 1—5.

*Brethren, if a man be overtaken<sup>3</sup> by any fault,* Ver. 1.

---

<sup>3</sup> *If a man be overtaken.*] *q. d.* if a man be carried away before he is aware. *εαν και προληφθῇ* “if a man by frailty or surprise fall into a fault.” Locke. “It expresses surprise by which a person might be drawn into sin without any deliberate design.” Chandler. “if a man be even discovered in any offence.” Newcome. “*Si quis invitus et improvise abreptus fuerit vitio quodam. Vide Elsner et Kypke. Sed vertunt alii interpretes sic: etiamsi quis deliquisse deprehendatur.*” Schleusner. This latter sense is adopted by Grotius. Griesbach joins the last verse of the preceding chapter to this: *q. d.* Let us not insult over each others frailties and offences, but rather endeavour to rectify what is amiss in ourselves and others.

CH. VI.  
Ver. 1.

*do ye who are spiritual<sup>1</sup>, restore<sup>2</sup> such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself<sup>3</sup>, lest thou also be tempted<sup>4</sup>.*

My Christian brethren, instead of envying the superior attainments of others; instead of tempting each other to what is wrong; instead of enjoying an ungenerous triumph if a person, supposed to be eminent for prudence and piety, should disgrace his character by unbecoming conduct; our profession inculcates, and it behoves us to exercise, a very different spirit. If, indeed, it should ever happen, as, from human frailty, it undoubtedly may, that a person professing Christianity, through the influence of former habits, or by sudden temptation, should be surprised into sin, let those who are eminent for gifts and virtues, and for their rank and station in

<sup>1</sup> *Ye who are spiritual.*] πνευματικοί. “who are eminent in the church for knowledge, practice, and gifts. 1 Cor. iii. 1, xii. 1.” Locke; which is the general opinion of the expositors. I am rather inclined, with Dr. Whitby, to understand it as principally referring to those who were instructors of the church, and who were qualified for this office by spiritual gifts. Dr. Chandler interprets, “you, in whom reason and religion are stronger principles, &c. A spiritual man in the New Testament, is either one who is endued with the gifts of the spirit, or one who is spiritually-minded.”

<sup>2</sup> *Restore such an one.*] καταρτιζετε. “*restituo rem in suum locum aut statum, restauro quod ruptum et dissolutum est.*” Schleusner. *To set a limb that is out of joint.* “It properly signifies to reduce and recover every thing to its original state of perfection.” Chandler. See 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Considering thyself.*] Jerome and Le Clerc note this change of person as a solecism. Blackwall and Doddridge remark it as a beauty. See Erasmus *in loc.*

<sup>4</sup> *Be tempted.*] πειρασθης. “be overtaken.” Wakefield; who argues that it signifies the same as ληφθης.

the church, take the case in hand; and let them endeavour to bring the offender to penitence and reformation. Let not the disjointed limb be roughly handled, or, immediately cut off; but rather, by patience and prudence, let it be gently restored to its place, where it may again, in due time, become ornamental and useful to the body. For consider, my friends, that the very best men are frail; and none can say how soon his own virtue may be exposed to a severe trial. Let him, then, conduct himself to an offending brother in the same manner in which, in similar circumstances, he should himself think it right to be treated by others.

*Bear ye one another's burdens<sup>5</sup>, and thus ye will fulfill the law of Christ<sup>6</sup>.*

2.

In the progress of life, and in the profession of the Christian faith, we all have our trials; and often to the full extent of our ability to bear them: every one knows his own burden, and finds it heavy enough: we need not to have it increased by any unnecessary addition to the load. And yet, my brethren, such is the strange propensity of some among you, that they are eager to impose upon you

---

<sup>5</sup> *Bear one another's burdens.*] “Bear with one another's infirmities. 1 Thess. v. 14; Rom. xv. 1.” Locke, Newcome.

<sup>6</sup> *Ye will fulfill, &c.*] *ανα πληρωσετε*, in the future tense, is the reading of most of the ancient versions, and is adopted by Mr. Wakefield. “As some were so very zealous for the law of Moses, St. Paul here puts them in mind of a law which they were under, and obliged to observe, the law of Christ. And he shows them how to do it, viz. by bearing one another's burdens, and not by increasing their burdens by the observances of the Levitical law.” Locke.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 2.

the burden of the law of Moses, encumbered with their own pharisaic rites, the burden of its impositions, and the burden of its curse; a weight which is sufficient to press you down to the pit of destruction. But the gospel which you profess breathes a very different spirit. Bear one another's burdens, and do not add to them. Sympathize in each other's sufferings; comfort one another under trouble; relieve distress where it is in your power, and encourage the feeble-minded. These, my brethren; are the requisitions of the mild dispensation under which you live. If you comply with them, if you obey this easy, this reasonable, this lovely rule of life, you manifest your allegiance to Christ, and fully approve yourselves the faithful subjects of his heavenly kingdom, entitled to all the privileges and immunities of his auspicious reign.

3. *For, if any man<sup>1</sup> conceiteth that he is something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

Let me add, that if there should happen to be any person among you, my brethren, who, despising the pure and simple precepts of Jesus, should think highly of himself, because of his attachment to the ritual law; should exhibit himself as a model of imitation, and as a standard of truth; and should be loud in his censures of those who do not yield implicit deference to his authority; and if, after all,

---

<sup>1</sup> *If any man.*] There seems to be an evident allusion to the judaizing teacher, though the proposition is expressed generally. Indeed, Mr. Wakefield's translation fixes it directly upon him: "Now if a certain person think himself to be something, he deceiveth his own heart, for he is nothing."

it should appear upon examination that such a person has no foundation upon which to build his presumptuous claims, let that man know that he will find himself, in the issue, most egregiously deceived, and that his folly and his vanity will terminate in his own disgrace.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 3.

*But let every man try<sup>2</sup> his own work, and then he will have reason to glory on his own account, and not on that of another<sup>3</sup>. For every man must bear his own burden<sup>4</sup>.*

4.

5.

Instead of meddling with and censuring others, let every man examine himself, let him inquire se-

<sup>2</sup> *Try.*] “by the test of the evangelical law; and then he will have matter of glorying in his personal obedience, and not in causing others to judaize.” Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Not on that of another.*] “See ver. 13; the apostle in both places means the same thing; viz. glorying in another, in having brought him to circumcision, and other ritual observances of the Mosaic law.” Locke. Wakefield reads *ἐταίρον*, “then he will keep his boasting to himself, and not boast against his neighbour.”

<sup>4</sup> *His own burden.*] i. e. of his own faults. See ver. 2. “Thus,” says Mr. Locke, “St. Paul seems to me to discourse in this section: Brethren, there be some among you that would bring others under the ritual observances of the Mosaic law, a yoke which was too heavy for us and our fathers to bear. They would do much better to ease the burdens of the weak; this is suitable to the law of Christ, which they are under, and which they ought strictly to obey. If they think that, because of their spiritual gifts, they have power to prescribe in such matters, I tell them that they have not, and that they deceive themselves. Let them rather take care of their own particular actions, that they be right, and such as they ought to be. This will give them matter of glorying in themselves, and not vainly in others, as they do when they prevail with them to be circumcised. For every man shall be answerable for his own actions. Let the reader judge (continues this admirable expositor) whether this does not seem to be St. Paul’s view here, and suit with his way of writing.”

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 5.

riously and impartially into his own character and conduct; let him consider how they correspond with the spirit of the gospel; let him reform what is amiss, and improve what is imperfect. By these means he will acquire true satisfaction and peace of mind, and will have reason to rejoice on his own account, in his own character and hopes; nor will he then be inclined to boast of a fancied superiority to his brethren, and much less in his attempts to bring them over to his own opinion and party, and to subject them to the tyranny of the law. For all this will be of little avail in the great day when men will be judged according to their works, and to their real character, and not according to the estimation in which they have been held by themselves or others. In that day, every one must be responsible for his own errors and offences; and they who have been severe in their censures of others will then need, but will seek in vain for, that mercy which they have so unrighteously withheld. Nor will their professed subjection to the law of Moses, nor all their zeal in making proselytes, be of any avail.

2. The apostle urges the Galatians to make a competent provision for the teachers of religion, and to persevere in the practice of virtue and benevolence, ver. 6—10.

6. *Now let him who is instructed in the word, communicate in all good things<sup>1</sup> to him that instructeth.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Communicate in all good things.*] “make the teacher thereof

Let those who are taught the important truths of the Christian revelation be liberal to their pious and faithful instructors ; and cheerfully contribute what may be necessary for their support and comfort. It is but reasonable that they should have a suitable compensation for their time and labour ; and it is the appointment of Christ that the teachers of his religion should be maintained by those who derive benefit from their instruction.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 6.

*Be not deceived<sup>2</sup> : God is not deluded ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that he will also reap.*

7.

Do not excuse yourselves by frivolous pretences from the discharge of this duty. It is required by God. And though the persons who are immediately

a partaker in all his good things." Wakefield. "The exhortation," says Dr. Chandler, "is founded upon this rule of equity and gratitude, that benefits conferred deserve suitable returns." He adds, that "we may observe that the maintenance of the preachers of the gospel was, in the primitive church, by the voluntary contributions of the Christian people ; and that the divine right of tythes was a doctrine much later than the times of the apostles." See Phil. iv. 15 ; 1 Cor. ix. 11. "If this was their duty," says Dr. Whitby, "towards such teachers as had no need of books or study to fit themselves for the work, they being enabled for it by immediate assistance and gifts of the Holy Ghost ; how much more towards them who spend much time and money to fit themselves for that work, and must be still employed in studying and reading to make themselves such workmen as need not to be ashamed !"

<sup>2</sup> *Be not deceived, &c.*] "The apostle here, with great propriety and force, exposes the evasions some would make use of to excuse themselves from acts of liberality ; by which, however they might impose upon others, they would egregiously deceive themselves, as every circumstance lies open to an all-seeing God, and they assuredly should reap according as they sowed ; a metaphor which he employs elsewhere to excite liberality, 2 Cor. ix. 6." Doddridge.



Ch. VI.  
Ver. 7.

aggrieved may not be able either to reply to your sophistry, or to redress their own wrongs, God is the impartial judge between you and them. None of your vain pretences can impose upon him; nor will it be possible for you to elude his retributive justice. Proportioned to your seed-time will be your future harvest. To the bountiful and kind, bounty and kindness shall be abundantly exercised; but to the penurious and the niggardly, the recompense will be correspondent to their deeds.

8. *For he who soweth on the flesh<sup>1</sup>, from the flesh will reap destruction; but he who soweth on the spirit, will from the spirit reap everlasting life<sup>2</sup>.*

The produce will naturally partake of the qualities of the soil upon which it grows. A bad soil will corrupt the good seed, which a rich and fertile soil would invigorate and cherish. He who professes the

---

<sup>1</sup> *He who soweth on the flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction.*] So Mr. Wakefield. The flesh and the spirit are the soil upon which the seed is sown, and corresponding to the soil will be the produce. A bad soil will corrupt the best seed, and destroy the most vigorous plant. A good soil will nourish and invigorate the seed, and produce an abundant crop. The *flesh*, agreeably to the sense in which the word has been before used, is the heathen, unchristianized state, the produce of which is weeds and unwholesome plants. He that soweth on the flesh is the man who professes faith in the Christian religion, but whose heart is unconverted; the fruit which he will bear will be putrid and worthless. He that soweth on the spirit is the cordial and practical believer in the gospel; who bringeth forth fruit to holiness, the end of which is everlasting life. To sow upon the spirit is to receive the truths of the Christian religion in a good heart.

<sup>2</sup> *Everlasting life.*] “The apostle makes use of the terms *corruption* and *life*, in correspondence to the nature of those principles of *flesh* and *spirit*; the flesh being liable to corruption, and spirit or breath being the principle of life.” Priestley.

Christian religion, while he is in his heart a heathen, will naturally practise those vices of a heathen state which will terminate in ruin. But he whose heart is upright and pure, and whose profession is sincere, will abound in those fruits of virtue and piety, and in those acts of liberality and beneficence, which are the surest pledge of everlasting happiness.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 8.

*And let us not grow weary of doing well, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

9.

Let us then faithfully and resolutely persevere in the practice of duty, though it may sometimes require great labour, and patience, and self-denial; though we derive no immediate advantage from it; and though our spirits are at times depressed and discouraged at the little good which we appear to do. If we hold out to the end, we shall succeed. We are scattering the good seed upon a soil apparently rough and barren. But in due time it will take root and spring up, and reward our anxiety and toil with an abundant harvest. The labourer at least shall not lose his own reward. But in order to this, it is necessary that we should not relax in our virtuous exertions, much less fold our hands, and sit down in despair.

*So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men<sup>3</sup>, but especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

10.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Do good unto all men.*] “How generous the spirit which Christianity inspires! None that need our assistance are to be excluded from it, when it is in our power to give it. And yet how wise and just is the limitation here fixed by the apostle!

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 10.

To conclude : Let us ever cultivate a benevolent, disinterested, and liberal spirit. Let our good wishes extend to all mankind ; and, as far as opportunity offers, let us contribute to the happiness of all, without distinction, and without excluding those who may differ most widely from us in principles and profession : no, nor yet our enemies and persecutors, if it should be in our power to help them. But as the exercise of benevolence is necessarily restricted, let us be most kind to those with whom we are most intimately connected, and who may be most benefited by our exertions ; particularly to our fellow-Christians, who are brethren of the same family, heirs of the same glorious hopes, and who are exposed to the same difficulties, trials, and dangers, with ourselves ; who are therefore entitled to a peculiar share in our sympathy and affection, and to whom our good offices may often prove of essential service.

---

Nature teaches men to provide in the first place for their household and family ; and reason instructs them to regard the most worthy objects of charity in their first and largest distributions. And both these reasons concur to direct the Christian to do good, especially to the household of faith." Chandler.

## CONCLUSION.

*THE APOSTLE closes his epistle with a severe animadversion upon the judaizing teachers, with a solemn declaration of the liberty of Gentile Christians, with an earnest profession of his own sincerity, and with the apostolical benediction.* Ch. VI.  
Ch. vi. 11—18.

1. He calls their attention to the circumstance of his having written the whole letter himself, ver. 11.

*See in what large characters<sup>1</sup> I have written to you with my own hand.* Ver. 11.

As I have been greatly calumniated by my opponents, and charged with duplicity of conduct, it might possibly be alleged, if I had employed an amanuensis as usual, that my signature was forged, or that the letter did not express my real sentiments.

---

<sup>1</sup> *In what large characters.*] *πηλικοις γραμμασι* this expression is usually understood of the length of the letter; but Dr. Whitby observes, that St. Paul uses the word *επιστολαι* seventeen times, but never the word *γραμματα*, when he speaks of his epistles; also that the Greek scholiast conceives that the expression refers to the largeness and inelegancy of the characters in which it was written. The apostle probably chose to write this whole epistle himself, to give testimony under his own hand and seal to the importance of his doctrine and the consistency of his character; and to preclude the possibility of the pretext that the letter was forged. He probably wrote the Greek characters ill and with difficulty, which might be the reason why he commonly employed an amanuensis. See Doddridge.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 11.

To preclude every objection of this kind, I have written the whole epistle myself, that my own hand-writing may bear testimony to the doctrine which I teach. And that it is my hand-writing you may easily perceive from the large and ill-shaped characters in which the letter is written, which discover the writer to be one not much used to writing Greek.

2. The apostle directly charges the judaizing teachers with acting from sinister and selfish motives, ver. 12, 13.

12. *All those<sup>1</sup> who are desirous of making a specious appearance<sup>2</sup> in the flesh would constrain you to be circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted<sup>3</sup>*  
 13. *for the cross of Christ. For they who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law<sup>4</sup>, but they de-*

<sup>1</sup> *All those.*] ὅσοι, “as many as.”

<sup>2</sup> *A specious appearance.*] εὐπροσώπησαι “the word properly signifies, to be handsome and lovely: hence it is used to signify any thing that recommends itself by its specious appearance. This was the case of these judaizing teachers: they made it their study to keep fair with the Jews ἐν σαρκί, *by means of the flesh*; not only by boasting of their own circumcision, but that they had pressed the necessity of circumcision upon others.” Chandler. ἐν σαρκί, “in the ritual observances of the law; which, Heb. ix. 10, are called δικαιώματα σαρκός.” Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *That they may not be persecuted.*] Dr. Whitby observes from Jerom, “that Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius Cæsar, had made laws that the Jews dispersed through the whole Roman empire should live according to their own laws and ceremonies: whosoever, therefore, was circumcised, though he believed in Christ, was by the Gentiles deemed a Jew; but they who had not this token were persecuted both by Jews and Gentiles.”

<sup>4</sup> *Do not keep the law.*] “For how, saith Theodoret, could they in Galatia regularly observe the Jewish feasts, or offer sacrifice, or cleanse themselves from their defilements by touching

*sire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh*<sup>5</sup>.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 13.

When these zealots urge you to submit to the yoke of the Mosaic institute, they profess great zeal for your interest, and pretend that obedience to the ceremonial law will be of the greatest advantage to you. But the truth is, they are only pursuing their own selfish purposes. They desire to pass themselves off as Jews, and so to escape persecution; as the Jewish religion is tolerated through the Roman empire. They wish, therefore, to conciliate the minds of the Jews by representing you to them as proselytes to their law, whereas they are themselves convinced that the law is of no use; and while they are persuading, and even compelling you, by their imperious language, to conform rigidly to it as a matter of indispensable obligation, they themselves make no scruple of violating the Mosaic precepts, and they screen themselves from censure by boasting of their zeal and their success in your conversion to Judaism.

3. The apostle boasts in emancipation from the Jewish law by the death of Christ; and declares that a practical faith in the gospel is of itself quite

---

any thing that was unclean?" Whitby. But the apostle no doubt means to insinuate, that those zealots who bound the yoke of the law upon others were themselves very negligent in observing its precepts. See Matt. xxiii. 4, 5.

<sup>5</sup> *May glory in your flesh.*] "might boast of this among the Jews, that they promoted circumcision even among the Gentiles, and by that pretence might avoid persecution." Whitby.

Ch. VI. sufficient to entitle a believer to mercy and peace,  
ver. 14—16.

Ver. 14. *But far be it that I should glory<sup>1</sup> except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world<sup>2</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> *Far be it that I should glory, &c.]* μη γεινοιτο. See Newcome and Wakefield.—“glorying in the cross of Christ, is opposed to the judaizers’ glorying in circumcision: it is glorying in the plain unmixed doctrine of justification by a crucified saviour.” Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *The world is crucified, &c.]* “by means of which doctrine the world was of no more account to him, he valued the applauses of men, and the riches and pleasures of the world, no more than a dead body hanging upon a cross; and by means of which he was crucified to the world, of no more esteem with worldly men than that loathsome and wretched spectacle.” Chandler.—“I view the world as little impressed by all its charms, as a spectator would be by any thing which had been graceful in the countenance of a crucified person, when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death; and am no more affected by the objects around me, than one that is expiring would be struck with any of those prospects which his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he was suspended.” Doddridge. Mr. Locke, Archbishop Newcome, and most other expositors, understand the words in a similar sense. With deference, however, to these great authorities, I am inclined to agree with those critics who understand κοσμος in this connexion to signify the Jewish dispensation, as it unquestionably does Gal. iv. 3, and Col. ii. 8, 20.—“Nulla amplius Judæorum et religionis Mosaica mecum est conjunctio.” Schleusner.—“Propter Christum, inquit, illa judaica vanitas, cum suis commodis, mihi crucifixa est, non me movet vel allicit; repudio eam.” Rosenmuller. But as it is certain that the apostle was not released, and did not regard himself as personally released, from his subjection to the ceremonial law, it seems most reasonable to understand him as speaking in the name and under the character of a converted Gentile. In the same lax sense he uses the first person singular in Rom. vii. See Locke’s preface, p. vi. Still, however, though to avoid giving offence the apostle submitted to the rites of the law, he was dead to all dependence upon it, or expectations from it.



May I never boast of that in which these hypocrites place their glory, in making proselytes to the Jewish ritual. Nor, indeed, may I ever value myself upon any thing else but upon being a faithful and unwearied preacher of the true doctrine of my master Jesus, the illustrious person in whom all the purposes of the law were fulfilled, and by whose public death upon the cross a new dispensation is introduced and ratified, and the former covenant is so completely superseded and abolished, that it may be considered by all converts to Christianity as absolutely dead; and believers in Jesus, even those who were formerly Jews, may be regarded as persons who are in a sense dead to their former connexions and obligations, and as having entered upon a new and better state of existence.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 14.

*For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision any thing<sup>3</sup> nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.*

15.

To say the truth, to those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, no rites or ceremonies are of any use. It matters little whether they were originally Jews or heathen; they are by faith born into this new world which God has created: In other words, they thus become members of the visible church; and being separated from the mass of the unbelieving world, they are entitled to the privileges of the pro-

---

<sup>3</sup> *Is any thing.*] The best copies for *ισχυει*, *availeth*, read *εστι*, *is*. See ch. v. 6. A "new creation" is the introduction into a new state of things by faith in Christ; by which believers, whether Jews or heathen, are brought into covenant with God. It is parallel to ch. v. 6, "faith which worketh by love." See 1 Cor. vii. 19; Eph. ii. 10.

Ch. VI. fessing people of God. It is not circumcision, it is  
Ver. 15. a new creation, and a new life, which now entitles them to be registered as children of God.

16. *And as many as shall walk according to this rule, peace and mercy will be upon them<sup>1</sup>, even upon the Israel of God.*

If they who are thus by faith introduced into a new and privileged state have wisdom to make a proper use of their privileges, and to govern their temper and conduct by the rules of their profession, and the precepts of Christ, they shall most assuredly obtain all the invaluable blessings which the gospel promises, forgiveness of sins, peace here, and happiness hereafter. For these persons, whether they were originally Jews or Gentiles, whether they use ceremonies or neglect them altogether, are the true Israel of God, the genuine offspring of Abraham, heirs of the promises, and the worthy objects of divine complacency and benevolence.

4. The apostle solemnly professes his own devotedness to the service of Christ, ver. 17.

17. *Henceforth let no man give me trouble<sup>2</sup>, for I bear in my person the marks of the Lord Jesus<sup>3</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Will be upon them.] “peace and mercy shall be upon them, they being that Israel which are truly the people of God.” Locke. See also Chandler. “will be upon them.” Wakefield. Newcome and others translate the words as expressing a kind wish: Peace be upon them.

<sup>2</sup> Let no man, &c.] “by questioning my character and mission.” Chandler.

<sup>3</sup> The marks, &c.] “*σημα* properly signifies a mark that was imprinted on the hands of the soldiers when they were en-

For the future, let no one doubt of my attachment to the Christian doctrine and to the principles of Christian liberty: nor let any one presume to charge me with duplicity of conduct, and to add to my persecutions by calumniating my character. I carry in my person the marks of subjection to a master, and devotedness to a chief: not indeed to Moses and his law, but to Jesus, whom I am proud to acknowledge as my leader: and of my fidelity and attachment to him and to his cause, those numerous scars which I carry about with me, and which are the indelible effects of my sufferings for his sake, are ample and incontestable proofs.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 17.

5. The epistle closes with the apostolical benediction, ver. 18.

*The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren*<sup>4</sup>. *Amen.* 18.

My Christian brethren, for as such I will still regard you, and by this endearing appellation will continue to address you; for, notwithstanding the

---

listed and had their names entered into the military roll: this mark was commonly the emperor's name. Thus our apostle had those marks imprinted upon him, either by his sufferings for Christ, or, through the number and greatness of the revelations he had received from him, as made it abundantly appear under what general he was enlisted." Chandler.

<sup>4</sup> *With your spirit.*] "that is, *with you*: in other epistles it is *μεθ' ὑμῶν*, 1 Cor. xvi. 23; or *μετα πάντων ὑμῶν*, Rom. xvi. 24; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; Phil. iv. 23." Whitby. The postscript which affirms this epistle to have been written from Rome is not found in the Alexandrine, Ephrem, Clermont, or other of the most ancient and approved manuscripts, and is undoubtedly a mistake.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 18.

freedom and even the severity of language which I may have used in the course of this epistle, I still entertain a kind affection for you: and as the best proof of my regard, I conclude, my dear brethren, with expressing my earnest wish that our common Master Jesus Christ may behold you with complacency, and that the invaluable blessings of his gospel in all their purity and freedom may long remain among you. Amen.

---

---

THE EPISTLE  
OF  
PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO  
THE EPHESIANS.

---

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE EPISTLE entitled TO THE EPHESIANS was written by the apostle Paul about the year 62, while he was a prisoner at Rome; and was sent at the same time with the epistles to the Colossians, and to Philemon, and by the same messengers, Tychicus and Onesimus: ch. vi. 21.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "There is," says Dr. Priestley, "a peculiar dignity and sublimity in this epistle, as well as the strongest marks of the most earnest affection to those to whom he writes; and the same has been observed of all the epistles which he wrote from Rome. He probably knew that he was near the close of his life; of a long and laborious warfare, as it may be called, in the cause of Christianity, of the great value of which he was fully sensible: he therefore writes with that energy with which a man may be supposed to give his last admonitions to those he loves, respecting their most important interests."

It is one of those epistles the genuineness of which was never disputed by the ancients, who were best qualified to decide upon the subject, and who took great pains to gain information. And the train of thought, the style of argumentation, the structure of the sentences, the peculiarity of phrase, and the allusions to facts, constitute a strong body of presumptive evidence that the epistle is justly ascribed to the apostle Paul as its author.

Nevertheless, there is great reason to believe that this epistle was not addressed by the apostle to the church at Ephesus. In all the epistles which are inscribed to churches which Paul had himself planted, and where he had for some time resided, there are frequent allusions to the visit he had made to them, and to memorable events and circumstances which had occurred during his residence among them. This is evident in the epistles to the Thessalonians, the Galatians, the Philippians, and the Corinthians. But though the apostle had visited Ephesus twice at least (Acts xviii. 19, xix. 1); though, in his second visit, he had passed the greater part of three years amongst them (Acts xx. 31); though he had been exposed to great danger in that city, in consequence of the uproar excited by Demetrius (Acts xix. 30), to which, in other epistles, he is supposed to allude with great emphasis and feeling (1 Cor. xv. 32, 2 Cor. i. 8); and though he had taken so affectionate a farewell of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus in his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 17); yet of all this he takes no notice at all through

the whole of the epistle, but writes in general terms, as if he were addressing believers who were almost, if not altogether, strangers to his person. It is observable that in one place (Eph. i. 15) he speaks of *his* having *heard* of *their* faith and love; and in another (ch. iii. 2) he makes the supposition that *they* had *heard* of *his* divine commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. No evidence could more decisively prove that he was not at that time addressing a body of Christians with whom he had been for years in the habits of familiar intercourse.

It is plain from a passage in the epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 16), that the apostle had written a letter to the church of Laodicea. It also appears from the same epistle (ch. ii. 1), that he had never visited that church in person. And as he requires that the epistle to the Colossians should be read to the Laodiceans, and that of the Laodiceans to the Colossians, it is highly probable that this is the epistle which was originally addressed to the Laodiceans. For the two epistles were written at the same time, were sent by the same messengers, they treat on the same subject, and were composed in the same style; so that they mutually illustrate each other, and serve as a useful commentary upon each other; and, indeed, one can hardly be understood without the other. And as the subject in both is discussed in a rhetorical declamatory style, it is very probable that the apostle might wish that both the letters might be read by the same persons, that so the subject might be the better understood. In



all the manuscripts now extant the epistle is inscribed to the Ephesians ; but some copies in possession of Basil, an ecclesiastical writer of the fourth century <sup>1</sup>, wanted the word Ephesus, as if the transcriber had been uncertain to what church the epistle was addressed, or had considered it as intended for a general circular letter. And Marcion, a learned Christian in the second century, who was stigmatized as a heretic by those who assumed the title of orthodox, says that the epistle was inscribed to the Laodiceans ; which is probably the fact <sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Basil, speaking of this epistle, says, “ and writing to the Ephesians as truly united to him through knowledge, he called them, in a peculiar sense, *such who are*, saying τοῖς ἀγίοις τοῖς ἔσσι, *to the saints who are, and the faithful in Christ Jesus*. For so those before us have transmitted it, and we have found it in ancient copies.” Hence Mill and others have inferred that the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ were wanting in Basil’s copies ; L’Enfant, Lardner, and others, deny this conclusion ; but Paley, with his usual correctness of judgement, remarks, “ that the passage must be considered as Basil’s fanciful way of explaining what was really a corrupt and defective reading ; for I do not believe it possible that the author of the epistle could have originally written ἀγίοις τοῖς ἔσσι, without any name of place to follow it.”

From this omission, Archbishop Usher conjectures that this epistle might be intended as a circular epistle to any of the churches of the Lesser Asia, whose name might be occasionally inserted to fill up the blank. Usser. *Ann.* A.D. 64. See Doddridge’s *Introduction*. Bengelius and Haenlein adopt Usher’s hypothesis. See Rosenmuller, *Introd. ad Eph.* ; who himself adheres to the common opinion, together with Locke, Whitby, Lardner, Chandler, Doddridge, Newcome, Macknight, Priestley, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Grotius argues, from the testimony of Marcion, that this epistle was inscribed to the Laodiceans ; for, however erroneous his doctrine, or however faulty his character might be, his testimony was admissible to a fact which had no connexion with his errors. “ *Marcio hanc epistolam vocat ad Laodicensēs, ex fide, ut credibile est, Ecclesiæ Laodicensis. Nam cur in ea re*

To account for the early and prevailing error in the address of the epistle, it has been ingeniously, and not improbably, conjectured, that Tychicus, who was intrusted with the epistle, passing through Ephesus in his way to Laodicea, permitted the Ephesians to read and to take a copy of the epistle to the Laodiceans, leaving out the name of the city to which it was directed; and that other churches, transcribing from the copy at Ephesus, which was probably more known than that at Laodicea, erroneously apprehended that the epistle was originally addressed to the Ephesian church<sup>3</sup>.

The objections urged by the late learned and acute Edward Evanson against the genuineness of this epistle are of great force, upon the supposition that the epistle was inscribed to the Ephesians, but

---

*mentiretur nihil erat causæ."* This he supposes to be the epistle to which Paul refers Col. iv. 16. Benson and Paley argue strongly in favour of the same hypothesis; also Mill, Vitringa, and Wetstein.

<sup>3</sup> "Whoever (says Dr. Paley) inspects the map of Asia Minor will see that a person proceeding from Rome to Laodicea, would probably land at Ephesus, as the nearest frequented sea-port in that direction. Might not Tychicus then, in passing through Ephesus, communicate to the Christians of that place the letter with which he was charged? And might not copies of that letter be multiplied and preserved at Ephesus? Might not some of the copies drop the words of designation, *ἐν τῇ Λαοδικείᾳ*, which it was of no consequence to an Ephesian to retain? Might not copies of the letter come out into the Christian church at large from Ephesus? and might not this give occasion to the belief that the letter was written to that church? And lastly, might not this belief produce the error which we suppose to have crept into the inscription?" *Horæ Paulin. Ephes.* No. 4.

are of no validity if the epistle was written to the church at Laodicea <sup>1</sup>.

PAUL was the apostle of the Gentiles ; and it was in the faithful discharge of this honourable mission that he had been attacked with savage fury by a Jewish mob, and, after having been confined for two years as a prisoner in Judea, had been sent to Rome, and had continued there in bonds two years longer. Of this subject his heart was full ; and his main design in this epistle, and in that to the Colossians, is to express his gratitude to God for his great goodness in admitting Gentiles to equal privileges with Jews in the Christian community ; and his admiration and delight, that he, who was once an ignorant, bigoted, persecuting pharisee, should be singled out as the apostle of this gracious dispensation. This is a circumstance which ought to be continually kept in view in reading the epistles that are dated from Rome, and particularly this to the Ephesians. To modern Christians it appears so natural and reasonable, that the benevolent parent of mankind should be impartial in his dispensations towards all his rational offspring, and they are so entirely unaccustomed to national distinctions and preferences, that they hardly know how to make sufficient allowance for those who were placed in dif-

---

<sup>1</sup> See Evanson's *Dissonance*, ed. 2, p. 312. The learned writer denies that there is any evidence that this epistle was inscribed to the church at Laodicea. There is indeed no direct evidence, but the supposition is at least plausible.

ferent circumstances ; and the rapturous language of the apostle upon this subject is apt to appear unnatural, affected, and insipid. This objection, however, will vanish, if the reader will keep in mind the history and character of the apostle, and the peculiar circumstances under which these epistles were written.

Born a Jew, educated a pharisee of the sternest *caste*, holding all the heathen of every rank, and even the Jewish *populace* themselves, in sovereign contempt, and execration, a hater of the Christian name, and a savage persecutor of the Christian faith, it might well be matter of astonishment and gratitude, that God, in his free and sovereign mercy, should have vouchsafed to step out of his usual course, to arrest such an one in his mad career, to humble him who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, and the very chief of sinners, at the feet of that Jesus whom he had insulted and persecuted, and to subdue him to the Christian faith, by the personal appearance of Christ to him for this purpose on the road to Damascus.

But that one who had been so bitter an enemy, so malignant a persecutor, should not only be converted to the faith, but that he should be appointed a teacher of the Christian doctrine ; that he should be invested with the authority and credentials of an apostle, in no respect inferior to the very chief of that venerable body ; that he should be honoured with a special commission to the Gentiles ; that it

should be one principal object of this mission, to proclaim liberty to the Gentile believer, and to offer him all the privileges of the gospel, accompanied with entire exemption from the yoke of the law; and finally, that he at this very time should be a sufferer and a prisoner, for this reason only and for no other, because he had preached the gospel in this liberal form to the Gentiles: all these considerations rushing at once into the apostle's mind, overwhelmed him with astonishment, delight, and gratitude. He labours for language to express what his heart so intensely feels. And while he abounds in the loftiest expressions of admiration and thankfulness for the great mercy of God to the Gentile world, in inviting them to the privileges of the gospel, unshackled with the rigours of the law; and to himself in particular, in employing him as the missionary for this gracious purpose; he at the same time earnestly presses upon those to whom he writes, that they would firmly adhere to the pure uncorrupted doctrine which he had taught them; and urges them not to regard his own sufferings as any objection either to his mission or to his doctrine; for that these were so far from being to himself a cause of uneasiness and regret, or, a reproach to the cause which he espoused, that he accounted the chain he wore as his ornament and glory, as the sure pledge of a triumphant remuneration at the day of Christ's appearance; and even as a corroborative evidence of the authenticity of his mission.

If the reader, therefore, will take into consideration this peculiar state of the apostle's mind, the rapturous and glowing language of the epistles which are dated from Rome, far from being inflated and overstrained, will appear to be the natural and appropriate expressions of the apostle's ardent and energetic feelings.

And these considerations will account in a satisfactory manner for the manifest difference between the style of the epistles which were dictated at Rome by Paul the PRISONER, and the other letters of the same apostle. In the former he gives vent to his intense and exalted feelings in a sort of rhapsodical declamation, under a strong impression that he approached the termination of his arduous but glorious course; while in the latter, he usually adopts the calmer language of reasoning and persuasion: not indeed without some occasional bursts of natural and strong eloquence. So that this diversity of style in epistles written under circumstances so very different, which to some has appeared in the light of an objection to the epistles sent from Rome, is in fact a presumptive argument in favour of their authenticity.

THIS EPISTLE, like the rest of those which the apostle indited, is partly *Doctrinal* and partly *Practical*. The *Doctrinal* part is contained in the first three chapters, and the *Practical* in the last three. —In the *Doctrinal* part, the apostle,

I. After the usual *Introduction*, expresses his gratitude to God for the *privileges* of which the Gentiles equally with the Jews are made to participate through Christ, in consequence of their eternal predestination to it by the pure infinite mercy of God. Ch. i. 1—14.

II. The apostle prays that his Christian friends may be duly sensible of that great *exertion of divine power* which was exhibited in elevating them to the hope of the gospel; a power analogous to that by which Christ was raised from the dead, and advanced to heaven; an exertion prompted by boundless, unmerited goodness; and the design of which was to raise them to a state of dignity, virtue, and happiness. Ch. i. 15—ii. 10.

III. In order to impress upon their hearts a just sense of the value of their privileges, the apostle reminds his Christian friends of the great *disadvantages of their former Gentile state*, from which they are delivered by the death of Christ, in consequence of which, they are now incorporated with the chosen people of God. Ch. ii. 11—22.

IV. The apostle, meaning to enter upon the practical part of the epistle, incidentally mentions his own situation as a *prisoner* for having preached the gospel to the Gentiles. And in order to obviate any discouragement which might arise from this circumstance, he introduces a digression, in which he reminds them of the revelation which had been made concerning the admission of the Gentiles into



the new covenant ; he dwells with rapture upon the great honour conferred upon himself as an apostle of this new and gracious dispensation ; he hints at the powerful evidence which accompanied the preaching of the gospel ; he exhorts them not to be disheartened at his sufferings in the cause, which were indeed a confirmation of his testimony ; he prays for their establishment in the faith ; and concludes this part of the epistle with a suitable doxology. Ch. iii. *throughout*.

Entering now upon the *Practical* part of the epistle, the apostle

1. Exhorts to the practice of various *personal* and *social* virtues. Ch. iv. 1—v. 21.

2. He insists upon the *relative* duties. Ch. iv. 22—v. 9.

3. He recommends resolute *opposition* to whatever would alienate their regards from the Christian faith. Ch. v. 10—20.

4. He concludes the epistle with a *salutation* and *benediction*. Ch. v. 21—24.

The language of this epistle is, as I have already observed, in many places highly figurative and rhetorical. It cannot be understood without much attention ; but the true explanation of it will serve as a key to the solution of some obscure phrases, the misinterpretation of which has laid a foundation for many of those popular errors by which the Christian doctrine has been corrupted and debased.

I shall conclude with the words of Grotius:  
“*Paulus jam vetus in apostolico munere, et ob  
evangelium Romæ vinctus, ostendit quanta sit vis  
evangelii præ doctrinis omnibus: quomodo omnia  
Dei consilia ab omni ævo eo tetenderint; quam ad-  
miranda sit in eo Dei efficacia: rerum sublimita-  
tem adæquans verbis sublimioribus, quam ulla un-  
quam habuit lingua humana.*”

---

# THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

---

## PART THE FIRST.

THE APOSTLE TREATS OF THE PRIVILEGES OF GEN- Ch. I.  
TILE CONVERTS, AND ENDEAVOURS TO IMPRESS  
UPON THE HEARTS OF HIS READERS A JUST SENSE  
OF THEIR INESTIMABLE VALUE, AND OF THE OB-  
LIGATION THEY ARE UNDER TO DIVINE MERCY.  
Ch. i.—iii.

### SECTION I.

*THE APOSTLE, after a suitable introduction, ex-  
presses his gratitude to God for his great good-  
ness in the admission of Jews and Gentiles with-  
out distinction to the privileges of the Christian  
church. Ch. i. 1—14.*

1. THE apostle opens the epistle with a suitable  
Introduction and Salutation, ver. 1, 2.

*PAUL, by the will of God<sup>1</sup> an apostle of Jesus* Ver. 1.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul, by the will of God.] Dr. Chandler observes, that “the

Ch. I. *Christ, to the saints*<sup>1</sup> *who are at Ephesus*<sup>2</sup>, *even*  
 Ver. 2. *the believers*<sup>3</sup> *in Christ Jesus, favour be to you*  
*and peace from God our Father, and from our*  
*Lord Jesus Christ*<sup>4</sup>.

This letter comes from Paul, who by the merciful interposition of God was converted to the Christian faith, and invested with the high and honourable commission of preaching the gospel of Jesus, and of being a chosen witness to his resurrection from the dead. And it is addressed to those persons at

---

apostle asserts his divine mission and character at the beginning of his letter, that the doctrine he delivered in it might carry the greater authority and weight."

<sup>1</sup> *Saints,*] that is, holy persons, separated by their profession of Christianity from the rest of mankind, like the Jews, without any respect to moral character. 1 Cor. i. 2; Rom. i. 2; Exod. xix. 6, &c. See Locke and Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *At Ephesus.*] This reading is supported by all the copies and versions now extant; though, for the reasons assigned in the Introduction, it is probably a mistake. Basil's manuscripts omitted the word, and Marcion read Laodicea. See Griesbach *in loc.*

<sup>3</sup> *Believers.*] *πιστοίς, faithful.* Mr. Locke observes that "this word is found in the introductions to the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, but to no other epistles of Paul; and he understands it of those "who stood firm to Christ: which he (the apostle) did not count them to do who made an observance of Jewish rites a requisite part of the Christian religion."

<sup>4</sup> *From God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.*] "You see," says Dr. Priestley, "how the apostle constantly distinguishes God from Christ. Indeed there is no passage in the New Testament in which Christ is so much as called God, though in an inferior sense. Could the apostle have foreseen how strangely the Christian doctrine would have been corrupted in this respect, he might have taken more effectual methods to prevent it: but considering that he had not, and without a particular revelation could not have had, the least suspicion of any such thing, nothing could be better calculated to guard against it than the manner in which he has uniformly expressed himself on this subject."

Ephesus and elsewhere, who by their public profession of Christianity have separated themselves from the unbelieving world, and especially to those who faithfully adhere to the purity and to the liberty of the gospel, without blending Jewish rites with Christian doctrine. And my first wish for you all is, that you may enjoy that peace which flows from a faithful profession of the gospel, which is the free gift of our heavenly Father, communicated to us by our honoured Master Jesus, whom we receive and acknowledge as the promised Messiah.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 2.

2. The apostle gives thanks to God for the conversion of the Gentiles to the Christian faith, ver. 3, 4.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us<sup>5</sup> with every spiritual blessing<sup>6</sup> in heavenly places<sup>7</sup> in Christ<sup>8</sup>,*

3.

<sup>5</sup> *Who hath blessed us.*] Mr. Locke has taken great pains, in a note upon this text, to show that by the expressions *we* and *us* in this chapter the apostle means converted Gentiles in general, with whom St. Paul frequently joins himself. Rom. v. 1—11; Eph. i. 11, iii. 6. See also Chandler, Macknight, and Newcome.

<sup>6</sup> *Every spiritual blessing.*] “*i. e.* the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, and the invaluable benefits of redemption.” Chandler.—“every blessing, so as not to need any assistance from the law.” Locke.

<sup>7</sup> *Heavenly places.*] “*i. e.* the Christian church; which is now what the Jewish church formerly was, the chosen and peculiar community of God. See Eph. ii. 6, and Mr. Locke's note on Eph. i. 10. See also Dr. Chandler's note upon the text, and Dr. Macknight.—*In heavenly things.* Newcome: “in matters relating to heaven and leading us there.”

<sup>8</sup> *In Christ.*] “*i. e.* Christian, or belonging to Christ. Rom. xvi. 7, *q. d.* in the Christian church as distinguished from the Jewish. Or, who hath blessed us, *by* or *through* Christ, with

Ch. I. according as he chose<sup>1</sup> us in him before the founda-  
 Ver. 4. tion of the world<sup>2</sup>, that we might be holy<sup>3</sup> and  
 spotless before him<sup>4</sup>.

Join with me, my brethren, in thankful acknowledgements to that holy and benevolent Being, whom our Master Jesus has taught us to regard as his and our God and Father, by whom he was ap-

every spiritual blessing. “*ἐν Χριστῷ*” per Christum, *ejusque salutarem doctrinam*.” Rosenmuller.

<sup>1</sup> *He chose us.*] As the Jews were formerly the chosen people of God, whom he selected from the mass of mankind to the possession of peculiar privileges (see Ps. cv. 6), so now believers in Christ are elected in the same manner and in the same sense. This by no means implies an arbitrary election of a few individuals to eternal life. See Chandler.—“chose the body of the Gentiles in Christ, to become disciples of Christ.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Foundation of the world.*] “of the Jewish state.” Wakefield. “before the law was, even before the foundation of the world.” Locke. Dr. Chandler observes that the word *καταβολή* is used for the beginning of any thing, and that the phrase signifies, *before the world began*; and he supposes the apostle meant to humble the pride of the Jews, who boasted that the world was created for their sakes. “We here see,” says Dr. Priestley, “how familiar it is with the sacred writers to speak of things being done before the world was, when it was only in the divine councils that they should be done: Christians could not be chosen before they were Christians. In like manner Christ is said to have glory with God before the world was; when the meaning is, that this glory was designed for him, as these honours were designed for all Christians, before either Christ or Christians had any existence.”

<sup>3</sup> *Holy.*] *ἅγιοι*. “Saints,” says Mr. Locke, “in St. Paul’s epistles, is known to signify Christians, who are now the people of God.” “*Ἄωμοι*, innocentes, sine vitio: *quemadmodum in vetere lege arietes et boves qui Deo offerebantur*. Lev. i. 3, iii. 6.” Grotius, Rosenmuller.

*Before him.*] With Griesbach and Wakefield I finish the sentence with *αὐτῷ*, “before him;” and join *ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, “in love,” to the next period.

pointed to his honourable office, and from whom he derived all his powers and qualifications for the work. To his God and ours let us give thanks, that he has in consequence of our profession of Christianity admitted us, though Gentiles, into the community of his peculiar people, and has liberally imparted to us all the privileges of the new and spiritual dispensation, without annexing any burdensome conditions. And be it known to you for your comfort and satisfaction, that this extraordinary and unhopèd for blessing is not the consequence of any change in the divine councils, but from the very beginning of time he purposed to select those of the human race who would believe in Jesus, and to separate them from the unbelieving world, that, being possessed of the best means of moral improvement, they might excell all others in the practice of virtue.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 4.

3. This great blessing was the result of his eternal love, and communicated by Jesus; whose death was the seal of our forgiveness, ver. 5—7.

*Having long ago<sup>5</sup> in his love appointed us his adopted sons<sup>6</sup> through Jesus Christ<sup>7</sup>, according*

5.

---

<sup>5</sup> *Having long ago.*] προοριστας. Wakefield. “The word,” says Dr. Chandler, “properly signifies to determine, appoint, or decree any thing beforehand; and when applied to God in the case before us, it denotes his everlasting purpose, or his fixed resolution and decree before the creation of the world, to receive the believing Gentiles without circumcision into the privileges of his church and people.”

<sup>6</sup> *Adopted sons.*] υιοθεσιαν. Gr. “to the adoption of sons.” To the Jews as a nation pertained the adoption, Rom. ix. 4, Exod. iv. 22: that is, they were favoured with pri-



Ch. I.  
Ver. 6.

- to the good pleasure of his will<sup>1</sup>, to the praise of his glorious kindness, with which he graciously favoured<sup>2</sup> us through that beloved son, in whom we have deliverance, through his blood<sup>3</sup>: even forgive-*

vileges beyond all other nations, as the first-born is preferred amongst the other children. Thus the Gentiles are now appointed to the adoption of sons, being invited by the gospel to nobler privileges than the Jews were ever favoured with. See Chandler and Locke.

<sup>1</sup> *Through Jesus Christ.*] διὰ that is, by the mission and doctrine of Christ; who was authorized to publish the joyful tidings, and to impart the glorious privileges.

<sup>1</sup> *According to the good pleasure of his will.*] εὐδοκίαν τῇ θελήματι. It was the free unmerited gift of God to the Jews to receive and acknowledge them as his people; and the communication of the blessings of the gospel to the Gentiles in consequence of believing, is equally the effect of free, unsolicited, and unmerited kindness. See Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *Graciously favoured.*] ἐχαρίτωσεν. Dr. Chandler observes, that "this word is not used by profane authors. It occurs Luke i. 28, 30, where it is properly rendered, *thou art highly favoured*; and the true rendering of it in this passage is not as we have translated it, "made us accepted," but "highly favoured us." So also Mr. Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *Deliverance, through his blood.*] ἀπολυτρωσιν. "The word (says Dr. Chandler) signifies deliverance from any thing. Luke xxi. 28; Rom. viii. 23; Heb. xi. 35." *By the blood of Christ:* that is, by means of his death. "Christ by dying," says Dr. Chandler, "annulled that law which pronounced accursed every one who did not continue in all things written in it to do them. Gal. iii. 17; Eph. ii. 16, 17." "The manner of speaking that some have allowed themselves (continues this learned and masterly expositor), from this representation of Christ's death by his blood, viz. that a drop of Christ's blood was sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, is a very crude and unjustifiable expression, that hath nothing in reason or scripture to support it; for the great stress which scripture lays, is constantly upon the death of Christ, and not upon any shedding of his blood which implies less than his actually dying. Not to add, that his death would have been a very needless expense, could the deathless shedding of a drop, or the greatest part of his blood, have as effectually answered the purposes of God's

*ness of our offences*<sup>4</sup>, according to the riches of his kindness.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 7.

I repeat it again, that from pure benevolence, without any foreign consideration whatever, prompted solely by infinite love, our heavenly Father long ago marked us Gentiles out as persons who, by the mission and ministry of Jesus and his apostles, were to be invited and received into his family, upon equal terms with his ancient people, to be acknowledged by him as his children, and to be provided with a suitable inheritance. This is a privilege and a blessing so far beyond all that could have been imagined or expected by poor ignorant idolatrous heathen, that it may justly be called a glorious display of divine loving-kindness which demands our highest gratitude and praise. And the manner in which this

---

grace; and they who by such kind of expressions think to honour Christ, should take care that they do not impeach the wisdom and goodness of God the Father." The blood of Christ is the blood of the new covenant, 1 Cor. xi. 25; *i. e.* by which the new covenant is ratified. It is into the participation of the blessings of this covenant that believers are introduced; and in this sense they obtain redemption by or through the blood of Christ.

<sup>4</sup> *Forgiveness of offences.*] "The forgiveness of sins here spoken of," says Dr. Chandler, "is not the eternal justification of sinners from all the sins they are or can be guilty of during the whole course of their lives, but strictly and precisely this, Their being justified and delivered from all the sins of their Gentile state, and so reconciled to God as to become his people, and put into a capacity of final and eternal salvation." Gentiles, as such, being out of covenant, are *sinners*. Believers are in a corresponding sense *holy, reconciled, and adopted*. Forgiveness of sins, therefore, in this connexion, is admission to the privileges of the gospel: it is the translation from an unholy to a holy state.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 7.

blessing is conferred enhances, if possible, its intrinsic value. The gracious message was first announced by Jesus Christ, who, in consideration of the honourable office to which he was appointed, was publicly declared to be the beloved Son of God, in whom he was well pleased; and who, in obedience to his Father's will, suffered death, in order to ratify the new covenant by which we, being delivered from the disadvantages and miseries of our heathen state, are admitted to the privileges and hopes of the sons of God. Such are the riches, and such the unsolicited and abounding freedom of the divine mercy to a numerous class of mankind, who seemed to be abandoned to hopeless ignorance, and vice, and ruin.

4. The apostle celebrates the goodness of God in communicating to believers the knowledge of the new dispensation, which was before an impenetrable mystery, ver. 8—10.

8. *Which he made to overflow on us*<sup>1</sup>, *in all wis-*  
9. *dom and understanding*<sup>2</sup>, *by making known to us*

---

<sup>1</sup> *He made to overflow.*] See Knatchbull, Wakefield, Mac-knight. “*Quam liberalissime nobis exhibuit.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>2</sup> *In all wisdom and understanding.*] *q. d.* which riches of his grace he exhibited abundantly to us who believe, by a great increase of wisdom and understanding—which increase of wisdom was effected by making known (γνωρισας) to us the mystery, &c.: compare Col. i. 9. “I cease not to pray—that ye may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Newcome's Translation. Mr. Locke also refers to Col. i. 28, ii. 2, 3, as parallel passages, which plainly show “that the apostle means by wisdom and understanding, a comprehen-

*that mystery<sup>3</sup> of his gracious will<sup>4</sup>, (which he had long before purposed in himself,) concerning<sup>5</sup> the dispensation of the fulness of times<sup>6</sup>, that he would reunite<sup>7</sup> all things, both in the heavens and upon earth<sup>8</sup>, under one head in Christ.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 9.  
10.

sion of the revealed will of God in the gospel, and particularly of the mystery of God's purpose of calling the Gentiles." Dr. Chandler also approves of this interpretation, though he acknowledges that the words will bear a very good sense if understood of the wisdom of God in the gospel dispensation.

<sup>3</sup> *Mystery.*] The secret purposes of his counsel with respect to the call of the Gentiles; "which," says Dr. Chandler, "is the usual sense of the word mystery in the New Testament." He supposes an allusion to the idolatrous mysteries of Diana, whose temple and worship at Ephesus were celebrated all over the world. Mr. Locke remarks that the purpose of God in the call of the Gentiles is called a mystery five times in this epistle, and four times in the epistle to the Colossians; and he thinks that the design of the apostle is to keep the Gentiles from attending to those Jews who would persuade them to submit to the yoke of the law, by assuring the Ephesians and Colossians that the Jews knew nothing of the divine purpose, which had been revealed to him with the express view of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

<sup>4</sup> *His gracious will.*] τὸ θεληματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ. literally, *of his will, according to his good pleasure.* The phrase is exactly parallel to ver. 5; κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τὸ θεληματος αὐτοῦ.

<sup>5</sup> *Concerning.*] εἰς. See Newcome. "at the dispensation." Chandler.

<sup>6</sup> *The dispensation of the fulness of times.*] "the gospel covenant." Gal. iv. 4. Macknight rightly interprets it, "of the dispensation in which all former dispensations terminated, and which was erected when the time fixed for it was fully come."

<sup>7</sup> *Would reunite.*] ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι "properly signifies," says Locke, "to recapitulate." Dr. Chandler renders the word *to comprehend, sum up, or collect* under one head in Christ, i. e. *to unite under Christ as their common head.* Archbishop Newcome gives the verb the force of the middle voice; his version is, "that he would gather together to himself in one, all things through Christ." "*Ut nempe omnes creaturæ intelligentes in cælo et in terra, per Christum in unam societatem adducerentur.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 10.

For the better understanding of the following paraphrase, it is necessary to observe, that the word *mystery*, in the apostle's writings, expresses not some obscure and unintelligible doctrine that is still imperfectly made known, but a truth or fact which, having been unknown in former ages, is now distinctly revealed. And in this epistle, as well as in that to the Colossians, in which the word frequently occurs, it uniformly signifies the call of the Gentiles, which, though it was always intended in the eternal purpose of God, had not been clearly revealed to the Jews.

It is also of great importance to the right under-

---

<sup>a</sup> *Heavens and earth.*] Whitby, Chandler, and the generality of expositors, understand 'things in the heavens and things on earth' to mean 'angels in heaven and believers on earth, whether Jews or Gentiles.' See Newcome; who refers to John vi. 37, 39, for an instance where the neuter is used for the masculine. Mr. Locke and Dr. Macknight understand the expression of 'Jews and Gentiles,' which seems to be the true sense of the phrase. Mr. Locke has an excellent note upon the text, which he closes with modestly observing, "However, this interpretation I am not positive in, but offer it as matter of inquiry to such who think an impartial search into the true meaning of the sacred scriptures the best employment of all the time they have." "*τα εν θρανοις diversè explicatur. Multi intelligunt de dæmonibus, vel de mortuorum hominum animabus, alii de Judæis. Koppe τα εν θρανοις και τα επι της γης, putat esse periphrasin universi, ut h. l. intelligantur omnes omnino homines sine discrimine gentis, Judæi et Barbari.*" Rosenmuller; who, however, himself, prefers the interpretation 'angels and men.' Perhaps the sense of this intricate period may be thus expressed:

'Which riches of his goodness he has abundantly exhibited to us, having enriched our understanding with a clear knowledge of that mystery which was the object of his gracious and eternal purpose, and which relates to that dispensation which has now, at the fulness of time, taken place: namely, that he would reunite under one head, even Jesus Christ, all descriptions of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles.'

standing of the epistle, to be apprized that the expressions 'heaven' and 'earth' are used in a figurative sense, and signify nothing more than 'Jew' and 'Gentile,' the persons who *are*, and they who *are not*, in a state of privilege and covenant with God. This sense of the words was not unusual amongst the Jews. The prophet Daniel calls the Jewish nation 'heaven,' Dan. viii. 10; and our Lord, (Luke xxi. 26,) by 'the powers of heaven' means 'the great men of the Jewish state.' Also Capernaum, by its privileges, is said to be exalted to heaven, Matt. xi. For this interpretation we are indebted to that excellent expositor, Mr. Locke; and it is unquestionably the true key to the interpretation of many difficult passages, the misunderstanding of which has greatly misled the Christian world, and given occasion to many strange conceits concerning the laws and state of the angelic powers, which, if true, are of no use; and would therefore never be made the subject of divine communication. That the apostle expresses himself in this figurative manner, may easily be accounted for by his unwillingness to give offence to his countrymen, and by the delicacy which he always observes in mentioning a subject so painful to himself, and so offensive to them, as the conversion of the heathen, and the rejection of God's ancient people. The following exposition, therefore, may perhaps convey the true meaning of the apostle's language.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 10.

God has abundantly manifested those riches of

Ch. I.  
Ver. 10.

his goodness to us Gentile believers, by revealing to our minds a doctrine which is to us the excellency of wisdom; far surpassing all the boasted philosophy of the schools. This he has done by unfolding to us that mysterious purpose which had hitherto been concealed under an impenetrable veil; that purpose which was formed from eternal ages in the councils of infinite benevolence, and which relates to a dispensation which, after the revolution of the destined number of ages, is now at its proper season introduced into the world. Of which new and glorious dispensation this is the gracious purport and tenor: That Gentiles as well as Jews are admitted, upon equal terms, into the kingdom of the Messiah; that they shall be collected into one body under Christ; that all shall enjoy equal privilege and equal favour; and that all invidious distinctions shall for ever cease.

5. Of this mercy the Jews were the first partakers; the invitation of the gospel having been first addressed to them, ver. 11, 12.

11. *In him<sup>1</sup>, by whom also we<sup>2</sup> were invited<sup>3</sup>, (hav-*

---

<sup>1</sup> *In him.*] Dr. Chandler observes that “these words are very injudiciously made, in our version, the end of the tenth verse; whereas they ought to be the beginning of the eleventh, being in strict connexion with it.”

<sup>2</sup> *By whom also.*] *q. d.* “We are united in him by whom, &c.” The change of persons in ver. 11 and 13 makes it probable that the apostle is here speaking of the believing Jews, especially if the phrase ‘things in heaven and things on earth,’ ver. 10, is to be interpreted of Jews and Gentiles. Mr Locke’s objection, that the Jews are never represented as without hope,



ing been predestinated according<sup>4</sup> to the purpose of him who performeth all things according to the determination of his own will<sup>4</sup>;) that we who first hoped in Christ<sup>5</sup> might be to the praise of his glory<sup>6</sup>.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 11.

12.

Though the Gentiles are invited, the Jews, the ancient people of God, are not excluded from the

seems of little weight, especially as, on the one hand, the expression προηλπικotas does not necessarily imply that they were before entirely destitute of hope; and on the other, the apostle has taken great pains in the epistle to the Romans, ch. ii. iii., to prove that the Jews, by their immoralities, were reduced to a situation little superior to that of the unconverted heathen; so that every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God, Rom. iii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Were invited.] εκληθημεν this is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, Corbey, and other ancient manuscripts of great repute, and of the old Italic and Vulgate versions. It is marked by Griesbach as of good authority; and seems preferable, as being more intelligible, and better suiting the connexion, than εκληρωθημεν, which is the common reading, and which some render 'we have obtained an inheritance,' and others, with Locke and Chandler, 'we are become the lot of his inheritance.' The Ephrem manuscript is mutilated in this passage.

<sup>4</sup> Determination of his own will.] See ver. 5, 9. his benevolent will. "liberrima voluntas: Est in his verbis descriptio Dei omnipotentis, et immutabilis, qui omnia facit pro sua voluntate, nec mutat quod semel voluit." Rosenmuller.

<sup>5</sup> Who first hoped.] προηλπικotas, q.d. who were the first believers in the gospel; to whom it was preached, and by whom it was accepted before it was offered to the Gentiles. Dr. Chandler offers a different, but a very good, interpretation: "The words literally rendered are, who before hoped in Christ. And this I think a proper characteristic of the Jews; they had the promises of the Messiah, and therefore hoped in him before the time of his actual appearance." See Rosenmuller. "who have hoped in Christ from the first." Wakefield.

<sup>6</sup> To the praise of his glory.] "might praise him for his glorious mercy vouchsafed to us." Chandler. "ut inserviremus laudi divinæ, qui jam olim expectabamus Messiam." Rosenmuller.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 12.

blessings of the gospel. It was an essential part of the plan formed in the eternal councils of infinite wisdom and benevolence, that the privileges of the new covenant should be offered in the first place to the descendants of Abraham. In pursuance of this purpose, Jesus himself, during the whole course of his personal ministry, preached to them only, and even limited the invitations of mercy to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And when he appeared to his apostles after his resurrection, and gave them a commission to preach his gospel, it was accompanied with a strict injunction that they should begin at Jerusalem, and make the first offers of the blessings of the new covenant to their own countrymen. And though it is but too true, that the generality of the Hebrew nation despised and rejected the doctrine of Christ, and hated and persecuted the teachers of it, yet it is also true, that myriads have received the tidings with joy; of which number I have the happiness to be one. And the great design of this mercy exhibited to us was, that we who were the expectants of the promised Messiah, and the first believers in the Christian doctrine, the first whose immortal hopes were founded on the promises and the resurrection of Jesus, might be duly sensible of, and gratefully acknowledge, our distinguished privileges; and that we might, by our conduct, reflect honour upon our Christian profession, and, by our unwearied exertions, might bring many others, both Jews and Gentiles, to the knowledge of the truth.

6. In the same manner the 'Gentiles had been invited by Christ to the participation of the blessings of the gospel, and had been endowed by him with the holy spirit as an earnest of the future inheritance, ver. 13, 14. Ch. I.

*By whom ye also were invited*<sup>1</sup>, *when ye heard the word of truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; by whom also*<sup>2</sup>, *after ye believed, ye were sealed*<sup>3</sup> *with the holy spirit of promise*<sup>4</sup>, *which is* Ver. 13.  
14.

<sup>1</sup> *Ye were invited.*] The change of persons shows that the apostle is now speaking of the Gentiles. The construction of the 13th verse is the same with that of the 11th, and therefore, as Locke and Chandler have observed, requires the same word to be supplied: ver. 11, by whom we Jews were invited: ver. 13, by whom ye Gentiles were also *invited*—to the praise of his glory.

<sup>2</sup> *By whom also.*] The same construction continues. by whom we Jews were invited—ver. 13. by whom ye Gentiles were also invited, &c.—and *by whom* ye also, upon believing, were sealed, &c.

<sup>3</sup> *Were sealed.*] The gifts of the spirit, communicated by the imposition of the apostle's hands, to primitive converts upon their profession of faith, authenticated the truth of the Christian doctrine, and marked those who possessed them as the people of God; and in this view they are figuratively represented as God's seal. In the same sense circumcision is represented as the seal of God's covenant with Abraham, Rom. iv. 11. "The use of a seal," says Dr. Chandler, "is for confirmation and certainty, to ascertain and establish any thing written or done, as the act and deed of the person who writes and does it. In this sense the spirit conferred on those who believed is metaphorically called God's seal; because, as it was conferred immediately by God, in confirmation of the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ, it was a solemn assurance and proof to those who received it that they were accepted of God. Hence among the primitive Christians baptism itself was frequently styled a seal, because this spirit was frequently received immediately after baptism. Under the Old Testament Abraham received circumcision as a seal, Rom. iv. 11; not to make him a righteous person, but as a testimony from God, that he accepted him as

Ch. I.  
Ver. 14.

*the earnest<sup>1</sup> of our inheritance, for the redemption of the purchased possession<sup>2</sup>, to the praise of his glory<sup>3</sup>.*

The blessings of the gospel having been first offered to the Jews, the ancient people of God, and having been by them too generally rejected, were,

such." Macknight says, "In allusion to the custom of merchants who marked their bales or parcels with seals, to distinguish them from the goods of others, Christ is said to have marked the Gentiles as the children of God, by bestowing on them the gifts of the spirit, see Acts xi. 18. It is well known that the servants in the temples of particular gods had marks on their bodies by which they were distinguished." The spirit, therefore, was a seal by which it was manifested to the world that they who possessed it were the chosen people, the sons of God.

<sup>1</sup> *Spirit of promise.*] That is, the spirit promised by the prophets of God to the Jews, and by Christ to his apostles.

<sup>1</sup> *The earnest.*] "*ἀρράβων* signifies both an *earnest* and a *pledge*; it is a part of the price paid as a security for the remainder, or it is something of value which is lodged with the creditor to be redeemed when the debt is paid. In both senses it may be figuratively applied to the gift of the holy spirit." Chandler. As the spirit is a *seal* to notify their state and character to others, so it is an *earnest* or *pledge* to assure themselves, and to satisfy their own minds that they are the sons of God; a portion of his inheritance, a part of his family.

<sup>2</sup> *For the redemption of the purchased possession.*] This is the third object of the gift of the spirit: it is, first, a seal, to notify to the world; it is, secondly, an earnest to encourage the believer; thirdly, it is also given for the redemption of the purchased possession. The purchased possession is *the church* which Christ purchased (*περιποιήσατο*) with his own blood, Acts xx. 28; and believers are called a *purchased people*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Redemption does not always signify 'paying a ransom,' but 'deliverance from a slavish state.' So God is said to redeem the Israelites from the house of bondage, Deut. vii. 8. The spirit therefore was sent, *εις*, for the redemption of the purchased possession, as it was by the gifts of the spirit, and the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles, that the Christian doctrine made its way in the world.

"This interpretation (says Mr. Locke, to whom we are

by the command of Christ, offered to you Gentiles: and when the apostles and messengers of Jesus instructed you in the pure doctrine of Christ, and made known to you the joyful tidings of deliverance from ignorance, and vice, and misery, and of a resurrection to everlasting life and happiness, Christ did, by these his chosen servants, invite, and as it were beseech, you to accept the offers of mercy. Happily for you, ye were induced by the evidence proposed, to receive the doctrine, and publicly to profess your faith in Christ, and your subjection to his authority. In consequence of which he vouchsafed to you the promised effusion of his holy spirit, in various miraculous gifts and powers. This spirit he communicated as the *seal* of your adoption, the public and sensible token of your admission into the family of God, and of your title to the character and inheritance of his children. He imparted it also as to yourselves an *earnest* and *pledge* of the divine favour; so that you cannot doubt that you are re-

Ch. I.  
Ver. 14.

---

wholly indebted for this admirable solution of a most difficult passage,) best answers Paul's design here, which is, to establish the Ephesians in a settled persuasion that they, and all the other Gentiles who believed in Christ, were as much the people of God, his lot and his inheritance, as the Jews themselves, and equally partakers with them of all the privileges and advantages belonging thereunto, as is visible by the tenour of the second chapter. And this is the use St. Paul mentions of God's setting his seal (2 Tim. ii. 19) to mark them that are his. See also Rev. vii. 3, iv. 1. Those who purchased servants did, as it were, take possession of them by setting their marks on their foreheads."

<sup>3</sup> *To the praise of his glory.*] See ver. 12. The Gentiles are called and sealed, &c., that they, as well as the believing Jews, may celebrate the praises of God for his abundant mercy.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 14.

ceived into his family, while this spirit witnesses to your hearts that you are the children of God.

These gifts of the spirit are the chief instruments which the wisdom of God employs for the redemption and recovery of those from the bondage of idolatry and vice, who are disposed to comply with the invitations of the gospel, and to become members of that holy community which in figurative language are described as redeemed to God, and as purchased by the blood of Christ.

And the great design of your invitation to the privileges of the gospel, of the gifts of the spirit, and your equality of state with God's ancient people, is, that you should unite with them in ascribing praise and glory to your common Father and God for his abundant mercy.

## SECTION II.

*THE APOSTLE gives thanks to God for the perseverance of his brethren in their Christian profession; and prays continually that they may be duly sensible of the extraordinary manifestation of divine power and mercy in their conversion from heathen idolatry; which, indeed, bore a striking analogy to that by which Jesus was raised from the dead, and exalted to supreme authority in the new and heavenly dispensation. Ch. i. 15—ii. 10.*

1. The apostle gives thanks to God continually

for the progress which his brethren make in faith and love; and prays that they may be duly sensible of the value of the Christian dispensation, ver. 15—18. Ch. I.

*Wherefore, I also, having heard<sup>1</sup> of your faith in the Lord Jesus<sup>2</sup>, and love to all<sup>3</sup> the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>4</sup>, the Father of glory<sup>5</sup>, may give you* Ver. 15.  
16.  
17.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Having heard, &c.*] This is regarded by some as a presumptive argument that the epistle was not written to the Ephesians, with whose faith and love the apostle must have been personally acquainted; but it is properly enough replied that the apostle, having been absent from them five or six years when the epistle was written, might have heard with pleasure of their perseverance in the Christian doctrine, 1 Thess. iii. 4—6; Philem. ver. 4, 5. See Doddridge, Chandler, and Macknight.

<sup>2</sup> *Faith in the Lord Jesus.*] “Hearing of their faith is not his being told that they were Christians, but their continuing in that faith which they were converted to and instructed in; viz. that they became the people of God only by faith in Christ, without submitting to the Mosaical institution.” Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *All the saints.*] Mr. Locke observes, “that *all* is here an emphatical word, put in for some particular reason; viz. that they were not by the Judaizers drawn away from their esteem and love of those who did not observe the Jewish rites; which was a proof that they stood firm in the faith and freedom of the gospel.” Dr. Chandler agrees in this interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> *God of Jesus Christ.*] See John xx. 17. What plainer proof can there be that Jesus Christ is the creature of God, and not his equal? Dr. Chandler observes, “that it can never in any sense be said of Christ that he is God of the Eternal Father.” “Here it is evident,” says Dr. Priestley, “that all the illumination the apostle prayed for, was to come from God the Father, who is here called *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*; the same, no doubt, who was the author of his being, whom he reverently worshiped, and whom he taught his disciples to worship: so far was he from teaching the worship of himself.”

<sup>5</sup> *Father of glory.*] “either possessed of eternal unchangeable glory, or the author and bestower of glory, in which sense



Ch. I. *a spirit of wisdom and revelation to the knowledge*  
 Ver. 18. *of him*<sup>1</sup>, *that the eyes of your mind being enlight-*  
*ened*<sup>2</sup>, *ye may know what is the hope of this invi-*  
*tation by him*<sup>3</sup>, *and what the glorious riches of that*  
*inheritance*<sup>4</sup> *which he hath given you among the*  
*saints.*

Having, as I have just observed, been invited by Christ to a participation of the blessings of the gospel, and favoured with the gift of the holy spirit, as the seal and earnest of the promised inheritance, I am anxious that you should duly appreciate your great privileges. And, in the first place, having received the pleasing intelligence of your perseverance

---

the word rendered 'Father' is sometimes used. James i. 17." Chandler. "being glorious himself, the fountain from which all glory is derived, and to whom all glory must be given." Locke.

<sup>1</sup> *To the knowledge of him.*] *εν επιγνωσει*, in, &c. Dr. Chandler observes, "that *εν* is frequently used by the best writers for *εις*, to denote the end and design of any thing." By 'the spirit of wisdom and revelation,' Archbishop Newcome justly remarks, that the apostle means the knowledge of revealed truths, 1 Cor. xiv. 6, 26, 30. *The knowledge of him*, that is, 'of the doctrine of God.'

<sup>2</sup> *Eyes of your mind being enlightened.*] "The Greek is in the accusative absolute." Newcome. The best copies read *καρδιας*, heart, instead of *διανοιας*, understanding; and Griesbach receives it into his text. The meaning is the same. "The expression," says Dr. Chandler, "is certainly explicative of the former words, and should have been rendered, *even enlightened eyes of your understanding*. 'I make mention of you,' says the apostle, 'in my prayers, that God would give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, even enlightened eyes of your understanding; i. e. a mind free from prejudice and darkness, that you may clearly apprehend, and pass a true judgement concerning, the great object of your hopes as Christians.'"

<sup>3</sup> *This invitation by him.*] See Wakefield. *της κλησεως αυτου*, of his invitation.

<sup>4</sup> *The glorious riches of that inheritance, &c.*] So Wakefield. *Gr. of his inheritance among the saints.* "that you may see

Ch. I.  
Ver. 18.

in the faith in which you have been instructed, notwithstanding opposition and danger ; and of your fraternal affection to believers of all denominations, notwithstanding some accidental differences in opinion or practice, and the pains which some who are bigots to the ceremonial law take to pervert your judgement, and to give you an ill opinion of all who are not equally rigid with themselves ; for this your firmness of principle, and liberality of spirit, I offer my daily thanksgivings to God, to whose grace and favour all attainments in moral excellence are justly to be ascribed. To these thanksgivings I add fervent prayers to that great Being whom our Master Jesus Christ has taught us to adore as his God and our God ; and to venerate as our common Father to whom all glory belongs, and from whom all honour and happiness is derived ; of whom I earnestly implore, that he will impart to you that perfect knowledge of revealed truth which will lead you with still greater courage and zeal to profess your faith in the heavenly doctrine : And that your understandings may be so enlightened by the instructions of the go-

---

what an abundant glory it is to the saints, to become his people, and the lot of his inheritance." Locke.

Perhaps the true meaning of this paragraph may be thus briefly expressed :

Having heard of your perseverance in the true faith, and of your love to all believers, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, I thank God on your account. And I also pray that God would enlighten your mind in revealed truths, that you may clearly understand the object of Christian hope, and the unspeakable importance of your admission into the pale of the Christian church, and to the privileges of the people of God.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 18.

spel, and the gifts of the spirit, that you may be fully apprized of the inestimable value of your Christian hope: and may be duly sensible of the high importance of your Christian profession, and of your unspeakable obligation to the mercy of God in thus freely admitting you into the Christian community, and to the glorious privileges of his peculiar people!

2. The apostle further prays that they may be properly apprized of that great display of divine power which had been manifested in their conversion to the faith: an exertion analogous to that by which Christ was raised from the dead, and exalted to be the head of the new and evangelical dispensation, ver. 19, 20.

19. *And what is the exceeding<sup>1</sup> greatness of his power toward us who believe, corresponding with the energy of his mighty strength<sup>2</sup> which he exerted*  
20. *in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Exceeding greatness of his power.*] “That is,” says Dr. Chandler, “that you may be able to form some suitable conception of that amazing infinite power of God which he shall exert in our future resurrection.” So Dr. Macknight. Mr. Locke’s interpretation appears to me far preferable: “What an exceeding great power he has employed upon us who believe! a power corresponding to that mighty power which he exerted in raising Christ from the dead.” This sense is adopted by Archbishop Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Energy of his mighty strength.*] Dr. Doddridge observes that the admirable beauty of this passage, and the strong emphasis and force of the expressions in the original, are well set forth by Bishop Pearson (*on the Creed*, p. 519), as scarcely to be paralleled in any author; and superior to what our language can reach. Blackwall’s *Sacred Classics*, vol. i. p. 307.

*seated him at his own right hand*<sup>3</sup> *in the heavenly places*<sup>4</sup>.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 20.

I also earnestly pray, that you may be duly sensible of the extraordinary manifestation of his power which God has been pleased to display in all who sincerely believe, and particularly in subduing their inveterate prejudices, whether Jews or heathen: a power which, when I consider the astonishing effect produced in our conversion to the Christian faith, and in the wonderful change which it has effected in our views, affections, and practice, I can compare to nothing less than to that amazing effort of omnipotence, if I may so express it, by which our Master Jesus Christ was raised from the grave and advanced to the highest dignity and authority in the new and heavenly dispensation; which is as much superior to any that preceded it as heaven to earth.

### 3. Having mentioned the exaltation of Christ,

---

<sup>3</sup> *His own right hand.*] “The right hand is the seat of dignity and honour; and therefore when God the Father is said to have set Christ at his right hand, the meaning is, that he placed him next in dignity to himself.” Chandler. *i. e.* as head of the Christian church.

<sup>4</sup> *Heavenly places.*] or, *things.* *i. e.* in his heavenly kingdom; or, the gospel dispensation. See Matt. iii. 2, xvi. 7; John iii. 2. Mr. Locke says, “The whole drift of this and the following two chapters is to declare the union of Jews and Gentiles into one body under Christ, the head of the heavenly kingdom. And he that sedately compares Eph. ii. 16 with Col. i. 20, in both which places it is evident the apostle speaks of the same thing, viz. God’s reconciling both Jews and Gentiles by the cross of Christ, will scarce be able to avoid thinking that ‘things in heaven and things on earth’ signify the people of the one and the other of these kingdoms.”

Ch. I. he expatiates upon this pleasing topic in language borrowed from the Jewish notions of the celestial hierarchy; and represents the dependence of the whole Christian church upon communications from him, to be as entire as that of the body upon the head, ver. 21—23.

Ver. 21. *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion*<sup>1</sup>, *and every name that is named, not*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Principality, &c.*] These titles are commonly understood to express ranks of angels, and the text is generally interpreted as asserting the dominion of Christ over the angelic world. But if Mr. Locke's interpretation of *heavenly places* in the preceding verse be the true one, then *principalities, powers, &c.* can only signify officers of different ranks and degrees under a divine dispensation, such as prophets, priests, apostles, teachers, &c., to all of whom Christ is in dignity and office far superior, being the head of them all, the chief of all the prophets of God.

“These abstract names are frequently used in the New Testament, according to the style of the eastern languages, for those vested with power and dominion, &c., and that not only here on earth among men, but in heaven among superior beings, and so often are taken to express ranks and degrees of angels; and though they are generally agreed to do so here, yet there is no reason to exclude earthly potentates. Besides, the apostle's chief aim here being to satisfy the Ephesians that they were not to be subjected to the law of Moses, and the government of those who ruled by it, but they were called to be of the kingdom of the Messiah, it is not to be supposed that where he speaks of Christ's exaltation to a power and dominion paramount to all other, he should not have an eye to that little and low government of the Jews, which it was beneath the subjects of so glorious a kingdom to subject themselves unto.” Locke.

The Jewish dispensation having been represented as “heavenly places,” the superiority of Christ to the officers of that dispensation is naturally described as an exaltation above the supposed ranks and orders of beings in those heavenly places: but as Christ is also superior to all the officers of his church, this superiority is represented as an exaltation above such supposed orders of beings in the world, or age to come, that is, the Christian dispensation, as well as in the present world, or age, that is, the dispensation of the law. So that there is no reason to

*only in the present age, but in that also which is to come*<sup>2</sup>. *And he hath put all things in subjection under his feet*<sup>3</sup>; *and hath appointed him*<sup>4</sup> *head over all things in the church, which is his body*<sup>5</sup>, *the completion*<sup>6</sup> *of him who filleth all, with all things.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 22.  
23.

Our glorious Lord and Master, being thus ad-

suppose that the apostle had any intention to express or allude to the superiority of Christ above angels in heaven.

<sup>2</sup> *The present age :*] or, *dispensation*. See Mr. Locke's note on Eph. ii. 2. That *αιων* has the sense of *dispensation* does not admit of a doubt. See Heb. i. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Put all things, &c.*] Alluding to Ps. cx. 1; Ps. viii. 6—8; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27; Heb. ii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Appointed.*] “In the original ‘given :’ a Hebrew phraseology. See Gen. xvii. 5; Ezek. iii. 17.” Newcome.

<sup>5</sup> *Which is his body.*] “deriving all its nourishment and influences, its growth and support, its direction and management, from Christ as the head: even as the natural body is influenced and supported, guided and managed, by its natural head.” Chandler.

<sup>6</sup> *The completion.*] *πληρωμα*, “the complement :” that which is wanting to make an object complete. “The Jews and Gentiles,” says Dr. Chandler, “are the different members of Christ’s church, and these different members are the full complement of his body. The word *πληρωμα* is used in a sense like this by the best Greek writers. *Æl. V. H.* l. 5, c. 10.” The learned writer imagines an allusion to the statue of Diana at Ephesus; but with little appearance of reason.

“It is a fine figure,” says Dr. Priestley, “by which Christ is here represented as the head, and his disciples the body, all being one and the same system, he only having pre-eminence in point of honour, distinction, and usefulness. A similar idea is expressed by Christ being called our elder brother, implying that he is one of the same species and family. Accordingly, when he is called an heir of God, his brethren are joint heirs with him. This doctrine is uniformly inculcated in the New Testament, and we ought to have our minds deeply impressed with it, and fully to understand its value, in opposition to that strange system, however prevalent, which makes Christ a being of equal rank with God his Father; and thus in fact makes three Gods, or objects of religious worship. If any article of faith be worth earnestly contending for, it is this.”

Ch. I.  
Ver. 23.

vanced by the power of God to supreme authority in his church, is made superior to all other teachers and prophets, how important soever the instructions they were authorized to communicate, how splendid soever the attestations of their mission, to whomsoever their message was addressed, or by whatever names and titles of civil or ecclesiastical authority they have been, or may be, dignified. Whether they lived under the old or under the new dispensation, whether the objects of their instructions were Jews or Gentiles, or both, they must all bow to the authority of Jesus, and acknowledge him as their superior and lord. His dignity is more exalted, his mission is more important, his miracles are more splendid, his dominion is more extensive and durable. Of him it is declared (Ps. viii. 6), that "all things are put in subjection under his feet:" by which is meant, that the whole world shall in due time embrace the gospel, and yield a willing subjection to his gentle yoke. And in the mean time God has authorized him to impart all necessary information to true believers, and to supply them with those gifts of the spirit which contribute to their conviction, edification, and comfort. So that Christ and his church form as it were a complete person: Christ is the head, and the church the body, which derives that light and vigour, and vital influence from him by his doctrine and his spirit, which are essential to the life and nourishment, the growth and beauty of every part, and to the symmetry and perfection of the whole.



4. The apostle proceeds to illustrate his position, that the power of God manifested in the conversion of Jews and heathen, and in their admission to the privileges and hopes of the gospel, is analogous to that power which was displayed in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ, ch. ii. 1—6. Ch. II.

*And you hath God brought to life with Christ<sup>1</sup>, who are now dead to transgressions and sins<sup>2</sup>.* Ver. 1.

---

<sup>1</sup> *And you hath God brought to life.*] Dr. Chandler, and after him Dr. Macknight, supplies the ellipsis in this verse from the preceding; viz. “you hath he filled who were dead,” &c. Mr. Locke, with the public version and the generality of commentators, supplies the ellipsis from the fifth verse: *q. d.* you hath he brought to life with Christ. See Wakefield. The train of thought is this: I pray daily for you, ch. i. 16, that you may be apprized of the value of the inheritance, ver. 18,—and of the great power of God exerted upon you, ver. 19,—similar to that exerted in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, ver. 20—23;—so likewise has he raised you who are now dead to your former state, ch. ii. 1,—in which you once lived, ver. 2;—and likewise we Jews, being in a situation equally deplorable, ver. 3,—are nevertheless made objects of mercy, ver. 4;—and being dead to our former state, ver. 5,—we and you are raised and exalted together with Christ, ver. 5, 6,—as monuments of free unmerited goodness, ver. 7—9,—to the practice of virtue, ver. 10. See Locke’s note; who observes, that the conjunction *καὶ* gives us here the thread of Paul’s discourse, which it is impossible to understand without seeing the train of it.

<sup>2</sup> *Dead to transgressions and sins.*] “to trespasses and sins.” Wakefield. Dr. Chandler acknowledges that the words admit of being translated *dead to trespasses*, though he prefers the common translation. The best commentary upon this text is the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which the same thought is pursued at large. The apostle does not mean to represent the unconverted Gentiles as in a state of death, but as living in sin, and to the purposes of sin. When converted to the gospel, they die to sin; *i. e.* they renounce the idolatry and vices of their heathen state: and when by the profession of Christianity they entertain new views and expectations, and

Ch. II.  
Ver. 1.

Such is the astonishing power which Almighty God hath displayed in the resurrection of Christ, and in his exaltation to supreme authority in the church. Similar to this, and equally illustrative of divine power and goodness, is the wonderful change which has taken place in you Gentiles, in your conversion to the Christian religion. It may justly be said of you, that you have undergone a transformation equivalent to a death, a resurrection, and an exaltation. You are dead to your former state of idolatry and vice; and by the same power of God which raised up Jesus you are now animated with a life and spirit far different from that of your unconverted state.

2. *In which ye formerly walked<sup>1</sup> according to the course of this world<sup>2</sup>, according to the prince of the power of the air<sup>3</sup>, of the spirit which now worketh<sup>4</sup> in the sons of disobedience.*

lead a different course of life, they are said, by Christ, and with Christ, and in resemblance of Christ, to be raised to life and exalted to heaven.

<sup>1</sup> *In which ye formerly walked:*] that is, *lived*; not in which you were dead. You were then alive to sin: sin was your master, in whose service you exerted all your powers. See Rom. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Course of this world.*] Dr. Chandler observes, “that the Greek word *αἰών* and the Latin *ævum* both signify the life of man, and from thence by an easy figure the manner and custom of a person’s living. It here signifies the corrupt principles and idolatrous practices of the Gentile world.” “*Αἰών*, quodvis temporis spatium, s. longius, s. brevius—integram durationem accommodatam nempe rebus et personis de quibus sermo est, significat, ita tamen, ut etiam res et personas durantes, res in tempore factas, seu, existentes, per metonymiam adjuncti complectatur: ingenium ætatis—vivendi ratio. Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 6.” Schleusner. Very properly rendered “the course of this world.”

In your former heathen staté you were the devoted subjects of the worst of tyrants ; you lived in the unrestrained practice of those vices which were authorized and allowed by the idolatry of your country ; you behaved like the rest of the heathen world, like the subjects of Satan, whose kingdom is in direct hostility to that of truth and virtue, of God and Christ : who is supposed by his deluded votaries to inhabit the regions of the air ; and whose spirit, the spirit of obstinacy, of error, of malignity, and mis-

Ch. II.  
Ver. 2.

---

<sup>3</sup> *The prince of the power of the air :*] i. e. Satan, the mythological head of the unbelieving world ; whose residence was supposed to be in the air, as that of Christ was supposed to be above him in the heavens. There is no occasion to suppose, either, with Dr. Harwood, that Jupiter is the person alluded to by the apostle, (see Harwood's *Introd. to New Test.*) or with many, that the devil is a real being, who resides in the air and who has power to govern the changes of the atmosphere. This most improbable doctrine, which makes a malignant spirit a colleague with the Deity in the government of the universe, receives no countenance from the writings of Paul, who only alludes to a mythology already subsisting. Should it be alleged, that if Satan be a figurative person, Christ, who is opposed to him as the ruler of the believing world, must also be a figurative person, it may perhaps be allowed, that when Christ is thus put in opposition to Satan, the word may, sometimes at least, be taken in a figurative sense to express the spirit and the principles of the Christian religion, in opposition to the spirit and principles of heathenism and idolatry. Mr. Wakefield renders the clause, " the ruler of this empire of darkness." Archbishop Newcome remarks, that though the sense of *darkness* is very suitable to *αἴρ* in this place, and is attributed to it by Cocceius, Heinsius, and Wakefield, he cannot find it used thus except in the feminine gender. See 2 Pet. ii. 4, Jude 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Which now worketh.*] *ενεργῶντος*. Mr. Locke observes, that " this is the proper term whereby in the Greek is signified the possession and acting of any person by an evil spirit." The apostle represents unconverted heathen as demoniacs, as madmen, as men out of their senses. See Doddridge.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 2.

chief, possesses and actuates the minds of the mass of unbelievers, and impels them, like madmen, to reject and vilify the salutary scheme, and gracious offers of the gospel.

3. *Among whom we all likewise lived formerly, in our carnal desires, indulging the inclinations of the senses and of the thoughts<sup>1</sup>, and were by nature children of wrath<sup>2</sup> even as the rest.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Of the senses and of the thoughts.*] Literally, *of the flesh and of the imaginations*. See Macknight. Dr. Chandler says “the literal version of the words is this, *doing the wills of the flesh and of the thoughts*: i. e. they did whatever their fleshly appetites prompted them to; and not only thus, but they studied after methods of vice and wickedness, and employed their thoughts how to invent new gratifications of their corrupt appetites and passions, and allowed themselves the freest indulgence in them.” It was a maxim of the pharisees, that thoughts were not sinful.

<sup>2</sup> *By nature children of wrath.*] i. e. we Jews, like you Gentiles, were, *antecedent to our conversion to Christianity*, in a state of condemnation under the righteous law of God. See Gal. i. 15. ‘we who were Jews by nature,’ i. e. before our conversion to Christianity, ‘and not sinners of the Gentiles.’ That Jews as well as Gentiles were in a state of condemnation previously to the publication of Christianity, the apostle proves at large in the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans. See particularly Rom. iii. 19, 20. How far this text, thus explained according to its true import, is from giving countenance to the commonly received doctrine of original sin, is sufficiently obvious. “It is evident (says Dr. Chandler) by the very form of expression, that the apostle refers to their condition before their conversion, and not to that which may be at all times affirmed equally of all mankind. For he says, and *were* by nature, not *are* by nature; and therefore their being formerly children of wrath could only refer to the vices of their condition before conversion, and means no more than their being subject to God’s displeasure, because educated and brought up in, and habituated by inclination and practice to, the worst of immoralities and vices. This is the meaning of the word in the best writers.” The learned author proceeds to cite authorities to

And to say the truth, we Jews, notwithstanding all our professions of sanctity and our means of better information, were sunk in vices as gross as those of the heathen world; equally with the Gentiles, whom we despised, yielding ourselves to the direction of our unbridled appetites and passions, and the strictest among us pleading for the uncontrouled indulgence of licentious imaginations; being utter strangers to that purity of principle which imposes severe restraints upon the thoughts and purposes of the heart. So that, antecedently to our conversion to the Christian religion, we were, nationally, as forlorn, and as liable to condemnation, as the unbelieving world now are.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 3.

*But God being rich in mercy, according to his great love with which he loved us, hath made us, who are now dead to sins<sup>3</sup>, alive together with Christ: by whose free favour ye are delivered<sup>4</sup>;*

4.

5.

---

prove that the word *φύσις*, *nature*, is used to express a disposition contracted by habit. I am, however, rather inclined to think that the apostle uses the word in a technical sense, to express the condition in which they were born, that is, out of covenant; and he affirms that his countrymen, however they might pride themselves in their privileges, had by their transgressions cast themselves, as a nation, out of covenant, and were therefore, antecedently to their conversion, in no better state than the Gentiles themselves, whom they familiarly spoke of as sinners, and children of wrath. See Rom. ii. 17—20; Gal. ii. 15. “*By nature*, in our original state: before conversion. *children of anger*. Heirs of the divine displeasure on account of our *actual vices*.” Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> Now dead to sins.] Not in sins, but to sins: *i. e.* to our former unconverted state. “made us, now dead to sins, alive together with Christ.” Wakefield.

<sup>4</sup> By whose favour ye are delivered.] *ἐν χάριτι*. This is the

Ch. II.  
Ver. 6.

*and hath raised us up with him, and hath made us sit together with him, in heavenly places', by Christ Jesus.*

Nevertheless it pleased God, who delights in mercy, that where sin had abounded, mercy should also abound. And not regarding even us sinful and apostate Jews as utterly unworthy of his notice, he has vouchsafed to raise to life, as Christ was raised, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are dead to our former state of ignorance and wickedness, and who are willing to renounce all dependence on ceremonial rites, and to reinstate us in a life of virtue, privilege, and hope. This favour we have obtained by the grace of Christ, through faith in the gospel of our common Master. And as he is raised by the

---

reading of the Clermont and other ancient manuscripts, and of the Vulgate and Italic versions; and it best suits the connexion. See Chandler. The gospel is often called the grace or gift of Christ, because Christ was the medium of communicating this great blessing to the world. "Ye are saved," *i. e.* delivered from the evils of your heathen state; as the context sufficiently shows. The apostle here resumes his discourse concerning the heathen converts, and speaks of believers in general to the end of the section.

<sup>1</sup> *Hath made us sit together with him in heavenly places.*] Observe, the apostle says, God *hath* brought us to life, *hath* raised us up, *hath* made us sit in heavenly places by Christ: not he *will* do it. Therefore it is not a literal, but a figurative resurrection and ascension that is here intended, and a figurative heaven. The plain meaning is, that Jew and Gentile believers, having completely renounced former errors, prejudices, and vices, are now advanced to the privileges and hopes of the gospel. This is that kingdom of heaven of which Christ is appointed to be the sovereign; and as believers sit with him who sitteth at the right hand of God, they share with him in his dignity and authority, and under his auspices are employed in extending the limits of his glorious kingdom.



power of God, and exalted to the highest dignity in the new and heavenly dispensation, so we likewise are exalted with him, and are even now seated with him, and near him, in his heavenly kingdom: gratefully acknowledging subjection to him as our governor and head, deriving evangelical blessings from him, and in our respective posts employing and exerting our best talents to extend the limits of his auspicious empire.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 6.

5. This whole scheme is an illustrious display of undeserved and unexpected mercy, which precludes all boasting on the part of those who are interested in it and benefited by it, ver. 7—10.

*That in the ages which are coming<sup>2</sup> he might show the superabundant riches of his favour and kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.*

7.

The design and end of all these extraordinary

---

<sup>2</sup> *The ages which are coming:] i. e. the gospel dispensation.* Mark xi. 10; Heb. vi. 5, ii. 5.—“God was pleased to quicken and raise up the Gentiles who believed, that in all successive ages of the world they might stand as a demonstration of the acceptableness of faith in God, and of his fixed purposes of mercy and grace towards all without exception that should receive and obey the gospel. The conversion of the Gentiles by the ministry of the apostles, was a great instance of God’s goodness to them, and a standing proof, throughout all future ages, of the certainty of God’s favour to all who should believe, to the end of time.” Chandler. “The great favour and goodness of God,” says Mr. Locke, “manifests itself in the salvation of sinners in all ages; but that which most eminently sets forth the glory of his grace was *the case of* those who were first of all converted from heathenism to Christianity, and brought out of the kingdom of darkness, in which they were as dead men, without life, hope, or so much as a thought of salvation or a better state, into the kingdom of God.”



Ch. II.  
Ver. 7.

operations of divine power in our conversion to the Christian faith, and in thus transferring us, as it were, from an earthly to a heavenly state, from a state of ignorance and prejudice, and vice and misery, to a state of light and virtue, and privilege and hope, is to exhibit and to magnify his unspeakable mercy and compassion in this new dispensation, which his faithful and holy servant and messenger Jesus of Nazareth has been commissioned to introduce into the world.

8. *For by free favour ye are delivered through faith, and this<sup>1</sup> not of yourselves, it is the gift of*  
9, 10. *God. Not of works, that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works<sup>2</sup>, which God hath before prepared for us, that we should walk in them<sup>3</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *And this.*] και ττο. Dr. Doddridge and others contend that *faith* is the antecedent; Chandler, Newcome and others refer ττο to the whole antecedent sentence: *q. d.* this salvation by faith is the gift of God. The sense amounts nearly to the same; the glory of all is to be ascribed to God. Dr. Doddridge in favour of his interpretation pleads Phil. i. 28; Eph. vi. 18; Gal. iii. 17, iv. 19; and refers to Elsner's *Obs.* vol. i. p. 128, and Raphelius *Annot. ex Herod.* p. 186. Faith may be called the gift of God, as he communicated the evidences and placed the mind in circumstances in which those evidences produced conviction. Dr. Chandler contends that his translation is more agreeable to the construction and the context.

<sup>2</sup> *Created in Christ Jesus.*] κτισθεντες. “the original word, which we render *create*, properly signifies to *produce* or *form* any thing. Thus it is used by the best writers for the building of walls and cities, the planting of groves, the making laws, &c. So that it is not strictly applied to what we mean by creation, nor doth it involve the notion of almighty power: and in Latin Cicero speaks of *creating* magistrates, dangers, calamities, &c. The Ephesians were God's workmanship, *created* in or by Christ

I again repeat, that it is solely to be imputed to the free, unsolicited, and unmerited goodness of God that you have been delivered from the evils and disadvantages of your heathen state, and by the profession of faith in Christ have been admitted to participate in the privileges of the gospel. And this deliverance is to be ascribed to no merit and to no effort on your part: you neither knew the danger of your case nor sought for deliverance. You owe all to the free gift of God. He formed the

Ch. II.  
Ver. 10.

---

Jesus to good works; brought by his gospel to the knowledge of true religion and virtue, and quickened by the powerful motives contained in it to obey and live according to the precepts thereof. The forming particular doctrines from metaphorical expressions, and straining similitudes to their utmost extent, is not to explain but pervert the sense of writers, to make them speak in the most absurd and unintelligible manner, and to expose their meaning to ridicule and contempt." Chandler.

<sup>3</sup> *Which God, &c.*] Archbishop Newcome renders the words, "in which God before designed that we should walk." He observes, that instead of *εν οἷς*—*ἵνα περιπατήσωμεν*, the apostle uses a pleonastic pronoun, after the Hebrew manner. Dr. Chandler has an excellent note upon the text: "God (says he) prepared ordinances and statutes for his people the Jews under the law by Moses, that they should observe and do them, Prov. xxiv. 27, Ps. lix. 4. But under the gospel dispensation he intended a more excellent service, and chose us that we should be holy and without blame before him in Christ. These works he prepared for the gospel dispensation, as what should supersede all ceremonial observances."

Upon the whole, the sum of the apostle's argument is this: The conversion of Jews and Gentiles to the Christian faith is an extraordinary effort of divine power, the result of unsought for, unmerited goodness; the end and design of which is to form those who are so converted to the love and practice of virtue.

Mr. Locke has a long note upon the eighth verse, to show that "the apostle, when speaking of the Gentiles, calls their being brought back again from their apostasy into the kingdom of God, their being saved."

Ch. II.  
Ver. 10.

plan, he annexed the condition, he made the discovery, he proposed the evidence. You yourselves had no concern in the contrivance, and contributed nothing to the execution of the glorious scheme. So that no one can boast of himself as a party concerned in producing this astonishing effect. So far from it, you were as little accessory to it as if you had not even existed: for the change which you have undergone, in passing from heathenism to Christianity, is like that of passing from nothing into existence. It is a new creation. God has herein, as it were, formed you anew; and by Jesus Christ he has introduced you into a new state of existence, upon new conditions of life. For, as to Adam in paradise was given the law of innocence, and to the Jews by Moses, the law of Sinai, the yoke of ceremonies, so, to believers in Christ is given the law of virtue and beneficence, love to God and love to man, by which it was long ago determined and foretold that the followers of Jesus should be distinguished from the unbelieving world, and become entitled to the promised blessings of the gospel.

## SECTION III.

*THE APOSTLE, in order to excite in the Christian converts a just sense of the inestimable value of the blessings of the gospel, strongly urges them to retain an habitual recollection of the miseries of their past, and of the privileges of their present condition.* Ch. ii. 11—22. Ch. II.

1. He reminds them of the disgrace and danger of their heathen state, ver. 11—13.

*Wherefore remember, that ye who were originally Gentiles by descent*<sup>1</sup>, (being called the uncircumcision<sup>2</sup>, by that which is called the circumcision performed by hands in the flesh<sup>3</sup>), were at that time without Christ<sup>4</sup>, aliens from the community<sup>5</sup> of Israel, and strangers to the covenants<sup>6</sup>, Ver. 11. 12.

<sup>1</sup> *By descent.*] *ἐν σαρκί* literally, *in the flesh*. Rom. i. 3. See Chandler's note. "Gentiles born."

<sup>2</sup> *Called the uncircumcision*] "by the Jews in contempt; implying that they were destitute of every privilege in which they imagined themselves interested, and of which they looked upon circumcision as a seal or mark." Chandler.

<sup>3</sup> *In the flesh.*] To distinguish it from the circumcision of the heart, Rom. ii. 29; in which they were miserably deficient, Col. ii. 11. "which consists in cutting off and casting away the sinful affections, passions, and habits, of a corrupted mind." Chandler.

<sup>4</sup> *Without Christ.*] "destitute of all knowledge of the Messiah, or any expectation of deliverance or salvation by him." Locke; who argues, that the connexion determines this to be the sense of the words.

Ch. II. *having no hope of the promise*<sup>1</sup>, *and without God*<sup>2</sup>  
Ver. 12. *in the world.*

I have been representing to you the extraordinary exertion of divine power and goodness in your conversion to the Christian religion, that you might be reclaimed to the love and practice of righteousness. And indeed it is highly reasonable that you should retain a just sense of the value of your present privileges, which you will best accomplish by contrasting your present happy condition with your former forlorn and miserable state. Remember then, my brethren, what you originally were: ignorant, idolatrous, and vicious heathen; regarded and treated with the utmost contempt by the Jews, who glory in the external marks of their relation to God, though they are too often deficient in that spirit of piety and purity which their profession requires, and their law inculcates. In this unhappy state you

---

<sup>7</sup> *Aliens, &c.*] “They had no right of citizenship in the Jewish polity, nor any claim to the privileges of citizens,” Chandler. “The Jews were then the only people of God.” Locke.

<sup>8</sup> *Strangers to the covenants.*] *i. e.* “the patriarchal and Mosaic covenants, which promised the Messiah, Rom. ix. 4.” Newcome. Mr. Wakefield’s version is, “strangers to the covenants, having no hope of the promise, and without God, men of this world.” This alteration in the punctuation is suggested in Bowyer’s *Conjectures*.

<sup>1</sup> *No hope of the promise.*] *i. e.* of those blessings which the promises contained, justification by faith, acceptance with God, as his children, a title to the inheritance of eternal life. See Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Without God.*] “without having the true God for their God.” Locke; who observes, that “it is in this sense the Gentiles are called *αθεοι*, few of them being, properly speaking, atheists, denying the existence of superior powers.” See Rom. ix. 5; with Taylor’s or Crellius’s note.

had neither hope nor wish for a deliverer: not being descended from the ancient patriarchs, you were excluded from the privileges entailed upon their posterity, and from the community which God had selected as his own. You had never heard of the covenants which God had entered into with Abraham and his descendants, in which he promised his favour upon condition of obedience, and foretold the appearance of a great prophet, who should instruct them in a more perfect institute than that of Moses. In consequence of this ignorance, you had no interest in the promises, no expectation of any improvement of your moral condition, nor any hope of a future life. You had no just ideas of the nature and character of God; you neither loved nor worshiped him; you were enemies to him by wicked works, and outcasts from his favour; you were mere men of the world, who only sought after worldly pleasures, and who looked for nothing beyond the present life.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 12.

2. He reminds them of the happy change which had taken place in their condition by faith in Christ, ver. 13.

*But now, in Christ Jesus<sup>3</sup>, ye who formerly were far off<sup>4</sup>, are brought near by the blood of Christ<sup>5</sup>.*

13.

<sup>3</sup> *In Christ Jesus.*] “since your conversion to the faith of Christ.” Chandler. *q. d.* you being in Christ Jesus, that is, in the number of his disciples. See Rom. xvi. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Far off.*] From the connexion, and from ver. 17, it seems evident that the expressions ‘far off’ and ‘near’ allude to the

Ch. II.  
Ver. 13.

Your state is now wonderfully improved. Instead of being at a distance from God, excluded from his temple, and regarded as aliens and enemies, you are admitted into his holy place, and brought near to his person, by your conversion to the Christian religion; being, as it were, consecrated and purified by the blood of Christ, which was shed to ratify the new and more comprehensive covenant, and to put an end to the distinction between Jew and Gentile.

3. By his death having abolished all ceremonial distinctions, Jesus has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to each other, and to God, ver. 14—18.

14. *For he is our peace<sup>1</sup>: who hath united both<sup>2</sup>,  
and hath removed the enmity, the middle wall of  
15. partition<sup>3</sup>; having in his own person abolished<sup>4</sup>*

---

situation of the worshipers in the outer and the inner courts of the temple, the court of the Gentiles and that of the Jews. So the publican in the parable is described as standing afar off, *i. e.* in the court of the Gentiles, Luke xviii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> *By the blood of Christ.*] Qu. How by the blood of Christ? The apostle immediately explains himself. The death of Christ broke down the partition wall, and opened a way for the worshipers in the outer court to advance into the holy place.

<sup>1</sup> *Our peace.*] *i. e.* the maker or author of peace, see ver. 15; a common phraseology: so (ver. 15) the partition wall, the ceremonial law, is called 'the enmity,' being the cause or the sign of enmity. Compare Gen. xv. 1, 1 Thess. ii. 20. "The cause of peace and union between Jews and Gentiles." Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *United both:*] *i. e.* those who were far off, and those who were near; those who were in the outer, and those in the inner courts. Literally, "he hath made both one."

<sup>3</sup> *The enmity, the wall of partition,*] which separated the court of the Gentiles from that where the Jews worshiped, and into which it was not permitted to the Gentiles to enter, under pain



*the law of commandments, consisting in ordinances*<sup>5</sup>.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 15.

To accomplish this important purpose, of bringing Jews and Gentiles into the same state of privi-

of death. Josephus *Ant.* l. xv. § 5. St. Paul was seized upon the charge of having brought Gentiles into the inner court, Acts xxi. 28. I adopt the punctuation of Griesbach and Wakefield.

<sup>4</sup> *In his own person abolished the law.*] Gr. "in his own flesh," *i. e.* by his death he introduced another dispensation, which superseded the dispensation of rites and ceremonies, the observance of which ceased to be necessary as an introduction to the kingdom of God. Mr. Locke here introduces a long note, to explain what is meant by the abolition of the law, justly observing, "that the law of Moses is no where abrogated by an actual repeal; but that by the introduction of the kingdom of the Messiah, which extended to the Gentiles, and proposed new terms of admission, it ceased to be the law of the people and kingdom of God, but not to be the law of the Jewish nation. This did not make its observances unlawful to those who, before conversion, were under the law; but that which was unlawful and contrary to the gospel was, the making those ritual observances necessary to be joined with faith in believers for justification."

<sup>5</sup> *Ordinances.*] *δουγμασι*, "*edicta multas observationes reddunt necessarias.*" Rosenmuller; that is, the ceremonial law. The Jews insisted upon the strict observation of its rites as necessary to admission into covenant with God; while the Gentiles regarded them as an insupportable yoke. This difference produced an enmity between them, which could not be reconciled till the ceremonial law was abolished. "This law of ceremonies," says Dr. Chandler, "was properly the partition wall, which kept the Jews and Gentiles from coalescing or uniting into one church and people; from worshiping together, and partaking in common the privileges of God's house and service; and therefore our blessed Saviour, by taking down this partition wall, *i. e.* by cancelling the obligation of the Mosaic law, became our peace, and made both one; made both Jews and Gentiles equally the people of God, invested them with a right to the same privileges, enjoined them the same method of worship, gave them the same body of laws, and thus laid a foundation for their future union in the strictest bonds of affection and friendship."

Ch. II.  
Ver. 15.

lege and promise, Jesus came as the ambassador of peace. And this great design he has actually fulfilled: having reconciled believers of both descriptions to each other, by putting an end to that which was the principal cause of enmity; namely, the law of ceremonies, which formerly constituted the proud distinction of the Jews. Jesus having ratified by his death a covenant which admits all believers to equal privileges, without arbitrary and positive marks of distinction, has, as it were, broken down that wall in the temple which separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews; so that converted heathen may now approach as near to the holy place as converted Jews; and all who profess subjection to Christ as their Master are taught to regard each other as brethren in him.

- 15. *That he might form the two<sup>1</sup> into one new man*  
16. *in himself<sup>2</sup>, thus making peace<sup>3</sup>, and that he might*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Form the two.*] *κτισθῇ*, create, i. e. make, or form, see ver. 10, note.

<sup>2</sup> *In himself.*] i. e. “in his mystical body, the church.” Newcome. The apostle delights in representing the universal church, consisting of believers, Jews and Gentiles, as forming one body, of which Christ is the head; and this body is sometimes called Christ, see Eph. i. 23. Mr. Locke observes, that the apostle “always has Jesus Christ in his mind as the head of the church, which was his body; from and by whom alone, by being united to him, the whole body, and every member of it, received life, vigour, and strength, and all the benefits of that state, which admirably well shows that whoever were united to this head must needs be united to one another; and also, that all the privileges and advantages they enjoyed were wholly owing to their union with, and adhering to, him their head; which were the two things he inculcated upon the converted Gentiles at Ephesus.” He adds: “If the Jewish nation had owned Jesus

*reconcile both, in one person; to God<sup>4</sup>; having slain the enmity by the cross.* Ch. II.  
Ver. 16.

Two purposes were to be accomplished by the abolition of the ceremonial law: the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles to each other, and to God. As to the first, it is so completely effected, that the great body of believers now forms one mystical person, of which Christ is the head; and of this body the several parts and limbs, in their respective places, live and act together in perfect harmony. This mystical person, consisting of Jesus and his faithful disciples of all nations and parties, is reconciled and consecrated to God, not by any formal initiatory rite, or ceremonial institute, but by the death of Christ, which abolishes all those legal distinctions which heretofore constituted ceremonial disqualifications, and barred the gates of the temple against the admission of the Gentiles.

---

as the Messiah, they had continued the people of God: but, as they had nationally rejected him, they were no longer such; and all who after that would return to their allegiance, must be admitted upon other terms than being the posterity of Jacob."

<sup>3</sup> *Making peace,*] by making them members of the same body, all harmonizing with each other.

<sup>4</sup> *To God, having slain the enmity by the cross.*] I follow the reading and the punctuation of the Syriac and Mr. Wakefield. *The enmity slain by the cross* is the ceremonial law, which was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile. This being now abolished, and the two parties being now formed and moulded into one mystical body, of which Christ is the head, this new man is admitted into favour with God, and taken into a covenant state, not in consequence of any satisfaction made to offended justice, but from free, unpurchased, unmerited mercy. See ver. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith, and this salvation is the free gift of God.' This is plainly the train of the apostle's ideas.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 17.

- And he came*<sup>1</sup>, *and proclaimed the glad tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and to those that were near*<sup>2</sup>. *For through him we both have admission*<sup>3</sup>, *by one spirit*<sup>4</sup>, *to the Father.*

Having thus superseded the ceremonial law, which was the cause of alienation from God, and from each other, he came after he was risen from the dead, and by himself in person, and still more explicitly by his apostles and other chosen messengers, to announce the joyful tidings of peace and reconciliation. To you Gentiles, who worshiped in the outer court, he has proclaimed liberty of access to the holy place, and the removal of whatever prevented your admission into the rank and privileges of the people of God. To the Jews he has announced a new and better covenant, which makes provision for the remission of offences which the law condemned without mercy. And thus, through this highly favoured messenger of peace, Jesus Christ, we all, both Jews and Gentiles, are admit-

---

<sup>1</sup> *He came.*] Newcome joins this with ver. 14, including the 15th and 16th in a parenthesis. Christ came to proclaim these tidings, after his resurrection, by his apostles and prophets, ver. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *To you who were afar off, &c.*] *q. d.* to you Gentiles who were in the outer court, and to the Jews who were in the inner court of the temple, see ver. 13, note.

<sup>3</sup> *Admission.*] An allusion to the custom of appointing persons to introduce strangers at the courts of princes. See Doddridge and Macknight.

<sup>4</sup> *By one spirit.*] “The extraordinary gifts of the spirit were the evidence of their adoption, and were poured out upon the Gentiles as well as upon the Jews.” Chandler. One and the same spirit is communicated to all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

ted into the temple of God; we are allowed to invoke God as our Father, and to expect a glorious inheritance from him; of which the miraculous gifts and powers which are communicated alike to believers of every nation, are a convincing proof, and a most satisfactory earnest and pledge.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 18.

4. Being thus incorporated with the people of God, they are dedicated to his service, being made constituent parts of an ever-increasing temple, consecrated to God, and inhabited by him, ver. 19—22.

*So then, ye are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and belonging to the house of God<sup>5</sup>.*

19.

From this view which I have given you of the means by which reconciliation has been accomplished by Christ, you may draw the joyful conclusion that you Gentiles are no longer considered as foreigners and sojourners, who have no title to the privileges and immunities of the holy city, the com-

---

<sup>5</sup> *Belonging to the house of God.*] The word *οικαιοι* signifies either belonging to a family as members or servants, Gal. vi. 10; or belonging to the building as a constituent part of it. The apostle glances at both these senses of the word, and passes off to another similitude. See Macknight. “The church of God (says Dr. Chandler) is compared to a city or republic, which hath its peculiar immunities, rights, and privileges; and of this city all who believe in Christ are equally free, of whatsoever nation or country they may be. They are no more *παροικοι*, i. e. mere dwellers or lodgers in a city, without enjoying the freedom of it, but the proper denizens of it, yea, such as belong to the very house and family of God, the universal Lord and Father. The word *οικαιος* is used in both senses, to denote a domestic, or one who is a freeman, in opposition to a stranger or foreigner.”

Ch. II.  
Ver. 19.

munity of the chosen people of God ; but that, by your profession of faith in Christ, without submitting to the yoke of the ritual law, you are entitled to all the privileges which any of the professing people of God have ever enjoyed. You are free citizens of the kingdom of Christ ; you are admitted into the house of God ; you are suffered to enter as worshipers into the holy place ; you are received into his service ; you are acknowledged as his children.

20. *Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*<sup>1</sup>, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief*  
21. *corner-stone*<sup>2</sup>. *By which the whole building, being harmoniously framed together*<sup>3</sup>, *groweth*<sup>4</sup> *to a holy*

<sup>1</sup> *Apostles and prophets.*] “ of the Christian church.” Newcome. See ch. iii. 5, iv. 11 ; 1 Cor. xii. 28. *built upon*, &c. “ since that gospel which they preach they received by immediate revelation from Christ.” Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Corner-stone.*] “ The chief corner-stone is that which is laid at the foundation, upon which the whole angle of the building rests ; and which, therefore, is the principal support and tie of the whole edifice.” Chandler. See Psalm cxviii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Harmoniously framed together.*] “ The materials of a building in their original form (says Dr. Chandler in his beautiful note) are shapeless and disagreeing, and could never constitute an edifice till wrought and fashioned by the art and labour of the workmen, fitted in size and shape for their proper places. And what more unlikely than that Jews and Gentiles should ever be brought to coalesce and join in one society, and constitute one church, between whom there had been so long and inveterate an opposition and hatred ? But in Christ they were fitly framed. His gospel, and doctrine, and spirit, so altered and fashioned them, that they became capable of settling and joining together, and in their several places contributing to the proportion, harmony, strength, and beauty of this sacred temple which it pleased God to erect out of them. Notwithstanding the enmity of their former state, and though they would will-

*temple through the Lord<sup>5</sup>: by which<sup>6</sup> ye also are built together for a habitation of God, through the spirit<sup>7</sup>.*

Ch. II.  
Ver. 22.

I said that you belonged to the house of God: you do belong to it as members of his family; you also belong to it as constituent parts of that holy building the church. As such, you rest upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; your faith being erected upon the doctrine which the authorized teachers of the gospel have taught and inculcated, and upon the evidence which they exhibited of the truth of their doctrine. But your principal

---

ingly have destroyed each other, yet, under the power and skill of the Redeemer, they arose upon him as their proper foundation, out of their common ruins, a regular and stately temple, consecrated to God, and honoured with his presence."

Archbishop Newcome and others have observed that "the temple of Diana, at Ephesus, made this allegory a most pertinent one." But I confess that I see nothing in the allegory peculiarly appropriate to that celebrated temple. The apostle, upon other occasions, 1 Cor. iii. 11, 12, 16, 17, has compared the church to a temple, where it is not suspected that he had any particular temple in view. Nor would the temple of Diana have been thought on here, had it not been first presumed that the epistle was addressed to the Ephesians. And this allusion, if it were more direct than it is, would be of no avail in opposition to the many strong objections against that hypothesis, and particularly that from the apostle making no allusion to any of the memorable events which occurred to him at Ephesus, or even, to his having ever visited Ephesus at all.

<sup>4</sup> *Groweth.*] "is gradually increasing by the addition of new members." Macknight.

<sup>5</sup> *Through the Lord.*] "under the inspection of, and sacred to, the Lord." Chaëdler.

<sup>6</sup> *By which.*] i. e. "corner-stone." Newcome, Wakefield.

<sup>7</sup> *Habitation of God.*] "God dwells in you by those extraordinary gifts of his holy spirit which is the sure evidence of his acceptance and immediate presence." Chandler.—"a spiritual habitation of God." Wakefield,



Ch. II.  
Ver. 22.

dependance is upon the testimony of Jesus himself, the chief of all the prophets of the Most High. He is the solid foundation and the chief corner-stone of this spiritual temple, which unites and firmly binds together different parts of the building. He is the great bond of union to the universal church. Resting upon this foundation, the united building rises by the continual accession of fresh materials, of new converts, to a harmonious and magnificent temple, constructed by the Lord, and consecrated to him. Upon this foundation you rest secure; and, firmly united with the great body of true believers of all nations, you constitute a glorious fabric, the universal church, in which God has fixed his permanent residence, as he once did in the most holy place; and where he manifests his presence, by the gifts of his holy spirit, in a manner more truly honourable and beneficial than the cloud of glory upon the mercy-seat.

#### SECTION IV.

Ch. III. *THE APOSTLE prays to God for the establishment of his Christian friends in the faith of Christ; and in a pertinent and eloquent digression he obviates the objections which would naturally occur from the consideration of his own sufferings in the cause. Ch. iii. throughout.*

1. He announces himself as a prisoner of Christ, for their sake, ver. 1.

*For this cause*<sup>1</sup> *I, Paul, the prisoner*<sup>2</sup> *of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles*<sup>3</sup>.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 1.

Having thus reminded you of your great privilege of admission into the kingdom and family of God, (ch. ii. 19,) I, Paul, whom you know by name and character, and many of you in person, who, in the introduction of this epistle, announced myself as the apostle of Christ, and who now am also a prisoner at Rome; not for any wrong that I have

<sup>1</sup> *For this cause.*] “Because ye are admitted into the outward privileges of the gospel, ch. ii. 19. I pray that ye may be strengthened in it, ver. 16, &c. This verse is connected with ver. 14, where *ταυτὸ χάριν* is resumed; St. Paul having dropped his first thought, and pursued others which arose in his mind.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *The prisoner.*] Grotius, Chandler, Wakefield, and many others, read, “I, Paul, *am* a prisoner,” and thus avoid the parenthesis. With Archbishop Newcome, and most others, I include the twelve verses following in a parenthesis; and think that the apostle takes up his expressions again ver. 14. This is, indeed, more obscure, but more agreeable to his usual style of writing; in which he frequently digresses to pursue incidental thoughts, which, however, are generally closely connected with the subject. A remarkable instance of this occurs 1 Cor. ix. x.

<sup>3</sup> *For the sake of you Gentiles.*] The apostle’s long imprisonment, first at Cesarea, and afterwards at Rome, was, strictly speaking, owing to his public declaration, Acts xxii. 21, that he had received a divine commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The historian remarks, ver. 22, “they gave him audience to 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.” It was in consequence of the riot thus excited, that the chief captain ordered him to be arrested and brought into the castle. The exact, but undesigned coincidence between the epistle and the history is a considerable presumptive evidence of the genuineness and credibility of both. See this argument beautifully and conclusively illustrated in Paley’s *Horæ Paulinæ*, ch. viii. no. 1.

Ch. III. done, but for having taught the doctrine of Christ ; and particularly for having executed his gracious commission with which I was intrusted for the benefit of you, the converted Gentiles—I, therefore, being now a prisoner for his sake and for yours, commend you to the divine blessing.

2. The apostle, recollecting himself, stops to obviate any unfavourable impression which might be occasioned by the circumstance of his being at that time a prisoner, ver. 2—13.

1.) He expatiates upon the important communication which had been made to him and others of the gracious design of divine Providence in the conversion of the heathen, ver. 2—6.

2. *Inasmuch*<sup>1</sup> *as ye have heard*<sup>2</sup> *of the dispensa-*

<sup>1</sup> *Inasmuch.*] With Newcome, Bowyer, &c., I include in a parenthesis ver. 2—13. Some, not without plausible reason, suppose the parenthesis extended through the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> *As ye have heard.*] *εργε ηκασατε.* Dr. Mill, Mr. Evanson, and others, infer from the expression “ if that you have heard,” that the epistle was not addressed to the Ephesians, but to some persons who had never seen the apostle. It has, however, been argued that the word *εργε* does not express uncertainty, but may be rendered *si quidem*, seeing that, inasmuch as. See Locke, Whitby, Newcome, and Chandler. 2 Cor. v. 2 ; Eph. iv. 21. “ *Εργε magis est confidentis quam dubitantis.*” Hoogveen. Nevertheless, I cannot help thinking with Mr. Evanson, that after the apostle had visited Ephesus twice, and had at one time spent almost three years amongst them, Acts xx. 31, it is very extraordinary that he should address the Ephesians only as having *heard* that the dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles had been committed to him, and should refer them to the former part of his epistle, that they might, when they had read it, perceive his knowledge of the mystery of Christ. These considerations appear to me conclusive against the epistle being inscribed to the Ephesians ; but I cannot coincide with the learned and

*tion<sup>3</sup> of the grace of God, which has been granted to me concerning you.*

Ch. III.  
Ver. 2.

I am, my brethren, indeed suffering for my exertions in your cause, and for the zeal with which, in the face of my bigoted countrymen, I announced the commission with which I was charged to preach the gospel to you (see Acts xxii. 21). And this circumstance may possibly alarm and intimidate some of you : but I assure you that you have no reason at all to be disquieted on that account ; for, when duly considered, my long imprisonment is more a subject of congratulation than uneasiness. For, though some of you may not know my person, you cannot fail to have heard much of that extraordinary commission with which I have been honoured by God to publish the designs of his great wisdom and goodness towards you.

*That by revelation<sup>4</sup> that mystery<sup>5</sup> was made known to me (as I have written before briefly<sup>6</sup>; by*

3.

4.

acute writer, that they prove the epistle not to have been written by Paul. See Evanson's *Dissonance of the Evangelists*, p. 261, 262.

<sup>3</sup> *Dispensation of grace.*] “ This dispensation,” says Dr. Chandler, “ seems to be that particular office in the Christian church to which this apostle was immediately called ; and he styles it a dispensation of grace, because it was a great honour and signal favour conferred upon him, and because the design of it was extremely beneficial and favourable to the Gentiles.” The apostle often speaks of the gospel as *χαρις*, a free gift, Rom. vi. 15, and of his own apostleship as *χαρις*, an unmerited favour, Rom. i. 5, Eph. iii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *By revelation.*] “ by the teaching of God himself. See Gal. i. 12.” Newcome.

<sup>5</sup> *Mystery :*] the call of the Gentiles. See ver. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Written before :*] in this epistle. See ch. i. 4—10, ii. 13—21. *εν ολιγω*, in brief. Worsley.

Ch. III. *reading which ye will be able to perceive my know-*  
 Ver. 5. *ledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ge-*  
*nerations was not made known*<sup>1</sup> *to the sons of men,*  
*as it hath now been revealed to his holy apostles and*  
*prophets*<sup>2</sup> *by the spirit.*

What I allude to is the discovery which God has been pleased to make to me in particular of a dispensation, the full import of which has hitherto been a secret and a mystery that was known to none but God himself. This mystery communicated to me I have in the former part of this epistle disclosed to you, not indeed insisting upon it to that extent which mercy so rich, so unmerited, and so unexpected, deserves. Nevertheless, if you will take the trouble to review what I have written, you will find that it comprehends a new and glorious discovery of truths the most interesting and important relative to the doctrine of Christ. And though it was hinted at occasionally and obscurely by the holy prophets of former ages, it was never so fully re-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Not made known.*] “The calling of the Gentiles to be the people of God was frequently foretold by the prophets under the Old Testament; but yet it does not seem to have been expressly asserted by any of them that they should become God’s people by faith only, without conformity to the law of Moses. The calling of the Gentiles in this manner was the grand secret of God’s counsel and providence, which former ages knew nothing of in comparison with that clearness with which God was pleased to discover to the apostles and prophets under the New Testament.” See Chandler. Comp. Rom. xvi. 25, 26, xiv. 24, 25. Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Prophets:*] *i. e.* authorized teachers of the gospel. See Eph. ii. 20; 1 Cor. xii. xiv. All inspired or duly authorized teachers are called prophets, though they did not foretell future events.

vealed to the servants and messengers of God in past generations, as it is now revealed and confirmed, by the communications of the holy spirit, to the apostles of Christ, and to the authorized teachers of his doctrine.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 5.

*That the Gentiles through the gospel<sup>3</sup> are co-heirs with the Israelites, incorporated with them, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ<sup>4</sup>.*

6.

Need I mention, that the glorious and interesting truth so long concealed in the eternal councils of heaven, and now first made known, to the joy and astonishment of all who possess the generous sentiments of the gospel, is this? That the Gentiles are no longer to be regarded as aliens and enemies, nor even as inferiors, in the same community, but that under the gospel dispensation, and believing in Christ, they are admitted to a full equality with the ancient people of God. They become, together with believing Jews, sons of God and co-heirs of the divine inheritance of eternal life; they are incorporated in the same privileged community, and equally with the descendants of Abraham they participate in all the blessings and promises of the gospel.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Through the gospel.*] Locke says, “in the time of the gospel:” rather, by faith in the gospel. “by the preaching of the gospel.” Newcome.—This is the mystery now fully revealed, that believing Gentiles should be upon an equal footing with believing Jews, “joint heirs, a joint body, and joint partakers of his promise in Christ.” Newcome.

<sup>4</sup> *The promise in Christ.*] “of which Christ was the object.” Newcome. The received text reads, *his* promise; which is not supported by the best copies. See Griesbach.

CH. III. 2.) Of these joyful tidings it was the apostle's honour and happiness to be appointed a herald, ver. 7—9.

Ver. 7. *Of which I have been made a minister, by the gracious gift<sup>1</sup> of God bestowed upon me according to the energy of his power<sup>2</sup>.*

This glorious intelligence I am appointed to communicate. Not that I was myself a candidate for the honourable office: far from it. This great favour was the free unsolicited gift of God to me, and his mighty energy qualified me for the work. Nothing but omnipotence could have subdued my inveterate prejudices, or have imparted those dispositions and qualifications which were requisite to my success.

8. *Upon me, who am less than the least<sup>3</sup> of all*

<sup>1</sup> *The gracious gift of God.*] Gr. “the gift of the *grace* or *favour* of God. See ver. 2. “Of which great and merciful dispensation God has made me a minister, and qualified me for preaching and demonstrating the truth of it, by the powers of his holy spirit conferred upon me.” Pyle.—“The apostle unquestionably refers in these words,” says Dr. Chandler, “to the extraordinary manner in which he was called to, and fitted for, the work and office of an apostle.”

<sup>2</sup> *Energy of his power.*] “Paul’s conversion to the Christian faith was purely miraculous, and his knowledge of the gospel the effect of immediate inspiration.” Chandler. See Gal. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10; and Locke on the text.

<sup>3</sup> *Less than the least.*] Dr. Doddridge says, “It has often been observed, that the apostle here makes a new word, *ελαχιστοτέρω*, the comparative degree of the superlative, which no translation can fully equal or happily express. No doubt he refers to what he had been formerly, when he persecuted the church of God.” See 1 Cor. xv. 9; 1 Tim. i. 13. “The original word,” says Dr. Chandler, “is excellently well rendered by our translators. The apostle does not content himself with



*saints, this favour hath been bestowed, to proclaim<sup>4</sup> among the Gentiles the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches<sup>5</sup> of Christ.*

Ch. III.  
Ver. 8.

I cannot express the astonishment and the gratitude that I feel at the high honour that has been conferred upon me. When I call to mind what I formerly was, a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, I can hardly believe that I am permitted to enter into this holy community. I am unworthy of the lowest place, of the meanest office, in the church of God; and yet to me, even to me, the most unworthy of the servants of God, is this high distinction granted, to be the herald of eternal truth, to proclaim to the ignorant, deluded, despised Gentiles the joyful tidings of inestimable blessings by Jesus Christ, freely offered to those who could never have expected them, and who indeed were not sufficiently apprized of their poverty and wretchedness to have sought after them.

*And to manifest clearly unto all that mysterious dispensation<sup>6</sup> which was concealed from the past ages in God, who hath created all these things<sup>7</sup>.*

9.

saying that he was the least of all saints, but his humility goes yet lower, and he styles himself 'less than the least.' Such diminutive forms of expression are used by the best writers."

<sup>4</sup> *Proclaim, &c.]* This is the spirited and just translation of Mr. Wakefield.

<sup>5</sup> *Unsearchable riches.]* Dr. Doddridge remarks in this and the following verse an allusion to concealed treasure. Dr. Chandler supposes that the apostle alludes in this paragraph to the officers of the temple of Diana at Ephesus; but the resemblance does not appear to be very striking.

<sup>6</sup> *Mysterious dispensation.]* Most of the ancient manuscripts

Ch. III.  
Ver. 9.

To me it has been granted to discover and make known this hidden treasure; to publish to the world this new and glorious dispensation, which was lately an unfathomable mystery, concealed in the eternal councils of God, from wise and good men in past ages and under former dispensations; and now in its proper season revealed by him whose wise and powerful providence has introduced this new and happy state of things.

3.) The consequence of the apostle's preaching was the manifestation of the wisdom of God in the gospel dispensation through the medium of the church, ver. 10—12.

10. *So that<sup>1</sup> the manifold variety of the wisdom of God<sup>2</sup> is now<sup>3</sup> made known through the church<sup>4</sup> to*

---

and versions read *οικονομία*, *dispensation*, instead of *κοινωνία*, *fellowship*; and this reading is adopted by Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome. 'The dispensation of the mystery,' or, 'the mysterious dispensation,' is that dispensation which was formerly a mystery.

<sup>1</sup> *All these things:] i. e.* who has introduced this happy change of state in the moral world. The words "by Jesus Christ" are probably spurious, being omitted in many of the most ancient manuscripts and versions, though capable of a very good sense, as the new creation alone is spoken of by the apostle in this passage. Archbishop Newcome observes "that the sense most suitable to the place is this, 'who hath created all things, that is, Jews and Gentiles, anew to holiness of life.'" See ch. ii. 10, 15, iv. 24. How very precarious the argument is which is drawn from this text in favour of the pre-existence of Christ, and that he is the creator of all things, is obvious to every intelligent and impartial reader. See Tyrwhit *On the Creation of all Things by Jesus Christ*.

<sup>1</sup> *So that.]* Whitby observes that *iva* may here signify *adeo ut*.

<sup>2</sup> *Manifold variety of the wisdom of God.]* *πολυποικίλος*. See Wakefield. "Now that the uncircumcised Gentiles believe in

*the principalities and powers in heavenly places*<sup>5</sup>: Ch. III.  
*according to the predisposition of the ages*<sup>6</sup> which Ver. 11.  
*he made in respect to Jesus Christ our Lord*<sup>7</sup>.

In consequence of this manifestation of God's

Christ, and are by baptism admitted into the church, the wisdom of God is made known to the Jews, not to be tied up to one invariable way and form, as they persuade themselves, but displays itself in sundry manners as he thinks 'fit.' Locke.

<sup>5</sup> Now.] "This word affords a presumptive argument that a recent creation is spoken of in the foregoing verse." Newcome.

<sup>4</sup> Made known through the church.] The existence of the Christian community, formed by the apostle's ministry, and acknowledged by God as his through the gifts of the spirit, constitutes a proof which the scribes and priests and ministers of the Jewish dispensation could not object to or repel, that the wisdom of God had other ways of reconciling sinners to himself, and of bringing the Gentiles into the church, than submission to the Mosaic institute.

"The Jews, and most even of the converted Jews, would not believe that the converted Gentiles were admitted without submitting to the laws and ceremonies of the Jews. Now, says St. Paul, God of his special grace has commissioned me to preach to the world this his hidden purpose of taking the Gentiles into the kingdom of his son, that so by the church consisting of members who are God's people, without being circumcised or observing the other Mosaic rites, might, which the Jews could by no means conceive, now be made known and declared, to the leaders and chiefs of that nation, the manifold wisdom of God, which is not, as the Jews imagine, tied up to their own way, but can bring about his purposes by sundry manners, and in ways that they thought not of." Locke.

<sup>6</sup> Principalities and powers in heavenly places.] The ANGELS, 1 Pet. i. 12. Newcome, Chandler, &c. "not only governors and magistrates of this world, but all ranks and degrees of creatures in heaven and earth." Pyle; who observes upon ch. i. 10, that "*heaven and earth* are sometimes a Jewish phrase to express *the whole world*; but they seem in these epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, with relation to Christ's government, to include the angels and heavenly spirits along with mankind."

But it is hard to say, what could be the use of communicating

Ch. III.  
Ver. 11.

gracious, and heretofore unknown counsels of mercy to mankind, a church has now been gathered in the world, which God acknowledges as his peculiar peo-

by revelation any thing which passes in the world of spirits, even supposing such a world to exist, and to be informed of what is going on upon the earth. And if, with Mr. Locke, we understand *heaven and earth* as expressing Jews and Gentiles, those who are in, and those who are out of, covenant. It is in strict analogy with this figure to interpret *principalities and powers* as expressing the officers and ministers of the Jewish church. This is the explanation which Mr. Locke himself gives in a judicious and modest note upon this text, which, however, he professes that he "does not fully understand." After having observed, that it is not easy to conceive that the commission given to St. Paul was for the instruction of angels, and that heathen magistrates gave themselves no concern about it, he adds, "I dare not be positive, but I should take this to be the meaning of it. The high priests, scribes, and pharisees, who alone pretend to any authority in these matters, deny the converted heathen to be the people of God, because they neglect the law and circumcision, and those other rites whereby God has appointed those who are his people to be separated from the rest of the world and made holy to himself. Now, says St. Paul, God has commissioned me to preach his purpose of taking the Gentiles into the kingdom of his Son; that so, by the church, consisting of members who are God's people without being circumcised, might be declared to the leaders and chiefs of that nation the manifold wisdom of God; which is not, as the Jews imagine, tied up to their own ways, but can bring about his purposes by sundry manners, and in ways which they thought not of. And thus, by the church, is this mystery now made known to *principalities and powers*, i. e. to the rulers and teachers of the Jewish nation."

<sup>6</sup> *According to the predisposition of the ages.*] So Wakefield, Locke, &c. *κατα προθεσιν των αιωνων*. "The word *προθεσις*," says Dr. Chandler, "properly signifies the disposition which a person makes of any thing either in his intention or conduct. The literal translation of the Greek words is not, as in our version, *according to his eternal purpose*, the word *his* not being in the original, but *according to the disposition of ages which he made in or by Christ*."

<sup>7</sup> *In respect to Jesus Christ.*] *εν Χριστω*, "for the coming of Christ." Macknight; who observes, that *αιων* is a word of va-

ple by the gifts of his holy spirit: a proof which none can call in question. And this church, thus endowed, manifests beyond all contradiction, and that to those who are most averse to believe, even to the priests and rulers of the Jewish dispensation, that the wisdom of God is not limited in its mode of operation; and that compliance with the law of Moses, in all its pompous and burdensome ceremonial, is not the only way of admitting sinners and outcasts into the bond of his covenant, and to the privileges of his peculiar people. And this new and happy state of things is not owing to any late change in the divine counsels, for all the various portions of this magnificent design take place in regular succession, according to the plan originally formed in the divine mind; God having from the beginning determined that all the more imperfect and limited revelations of his will under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, should be made subservient to the great and final plan of universal redemption by Jesus Christ.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 11.

*By whom we have this freedom of speech, and access with confidence through faith in him<sup>1</sup>.*

12,

rious signification. Here it denotes the dispensations of religion under which mankind have been placed, the *patriarchal*, the *Mosaic*, the *Christian*. All these ages or dispensations the apostle says God planned and brought to pass for the sake of Christ Jesus, to prepare mankind for his reception." Dr. Chandler refers to Heb. i. 2, which he renders, *for whose sake, or, upon whose account*, he made even the ages, as illustrating this text: "all which dispensations had a reference to Christ, and led on to the accomplishment of the divine purposes of mercy to mankind."

<sup>1</sup> *Faith in him.*] πρὸς αὐτὸν, faith of him. The genitive

Ch. III.  
Ver. 12.

And it is by the dispensation introduced by Christ which has now superseded all others, that we all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are encouraged to address ourselves to God as our God and Father; and by the profession of faith in Christ, and by this alone, without any ceremonial observances whatsoever, we are initiated into our present happy state of privilege, and joyful expectation.

4.) The apostle concludes his digression with a request to his friends not to be discouraged by his sufferings for their sake, ver. 13.

13. *Wherefore, I entreat that ye faint not<sup>1</sup> at my afflictions for you, which are your glory<sup>2</sup>.*

Since, therefore, I esteem it so great an honour to be employed in the promulgation of the gospel

---

case of the object, as well as of the agent, is so frequent in the sacred scriptures, that there needs nothing to be said of it." Locke.

<sup>1</sup> *Ye faint not, &c.*] Mr. Wakefield, with the Syriac version, renders the text, "I pray that I may not faint." The original is ambiguous; but the common interpretation appears preferable, because it is more probable that new converts would be discouraged by the apostle's persecutions than the apostle himself.

<sup>2</sup> *Your glory.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that the pronoun *which* may either be referred to the whole sentence, and then the meaning will be, that Your not being disheartened will be your glory; or it may refer only to the apostle's sufferings, and then the sense will be, My afflictions are your glory, as I am hereby enabled to give you an example of fortitude, and a proof that I know the truth of my doctrine. He adds: "both senses are so good that I know not which of them to prefer." Archbishop Newcome remarks, that the language seems to show that a personal regard subsisted between the writer of this epistle and those to whom it is addressed. See ch. vi. 22. He refers for the use of  $\eta\tau\iota\varsigma$  to Phil. i. 28.



to the Gentiles, notwithstanding all the persecutions that I endure, and since I have exhibited such decisive evidence of the commission which I have received for this purpose, let not the imprisonment which I suffer, and the hardships which I so cheerfully undergo, diminish your regard either to me or to my doctrine. It is for your sake that I am in bonds; it is your honour to be benefited by the instructions of a teacher who is ready to attest the truth of his doctrine by his sufferings; and it will be much to your commendation to adhere to such a doctrine, and to such a teacher, in circumstances so difficult and perilous.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 13.

3. The apostle, resuming his subject, prays for the establishment and perseverance of his Christian friends, and that they may be duly sensible of the inestimable value of the gospel, ver. 14—19.

*For this cause<sup>3</sup> I bend my knees to the Father<sup>4</sup>,  
by whose name the whole family<sup>5</sup> in heaven and  
upon earth is called,*

14.

15.

---

<sup>3</sup> *For this cause.*] The apostle here resumes the sentence begun ver. 1. See the note on that verse.

<sup>4</sup> *Father.*] With Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and some ancient versions, I omit the words “of our Lord Jesus Christ,” which make the sense ambiguous, and which seem to have been added by some officious scribe, or taken in from a marginal note. Archbishop Newcome has marked them as doubtful.

<sup>5</sup> *The whole family.*] Archbishop Newcome remarks, that the word *πατρια*, ver. 15, has a reference to *πατερα*, ver. 14. By the family “in heaven and earth,” is commonly understood angels and men. Mr. Locke interprets it, “of Jesus Christ, who is already in heaven, and believers, who are still on earth.”

But



Ch. III.  
Ver. 15.

To return, then, to the subject of your admission to the privileges of the gospel, from which the astonishment and gratitude which I always feel at the recollection of my being employed on this glorious errand, and the fear lest you should be intimidated by my sufferings, have tempted me so far to digress: When I call to mind the rich, and free, and unsolicited mercy of God, in bringing you idolatrous Gentiles within the inclosure of the church, I humbly offer my most fervent prayer to that venerable Being, who is the great universal Parent, and who, more especially, owns the character of the Father of the whole family of believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether antecedently to their conversion to the faith, they had, or had not, been subject to the Mosaic ritual: all being now equally acknowledged as his children, and equally the objects of his paternal love,

16. *That he would grant you, according to his glorious riches<sup>1</sup>, that ye may be strengthened with power, by his spirit<sup>2</sup>, in the inward man<sup>3</sup>:*

---

But I see no reason in this text to recede from Mr. Locke's own former explanation of the words *heaven and earth*, as signifying Jew and Gentile. Mr. Locke himself indeed, in his note upon ch. i. 10, gives it as his opinion, that the family in heaven and earth in this text (iii. 15) signifies "the united body of Christians, made up of Jews and Gentiles." I see no allusion here to the goddess Diana, which Dr. Chandler supposes, who remarks, that "she was the common goddess of the Asiatic cities. All Asia worshiped her, Acts xix. 27: which was therefore strictly and properly her family." But who would have thought of such an allusion if they had not pre-supposed that this epistle had been written to the Ephesians?

<sup>1</sup> *Glorious riches.*] "his abundant and glorious power."  
Chand-

The favour which I request for you is, that our benevolent and gracious Father, in conformity to the wonderful purposes of his love to you converted Gentiles, would, by the energy of his spirit so copiously diffused among you, enlighten your understandings, establish your faith, fix your resolution, and confirm your courage.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 16.

*That Christ may dwell<sup>4</sup> in your hearts by faith.* 17.

That you may be sincere, judicious, established, and practical believers in the Christian doctrine.

*So that being rooted<sup>5</sup> and founded in love<sup>6</sup>, ye* 18.

---

Chandler.—“the great glory he designed to you Gentiles. See Col. i. 27; Eph. i. 17.” Locke.—“The glorious abundance of good things, and especially of spiritual endowments, which he can impart.” Newcome.

<sup>4</sup> *Power by his spirit.*] “strengthened with might, *i. e.* mightily strengthened, that God would give them mighty courage. *By his spirit.* The extraordinary gifts of the spirit were the great means of confirmation and establishment.” Dr. Chandler; who thinks that by *spirit* here may also be intended “the ordinary influences of the power and grace of God.”

<sup>5</sup> *Inward man.*] “the mind and spirit (Rom. vii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 16), of which the body is only the outward clothing and habitation.” Chandler.

<sup>6</sup> *That Christ may dwell.*] Dr. Chandler here supposes an allusion to the temple of Diana, in which the goddess was supposed to reside. This is upon the hypothesis that the epistle is addressed to the Ephesians; which appears to me, for reasons before assigned, in the highest degree improbable. All these fanciful allusions, therefore, in the illustration of which so much learning and ingenuity are displayed, fall to the ground; nor, in truth, are the allusions to temples and buildings in this epistle at all more frequent, or appropriate, than in the other epistles of the same apostle. See 1 Cor. iii. 10, &c.

<sup>5</sup> *Rooted, &c.*] “Grotius observes that there is a trajection in *iva*, as John xiii. 29, 1 Cor. ix. 15. The original runs, *being rooted, &c.*, so that ye may be able, &c.; and Bengelius removes the comma or colon from *τεθεμελιωμενοι*.” Newcome.

<sup>6</sup> *Founded in love.*] Archbishop Newcome justly observes,

Ch. III. *may be able to comprehend with all the saints, the*  
 Ver. 19. *breadth and length, and depth and height<sup>1</sup>, and*  
*to know the exceeding love of the knowledge of*  
*Christ<sup>2</sup>, so that ye may be filled to all the fulness*  
*of God<sup>3</sup>.*

that “ the apostle here uses a figure taken from architecture ;” but there is no occasion to suppose, with the learned prelate, any particular allusion to the temple of Diana; though Dr. Chandler “ thinks that this verse is in every word almost a remarkable and beautiful allusion to Diana’s temple at Ephesus ;” but he acknowledges that “ it is not taken any notice of by any interpreter that he has seen.”

<sup>1</sup> *The breadth and length, &c.]* Dr. Chandler applies this description to “ the spiritual temple, the Christian church, whose breadth and length extend as wide as the universe, and whose depth and height reach from earth to heaven, comprehending believers of all nations ; also angels as well as men.” Archbishop Newcome observes that “ the words are applied to the mystery of calling the Gentiles, in all its consequences here and hereafter ;” and accordingly he translates, the height of *this mystery*.

<sup>2</sup> *Exceeding love of the knowledge of Christ.]* I adopt the reading of the Alexandrine manuscript, *αγαπην της γνωσεως*, and take the words in Mr. Locke’s sense, “ to understand the exceeding love of God in bringing us to the knowledge of Christ.” The apostle prays, that the Christians to whom he writes may see the great love of God, in contriving, executing and publishing the scheme of the gospel ; in the firmness of the foundation, and in the vast extent, the grandeur and beauty of the superstructure, capable of containing all the people of God in all ages : that, possessing a complete view of this magnificent design, they may be filled to all the fulness of God.

Grotius also adopts the Alexandrine reading, which he says was Jerome’s ; and he explains it, “ *summam illam dilectionem Dei scilicet et proximi, quæ ex cognitione Christi oritur.*” Bishop Pearce, in his *Epistolæ Duæ* (Works, vol. ii. p. 476) quoted by Bowyer, observes that the sense of ver. 18 is imperfect for want of a genitive, and that a genitive after *ὑπερβαλλεσαν* is scarcely Greek ; he proposes, therefore, to place *της γνωσεως* after *ὑψος*, which will make both the sense and the construction clear: *q. d.* “ that ye may be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height of this knowledge,

And being established in faith, I pray that you may also be established in love; and to this end, that you may be enabled to form a just conception of the love of God as manifested in the gospel of Jesus. It is indeed, my brethren, a scheme replete with the purest, richest love to guilty, perishing mankind. The gospel dispensation is a magnificent temple: its foundations are in the centre of the earth; its summit pierces the clouds; its circumference is sufficiently ample to include the whole human race, both Jew and Gentile; it is graced with the presence of God, who there delights to

Ch. III.  
Ver. 19,

---

and to know the surpassing love of Christ." This is a very judicious correction of the text; and, though only conjectural, it is by no means improbable.

Castalio's version is, "*ut cognoscere valeatis quàm omnem cognitionem excedat amor Christi*," 'that ye may know how far the love of Christ excels all knowledge.' Mr. Wakefield renders the passage thus: "and to understand (which is far better than that knowledge) the love of Christ, so as to be filled with all the fulness of God." Upon the whole, the Alexandrine reading and Mr. Locke's interpretation appear to me most suitable to the connexion, unless Bishop Pearce's conjectural emendation should be preferred.

<sup>3</sup> *Filled to all the fulness, &c.*] ver. 18, that you may comprehend the height and depth, &c., ver. 19, that you may know the love of Christ, &c. (*iva*), to the end that ye may be filled to, or with, all the fulness of God, *i. e.* that you may fully comprehend and gratefully acknowledge the complete scheme of divine mercy. "according to all the fulness of God." Worsley. Mr. Locke's interpretation is, "filled to that degree of fulness which is suitable to his purpose of munificence;" and "by the fulness of God he understands such a fulness as God is wont to bestow. παν το πληρωμα means, that there is not a fulness of one thing and emptiness of another, but a fulness of all necessary gifts." This is the interpretation generally received. So Grotius, "*ut impleamini omnibus illis donis quibus Deus implere homines solet.*"

Ch. III.  
Ver. 19.

manifest the glory of his mercy through Jesus the High Priest of our profession. May you all take your proper stations in this sacred inclosure; and, with true believers of every name, may you behold, with heartfelt pleasure, the unlimited dimensions of this stupendous fabric; and remark, with generous delight, the unspeakable love of God, through Christ, in the admission of believers into the church, without distinction of Jew or Gentile! So that, when you contemplate this great work from beginning to end, both in its design and in its execution, you may be filled with admiration and delight, in the view of a scheme so complete in all its parts, so worthy of its divine contriver, so honourable to God, so beneficial to men <sup>1</sup>.

4. The apostle concludes his prayer and the doctrinal part of his epistle with a suitable doxology, ver. 20, 21.

20. *Now, unto Him who is able to do very abun-*

---

<sup>1</sup> If we admit the emendation of Bishop Pearce, which is, to say the least, very plausible, the paraphrase may perhaps stand thus:

*q. d.* that you, and all believers, may possess a comprehensive view of this knowledge: that you may see the vast extent of the scheme of the gospel; how admirably it is adapted, by the liberality of its terms, to include all the people of God, all the virtuous in all ages and countries—that you may form a just conception of the love of God in the mission of Jesus Christ, which so far surpasses all that could antecedently have been expected and imagined—and finally, that you may be filled to the full with admiration and gratitude at the glorious manifestation of the wisdom and goodness of God, in the dispensation of the gospel.

*dantly above all which we ask or conceive<sup>2</sup>, according to the power<sup>3</sup> which strongly worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church, in Christ Jesus<sup>4</sup>,*

Ch. III.

Ver. 20.

21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ask or conceive.*] This is a most appropriate doxology. Neither the converted Gentiles nor the apostle himself would ever have thought of asking for that which was so graciously given to them, without any solicitation, or even wish, to obtain it.

<sup>3</sup> *According to the power.*] “*i. e.* according to the similitude of that power which worketh by the gifts of the spirit.” Newcome. That wonderful power which had been exerted in their conversion, and in the apostle’s mission, was a proof that God could do more and better than they could ask or think.

“This power was exerted,” says Dr. Chandler, “in their being quickened when dead in trespasses and sins, and recovered from the dominion of the powers of darkness; and in building them up to himself a church and people, that they might be to the praise of his glorious grace. Now the same power which they had already experienced in producing this wonderful change, a change which they neither asked nor thought of, was abundantly sufficient to confer on them as real and valuable blessings for the future, suitable to all their wants, far exceeding all their thoughts, and even greater than they themselves could ever directly ask for.”

<sup>4</sup> *In the church in Christ Jesus.*] *i. e.* in the Christian church; to be in Christ is to be a believer in him. See Rom. xvi. 7. “To him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus. The great object of adoration, and the medium by which it should be offered, are here expressly and distinctly represented. The object is the Almighty Father; the person by and through whom, or in whose name, this glory and praise is to be offered, is Jesus Christ.” Chandler. Yet if this learned writer means that these words *by, or through, or in the name of Christ*, are required to be repeated at the close of every prayer, as though there was some mysterious efficacy in them, as is now usual, I do not see the necessity, or use, or scripture warrant, for such a custom. That we ought at all times to be ready to acknowledge that all we know of God, and of the most acceptable method of praying to him, is derived from the instructions of Christ, cannot be doubted. But the constant use of the name of Christ, as a sort of charm at the end of a prayer, seems unnecessary; and if introduced with a view to make the Father placable, it is blameable in the extreme.



Ch. III.  
Ver. 21.

*throughout all the generations of this most excellent dispensation*<sup>1</sup>. Amen.

And now, my Christian friends, having thus surveyed the wonderful love of God, in contriving, in executing, and in completing the scheme of the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Throughout all the generations, &c.*] In the original, εἰς πᾶσας τὰς γενεὰς τῆ αἰωνοῦ τῶν αἰώνων literally, *through all the generations of the age of ages*; which is generally understood as an emphatical expression of eternity. Archbishop Newcome renders it, “throughout all generations, for ever and ever.” Locke, with the public version, “throughout all ages, world without end.” Wakefield, “through the generations of eternity.” Priestley, “to the end of all time.” Doddridge, “through all the successions of an endless eternity.”—Dr. Chandler says, “the expression in Greek is so emphatical that it can scarce be rendered into English. ‘To all the generations of the age of ages,’ i. e. throughout all the successions of all possible ages.” Rosenmuller, after Grotius, “*Junctæ sunt duæ formulæ synonymæ Hebr.*” and adds, “*ut summa æternitas quanta mente quidem humana cogitari potest, exprimeretur.*”

With great deference to these learned expositors, I would submit that, as the doxology to be offered is that of *the church*, the duration expressed can extend no further than while the church continues; which, of course, is limited to the end of time, or of the Christian age or dispensation; and this is the natural and proper signification of the apostle's words: viz. ‘to him be glory in the church, *of* or *through* Christ Jesus, through all the generations of this age of ages;’ or, agreeably to a familiar Hebrew idiom, ‘of this most excellent age or dispensation.’ Or if, with some good manuscripts, we drop τῶν αἰώνων (see Griesbach), the reading will be, ‘all the generations of this,’ i. e. ‘the Christian age,’ which appears to me to be clearly the apostle's meaning.

Dr. Chandler explains the apostle's rule, *q. d.* throughout all the successions of all possible ages glory must be ascribed to the Father by Christ. “I confess,” says he, “that the practice of the Christian church, for many ages, has superseded this command, though I do not find any injunction or precedent in the New Testament for doing it; the apostolic example may and ought to be followed.”

How far this apostolic precedent can be made consistent with the well known doxology, ‘Glory be to the Father, and to the



gospel, and especially in the conversion and admission of the Gentiles, what can we do better than express our gratitude in devout thanksgiving? To Him, therefore, to that almighty and most merciful Being, who has in this illustrious manner demonstrated, that he is not only able but willing to confer benefits upon his ignorant, thoughtless, ruined creatures, far beyond all their prayers and desires, and even their conceptions, which kindness he has abundantly manifested in the powerful operation of his spirit in the conversion of you Gentiles, and in my own apostolical mission and success, neither of which could have been imagined, much less solicited by us; to that ever-blessed Being to whose great mercy we are all so deeply indebted, be ascribed, by the whole Christian church, throughout all the successive generations of this most excellent, and most benign, of all the moral dispensations of God to mankind, even to the end of time, all those high honours, and all that grateful homage, which are so justly due to him from all who have been enlightened, and sanctified, and saved by him. Amen.

---

Ch. III.  
Ver. 21.

Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end,' it behoves those who daily use this famous doxology, and impose it upon others, seriously to consider.

For the sense here given to the word *αιων*, see ch. ii. 2—7; Matt. xxiv. 3; Heb. i. 2.

## PART THE SECOND.

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUDING SALUTATIONS. Ch. iv.—vi.

## SECTION I.

Ch. IV. *EXHORTATIONS to the practice of personal and social virtue, and Cautions against relapsing into the vices of the idolatrous heathen.* Ch. iv. 1—v. 21.

## I.

THE APOSTLE exhorts to humility and concord, particularly with a view to the distribution of spiritual gifts, and the appointment of officers in the church. Ch. iv. 1—16.

1. He bespeaks their attention to his advice, from the consideration of his persecutions; and earnestly recommends mutual forbearance, and unity, ver. 1—3.

Ver. 1, *I, therefore, the prisoner*<sup>1</sup> *on account of the*

---

<sup>1</sup> *The prisoner.*] The apostle recurs to the expression ch. iii. 1; and some suppose the parenthesis continued through the whole of the third chapter. The consideration of the exhortations being addressed to them by the apostle while suffering in their cause, would give them great weight with every ingenuous mind.

*Lord<sup>2</sup>, entreat you that ye walk worthily of the calling<sup>3</sup> with which ye have been called.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 1.

Having represented the exuberant display of divine power and mercy in the invitation of you, who were once idolatrous Gentiles, to the faith of the gospel; and in freely admitting you to the character and privileges of children of God, let me now remind you of the obligations under which you are laid by your holy profession. And remember, my brethren, that the man who inculcates these duties upon you is Paul the prisoner: the prisoner for his and your master Jesus Christ, and for the testimony which he has borne to his doctrine. He is Paul, the prisoner for you Gentiles, who lost his liberty for his zeal in your service, and for his known attachment to the rights and privileges of the Gentile church; who would not, therefore, impose upon you any unnecessary restraint, and whose sufferings for you entitle him to a peculiar share in your regard. And the sum and substance of my advice to you is this: That you would, upon all occasions, behave in such a manner as to reflect credit upon your Christian profession, and to exemplify the beneficial energy of your evangelical expectations and hopes.

---

<sup>1</sup> *On account of the Lord.*] εν Κυριω, in the Lord; “propter dominum, ut c. iii. 1. *Vel nomine Jesu Christi vos obtestor.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>2</sup> *Worthily of the calling,*] “i. e. (says Dr. Chandler) in a manner agreeable to the nature and suitable to the design of it.” “of the honourable appellations, *children of God*, &c., by which you are called.” Macknight.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 3.

- With all humility of mind<sup>1</sup> and gentleness<sup>2</sup>; with long-suffering<sup>3</sup>, bearing with each other<sup>4</sup> in love; earnestly endeavouring to preserve the unity of the spirit<sup>5</sup> in the bond of peace<sup>6</sup>.*

And, in the first place, let me recommend humility and lowliness of spirit, recollecting that you owe all the privileges you possess to the free, unmerited, unsolicited goodness of God. And let this consideration suppress all disquietude and jealousy at the supposed superiority of others, either in offices or endowments.

Let your disposition be kind and gentle, not easily offended, not angry at trifles: and, though the provocation be great, let it not throw you off your guard, nor induce you to use intemperate language, much less to indulge a spirit of resentment and revenge. Bear with each others ignorance, infirmities, and prejudices; recollecting how much you need the forbearance of others. And, if you cultivate the kind affection which the gospel recommends, you

<sup>1</sup> *Humility.*] “*Modestia vel humilitas maxime decet homines, qui omnia vera bona Deo se debere sentiunt.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>2</sup> *Gentleness.*] “*Lenitatis est non moveri ob res leves.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>3</sup> *Long-suffering.*] “*Indulgentia, etiam in gravioribus cohibere iram.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> *Bearing with each other.*] “*Ita ut toleretis vos invicem, amore compulsi.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>5</sup> *Unity of the spirit.*] “*animorum studiorumque consensus, in primis in religione. Alii το πνευμα interpretantur corpus spirituale, ecclesiam: alii religionem ipsam.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>6</sup> *Bond of peace.*] “*vinculum tranquillitatis, i. e. tranquillitas, quæ est vinculum societatis: est tropus omnibus linguis communis.*” Rosenmuller.

will not find this a difficult task. Finally: be unwearied in your endeavours to promote mutual kindness among individuals, and the peace and unity of the church, by cultivating in yourselves and others that peaceful spirit which is the bond of society.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 3.

2. The apostle suggests various considerations to recommend harmony and peace, ver. 4—6.

There is *one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called to one hope*<sup>7</sup>. 4.

Every thing concurs to induce you to live in peace and union. There is one body, of which you are all members, namely, the church; there is one spirit which animates this body, of whose various gifts you are respectively partakers. And there is one hope, the hope of a resurrection to everlasting life, which is the great object of Christian revelation, and in this most important blessing you all equally share.

*One Lord*<sup>8</sup>, *one faith*<sup>9</sup>, *one baptism*<sup>10</sup>, *one God*, 5, 6.

<sup>7</sup> *To one hope.*] “to one common hope, *i. e.* to the hope of the same blessedness and salvation. Thus the preposition is rendered by our translators, Luke i. 17; and thus it is used by the best Greek authors.” Chandler. Mr. Wakefield drops *της κλησεως υμων*, on the authority of the Æthiopic version, which however is not noticed by Griesbach.

<sup>8</sup> *Lord,*] “or Master; this is in a peculiar manner applied to our blessed Saviour, 1 Cor. viii. 6, and signifies his authority over the church.” Chandler.

<sup>9</sup> *One faith.*] “one and the same gospel, containing one settled and fixed scheme of truth, that was preached by him and his apostles.” Chandler.

<sup>10</sup> *One baptism.*] Hence some infer that water baptism is not obligatory, understanding the apostle to refer here to the baptism of the spirit. But there can be little doubt that the apostle

Ch. IV. *even the Father of all*<sup>1</sup>, *who is above all*<sup>2</sup>, *and*  
 Ver. 6. *through all*<sup>3</sup>, *and in all*<sup>4</sup>.

Be it further remembered, as a powerful inducement to Christian unanimity, that there is one Master, even Christ, whose servants you are, whose laws you must obey, and whose benign example you are to follow. There is also one great article of faith, in which you all agree, namely, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; and, agreeing in this essential principle, you may well bear with each others differences in things of less importance. There is one rite, that of baptism, by which you have all been initiated into the Christian communion; and, in consequence of which, without submitting to the burdensome ceremonies of the law, you become entitled to all the privileges of the sons of God. And, to sum up all, there is one God, the

---

here means the baptism of water, which it is certain that he himself practised. See Doddridge. "All Christians were equally baptized by water." Chandler.

<sup>1</sup> *Father of all.*] "the universal creator: Father in an especial manner of the rational creation, and particularly of every faithful Christian." Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Above all.*] "superior in perfection, dignity, and authority: even above him who is the one Lord of all Christians, being his Father and his God." Chandler.

<sup>3</sup> *Through all.*] "universally present: upholding all things by his power, directing all things by his wisdom, overruling and disposing all events by his providence, managing the affairs of his church." Chandler.

<sup>4</sup> *In all.*] The word *ὑμῖν* (*you*) is not found in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, nor in the Æthiopic version; it is omitted by Mr. Wakefield, and marked as doubtful by Archbishop Newcome. "amongst you all; manifesting his goodness by the privileges to which he has called you, and the extraordinary gifts of his spirit." Chandler.

sole object of your faith and adoration; whose providence governs all, whose energy supports all things, whose spirit dwells in all believers, and who thus demonstrates himself to be the kind impartial Father of all. Let jealousy and discord be for ever banished from amongst those who are united together by so many strong and tender ties.

Ch. IV  
Ver. 6.

3. As a further incentive to Christian unity, he reminds them that all their spiritual gifts were imparted by Christ in that measure and degree which he thought fit, ver. 7, 8.

*Now unto every one of us has been granted in its measure the gracious gift of Christ*<sup>5</sup>.

7.

It is particularly unbecoming for the disciples of Christ to entertain jealousies and to foment controversies concerning the pre-eminence of spiritual gifts, because they possess none but what they received from the free unmerited kindness of Christ himself, and in that measure and degree which he has been pleased to communicate. No one, therefore, can have any right to be discontented on the one hand, or vainglorious on the other.

*Wherefore the scripture saith, He ascended on*

8.

---

<sup>5</sup> *In its measure, &c.*] This is Mr. Wakefield's translation. "In such measure and proportion as Christ thinks proper to distribute them." Chandler. It appears from this and other passages of scripture, that the distribution of spiritual gifts and powers, in the apostolic age, was under the direction of Christ himself; who during that period seems to have maintained a personal, and often a visible and sensible, intercourse with the church. See Matt. xxviii. 20.



Ch. IV. *high, he led captivity captive, he gave gifts to*  
 Ver. 8. *men* <sup>1</sup>.

What I have now observed concerning our entire dependence upon Christ for the gifts we possess, may be very well expressed in the words of David in Psalm lxviii., which was written upon the occasion of the removal of the ark to Mount Sion, ver. 18. The Psalmist describes Jehovah as a glorious conqueror returning from the wars to take possession of his imperial throne, leading in triumph his captive enemies, the late oppressors of his loyal people, and distributing magnificent presents amongst his faithful followers. Thus it may be said of our glorious chief, that he has ascended to his heavenly throne, that he has subdued his enemies and ours, having, by his death, abolished all the ceremonial law, which was the great bar to our acceptance with God ; and, like a triumphant conqueror, he has distributed to his faithful adherents those precious gifts

---

<sup>1</sup> *The scripture saith ;] i. e. David, Ps. lxviii. 18 ; where he represents God returning as a conqueror from a complete victory over the enemies of his people, and bestowing rewards upon his faithful adherents. The expression in the psalm is, " thou hast received gifts ;" but the Chaldee paraphrase and the Syriac and Arabic versions render it as the apostle cites it, " he gave gifts ;" and this, as Dr. Chandler observes, " is the genuine sense of the place, for God could no otherwise receive gifts, than as he caused them to be given to his people. I suppose this whole passage alludes to the custom of victorious princes causing their captives to pass before them, and distributing largesses to their people. The passage is cited, not, as I apprehend, by way of strict proof, but by way of accommodation, and to illustrate the point by a like instance."*

of the holy spirit, which are the sure pledge of our admission into the family of God. Ch. IV.

4. The apostle, in a parenthesis, argues the antecedent humiliation of Christ, from the prediction of his exaltation, ver. 9, 10.

*Now this expression, "he ascended," what does it mean<sup>2</sup>, but that he [first] descended also into the lower parts of the earth<sup>3</sup>?* Ver. 9.

The Psalmist saith that he ascended : now if we apply this language to Christ, to whom it may easily be accommodated, it may lead us to reflect upon a very important circumstance relating to Jesus, which, indeed, ought ever to be present to our minds ; I mean his humiliation, his ignominious death, and descent into the grave ; a fact which, however offensive to unbelievers, must be admitted and regarded by us as the great foundation of our faith and hope.

*He that descended<sup>4</sup>, is the same who also ascend-* 10.

---

<sup>2</sup> *What does it mean?*] τῇ ἐξίῳ, "How can it be, unless—" Wakefield. The apostle argues, that as Jesus ascended, he must first have descended : the inference, perhaps, is not perfectly logical ; but this allusion to the death and burial of Christ is a plain proof that this fact lay uppermost in the apostle's mind, and was regarded by him as of great importance in the Christian system.

<sup>3</sup> *Lower parts of the earth.*] This expression signifies the womb, Ps. cxxxix. 15 ; and the grave, Ps. lxiii. 9. In the latter sense it is unquestionably used by the apostle in this place, as Dr. Newcome rightly observes. The word *first* (πρῶτον) is wanting in the most authentic manuscripts, and is dropped by Griesbach. It is evident that the text affords no argument for the commonly received doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> *He that descended.*] The apostle seems desirous of impress-

Ch. IV. *ed above all heavens*<sup>1</sup>, *that he might complete all*  
Ver. 10. *things*<sup>2</sup>.

Unbelievers may, if they please, revile us as the disciples of a crucified malefactor. We glory in the assurance, founded upon evidence the most satisfactory, that the same Jesus who was crucified and laid in the grave, was raised from the dead; and, though he is now removed from all visible intercourse with this world, he is exalted to higher dignity and authority than any of the other prophets and messengers of God; being constituted head of the church, and empowered to communicate those spiritual gifts which are necessary for the completion of this his mystical body, and for the growth and perfection of every part.

---

ing the recollection of the death of Christ upon the minds of his readers, as an event which ought to be remembered in connexion with his exaltation, and of which they ought never to be ashamed.

<sup>1</sup> *Above all heavens.*] An allusion, no doubt, to our Lord's ascension in the air; but as the fact cannot be true in a literal and local sense, there being no such concentric spheres as the Jewish philosophy supposed, the true meaning of the apostle probably is, to express the unrivalled superiority of Jesus over all former prophets and messengers of God, and his headship over the church. See Eph. i. 10, iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Complete all things.*] So Wakefield. *things, i. e. persons.* See Tyrwhit's *Dissertation on the Creation of all Things by Jesus Christ*, in the *Commentaries and Essays*. The church is the fulness or complement of Christ the head, ch. i. 23. He supplies or fills the various parts with vital influence; *i. e.* he communicates to the church what is necessary to its existence and well-being, viz. the gifts of the holy spirit, by which the apostles and teachers of Christianity were qualified for their mission, and by which the gospel was promulgated in the world. See Mac-knight and Chandler. "that he might bestow on all his disciples a fulness of gifts." Newcome.

5. Resuming his discourse, he reminds his readers, that the gifts communicated by Christ were intended to qualify believers for the exercise of different offices for the edification of the church, ver. 11—13. Ch. IV.

*And he appointed<sup>3</sup> some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting<sup>4</sup> of the saints, for employment in the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ.* Ver. 11.  
12.

<sup>3</sup> *He appointed:]* or, he gave. As a triumphant conqueror having taken possession of his kingdom, he dispenses honours and offices to his faithful adherents. This is an additional argument that Christ had a personal intercourse with the church during the apostolic age, of which there has been no proof or example since. See ver. 7. The gifts of the spirit seem to have been dispensed immediately by him, John xv. 26; and he repeatedly appeared to the apostle Paul, to direct and support him in his apostolic labours. There might therefore be a propriety in ascribing effects immediately to his interposition, and even in directing prayers to him in the apostolic age, which would be unwarrantable and highly improper now that we have no evidence of his personal presence and agency.

<sup>4</sup> *Perfecting.]* Dr. Chandler observes, that “καταρτίζω signifies an exact composition of one thing out of many; and figuratively, to reconcile those who have been at variance. So that the ‘perfection of the saints’ seems to intend the full settlement of the church, by introducing Jews and Gentiles into it, and uniting them together in affection and love as members of the same body.”

Archbishop Newcome remarks, that perhaps the first clause of the 12th verse refers to apostles and prophets, the second to evangelists, and the third to pastors and teachers. This observation appears to me to be judicious, and I have adopted it in the exposition. Dr. Doddridge says, he “shall not take upon him to determine whether two different offices are intended by pastors and teachers; but that it has been justly observed, that if diocesan bishops were the very remedy by which the holy ghost designed to prevent or heal those schisms of which the Ephesian church was in such apparent danger (Acts xx. 29, 30), it

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 12.

By the different gifts and powers which our exalted and triumphant chief has bestowed upon his disciples, he has qualified and appointed some to be apostles, the immediate witnesses of his resurrection from the dead, whom he furnished with a complete and comprehensive knowledge of the simplicity, liberality, and extent of the gospel dispensation. Others he qualified for the office of prophets, occasionally inspiring them with the foreknowledge of future events, and honouring them with extraordinary revelations for the instruction of others. And the main design of these chief and most useful offices in the church is to publish the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, and to unite believers of both descriptions in one firm, compact and harmonious body. Some were qualified for, and appointed to, the office of evangelists, companions of the apostles, who by the gift of tongues, and the instructions which they received from the apostles, became qualified and authorized to teach the gospel in those places which the apostles could not themselves visit ; and lastly, some were appointed by Christ to reside in the churches which were formed in different places for the purpose of superintending discipline and communicating further instruction where it was necessary, so that the magnificent edifice of the church

---

is very strange there should be no mention of *them* amidst all these ecclesiastics which are here enumerated." Dr. Doddridge and others connect the two first clauses of the 12th verse, and render them thus : " for the perfecting of saints to the work of the ministry," &c. The words will very well bear this sense, though the other appears to me preferable.

might continually increase, and the body of Christ Ch. IV.  
might grow in all its parts.

*Till we all<sup>1</sup> arrive at the unity of the faith and Ver. 13.  
knowledge of the son of God, at perfect maturity<sup>2</sup>,  
at the full proportion of the stature of Christ<sup>3</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> *Till we all, &c.*] The apostle keeps in view a favourite idea which he had advanced ch. i. 23. The church is a mystical body, of which Christ is the head, and individual Christians are parts of that body. While they think the observance of Jewish rites, or any other condition besides faith in the mission of Christ and a practical profession of it, necessary to communion with him, they are imperfect, ungrown parts of the body; but when they fully adopt the Christian faith in its pure and uncorrupted state, they are grown to a manly proportion, and are of a proper size to be joined to that mystical body of which Christ is the head. If we carry in mind this analogy, to which the apostle is so very partial, we shall easily enter into his meaning in this and the following verses, though he occasionally breaks and mixes his metaphors.

<sup>2</sup> *At perfect maturity.*] So Worsley. Gr. "manhood." Dr. Macknight ingeniously observes, that "the apostle having represented the Christian church under the idea of Christ's body, ver. 4, he here speaks of it as in a state of childhood, whilst its members were few in number and imperfect in knowledge; and told the Ephesians, that the supernaturally endowed teachers were to continue in the church till it was so enlarged, and so well instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, as to be able to direct and defend itself without any supernatural aid. This advanced state of the church the apostle termed perfect manhood: at which when the church arrived, the supernatural gifts of the Spirit were to be removed as no longer necessary."

Perhaps the apostle's meaning rather is, that these supernatural communications were made for the purpose of promoting the growth of every individual; not that they would continue till all were come to maturity.

<sup>3</sup> *The full proportion of the stature of Christ.*] *εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρωματος*, to the measure of the stature of the complement of Christ. See ch. i. 23. i. e. till they have attained their full growth as portions of the mystical body of Christ, till they are become mature and perfect Christians, well instructed and well disciplined in the practice of the Christian religion. "to the full size of the stature of Christ." Wakefield.

Ch. IV.  
Ver 13.

These various offices appointed by the great head of the church, and occupied by persons qualified by spiritual gifts for their respective situations, ought not to be the object of low ambition and malignant jealousy. They are calculated to unite Christians of all classes and nations in the harmonious belief and courageous profession of the fundamental truth, that Jesus Christ is the son of God, the first-begotten from the dead, the promised deliverer of the world, and in a conduct correspondent to this holy profession. When this is accomplished, we may indeed be said to have attained the manhood of Christianity; and then in our respective stations we shall appear as full-grown limbs of that mystical body, which, united to Christ the head, forms the complete figure of the universal church.

6. The great design of all the gifts dispensed by Christ, is to promote stability of principle and mutual affection in the several members of the great body of professing Christians, ver. 14—16.

14. *That we may be no longer children<sup>1</sup>, fluctuat-*

---

<sup>1</sup> *That we may be no longer children.*] The apostle here plainly declares that just principles of the Christian doctrine, derived from the instructions of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and other inspired and authorized teachers, are the only proper security against false and pernicious doctrines propagated by artful and bad men, for their own personal advantage: he particularly alludes to judaizing teachers. Dr. Chandler observes, that “the apostle heaps together a crowd of strong and lively figures. He represents such of the Christian church as were wavering and unsettled in their principles; as children who are continually changing their mind.” He describes the conduct of



ing, and whirled about by every wind of doctrine, through the sleight of men<sup>2</sup>, and through their crafty method of deceit<sup>3</sup>. Ch. IV. Ver. 14.

The intention of this wise provision which Christ has made for the instruction of the church is, that we may have a clear and distinct knowledge of the leading principles of the Christian doctrine; deriving them from those teachers only who prove their commission from him. Being thus well-grounded in the faith, we shall not become the dupes of false and artful teachers, who, to answer their own secular views, would impose upon us their own mischievous errors as Christian truths. Nor

---

false teachers by a word (*κνξεια*) which signifies that “they had no more honour than gamesters at dice;” and whose opinions have “no more certainty or constancy than the dice, which vary at every throw.” *Πανεργια* signifies *sleight of hand* and denotes the subtlety and false arts of those who endeavoured to corrupt them.

<sup>2</sup> *The sleight of men.*] *κνξεια*, “1. *alea*, *lusus aleæ*; 2. *fallacia et astutia in ludo tesserarum*, et per synecdochen significat, *omnem fraudulentiam et versutiam*, qua utuntur homines alios decepturi.” Schleusner.

“The deceitful arts of false teachers are here compared to those of gamesters, who, by using false dice, cheat those with whom they play. The men whose base arts the apostle describes were the unbelieving Jews and heathen philosophers, who opposed the gospel by sophistry and calumny.” Macknight.

<sup>3</sup> *Their crafty method of deceit.*] *εν πανεργια προς την μεθοδεian*, “craft to invent methods.” Worsley. “*Solertia ad male agendum, multo usu comparata.*” Schleusner; who observes that the word is always taken in a bad sense in the New Testament, though it admits a good one. *Μεθοδεια της πλαγης, excogitata ratio alios decipiendi, et in errores inducendi.*” Schleusner.—“through their craftiness for the purpose of artful deceit.” Newcome.—“for the more subtle disposition and orderance of error.” Chandler.—“by their malicious cunning, by the contrivances of error.” Wakefield.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 14.

shall we, like children, waver in uncertainty, without any fixed principles; at one time professing one opinion, at another time another, being destitute of all consistency of judgement and dignity of character.

15. *But maintaining the truth<sup>1</sup> in love, we may grow up in all things to him who is the head, even Christ.*

Being thus instructed in the genuine doctrine of Christ by apostles, prophets, and evangelists, it is our duty stedfastly to adhere to the truth, to defend it against all opposers, and upon no consideration whatever to suffer it to be corrupted by human inventions. And this may and ought to be done in perfect consistency with genuine benevolence; for, indeed, the more we know and study the doctrine of Christ, the more earnest, diligent, and persevering shall we be in our endeavours to do good to others. Thus shall we in our respective situations, as parts of the mystical body of Christ, be daily growing up in due proportion, to him who is our perfect and glorious head.

16. *From whom the whole body<sup>2</sup> fitly compacted and*

<sup>1</sup> *But maintaining the truth.*] Αληθευοντες denotes “not so much speaking truth as embracing and adhering to it; and to render the Christian perfect, he must add to this regard to truth, love, or universal benevolence.” Chandler.—“speaking the truth in love.” Newcome.—“dealing truly, may grow up in love.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *From whom the whole body.*] “The whole body that consists of divers parts: συναρμολογημενον is in all these parts proportioned and fitted for the nearest conjunction, και συμειξαζομενον, and to connect and fasten with each other by every joint contributing to this purpose; so that the body receives its

*connected together by the aid of every joint, and according to the proportionate operation of every single limb<sup>3</sup>, thriveth<sup>4</sup> to the improvement<sup>5</sup> of itself in love.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 16.

It is from Christ, the head, that the whole church, which, like the natural body, consists of various

increase by the operation, *i. e.* the growth of every single member, till by that sympathy or kind of affection which there is between them, it grows up to its full strength and perfection. And thus the various offices and gifts of the Christian church do unite, as the joints of the body do the several parts of it, the several members of the church, and will all conspire to promote its welfare, honour, and prosperity, if those members are united to one another in love." Chandler.

<sup>3</sup> *Every limb.*] This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, the Syriac, Coptic, and other versions: it is marked as not improbable by Griesbach, and is adopted by Newcome and Wakefield.

<sup>4</sup> *Thriveth.*] *την αυξησιν το σωματος ποιειται.* Wakefield. Literally, *maketh increase of the body.* "maketh its increase." Newcome; who remarks, that "in the Greek the antecedent is used instead of the pronoun."

<sup>5</sup> *Improvement.*] So Wakefield. *οικοδομην, edification:* Newcome, and others; but *improvement* better corresponds with the apostle's allegory.

"By the stress," says Dr. Priestley, "which the apostle here and elsewhere lays upon good morals, we see that this was the great object of the gospel; and in this respect it was essentially different from the religion of the Gentile world, which in reality had no connexion with morals, as it consisted of nothing but superstitious observances, with which they thought the favour of their gods to be arbitrarily connected. So far was religion, properly so called, from teaching good morals to the Gentile world, that their temples, and the precincts of them, were often used for the vilest purposes: accordingly, Christians were soon distinguished from heathens for their better morals. But this was not effected immediately, because it requires time for good principles to operate, and to produce their genuine fruits. On this account, the apostles are so frequent and earnest in their expostulations with their new converts on this most important subject."

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 16.

parts and limbs, every one in its proper place, ornamental, useful, and necessary to the compactness, beauty, and perfection of the whole, derives its nourishment and vigour. It is from him that those supplies of the holy spirit are communicated, by which every believer in his proper station is qualified to occupy the post assigned him, and contributes to the increase and prosperity of the general body of Christians. Though, therefore, all cannot occupy the highest posts, nor all possess the most splendid gifts, yet all may be virtuous, useful, and approved. Let, then, all jealousy and contention be entirely laid aside, and all exert their earnest and harmonious efforts in supporting the truth, and in diffusing the knowledge and the spirit of pure and practical Christianity.

## II.

The apostle earnestly exhorts the Christian converts to shun the impurities of heathenism, and to maintain a dignity of character becoming their superior knowledge and advantages, ch. iv. 17—24.

1. He solemnly cautions them against the evil examples of their heathen neighbours, ver. 17—19.

17. *This therefore I declare, and earnestly charge*<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Charge.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that “the word *μαρτυροῦμαι* in the best Greek writers often signifies *to beseech*, and *earnestly entreat*; and that this is unquestionably the meaning of it in this place.” Archbishop Newcome renders it “to charge,” and refers to 1 Thess. ii. 12.

you in the name of the Lord<sup>2</sup>, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles<sup>3</sup> walk, in the vanity of their minds<sup>4</sup>, darkened in their understanding<sup>5</sup>, alienated from the life of God<sup>6</sup> because of their ignorance, because of the hardness<sup>7</sup> of their heart: who have abandoned themselves without remorse<sup>8</sup> to lasciviousness, and to all exorbitant impurity<sup>9</sup>.

Ch. IV.

Ver. 18.

19.

<sup>2</sup> In the name of the Lord.] εν Κυριω, in, or by, the Lord: i. e. "by his authority, or by the greatness of his love, or by the sincerity of your love and regard to him." Chandler.—"as a disciple and apostle of Christ." Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> Walk as the Gentiles.] λοιπα, the other Gentiles, which is in the received text, is wanting in many manuscripts and versions; it is omitted by Mr. Wakefield, and marked as doubtful by Archbishop Newcome. 'Walking' is a common expression in Paul's writings, to denote a manner or course of life.

<sup>4</sup> Vanity of their minds:] i. e. "their false and inconclusive reasonings, which led them into the most absurd and dangerous errors in judgement and practice." Rom. i. 21; 1 Pet. i. 18. Chandler. See Macknight.

<sup>5</sup> Darkened in their understanding:] viz. "through contracted habits of vice, and those strong prejudices and corrupt principles in which they had been brought up; which prevent the access of light and knowledge, and pervert the judgement." Dr. Chandler.

<sup>6</sup> Life of God.] "from that course of life which God requires: from living to God." Gal. ii. 19. Grotius, Newcome. "from that life which God prescribes and approves." Chandler.

<sup>7</sup> Hardness.] πωρωσις, blindness, according to the common translation, and so Wakefield and Newcome. Dr. Chandler says, "It properly signifies the hardness and callousness of a man's skin, contracted by frequent exercise and labour; and this seems to be the true rendering, because the apostle had spoken of the darkness of their understanding just before."

<sup>8</sup> Without remorse.] απηλγυκοτες. Some copies read απηλπικοτες, without hope, desperate, and therefore wicked. The common reading is supported by the best authorities. "The word primarily means, to be void of sorrow; hence it signifies persons who through despair have thrown off all sense of grief and misery, and cease all care to free themselves from it. Hence it implies the last and worst state of wickedness and vice,

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 19.

Being therefore earnestly desirous that you may attain to Christian perfection, it is my solemn declaration in his name, and my explicit testimony under his authority, that the practice of vice is utterly inconsistent with a vital union to him, and with the participation of blessings from him: I warn and charge you, therefore, as you value your relation to him and your expectations from him, that you cautiously abstain from all those criminal excesses which in your unconverted state you practised without hesitation, and to which your heathen neighbours now abandon themselves without consideration or remorse. Their miserable reasonings, unassisted by the clear light of divine revelation, have indeed led them into the most pernicious errors both in doctrine and practice. Their understandings being obscured by the most inveterate prejudices, their affections being alienated from the practice of virtue, and from obedience to the will of God, being ignorant that his favour alone is the true source of life and happiness, and their hearts

---

in which men have no remorse of conscience, but are desperately wicked, hardened, and insensible in vice." Chandler.

<sup>9</sup> *Exorbitant impurity.*] In the public version, "to work uncleanness with greediness." ΠΛΕΟΝΕΞΙΑ, Dr. Chandler says, properly signifies *covetousness*; and he understands it of those who committed these crimes for gain. Some of the best manuscripts read καὶ πλεονεξίας, which Mr. Wakefield follows. Mr. Locke in a valuable note shows that the word πλεονεξία is not uncommonly used by the apostle as a decent expression for lewdness of the grossest and most abominable kind, and understands it in the same sense here: so likewise Wakefield. See Eph. v. 3; 1 Thess. iv. 5; 1 Cor. v. 10, 11; Rom. i. 29.

having become callous to every refined feeling, and even to the sense of shame, they abandon themselves without compunction to vices which are the disgrace of human nature, and utterly inconsistent with every sentiment of purity, dignity, and virtue.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 19.

2. The apostle further alleges, that believers in Christ have been instructed to aspire after the strictest purity of morals, ver. 20—24.

*But it is not so with you. Ye have learned Christ<sup>1</sup>: inasmuch<sup>2</sup> as ye have heard him, and been instructed in him, even as the truth is in Jesus<sup>3</sup>;*

20.

21.

Far different, my Christian friends, I trust, is your present character from that prejudice, ignorance, pollution, and callousness of mind which I have just described, by which you yourselves were formerly entangled, and in which, as you well know, the heathen world is now immersed. It is your privilege that you have been introduced into the school of Christ. You have heard him addressing you in the person of his ambassadors; you have been taught by him who sent his apostles and prophets to preach the gospel to you, and who instructed them in what they were to deliver in his name; and be assured,

---

<sup>1</sup> *It is not so with you.*] Such is the spirited translation of Chandler. *q. d.* “This is not your practice: *ye have learned Christ*: Christianity, in which you have been instructed, hath reformed you.” See Luke xxii. 26.—“You have been scholars at his school.” Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *Inasmuch.*] Εἰς. See Chandler, Wakefield.—“since ye have heard concerning him.” Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *In Jesus.*] “the antecedent for the pronoun, as in ver. 16.” Newcome.



Ch. IV.  
Ver. 21.

whatever insinuations some may throw out to the contrary, that the pure uncorrupted gospel has been preached to you, and that your teachers have faithfully accomplished the object of their mission. And this was the tenor of the message which they had in charge to exhort you.

22. *To put off the old man of your former course of life*<sup>1</sup>, *which was going to destruction with deceitful*  
 23. *desires*<sup>2</sup>, *and to renew yourselves in the spirit of*  
 24. *your mind, and to put on the new man, the man according to God*<sup>3</sup>, *created to righteousness, and holiness, and truth*<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> *To put off the old man, &c.*] This is Mr. Wakefield's translation, and seems to convey the true meaning of the passage. Some think there is an allusion here to the custom of baptism; in which the baptized persons laid aside their old garments when they went into the water, in token of laying aside their former sins, and put on white garments after baptism, to denote the purity of their Christian conversation. Dr. Chandler thinks that this custom of exchanging garments was not so ancient as the times of the apostle: yet it might have been the custom of the Jews, from whom the mode of baptism was probably borrowed. Chandler, however, supposes that the apostle "particularly alludes to theatrical representations, in which the actors put on different characters and took on themselves the persons of other men." The apostle's idea therefore seems to be, that in the school of Christ they have been taught by him to act a very different part from what they had before practised.

<sup>2</sup> *Going to destruction, &c.*] The unbridled licentiousness of their heathen state naturally tends to destruction here and hereafter. See Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *The man according to God.*] So Mr. Wakefield, see ver. 18, the man formed after the image of God, and living the life of God. They are to put off their former ancient selves, their heathen character and vices, and to assume a new self, a holy character, a person resembling God, approved by him, and devoted to him.

<sup>4</sup> *And truth.*] The Clermont and some other ancient manuscripts, and the Italic version, read  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ . The common

On this great theatre of human life you have formerly acted a most immoral and a dangerous part. You sustained the character which your heathen neighbours now do. You lived in the practice of vices, which, whatever flattering appearances they might assume, afforded no real satisfaction, and which tended to your destruction both in body and soul. The Christian doctrine warned you to renounce the character and to escape the danger. Christ by his faithful messengers required you to prepare your mind for a very different course of life. He taught you another and a far more honourable and useful lesson. You are now to assume a new character; a character such as God will approve, and which is formed after his own model; a character by which you may be distinguished as belonging to him, as dedicated to his service, as the firm and faithful adherents to truth and virtue.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 24.

### III.

The apostle cautions his readers against the vices of heathenism, and urges them to the practice of the contrary virtues upon principles peculiar to the Christian religion, ch. iv. 25—v. 2.

1. He recommends a strict regard to truth, ver. 25.

*Therefore, laying aside falsehood<sup>5</sup>, speak truth*

25.

reading is *holiness of truth*; or, true holiness, not external, but that of the mind. See Newcome. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "fashioned in righteousness and holiness, the true man."

<sup>5</sup> *Therefore, &c.*] The apostle now proceeds to state the qua-

Ch. IV. *every one to his neighbour, for we are members one*  
 Ver. 25. *of another.*

Having thus, by your profession of the Christian religion, assumed a new character, let your conduct ever be consistent with it. And though in your former heathen state the violation of truth was regarded by you as a matter of little moment, if any advantage could be gained by it, you must now, under your present character, utterly renounce every species and degree of falsehood and deceit; and in all your conversation and intercourse with each other, your language must always be the representative of your real sentiments; you must be sincere in your declarations, and inviolably faithful to your engagements. You are all parts of the body of Christ, and therefore are all members one of another; your true interest is one and the same; you must therefore feel for others, and act by them as you would feel for and act by your own selves, as though they were vital parts of your own bodies.

---

lities of that old man which they were to put off, viz. the vices of their heathen state; and to contrast them with those of the new man which they were to put on, viz. the virtues of the Christian religion. And first of all they must lay aside the practice of lying, which the heathen philosophy approves and recommends. *He may lie who knows how to do it*, says Plato, *εν δεοντι καιρω*, in a fit season. See this and many other passages from the writings of the philosophers, to the same purpose, in Whitby on the text. In opposition to which, the apostle recommends a stedfast adherence to truth upon all occasions, and enforces his exhortation by his favourite analogy, that being all members of the mystical body of Christ, they are all members of each other, and they cannot injure others without in some degree hurting themselves.

2. He further cautions against exorbitant anger, Ch. IV. ver. 26, 27.

*If ye be angry<sup>1</sup>, yet sin not; let not the sun go down upon your resentment<sup>2</sup>, and give no advantage<sup>3</sup> to the accuser<sup>4</sup>.* Ver. 26. 27.

<sup>1</sup> *If ye be angry.*] See Wakefield, Newcome, Bowyer, Beza, and Grotius. "The words," says Dr. Whitby, "are not a command to be angry, but a caution to avoid sinful anger." Comp. John ii. 19. See also Matt. vii. 1, 7; Prov. xix. 25; Isa. viii. 9, 10; Nah. iii. 14, 15; Eccclus. xxx. 9. Dr. Chandler says, that "the expression may be rendered 'Are ye angry? see that ye do not sin;' viz. by indulging it too far, and harbouring your resentment too long; *καὶ, tamen*, John i. 10; 1 Cor. v. 10; Phil. i. 18."

<sup>2</sup> *Let not the sun, &c.*] Plutarch says that the scholars of Pythagoras, when they had been angry with each other, shook hands and embraced before the sun went down. See Whitby. To this the apostle may perhaps allude. Though, as Dr. Chandler observes, "the advice is not to be understood literally, as though it were always sinful to keep anger after sunset." "The plain meaning (continues he) of the whole advice is, 'be not angry without just occasion; and, whenever you are, be of a reconcilable spirit, and carry not your displeasure against the offender too far, either in measure or duration.'"

<sup>3</sup> *Give no advantage, &c.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that "the phrase *δίδοναι τόπον*, *to give place*, is used by the best Greek writers to signify the *giving a handle, occasion, or opportunity, to any thing.*" Dr. Newcome's version is, "give not advantage," &c.

<sup>4</sup> *The accuser.*] So Erasmus and Wakefield, and unquestionably right. In the common and most other versions it is "the devil." But in what sense it is not easy to explain. Dr. Chandler adopts both interpretations: "do not give occasion to the devil to lead you to commit the most heinous crimes, nor to the enemies of Christianity to reproach and slander you." There is no reason to believe that the apostle intended to express two meanings so very different. The latter, therefore, as being natural, intelligible, and pertinent, is by far the most probable. See Macknight; who, though he translates "devil," yet in his note remarks, that "Erasmus, with the Syriac version, gives the sense, *ut ne detis locum calumniatori*. According to their translation the apostle's meaning is, 'give no occasion to infi-

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 27.

In your former heathen state you were accustomed to regard anger and revenge as the qualities of a noble and generous mind, and regarded it as meanness of spirit to forgive an injury. But you are now entered under the discipline of Christ, and have assumed the profession of Christians. Anger is a passion which, in the present state of imperfection, will occasionally rise in the breast. But, whatever be the provocation, guard to the utmost of your power against excess in your resentment. Let not anger rise upon trivial occasions, nor to an exorbitant degree, and suffer it not to dwell in your heart. Where offence has been given, be easily pacified; where it is acknowledged, be ready to forgive; and where correction is necessary, let it be administered with moderation. And give no occasion to the enemies of your faith to calumniate your character, and to say that Christians, whatever they may pretend to, are neither more forbearing nor more placable than other men.

3. The apostle recommends honesty and industry, ver. 28.

28. *Let him that hath stolen<sup>1</sup>, steal no more; but*

---

dels to speak evil of the holy religion which ye profess." Possibly the apostle may mean nothing more than to guard them against giving way to a bad temper, an angry unforgiving spirit. John xiii. 2, διαβολος is used to express the wickedness of the heart of Judas. "do not yield to any temptation to sin, from whatever source it may arise." Priestley.

<sup>1</sup> *Hath stolen, &c.*] Stealing was a common vice among the barbarous nations, nor was it regarded by them as deserving of reproach. See Whitby.

*rather let him labour, providing with his hands what is good<sup>2</sup>, that he may have something to impart to him that is necessitous.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 28.

In your former heathen state, violations of honesty, where they could be committed with impunity, were as little regarded as violations of chastity, truth, and meekness, and were hardly thought worthy of blame: these, therefore, are some of the deeds of the old man, which you are to renounce altogether, now that you have assumed the profession of Christianity, and have entered upon a new and a holy life. Have any of you, then, unjustly deprived another of his property; let him immediately restore what he has unlawfully acquired, for there can be no repentance without restitution; and, for the future, let him resolutely abstain from every dishonest action, whatever temptation or opportunity may offer itself, and how secure soever he may be from detection and punishment. And let every one by honourable industry endeavour to acquire such a plentiful supply of the good things of this life, that he may not only be under no temptation to take unjustly what belongs to his neighbour, but may be both able and willing, from his own abundant stores, to relieve those who are in want.

4. That conversation be inoffensive and instructive, ver. 29, 30.

---

<sup>2</sup> *What is good.*] “the good things of life.” Wakefield.—“a livelihood.” Dr. Chandler; “or such a support as may not only be barely sufficient for himself, but may enable him to give somewhat to other persons who are in distress.”



Ch. IV.  
Ver. 29.

- Let no corrupt discourse<sup>1</sup> proceed out of your mouth, but whatever may be useful for edification in faith<sup>2</sup>, that it may contribute to the benefit<sup>3</sup> of the hearers. And offend not<sup>4</sup> the holy spirit of God<sup>5</sup>, by which ye have been sealed to the day of redemption<sup>6</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> *Corrupt discourse.*] “By corrupt or rotten discourse,” says Archbishop Newcome, “obscene talk is principally meant. Hesychius explains σαπρον by αισχρον, ακαθαarton. The word properly means what is rancid, or putrid by age. Alberti.”—Dr. Chandler observes, “that it is used by the best writers to signify idle, insignificant, useless, and unprofitable discourse; and in this large sense it appears to be used in this place, as seems plain not only from the original notion of the word, but from what the apostle expressly opposes to it.” Wakefield renders it *unmeaning*.

<sup>2</sup> *Edification in faith.*] “The reading of πισews, *faith*, is,” as Archbishop Newcome remarks, “well established by manuscripts: it is preferred by Bengelius;” and marked with approbation by Griesbach. The common reading, χρειας, is tautological. Mr. Wakefield renders the clause, “what is good to the furtherance of the business.” Dr. Chandler renders χρειας ‘occasion or use,’ and explains it of such kind of discourse as is suitable to the present occasion.

<sup>3</sup> *Benefit.*] χαριν. Dr. Chandler explains “that it may be grateful and acceptable to such as hear it.” “*Ut gratus acceptusque sit.*” Raphelius. So Wakefield. χαρις being often used for the ‘gospel,’ or for the ‘temper and spirit of Christianity,’ the apostle may perhaps principally refer to their improvement in the knowledge and spirit of the gospel; especially if πισews be the true reading.

<sup>4</sup> *Offend not.*] “Though the primary sense of λυπεω is to grieve, it is often used in the best writers for ‘offending’ and ‘displeasing.’ ‘Grieving the holy spirit of God’ signifies ‘offending God himself,’ who conferred those extraordinary gifts.” Chandler. “*Delicata res est spiritus Dei*, was a maxim of one of the ancients.” See Doddridge.

<sup>5</sup> *Holy spirit of God.*] The gifts of the holy spirit, by which converted Gentiles were proved to be in covenant with God, are here personified, and said to be grieved or offended: *i. e.* corrupt discourse, as it tends to defeat the design of Christi-



Another practice of your heathen state, which you must now entirely lay aside, is all trifling, foolish, and obscene conversation, all kind of language which has a tendency to corrupt the heart and to debase the character. Let not such discourse ever be heard among professing Christians. But let conversation in your social intercourse be always innocent, and often edifying. Endeavour to confirm each others faith in the gospel, and thus to improve each other in Christian knowledge, and in virtuous resolution. And do not, upon any consideration, by grossness of language, or indecency of behaviour, offend the delicacy or provoke the resentment of that holy spirit of God which dwells in the temple of your hearts, and whose residence there is a stand-

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 30.

---

anity, would provoke God to withdraw from them the gifts of the spirit with which they are favoured.

<sup>6</sup> *Sealed to the day of redemption:]* i. e. by which that covenant is sealed and ratified, the promises of which have a respect to blessings which will be hereafter conferred upon you at the day of redemption, i. e. at the resurrection, when you shall be put in the actual possession of a place in his kingdom, whereof the spirit is now an earnest. See Locke. See Rom. viii. 23.—

“As these gifts were vouchsafed in token of God’s acceptance of the persons on whom they were conferred, and were thereby a kind of impression or seal that God put on them, to assure them of the future inheritance of his children, so if persons offended God by their vices, in such a manner as to provoke him to withdraw these gifts from them, they forfeited this seal of their right to the heavenly inheritance, and were left in a state of condemnation. And as these gifts were granted in confirmation of a religion which enjoined the greatest purity of heart and conversation, and the perpetual study of love and peace, the apostle, by placing this exhortation between the commands to abstain from corrupt conversation, and a bitter, wrathful, revengeful spirit and behaviour, seems plainly to intimate that by those sins God was in a peculiar manner offended.” Chandler.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 30.

ing proof that you are his chosen people, and heirs of the promised inheritance. In other words, do not by any misdemeanour, either in conversation or conduct, offend God, and provoke him to withdraw from you those manifestations of his spirit which are the tokens of his favour, and the earnest of your deliverance from the power of sin and death.

5. The apostle urges them to abstain from all malignity and clamorous contention, and to cultivate kindness, forgiveness, and disinterested goodwill, after the example of God and Christ, ver. 31—v. 2.

31. *Let all bitterness<sup>1</sup>, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be removed from you, with all malice.*

Among your unconverted and ungodly neighbours, who are under no restraint from moral and religious considerations, nothing is more common than malignant quarrels, fierce contentions and brawlings, abusive language, malice, and mischief. Be assured, my brethren, that nothing can be more contrary to the spirit of the gospel than such a temper and behaviour as this; and, if it is your desire to approve yourselves the genuine disciples of Jesus,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Bitterness, &c.*] It is not easy to distinguish the different signification of each different word which is here used. Dr. Doddridge observes, "that perhaps it might only be the apostle's design, in amassing so many almost synonymous expressions together, to show that he would have them be upon their guard against all the malevolent passions, and those outrages of speech and expression which they tend to produce."

you must utterly renounce these inalignant passions, and live under the influence of a very different spirit. Ch. IV.  
Ver. 31.

*And be ye kind one to another, tenderly affectioned<sup>2</sup>, freely forgiving one another, even as God by Christ<sup>3</sup> hath freely forgiven you. Be ye, therefore<sup>4</sup>, the imitators of God, as beloved children.* 32.  
  
Ch. V.  
Ver. 1.

Instead of hating, and wishing ill, and doing mischief to one another, the law to which you are now subject requires that you should be always ready

---

<sup>2</sup> *Tenderly affectioned.*] “This precept is very different from that of Epictetus, who says, ‘If one is in affliction, thou mayest say thou hast pity on him, but take care not to feel any pity.’” Macknight.

<sup>3</sup> *By Christ, &c.*] that is, ‘God in the gospel has declared free pardon to all who repent and believe.’ The expression *εἰ Χριστοῦ* is very improperly rendered in the public version, “for Christ’s sake,” a phrase which greatly diminishes the force of the apostle’s argument, which is to urge Christians to the exercise of a forgiving spirit, from the consideration of the great mercy of God exercised in the forgiveness of their offences without any foreign consideration whatever. He certainly did not mean to recommend to those who had been offended to withhold forgiveness till satisfaction had been made by a third party.

“God is no where said to forgive sin for the sake of Christ. It is a great injury to the character of the Divine Being to suppose that he does not forgive repenting sinners freely, without any satisfaction to his justice, or the intercession of others. All that is necessary is men’s becoming proper objects of his mercy, which true repentance and leading a new life will always make them. If this had not been the case, the divine conduct could never have been proposed to our imitation in this respect. Now, we are taught to pray that God would forgive us, as we forgive others, and we are told that if our offending brother only repent, we must forgive him. The Divine Being, therefore, no doubt acts upon the same generous maxim.” Dr. Priestley.

<sup>4</sup> *Be ye, therefore.*] Griesbach joins the two first verses of the sixth chapter to the end of the fifth, “from which,” as Chandler remarks, “they ought never to have been separated.”

Ch. V.  
Ver. 1.

to perform kind offices for each other ; that, instead of contriving and rejoicing in each others calamities, you should sympathize in the tenderest manner with those who are in distress, and contribute to the utmost of your ability to their relief ; instead of making a boast of taking ample revenge for a supposed injury or insult, you should be ready to forgive upon the first symptoms of repentance, and that without insisting always upon the satisfaction to which you are justly entitled. For, consider how often and how grievously you have offended God, and yet how kind he has been to you in sending Jesus Christ to offer you that forgiveness which you never sought for, and, had you been left to yourselves, would never have obtained. Imitate, then, the merciful spirit of your merciful God ; and, instead of indulging a revengeful temper, rather be the first to invite to reconciliation those with whom you have the greatest reason to be offended. Thus, by your resemblance to your heavenly Father, approve yourselves his beloved children.

2. *And walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice<sup>1</sup> to God of fragrant odour.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Offering and sacrifice.*] Some distinguish *προσφορά* as ‘ a peace offering,’ and *θυσία* as ‘ a sin offering.’ See Macknight, and Dr. Bates’s *Harmony of Divine Attributes*, p. 254. But Dr. Doddridge justly observes, “ I cannot lay much stress upon this distinction.” Neither, indeed, ought any stress to be laid upon the figurative representation of the death of Christ as a sacrifice, as though it necessarily implied atonement, propitiation, or satisfaction to God for the sins of men ; a notion ut-

Let your whole life be a continued scene of benevolent exertions; and be ever ready to make the most generous sacrifices of ease and interest, of health and safety, for the benefit of your fellow-creatures. Such is the glorious example which our honoured Master hath set before us. Such was his love to mankind and his generous pity for lost sinners, that, after having laboured with indefatigable zeal for their instruction, he closed his ministry by sacrificing his life upon the cross for their benefit. And so acceptable was this illustrious instance of magnanimous self-denial to his heavenly Father, that he has crowned his virtue with a proportionate reward, and given him a name above every name. And be assured, my brethren, that all who follow his example shall participate in his triumph.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 2.

#### IV.

The apostle earnestly warns them against the vices of heathenism, and enjoins the Christian virtues of purity, prudence, temperance, and thankfulness, ch. v. 3—21.

##### 1. He strictly prohibits, in every shape and in

---

terly unfounded in the scriptures. Christ, from good will to men, made a sacrifice of his life upon the cross; and his benevolent and disinterested conduct in this instance was highly acceptable to God, which is here expressed by the sacrificial term, 'an offering of fragrant odour.' See Lev. ii. 1—9; Numb. xv. 3—14. And it is the duty of the disciples of Christ to cherish and to exercise the same kind and generous spirit, and, where occasion may require, to submit to the greatest sacrifices for the good of others, 1 John iii. 16.

Ch. V. every degree, those gross impurities which were allowed amongst the heathen, ver. 3, 4.

Ver. 3. *Now let not fornication, nor any kind of impurity, nor licentious desire<sup>1</sup>, be even named amongst*  
 4. *you, as becometh saints, nor ribaldry<sup>2</sup>, nor buffoonery<sup>3</sup>, nor scurrilous jesting<sup>4</sup>, which are wholly improper<sup>5</sup>; but rather graceful conversation<sup>6</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> *Licentious desire.*] *πλεονεξία* "excessive appetite." Wakefield. See Eph. iv. 19. The usual sense of *πλεονεξία* is 'covetousness;' but Locke, after Hammond, observes, "that if it is considered how often it stands connected with various species of impurity, it can hardly be doubted that in this connexion it is used as a decent expression for very gross crimes, such as were not even to be named amongst Christians." See Rom. i. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ribaldry.*] See Worsley's translation. *αισχροτης* "indecent speeches." Wakefield. "The former advice," says Dr. Chandler, "related to impurity of action, this to obscenity of conversation and speech, which is here condemned by the apostle, as inconsistent with the obligation of our Christian profession; in which many who call themselves Christians give themselves very scandalous liberties, to the shocking of chaste ears, and to the breach of decency and all good manners."

<sup>3</sup> *Buffoonery.*] "*μωρολογία*." Worsley. "unchaste speeches." Wakefield. "*Studium ineptorum et impudicorum sermonum*." Schleusner. Archbishop Newcome renders the word, *foolish talking*; q. d. "nor impure talk, Col. iii. 8; nor light and idle talk, unworthy of the character or of the subject; nor scurrilous jesting, injurious to peace and reputation." He adds, from Erasmus, "*Non fero quosdam qui quoties urbani videri volunt e divinis literis ad suas ineptias detorquent aliquid*."

<sup>4</sup> *Scurrilous jesting.*] *εὐτραπεία*. So Newcome. "double meanings." Macknight. "*scurrilitas, dicacitas*." Schleusner. "The original sense," says Dr. Chandler, "is an artfully turned discourse; it is used both in a good and bad sense. The apostle here intends such ambiguous forms of speech as are intended to raise mirth by dishonest and corrupt meanings. This, amongst some, passes for wit; but, in the judgement of the apostle, it is foolish talking; and, in the opinion of all wise and sober persons, it is rudeness and ill manners."

<sup>5</sup> *Wholly improper.*] *ἐκ ἀνήκοντα* not convenient, "most



You well know in what low estimation the virtues of purity and chastity are held by your heathen neighbours, how deeply their conversation is tinged with indecent and obscene language, and with how little shame or sense of guilt they indulge themselves in the most abominable practices. I now solemnly warn you, my brethren, that these habits of your former heathen and idolatrous state must be entirely relinquished, and for ever renounced. You must not only, as believers in Christ, consecrated and set apart from the rest of mankind, abstain from the practice, but even from the familiar mention of these odious vices. Your conversation, also, must be purified from all those lewd expressions and indecent speeches which afford so much mirth to men of gross and sensual minds, but which are wholly unsuitable to the dignity of the Christian character. I do not, however, mean to proscribe innocent mirth. God is not honoured by sadness of spirit. Let your conversation, then, be cheerful and easy ;

Ch. V.  
Ver. 4.

---

disagreeable." Pyle ; who refers to Rom. i. 28, which he says " ought to be so translated."—" which are greatly unbecoming, and highly displeasing to God." See ver. 11. Chandler. Mr. Wakefield, from Bowyer, supplies *κατα* before *τα*, and reads *ἡ ευπραγεια (κατα) τα ουκ ανηκοντα*, which he renders, " unseasonable levity, levity upon improper subjects."

<sup>6</sup> *Graceful conversation.*] *ευχαριςια*. "*urbanitas et jucunditas in sermone temperata et honesta, gratia et honestas orationis, et opponitur τη μωρολογια.*" Schleusner ; who refers to Xenophon. This forms a better opposition to the preceding vices than " thanksgiving." comp. ch. iv. 29. Chandler includes both senses in his exposition : " Endeavour to render your speech grateful and profitable to those you converse with ; and abound in thanksgivings to God for all his mercies." See Col. iii. 15—17.



Ch. V. the natural effusion of a grateful heart, acceptable  
Ver. 4. alike to God and man.

2. He plainly warns them that these vices utterly exclude from all the privileges of a Christian profession, and entail condemnation even upon the ignorant and idolatrous heathen, ver. 5—7.

5. *For be assured of this, that no fornicator, or unchaste person, or lascivious libertine<sup>1</sup>, who is an idolater<sup>2</sup>, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of*  
6. *Christ and of God<sup>3</sup>. Let no man deceive you with vain words<sup>4</sup>, for because of these things the*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Lascivious libertine.*] *πλεονεκτης*. See Locke; compare ver. 3. “one of excessive appetites.” Wakefield. There can be no doubt that the crime alluded to in this verse is the same that is mentioned in the third verse; and, from the connexion, it seems evident that the apostle alludes to these abominable impurities which were practised and avowed amongst the heathen, and which often even constituted a part of their sacred rites. “a man of such inordinate desires as an idolater is and must be. This sense is most agreeable to the apostle’s design.” Pyle.

<sup>2</sup> *Who is an idolater.*] *q. d.* whatever such a profligate wretch may call himself, he is no Christian: he retains the very worst part of heathenism, and ought to be avoided by all sincere professors of Christianity, and to be excluded from the communion of the church. Archbishop Newcome explains the expression of “making riches his god;” so likewise Dr. Chandler; but this appears to me wide of the apostle’s meaning, which is, that these licentious practices are the very essence of idolatry, and the worst part of it.

<sup>3</sup> *Of Christ, &c.*] Mr. Wakefield observes, “that the Æthiopic and Arabic versions omit *και* before *Θεου*,” and he renders the clause, “no fornicator, &c., can have an inheritance in the kingdom of the anointed teacher of God.”

<sup>4</sup> *Vain words.*] “Suffer not yourselves to be imposed upon by the vain and false pretences of corrupt men, who may endeavour to persuade you that these vices may be indulged with safety.” Chandler; who observes that “the word means false

*wrath of God cometh on the sons of disobedience*<sup>5</sup>. Ch. V.  
*Be not, therefore, associates with them.* Ver. 7.

Do not, my brethren, make light of my advice, and think not that the crimes to which I have alluded can be made consistent with the Christian profession, or the Christian hope. I solemnly assure you that every violation of chastity, from cases which are commonly regarded as the least criminal, even to those of the greatest enormity, however connived at or tolerated, or even required, in the abominable rites of heathen deities, constitute an absolute exclusion from all the privileges of that holy community which God has been pleased to establish in the world, and of which Jesus is the holy and exalted head. There are, indeed, some who assume the character of lovers of wisdom, who will gravely argue in defence of these licentious practices. But beware of being deceived by their plausible and insidious harangues: they may make as light as they please of their infamous debaucheries, but let them

---

and deceitful representations, void of solidity and truth." Mr. Locke renders it, "empty talk;" and remarks, that "One would guess by this that, as there were Jews who would persuade them that it was necessary for all Christians to observe the law of Moses, so there were others who retained so much of their ancient heathenism, as to endeavour to make them believe that these abominations were indifferent actions, not offensive to God, nor inconsistent with his worship." Dr. Whitby, in his note upon this text, produces several authorities to show that fornication was approved and recommended by the heathen philosophers.

<sup>5</sup> *Sons of disobedience*] "here, and in ch. ii. 2, and Col. iii. 6, are plainly the Gentiles, who refused to come in and submit themselves to the gospel." Locke.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 7.

know that they are not only forbidden under the severest penalties to professing Christians, but that they are inconsistent even with the law of nature, and justly entail the righteous vengeance of God on the heathen world. Be not, then, associates with them in their crimes, lest ye also partake with them in their punishments.

3. The light of the gospel requires a conduct that will bear inspection, and is absolutely inconsistent with those deeds of darkness and of shame which were the disgrace of the heathen world, ver. 8—12.

8. *For ye were formerly darkness<sup>1</sup>, but now ye are light in the Lord<sup>2</sup>: walk as children of light.*

I press this advice upon you from the consideration of the happy change which has taken place in your moral state. Not long ago you were as ignorant of the character of God, of the requisitions of duty, and of the doctrine of immortality, as any of your poor unconverted neighbours. You were darkness itself; totally uninformed upon every topic of pure morality and true religion. You are now in a very different state. You are brought into mar-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Darkness.*] See Col. i. 12, 13. "The kingdom of Satan over the Gentile world was a kingdom of darkness; and, to express the ignorance which the Gentiles were in, the apostle calls them 'darkness itself.'" Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *In the Lord.*] *q. d.* ye believing in, or instructed by, the Lord, are light, *i. e.* says Dr. Chandler, "ye are instructed in the knowledge of God and of true religion by the gospel of Christ." "The converts from heathenism are said to be called out of darkness into marvellous light in the Lord: *i. e.* as Christians." Newcome.

vellous light. By the revelation of the gospel you have been fully instructed, both with regard to your duties and your expectations. Let your conduct, then, correspond with your privileges. Live as Christians, and not as heathen.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 8.

*For the fruit<sup>3</sup> of the light<sup>4</sup> consisteth<sup>5</sup> in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth<sup>6</sup>.*

9.

If you are truly enlightened by the doctrine and governed by the spirit of the gospel, you will abound in acts of beneficence. You will be scrupulously exact in rendering to every one his due, inflexibly firm in your adherence to truth, and inviolably faithful to all your engagements.

*Searching out<sup>7</sup> what is well pleasing to the Lord.*

10.

Being in possession of the best means of information, you will diligently study the doctrine of Christ, that you may learn the virtues of the Chris-

<sup>3</sup> *For the fruit.*] "This parenthesis," says Mr. Locke, "serves to give us the literal sense of all that is here required by the apostle in this allegorical discourse of light."

<sup>4</sup> *Light.*] The common reading is πνεύματος, *spirit*, but φωτός, *light*, is authorized by the most approved manuscripts and versions; and it best suits the connexion, and is adopted by Griesbach and Newcome. See Macknight's note. The word *spirit* does not occur in this connexion, and is probably borrowed from Gal. v. 22.

<sup>5</sup> *Consisteth.*] See Macknight.

<sup>6</sup> *Goodness, &c.*] "universal goodness, justice, and veracity." Chandler.

<sup>7</sup> *Searching out.*] δεικνύοντες. "giving proof." Wakefield. —"The most frequent signification of the original word," says Dr. Chandler, "is, *to discern*, or *search out*: sometimes it signifies to approve any thing when fully apprehended and discerned. In both senses it well suits the connexion."

Ch. V.  
Ver. 10.

tian character, and may attain that purity of spirit which alone is acceptable to God, who is the searcher of hearts.

11. *And participate not in the mischievous works<sup>1</sup> of*  
12. *darkness, but rather even reprove them<sup>2</sup>. For it is*  
*indecent even to mention their secret practices<sup>3</sup>.*

Far from joining in the lewd revels, the indecent language, and the licentious practices of your idolatrous neighbours, which are most hateful, and equally injurious to their bodies and their souls, rather seek every favourable opportunity to enter your protest against, and to testify your abhorrence of, these abominable vices. Discourage them, at least,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Mischievous works:]* ἀναρπυῖς “here signifies, not only unprofitable, but mischievous; as Rom. i. 28. Thus it answers to inutilis, which signifies *mischievous* in the best Latin authors.” Pyle. “destructive.” Newcome; who adds, “We have the same litotes, ver. 4, ‘which are not fit,’ for, ‘which are unfit and disgraceful.’ See Rom. vi. 21.”—“such as are attended with the most mischievous and destructive consequences.” Chandler.

<sup>2</sup> *Reprove them.]* Chandler observes, that “the original word signifies both *to reprove* and *to convince*. Christians ought to endeavour, by the light of a good conversation, to reprove the vices of their Gentile neighbours, that so they may convince them of the evil and danger of them.”

<sup>3</sup> *Secret practices.]* It is generally understood that there is a reference in these verses to the heathen mysteries; and Chandler observes, that “the word συγκαίνωσκετε is used by profane authors to denote a participation in their religious rites and mysteries.” Dr. Whitby, in his note upon the text, produces authorities to prove that the Eleusinian and Bacchanalian mysteries were full of the most detestable iniquity. Dr. Doddridge remarks, from Saurin, “a sarcasm in this clause seldom attended to: as if it were insinuated here, they are called ἀπορρήτα, things not to be spoken of. True, says the apostle, they are properly so; things not too sacred, but too infamous, to be mentioned.”

by the sanctity of your example. They veil these odious practices under the sacred appellation of religious mysteries, into which none but the initiated are permitted to be introduced; and mysteries let them ever remain, for the infamy of their conduct upon these occasions is too gross, and too atrocious, to be described.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 12.

4. The Christian religion denounces shame upon the gross vices of heathen idolatry, and calls upon every one to renounce the works of darkness, and to walk in the light of the gospel, ver. 13, 14.

*But all these things are discovered, being re-  
proved by the light<sup>4</sup>: for the light is that which dis-  
covereth every thing<sup>5</sup>; therefore it saith<sup>6</sup>, Awake,  
O sleeper! and rise from the dead, and Christ will  
shine upon thee.*

13.

14.

---

<sup>4</sup> *All these things, &c.*] So this clause is rendered and explained by Dr. Chandler: "All things, viz. which were done by the heathen in secret, were discovered, *i. e.* their moral turpitude, and the doers of them rendered ashamed, being re-proved, *i. e.* demonstrated to be wicked and abominable by the light, *i. e.* by the Christian religion, or by the lustre of an unblameable and virtuous behaviour."

<sup>5</sup> *For the light, &c.*] Dr. Chandler renders the words, "it is the light which makes manifest every thing." An anonymous writer in Bowyer suggests the propriety of the transposition, το γαρ παν φανερωμενον. Mr. Wakefield translates this verse, "For all these things show themselves when convicted by the light, and whatever sheweth itself is become light;" *i. e.* as he explains it in the note, "is thereby brought to shame." He adds, "after all, this is to me one of the most difficult passages of scripture."

<sup>6</sup> *It saith.*] The words which follow are not to be found in the Old Testament. They are, however, commonly supposed to be an allusion to Isa. lx. 1, "Arise, shine! for thy light is



Ch. V.  
Ver. 14.

But all these odious vices, so common in the heathen mysteries, so shamefully justified by the philosophers, so impudently practised by persons of all descriptions, and which so often constitute an essential part of idol worship, are now plainly proved to be disgraceful to human nature, and offensive to the divine purity. This important discovery is revealed by the gospel; the light of which now shines upon the benighted world, and exposes to just abhorrence and contempt those vices the malignant nature and pernicious tendency of which were not, under the darkness of heathenism, sufficiently apparent to mankind. Justly indeed may the evangelical doctrine be called light, since it makes the most important discoveries in the moral world, and so clearly reveals the duties and the expectations of man. And as a benignant angel, commissioned upon the kindest errand, it addresses itself in the most energetic language to those whose eyes are closed to the evidence and beauty of moral and religious truth, whose hearts are dead to every princi-

---

come; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." A writer in Bowyer supposes it to have been inserted from the margin. *Sculigerdna*, p. 136. G. Syncellus in *Chron.* p. 27, says it is cited out of an apocryphal piece of the prophet Jeremiah. Chandler thinks it was some sentence spoken by Christ, though not recorded in the evangelical history. Archbishop Newcome supplies the words "*the Spirit sayeth*," and explains it as a declaration by the apostle immediately from God. Dr. Macknight says, that "the apostle by a rhetorical figure introduces the gospel as addressing an exhortation to the Gentiles, to awake out of the lethargy of sin;" and refers to Rom. x. 6 for a similar personification. This interpretation appears both just and beautiful, and it is adopted in the exposition.



Ch. V.  
Ver. 14.

ple of virtue and piety, and who are buried in sensuality and vice, summoning them to awake from the slumbers of ignorance, calling upon them to rise from the death of sin, and inviting them to participate in the light, the life, and happiness of the gospel. And, blessed be God, this invitation is not always urged in vain.

5. The apostle recommends prudence, and that they should not unnecessarily provoke persecution, ver. 15—17.

*See, therefore, that ye walk correctly<sup>1</sup>, not as unwise, but as wise, gaining time<sup>2</sup>, because the days are evil. Therefore be not inconsiderate<sup>3</sup>, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

15.

16.

17.

<sup>1</sup> *Correctly.*] *ακριβως.* “exactly, according to the evangelical rule.” Newcome.—“accurately,” Macknight and Doddridge. “with great exactness and care, so as neither to become partakers with the Gentiles in their crimes, nor to expose yourselves to their malice and anger by an imprudent rebuke of their very vices.” Chandler. “walk correctly (Dr. Paley, *Hor. Paul.* p. 226), suiting yourselves to the difficulty and ticklishness of the times in which you live. When we advise a person to walk correctly, our advice is always given with a reference to the opinion of others.”

<sup>2</sup> *Gaining time.*] So Chandler; and Macknight, who refers to Dan. ii. 8: “I know of a certainty that ye would gain time,” *οτι καιρον εξαγοραζετε.* “The English expression, ‘gaining time,’” says Dr. Chandler, “will take in the proper meaning of the apostle; especially as the original expression seems to refer to debtors who by some valuable consideration buy off the fixed time for the payment of their debts; or, as we say, gain further time for this purpose. When the apostle wrote, the time was extremely dangerous, and the profession of Christianity hazardous. What was the prudence requisite? It was to gain time, that the evils might not come upon them to which imprudence would certainly expose them. See Col. iv. 5.”

<sup>3</sup> *Inconsiderate.*] *αφρονεις.* “Yet, for the sake of this gaining

Ch. V.  
Ver. 17.

You, my brethren, are in the number of those who have listened to the invitations of the gospel, and who walk in the light of Christ. Let me charge you to keep to the path of duty with the greatest accuracy and circumspection. Warn, admonish, instruct, and edify others by your example and conversation. Do not by any unguarded conduct expose yourselves or your cause to reproach, and give no unnecessary offence. Let the wisdom of the serpent be united with the simplicity of the dove. And by a prudent and conciliatory conduct, without a mean desertion of principle, adjourn as far as possible the season of persecution and peril. But in order to this, do not venture to join with your heathen neighbours in their mad and impious revels; for it would be far better to endure the severest torments their malice could inflict, than to be associates with them in their crimes. Consider, therefore, with yourselves how far you may with a safe conscience avoid giving offence, and how you may, consistently with your duty to God, forbear to provoke those evils which it will be sufficient to meet with fortitude, when they cannot be avoided consistently with integrity and honour.

#### 6. Instead of intemperate revellings, the apostle

---

time, do not become *madmen*, by joining the votaries of Bacchus in their frantic rites." Macknight. Dr. Chandler also supposes an allusion to the feasts of Bacchus, and that the advice of the apostle is, that "they should not act like persons out of their minds, but as persons fully apprized of their interest and duty. *q. d.* Do not act without thought and understanding."

recommends the love of virtue, pious hymns and thanksgivings, and a kind conciliatory conduct, ver. 18—21. Ch. V.

*And be not intoxicated with wine, by which is dissoluteness<sup>1</sup>, but be filled with the spirit<sup>2</sup>.* Ver. 18.

Instead of joining in the bacchanalian revels of your idolatrous neighbours, and escaping from persecution by indulging yourselves, and countenancing them, in those excesses of intemperance which lead to every species of wickedness and debauchery, and which are absolutely inconsistent with your characters and hopes as Christians, drink deeply into the doctrine and spirit of the gospel, with which if you are thoroughly imbued, you will lead a life diametrically the reverse of that low and gross and contemptible character which I have just described, and will be formed to habits of purity, truth, and virtue.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Dissoluteness.*] “*ασωτια, ex α priv. et σωω servo, qui servari nequit, vita fœdissima et ad omnem turpitudinem abjecta.*” Schleusner. See Wetstein *N. T.* vol. i. p. 758. “dissoluteness, riot, profligacy.” Harwood. “the habit of which vice shows that a man is so lost that he cannot be saved from present and final destruction without great difficulty.” Newcome. —“*Wherein is excess.* This rendering doth by no means come up to the force of St. Paul’s word, which signifies a wretched and abandoned disposition, the being lost to all virtue, and fit for the worst excesses and enormities, a perfect dissoluteness of mind and behaviour. So that the meaning of the advice is, Be not drunk with wine, because habitual drunkenness is an argument of a very dissolute and profligate temper; or because it leads to, and is the cause of, the most licentious and abandoned behaviour.” Chandler.—“in which is a shameful want of order.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *The spirit.*] “spiritual gifts.” Chandler. “with the grand discoveries of the gospel.” Macknight; more correctly. The attainment of spiritual gifts was not in their power.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 19.

- Speaking among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual odes*<sup>1</sup>, *singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord. Giving thanks at all times for all things*<sup>2</sup> *in the name*<sup>3</sup> *of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father*<sup>4</sup>. *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ*<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Speaking among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual odes.*] So Wakefield. Gr. "in psalms." "in psalms, such as those of David, in hymns of praise to God, and in other songs dictated by the spirit." Newcome. See 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 16. Probably the meaning is, that they were to entertain themselves and each other with hymns and anthems upon religious subjects, and particularly in praising God for his goodness in the Christian revelation, whether the compositions which they made use of were inspired or not. It is also supposed that responsive melodies are here alluded to. See Macknight.

<sup>2</sup> *All things.*] Dr. Barrow interprets the expression as if the meaning were, Consider yourselves as appointed to return to God the tribute of praise due from the whole human race. See his *Works*, vol. i. p. 257 : also Doddridge *in loc.*

<sup>3</sup> *In the name.*] i. e. under the direction and authority of our Master Jesus Christ. We are to give thanks in the way in which we have been directed by Jesus Christ. The apostle does not mean to require that every act of prayer or thanksgiving should be concluded with the words *in the name of Christ*, as if there was some charm in that expression which would prevail upon God to grant what he might otherwise be inclined to withhold. "*Secundum voluntatem, ex præcepto Domini nostri Jesu Christi.*" Rosenmüller.

<sup>4</sup> *To our God and Father.*] τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ, "to God, even the Father, or, our God and Father." Newcome.—"to God the Father." Wakefield. "The primitive Christians," says Dr. Priestley, "were noted for their observance of this advice, being frequently employed in singing spiritual hymns and psalms. Singing consists chiefly in thanksgiving, and this you see is here directed to God through Christ; Christianity being the means by which glory is brought to God. Here, as upon all other occasions, you see the supremacy of one God the Father, and the subordination of Christ, as well as of other prophets, to him, who is his God as well as ours, and his Father, or the author of his being, as well as ours."

Ch. V.  
Ver. 21.

Nor is the spirit of the gospel in the least degree inconsistent with innocent cheerfulness, but highly productive of it. And when your hearts are full of joy, arising from conscious integrity, and from the discoveries and hopes of the gospel, let your tongues express your gratitude and delight in responsive melodies; either using the language of those devotional compositions of which David and other pious harmonists have furnished us with so pleasing a variety; or, odes composed for the occasion, as every one's disposition and ability may prompt. Remembering, that sincerity is of more value in the estimation of God, than the finest poetry or the sublimest harmony; and that the most acceptable melody is a grateful heart. Give thanks to God, therefore, at all times for all things; for spiritual as well as temporal blessings, for adversity as well as prosperity. All is the appointment of God, all is intended for good; let all therefore be acknowledged with gratitude and praise. Give thanks to God likewise for his loving kindness to all men: praise him for the bounties of his providence, and for the riches of his grace to the whole family of mankind, and let a generous sympathy inspire the accents of gratitude. Let all be done according to

---

<sup>3</sup> *The fear of Christ.*] This is the reading of the Alexandrine and many other manuscripts and versions of the best repute: it is received into the text by Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome. The common reading is, "the fear of God." The fear of Christ expresses that reverence which is due to his authority as a teacher sent from God.—"*Obsequium exhibite vobis invicem ex pietate (reverentia), erga Christum.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 21.

the directions of our common Master Jesus Christ ; who has taught us to address our religious homage, neither to himself nor to any other creature, but solely to that great and venerable Being who is his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

And as the best proof of your reverence for Christ as your Master, and of your gratitude to your God and Father, be kind one to another, and fulfill with affectionate solicitude the important duties of the various relations of social and domestic life.

## SECTION II.

*Exhortations to Relative Duties.* Ch. v. 22—vi. 9.

### I.

The apostle insists upon the duties of the conjugal relation, with a particular allusion to the case in which either of the parties was an unbeliever. Ch. v. 22—33.

1. The apostle prescribes the duty of the wife to the husband, ver. 22—24.

22. *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as*  
23. *the church<sup>1</sup> is to the Lord ; for the husband is the*

---

<sup>1</sup> *As the church.*] An anonymous writer in Bowyer suggests ἡ ἐκκλησία, *the church*, as the word proper to be supplied between ὡς and τῷ κυρίῳ. And as it best agrees with the strain of the argument, I have introduced it into the translation. Dr.



*head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: he is the protector of this his body*<sup>2</sup>. *As the church, then, is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their husbands in every thing*<sup>3</sup>. Ch. V. Ver. 24.

Fulfill with becoming attention the duties of the various relations of life. And, to begin with that which is the most important of all, the conjugal relation: Let it not be imagined that the profession of Christianity interferes in the least degree with the social and civil duties; on the contrary, it enforces them more strongly and by peculiar motives. Let not Christian wives, even though united to unbelieving husbands, think themselves authorized to relax in that respectful attention to them which the laws and customs of society require, and which they have been accustomed to show. Let them regard the relation in which they stand to

---

Chandler observes, that "the submission here required is that which flows from sincere affection and love: for such is the submission we pay to Christ, and this is all a wise and good man will desire, and which no prudent and religious woman will ever refuse."

<sup>2</sup> *This his body:*] "i. e. the church." Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *In every thing.*] "This," says Archbishop Newcome, "is to be limited by reason. It is observable that when St. Paul inculcates submission to civil magistrates, he avoids expressing himself so strongly." "The church's subjection to Christ," Dr. Chandler observes, "is founded in gratitude; and results from that protection which he grants it, and those blessings which he confers upon it. And from hence it follows, that if the husband be defective in his care of the wife, and refuses her that tenderness, protection, friendship, and support, which the matrimonial relation gives her a claim to, the husband so far vacates the reasons and obligations of that submission which he might otherwise reasonably expect from her, and which an obliged virtuous wife would gladly pay him."



Ch. V.  
Ver. 24.

their husbands, as similar to that of the church to Christ. He is to the church what the head is to the body: so likewise is the husband to the wife: and as the church, instructed, protected, and cherished by Christ, yields a ready obedience to his mild and wise and beneficial precepts; so while the husband, though an unbeliever, continues to conduct himself with becoming tenderness and affection, and to exercise only that mild authority which the laws and manners of society warrant, and which in certain cases may be expedient, let the wife submit to his direction and yield to his authority in all cases in which she is not restrained from it by duties of superior obligation.

It may be proper to observe here, that the apostle's directions are better suited to the state of society and manners in the East, where the female sex then were, and still are, kept under an undue and ungenerous restraint, than to the more enlightened views and more polished manners of European countries and modern times; and they are by no means to be regarded as obligatory in their strict and literal meaning. Good sense, good temper, good manners, mutual affection and sincere piety, will regulate the conduct of persons in the married state toward each other, far better than any specific precepts.

2. The apostle enjoins upon the husband to show regard and tenderness, even to an unbelieving wife,

similar to that which Christ has manifested towards the church, ver. 25—27. Ch. V.

*Husbands, love your wives*<sup>1</sup>, *even as Christ loved the church*<sup>2</sup>, *and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, having purified it by the washing of water and by the word*<sup>3</sup>, *that he himself*<sup>4</sup> Ver. 25.  
26.  
27.

<sup>1</sup> *Husbands, &c.*] “These precepts concerning relative duties,” says Dr. Chandler, “evidently relate to such persons as were of different religions. Lest women who were converted to Christianity should imagine they were discharged from the obligations and duties of the matrimonial contract towards their husbands, if they were either Jews or heathens, the apostle commands them to live in a reasonable subjection to them. And lest the husband, when converted, should hate or endeavour to divorce his wife, if Jewish or pagan, the apostle commands him to treat her with the tenderest affection, and by methods of kindness to endeavour to reclaim and purify her from the superstitions of judaism or the idolatries of paganism.”

<sup>2</sup> *As Christ, &c.*] “As Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, *i. e.* might reform men from superstitious idolatries and vices, and separate them to himself to be his peculiar people, so ought men tenderly to love their heathen or Jewish wives, that thus by kindness and affection they might prove the means of their sanctification and conversion to Christ.” Chandler.

<sup>3</sup> *And by the word.*] So the Syriac: see Newcome. By the word they had been instructed in the Christian faith; by the washing of water in baptism they had made profession of it; and by both united they were purified and sanctified, *i. e.* openly separated from the unbelieving world. “*Εν ῥήματι optime veritatur per doctrinam, et conjungitur cum verbis, ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ. Nam per doctrinam, quam discimus, emendamur, reddimur pii, et abstrahimur a vitiis. Καθαρίσας κ. τ. λ. postquam nos aqua lavacro abluit.*” Rosenmuller. *q. d.* that he might sanctify it by his word, *i. e.* doctrine, after having purified it by the washing of water. Upon his profession of faith, the converted heathen is baptized and admitted into the Christian community, and by his continued attendance upon the Christian doctrine he gradually becomes thoroughly instructed and reformed.

<sup>4</sup> *That he himself.*] The Alexandrine, Clermont, and other manuscripts and versions read αὐτος for αὐτὴν. This is also the

Ch. V.  
Ver. 27.

*might present the church to himself, glorious<sup>1</sup>, not having blemish or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and unblameable.*

Let not husbands whose wives are unbelievers think themselves authorized to neglect them, or treat them unkindly, on that account. This ignorance of truth, this alienation from God, is their great calamity: let them be regarded with a generous tenderness and pity. So Christ loved the Gentile church, and pitied it in its heathen state; not because of its merits, but of its wretchedness. And, moved by disinterested compassion, he made a voluntary sacrifice of himself for it, in order first to separate it from the unbelieving world by the rite of baptism and the public profession of religion, and then to purify it by the efficacy of his doctrine: intending thereby to cleanse it completely from every moral stain, to make it resplendent in the beauty of holiness, and to prepare and qualify it for its high and honourable destiny of an intimate and everlast-

---

reading of the Coptic, Italic, and Vulgate versions, and is adopted by Locke, Griesbach, and Newcome. “*Ενδοξον, quicquid nitet: σπιλος, macula in facie, vel vestimentis. ῥυτίδες, rugæ.*” Rosenmuller. “The apostle (says Mr. Locke), to recommend to husbands love and tenderness to their wives, in imitation of Christ’s affection to the church, shows, that whereas other brides take care to spruce themselves and to set off their persons with all manner of neatness and cleanness, to recommend themselves to their bridegrooms, Christ himself, at the expense of his own pains and blood, purified and prepared for himself his spouse the church, that he might present it to himself without spot or wrinkle.”

<sup>1</sup> *Glorious: a church, &c.*] This punctuation is preferred by Chandler and Macknight: they both suppose an allusion to Ps. xlv. 13.

ing union to him. Thus let Christians who are connected in the conjugal relation with unbelievers by no means think themselves at liberty to withdraw from them, but, after the example of Christ, let them spare no pains to promote their conversion, to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, and to form them to the temper and spirit of the gospel; which will be the surest pledge of mutual happiness both here and hereafter.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 27.

3. The apostle enforces his exhortation by an allusion to the account given in the Jewish scriptures of the first formation of the woman, ver. 28—32.

*Husbands ought so to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself<sup>2</sup>. For no one ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ the church. For we are members of his body; we are of his flesh, and of his bones<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly<sup>4</sup>, a*

28.  
29.  
30.  
31.

<sup>1</sup> *Loveth himself.*] There is no doubt an allusion here to the account given of the formation of the woman out of the man, Gen. ii. 21—25; which, whether it is to be understood literally or figuratively, as a fact or as a fable, was equally suitable to the apostle's purpose. He alludes to it as a known story.

<sup>2</sup> *Of his flesh, &c.*] An unquestionable allusion to the words of Adam, Gen. ii. 24, 'This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' The church is a part of Christ's mystical person, as the woman of the person of the first man. "The apostle," says Mr. Locke, "had here two things in view: the one was, to press men to love their wives, by the example of Christ's love to his church; and the force of that argument lay in this, that a man and his wife were one flesh, as Christ and his church were one; but this being a truth of the greater consequence, though an incident, he subjoins the reason, *Because we are members of his body, &c.* These words, from Gen. ii. 23, in his concise way

- Ch. V. *man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall adhere to his wife, and they two shall be one*  
 Ver. 32. *person. This mystery is great<sup>1</sup>; yet I affirm it in reference to Christ, and the church.*

---

he understands both of Christ and the church. He then goes on with Gen. ii. 24, which makes their being one flesh the reason why a man was more strictly to be united to his wife than to his parents or any other relation."

<sup>1</sup> *Accordingly.*] ἀντιτῆς "answerably to this." Doddridge. The apostle's analogy seems to be this: As the woman was part of the body of the man, so is the church the body of Christ. And still further: As, in consequence of this formation of the woman, the matrimonial connexion is represented as the most indissoluble of all relations, such also is the relation between Christ and his church. Nothing must separate them.

<sup>1</sup> *This mystery is great.*] "This," says Dr. Chandler, "is the natural order of the words." The sense of them it is not easy to ascertain. It seems to me that the apostle is pursuing his analogy, *q. d.* The indissoluble nature of the matrimonial bond is a considerable difficulty, and seems liable to some objection: nevertheless, ἐγὼ δέ, I apply it in its utmost extent to the union between Christ and the church; this must never be dissolved. No professing Christian must apostatize from the faith, nor will Christ ever discard his genuine disciples. The apostle here follows the turn of his mind, probably owing to his pharisaic education, to pursue analogies from the Old Testament. There is no reason to suppose that any such figurative meaning was originally intended in the narrative in Genesis; still less to admit, with Mr. Locke, that the apostle was inspired to interpret these passages. Some persons understand the mystery to relate to the eternal Son of God becoming incarnate. But this is far from the apostle's purpose. The Vulgate version renders the text, "marriage is a great sacrament;" and upon this text found their doctrine, that marriage is one of the seven sacraments. But this is a palpable error.

"This mystery," says Dr. Chandler, "this secret union of persons by matrimonial affection, is great, and it is called a mystery, from the indissoluble union which that matrimony constitutes; and because the tenderness of conjugal affection, when sincere, is such as no words can describe. The Papists, from this passage, would fain prove matrimony to be a sacrament; whereas μυστήριον never signifies in the New Testament a sa-

You have read in the Jewish scriptures, that the woman was formed from a rib taken out of the side of the man, Gen. ii. 21. Now, whether this account be history or fable, it teaches the important truth that the conjugal relation is the most intimate and indissoluble that can subsist in the world; and that persons in the married state should consider themselves as one and the same in person, in spirit, in affection, in feeling, in design, and in conduct; it is therefore as unnatural for a man to be unkind and cruel to his wife, as it would be to see him tearing and mangling his own flesh. A man who loves his wife, loves himself; while he contributes to her ease and comfort, he contributes to his own. Here, like-

Ch. V.  
Ver. 32.

---

crament, but something that either was or is a secret; and therefore can never agree to the nature of a Christian sacrament."

"*Hoc mysterium vocat grave. Operæ pretium esse, inquit Paulus, has res invicem conferre, cogitare quomodo unum sub altero lateat. Hoc et similibus locis, Paulus imitatus est Judæorum interpretandi modum mysticum, quo, cum persona, historia, ritibus, comparatur simul res alia, quæ per illa illustretur. Inde scriptor allegoricus dici solet etiam mysticus. Non opus est ut nos Pauli exemplo hunc modum interpretandi imitemur, nobis enim non est res cum Judæis, quorum ingenio nos accommodare debeamus.*" Rosenmuller.

"*This mystery is great: q. d. This truth, which revelation has opened to us, is great. I mean, that Christ should leave the glory which he had with the Father, and should join himself to his spouse the church.*" Newcome. Dr. Doddridge is still more confident: "*The mystery certainly was, that the eternal Son of God, receiving the degenerate race of man into an union with himself,*" &c. Surely nothing but attachment to a favourite system could ever have induced these learned and pious writers to have given an interpretation to the apostle's language, to which neither the words themselves nor the context afford the slightest countenance.



Ch. V.  
Ver. 32.

wise, the analogy applies to Christ and the church ; the church is Christ's mystical body, which he regards as a constituent part of himself; which, therefore, he protects, nourishes, and comforts. As Adam is said to have called Eve ' bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh,' so may Christ be regarded as speaking of the church. And as it is said of man, that he shall forego all other relations in order to form an indissoluble connexion with the female of his choice, so the connexion between Christ and his church is equally paramount and indissoluble. You may think this doctrine strange, but I assure you that it is true. And they who have once entered into the Christian covenant must no more think of receding, than a man can recede from his marriage vow.

4. The apostle concludes this branch of his subject with a general exhortation to conjugal virtue, ver. 33.

33. *However*<sup>1</sup>, let each of you, individually, so love his wife as himself, and let the wife reverence her husband.

---

<sup>1</sup> *However.*] πλὴν q. d. Dropping the allegory altogether, the sum and substance of my advice is this, &c. "I speak of the sacred and strict union there is between him (Christ), and the members of it, (the church,) only that you may every one of you apply it to each other. πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς, only that you may apply it to yourselves, each one of you." Chandler. "Enimvero, particula transeundi, Ut ad rem redeam. Nam sensum illum allegoricum obiter tantum attingere voluit." Rosenmuller. "However, not to enlarge on this truth respecting Christ, let us, &c. See Phil. iii. 16." Newcome.



To return from this digression, and to drop the allegory, what I mean to recommend is, that each party should be strictly attentive to the duties of the conjugal relation, whether the other party be a Christian or an unbeliever. Let the husband, by kind and generous behaviour, win over the unbelieving wife to the profession of a religion which breathes the spirit of love; and let the dutiful behaviour of the Christian wife prove to the unbelieving husband that the profession of Christianity, while it strictly enforces all other duties, does not diminish that respectful deference which the laws and customs of society require from an affectionate and faithful wife to a kind and virtuous husband.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 32.

## II.

The apostle inculcates filial and parental duties, especially in cases where either of the parties were unbelievers, ch. vi. 1—4.

1. He represents the duties of children, and particularly to unbelieving parents, ver. 1—3.

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord<sup>2</sup>, for this is just<sup>3</sup>.*

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 1.

---

<sup>2</sup> *In the Lord.*] εν κυριω “by virtue of his command, and as far as they could consistently with the obligations of their Christian profession.” Chandler. These words are wanting in the Clermont and some other very ancient manuscripts, and have much the appearance of a marginal gloss. In the parallel passage, Col. iii. 20, they are placed at the end of the sentence. Dr. Chandler understands the advice as given to the converted children of unbelieving parents, that they might not

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 1.

The disciples of Moses, whose attachment to legal rites and rigours, and whose zeal for making proselytes is unbounded, teach that conversion to their system is a dissolution of all the bonds of civil society, and even of nature; so that parents and children are as entirely released from all the peculiar duties of those endearing relations, to those who remain in a heathen state, as if they were entire strangers to each other. Far different is the spirit and the doctrine of the Christian dispensation. Instead of relaxing, it enforces the duties of every relation by the most powerful and engaging motives. Let children, therefore, obey their parents; and particularly let those young persons, whose parents are not yet converted to the faith, yield to them the same respectful and dutiful obedience which that honourable and endearing relation naturally claims; except in those cases where obedience to the parent would be inconsistent with the allegiance which

---

think themselves exempt from filial duty. The Jews represented proselytism to their religion as dissolving the bonds of natural relation. "*Transgressi in morem eorum idem usurpant: nec quicquid prius imbuuntur quam contemnere divos; exuere patriam; parentes, liberos, fratres, vilia habere.*" Tacitus Hist. v. 7. It is not improbable that the judaizing teachers might inculcate a similar doctrine, which would make it peculiarly proper for the apostle to enter his protest against it, and strongly to press upon new converts the discharge of relative and social duties. See Dr. Jennings's *Jewish Antiquities*, b. i. ch. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *This is just.*] "It is reasonable in itself, independent of any law of God, it being the dictate of nature, and for the general good, that till persons come to the full use of their own reason, they should be under the direction of that of their parents, who are responsible for them." Priestley.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 1.

they owe to Christ. It is just that children should obey their parents thus far, because they are under great obligations to them for past care and kindness; because, in general, the prudence and experience of the parent is much superior to that of the child; and because such behaviour may induce the unbelieving parent to inquire into the evidence of a doctrine which produces such beneficial effects. But that obedience to parents is to be limited by the paramount authority of Christ, is also just; for Christ is the messenger of God, and it is right to obey God rather than man.

*This is the first commandment with a promise<sup>1</sup>: Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long in the land.*

2.

3.

That obedience to parents is peculiarly acceptable to God, may be inferred from the eminent distinction which this precept obtains among those commandments which the finger of God engraved upon the tables of stone. The precept which requires children to love, obey, and in case of need to support, their aged parents, is the only one to which a specific promise is annexed; namely, long life in the land of Canaan. And this shows how little

---

<sup>1</sup> *This is the first commandment, &c.]* I follow Mr. Wakefield, in placing this clause at the beginning of the sentence. It is justly observed that the meaning is, that this is the first, and indeed the only, commandment in the decalogue which hath any "special and appropriated promise;" the promise in the second commandment being of a general nature: "to all who love God and keep his commandments." See Newcome, Exod.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 3.

reason the Jewish zealots have for teaching, that proselytism supersedes the duties of natural relations. And though temporal blessings are not the proper objects of evangelical promise, yet be assured that, as nothing is more acceptable to God than filial piety, so there is no virtue that has a more direct tendency to secure peace, reputation, and prosperity in life.

2. The apostle gives directions to parents for their conduct towards children, especially if they are unbelievers, ver. 4.

4. *And, ye parents, do not exasperate<sup>1</sup> your children, but educate them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord<sup>2</sup>.*

---

Exod. xx. 6. “*ἐντολὴ πρώτη videtur potius esse, primum præceptum, unum e præcipuis, vel ad fructum, vel ad necessitatem observandi.*” Rosenmüller.

<sup>1</sup> *Do not exasperate, &c.*] “If converted Christian parents had children that seemed averse to the faith of Christ,” says Dr. Chandler, “they were not to treat them with severity, nor to exasperate them by an unkind and harsh behaviour, because this might tend to prejudice them against Christianity itself.”

<sup>2</sup> *The discipline, &c.*] Wakefield. “*παιδεία est disciplina, seu morum gubernatio, ut ex παιδείᾳ Cyri apparet.*” Raphelius. “*Νεθετεῖν est τὸν υἱὸν ευθετεῖν, τὸν υἱὸν καλῶς ἢ ὀρθῶς τιθεῖναι: ἐπανορθεῖν, monere mitius, vel severius, acriter redarguere et reprehendere, immo, pæna afficere.*” Kypke apud Newcome. “*παιδεία, omnis institutio et disciplina puerilis, sive illa fiat institutione in literis, sive morum et animi informatione ad honesta quævis exemplo, admonitionibus, beneficiis et pænis. νουθεσία, admonitio, disciplina, qua alterum ad meliorem mentem revocare studemus.*” Schleusner. “The apostle exhorts parents to treat children as rational creatures, and not with that harshness and severity which was common with the ancients, who had a power over their children which the humanity of modern laws does not permit. But they were to be more especially careful to instruct

Let not parents behave harshly and unkindly to their children; and particularly let not Christian parents think themselves authorized to treat with peculiar severity those who are not yet converted to the faith. Harsh behaviour and violent language will exasperate rather than convince. If they wish that their children should become true disciples of Jesus, let them mildly instruct them in the principles of Christian doctrine, and the evidences of the Christian faith, so as to enlighten their understandings and to bring conviction to their reason; and by wise and gentle, but firm, discipline, let them restrain their children from the vices of heathenism, and train them up to the practice and habit of Christian virtue.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 4.

### III.

The apostle enforces the mutual duties of masters and servants, or bondmen, ver. 5—9.

1. The duties of believing servants to unbelieving masters are strongly represented and enforced, ver. 5—8.

*Bond-servants<sup>3</sup>, be obedient to your earthly*

5.

---

their children in the principles of religion, this being a thing of more consequence to them than any thing else they could do for them." Priestley.

<sup>3</sup> *Bond-servants.*] "δσλος," says Dr. Chandler, "is, properly, a slave; and, lest slaves converted to Christianity should imagine that they were discharged from their subjection to their masters because they were become by faith the freed men of Christ, the apostle enjoins upon them the most exemplary obedience."

Ch. VI. *masters*<sup>1</sup>, *with*<sup>2</sup> *reverential fear*<sup>2</sup>, *in the integrity*<sup>3</sup>  
Ver. 5. *of your heart, as unto Christ*<sup>4</sup>.

Let not those whom the state and laws of society have placed in the degraded and unhappy condition of bondmen and slaves, imagine that Christianity is intended to operate any immediate change in their civil state or social duties. The benevolent principles and liberal spirit of the doctrine of Jesus will indeed, in due time, abolish slavery, and put an end to all unjust and arbitrary rule which man exercises over his fellow man. In the mean time, let the Christian slave yield obedience to his heathen master, not only from terror and the dread of punishment, but with the same uprightness and sincerity with which he obeys the precepts of his heavenly master Christ.

6. *Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers*<sup>5</sup>, *but as*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Earthly masters.*] In the original, "according to the flesh," "in opposition (says Archbishop Newcome) to their religious master, Christ." Mr. Wakefield translates it, "your worldly masters."

<sup>2</sup> *Reverential fear:*] literally, *fear and trembling*. See Worsley's translation. "i. e. with diligence and earnestness." Newcome. "with that fear and dread of their displeasure which becomes your state of slavery and subjection." Chandler. The same expression occurs Phil. ii. 12; it seems to be a proverbial phrase. "*summa cum reverentia.*" Rosenmüller.

<sup>3</sup> *Integrity,*] or, 'in singleness of heart.' "This virtue," says Dr. Newcome, "is opposed to that deceit and duplicity for which slaves were remarkable."

<sup>4</sup> *Unto Christ.*] The Alexandrine and some other manuscripts, and the Coptic version, here read 'the Lord.' See Griesbach.

<sup>5</sup> *Eye-service, &c.*] Dr. Doddridge observes, that "Grotius takes notice of the elegance of the compound words made use of here in the original, which our translators have endeavoured to imitate. But as the Greek abounds more in such compound

*bond-servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart<sup>6</sup>; performing service with good-will as to the Lord<sup>7</sup>, and not to men.*

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 7.

Let not Christian servants behave as the heathen are often known to do: being active and diligent under their master's eye, to excite his attention and to gain his favour, but idle and vicious when they can be so with impunity. Let them perform their duty faithfully, considering the lawful requisitions of their masters as the requisitions of Christ, whose command it is that they should be obeyed; and to obey Christ is to do the will of God, whose servant and messenger he is. Obey your heathen masters, therefore, from a sense of duty to God, whose notice you can never escape. Let, then, your obedience be not only exact and faithful, but benevolent and cheerful; and whatever you do for the service of your master, regard it as done for the service of Christ, who will not suffer you to go without a proper remuneration.

*Knowing that whatever good work any man doeth, he will receive it from the Lord, whether he be a slave<sup>8</sup> or a free-man.*

8.

words than any other language, so the apostle Paul has frequently introduced them into his writings with a peculiar elegance and beauty, of which the best translation must, in many instances, fall very short." Rom. ii. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Col. ii. 4; 1 Tim. i. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6, ii. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *From the heart.*] "ἐκ ψυχῆς, lubenter, sed tanquam ingenui Christiani, qui lubenter præceptis Dei obsequuntur." Rosenmüller.

<sup>7</sup> *As to the Lord.*] i.e. "Respicientes præcipue non illos homines, quorum servi estis, sed Christum, qui id exigit, et qui præmium reddit." Rosenmüller.

<sup>8</sup> *A slave.*] "These slaves were the property of their mas-



Ch. VI.  
Ver. 8.

Your unbelieving and unjust masters may sometimes govern you with the rod of oppression; and, instead of expressing approbation, or allowing a proper recompense for your fidelity and diligence, they may treat you with insult and cruelty. Let not this discourage you: least of all let it induce you to neglect your duty. You must habitually regard yourselves as the servants of Christ; he is your true master: and none of his servants, whatever their rank and condition may be, shall go without his due reward: nor shall the lowest act of duty fail of its corresponding recompense. Let no consideration, therefore, tempt you to neglect the duties of your humble and laborious station; and let your character exhibit to all around you the efficacy of Christian principles, and the triumph of Christian hopes.

2. The apostle gives advice to Christian masters, ver. 9.

9. *And ye, masters, deal equitably<sup>1</sup> with them, for-*

ters; and some of these being treated, upon their conversion to Christianity, as rational beings by the apostles and their fellow Christians, were more sensible of the yoke of servitude; and there were not wanting in those days who told them that their masters had no right to hold them in that abject state. To this doctrine they were too ready to give ear. But the apostle, sensible of what disservice this would be to the Christian cause, urges upon Christian slaves to render to their masters all the services that were required of them; and even to do it more cheerfully, as now lying under an additional obligation to the performance of every duty, being servants of God and of Christ, who would reward their obedience here in a better state hereafter." Priestley.

<sup>1</sup> *Deal equitably.*] *τα αὐτα ποιεῖτε.* Mr. Wakefield understands the words in the same sense as *ισότητα*, Col. iv. 1, and

*bearing threats<sup>2</sup>; knowing that their and your<sup>3</sup> master also is in heaven; with whom is no respect of persons.*

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 9.

Let Christian masters act justly and equitably towards their heathen slaves; and let them not imagine that they are to be treated with undue severity because they are of a different religion. As men, they possess the feelings and claim the rights of humanity. Abstain from harsh and reproachful language, and do not threaten severe punishments for trivial faults. Or if, in the heat of resentment, you may have let fall an unguarded threat, beware of executing the injustice you have denounced. These

---

renders them “deal *equally*.” Dr. Chandler explains the precept, “act by them in the like manner; *i. e.* with a benevolent and friendly mind, and out of regard to the will and example of Christ.”

<sup>2</sup> *Forbearing threats.*] ἀνιέντες “moderating threatening.” Macknight. Neither uttering unjust threats, nor executing them when uttered.

<sup>3</sup> *Their and your.*] αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμῶν this is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other manuscripts, and of the Vulgate version. See Griesbach. “The apostle,” says Dr. Priestley, “gives proper admonition to masters to forbear that rigorous and inhuman treatment of slaves which was too common in that age. There were some slaves of better condition, who managed their masters’ most confidential affairs; many of whom were persons of good education. Of this superior class there were many converts to Christianity. But the common labouring slaves were treated in much the same manner as slaves are now treated in the West Indies. We do not find any express precept in the scriptures against the practice of slavery. But the general maxims of Christianity are particularly applicable to this case, especially that golden rule, of doing to others as we would have others do to us. It is indeed true that the mild spirit of Christianity has greatly contributed to abolish slavery in this western part of the world; and it is not doubted but that, in time, its happy influence will be felt every where, to the abolishing of slavery universally.”

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 9.

poor and friendless wretches may not, perhaps, be able to revenge the injuries they receive ; but your religion teaches you that they have a protector in heaven, at whose tribunal both you and they will soon appear, who is equally the sovereign both of the master and the slave ; and who will administer justice with an impartial hand. Be merciful, therefore, and you shall obtain mercy.

### SECTION III.

*THE APOSTLE, in language highly figurative, cautions his readers against the pernicious errors of seducing and artful teachers, against which he advises them to fortify themselves by a firm adherence to the doctrine and the spirit of the gospel. Ch. vi. 10—20.*

1. The apostle warns them of the necessity of a firm attachment to the gospel, in all its extent, as the best guard against the artifices of seducing teachers, ver. 10, 11.

10. *As to what remains, my brethren, strengthen yourselves in the Lord, and in his mighty power<sup>1</sup> ;*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Strengthen, &c.] i. e. establish yourselves in the doctrine of Christ, which has been confirmed by miracles, the works of extraordinary and supernatural power. Dr. Chandler paraphrases the text, q. d. " Be ye established and confirmed in your Christian profession ; and fortify your minds with all those helps and assistances which the Lord, or the gospel of Christ, furnishes you with." The other interpretation is better suited to the context.*

*put on the complete armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the artifices of the slanderer*<sup>2</sup>.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 11.

I cannot conclude this epistle without warning you earnestly and faithfully of a dangerous and artful enemy, against whom it is highly requisite that you should be continually upon your guard; and for an encounter with whom you must be well prepared. Confirm yourselves, therefore, in your Christian principles; in those principles which you have received as the doctrine of Christ, and which have been proved to be such by the miraculous powers of the missionaries by whom they have been taught. Arm yourselves, therefore, at all points with the doctrine and the spirit of the gospel, and you will easily detect the sophistry and repel the attacks of those who would corrupt the simplicity of the Christian faith, and who calumniate the characters of its most enlightened teachers.

2. Under highly figurative language, the apostle describes the characters of the enemies of truth, ver. 12, 13.

---

<sup>2</sup> *The slanderer.*] *τὸ διαζόλον*, *the devil*. So the public and most other versions: applying it to the supposed leader of evil spirits. *Accuser*. Wakefield. “the insidious artifice of the false accuser.” Harwood. That the apostle is here cautioning his readers against the artifices of the judaizing teachers, by which they endeavoured to corrupt the Christian doctrine, by blending it with the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual, is sufficiently evident from the context; and that these teachers were justly entitled to the name of *διαζόλοι*, or *slanderers*, is notorious both from Luke’s history, and Paul’s epistles: especially those to the Galatians and Corinthians.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 12.

*For your conflict<sup>1</sup> is not only<sup>2</sup> with blood and flesh<sup>3</sup>, but with principalities, with powers, with*

<sup>1</sup> *Your conflict.*] *ὑμῶν* is the reading of the Clermont manuscript, and of some others of good authority, and is marked by Griesbach as well supported, though not admitted into his text. *παλη*, *wrestling*. “Plutarch tells us that wrestling was the most artful and subtle of all the ancient games, and that it was derived from a word which signifies to throw a man down by deceit and craft. Persons who understand this exercise have many fetches and turns, and changes of posture, which they make use of to supplant and trip up their adversaries. And it is with great justice that a state of persecution is compared with it.” Chandler.

Macknight observes, that the word here used must signify *fighting*: for instead of being clad in armour, the Greeks always wrestled naked.

<sup>2</sup> *Not only, &c.*] This is one instance amongst many of that idiom of the Hebrew language in which an absolute negation is used when inferiority only is intended. Your conflict is not with flesh and blood: that is, not only, or, chiefly. Other instances are numerous. See Matt. xii. 7; 1 Cor. i. 17. See Macknight's *Prelim. Ess.*, No. 4, p. 97. He states it as a form of the comparative degree.

<sup>3</sup> *Not with blood and flesh, but with principalities, &c.*] “our conflict is not barely with men, but with principalities,” &c. Locke; who adds in his note, that “principalities and powers are put here, it is visible, for those revolted angels which stood in opposition to the kingdom of God.” Such is Mr. Locke's interpretation, and with him run the whole mass of commentators with very few exceptions. It is unfortunate that this excellent critic did not upon this occasion recollect his own judicious observations upon ch. i. 10, where he interprets the very same expressions, of the “government of those who ruled by the law of Moses.” Dr. Chandler explains the words *blood and flesh* as expressing “men of low degree, in opposition to the powerful, rich, and mighty.” Dr. Harwood's version is, “For we combat not merely with the vices and prejudices of private individuals, but we have to conflict with all the confederate and united powers of grand and potent establishments, both civil and religious, which are supported by the sovereigns and rulers of this benighted age.”

This makes an excellent sense, well suited to the connexion and to the apostle's design. Perhaps, however, we shall approximate more nearly to the true meaning of the apostle, if, by

*the rulers of this dark world*<sup>4</sup>, *with spiritual wickedness*<sup>5</sup> *in heavenly places. Wherefore, take up* Ch. VI.  
Ver. 13.

taking the words *principalities, powers, &c.* in the sense in which they are used ch. i. 21, as meaning the Jewish hierarchy, and zealots for the law in general, we should understand its correlative, *blood and flesh*, as expressing heathen idolaters, and opposers of the gospel. See Heb. xii. 4. The contrast then will be, not between wicked men and wicked angels, according to the common opinion, nor, between men of low degree and men in power, according to Dr. Chandler and Dr. Harwood, but between the power and prejudices of heathen idolaters, and those of Jewish rulers and zealots for the law; not excluding the Judaizing Christians, who created so much uneasiness to the apostle and to the Gentile believers.

This interpretation is countenanced by Mr. Wakefield; and it gives a clear and consistent sense to this difficult and highly figurative passage: whereas the common interpretation, though supported by great names, is in truth totally unintelligible, and would appear so to every person of reflection, if, as in many other cases, its absurdity had not been veiled by its familiarity. For how can frail and feeble mortals be prepared to encounter with hosts of *revolted angels*, even supposing such beings to have a real existence?

<sup>4</sup> *Rulers of this dark world.*] The words *τῶν αἰώνων* are unnecessary, and are omitted, as Archbishop Newcome observes, upon sufficient authority. “*Κοσμοκράτωρ, mundi dominus. Eph. vi. 12. qui locus ab aliis, de doctoribus aut principibus Judæorum, ab aliis, vero, de geniis malis explicatur, a quibus hæc sublunaria gubernari credebant Judæi superstitiosi. Utrique explicationi favet usus loquendi.*” Schleusner. The state of the Jews at that time may justly be called a state of darkness, as their inveterate prejudices blinded their eyes against the light of the gospel.

<sup>5</sup> *Spiritual wickedness, &c.*] In the original, “the spiritual things of wickedness;” “which,” says Dr. Chandler, “may signify, either apostate spirits, or, what I rather incline to think, the wicked and perverse corrupters of the Christian doctrine.” Christians are called *πνευματικοί* the natural adversaries to these are *πνευματικά της πονηρίας*, *spiritual wickednesses*; men who, pretending to the spirit, endeavoured to corrupt the simplicity of the faith. See Rev. xviii. 2, xvi. 14; 1 John iv. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 1. Mr. Wakefield’s translation is, “For we have not only to wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the autho-

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 13.

*the complete armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in this evil day, and having subdued every thing<sup>1</sup>, to stand.*

The caution I have suggested to you is not superfluous; for I solemnly announce to you who have embraced the Christian faith, and who are desirous of maintaining it in its primitive purity, that you are engaged in a very arduous and perilous conflict, which will require the constant exertion of your best vigilance and skill to maintain your ground and to secure the victory. And do not imagine that I am here speaking of a personal combat between man and man, which, except in very extraordinary circumstances, is at all times inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel; nor yet do I refer particularly to the opposition to which you will be exposed, in your attempts to propagate the gospel, from heathen prejudices and heathen power: the struggle to which I chiefly allude, is that which you will have to maintain against those who would resist the progress, or corrupt the purity, of the Christian faith. I have before reminded you that you are, in a sense, risen with Christ, and are ex-

---

rity, against the powers, against the rulers of this dark age, against the wickedness of spiritual men in a heavenly dispensation:” *i. e.* as he explains it in his notes, “against Jewish governors, who have a dispensation of religion from heaven, as well as against heathen magistrates, under the darkness of superstition and idolatry.”

<sup>1</sup> *Subdued every thing.*] “and having vanquished them, to maintain your ground.” Harwood; who produces several passages from Dionysius Halicarnassensis, to prove that the verb *κατεργάζω* often signifies *to vanquish or dispatch* an enemy.



alted with him into the community of the sons of God without submitting to the yoke of the law, and that this has been so clearly made out to the Jewish leaders, that the greatest zealots could not deny it: see Eph. i. 21. These, therefore, and especially those sects and orders of men who are by profession most zealously and blindly attached to the Mosaic ritual, and to oral tradition, are full of the bitterest malignity against the gospel and its professors, and will leave no effort untried to pervert your principles and to seduce you from the faith: and some even of those who profess the Christian religion discover the same malignant opposition to the enlarged and liberal spirit of the gospel, and would bend the necks of their fellow-Christians under the yoke of the ceremonial law. These are the enemies, to oppose whom with success, it is necessary for you to gird on the whole armour of the gospel, by which alone you will be able to repel their hostile and insidious attacks; and, having vanquished them all, to stand your ground, and to approve yourselves as good soldiers of your glorious chief.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 13.

3. He describes the armour which the gospel furnishes to its professors to fit them for this important and perilous warfare, ver. 14—17.

*Stand<sup>2</sup>, therefore, having your loins girded about*

14.

---

\* *Stand.*] Dr. Chandler observes, "The Christian must never flee from his post, or quit the field." "Some (says Dr. Dod-

Ch. VI. *with truth*<sup>1</sup>; *having put on the breastplate of*  
 Ver. 14. *righteousness, and having your feet ready shod*<sup>2</sup>  
 15. *with the gospel of peace.*

Now, that you may not be at a loss to know what that armour of proof is which I so earnestly recommend, I will give you a brief description of it. In the first place, then, Let truth be your military belt: adhere firmly to the doctrine of the gospel; profess it sincerely, openly, and without disguise: this will inspire you with strength and vigour of mind. Put on next, the breastplate of integrity and universal virtue. Truth and righteousness must go together; and, united, they will form an impenetrable defence. And, that you may pass on in your Christian career with as little molestation as possible, you must always wear the greaves of peace. The gentle inoffen-

---

dridge) have observed, that no armour is provided for the back, as we must always face the enemy, or, have no defence from danger." It may also be remarked that the Christian virtues, here described as *the armour of God*, are very suitable for opposing the corruptions of Christian doctrine, and their use in this view is very obvious; but the propriety of the comparison, to say the least, is not equally apparent if the enemies to be resisted are evil angels.

<sup>1</sup> *Truth.*] It is not perhaps easy to ascertain the distinct meaning of every expression. By *truth*, the military belt, we may reasonably understand, the genuine doctrine of the gospel; which must be firmly adhered to and publicly professed. The breastplate is *righteousness*, the practice of universal virtue, and the greaves are *peace*, "that benevolent peaceful spirit required by the gospel; which (says Chandler) will render persons ever ready for and cheerful in every kind and friendly office, and will be one of the best securities any one can have against the injuries of persecution."

<sup>2</sup> *Feet ready shod.*] See Wakefield. "shod with the readiness or activity of the gospel of peace." Chandler.

sive spirit of the gospel will do much to smoothe the ruggedness of the way, and to disarm the fury of the enemy and the persecutor. While, therefore, you firmly profess the truth, let your conduct at all times be mild and peaceable. Ch. VI.  
Ver. 15.

*Besides all<sup>3</sup> these, take up the shield of faith, by which ye will be able to quench all the fiery darts<sup>4</sup> of the wicked adversary<sup>5</sup>.* 16.

In addition to truth, righteousness, and peace, you must grasp the shield of faith: faith in the protection, and promise of God, by Jesus Christ, will keep you from being alarmed and wounded by those bold denunciations of vengeance and damnation, which the enemies of truth, and of the liberty of the gospel church, vociferate against the faithful disciples of Jesus, as if the thunder of heaven were at their own disposal. These burning shafts, so formidable to weak and unstable minds, are easily repelled by the broad impenetrable shield of rational confidence in the goodness of God, and in the promises of the Christian covenant.

<sup>3</sup> *Besides all.*] ἐπὶ παντί, in addition to all. See Harwood.

<sup>4</sup> *Fiery darts.*] “It was customary among the ancients,” says Dr. Chandler, “to make small firebrands in the form of arrows, composed of pitch, tar, and brimstone, which they shot either into towns to set them on fire, or amongst their enemies, to disorder and annoy them. These the soldiers used to receive on their shields, and so prevented them from doing harm.” In the allegory, the fiery darts may be explained of the damnatory anathemas of the corrupters of Christian truth, which confidence in the divine mercy will easily repel.

<sup>5</sup> *The wicked adversary.*] So Dr. Harwood. The slanderer, mentioned ver. 11. The principalities and powers, &c.; that is, the enemies of truth, ver. 12.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 17.

*Take also the helmet of salvation<sup>1</sup>, and that spiritual sword, which is the word of God<sup>2</sup>.*

Let the hope of eternal life, founded upon the promises of the gospel, be the ornament and the defence of your head. Let this divine hope be the predominant affection in your breast, the constant spring of action in your soul, and by its benign influence let it overrule every inferior emotion, every low and unworthy impulse; and thus let it keep the understanding clear and cool, and capable of discerning and judging right, and diffuse an habitual cheerfulness over the countenance.—The last weapon which I shall mention, as necessary to complete the suit of Christian armour, is a weapon of attack as well as defence, which, if managed with skill and courage, will soon put hosts of adversaries to flight. I mean the word of God, the authentic declarations of the divine will by Christ and his apostles; which, if they are well understood and properly applied, will, like a sharp and well-tempered sword, cut

---

<sup>1</sup> *Helmet of salvation.*] 1 Thess. v. 8, for a helmet, the *hope* of salvation. “The hope of salvation,” says Chandler, “built on the promises of God, will preserve from the fatal effects of all temptations, from worldly terrors and evils, so that they shall not disorder the imagination, or pervert the judgement, or cause men to desert the path of duty.”

<sup>2</sup> *That spiritual sword, &c.*] So Mr. Wakefield. “The knowledge of this (says Dr. Chandler) not only separates them from evil affections, but teaches them to discern between truth and falsehood; guards the Christian from the entrance of corrupt and destructive doctrine, and destroys the influence and force of the most artful and delusive errors.” Beza observes that all the parts of the complete armour of the ancients are elegantly introduced into the apostle’s account of the armour of the Christian. See Macknight.

down that formidable band of reasonings and motives which the champions of error set in array against the advocates of truth. This is a weapon furnished by God himself, who by his spirit inspired the holy prophets; and its stroke is irresistible. If God, who is eternal and unchangeable, has declared that all sincere believers in Christ shall be accepted by him and adopted into his family, the envy, malice, and rage of those who would arrogate to themselves exclusively the tokens of the divine favour, may justly be regarded with pity and contempt.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 17.

In this armour stand, persevere, and advance. This will be your safety and your wisdom: as no armour is provided but that which enables you to face the enemy, nor any security for those who retreat.

4. The apostle recommends earnest prayer and intercession for one another; and particularly for himself, then a prisoner at Rome, ver. 18—20.

*Continually offering all prayer and supplication<sup>3</sup> in the spirit<sup>4</sup>, and watching thereto<sup>5</sup> with all perseverance, and supplication for all the saints.*

18.

<sup>3</sup> *Prayer and supplication.*] προσευχης και δεησεως. “These two words,” says Dr. Chandler, “seem naturally to denote the asking of what is good, and the deprecating of what is evil, from their two roots; the first of which signifies ‘wishing,’ and the latter ‘fearing.’ Dr. Macknight renders them “supplication and deprecation.” This distinction, however, is not adhered to, the word δεησις being used in the latter clause of this very verse for prayer in general.

<sup>4</sup> *In the spirit:*] i. e. “either with their heart and mind, sincerely and fervently; or, according as the spirit of God should excite and move them.” Chandler.—“praying in your mind at all times, i. e. as ye keep watch.” John xi. 33. Wakefield.

<sup>5</sup> *Watching thereto.*] “The apostle continues the use of mi-

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 18.

Clothed and girded as you are in the panoply of the gospel, I would not have you so far depend upon your own courage and prowess as to forget your dependence upon God. From him you derive all your weapons of attack and defence, and all your skill to wield them; and upon his blessing you depend for success. To him therefore, while you stand upon the watch to observe the motions of the enemy, continually address your humble, fervent supplications, for yourselves and others, in obedience to the precepts, and agreeably to the spirit of the gospel; that you and they may be preserved from pernicious errors, and may be enabled to defend the truth of the gospel with success.

19. *Particularly<sup>1</sup> for me, that utterance<sup>2</sup> may be*

---

litary terms; and alludes here to the sentinels and guards of an army, who were to watch in their posts during the night, to prevent surprise and give notice of danger." Chandler.

<sup>1</sup> *Particularly.*] Dr. Doddridge observes from Blackwall (*Sacred Classics*, vol. i. p. 145), that the particle *καί* sometimes signifies *particularly*, or, *especially*; and that he produces passages to this purpose from proper authorities. See also Mac-knight.

"Earnest intercession for others," says Dr. Priesley, "is particularly recommended in the scriptures; and there is the same reason for it as for praying for ourselves, because the interests of others ought to be as dear to us as our own. As to the efficacy of prayer in general with God, to whom it is addressed, we must remain at a loss: it is enough for us that it is prescribed by God, who would not do it without sufficient reason. It is certainly well adapted to our present infant state, and has the happiest effect upon our minds. But whatever connexion there be between our prayers and the blessings we pray for, or something equivalent, though seemingly the reverse of our prayers, we may be assured that at this day there is nothing supernatural in it. We pray for our daily bread, and we thank God for it; but it is never given us except through the medium

*given me, so that I may open my mouth to make known with confidence<sup>3</sup> this mystery of the gospel<sup>4</sup>, for which I discharge my embassy in a chain<sup>5</sup>, that I may speak boldly in its behalf, as I ought to speak.* Ch. VI. Ver. 20.

Amongst others, I particularly request your intercessions for myself, who am engaged in the same honourable conflict with you, and have suffered severely in the struggle. Whether I labour or suffer, it is an encouragement to me to know that my brethren sympathize with me, and are offering up their prayers for me. Intreat, then, that God will be pleased to grant me both ability and opportu-

of our own labour; and the same, no doubt, is the case with blessings of a spiritual nature. This is certain, that a sense of our dependence upon God for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, cannot be too deeply impressed upon the mind: and this can only be done by meditation and prayer."

<sup>3</sup> *Utterance, &c.*] Dr. Doddridge supposes that this may refer to some impediment in his speech, or other imperfection in the manner of his address. See 2 Cor. xii. 7, Gal. iv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *To make known with confidence.*] This punctuation is approved by Stephanus, Estius, Bengelius, and Griesbach. The common reading is, "that I may open my mouth boldly." See Bowyer and Wakefield.

<sup>5</sup> *Mystery, &c.*] *i. e.* "the call of the Gentiles." See ch. ii. 3—10. Newcome.

<sup>6</sup> *In a chain.*] *εν αλυσει.* An allusion, no doubt, to his being in the custody of a soldier, and chained to him. "Few (says Dr. Doddridge) need be told that it was usual among the Romans to chain the prisoner's right arm to the left arm of the soldier that guarded him. But as the persons of ambassadors were always sacred, the apostle seems to refer to the outrage that was done to his divine master in this violation of his liberty." "It is a fine idea," says Dr. Priestley, "under which the apostle here exhibits himself. He was a prisoner and in bonds; but, notwithstanding this, he considered himself as an ambassador, and from a power superior to any on earth."



Ch. VI. nity to publish the gospel; and particularly, to  
 Ver 20. speak boldly that great mystery so offensive to prejudiced and narrow-minded zealots, that believing Gentiles are admitted under the gospel dispensation to equal privileges with believing Jews. A glorious doctrine! of which I esteem it my highest honour to be an authorized ambassador; though, in consequence of my fidelity to my trust, I am now chained to a guard, and have long been a prisoner and an exile. Nevertheless, there is nothing I so much desire, whether a prisoner, or at large, as to be employed in this honourable ministry, and to proclaim the joyful tidings of the gospel with a zeal and freedom which becomes one whose obligations to the mercy of God in Christ are so various and transcendent.

## CONCLUSION.

THE EPISTLE concludes with referring them to Tychicus for further information concerning himself; and with a general salutation and appropriate benediction, ver. 21—24.

21. *Now that ye also may know my affairs, and what I am doing, Tychicus<sup>1</sup>, a beloved brother and*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Tychicus.*] “He was one of Paul’s friends and fellow-labourers, and had been his companion in the last interview he had with the elders of Ephesus, when he sent for them to come to him at Miletus. Acts xx. 4, 17.” Doddridge.

*faithful minister in the Lord, will inform you of every thing. Him I have sent unto you for this express purpose, that ye may know what relates to me<sup>2</sup>, and that he may comfort your hearts.*

Ch. VI.

Ver. 22.

I have not time to write particularly the state of my affairs ; and it is the less necessary, as Tychicus my Christian brother, and faithful fellow-labourer in the gospel, who has passed some time with me at Rome, and who knows in what manner I employ myself, under what disadvantages and with what success I teach the gospel, will give you all the information concerning me, that you can wish. He is the bearer of this epistle : and though much pleased with his company, and relieved by his help, I have sent him for the express purpose of letting you know the state in which I am ; and of comforting and encouraging you, by representing the cheerfulness with which I bear persecution in the cause of Christian truth, and the great degree in which my sufferings have contributed to promote the success of the gospel.

*Peace be unto the brethren, and love, with faith, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>.*

23.

---

<sup>2</sup> *What relates to me.]* “ The apostle means, that he wishes them to know what success he had had in preaching at Rome, what opposition he had met with, what comfort he enjoyed under his sufferings, what converts he had made to Christ, and in what manner the evidences of the gospel affected the minds of the inhabitants of Rome.” Macknight.

<sup>3</sup> *From God, &c.]* i. e. from God the Father, who is the ori-

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 23.

May the best blessings for this life and the next be imparted to all who profess the Christian name ; and in order to this, may God our Father, through the mission and doctrine of Jesus Christ our teacher and Lord, implant in your hearts that genuine faith which will be productive of love to God and benevolence to man ; and which, without the rigour of the ceremonial law, is of itself a sufficient qualification for the character and privileges of the sons of God.

24. *Favour be with all those who love the uncorrupted doctrine<sup>1</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

May the favour of God, and the complete participation of all the blessings of the gospel, be granted

ginal source and author of the blessings of the gospel ; and from the Lord Jesus Christ, who was appointed by him to publish and dispense them to mankind. *q. d.* May they have that peace which is the result of love to God and man, and founded in a cordial belief in the gospel which was given by God and published by Christ. “ Here,” says Dr. Priestley, “ as upon all other occasions, God or the Father is spoken of as one being, and Jesus Christ, or our Lord, as another. The difference is that of God and man, which certainly ought not to be confounded.”

<sup>1</sup> *Who love the uncorrupted doctrine.*] *εν αφθαρσια.* “ who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption.” Mr. Locke remarks the peculiarity of the phrase, and explains it, “ without mixing or joining any thing with him in the work of salvation which may render the gospel useless and ineffectual.” See Gal. v. 2. Archbishop Newcome explains the text in the same sense: “ not adulterating the gospel with false doctrines, as the judaizers did.” As the expression “ loving the Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption ” sounds harsh, I have ventured to translate it by the equivalent phrase, “ loving the uncorrupted doctrine of

to those who show their regard to Christ by receiving his doctrine in its primitive purity, and in firmly resisting every attempt to blend the simplicity of the gospel with the unauthorized inventions of human folly and presumption. Amen.

---

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 24.

Christ."—"who love the Lord Jesus Christ in purity." Wakefield. Dr. Harwood gives a peculiar turn to the passage: "who love our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in immortality." The phrase is never used in the sense given to it in the public version, "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in *sincerity*," that is, *truly* and *faithfully*.



---

# THE EPISTLE

OF

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

### THE PHILIPPIANS.

---

#### INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

**PHILIPPI** <sup>1</sup> was a considerable city in the eastern district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. The gospel was first preached in this city about A.D. 51, when the apostle Paul, having separated from

---

<sup>1</sup> Philippi took its name from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, who improved and fortified it, partly for the sake of the gold mines in the neighbourhood, and partly for defence against the Thracians. Acts xvi. 12, it is called "a colony;" and, ver. 21, the inhabitants call themselves Romans. It appears, by the coins of several of the Roman emperors, that it was first colonized by Julius Cæsar, and that other inhabitants were afterwards sent thither by Augustus. It is well known that Roman colonists retained the laws and privileges of Roman citizens. Acts xvi. 12, Philippi is called the *chief* city of that part of Macedonia, and the margin reads, the *first* city. Neither of these assertions is true; Amphipolis being the metropolis, and Neapolis the first city to which a traveller from Asia would come. See ver. 11. It is conjectured that the true

Barnabas, had chosen Silas to be the companion of his labours, and in his circuit through the Lesser Asia having arrived at Troas, he had been admonished in a vision to extend his mission to Macedonia, Acts xvi. 9, 10. He landed at Neapolis, and proceeded to Philippi; where, after having converted Lydia, a woman of property, he and his companions consented to pass some days at her house. In this interval he miraculously healed a young woman whose mind was deranged, and who, imagining herself possessed with a spirit of divination, had taken a fancy to bear her testimony to the divine authority of the Christian missionaries. The keepers of this unhappy creature, who by her restoration to her right mind were deprived of the iniquitous gains which they extorted from the credulity of the superstitious crowd, exasperated against the apostle and his companion, accused them before the magistrates as turbulent men, who were guilty of illegal practices, and who disturbed the peace of the city: upon which charge they were severely beaten, and cast into prison, without being heard in their own defence. But having been released by miracle, the jailer was converted and baptized. The next day, the apostles having obliged

---

reading is, "which is a city of the first part of Macedonia." This would require a very small alteration of the original (*πρωτης* instead of *πρωτη της*). Paulus Æmilius, when he conquered Macedonia, divided the country into four districts, of which the first was between the rivers Strymon and Nessus: in which district stood Philippi. See Peirce's *Synopsis* of the Epistle, and Benson's *Propagation of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 87.



the magistrates to attend in person to set them at liberty, and to make an apology for having infringed their privileges as Roman citizens, they quitted Philippi and went to Thessalonica, Acts xvi. 12—40. In this mission, Luke and Timothy were associated with Paul and Silas.

The apostle passed through Philippi some years afterwards, in his way to Jerusalem from Macedonia, Acts xx. 6; and it is generally believed that he visited this city again, agreeably to his expressed intention, Philip. ii. 24, soon after his release from his first imprisonment.

It appears from the apostle's grateful acknowledgements, that the Christian converts at Philippi had been very kind to him. They had not only entertained him and his associates with great hospitality during his residence amongst them, but they had also sent him very liberal supplies, both into Achaia<sup>1</sup> and Thessalonica; and would have done more for him in other places if they could have

---

<sup>1</sup> *Achaia*.] This Dr. Paley apprehends the apostle to refer to Phil. iv. 15, 16; which he translates thus: "Now ye Philip-  
pians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I  
was departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with  
me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only; and that  
also in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity."  
From 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9, it appears that he accepted no pecu-  
niary assistance from the converts of that country, but that  
he drew his supplies from the Macedonian Christians. This  
was at the beginning of the gospel, *i. e.* when he first preached  
the gospel in these parts. The ingenious and learned author  
justly infers from this undesigned coincidence in the two epistles,  
the impossibility of forgery. See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 263  
—267.

found a safe and convenient conveyance. And it is observable, that the church at Philippi was the only society of Christians from whom the apostle, when he first preached the gospel in Greece, accepted contributions of this kind; choosing, from prudential considerations, to wave his right of being maintained by those to whom he preached, and to support himself by his own manual labour, rather than give occasion to his enemies to calumniate his motives, or obstruct the progress of the gospel by making it burdensome to the hearers. See Phil. iii. 10, 14—16, 2 Cor. xii. 13, 14. It is generally inferred from 1 Cor. vii. 8, that the apostle was a widower, but many have concluded, from an expression in this epistle (ch. iv. 3), that Paul was a married man: but that his consort being unable to accompany him in his fatiguing and perilous missions, he had, as a testimony of his high regard and affection to his generous friends at Philippi left her under their protection in that city, where she was employed, in company with other pious women, in acts of piety and charity. The Philippians had lately sent the apostle a very liberal present by Epaphroditus (ch. iv. 18), by whom it should seem that they had also expressed their tender sympathy with him in his confinement, and their alarms lest the progress of the gospel should be retarded by the arrest and persecution of its most zealous and successful advocate. This worthy messenger of the church, who had been visited with a long and dangerous sickness at Rome, probably in consequence of the

fatigue which he had suffered, was now recovering ; and being impatient to return to his anxious friends, who had heard of his illness, the apostle dispatched him with this letter (ch. ii. 25—30), the design of which is to acknowledge and to return them thanks for their pious liberality, to remove their apprehensions with regard to the consequences of his imprisonment, to fortify them against the intrusion and the mischievous doctrines of the judaizing zealots, and to encourage them to persevere in their adherence to the gospel. It has been observed, that this epistle contains very high commendations of the conduct of the Philippians, with little or no mixture of reproof<sup>1</sup> ; a clear evidence that the Christian doctrine had not at that time been corrupted among them ; and indeed it is probable that not many Jews were settled in the place, as there does not appear to have been any synagogue at Philippi. See Acts xvi. 13.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “ *Est hæc Epistola, quanquam et ipsa Romæ in vinctis scripta, lætior, alacriorque, et blandior cæteris, ideo quod Philippis, quæ urbs præcipua est Macedoniæ et colonia, bis fuisset Paulus, et bene successisset ibi Pauli prædicatio, etc. Post quæ tempora Philippenses plerique fideliter custodierant ea quæ a Paulo acceperant, amoremque in tam bonum magistrum, et reverentiam multis modis erant testati.*” Grotius.

<sup>2</sup> If the Jews had been numerous at Philippi they would have had a synagogue, where the apostle would, as usual, have opened his commission ; whereas it appears that he began to preach at an oratory by the river side, out of the city, to the pious women who resorted thither. The Jewish converts were most easily seduced by judaizing teachers, and usually gave the the apostle most trouble ; the converts at Philippi were probably chiefly among the Gentiles.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS was written about A. D. 62<sup>1</sup>, and near the close of the apostle's first imprisonment. It is one of those epistles the genuineness of which has never been impeached. Its authenticity is not only established by the concurrent testimony of the ecclesiastical writers, but by very strong internal evidence<sup>2</sup>, particularly by many undesigned coincidences with the history of Luke, and by a cast of sentiment and a structure of style which are peculiar to St. Paul, and easily distinguished by those who are much conversant with that apostle's invaluable writings.

Having introduced the epistle with an appropriate salutation, ch. i. 1, 2, the apostle proceeds,

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Lardner thinks, some time before the close of that year. *Supplement*, vol. ii. ch. xii. sect. 11.

<sup>2</sup> As internal evidences of the genuineness of this epistle, Dr. Paley mentions: 1.) The account of Epaphroditus, his journey, errand, sickness, &c. which are all incidentally hinted at as circumstances well known to his correspondent. 2.) The insinuation that Epaphroditus's recovery was natural, and not miraculous. 3.) The coincidence of the hints which he drops of having received supplies from the Philippians while he was in Achaia, with the facts he mentions in the second epistle to the Corinthians. Phil. iv. 15, 16, compared with 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9. 4.) The allusion to Timothy having been at Philippi, ch. i. 1, ii. 19, which, though not expressly mentioned, is plainly implied in Luke's history, Acts xvi. 3, xvii. 14. 5.) The epistle purports to have been written near the close of an imprisonment of long duration, which agrees with Luke's account, Acts xxviii. 31. 6.) The temper of the apostle's mind, as discovered in this epistle, ch. i. 23, and in the 2 Cor. v. 8, &c. is a presumption that they were written by the same person. 7.) The allusions to his persecutions at Philippi, ch. i. 29, 30, ii. 1, 2, agree with the account given by Luke, Acts xvi. 22.

I. To express his gratitude to his Philippian friends for their liberality, and his prayers for their improvement, ver. 3—11.

II. To quiet their apprehensions, he gives some account of his own situation and views, of his feelings and his prospects of release, and of the great success of the gospel at Rome, ver. 12—26.

III. He exhorts the Philippian converts to cultivate a temper and spirit worthy of the gospel, and particularly to unanimity and fortitude in the profession of truth, after the example of Jesus Christ, and in hope of future reward. Ch. i. 27—ii. 16.

IV. The apostle promises to send Timothy to Philippi as soon as he could judge how his own case was likely to terminate, he expresses his hope of following him speedily; and in the mean time he dispatches their friend and messenger Epaphroditus to them without delay, passing, at the same time, a high encomium upon his character, and warmly recommending him to their esteem, ver. 17—30.

V. The apostle earnestly warns them against the artifices of Jewish zealots, and urges them to follow his own example, and to adhere firmly to the doctrine which he had taught them. Ch. iii. 1—iv. 1.

VI. He sends specific messages to a few distinguished individuals; he adds some general exhortations; he renews his expressions of gratitude for

their repeated kindness and liberality, and particularly for their late generous and acceptable present by Epaphroditus ; and concludes the epistle with a suitable doxology, a general salutation, and the usual benediction, ver. 2—23.

---

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

---

## THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

### CHAP. I. 1, 2.

THE apostle, associating the name of Timothy Ch. I. with his own, introduces the epistle with a general salutation to the officers and members of the Philippian church, ch. i. 1, 2.

*PAUL and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ*<sup>1</sup>, Ver. 1.  
*to all the holy believers in Christ Jesus*<sup>2</sup> who are

---

<sup>1</sup> *Servants, &c.*] There are but four epistles in which Paul does not introduce himself under the character of an apostle. The two epistles to the Thessalonians were written before his authority had been disputed; and that to Philemon was a private letter, requesting a favour of a friend. The object of this epistle to the Philippians appears to be in a great measure to express his gratitude to them for their liberality: he seems, therefore, purposely to avoid mentioning a title which carried in it a claim to a maintenance. See 1 Thess. ii. 6, 2 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Nor does it appear that there was any party formed against the apostle in the church at Philippi. Timothy's name is joined with his own, because he had been with the apostle when he first preached the gospel at Philippi. See Peirce *in loc.* and Benson on Philemon, ver. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Holy believers, &c.*] In the original, "all the *holy* in Christ



Ch. I.  
Ver. 2.

*at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons*<sup>1</sup>, *favour be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul and his beloved associate Timothy, whose

---

Jesus :” a periphrasis for all *Christians*; a word which the apostle never uses in any of his epistles, though it must have been familiar to him, as it was first imposed at Antioch, where he and Barnabas had preached the gospel with much success, Acts xi. 26 : a plain proof that those learned men are mistaken who infer, from the expression used by Luke, that this appellation was given by divine appointment.

<sup>1</sup> *Bishops, &c.*] The existence of these officers in the primitive church is indisputable; and the mention of them in this epistle, and in no other, seems to me to be no serious objection against the genuineness of the epistle. They might have been particularly active in the collection which had been made for the apostle, or there might be some other reason for mentioning them of which we are ignorant. See Doddridge and Macknight; and Whitby, who also justly argues that the apostle, by the word *bishops*, ἐπίσκοποι, here, means the elders of the church. “By bishops,” says Dr. Priestley, “the apostle could only mean the elders or presbyters of the church, to all of whom, as to those of the church of Ephesus, he gives the title of bishops, or, overseers. There could be no such thing in that age as a bishop of one church having a superintendence over the ministers of other churches. Whether diocesan episcopacy be a useful Institution or not, there is nothing to countenance it in the scriptures; and the history of the church in later ages shows how liable it is to the grossest abuses, making the church of Christ to resemble the kingdoms of this world, by feeding the pride and ignorance of some churches and bishops, to the degradation and oppression of others.”

It is very true, as Dr. Priestley observes, that diocesan episcopacy is not a divine institution. Neither is any other form of church discipline and government. The Christian religion, with great wisdom, leaves every society of believers to model its own discipline according to its own ideas of expedience. And though episcopacy has been often perverted to evil purposes, to which all human institutions are liable, and of which episcopacy is far from exhibiting the sole example, it does not follow that this mode of church government which has so generally prevailed may not in all cases be lawful, and in some highly expedient.

highest boast it is to be the servants of Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, and the messengers of his grace to the heathen world, send their affectionate salutations to their generous friends, to all true believers in Christ in the celebrated city of Philippi; and particularly to those grave and venerable men who so worthily preside over their religious assemblies; and likewise to those active and faithful persons to whose management the temporal concerns of the society are committed. The blessing of God be upon you all, and a large participation of that peace which results from the faith and hope and temper of the gospel of Christ.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 2.

## SECTION I.

*THE APOSTLE expresses his gratitude for their kindness, and his prayers for their improvement in the spirit of the gospel. Ch. i. 3—11.*

1. The apostle expresses his great satisfaction in their liberal spirit, his gratitude to God for it, and his firm persuasion that they will persevere in their Christian principles and conduct, ver. 3—7.

*I thank my God for all your remembrance of me<sup>2</sup>; always and in every prayer of mine for you*

3.

4.

---

<sup>2</sup> *All your remembrance of me.*] ἐπὶ παντὶ τῇ μνησίᾳ ὑμῶν. Compare Luke xv. 7, 10. See Peirce; who proposes and vindicates this translation.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 5.

- all, making supplication with joy, because of your contribution to the gospel<sup>1</sup> from the first day until now. Being confident of this, that each of you who hath begun a good work<sup>2</sup> will go on to finish it until the day of Jesus Christ. As it is just for me to think this of you all, because you retain me in your hearts<sup>3</sup>, and because you were all joint contributors to the present which I received<sup>4</sup>, both during my*

<sup>1</sup> Contribution, &c.] κοινωνια·εις το ευαγγελιον' i. e. "communicating or contributing to my support while I have been employed in preaching the gospel." Peirce; who observes, that if he had intended what our translators have expressed, he would have said τῷ ευαγγελιστῇ. 1 Cor. i. 9. Eph. iii. 9. See Wakefield. *From the first day*: "i. e. ever since I began to preach among you." Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> That each of you, &c.] So Mr. Wakefield translates the clause; and much more suitably to the connexion than the common version. *Until the day, &c.* "i. e. as long as you live." Peirce.

<sup>3</sup> You retain me in your hearts.] δια το εχειν με εν τη καρδια υμῶν. The original is ambiguous: I adopt the version of Peirce and Wakefield, as more agreeable to the context.

<sup>4</sup> Joint-contributors, &c.] "You have all been contributors to the gift I have received, in order to my being the better prepared for my defence." Peirce; who shows that the word κοινωνος is sometimes taken in an active sense in classical authors. See 1 Cor. ix. 23; which he translates thus: "This I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be συκοινωνος, in conjunction with others, a communicator of the gospel. "Pearce (Peirce) I believe," says Dr. Paley *Hor. Paul.* p. 256, "was the first commentator who gave this sense to the expression, and I believe also that his exposition is now generally assented to." It is very evident that Dr. Paley appeals to Peirce of Exeter, whose criticism he cites, and not to Bishop Pearce. But it is remarkable that Bishop Pearce himself, in his *Epistolæ Duæ*, Works, vol. ii. p. 478, incidentally gives the same sense to the passage. He considers the text in ver. 3, 4, as corrupted and confused, and conjectures the true reading to be, Ευχαριστω τῷ Θεῷ με (ἐπι παση τῇ δεήσει μου παντοτε ὑπὲρ παντῶν ὑμῶν, μετὰ χάρας τὴν μνηιαν ποιῶμενος) ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, κ.τ. λ. "et Apostolum puto

*bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 7.

It is with the greatest satisfaction that I not only hear of, but that I also experience in my own person, the happy effects of your Christian benevolence. I thank God that you still remember your faithful friend and teacher in the gospel, and that neither length of time nor distance of place, nor depression of circumstances, have effaced your affectionate sympathy. I often pray for you ; which is the only way in which I can express my love and gratitude to you. And as often as I pray, I recollect with joy, and express with gratitude, your great liberality in the generous contributions which you have made to support the great expense of the mission of the gospel among the heathen. This generous spirit manifested itself, not only when your affections were warmly excited at your first conversion to the faith, but, to your great honour, this zeal has never relaxed, from that time to the present hour : and I have no doubt that you will persevere, as long as you live, in the same generous, public-spirited conduct ; and that you will be found so employed when you are

---

*velle dicere, se gratias Deo agere quia Philippenses huic suas divitias communicârunt, ut Judæis inopia laborantibus ministraretur."* This, though a very ingenious conjecture, being destitute of all authority, is therefore inadmissible, as Mr. Peirce observes, who gives what he esteems a correct interpretation of the received text.

How little support is given by this passage to the Calvinistic doctrine of final Perseverance, or that a man who has been once converted cannot fall away from grace, is sufficiently obvious.

Ch. 1.  
Ver. 7.

summoned to the great and final tribunal. I speak with confidence of you all without exception; and I have the best reason for the good hopes which I entertain respecting you, for I am informed that every individual among you sympathizes kindly with me in my present confinement, and that you all contributed in proportion to your ability to that handsome and seasonable present which you have sent me; and for which I may have particular occasion, as I expect in a short time to be called upon to defend myself, and the gospel which I am commissioned to preach, at the imperial tribunal.

2. The apostle further assures them of his tender affection for them, which he expresses in earnest prayer to God for their improvement in the knowledge and spirit of the gospel, ver. 8—11.

8. *For God is my witness how earnestly I long after you all with the tender affection<sup>1</sup> of Jesus*
9. *Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and in all discern-*
10. *ment<sup>2</sup>, that ye may distinguish things that differ<sup>3</sup>,*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Tender affection.*] Gr. *bowels*. See Wakefield and Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Discernment.*] *αἰσθησεῖ* “see Prov. i. 7, ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning *αἰσθησεως*.’” Newcome. “I pray that your attachment to the gospel may increase and show itself by your knowledge of its principles and your feeling of its influence. The word, in the original, implies perception and feeling.” Dr. Priestley.

<sup>3</sup> *Distinguish things that differ.*] So Peirce. Wakefield and Newcome prefer the common version, viz. “things that are excellent.” Peirce refers to 1 Thess. v. 21 as a parallel text, “Prove all things: hold fast that which is good;” and adds,

that ye may continue clear<sup>4</sup> and unperverted<sup>5</sup> till the day of Christ: being filled with the fruit<sup>6</sup> of righteousness<sup>7</sup> through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 11.

Be assured, my dear friends, that your great kindness to me, and your generous remembrance of me, is not lost upon me. God, who searches the heart, is witness to the truth and fervour of my affection for you; how earnestly I desire to visit you, how much I wish to impart to you some Christian instruction, some spiritual consolation. But, for the present, a personal interview is not permitted. And the only return I can make for your kindness and liberality is, by praying for you. And this, my

“Nor can a man’s holding fast any controverted opinion in religion be of any advantage unless he hold it fast upon such a trial; nor is there any other way for men to approve themselves sincere against the day of Christ while they neglect this course, as is here plainly intimated.”

<sup>4</sup> *Clear.*] εὐλκρινής, qui ad solem explicatus et spectatus purus reperitur.” Schleusner. It is generally understood of sincerity, in opposition to deceit and duplicity: see Peirce. Grotius explains it, “ut clarè omnia perspiciatis;” and Mr. Wakefield translates it, “that ye may continue with discernment.” See 2 Pet. iii. 1. Perhaps this sense better suits the connexion: *q. d.* that you may be *clear-sighted* in the doctrine of Christ.

<sup>5</sup> *Unperverted.*] ἀπροσκοποι. The word is doubtful: it sometimes signifies, not giving offence to others, 1 Cor. x. 32. Mr. Peirce thinks it here signifies, “Do nothing to offend yourselves:” *i. e.* to wound your own consciences, Acts xxiv. 16. Mr. Wakefield translates it, “without stumbling;” and in this sense it best connects with εὐλκρινείς, if that word is rendered *clear-sighted*.

<sup>6</sup> *Fruit.*] This word is read in the singular number in the best copies. See Griesbach.

<sup>7</sup> *Righteousness:*] *i. e.* liberality. See Ps. cxii. 3, 9; 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10; James ii. 13. Peirce.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 11.

brethren, is the object of my earnest aspirations on your account: That you may persevere and improve in that amiable, benevolent, and generous spirit, by which you have hitherto been distinguished; and that your Christian benevolence may be combined with proportionable improvement in Christian knowledge, and in a capacity to form a right judgement concerning the doctrines of the gospel. And this I desire for you, to the end that you may be able to distinguish truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and may not be in danger of being misled by false and seducing teachers, who, I fear, are endeavouring to insinuate themselves among you. Hitherto you have maintained the gospel doctrine in its purity, and have preserved inviolable your Christian liberty. I pray that you may persevere to the end of life in the same honourable course; that your principles may be uncorrupted; that your conduct may excite no prejudices against your profession: that so you may enjoy, to their utmost extent, the comfort, the reputation, and the affectionate gratitude, which are the genuine fruit and just reward of your Christian liberality, which redounds so much to the honour of God, and to the credit of the gospel, and for which you will hereafter receive ample recompense at the great day, when we shall all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ.



## SECTION II.

*THE APOSTLE reports to the Philippians an encouraging account of his present situation; and expresses his hope that it would soon be in his power to make them a visit.* Ch. i. 12—26. Ch. I.

1. He informs them that his long confinement had, upon the whole, contributed to the success of the gospel, ver. 12—14.

*Now I would have you know, brethren, that what hath happened to me hath turned out rather<sup>1</sup> to the advancement of the gospel. So that my bonds are well known to be for the sake of Christ<sup>2</sup>, through all the palace<sup>3</sup>, and all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord<sup>4</sup>, emboldened by my bonds* Ver. 12. 13. 14.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Rather.*] *μαλλον*. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "has been greatly to the furtherance of the gospel."

<sup>2</sup> *For the sake of Christ.*] The expression in the original is ambiguous; the sense given in the translation seems best adapted to the context, and is given by Peirce, Harwood, Mac-knight, Wakefield, and Newcome. If it were known that he was imprisoned solely for preaching the Christian doctrine, and not for any offence against the state, it might tend to make an impression in his favour, and contribute to his enlargement.

<sup>3</sup> *Palace.*] "the word properly signifies, the judgement-hall. Some think the camp of the pretorian guards is meant. See *Le Clerc, Suppl. to Hammond.*" Newcome.

<sup>4</sup> *Brethren in the Lord.*] "Christian brethren, described in the second clause of the next verse." Newcome.

Ch. I. *have ventured*<sup>1</sup>, *with much more undaunted cou-*  
 Ver. 14. *rage, to speak the word of God*<sup>2</sup>.

You are naturally apprehensive, lest my long imprisonment at Rome may have been a considerable impediment to the progress of the gospel. But divine providence often compasses its ends by means which are to us unsearchable ; and in the present case I can assure you for your comfort, that an event which appeared in itself so likely to obstruct and to put an end to my usefulness, has, in fact, contributed greatly to extend it. My tedious and unjust confinement has promoted the diffusion of the gospel. For it has excited the curiosity of many, even in Cæsar's palace, as well as in all other districts of the city, to inquire into the cause of this bitter persecution ; and having discovered that the only ground of accusation was, that I preached the gospel to the Gentiles, it has led them to inquire into the contents of this glorious dispensation ; the consequence of which has been, that many have become sincere and confirmed believers, and some of them of no inconsiderable rank in the imperial court. And though the chain I wear is a considerable restraint upon my personal exertions, yet I am happy to say that I have many faithful colleagues who are both able and willing to labour in this honourable cause,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Have ventured.*] See Doddridge's version. Gr. "are more abundantly bold to speak the word without fear."

<sup>2</sup> *Of God.*] τὸ θεοῦ. This, which is wanting in the received text, is the reading of the Alexandrine and several other manuscripts, and of the Syriac, Italic, and Vulgate versions. See Griesbach and Peirce.

and who, observing the cheerfulness with which I endure this long confinement, and its happy effect, so contrary to their expectation, in diffusing the knowledge of the gospel, have become more active, zealous, and courageous in the propagation of Christian truth, and brave every danger in so glorious and divine a cause.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 14.

2. The apostle expresses the great satisfaction he felt in the zeal with which the gospel was promulgated, even though some of the preachers of it were influenced by motives personally unkind to himself, ver. 15—18.

*Some, indeed, are preaching Christ even through envy and contention<sup>1</sup>, and some also through goodwill. Those who preach him from love<sup>2</sup> preach,*

15.

17.

<sup>1</sup> *Some are preaching Christ even through envy and contention.*] These were, no doubt, judaizing zealots, who, professing to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, but insisting upon the observation of the Jewish ceremonial as essential to salvation, were implacable enemies to the apostle, who was a zealous advocate for the liberty of the Gentile Christians. These would probably take advantage of the apostle's confinement; and would go about among the new converts, endeavouring to persuade them to submit to the Mosaic ritual, than which nothing, as they well knew, would be more mortifying to him. It should seem that, though these men preached their judaizing doctrine in a degree which marked the malignity of their temper, and their hostility to the apostle, yet they did not preach it to that extent in Rome to which they carried it in some other places. Otherwise the apostle would hardly have called it preaching Christ. See Gal. i. 6—9, v. 2, 3. Perhaps these zealots were afraid of insisting loudly and publicly at Rome upon the absolute necessity of submission to the Jewish ritual, lest they should give offence to the civil power. See Peirce and Macknight. Mr. Evanson, surely, has little reason to argue, from the bad spirit of Paul's opponents, that the epistle is not genuine.

<sup>2</sup> *Those who, &c.*] The construction of the original (οἱ μὲν—

- Ch. I. *knowing that I lie in prison for the defence<sup>1</sup> of*  
 Ver. 16. *the gospel. But those who preach from strife, pro-*  
*claim Christ with no pure intention<sup>2</sup>, meaning to*  
 18. *add affliction to my bonds. What then? notwith-*  
*standing, every way, whether in pretence or in*  
*truth, Christ is proclaimed, and herein I do rejoice,*  
*yea, and will rejoice<sup>3</sup>.*

Many are engaged in preaching the great truth, that Jesus is the Christ; but, I am sorry to add,

---

οὐ δε) requires the transposition of the 16th and 17th verses, which is supported by many good manuscripts and versions. See Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome. Peirce justly remarks, “ that οὐ ἐξ ἀγαπῆς, and οὐ ἐξ ἐριθείας, are the subjects and not the predicate of their respective sentences ;” which is also the construction of Wakefield and Newcome.

<sup>1</sup> *Lie in prison for the defence.*] εἰς ἀπολογίαν τῆς εὐαγγελίᾳ κειμαι. “ that I lie in bonds in order to make an apology.” Peirce ; who thinks this sense better suited to the connexion than the common version, *I am set or appointed for the defence*, &c. : he observes, that the proper sense of ἀπολογία is a defence upon an accusation. Perhaps the meaning is, *q. d.* I must remain in confinement till after my defence ; and therefore, as I can do less, these exert themselves the more.

<sup>2</sup> *With no pure intention.*] ἄγνως. This expression may refer either to the insincerity of their motives, or to their corruption of the Christian doctrine : perhaps the apostle included both. I have adopted Mr. Wakefield’s translation.

<sup>3</sup> *Will rejoice.*] “ The friends of Paul,” says Dr. Priestley, “ were encouraged by his firmness to preach the gospel with the greatest boldness ; and others who were probably judaizing teachers, of whom, as appears by St. Paul’s epistle to the Romans, there were many in that metropolis, preached it in such a manner as tended to disparage the apostle, thinking perhaps to mortify him by preaching independently of him, and undervaluing him ; and also, preaching many doctrines that he did not approve, especially the universal obligation to adhere to the laws of Moses. Paul, however, rejoiced in this preaching of the gospel, for hereby converts would be made to it, and the evil that might be occasioned by the preaching of his enemies would in time be rectified.”

not all with equally pure and benevolent motives. Strange to relate, there are some who preach the good news of universal peace and good will to men, from a contentious, perverse, and envious spirit; but there are also some who preach the same doctrine from the best and most generous motives. These illustrious characters, who honour me with their friendship, are the more active in the labours of their ministry, because they know not only that I am a prisoner for the sake of the gospel, but that till I have made my defence, or rather, which is in effect the same, till I have pleaded the cause and made known the doctrine of Christ before the imperial tribunal, I must continue in confinement, unable to exert myself as I wish. It is their desire, therefore, to supply my deficiency, and in this they manifest their affection to me by their zealous co-operation in the same cause. The other party, who oppose my doctrine and envy my success, teach indeed that Jesus is the Christ, and so far it is well. But they neither act from a good motive, nor teach uncorrupted doctrine. As far as they dare, at this distance from Jerusalem, the chief seat of their polity and worship, they insist upon the observation of judaical rites; and thus they expect and intend to add to my sufferings, by the pain which they know that it would give me to witness their success in propagating unsound doctrine. But in this they are mistaken: for after all, and amidst all the imperfection, and all the insincerity with which they exercise their ministry, they agree with those who are animated

Ch. I.  
Ver. 18.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 18.

by a better spirit in teaching, the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, and in this I do and I will rejoice: knowing that they who sincerely embrace the first elements of Christianity, and who practically acknowledge Jesus as their master, will not, whatever their teachers may intend, be materially injured by speculative errors.

3. The apostle expresses his cheerful confidence that this zeal for the gospel would contribute to his release; and that his defence at his approaching trial would be conducive to the success of the Christian doctrine, ver. 19, 20.

19. *For I know<sup>1</sup> that this<sup>2</sup> will end in my deliverance<sup>3</sup> through your prayer, and through the sup-*  
20. *ply of the spirit of Jesus Christ<sup>4</sup>, according to my*

---

<sup>1</sup> *I know.*] *οἶδα*. Though the apostle uses strong language, he does not mean to express absolute certainty of release, but merely a confident expectation of it; for in the next sentence he expresses at least a possibility that the issue might be fatal.

<sup>2</sup> *This:*] *i. e.* "this preaching of Christ of which my bonds are the occasion, ver. 18." Peirce. "this imprisonment." Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *Deliverance.*] *σωτηριαν*, *release from confinement*. 2 Cor. i. 6, Acts vii. 25, xxvii. 34, are passages in which the word is used in a sense different from *eternal happiness*. See Peirce, Wakefield, Harwood, Macknight, and Newcome. Peirce suggests that "the preaching of the Judaizers, out of envy, would give his friends an opportunity to represent to the emperor and those in power, that he was persecuted by the Jews out of malice, and not for any real crimes against the state. He might be sensible what good use would be made of this to favour his release."

<sup>4</sup> *Supply of the spirit,*] "which was promised in imminent danger, and for which the apostle had occasion in his defence before Nero." Harwood.

*earnest expectation and hope that I shall disgrace myself in no respect*<sup>5</sup>; but that with all freedom of speech now, as at all other times, Christ will be honoured in my person<sup>6</sup>, whether it be by life, or by death.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 20.

I rejoice in the zeal with which the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are promulgated; nor need you, my friends, be anxious lest I should suffer any inconvenience on this account; for I am persuaded, that so far from being an impediment to my release, as some desire and expect, it will rather tend to accelerate that happy event, in connexion with your prayers for me, and with that supply of holy courage and freedom of speech which Christ has promised to his faithful servants, when they are called to plead his cause before kings and rulers. The enmity of Jewish zealots will be no disadvantage to me in the imperial court; and the prevalence of the gospel in its genuine spirit must be favourable to my cause. And I am fully confident that my honoured Master, who has so powerfully supported me upon all former occasions, will not, by denying me his promised aid, suffer me to disgrace myself and the cause in which I am embarked, at the approaching important crisis; but that, by a becoming freedom of speech when I am called to defend my character and cause at the tribunal of Cæsar, the doctrine of

---

<sup>5</sup> *Disgrace myself.*] So Mr. Wakefield; or, *be disappointed*. He refers to Rom. v. 5; where the word is used in the sense of *disappoint*. "I shall be put to shame in nothing." Newcome.

<sup>6</sup> *Person.*] Gr. "body."



Ch. I.  
Ver. 20.

Christ will obtain a glorious triumph through my instrumentality, whatever the event may be as to my own person, and whether I, the herald of salvation, be condemned or released.

4. The apostle, though on his own account desirous of release from a state of labour and suffering, expresses, nevertheless, an entire readiness to continue at his post as long as he could be of use to others by preaching the gospel, ver. 21—24.

21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die, gain*<sup>1</sup>.
22. *But though this living in the flesh, would be to me a fruitful labour*<sup>2</sup>; yet, what I should choose I
23. *cannot say*<sup>3</sup>. *But I am distressed between the*

<sup>1</sup> *To live is Christ, and to die, gain.*] The Arabic translator reads *χρησιν*, good; which Griesbach marks as a valuable reading. Beza, Calvin, Gataker, and Peirce make *Χριστος* the subject of both members of the sentence, and *κερδος* the predicate of both; *q. d.* for Christ to me, both in life and death, is gain. But Wolfius *Cur. Crit.* observes, that the apostle would then have written *εμοι γαρ Χριστος, και το ζην, και το αποθανειν κερδος*. See Bowyer.

<sup>2</sup> *Would be to me a fruitful labour.*] Gr. “fruit of labour,” *i. e.* fruitful, or advantageous labour. To him to live was to preach Christ; and this employment would be highly advantageous; the greater the labour, the greater would be his reward. Yet even this consideration can hardly reconcile him to life. The expression in the original is elliptical: *ει δε το ζην εν σαρκι, τετο μοι καρπος εργα*. Dr. Newcome supplies *διδοται μοι* after *σαρκι*, and his version is: “But if it be given to me to live in the flesh, this preaching of Christ is the fruit of my labour.” “But if this life in the flesh be to me a fruitful employment in his gospel.” Wakefield. “*Quod si vero vita mea in corpore, utilitatem afferret muneri meo, sane quid eligam nescio. Kai, sane.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>3</sup> *I cannot say.*] *α γνωριζω*. So Wakefield; who thus preserves the proper signification of the word, which is lost in the common

*two*<sup>4</sup>, *having a desire to depart*<sup>5</sup>, *and to be with Christ, which were very far better*<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, *to continue in the flesh is more necessary for you.* Ch. I. Ver. 24.

I am well prepared for the awful alternative of life or death. While I live, indeed, I am doing

---

translation, and which has created a difficulty to critics. See Peirce.

<sup>4</sup> *Distressed between the two.*] See Wakefield. "I am borne different ways." Doddridge; who observes, "that the original is very emphatical, *συνεχόμεαι ἐκ τῶν δύο*, and seems to be an allusion to a ship riding at anchor, and at the same time likely to be forced to sea by the violence of the winds."

<sup>5</sup> *To depart.*] *εἰς τὸ ἀναλυσαι* "to be unbound." Doddridge. Many manuscripts omit *εἰς*, and it is ingeniously conjectured by Bishop Pearce, that the true reading is *τὴ ἀναλυσαι*. See Peirce and Bowyer, and Bishop Pearce's *Epp. Duæ*.

<sup>6</sup> *Very far better.*] *πολλῶ μαλλον κρείσσον*. The original is very emphatical. "*multo magis melius.*" Vulgate. The Clermont and some other manuscripts read *ποσῶ* for *πολλῶ*, and omit *γαρ*. *q. d. O how very far better!* It is commonly inferred from this text, and with some appearance of plausibility, that the apostle expected to be introduced into a state of activity and happiness immediately after death; but this conclusion is inconsistent with his doctrine in the epistles to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians, where he represents the happiness of a future life as entirely dependent upon a resurrection from the dead; without which he assures them that their faith is vain, and that all who had fallen asleep in Christ had perished, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, 1 Cor. xv. 12—18. To make the apostle, therefore, consistent with himself, we must understand him as comparing the present state with that which will take place immediately after the resurrection, and accounting as nothing the intervening lapse of time. Not, indeed, upon the metaphysical, however just, supposition, that the interval of thousands of ages is in reality nothing; but, because the apostle, and all the Christians in that age, believed that the second appearance of Christ to raise the dead, and judge the world, would take place in the course of a very few years, so that some who were then living would be witnesses to that awful event. It is upon this ground that he regarded as nothing the few years which he supposed would elapse before the resurrection of the dead. See 1 Thess. iv. 15.

"Nothing can be inferred from this text," says Dr. Priestley,

CH. I.  
VER. 24.

something to promote the cause of Christ, and to diffuse his doctrine in the world; and this it is which gives life all its value, and reconciles me to remaining in life. But, independently of usefulness, life would be of little value; and death would be far preferable to the fatigues and sufferings which I continually undergo. Indeed, so weary do I often feel, that the desire of rest almost prevails over that

---

“in favour of an intermediate state between death and the resurrection. For the apostle, considering his own situation, would naturally connect the end of this life with the commencement of another and a better, as he would have no perception of any interval between them. That the apostle had no view to any state short of the coming of Christ to judgement, is evident from the phrase he makes use of, viz. being with Christ, which can only take place at his second coming. For Christ himself has said that he would come again, and that he would take his disciples to himself; which clearly implies that they were not to be with him before that time.

“Accordingly, for many centuries after the notion of an intermediate state was advanced, a notion which has been the foundation of the doctrine of purgatory, and many other absurd and mischievous opinions and practices in the church of Rome, and of no good whatever, it was never imagined that the departed souls were to be with Christ, but only in a place underground called Hades, where they were to wait till the resurrection of their bodies, at which time, and not before, it was supposed that they would be with Christ. The opinion, of the soul going immediately to heaven, was not advanced with any degree of confidence by any Christians except the Gnostics, who believed in no resurrection at all, till about a thousand years after Christ.”

“The scripture,” says the venerable Bishop Law, “in speaking of the connexion between our present and our future being, doth not take into the account our intermediate state in death, no more than we, in describing the course of any man’s actions, take in the time he sleeps. Therefore the scripture must affirm an immediate connexion between death and judgement, Heb. ix. 27, and represents the coming of Christ as near at hand, James v. 8, 9.” Law’s *Inquiry*, App. No. xiii. xiv.

of usefulness; and I can hardly say whether I incline most to live or die. My situation is like that of a ship at anchor, exposed to the impulse of opposite currents. Self-interest and the love of ease sometimes prompt the wish to break loose, to depart from a region of storms and dangers, and to return to port, where I should soon be summoned into the presence of my glorious chief, and receive the promised reward—a reward how great and transcendent! a state how unspeakably preferable to the present mixed and variable scene! Nevertheless it is for your advantage, and for that of the church in general, that I should remain a little longer at my post; and I am content to do so. My master's will is mine: I desire nothing so much as to approve my fidelity to him.

Ch. I  
Ver. 24.

5. With these views the apostle expresses his firm conviction that he shall be spared, and in due time restored to the society of his friends, ver. 25, 26.

*And, being confident of this, I know<sup>1</sup> that I shall remain, yea I shall remain with you all<sup>2</sup>, for the advancement of your faith and joy<sup>3</sup>; that your*

25.

26.

<sup>1</sup> *I know,*] by inference, not by revelation; for in that case he could not have supposed it possible that his confinement might issue in martyrdom, ver. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *With you all,*] “I shall not only remain on earth, but continue my intercourse with you. See ver. 26.” Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Advancement, &c.*] Doddridge. “for your furtherance and joy in the faith.” Newcome. Mr. Wakefield translates the words, “for your satisfaction, and the furtherance of your faith;” and observes in his note, that “the transposition of the two substantives is authorized by the Syriac, and in some measure

Ch. I.  
Ver. 26.

*glorying<sup>1</sup> in Christ Jesus may abound through me, by my presence with you again.*

Being fully persuaded that the continuance of my mission will, for the present, be of considerable advantage to the Gentile churches, I have no doubt that my life will be prolonged. And not only so, but I am further persuaded that I shall also obtain my release from this long confinement, and shall be permitted once more to visit you, and all the other Gentile churches which I have planted, to confirm your faith and promote your joy, by recounting to you the beneficial effects which have resulted from this painful and tedious imprisonment. And my presence with you will completely justify the triumph which you have so often expressed in your conversion to the Christian doctrine by me, who was your first instructor ; and will confute and bring to shame the malignant insinuations of those who would infer from my sufferings, and particularly from my long restraint from public service, that I am not an authorized apostle of Jesus Christ.

---

by other versions, to say nothing of the context." Griesbach takes no notice of any various reading. I have given Dr. Doddridge's translation, which evidently expresses the apostle's meaning. So Grotius explains the text : "*Quò majori cum gaudio conjuncta sit fides vestra.*" "*Ut adjuvem vestrum profectum in cognitione et virtute, et gaudium, quod ex fide promanare solet.*" Rosenmuller.

<sup>1</sup> *Glorying in Christ.*] They would not only rejoice to see the apostle at liberty, and to enjoy his instructions, but would also triumph over his adversaries, who represented his imprisonment as a proof of the invalidity of his mission. See Peirce and Newcome.

## SECTION III.

*THE APOSTLE exhorts the Philippians to cultivate a spirit worthy of the gospel, and particularly recommends mutual affection, humility, and fortitude in the profession of truth, from the example of Christ, and in expectation of future reward.* Ch. i. 27—ii. 16. Ch. I.

1. The apostle urges them to a firm adherence to truth and duty, undismayed by opposition, ver. 27—30.

*Only<sup>2</sup>, behave worthy of the gospel of Christ<sup>3</sup>, that whether I come and see you, or being absent hear of your concerns, I may be assured<sup>4</sup> that ye stand firm in one spirit<sup>5</sup>, striving together with one soul for the faith of the gospel<sup>6</sup>, and in no* Ver. 27. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Only.] *Hoc tantum moneo in præsentia.* Menochius apud Pol. Syn. See Newcome. Gal. ii. 10, v. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Behave, &c.] *πολιτευεσθε.* "The word literally signifies, 'to behave as denizens of some city or corporation.'" Doddridge.

<sup>4</sup> I may be assured.] The expression is elliptical by the omission of *ιδω και ακρω* after *υμων*, and the ellipsis is supplied variously, but the apostle's meaning is evident. See Wakefield.

<sup>5</sup> Stand firm in one spirit.] unanimous in your adherence to truth. See Peirce. "*Standi verbum athletis convenit gradum servantibus; a quibus sumpta est translatio.*" Beza.

<sup>6</sup> Striving, &c.] "united in exertion to maintain the uncorrupted faith in opposition to Jewish zealots. See ch. iii." Peirce; who observes, "that their own unanimity, and their withstanding and opposing seducers to Judaism, were the two points on



- Ch. I. *degree intimidated by your opponents*<sup>1</sup>, (which con-  
 Ver. 28. *stancy*<sup>2</sup> *is to them a certain evidence of your ruin*<sup>3</sup>,  
 29. *but to you of salvation*<sup>4</sup>: *For this favour has*  
*been graciously given*<sup>5</sup> *to you by God with respect*  
 30 *to Christ, not only to believe in him, but even to suf-*  
*fer for him:)* *enduring the same conflict*<sup>6</sup> *which ye*  
*saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

which the apostle was about chiefly to insist." *Striving*, *συν-αθλυντες*, *wrestling together, jointly contending*: the metaphor is still kept up. "It signifies," says Dr. Macknight, "the greatest exertions of courage and strength. The word denotes the action of the *Athletæ* in the Olympic games."

<sup>1</sup> *Intimidated.*] *πτυρομενοι*, startled by your opposers: *i. e.* judaizing teachers, "who alone, says Mr. Locke (Eph. i. 25), were likely to affright the convert Gentiles, and to make them start out of the way of the gospel; which is the proper import of the word." Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> *Which constancy.*] "*ἡτις*, says Dr. Newcome, is here used for *ὅπερ*, as Eph. iii. 13 it is used for *αἵτινες*: being in both places attracted by the following substantive. See also Col. i. 27."

<sup>3</sup> *Of your ruin.*] "When these Judaizers saw that they could not by all their endeavours prevail upon the Gentiles to comply with what they took to be the condition of salvation, Acts xv. 1, they would esteem them obstinate and incorrigible, and as abandoned by God to everlasting perdition." "It is no new thing (adds Mr. Peirce) for men to make such things the conditions of salvation, as God does not; and then unmercifully to damn those who do not submit to them." Peirce. See also Macknight. The common interpretation supposes, that the constancy of the Philippians was an evidence of destruction to their opponents: which is hardly consistent or intelligible. The construction requires, that from the middle of the 28th verse to the end of the 29th should be included in a parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> *Salvation.*] I follow Mr. Wakefield in finishing this sentence at *σωτηρίας*. He pleads the authority of the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic translators. Griesbach is silent.

<sup>5</sup> *Graciously given.*] The apostle here, with great address, speaks of suffering for Christ as an honour and a favour: thus obviating the objections of those who represented persecution as a token of divine displeasure, and of disapprobation of the persecuted cause. Newcome, Peirce.

<sup>6</sup> *Enduring the same conflict, &c.*] The construction requires



To promote your stability and improvement in the Christian doctrine, I am willing to continue in a state of labour and of suffering. I have one, and but one, favour to ask of you in return for this testimony of my affection: Live as Christians. Let your whole conduct correspond with the laws and the spirit of that holy community into which you are now initiated, and in the privileges and immunities of which you have been made to participate. I hope soon to be at liberty to visit you: at all events, I cannot be long without hearing of you. But in whatever way I gain information of your state, let me have the satisfaction to learn that you all adhere stedfastly to the doctrine of the gospel, in its simplicity and purity; that you are unanimous in the profession of it, and that you support one another in earnestly contending for the truth, and in a zealous opposition to all false doctrine, under whatever pretence it may be pressed upon you. They who wish to subvert your principles announce their doctrines as essential to salvation, and anathematize all who will not receive them. Fear them not: their anathemas are vain. This firmness of yours they will call obstinacy, and represent it as a sure mark of reprobation. But believe me when I assure you, that you cannot possess a stronger evidence

---

that this should be joined with the former part of the 28th verse. Bowyer. It is uncertain what that conflict is to which the apostle alludes, whether the opposition of judaizing teachers, or of persecution. The former, from the connexion, seems most probable; though we hear nothing of any such contest which the apostle had at Philippi. Perhaps both may be included.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 30.

of the safety of your state than a firm practical adherence to the purity of the Christian faith. You have also this further proof of your interest in the promises of the gospel. God has not only called you to the profession of the gospel, but he has vouchsafed you the great honour of being confessors and sufferers in this holy cause. Do not, then, disgrace it or yourselves, by suffering this inestimable treasure to be injured and corrupted. Your situation is similar to my own : you saw that I strenuously resisted every attempt to blend the simplicity of the gospel with the bondage of the law ; you know that I am now in confinement for maintaining the liberty of the Gentile church, and you are now struggling with the zealots who wish to bring you under the yoke of the ceremonial institution. Follow my example : resist them firmly : and upon no consideration abandon the principles, or resign the privileges, of the gospel.

2. The apostle earnestly adjures them to manifest their affection to him by uniting zeal for truth with a peaceable, humble, and disinterested spirit, ch. ii. 1—4.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 1.

*If, therefore<sup>1</sup>, there be any consolation in Christ<sup>2</sup>, if any comfort from love, if any commu-*

---

<sup>1</sup> *If, therefore.*] *q. d.* If you have that affection for me which you profess, and which I am confident that you feel, complete my happiness ; which you will accomplish most effectually by love and kindness to each other, and by a cordial union to support the pure doctrine of the gospel, in opposition to those who would subvert the truth or corrupt its purity.

CH. II.  
Ver. 2.

nion of spirit<sup>3</sup>, if any tender compassion<sup>4</sup>, complete ye my joy<sup>5</sup>: that ye may be unanimous, maintaining the same love, having your souls joined together in attending to one thing<sup>6</sup>, doing nothing through contention or vainglory, but in humility of mind giving others a preference to yourselves: each one considering not his own attainments only, but every man the attainments of others also<sup>7</sup>.

3.

4.

\* *If any consolation in Christ.*] *q. d.* if there be any comfort in the doctrine of Christ, in which we mutually participate.

<sup>3</sup> *Communion of spirit, &c.*] *κοινωνία πνεύματος*. This may be understood of the gifts of the holy spirit communicated by the apostle; or, more probably, of spiritual union or fellowship. See Peirce and Wakefield.

<sup>4</sup> *Any tender compassion.*] *Gr.* “any bowels and mercies.” “affection and compassion.” Wakefield. *q. d.* if you have any sympathy in my privations and sufferings, which indeed you have so largely contributed to relieve.

<sup>5</sup> *Complete, &c.*] The apostle had before expressed his great joy at the good account which he had received from Epaphroditus of their faith and liberality, chap. i. 4: he now wishes that they may render his satisfaction complete, by mutual harmony among themselves, and by a stedfast adherence to the purity of the faith.

<sup>6</sup> *Attending to one thing.*] “The apostle forcibly inculcates unanimity and agreement by a redundancy of language.” In this observation of Archbishop Newcome most expositors concur. Mr. Wakefield’s version is, “having the same dispositions, the same love, the same soul, the same mind.” Dr. Daniel Scott joins the two former and the two latter clauses; viz. “that ye may be unanimous, maintaining the same love; having your souls joined together, in attending to the one thing.” See Doddridge’s note upon the text. Mr. Peirce expounds the words thus: “Let me have a complete joy and satisfaction, in your manifesting the same disposition towards me which I have declared that I have towards you all.” And he observes, in his note, that it “*will make all easy* if we understand the apostle in the first clause as exhorting them to be like-minded with himself; and the *το ἐν φρονεῖντες* as signifying their agreement with one another.” The difficulty is, to avoid tautology.

<sup>7</sup> *Not his own attainments only*] “his own advantages and

Ch. II.  
Ver. 4.

In this conflict of principles and parties, allow me to put in my claim to a share in your regard. If there be any thing valuable in your Christian profession, you owe it in some measure to me, who first enlightened you in the doctrine of Christ. If, then, you set any value upon that doctrine which reveals an immortal existence, if there be any delight in that cordial affection which the true disciples of Jesus bear to each other, if there be one common spirit of holiness and zeal pervading the community of those who believe, and in which we, I trust, largely participate; finally, if you still feel, as I am sure you do, a kind affection for your first instructor in the faith, and a tender sympathy with him in his sufferings for truth, let me conjure you by all these tender and engaging considerations to contribute what lies in your power to my comfort and satisfaction. You have indeed already done much; you have received the gospel readily; you have professed it honourably and consistently; you have shown me much personal kindness. Persevere, my brethren: complete my satisfaction, fulfill my joy. Unite with me in firm adherence to Christian principles, in resolute opposition to false doctrine, and to insidious and seducing teachers. Be unanimous amongst yourselves in the prosecution of this honourable cause. If you maintain your inte-

---

excellencies, thus filling himself with pride." Newcome.—"The apostle does not mean to encourage a busy pragmatistical temper; which he elsewhere utterly condemns. 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12; 1 Tim. v. 13." Peirce.

grity, you will indeed afford me the highest delight, an ample remuneration for all my labours and my sufferings. Unite in opposing the common enemy; but first of all, love one another: be peaceable; be humble; let each be ready to give preference to others, and to wave his own right to precedence. Think not highly of your own attainments; regard not solely your own interest. Allow to others the merit of those good qualities which they possess; and be zealous and active in promoting the welfare of others; for in so doing you will best consult your own ultimate advantage.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 4.

3. The apostle, to enforce the practice of self-denial, urges the example of Christ, in his voluntary humiliation and subsequent exaltation, ver. 5—11.

1.) The apostle states the circumstances of Christ's voluntary humiliation as an example of self-denial to his followers, ver. 5—8.

*Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God<sup>1</sup>, did*

5.

6.

<sup>1</sup> *In the form of God.*] εν μορφῇ Θεοῦ “Μορφή, forma, omne quod in oculos occurrit, imago, similitudo.” Schleusner. Hesych. ιδεζ, εἶδος. This word occurs but three times in the New Testament: Mark xvi. 12, he appeared in another form to two of them; and Philip. ii. 7, he took upon him the form of a servant. Its proper signification is, an external visible appearance. In this sense Christ could not resemble God, who is invisible; the word is used, therefore, in a figurative sense: and to pretend that here is an allusion to some pre-existent glory, or to his supposed appearance upon Mount Sinai, is perfectly gratuitous, and destitute of all proof and probability. I have given in the paraphrase what appears to me the true sense of the expression.

Ch. II. *not peremptorily lay claim<sup>1</sup> to this resemblance of*  
 Ver. 7. *God<sup>2</sup>, but divested himself<sup>3</sup>, assuming the form of*

God alone, the omnipotent Author of Nature, can controul its laws and operations at pleasure; and the voluntary power of working miracles which Christ was permitted to exercise, exhibited a striking resemblance of the divine omnipotence, and distinguished this illustrious prophet from all former prophets and messengers of God.

<sup>1</sup> *Did not peremptorily lay claim, &c.] ουχ ἀρπαγμα ἡγήσατο. did not regard it as a prey: did not seize as his right: as a property acquired by his own prowess, for which he was amenable to no account. “Ἀρπαγμος, proprie, direptio, ipsa rapiendi actio. Nomen verbale; et nomina in ος desinentia fere actionem, non rem, et statum, significant. Sed interdum tamen passivè usurpatur, ut significet rem raptam, prædam, vel rem avidè diripiendam et vindicandam. Hinc formula ἀρπαγμα ἡγίσθαι τι, cupidè aliquâ re uti, studiosissimè eam occupare, et sibi vindicare, significat.” Schleusner.—“non rapinam arbitratus est.” Vulg.—“did not esteem it a prey or booty.” Newcome; and Peirce, who observes “that ἀρπαγμος, which is a word that occurs very seldom in classic authors, has probably the sense of ἀρπαγμα, as βαπτισμος of βαπτισμα, &c., and that it signifies something actually in possession, which a person is eagerly desirous to retain.” Mr. Wakefield, from Eustathius, shows that, according to the genius of the Greek language, ἀρπαγμος is equivalent to ἀρπαγμα. *Sylva Critica*, iii. 112, § cxlii. Dr. Clarke observes, that the construction also requires, that the clause *εχ ἀρπαγμα κ. τ. λ.* should be understood as expressing, not his greatness, but his humiliation; otherwise the expression would have been, not *αλλα*, but *ὡμως δε*, or, *αλλ’ ὡμως*, nevertheless. Clarke’s *Script. Doct.*, No. 934. The connexion also requires this sense; for the apostle is exhorting the Philippians, after the example of Christ, not to seek after that to which they had no claim, but, for the benefit of others, to part with that which they might have retained. It highly favours this interpretation that it is the sense in which the word was understood by all the Ante-Nicene writers. The churches of Vienne and Lyons, in their epistle to those of Asia, speaking of the martyrs who suffered in the time of the emperor Verus, say, They were such zealous followers of the example of Christ, who being in the form of God, *ουχ ἀρπαγμα κ. τ. λ.* did not claim as a right, was not tenacious of being like God, that though they had often been cast to wild beasts, and had en-*



*a servant*<sup>4</sup>, and becoming like other men<sup>5</sup>. And being in condition like another man<sup>6</sup>, in obedience

Ch. II.  
Ver. 8.

dured all manner of torments, yet would they not suffer themselves to be honoured with the title of martyrs, &c. See also Origen on John, p. 34, Huet. et Novatian *De Trin.* cap. 17. Grotius, Tillotson, Whitby, and Bishop Bull, disapprove the common translation. Mr. Wakefield renders the clause, “ did not think of eagerly retaining this divine likeness.”

<sup>2</sup> *Resemblance of God.*] *ισα Θεω*, “ to be as God, or in the likeness of God,” Whitby; who observes, that *ισα* is frequently used adverbially in the LXX. Job x. 10, *hast thou not curdled me, ισα τυρω*, like cheese? xi. 12, *man is born, ισα ονω*, like a wild ass's colt. See also xiii. 12, xv. 16; Isa. li. 23. If the apostle had intended to express complete equality, he would rather have used *ισον τω Θεω*. See John v. 18. But the thought of the humble Jesus arrogating to himself perfect equality with the Almighty God, whose servant and messenger he was, could never have entered into the apostle's mind. The true sense of the passage appears to be that which is expressed in the paraphrase, viz. that Christ, possessing voluntary powers of working miracles, did not regard them as his own property and right. He had been taught by the discipline of his temptation in the wilderness, that he was not to exercise the powers intrusted to him to promote his own interest, or to gratify his own ambition; nor, in general, to extricate himself from danger. And this was so remarkably the character of our Lord, that he even prohibited his disciples from speaking of some of the most illustrious of his miracles; he was supported by the contributions of his followers, in preference to a supernatural supply; and till his appointed hour was come, he chose rather to withdraw from the scene of danger than to rescue himself by miracle. And this, by the way, obviates the objection which some have made against the supposition that Jesus was intrusted with discretionary miraculous powers. It amounts to exactly the same thing, whether he never wrought a miracle but by immediate impulse, or whether, being intrusted with a voluntary power of working miracles, his mind was so perfectly disciplined that he never exercised that power but upon proper occasions.

<sup>3</sup> *Divested himself.*] *ἐαυτὸν ἐκενώσε*. “ emptied himself of it.” Wakefield.—“ made himself of no account.” Newcome. Not that he actually resigned his miraculous powers, but that he never exerted them except upon special occasions; and that in



Ch. II.  
Ver. 8.

to God *he humbled himself*<sup>7</sup> unto death, even unto death upon a cross.

Practise self-denial. Be ever ready to make the greatest sacrifices for the good of others; and be assured you will not ultimately be losers by your generosity. Drink deeply into the spirit of Christ, and follow his great example. He voluntarily and cheerfully made far greater sacrifices for the benefit of mankind than it is possible for any of his followers to pretend to, and his reward was proportionably

the common intercourse of life he acted as though he possessed them not, so that no one from his appearance would expect any thing extraordinary from him.

<sup>4</sup> *Assuming the form of a servant.*] μορφην δελα λαβων, he voluntarily submitted to the labours, the indignities, and to the punishment of a slave. Μορφη δελα does not imply that he was actually a slave, nor does μορφη Θεσ prove that he was truly God. He resembled God in his miraculous powers, he resembled a slave in his labours and sufferings.

<sup>5</sup> *Becoming like other men.*] εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων γενομενος, being made in the likeness of men: i. e. of other men, who possessed no superior powers. He made himself like them by not exerting the powers he possessed upon ordinary occasions. See Judges xvi. 7, 11, 13, 17: *I shall become weak, and be ως εις των ανθρωπων, like another man.* The expression *likeness of men*, no more proves that Christ possessed a nature different from that of men, than the similar expression, as applied to Sampson, proves that warrior to have been one of a superior class of beings.

<sup>6</sup> *Being in condition like another man.*] σχηματι ευρεθεις ως ανθρωπος, being found in fashion as a man. ευρεθεις, cum esset, cum existeret. Ellys's *Fortuita Sacra*, Newcome, Peirce. σχημα, state and condition. Raphelius. "*Omnem habitum et statum alicujus rei externum significat.*" Schleusner. 1 Cor. vii. 31.

<sup>7</sup> *He humbled himself unto death.*] This plainly implies, that the submission of Christ to a violent death was a voluntary act, which it was in his power to have avoided if he would; agreeably to his own declaration John x. 15, 17, 18.

great. He was exalted far above all other men by his miraculous gifts ; he was anointed with the holy spirit and with power ; the spirit was communicated to him without limitation ; and he exercised at pleasure those miraculous powers which were given him for the confirmation of his mission : and in this sphere, like that Almighty Being himself whose delegate and ambassador he was, he spontaneously controuled the laws, and changed the course, of nature. Nevertheless, so admirably was his mind enlightened, and his heart disciplined to his situation and office, that he never presumed to arrogate these mighty powers, this similitude to the Almighty, as his own natural right, as the acquisition of his own wisdom and strength, for the possession of which he was indebted to none, in the exercise of which he was controulable by none, and for the use of which he was amenable to none. Far otherwise. He knew that he possessed these mighty powers as a trust for which he was accountable, and in the use of which he had been fully instructed : and therefore he strictly confined the exercise of them to the purposes for which they were communicated. He never exhibited them for the purpose of display ; he seldom used them for his own personal benefit ; he acted in the concerns of life as though he possessed them not. He declined the applause which the gratitude of the happy subjects of his beneficent miracles, and the admiration of surrounding multitudes would have accumulated upon his head. Resembling the Almighty in the

Ch. II.  
Ver. 8.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 8.

powers which he possessed, in external appearance he assimilated himself to a servant. For the good of mankind he submitted to the labours, and bore the indignities, of a slave. Thus, notwithstanding the dignity of his character and the greatness of his powers, he could not in appearance be distinguished from other men. And being, as to his external state and condition, like a person of the meanest rank in life, destitute even of necessities, when it was in his power to have commanded all the pomp and luxury which opulence could supply, he carried his self-denial still further; and in obedience to the will of God, who had given him a commission to redeem mankind from idolatry and vice, he submitted to greater indignities still. And though no human power could have wrested his life from him, though legions of angels would, in obedience to his summons, have instantaneously appeared in his defence, though he could in an instant have struck all his adversaries to the ground, and though he felt and trembled at the horrors of his approaching sufferings, yet because the purposes of his mission required it, and his heavenly Father directed it, he without hesitation submitted to a death which it was in his power to have avoided; and that, a kind of death the most painful and ignominious, being nailed to and suspended upon a cross. These were the sacrifices which Jesus made, and the sufferings which he voluntarily underwent for the good of mankind.

2.) The apostle insists upon Christ's exaltation as the reward of his self-denial, ver. 9—11. Ch II.

*Therefore God, on his part, hath very highly exalted him<sup>1</sup>, and hath granted him that name<sup>2</sup> which is superior to every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend<sup>3</sup>, of those who are in heaven, and upon earth, and under the earth<sup>4</sup>, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Ver. 9.  
10.  
11.

---

<sup>1</sup> *God on his part, &c.*] *καὶ, vicissim.* Rom. i. 24. Newcome. “ὤπερὑψωσε. Ideo Deus eum multo sublimiorem fecit quam erat antea.” Grotius, Peirce. Heb. xii. 2, Dan. iv. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *That name.*] See Griesbach and Newcome. *A name superior to every name:* i. e. authority superior to all former prophets and messengers of the divine will. “*Nomen hic est dignitas.*” Grotius. See Eph. i. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *In the name of Jesus, &c.*] i. e. that all should be taught by Jesus the worship of the true God. “It should be translated *in*, says Secker, *Sermons*, vol. iii. p. 344. *To bow the knee* is to pray. Eph. iii. 14. Or, rather thus: that a token of subjection should be shown *at, for, on account of* the glorious name, dignity, or authority of Jesus. Matt. vi. 7, xi. 6; Acts vii. 29. The next verse shows what this dignity is.” Newcome. Viz. that every tongue should confess, &c.

<sup>4</sup> *Of those that are in heaven, &c.*] i. e. says Newcome, and most of the expositors with him, “*of angels, of men now living, and of departed men.*” I would rather understand this figurative expression of Jew and Gentile, the living and the dead. See Mr. Locke's note upon Eph. i. 10. At any rate, let it be remembered, that it is the worship of God, not of Jesus, which is here spoken of. *In the name*, not *at the name*, of Jesus, every knee shall bow: as his *disciples*, not as his *worshippers*, as many believe.

Mr. Peirce conjectures, or rather he considers the scriptures as teaching, that “*antecedently to the advent of Christ, God allotted to the angels provinces and dominions; one being appointed to preside over one country, and another over another. But that at our Lord's resurrection an end was put to this rule of angels; they themselves, together with all nations, were put under Christ, whose authority and power were then highly ad-*

Ch. II.  
Ver. 11.

This unexampled instance of voluntary humiliation and suffering for the benefit of mankind was not left destitute of its proper reward. The righteous and benevolent Governor of the world, who, to answer the wise purposes of his administration, imposed this severe duty upon his holy servant Jesus Christ, has in return made him ample compensation for this great act of filial obedience and magnanimous benevolence. He first raised him from the grave ; and has since advanced him to the highest honour and authority. He has made him superior to all former prophets and messengers of his will, without excepting the Jewish legislator himself ; whose authority was never meant to extend beyond the limits of the Hebrew nation, while the divine religion of Jesus Christ, confirmed by his

---

vanced above what they were before : he being intrusted with universal dominion, and all that were rulers and governors before being made his subjects and ministers." To this, I had almost said *wild*, but at best very improbable, hypothesis, the learned writer accommodates the tenth verse : and upon this principle he explains the ninth, ' And upon this account God has advanced him higher than before.'

" Whether the apostle annexed any distinct ideas to these phrases," says Dr. Priestley, " or only meant to give one general idea of the great power to which God had raised Christ, is not very certain. The phrase *heaven and earth* might have been a kind of proverbial expression, denoting the universe in general. But it has been conjectured that *the things in heaven, the things in earth, and the things under the earth*, in this place may refer to the threefold division of the heathen gods, some of whom were said to have power in heaven, others upon earth, and others under the earth, or among the ghosts of the dead : intimating, that all these heathen deities would fall before the doctrine of the gospel of Christ ; or, that idolatry in all its forms would fall before it. This interpretation appears to me not improbable."

miracles, his death, and resurrection, is intended for universal prevalence. The law which he has promulgated is to be obligatory upon all mankind; upon those who were favoured with former revelations, as well as upon those who were left to unassisted reason and the dim light of nature. The blessings of the gospel extend to the dead as well as to the living; and the doctrine of Jesus reveals the awful truth, that all who are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth. It is the will of God that this divine religion, of which Jesus is the honoured founder, should be promulgated to all nations; and in due time all the systems of heathen idolatry shall fall before the banner of the cross: all the tribes of mankind, of every rank and degree, shall bow to the sceptre of Christ: all shall learn from him how to offer the most acceptable homage to his and their Father; and while they joyfully acknowledge and honour him as their Master, they shall with grateful hearts adore the mercy of God in sending his well-beloved son and faithful servant into the world, as the teacher of truth and the messenger of peace. Such is the honour and reward which has been conferred upon Jesus, our great Lord and Master, for his willing obedience, and his meritorious self-denial for the good of mankind. Be you animated by the same spirit, and from the same righteous and merciful Judge you shall receive your due reward.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 11,

4. The apostle enforces his exhortation from the



Ch. II. deference which they had hitherto uniformly paid to his authority ; and from the help which they had obtained from God, ver. 12, 13.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore*<sup>1</sup>, *my beloved brethren, as ye have always obeyed me*<sup>2</sup> *with respect and reverence*<sup>3</sup>, *and that not only when I was present but much more now in my absence, promote earnestly the welfare of each other*<sup>4</sup>, *for God is working in you both to be willing*<sup>5</sup>, *and to perform.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Wherefore* :] *i. e.* since Christ has done so much for us. Newcome, Peirce. See ver. 3—5.

<sup>2</sup> *Obedied me.*] So Peirce and Wakefield. This suits the connexion better than if the word *God* had been supplied, agreeably to the opinion of some expositors · for the apostle, being about to give a solemn charge, enforces it by reminding them of the attention which they had been used to pay to his advice and directions. Mr. Wakefield observes, that “ this translation is as consistent with the original, and much more with the scope of the writer, than the former.”

<sup>3</sup> *With respect and reverence.*] *μετα φόβου και τρεμειν*, *with fear and trembling* ; probably a colloquial phrase, by which is expressed respectful deference to the directions of a teacher or master. It occurs in three other places only in the New Testament, 2 Cor. vii. 15, “ whilst he (Titus) remembers the obedience of you all, how with *fear and trembling* you received him.” See also 1 Cor. ii. 3, Eph. vi. 5. In this sense it is properly connected with the clause which precedes it, and expresses the deference which the Philippians paid to the instructions of the apostle. Mr. Peirce, who proposes and defends this interpretation, renders the words *humility and concern*.

<sup>4</sup> *Promote earnestly the welfare of each other.*] *την ἑαυτων σωτηριαν κατεργαζεσθε*. The connexion seems to require this interpretation in preference to the common one, “ work out your own salvation.” See Peirce, Harwood, and Wakefield. *ἑαυτων* is sometimes used for *one another*. See Eph. iv. 32. *χαριζομενοι ἑαυτοις*, *forgiving one another*, Col. iii. 16, Heb. iii. 13. Mr. Peirce, however, allows that the word does not occur in this sense in any other passage in this epistle. *σωτηρια* is unquestionably sometimes used in the sense of temporal welfare, prosperity, or comfort. See Philip. i. 19, with Peirce's



Ch. II.  
Ver. 13.

You see, my beloved Christian brethren, the example of our Master Jesus Christ. How great his condescension, his self-denial, his voluntary humiliation, and sufferings for the benefit of mankind, and how transcendent his reward! I beseech, I charge you to resemble him to the utmost of your ability, in your exertions to assist and benefit one another. And I flatter myself that this my solemn injunction will not be ineffectual. I bear you testimony that, while I was with you, and exercising my ministry at Philippi, you discovered the utmost anxiety and solicitude to comply with my wishes, and to conform to my instructions in every thing. And since I have left you, and especially since I have been a prisoner for the gospel, you have discovered, if possible, a still more earnest concern to adhere to the principles and rules which you received from me. Let me not be disappointed in the present case: especially as God, in his good providence,

---

note. *κατεργάζομαι* signifies *to secure, to effect*. Dr. Harwood translates it, “*sedulously effect and secure one another's welfare.*” See Harwood's note *in loc.*

<sup>a</sup> *God is working, &c.*] To will, *i. e.* by the motives of the gospel he produces this effect in your minds, and by the opportunities his providence affords he enables you to fulfill your generous purposes. This expression does not necessarily imply an immediate divine impulse upon the mind, much less does it countenance the strange doctrine of irresistible grace. “It is God who infuseth into you the powers of acting and willing in this manner.” Harwood. Bishop Pearce, in his *Epistolæ Duæ*, objects to the expression *ενεργεῖν ἐν ὑμῖν*—*το ενεργεῖν*, and conjectures that *ἐπιτελεῖν* is the true reading. Mr. Peirce, though he allows the ingenuity of the conjecture, objects to the admission of a merely conjectural emendation, unsupported by manuscripts; and ably defends the received text.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 13.

has imparted to you the discoveries and promises of the gospel, which is a law of love, and which, if practically believed, will be sure to generate a kind and benevolent temper, and has afforded you many opportunities of exercising and gratifying your generous feelings.

5. The apostle further enforces his exhortation from a regard to the credit and success of the gospel, and from the expectation of Christ's appearance, ver. 14—16.

14. *Do all things with good-will<sup>1</sup>, without grudging*  
15. *and hesitation<sup>2</sup>, that ye may be blameless and un-*

---

<sup>1</sup> *With good-will.*] I place the period after *ενεργειν*, with an anonymous writer in Bowyer, and with Mr. Wakefield: *της ευδοκίας αυτες*, is the reading of the Ephrem manuscript alone.—The words *υπερ της, κ. τ. λ.* are commonly joined to ver. 13. Admitting this punctuation, Mr. Peirce observes, “that the sense is either, ‘that God works in you to be willing to act in this manner, that he may promote good will among you, which ought to be a strong motive to good-will, because God does so much to promote it;’ or, ‘that God works in you to be inclined to, and to act from this principle.’” Archbishop Newcome adopts the common version: “It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” “As a motive to constant vigilance and exertion,” says Dr. Priestley, “the apostle reminds the Philippians of the great goodness of God, who, by giving the gospel in reality, does every thing for us; the principles of the gospel being that which animates and engages us to act as we ought to do in life. It is unquestionably God that works in us, and for us, but not immediately. The contrary idea has been the source of much enthusiasm.”

<sup>2</sup> *Grudging and hesitation.*] “*γογγυσμων και διαλογισμων γογγυσμος*, indignatio clandestina quæ non palam profertur. 1 Pet. iv. 9. *διαλογισμος*, cogitatio et opinio hominis secum ratiocinantis. Luc. v. 22. *dubitatio*. Luc. xxiv. 38. *disceptatio*. Luc. ix. 46.” Schleusner. Deut. xv. 9. See Peirce; who observes, that the apostle here continues his subject from ver. 3.

corrupted<sup>3</sup>, the children of God without reproach<sup>4</sup>,  
 in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation<sup>5</sup>,  
 amongst whom shine ye forth as lights<sup>6</sup> in the world,  
 holding out<sup>7</sup> the doctrine of life, that I may glory

Ch. II.  
 Ver. 15.

16.

<sup>3</sup> *Blameless and uncorrupted.*] ἀμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκεραιοί· ἀμεμπτος, integer ab omni vitiositate. ἀκεραῖος, ἀκεραΐζειν lædere, nocere. Eum notat qui nemini lædit, ab omni dolo, ac fraude alienus, homo perfectus." Schleusner. "Some derive the word from κερᾶω misceo, and give it the sense of sincerum, immixtum: blameless and uncorrupt." Wakefield.

<sup>4</sup> *Without reproach.*] ἀμωμητα. "unreproveable." Newcome. "spotless." Wakefield. "Ex a priv. et μωμος macula, nulla macula notatus." Schleusner.

<sup>5</sup> *Crooked and perverse generation.*] "σκολιας καὶ διεσραμμενης. See Deut. xxxii. 5. σκολιός tortuosus, obliquus, curvus. Luc. iii. 5. metaphorice pravus, iniquus, perversus. Act. ii. 40. διασρεφω, torqueo, in varios anfractus deflecto, corrumpo, perverto, vitiosum reddo." Schleusner. These epithets are applied to the Jews in the Old and New Testaments; but there can be no reason to limit them to that nation only. They may be extended to idolatrous heathen, to persecuting Jews, or to judaizing zealots, who were desirous to corrupt the genuine doctrines of the gospel.

<sup>6</sup> *Amongst whom shine ye forth as lights, &c.*] "ἐν οἷς, agreeing with ἀιθρωποῖς understood." Bowyer, Newcome. "as luminaries." Wakefield. Dr. Doddridge, from Saurin, supposes that there is an allusion to a light-house, and paraphrases the words thus: "Shine as elevated lights in the dark world about you, that you may direct those who sail on this dangerous sea, and secure them from suffering shipwreck on those fatal rocks which every where lie in their way." The imperative sense of the verb is preferable to the indicative.

<sup>7</sup> *Holding out.*] The word ἐπεχω has the sense both of holding fast, and holding out or exhibiting. See Schleusner. The latter seems better suited to the connexion. Christians, as luminaries to the world, are to exhibit, both by instruction and example, the excellence and energy of that doctrine which reveals a future everlasting life. "Beza thinks this is an allusion to those towers which were built at the entrance of harbours, and on which fires were kept burning to direct ships into port." Macknight.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 16.

*in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain,  
nor laboured in vain.*

Let your benevolent actions be the genuine effect of a truly benevolent spirit. Perform them without a reluctance which would indicate that your kindness was extorted and involuntary, and without any of those frivolous excuses and pretences which betray a backwardness to good works. By this liberal and generous spirit you will show that your profession is not a mere name, and that your principles produce their proper effect, so that none will have reason to charge you with insincerity. You will approve yourselves the genuine sons of God, who has adopted you into his family who were once aliens and enemies, and admitted you to all the privileges and expectations of his children. You will retain your integrity and preserve your character and principles unsullied, amidst the scoffs of idolaters, the malice of unbelieving Jews, and the insidious arts and practices of false brethren, who are desirous of subverting your faith and infringing your Christian liberty. In the midst of temptation hold fast your integrity; and in a dark and benighted region let the lustre of your benevolent example exhibit to the admiring world the beauty and excellence of the doctrine of Christ, and thus engage them to embrace it cordially as the only foundation of our immortal hopes. If such be your conduct, you will fulfill my best wishes and gratify my highest ambition. We shall then have a glorious meeting at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, where

I shall enjoy the unspeakable satisfaction to see that I have won the prize for which I have contended in the course, and my anxious and persevering labours will be crowned with the reward of which I was most ambitious, the salvation of those to whom I proclaimed the joyful tidings of the gospel.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 16.

6. The apostle expresses his willingness to suffer as well as to labour in the cause of truth, and for the benefit of his hearers, and calls upon his friends to congratulate with him, if this should be the event of his present conflict, ver. 17, 18.

*Yea, if I should even be poured out as a libation<sup>1</sup> upon the sacrifice and offering of your faith, I rejoice and congratulate with you all; and in the same manner do ye also rejoice and congratulate with me<sup>2</sup>.*

17.

18.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Poured out as a libation.*] “If my blood be poured out as a drink-offering, Lev. ii. 6, Num. xv. 5, 7, upon the acceptable sacrifice and public oblation of your Christian faith to God, Rom. xv. 16. The heathen also poured libations of wine on the victim which was about to be sacrificed.” Newcome.” The word *σπενδομαι* occurs twice only in the New Testament: here, and 2 Tim. iv. 6. It is rendered by Schleusner, *paulatim absumor*; perhaps it may have no direct allusion to a sacrificial rite. “The apostle,” says Dr. Priestley, “compares the faith of the Philippians and the fruits of it to the victim, and himself to this libation which accompanies it; intimating that he would cheerfully give up his life to promote their faith in the gospel.”

<sup>2</sup> *Congratulate with me.*] Dr. Doddridge remarks, that he “cannot read this heroic discourse of the apostle without reflecting on the behaviour of the brave Athenian mentioned by Plutarch, (*Opp.* p. 347,) who returned to Athens from the victo-

Ch. II.  
Ver. 18.

Yea, my Christian friends, with this glorious prospect in view, I am as willing to suffer, as to labour, in the cause of truth, and for the benefit of mankind. And if my present confinement and my approaching trial should, as it possibly may, terminate in martyrdom ; if my blood should be poured out as a libation upon the acceptable sacrifice of your faith, and the public offering of your homage and worship to the true God, so far from regretting it as a calamity, I shall glory in it as an honour ; I shall triumph in it as the crown and completion of my most fervent desires ; and, my dear brethren, I call upon you, as deeply interested in my success, and as faithful confessors in the same cause, to unite your joy and congratulations with mine for the honour conferred on one whom you profess so highly to esteem, so affectionately to love.

---

rious battle of Marathon, bleeding to death with the wounds he had received in the action, and coming directly to the house where the magistrates were assembled, uttered only these two words, *χαίρετε, χαίρομεν*, *take your share of our joy*, and immediately dropped down dead at their feet."

## SECTION IV.

*THE APOSTLE promises to send Timothy to the Philippians as soon as he could judge how his own case was likely to be determined at Rome; he expresses his hope of visiting them soon in person, and in the mean time, he dispatches Epaphroditus with this epistle, and passes a high encomium upon his character.* Ch. ii. 19—30. Ch. II.

1. The apostle promises that as soon as he can learn how his own case will be determined he will send Timothy, of whom he gives a high and honourable character, ver. 19—23.

*But I hope in the Lord Jesus<sup>1</sup> to send Timothy to you soon, that I may be of good comfort also when I know the state of your affairs.* Ver. 19.

---

<sup>1</sup> *I hope in the Lord Jesus:]* that is, I hope that Jesus, my master, will permit me. The apostle upon every occasion expresses himself as immediately under the direction of Jesus, from whom he received his commission, and with whom he appears occasionally to have been favoured with personal intercourse, and to have been directed by him in his various journeys.

Mr. Peirce judiciously remarks, “that St. Paul having declared his readiness to lay down his life for them, apprehended how tenderly they would take it; and therefore, to prevent their being over much concerned, he here tells them that, however willing he was to die for them, he did not expect to do so presently; and acquaints them that when he could see which way his affair was like to turn, he should be able to spare them Timothy, from whom he expected a good account of them.”



Ch. II.  
Ver. 19.

But though I use this strong language, and well know that I am approaching the termination of my course, and know not how my imprisonment will end, and am prepared to welcome the issue whatever it be, I do not mean that you should suppose that I am in immediate danger. No; I hope first to be cheered with good tidings from you. I hope, therefore, that the Lord Jesus, whose servant I am, and whose directions I obey, will permit me in a short time to spare the evangelist Timothy to make you a friendly visit, and from him I hope to receive such a report of you, and of the prosperous state of religion among you, as will yield me the highest satisfaction and comfort.

20. *For I have no one here of a like disposition with him<sup>1</sup>, who will sincerely concern himself in your*  
21. *affairs. For all seek their own interest, rather than<sup>2</sup> that of Christ Jesus.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Of a like disposition with him.*] ἰσοψυχον. So Newcome and Doddridge. This appears to me to suit the connexion better than the sense which Peirce gives to the word "like-affected to myself." See 2 Cor. xii. 18, 1 Cor. xvi. 10. The apostle's meaning seems to be: That of the associates who were then with him, none felt so much concern for the Philippians as Timothy; and none would exert himself so much, or submit to so many inconveniences to serve them.

<sup>2</sup> *Rather than.*] See Peirce. In the original, "all seek their own, not the things of Christ Jesus." The apostle probably only means to speak comparatively, though the negative is used absolutely here, as in many other places, Matt. ix. 13, vi. 19, 20, 34; John vi. 27; 1 Cor. x. 24. The apostle can hardly mean to pass an unqualified censure upon all his associates who were then with him, though none of them perhaps might be equal in zeal and self-denial to this young evangelist, and they might all be very reluctant to leave the society of Paul in

CH. II.  
Ver. 21.

I send Timothy in preference to any other person, because I have no one here who enters so cordially into my views and feelings, and who is so deeply interested in your character and conduct as he; or who is so ready to make any sacrifice which may be requisite to promote your comfort and improvement. Indeed I have many friends with me whose characters I highly respect; but they are not particularly known to you, and rather wish to remain here, or to be employed in services less hazardous and laborious; and, to say the truth, some of them are perhaps too much disposed to prefer their own inclination, ease, and security, to the success of the gospel, and incline to go where they may be most comfortable, rather than where they may be most useful.

*But of him ye know the proof<sup>3</sup>; that as a son with a father<sup>4</sup>, so he hath served with me for the*

22.

---

order to carry a message to Philippi. It is highly probable that Luke and Mark were both with him when he wrote this epistle. See Philem. v. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *The proof.*] Timothy was in company with Paul and Silas when they preached the gospel at Philippi, Acts xvi. 1—3. "There were few," says Dr. Priestley, "so wholly devoted to the service of the gospel, and who paid so little regard to their own ease and safety, as Timothy. The apostle had before expressed some chagrin at the conduct of Demas, and even that of Crescens and Titus, for deserting him, and consulting their own safety by flight."

<sup>4</sup> *As a son with a father.*] "sicut patri filius mecum inservivit religioni. Non dicit Paulus, Timotheus mihi servivit, sed mecum servivit, et quidem evangelio εις το ευαγγελιον, et ita quidem ut me, ut patrem filius, observaret, mihi que in omnibus obsequentem se præberet." Rosenmuller. "Assure yourselves of Timothy's approved faithfulness, for he has been to me as a child to his father in the service of the gospel." Wakefield.

Ch. II. *gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him forthwith,*  
 Ver. 23. *as soon as I shall see the issue of my affairs*<sup>1</sup>.

My young friend and fellow-labourer Timothy breathes a very different spirit. You well recollect his behaviour during the critical and dangerous season of my ministry at Philippi; how firm, how active, how zealous, he was in propagating the gospel; and to what hazards he exposed himself in a place where I was myself so severely treated. You observed also how affectionately he behaved to me, how tenderly he sympathized with me, and the filial deference which he constantly showed to my advice and instructions. So that we appeared like a father and a son who were fellow-servants of the same master, and commissioned upon the same perilous and important errand, vying with each other who should best approve his zeal and fidelity in the service. I hope to send him to you soon, but not till my appeal has been decided in the imperial court, the result of which I know you will be anxious to hear, and the tidings of which he shall immediately convey to you.

2. The apostle expresses his hope that he should soon follow his friend, and make the Philippians a visit in person, ver. 24.

24. *But I am confident in the Lord<sup>2</sup>, that I shall soon come to you myself.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *As soon as I shall see, &c.]* ὡς ἂν ἀπιδῶ τὰ περὶ ἐμεῖ “ubi videro, quid de me futurum sit.” Rosenmuller. “Him, then,

You may perhaps suspect, from the hints which I have dropped, that I am apprehensive that the issue of my trial may be fatal. But I assure you, on the contrary, that I have the highest expectation of a speedy release from my long confinement; and in this case, if I may indulge my own inclinations, one of my first visits shall be to you. And I am persuaded that my beloved and honoured master will not, in this instance, oppose the desire of his faithful servant.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 24.

3. In the mean time he thought fit to send back Epaphroditus immediately, of whose character and services he expresses the highest approbation, and whom he warmly recommends to their affection and esteem, ver. 25—30.

*Yet I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus<sup>3</sup> my brother and fellow-labourer, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and minister to my wants<sup>4</sup>; for he greatly longed after you all,*

25.

26.

I hope to send as soon as ever I shall see the issue of this *affair* with me." Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *Confident in the Lord.*] See the note on ver. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Epaphroditus.*] Grotius supposes this person to be the same with Epaphras, who is mentioned in the epistles to the Colossians and Philemon: Col. i. 7, iv. 12; Philem. v. 23. It is indeed probable that Epaphras was at that time with Paul; but he seems to have been particularly connected with the church at Colossæ, as Epaphroditus was with that at Philippi. Dr. Jones has laboured with his usual learning and ingenuity to prove that Epaphroditus was the celebrated freedman of the emperor Nero; but this is hardly consistent with his having been employed by the Philippians (ch. iv. 18) to convey their present to the apostle; or his being described (ch. ii. 25) as their apostle and teacher. Dr. J. Jones's *Series of Facts*, chap. 4.

Ch. II. *and was much dejected*<sup>1</sup> *because ye had heard that*  
 Ver. 27. *he was sick. For indeed he hath been sick, near*  
*unto death; but God had pity upon him, and not*  
*upon him only, but upon me also, that I might not*  
*have sorrow upon sorrow*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Your messenger and minister to my wants.*] ὑμῶν δὲ ἀποστο-  
 λον, καὶ λειτεργον τῆς χρείας μου. “minister of my concerns;  
 literally, *of this business of mine*; meaning the particular errand  
 on which he went,” Wakefield. “your apostle, and who is now  
 to act for me with you,” Peirce. “whom you are now to re-  
 gard as your apostle, and my substitute,” Harwood. “*Ves-*  
*trum autem apostolum et mei muneris vicarium.*” Castellio. The  
 common translation, however, which is that of Newcome, and  
 adopted in the text, may be defended. χρεία is used in the  
 sense of *necessity*, ch. iv. 16, 19. The opposition in the clauses  
 of the sentence is sufficiently supported, if the first clause is  
 supposed to express the reasons why the apostle wished to de-  
 tain Epaphroditus, and the latter the grounds upon which it was  
 expedient that he should depart. λειτεργος τῆς χρείας may be  
 uncommon, but Mr. Peirce does not pretend that it is unallow-  
 able. Indeed ἀποστολος τῶν ἐθνῶν is a similar construction. And  
 it is certainly very unusual for the minister of a church to be  
 called its apostle. The common interpretation is favoured by  
 ver. 30.

<sup>1</sup> *Much dejected.*] “full of anguish,” Newcome. ἀδημονων.  
 Erasmus says that the word signifies *to be almost killed with*  
*grief*.

<sup>2</sup> *That I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.*] It has been  
 before observed that Dr. Paley notices the case of Epaphroditus  
 as a proof that the apostles did not possess the power of work-  
 ing miracles at pleasure. Dr. Priestley makes the same observa-  
 tion; “otherwise (he remarks) Paul no doubt would not have  
 suffered this Epaphroditus, whom he esteemed so highly, and  
 others of his fellow Christians whose sickness he mentions,  
 and whose lives he imagined to be of value for the propagation  
 of the gospel, to continue in circumstances so painful to them-  
 selves, and so detrimental to the cause in which they were en-  
 gaged. Miraculous power does not appear to have been in any  
 case subject to the will of men, our Saviour and the apostles  
 always feeling a supernatural impulse upon their minds, when-  
 ever divine wisdom judged a miracle to be proper.”

I am fully ready to concede this point with respect to the

Ch. II.  
Ver. 27.

Though I cannot at present spare Timothy, yet I think it highly requisite to send Epaphroditus back to you immediately, both that he may carry this token of my affection, may inform you of the particulars of my situation, and that he may renew his ministerial labours among you. I should indeed have rejoiced to have kept him with me, both to have enjoyed his society as a Christian friend, and to have engaged him as an associate in the toils and dangers of my apostolic mission. But I consider you as possessing a prior claim to his eminently useful services. He came hither as the messenger of your liberality to me; it would therefore be inexcusable to detain him without your approbation. And indeed he is himself very anxious to return to you, being exceedingly desirous to see you again, especially since he has heard how much you were affected by the account you received of his late illness; and he cannot enjoy any peace till he has relieved your affectionate solicitude for him. And indeed he has been very dangerously ill; but God in great mercy, both to him and to me, has dis-

---

apostles; but he to *whom the spirit was communicated without measure*, appears to have possessed a power of performing at pleasure that class of miracles which were necessary for establishing his character and claims as the Son of God, the Messiah foretold by the prophets.

Dr. Priestley adds, "With respect to the miraculous healing of sickness, it is observed that it was seldom exerted in favour of preachers of the gospel, but generally of indifferent persons, though they might afterwards be won upon, by such marks of divine favour, to embrace the gospel. By this means the evidence of the miracles was less liable to suspicion."



Ch. II. pelled our fears and restored his health ; for truly,  
Ver. 27. if I had lost so dear a friend, I should have been overwhelmed with an accumulation of distress.

28. *I have sent him, therefore, the more speedily<sup>1</sup>, that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that*  
29. *I may be the less sorrowful<sup>2</sup>. Receive him, therefore, in the Lord<sup>3</sup>, with all joy, and hold such in*  
30. *high estimation. For because of the work of Christ he was near to death, having exposed his own life<sup>4</sup>, that he might supply the remainder of your kind offices towards me<sup>5</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> *Speedily.*] “σπεδαιστερως, *festinantiùs.*” Vulg. See Peirce. “à σπεδαιος, *festinans.*” Schleusner.

<sup>2</sup> *Less sorrowful.*] “Because my sympathy in your concern about Epaphroditus will be removed.” Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *In the Lord.*] “As a Christian minister.” Peirce. “as a fellow-disciple of the Lord.” Newcome.

<sup>4</sup> *Having exposed his own life*] παραβόλευσάμενος, according to the Alexandrine and other manuscripts of the best authority. “*parabolatus de animâ sud.*” Vulg. See Griesbach. “*Parabolani sunt qui se in periculum maximum projiciunt.*” Rob. Steph. *Thes. Linguae Latinae*. Epaphroditus, by the fatigue he had undergone in the execution of his commission, had probably brought on a fever, which had endangered his life. “Epaphroditus had exposed his own life to the utmost danger, as they did who took care of people infected with the pestilence, who were called *parabolani*; or as they did who fought with wild beasts. Vid. Socrat. *H. E.* lib. 7. c. 22.” Peirce; who conjectures that the danger was incurred by sickness brought on by fatigue, and that it must have happened some time before, “as the news had not only been carried to Philippi, but the knowledge of their being acquainted with it had been brought back to Rome.”

<sup>5</sup> *That he might supply, &c.*] “that he might supply your lack of service towards me :” το ὑμῶν ὑπερημα της προς με λειτουργίας. “Our translators, (whose version is here given,)” says Mr. Wakefield, “quite misunderstood the passage. The defect of the Philippians, or rather towards them, was the apostle’s inability to come himself, which he sent Epaphroditus to



For these reasons I was the more desirous to send him back to you without delay, both that you might have the satisfaction to see your friend in good health, and that I might share in your joy, and be under less apprehension on your account. Receive him then, my brethren, with a cheerful welcome, as your faithful minister in the gospel of our common Lord; and hold such able and zealous servants of Christ in the highest respect and affection. Epaphroditus eminently deserves it at your hands: his late dangerous sickness was brought on by his too ardent exertions to fulfill the generous commission with which you had entrusted him in my behalf. Benevolence so active and disinterested cannot be too highly prized.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 30.

---

supply." His own translation is, "making no account of his life, that he might fill up the deficiency of my service towards you." But without stopping to inquire whether the words will admit of this translation, the version of Peirce, Newcome, and others, seems more natural, and better suited to the connexion: "exposing his life to the most imminent danger, that he might fill up the remainder of your beneficence to me." "*Id mihi præstaret, quod præstare, vestri erat officii.*" Castalio.

The Public Version appears to express the true meaning of the passage. Epaphroditus fell sick through fatigue, occasioned by his zealous exertions to supply your place; by attempting to do what you would have done for me had you been at Rome: or, as Archbishop Newcome expresses it, "by conveying your supply to me, and giving me personal attendance." See 2 Cor. x. 8, 9.

## SECTION V.

Ch. III. *THE APOSTLE warns the Philippians against being misled by the artifices of judaizing zealots, and exhibits his own conduct as an example of an absolute renunciation of dependence upon any legal pretensions as the ground of acceptance with God. Ch. iii. 1.—iv. 1.*

1. The apostle apologizes to his friends for insisting upon the same topics which he had given in charge to Epaphroditus, ver. 1.

Ver. 1. *As to what remains, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord<sup>1</sup>. To write the same things<sup>2</sup> to you is not irksome to me, and to you it is safe.*

To proceed, my brethren and beloved friends, to the advice which I would now offer as peculiarly suitable to your present circumstances: my first exhortation is, Rejoice in, and be thankful for, that liberal dispensation of which you partake, and which imposes upon you no harsh and insupportable yoke. I have desired Epaphroditus to warn you against a

---

<sup>1</sup> *Rejoice in the Lord.*] “as Christians: in your Christian privileges and hopes.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *The same things.*] i. e. “which I have delivered in charge to Epaphroditus.” Peirce.—“which I have inculcated when present with you; or, which I have written to other churches.” Newcome. I prefer Peirce’s interpretation. Two manuscripts read ταῦτα, *these things*.

delusion of which you are in some danger. I shall now address the same warning to you; and shall think it no trouble to repeat to you what I have said to him, and the advice will probably come to you with greater effect when you observe the perfect coincidence in the doctrine of those whom you have been used to regard as your instructors in Christian truth.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 1.

2. He briefly warns them against those evil-minded teachers who would seduce them into a needless subjection to the ceremonial law, ver. 2, 3.

*Beware of the dogs<sup>3</sup>, beware of the evil labourers<sup>4</sup>, beware of the concision<sup>5</sup>. For we are the*

2.  
3.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Beware of the dogs.*] “The apostle seems to retort upon the wicked and persecuting Jews the name given by them to the Gentiles.” Newcome. See Isa. lvi. 10—12, Rev. xxii. 15, Matt. vii. 6. “cruel, fierce, and mischievous.” Peirce. “It was customary with the Jews,” says Dr. Priestley, “as well as with other Oriental nations, to denote particular characters by the names of those animals in which they predominate. Thus our Saviour, ‘Cast not your pearls before swine,’ ‘Go and tell that fox.’ Here the name *dog* probably means persons of a quarrelsome disposition, always ready to promote contention and division: which was the character of the judaizing teachers.”

<sup>4</sup> *The evil labourers:*] not merely evil-doers. *εργατης*, *operarius*, a labourer in any business: here the apostle means labourers who set up to be teachers. *κακας εργατας*, *evil labourers*, similar to *κακουργες*, persons who act fraudulently and deceitfully. See Peirce. In 2 Cor. xi. 13 the apostle calls the same persons *deceitful labourers*.

<sup>5</sup> *The concision.*] An expression of contempt, denying them a right to the title of *περιτομη*, the circumcision, in which they gloried. “those who rend and divide the church.” Peirce.—Mr. Wakefield translates the passage, “Beware of those dogs, beware of their wicked practices, beware of their biting you.”

Ch. III. *circumcision who worship God by the spirit*<sup>1</sup>, and  
Ver. 3. *who glory in Christ Jesus, and place no confidence in the flesh.*

When I consider what they are who attempt to rob you of your liberty and your peace, when I call to mind their restless malice and their hypocritical professions, I cannot restrain my indignation. Be, therefore, much upon your guard against those fierce and hungry dogs who wish to break in upon and to devour the flock. I mean those false teachers who are exerting their utmost endeavours to pervert your faith, to alienate your affections from your faithful instructors, and to make a prey of you. Beware of those men who, preaching up the necessity of Jewish rites, are in fact dividing and rending asunder the church of Christ by their schismatical and sectarian spirit. They call themselves, indeed,

---

In this last clause he professes to follow an interpretation in Gataker's *Advers. Miscell.* p. 826. *κατατομή, concisio, mutilatio: q. d.* The rite being now abolished, is no longer entitled to its former honourable name. Theophylact *apud* Schleusner. "We are not to infer from this," says Dr. Priestley, "that the apostle undervalued circumcision, or any other part of the Jewish ritual. Had he thought the law of Moses to be abolished by the gospel with respect to the Jews, he certainly would never have circumcised Timothy; especially as his mother only, and not his father, was of Jewish extraction. All that he says in contempt of Jewish observances, is only 'to be understood of them in comparison of moral virtues, on which alone any stress is laid in the gospel, and which the superstitious attachment of the Jews to their ceremonies led them to neglect.'"

<sup>1</sup> *Who worship God, &c.*] the spirit; i. e. the gospel, as opposed to the law of rites. See Gal. iii. 3, 5, iv. 29, v. 5; Rom. ii. 29. *we glory in Christ Jesus:* i. e. in our faith in and relation to Jesus as the Messiah. *and have no confidence in the flesh:* i. e. in subjection to the law.

the chosen and the holy people of God; they glory in their conformity to the ceremonial law, and they place their confidence in the seals and symbols of the Mosaic institute. But in this, if they are sincere, they are most egregiously mistaken: for we, my friends, are the true and accepted people of God who worship the Father of our spirits agreeably to the terms of the new dispensation; who glory, not in being the adherents of Moses, but the disciples of Jesus the true Messiah; and who place our confidence, not in the symbols of the old and superseded covenant, but in our conformity to the terms of the new and better dispensation.

CH. III.  
Ver. 3.

3. The apostle shows that no one ever had greater cause than himself to boast in Jewish privileges, and ritual conformity, ver. 4—6.

*Although I might have confidence, even in the flesh. If any other may presume to have confidence in the flesh<sup>2</sup>, I still more. Circumcised on the eighth day<sup>3</sup>, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of*

4.

5.

<sup>2</sup> *Presume, &c.*] See Mr. Wakefield. *in the flesh*. The context plainly shows, that by *the flesh*, the apostle means the rites, privileges, and profession of a Jew educated under the law.

<sup>3</sup> *Circumcised the eighth day.*] See Bowyer, Newcome, and Griesbach, for the construction of the original. Dr. Doddridge observes, that “the Jews did not only lay a great deal of stress on the rite of circumcision, but on the time of performing it, *i. e.* exactly the eighth day; and that the LXX. have an addition to Gen. xvii. 14, which is also in the Samaritan Pentateuch, ‘the male-child which is not circumcised the eighth day shall be cut off from among his people.’” It is generally supposed that the apostle in these observations refers to some particular person who was the leader of the judaizing party in the

Ch. III. *Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews*<sup>1</sup>; concerning  
 Ver. 6. *the law, a pharisee; concerning zeal, a persecutor  
 of the church*<sup>2</sup>; *concerning justification by the law*<sup>3</sup>,  
*blameless.*

Your false teachers boast of their Jewish extraction, and of their strict adherence to Jewish rites, which they represent as essential to acceptance with God. But be assured, that under the gospel dispensation all this is of no value. Impute not this disavowal to envy, or to any consciousness of defect on my part: I am equal, yea superior, to every one of them in those claims to merit which Judaism can give. So that if any confidence could be placed in such kind of privileges or of works, as entitling men to the divine favour, I, above the proudest of

---

church at Philippi, and who made great boasts of his Jewish privileges.

<sup>1</sup> *Hebrew of Hebrews:*] *i. e.* a Hebrew of the purest pedigree: or, as some think, a Hebrew in language, in opposition to the Hellenistic Jews, who used the LXX. See Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *A persecutor of the church.*] “St. Paul was far from accounting this a virtue: he freely condemns it elsewhere as a grievous sin. 1 Cor. xv. 9, 1 Tim. i. 13. All, therefore, he can mean by what he says is, that if a zeal for the law were, as the Jews thought, a ground of confidence, he could with a witness pretend to it, since his zeal had been so great for it as to lead him to persecute the Christians, because he thought they dishonoured it.” Peirce.

<sup>3</sup> *Justification by the law.*] This is opposed, ver. 9, to justification by faith in Christ. The former is that state of privilege which a Jew obtained by an exact conformity to the Mosaic ritual. In this respect the apostle was comparatively blameless: no person had a better claim than he to the reward which was due to ceremonial obedience. See Peirce and Macknight.—“the imperfect justification which can only make me appear blameless as to legal transgression in the sight of men.” Newcome.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 6.

them all, have a right to boast this confidence. I was circumcised, as the law prescribes, precisely on the eighth day after my birth. I am a genuine descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made; I am of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the two which returned from the captivity. I am a Hebrew of the purest pedigree: both my parents were of the Hebrew nation, and descendants of Hebrew ancestors. I was educated at Jerusalem in a strict observance of the law; I was admitted a member of the rigid sect of the pharisees, and was as rigorous in my external conduct as any of that fraternity. I was beyond measure zealous for judaical rites, and for that reason a vehement persecutor of those who professed to hold the doctrine of Jesus in higher estimation than the law of Moses. So that, if lineal descent from the Abrahamic family, if early initiation, if intemperate zeal, if rigid profession, could entitle any one to justification in the sight of God, I may challenge the whole Jewish nation to produce one who possesses a claim superior to my own.

4. The apostle explicitly disclaims all merit of this kind, and rests his hope of acceptance with God upon his faith in Jesus Christ, ver. 7—9.

*But these things, which were once gain to me, I accounted loss for Christ<sup>4</sup>. Yea doubtless, and*

7.

8.

---

<sup>4</sup> Gain—loss.] κερδη—ζημιαν, profit and loss in commercial speculation. The apostle represents this ceremonial righteousness, which he once valued as his choicest treasure, as being



Ch. III.  
Ver. 8.

- I account all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ<sup>1</sup> Jesus my Lord; for whose sake I have cast away<sup>2</sup> all these things, and do account*  
9. *them but refuse<sup>3</sup>, that I might gain Christ<sup>4</sup> and be found in him<sup>5</sup>, not having my own justification,*

now in his estimation nothing but refuse and lumber, which he had thrown overboard to make room for that justification by faith which was a prize of the highest value. See Peirce.

<sup>1</sup> *Knowledge of Christ.*] “By the knowledge of Christ Jesus we are to understand the knowledge of Christianity; so also by *winning Christ* is to be understood gaining the rewards of Christianity. With Christ himself, personally considered, we can have nothing to do; and the manner in which many enthusiastic persons have expressed themselves on this subject is highly reprehensible.” Dr. Priestley.

<sup>2</sup> *Cast away all these things.*] “*ῥημιον* has two senses; one to suffer loss or damage, the other to part with or throw away, in order to prevent a greater detriment, as when goods are thrown overboard to save the ship.” Peirce. See Grotius on Matt. xvi. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Refuse.*] *σκυζαλα*. “*Latissime patet hoc vocabulum, et quodvis vile rejectamentum notat.*” Schleusner.

<sup>4</sup> *That I might gain Christ:*] that is, the blessings of his gospel. This is the treasure which I now seek after, and for which I have cast away what I formerly most highly prized. “He seems here to consider Christ as the most important and valuable thing, which he was therefore solicitous to secure to himself above every thing; and his meaning is, That I may attain the knowledge of Christ and faith in him, so as to have him for my Saviour, and be entitled to all the advantages which belong to those who are found in him.” Peirce.

<sup>5</sup> *Be found in him.*] See chap. ii. 7. *To be found in Christ* is the same as to be in him; and to be in Christ, is to believe in him and to profess his doctrine. See Rom. xvi. 7, 11. Mr. Peirce considers the text as parallel to Gal. iii. 27, according to Mr. Locke’s interpretation: Believers having put on Christ are clothed with him, so that God, looking on, sees nothing but Christ. “This expression, being *found in Christ*,” says Dr. Priestley, “which has been so much abused by ignorant and enthusiastic persons, means nothing more than continuing in the profession of Christianity. Also by his *own righteousness which was of the law*, the apostle means, not moral virtue,

*which is by the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ*<sup>6</sup>: *even the justification which is from God by faith.*

Ch. III.  
Ver. 9.

Upon these external distinctions I once laid a most unreasonable stress, and thought highly of my character and state on account of them. But I now view them in a very different light; and what I then valued most I now regard as of no real worth: and indeed as worse than nothing, if they are placed in competition with the blessings of the gospel. Yes indeed, my dear brethren, I solemnly assure you that I reckon, not only these proud distinctions, but all the most valued blessings of life, as nothing, as a price infinitely below the value of that saving doctrine of my master Jesus Christ; which in its sublimity, in its evidence, and in its glorious effects, far surpasses every thing which bears the name of learning or science.

For the acquisition of this most excellent knowledge I have in fact sacrificed all that was most dear and valuable in life; my most endearing and useful

---

which he was very far from undervaluing, but the mere observance of the Mosaic ritual. And that *righteousness which is by faith in Christ*, means that virtue or ground of justification in the sight of God which is taught in the gospel, independently of the law."

<sup>6</sup> *That which is through the faith of Christ.*] That state of privilege and acceptance with God, which was to be attained by faith in Christ without submitting to the rites of the law; of which justification the apostle treats at large in his epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. It was a state in which they were admitted to all the outward privileges of the gospel; and which, if practically improved, would entitle them to an interest in its spiritual and everlasting blessings.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 9.

connexions, my temporal interest, my flattering prospects, and even my fondest prejudices ; and have exposed myself to poverty, to contempt, to persecution, and to death in its most terrifying forms. I have, as it were, cast overboard all that I once thought precious. But I am far from repenting of the sacrifices I have made ; for though I would not undervalue the blessings of life, when they are to be obtained in consistence with duty, I would nevertheless cheerfully discard them all, as I would cast away the vilest refuse, if this self-denial should be necessary to securing the prize at which I aim, a true knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, and an interest in the blessings of the gospel ; that I may be justified in the sight of God, not by ritual merits, which is all that I could ever pretend to, but by faith in Jesus as the Christ, which is the reasonable and sole condition of the gospel covenant. This justification, this happy state of acceptance and of privilege, is the free gift of God to all who, convinced by the evidence proposed, receive and acknowledge Jesus as the Christ.

5. The apostle pants after this practical knowledge of Christ, to whatever dangers or sufferings it may lead, being confident that it must terminate in a resurrection to immortal happiness, ver. 10, 11.

10. *That I may know Christ<sup>1</sup>, and the efficacy of*

---

<sup>1</sup> *That I may know Christ.*] *τε γινωσκει*. The English version supposes the infinitive to be put for the subjunctive, and that *τε γινωσκει* answers to *εὐρεθω*, ver. 9. Bengelius supposes the

*his resurrection*<sup>2</sup>, *and the participation of his sufferings*<sup>3</sup>; *being made conformable to his death*<sup>4</sup>, *so that, in any way, I may arrive at the resurrection of the dead*<sup>5</sup>.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 11.

infinitive to be taken as a gerund, and to be governed by *πιστει*, 'the faith of knowing him.' Peirce supposes it governed by *δικαιοσύνην* (see ver. 21,) the righteousness of knowing, or which consists in knowing, Christ. This interpretation would be more probable if the intervening words *ἐπὶ τῇ πιστει*, should be dropped, as they are in the Ethiopic and Syriac; and by Mr. Wakefield, whose translation is, "so as to know Christ."

\* *Efficacy of his resurrection.*] "its power of confirming my faith in him, and my hope of salvation through him." Mac-knight. See 1 Pet. i. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Participation of his sufferings.*] "either those which he himself endured, or which are allotted to his disciples, for his sake and in his cause. The latter the more probable." Peirce.

<sup>4</sup> *Conformable to his death.*] *ἐν ᾧ ζωὴν συμμορφωμένος* see ver. 9. Grotius. *may be found conformable to his death.* The Alexandrine and Clermont copies read *συμμορφιζόμενος*, *made conformable*; which Griesbach marks as the preferable reading. Peirce justly observes, that "though *dying to sin* is several times spoken of as a conformity to Christ in his death, Rom. vi. 3, &c., yet conformity to his death by dying for his sake seems to be more agreeable to the scope of this place. Rom. viii. 17, 2 Cor. iv. 10—14."—Dr. Priestley observes, that "the apostle alludes to his sufferings in the same cause with Christ, and his expectation of the same reward after death. From many other expressions it appears that the apostle did not consider the sufferings of Christ as of a peculiar nature, having any other cause or effect than the sufferings of other good men in a good cause. The public death of Christ was absolutely necessary, as a preparation to the proper evidence of his resurrection. Had he died a natural death and then appeared again, it might have been said that he had never died at all: it was therefore wisely ordered in the course of divine providence, that his death should be as public as possible. His resurrection was so circumstanced as to have the highest degree of credibility at this distance of time."

<sup>5</sup> *Resurrection of the dead.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that the expression "*εἰ* has not always a dubitative signification, 1 Tim. v. 10, Acts xxvi. 23; nor necessarily so when followed by *πῶς*,

Ch. III.  
Ver. 11.

The great prize of which I am ambitious, and the possession of which will amply compensate for every loss, is that state of privilege, and hope, and peace, which is the result, not of the knowledge and profession merely, but of a practical conviction of the truth of the Christian doctrine, a conviction founded upon that amazing display of divine power by which Jesus was raised from the dead, and was made the pledge and pattern of the final resurrection of all his faithful disciples to immortal life and happiness. Nay, I am not unwilling to be a fellow-sufferer with him, to endure the ignominy and torture to which he was exposed, and to resign even life itself, if this sacrifice should be necessary to my safe arrival at the desired haven : to the attainment of that which is the great object of my triumphant expectation, and the glorious reward of all my toils and dangers and sufferings, a resurrection to life and happiness uninterrupted and everlasting. And I am persuaded that you, my brethren, among whom I laboured so long, who were also witnesses to my sufferings for the gospel, will give credit to my assertion, and will not regard it as a vainglorious boast : but will your-

---

nor is it to be so understood here." *κατανταω* signifies, to arrive at a harbour ; so that the apostle still keeps up his beautiful metaphor. Acts xviii. 19, 24, xxvi. 7. The apostle is here speaking of the resurrection of the just. And as the Philip-pians were personally acquainted with him, there was a propriety in appealing to what they had observed in his conduct which there would not have been in writing to the Colossians, who had never seen him. See Peirce's excellent note upon this text. " arrive at a complete resurrection from dead *works*." Wakefield.

selves be disposed to follow my example and to act the same wise and honourable part. Ch. III.  
Ver. 11.

6. He does not pretend that he has as yet obtained the object to which he aspires, but he professes to be incessantly reaching forwards towards it, ver. 12—14.

I say *not*<sup>1</sup> that I have already received the prize, or already finished my race<sup>2</sup>; but I press forward, that I may lay hold on that<sup>3</sup> for which I also have 12.

---

<sup>1</sup> I say *not*.] The expression in the original is elliptical: *I say* is supplied by Peirce and Newcome. The apostle here changes his metaphor, and represents himself as in the situation of a man who is candidate for a prize in the races at the Grecian games, who is continually pressing forward till he reaches the goal. Mr. Peirce thinks that the apostle intends a secret comparison between his own character and that of the false teachers, who regarded and represented themselves as having attained perfection by their zealous conformity to the ceremonial law. But the apostle, though he had as good reason for boasting in this respect as they, was so far from regarding himself as complete in every particular and fully entitled to the prize, that he thought it necessary to stretch every nerve in order to maintain his ground and to secure final success.

<sup>2</sup> *Finished my race*.] So Mr. Wakefield. The false teachers fancied that their labours were finished, they had only to receive the prize; but the apostle had no such vain thought of himself. "am already perfected in evangelical excellence." Newcome. Comp. ver. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *That I may lay hold*, &c.] *εἰ καὶ καταλαβῶ*. So Peirce; who considers *εἰ καὶ* as similar to *εἰ πως*, ver. 11, not expressing any doubt in the apostle's mind. Castellio renders the phrase *ut comprehendam*. Yet still it may be doubted whether the apostle, in opposition to the bold confidence of the false teachers, did not mean to represent himself as under some degree of anxiety with regard to the issue of his exertions. Mr. Wakefield renders the words, "I am still pursuing if I may after all lay hold," &c.



Ch. III.  
Ver. 13.

- been laid hold on*<sup>1</sup> *by Christ*<sup>2</sup>. *Brethren, I do not reckon*<sup>3</sup> *myself to have laid hold on it : but neglecting those that are behind, and stretching forward*  
14. *to those before, I pursue one thing, according to my design*<sup>4</sup>, *for the prize of that invitation of God from above*<sup>5</sup> *by Christ Jesus.*

Others, if they please, may boast the perfection of their character and the happiness of their state, in uniting the privileges of the disciples of Moses with the hopes of believers in Christ. I am not their inferior in either of these respects, and yet I am far from pretending, either that I have attained the prize of my ambition, or the perfection of those qualifications which are requisite for this purpose. Nevertheless, as Jesus mercifully arrested me in the

<sup>1</sup> *Laid hold on.*] “The apostle, playing upon a word, represents himself as made a prize of by Christ, while he himself is desirous of obtaining that for which Christ made a prize of him.” Dr. Priestley.

<sup>2</sup> *Christ.*] This is the reading of the best copies : the received text reads *Christ Jesus*. See Griesbach.

<sup>3</sup> *I do not reckon.*] “This will ever be the disposition of a mind truly virtuous. Every man who knows himself will be sensible of his imperfections, and if he be a good man he will be continually striving to remove them, and make nearer approaches to perfection.” Dr. Priestley.

<sup>4</sup> *I pursue one thing, &c.*] “Join *εν δε* with *κατα σκοπον διωκω*, including the intermediate words in a parenthesis.” Peirce and Bowyer. Peirce says he has no where met with good authorities to prove that *σκοπος* signifies the same as *τεμα*, the goal. He translates the words, therefore, “according to my aim or design.” He admits that *εν διωκω, επι το βραχειν* is unusual, but he refers to Prov. xx. 6, LXX. as perfectly parallel.

<sup>5</sup> *Invitation of God from above.*] See Wakefield. The judges, seated on an eminence, summon the competitors to enter the lists. See Macknight.



Ch. III.  
Ver. 14.

midst of a course of hardened unbelief and fiery persecuting zeal, and has graciously enlisted me in his service, I now steadily pursue the great object for the sake of which I became a believer and was constituted an apostle. Indeed, my brethren, I pretend not to perfection, either in character or in state. But I have entered the lists, and I am resolved to press forward till I have reached the goal and won the prize. Not trusting to past merits and services, nor comparing myself with those whom I have left behind, I will still exert myself to the utmost in my Master's work, making it my sole aim to obtain that glorious reward which God has promised in the gospel of his Son to those who obey the heavenly call, and who persevere to the end of their course.

7. The apostle urges the Philippians to follow his example, and expresses his hope that God will communicate to them all necessary truth, ver. 15, 16.

*Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect men<sup>6</sup>, be of this mind; and if ye differ in any thing<sup>7</sup>, God*

15.

---

<sup>6</sup> Perfect men.] τελειοι, perfect, q. d. persons thoroughly instructed in the Christian doctrine. See 1 Cor. ii. 6, we speak wisdom among those that are perfect. It is opposed to νηπιος, a child. 1 Cor. xiv. 20, Heb. v. 13, 14. "Let us, as many as are perfect men, think thus as to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." Newcome. In opposition to Judaizers. "grown up men not babes in Christ." Wakefield; who "suspect the purity of the latter part of the verse."

<sup>7</sup> If ye differ, &c.] ει τι ετερως φρονειτε. Mr. Peirce understands ετερως here, of differing with one another. They were all sufficiently instructed in the Christian doctrine not to be imposed upon by judaizing teachers; if there were any other points concerning which they were in doubt, God would, in one

Ch. III.  
Ver. 16.

*will reveal this likewise to you. Nevertheless, as to what we have attained, let us walk therein*<sup>1</sup>.

Upon the whole, then, let all of us who profess the faith of Christ, who are no longer babes but grown up men, and who have been well instructed in the doctrine and in the liberty of the gospel, be unanimous in our resolution that we will not be enslaved to the yoke of the ceremonial law, but that we will make it our chief study and our constant aim to obey the laws of Christ. And if there be any other points concerning which you differ in opinion, and in which you are not fully informed, if you are sincere lovers of truth, and open to conviction, using at the same time the proper means of inquiry, there is great reason to believe that God will, in one way or other, correct your errors, and lead you into all important truth. To this end let your practice keep pace with your knowledge. Let us all act up to the principles and to the spirit of the gospel. If we improve the light we have, we may reasonably hope that more will be communicated.

8. The apostle still more explicitly presses upon the Philippians to follow his example, and cautions

---

way or other, communicate instruction. Revelation does not always express new inspiration. See Locke on Eph. i. 17.

<sup>1</sup> *Let us walk therein.*] The received text reads, *let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* But the Alexandrine manuscript and some ancient versions leave out the words *κατα το αυτο φρονειν*, and these words are omitted in the editions of Griesbach and Newcome.

them against the practices of selfish and seducing teachers, ver. 17—21. Ch. III.

*Brethren, be ye together imitators of me, and observe those who walk after the pattern which ye have in us* <sup>2</sup>. Ver. 17.

My christian brethren, I have plainly stated to you my principles, views, and conduct; that I am by birth a Jew, and entitled to claim all the privileges of the disciples of Moses to a degree beyond what any one else can pretend to; that nevertheless I have renounced all for the sake of Christ; and that my sole object now is to comply with the requisitions and to secure the rewards of the gospel. You well know that I have not misrepresented my character and aims. Be, then, all of you without exception, imitators of me in these respects; and observe the conduct of those who habitually follow my example, the wise and faithful teachers who are settled among you, or the excellent person who bears this epistle to you; and mark how far superior their character shines above that of their opponents who disclaim my authority, and would subvert our faith.

*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ* <sup>3</sup>; whose end is destruc- 18. 19.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Observe those, &c.*] See Wakefield. The apostle here contrasts his own character and that of his colleagues with those of the judaizing zealots. “Here,” says Peirce, “the reason very plainly appears why he said so much of himself in the foregoing verses.”

<sup>3</sup> *They are enemies, &c.*] The apostle is here speaking of the judaizing teachers who were ashamed of the cross, who taught

Ch. III. *tion*<sup>1</sup>, whose God is their belly<sup>2</sup>, and whose glory  
Ver. 19. is in their shame<sup>3</sup>, who affect earthly things<sup>4</sup>.

There are many in the Christian church, and it is well if there are not some even among you, who are of a character the reverse of that which I have described. I often mentioned them to you when I was present with you, and cautioned you against their seducing and mischievous arts. I now renew my caution to you again; and, anxious for your welfare, I with tears warn you against those artful and wicked teachers, who conceal their enmity to the doctrine of Christ and their shame of the cross, by an affectation of zeal for the Mosaic ritual; the tendency of whose doctrine, whatever they may think or profess, is to the ruin of themselves and of their hearers; who, whatever pretences they make

---

the obligation of the ceremonial law, which had been abolished by the death of Christ; who preached the gospel with mercenary views, and who were men of immoral characters, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 15, 20, 1 Tim. vi. 5.

<sup>1</sup> *Destruction.*] ἀπωλεία “the ruin of others.” Mr. Wakefield, *Comp. c.* 1. 28. “These men reckon upon your destruction, but they will certainly meet with their own.” Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> *Whose God is their belly.*] who aim at nothing but their own gratification. See Rom. xvi. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 5; Tit. i. 11.

“Whatever any person may profess,” says Dr. Priestley, “of friendship for Christ and respect for the gospel, if their lives be not governed by the moral precepts of it, they are to be ranked with its enemies, their conduct tending to bring it into disgrace.”

<sup>3</sup> *Glory is in their shame.*] “That is, who triumph in that which is really a disgrace; viz. in their circumcision, in their zeal for the law, in the number of their proselytes, in the advantage they derived from them.” Peirce.

<sup>4</sup> *Who affect earthly things.*] that is, the ordinances and ceremonies of the law which were of an earthly nature. That this sense is included is evident from Col. iii. 1—3. See Peirce.

to peculiar sanctity, are in fact the slaves of luxury and intemperance, and seek only for the means of gratifying their appetite; who glory in their blind subjection to a ritual, to which, as professors of Christianity, it is a disgrace to them to be in bondage; and who are enthralled by that low and degrading spirit which is generated by an attachment to the law of Moses and the traditions of the pharisees.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 19.

*For we are citizens of heaven<sup>5</sup>, whence indeed<sup>6</sup> we are expecting a deliverer<sup>7</sup>, our Lord Jesus*

20.

<sup>5</sup> *For we are, &c.*] Include the 18th and 19th verses in a parenthesis, *q. d.* Mark those that walk, &c. *for* we are citizens of heaven. See Newcome and Wakefield. Formerly the Jews were in heaven and the Gentiles were on earth, *i. e.* the former were in a covenant, and the latter in an uncovenanted state. Now *they*, the judaizers, are earthly, but we Christians are citizens of heaven. Eph. ii. 6. This interpretation is the more probable if, as Peirce allows, 'earthly things' in the preceding verse express Jewish rites and ceremonies.

<sup>6</sup> *Whence indeed.*] εἴ ὅθεν. Peirce, and Dr. Owen in Bowyer (see Newcome), with the generality of interpreters, supply τοῦτο, *q. d.* from which place. Two copies, of no great account, read εἴ ὧν. "This is the most important of all considerations," says Dr. Priestley in his note upon this verse, "Christians should ever consider themselves as citizens of heaven. Our king or sovereign, who was not of this world, and whose kingdom was not of it, is now in heaven; and if we here below behave as the proper subjects of his spiritual kingdom, he will in due time come again, and take us to himself, to our proper country. I would observe, however, that according to this representation, we have nothing to expect from our King and Saviour before his coming to raise the dead, and judge the world."

<sup>7</sup> *We are expecting a deliverer.*] So Wakefield. The apostle always expresses himself as if the second coming of Christ was very near at hand, so that some then living would be eye-witnesses to it, 1 Thess. iv. 15. The times and seasons were not revealed to him, nor even to Christ himself, Acts i. 7.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 21.

*Christ; who will transform this our lowly body into the similitude of his glorious body<sup>1</sup>, according to the energy by which he is able even to subject all things to himself<sup>2</sup>.*

Follow, then, as I have just observed, the example of me and of your other faithful and approved teachers; for we are members of a celestial community, and are entitled to the blessings and privileges of the new and heavenly dispensation, the laws of which it is our duty to obey. And, as the immediate consequence of this happy change of state, we are now taught to look with joyful expectation for the glorious appearance of our triumphant deliverer Jesus Christ from heaven, who is speedily coming, perhaps much sooner than many apprehend, to raise those who have fallen asleep in him, and to renovate those who shall be living when that awful consummation arrives. Then shall

---

<sup>1</sup> *Will transform, &c.*] μεταχηματισει properly expresses a change of the outward appearance, not the substance of the thing spoken of. In the present state we bear the image of the earthly Adam, in the future we are to bear the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 45—49. This mortal frame, which we inherit from a mortal ancestor, must be transformed into the similitude of the glorious person of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 50—54, 1 Thess. iv. 15—17. What the full import of these expressions is, the event only can fully show. See Peirce. “who will change this lowly body of ours into the form, &c.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *According to the energy, &c.*] See 1 Cor. xv. 24—26, 54—57. Mr. Peirce remarks, that this energy and power which is here attributed to Christ, is elsewhere ascribed to God, 1 Cor. vi. 14, for the power which Christ has, he received from the Father; Christ will subdue all things; his dominion will be universal. All the race of mankind will ultimately become subject to his authority; and his enemies, sin and death, all evil natural and moral, shall be destroyed.

this mortal put on immortality, and these frail and perishable frames shall, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, be transformed into the similitude of his own glorious person, qualified for immortal life, improvement and felicity. And this great and unknown change shall be produced in us by the energy of that stupendous power which is communicated to him by the Father, by which all his enemies shall be subjected to his authority; and sin and pain and death shall exist no more.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 21.

9. The apostle concludes this division of his subject by an affectionate exhortation to steadfastness in their Christian profession, ch. iv. 1.

*Wherefore<sup>3</sup>, my brethren, beloved and greatly desired, my joy and crown, thus stand firmly<sup>4</sup> in the Lord, my beloved<sup>5</sup>.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 1.

To conclude: My dear brethren in the faith, children of the same father, heirs of the same immortal hopes, the worthy objects of my complacency and benevolence; whose company and conversation I earnestly desire; but for whose moral and Chris-

---

<sup>3</sup> *Wherefore*, &c.] This verse should not have been separated from the preceding chapter, from which it is the proper inference. See 1 Cor xv. 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Thus stand firmly*, &c.] implying a commendation of their steadfastness hitherto, as well as an exhortation to perseverance. Stand fast in the Lord, *i. e.* be steadfast Christians. See ch. i. 5, 6, 28, 29, ii. 11—16, iii. 17. “*thus, q. d.* as I have exhorted you, follow this my example.” Peirce.

<sup>5</sup> *My beloved*.] “Remarkable (says Peirce) is the number of words he here uses, as though he thought he never could apply words enough to express the greatness of his love and tenderness for them.”



Ch. IV.  
Ver. 1.

tian improvement I am still more anxiously solicitous; whose conversion, whose practical and persevering faith, and whose kind remembrance of their persecuted instructor, have been, and continue to be, a source of the purest satisfaction and delight; and to whose joyful appearance with me at the tribunal of our glorious chief, I look forward with transport as to a prize more to be coveted than an imperial diadem; attend, my beloved brethren, to this my last, my earnest and most affectionate advice: Continue inflexible in your adherence to the purity of the Christian faith, and let no artifices of your seducing teachers, nor any consideration whatever, alienate your minds from the doctrine, the spirit, the practice, and the hope of the gospel.

## SECTION VI.

*THE APOSTLE offers seasonable advices and exhortations to some distinguished individuals; he repeats his thanks to the Philippians for their liberality, and particularly for their last present, and concludes the epistle with a suitable doxology, a general salutation, and the usual benediction. Ch. iv. 2—23.*

1. The apostle gently hints some seasonable advice to some respectable members of the church at Philippi, ver. 2, 3.

*I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche<sup>1</sup>, that they be of one mind in the Lord. Yea, I intreat thee also, true companion<sup>2</sup>, assist these women, for*

Ch. IV.

Ver. 2.

3.

<sup>1</sup> *Euodia and Syntyche.*] These were, no doubt, two women of respectable character in the church at Philippi. The apostle's exhortation supposes the existence of some difference, but whether with each other, or with the church in general, does not appear from the epistle. As the exhortation immediately succeeds the warning against false teachers, and these pious women appear, ver. 3, to have been very active in assisting the teachers of Christianity, it seems not improbable that they had been misled by the affected zeal of the judaizing teachers, and that the apostle's design was to recover them to the purity of the faith. This thought is hinted at in Mr. Peirce's note. Dr. Whitby thinks, that as persons cannot change their minds by intreaty or exhortation, the apostle exhorts them to promote the gospel with one soul.

<sup>2</sup> *True companion.*] So Newcome. γνησιε συζυγε, *true yoke-fellow*; metaphorically, *every one who is in any way united to, or associated with another*. See Schleusner. Some of the ancients imagined that the apostle is here addressing his own wife, whom he is supposed to have left at Philippi. Clemens Alex. Strom. ii. p. 448. Euseb. E. H. iii. 30. It is objected that γνησιε is in the masculine gender. But this, Erasmus observes, is not an unusual Atticism, and if it was a real objection, it must have occurred as such to the ancient Greek ecclesiastical writers. It is, however, generally understood from 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8, that the apostle was either unmarried or a widower; and most modern interpreters suppose that the apostle here addresses some eminent fellow-labourer in the gospel. Grotius and others think that he apostrophizes Epaphroditus; but this distinguished teacher was not then at Philippi; and the apostle never uses the expression συζυγος in this sense, but συνεργος. "It is uncertain what eminent person in the church of Philippi is here meant." Newcome. Perhaps the most probable supposition may be that of Chrysostom, and some ancient Greek commentators, (see Clarius's note, and Peirce in loc.,) that the person here addressed was the husband or brother of one of these women. It may be observed, that a difficulty of this kind, which is inexplicable to a commentator, could not occur to those to whom the letter was written, who would at once know the persons and circumstances to which the apostle al-

Ch. IV. *they have earnestly laboured in the gospel with me,*  
 Ver. 3. *and with Clement*<sup>1</sup>, *and with my other fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life*<sup>2</sup>.

Having thus warned you of the danger you are in of being misled by false and interested teachers, I must now take leave to suggest a hint of friendly and Christian advice to two eminently pious women, who are, I fear, in some hazard of being warped from the simplicity of the faith. I earnestly beseech, therefore, and I seriously exhort those venerable matrons, Euodia and Syntyche, that they continue in unison with the church of Christ, and that they do not suffer themselves to be seduced from the pure doctrine of the gospel. And you, my dear brother, the faithful partner of one of these excellent women, assist their weakness, and teach them how to repel the artful attacks of the enemies of Christian faith and liberty. I am anxious on their account, because they were once zealous advocates

---

luded. This is an inconvenience unavoidably attached to epistolary writing; and the occurrence of such obscure allusions is a presumption in favour of the genuineness of the epistle, which a forger would hardly give himself the trouble to invent.

<sup>1</sup> *Clement*] is supposed to be the person who was afterwards Bishop of Rome, who wrote an epistle to the Corinthians which is still extant.

<sup>2</sup> *Whose names, &c.*] This is an allusion to a public register of the names of persons who are entitled to the privileges and immunities of a corporation or society. It occurs repeatedly both in the Old Testament and the New. See Exod. xxxii. 32; Isa. iv. 3; Luke x. 20; Heb. xii. 33; Rev. xiii. 8, xxi. 27, xxii. 19; Mal. iii. 16. The apostle does not pretend to any revelation upon this subject; but, knowing the character and zeal of his fellow-labourers, he expresses his firm expectation of their future reward.

for truth, and in their proper province they afforded great assistance to myself, and to Clement, and to other teachers of the gospel who have laboured among them at different times, who are not only professing but practical believers, and useful ministers: and whose names are entered in the registers of that holy community the members of which are entitled by the promise of God to immortal life and happiness.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 3.

2. The apostle recommends cheerfulness, meekness, prayer, and thankfulness, ver. 4—7.

*Rejoice in the Lord. Again I say, always rejoice*<sup>3</sup>.

4.

My friends, in the midst of your difficulties and trials I call upon you to rejoice. Rejoice in your Christian profession, your Christian privileges, and your Christian hopes; I have given you this advice before; I now repeat it again. Rejoice continually. None have so much reason to rejoice as the sincere and enlightened believer in Christ. Let not any sophistry of error, nor any outward afflictions or persecutions, rob you of your invaluable treasure, or interrupt your sacred delight.

*Let your mildness*<sup>4</sup> *be known to all men. The Lord is near*<sup>5</sup>.

5.

<sup>3</sup> *Again I say, always rejoice.*] This punctuation is recommended by Bengelius, "that the sentence may rise stronger after the word *again*, agreeably to the apostle's usual manner Gal. i. 8, v. 2, 3." Bowyer. See ch. iii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Mildness.*] το επιεικεις. "The word denotes a disposition to clemency, lenity, and forgiveness." Newcome.

<sup>5</sup> *The Lord is near.*] This is generally understood of Christ's

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 5.

You suffer in one shape or another for your adherence to Christian truth. Let not the injustice nor the severity of your sufferings betray you into any acrimonious expressions, and still less into any acts of retaliation for injuries received. Let your meekness and forbearance to your enemies and persecutors be conspicuous to all. It will make a favourable impression. At all events, remember that Jesus is near; that the hour is approaching when your beloved and honoured Lord will appear in his glory to animadvert with just severity upon his enemies and yours; and to give his faithful followers the crown of life. Leave it to him to redress your wrongs, and look to him for the promised reward.

6. *Be anxious about nothing; but upon every occasion, by prayer and supplication<sup>1</sup>, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*
7. *And that peace of God<sup>2</sup> which exceedeth all com-*

---

coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, but that would be little to the apostle's purpose. It seems more probable that the apostles expected the appearance of Christ to judge the world before the generation then existing was extinct. To them it was not given to know the times and the seasons, Acts i. 7. "*Ita sane arbitrabantur quia Christus tempus illud sui adventus in occulto tenuerat.*" Grotius.

<sup>1</sup> *Supplication.*] Dr. Macknight renders the word *δεησεί*, "deprecation of what is evil."

<sup>2</sup> *Peace of God will guard, &c.*] This expression occurs only in this place and Col. iii. 15; it probably signifies that state of peace and friendship with God into which they were introduced by the Christian religion, which, by enlightening their understandings and encouraging their hearts, would keep them firm in their adherence to the gospel. Newcome renders the phrase, "peace with God." The Vulgate and Italic versions read *custodiat*, which Mr. Wakefield adopts, *q. d. May that peace of God, &c.* The Alexandrine manuscript and the Syriac ver-

*prehension, will safely guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 7.

In the mean time, let not your minds be distracted by corroding care, or by any distressing apprehensions of what may happen to you in your passage through this world. Confide in God, and keep close to him in the exercises of devotion. Pray to him for what you want, deprecate what you fear, and be thankful for what you possess. While you thus offer up the tribute of gratitude and of piety, you may cheerfully hope for a divine blessing. And in particular, that happy state of reconciliation with God into which you are introduced by faith in Jesus Christ, will soothe your troubled spirits into tranquillity and peace. That exquisite delight which

---

sion read, "the peace of Christ;" and in the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, this reading is so well supported, that Griesbach introduces it into his text. The sense is the same; that happy state into which the mind is brought by practical faith in the gospel of Christ, and reliance upon its promises.

Mr. Peirce observes, that "St. Paul is here arming the Philippians against persecution; nor could any thing be a greater support to them under it than the peace we have with God; for the sense of it will make the heaviest afflictions and pressures sit easy upon us. I grant a peaceable and quiet temper (which is the sense in which some understand the words) will be a support and comfort to a man under his troubles, when he considers that he has done nothing to provoke men, and that their fury and wrath against him is without cause. But this is inconsiderable in comparison with the support we shall have from a sense of God's favour and his being at peace with us. And the commendation here given to the peace of God, that it passeth all understanding, seems to suit better with this sense than the other." "Peace signifies happiness; and the 'peace of God' may signify 'great happiness,' or, 'such peace or happiness as God alone can bestow.'" Dr. Priestley.



Ch. IV. arises from a humble hope in the divine mercy, and  
 Ver. 7. which none but those who experience it can comprehend, is the best and surest refuge to the bewildered understanding, and to the aching and foreboding heart.

3. The apostle enjoins the practice of all virtue, and proposes to their imitation his own example, ver. 8, 9.

8. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true<sup>1</sup>, whatsoever things are venerable<sup>2</sup>, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are kind<sup>3</sup>, whatsoever things are reputable<sup>4</sup>; if there be any virtue, if there be any*  
 9. *praise<sup>5</sup>, attentively consider these things<sup>6</sup>. And*

<sup>1</sup> True.] “*rectum, honestum ut verum apud Latinos*; ‘*Quid verum atque decens. Hor.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>2</sup> Venerable.] *σεμνα*, “grave, or honourable.” See Newcome. Mr. Wakefield renders the word *respectable*, “which,” he observes, “has not a sufficiently ancient cast, but so exactly represents the original as to deserve the preference to every other.” “*honestum, decorum, quicquid est viro gravi et honesto dignum.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>3</sup> Kind.] “*προσφιλη, quæ benigna sunt et gratiosum faciunt hominem.*” Grotius. “*amabilia.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> Whatsoever things are reputable.] “*εὐφημα, quæ bonam famam pariunt.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>5</sup> If there be any virtue, &c.] “If there be any other virtuous or praiseworthy action. Praise is used for what is the cause of praise.” Newcome. Some copies after *επαινος*, read *επιστημης*, “praise of knowledge;” and the Vulgate and some other versions read *disciplinæ*, which reading Peirce prefers, though he admits that the common reading amounts to the same thing. “*Si quæ res est, quæ in censu virtutum apud cordatos venit. επαινος, meton. quicquid est laude dignum.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>6</sup> Attentively consider.] So Macknight. “*ταυτα λογιζεσθε*,



*the things which ye have learned<sup>7</sup>, and admitted, and heard, and seen in me, these practise, and the God of peace<sup>8</sup> will be with you.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 9.

And now, my beloved brethren and fellow-Christians, I shall in a few words sum up what remains to be added by way of exhortation. Maintain an invariable regard to truth. Let your words uniformly correspond with your real sentiments, and your actions with your promises. Let your conduct

*hoc animo recolite, nempe ideo, ut et in actionem producatiss."*  
Rosenmuller.

<sup>7</sup> *Which ye have learned.*] "which ye have learned from me, and received as the will of God, and have heard that I practise, and seen me do." Macknight. "It is happy when the preachers of the gospel can thus propose their own example for the imitation of their hearers; and certainly none ought to preach the gospel but those who, besides understanding the principles of it, can likewise recommend and enforce it by their own conduct." Dr. Priestley.

<sup>8</sup> *The God of peace:*] *i. e.* God the giver of peace. Mr. Peirce observes, that "this title is several times used by St. Paul when he is discoursing of Christians being peaceable as very proper to encourage them to mind the things which make for peace;" but he adds, "that he may as well be called the God of peace, upon account of his affording us peace with himself. See Heb. xiii. 20, 1 Thess. v. 23."

Dr. Priestley observes, that "the apostle concludes his epistle with mentioning particular circumstances relating to himself and the persons to whom he wrote, and with salutations from and to particular persons; all which are most unequivocal marks of the genuineness of the epistle. Indeed there are no epistles remaining from all antiquity which bear such indisputable marks of genuineness as these of Paul: and, as I have observed, the genuineness of these epistles sufficiently proves the truth of Christianity. For it is impossible to account for the writing of such epistles as these, without admitting the reality of the principal facts on which the truth of Christianity depends; and these epistles were written prior to any of the gospels."

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 9.

be grave and dignified, worthy of your honourable profession and your exalted expectations. In your intercourse with others, be solicitous to give every one his due, and so insist upon your own rights as not to infringe upon the rights of others. Preserve the purity of your mind unsullied; and resolutely abstain from all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions. Be courteous and kind to all, and let beneficence in conduct flow from benevolence of heart. Behave at all times with that prudent circumspection and strict propriety which will ensure the approbation of the wise and good, and will defeat the malice of those who may wish to calumniate your character and profession. In a word, whatever may with truth be denominated virtuous and praiseworthy, let this be the object of your serious attention; and when you have formed your judgement, act accordingly.

Upon these topics it is unnecessary for me to enlarge at present. When I preached the gospel to you at first, I fairly stated the whole of its requisitions. You learned them from me; you admitted their obligation: you saw them exemplified in my conduct. I can appeal to you, that my character was uniformly consistent with my doctrine. As, then, you have received my doctrine, I beseech you to follow my example. Live in habitual subjection to the laws of Christ; and God, the Author of peace, who sent his son into the world, to proclaim and to seal the message of reconciliation and mercy, this God will be with you to preserve and bless

you, to ensure peace here, and everlasting happiness hereafter. Ch. IV.

4. The apostle expresses the great satisfaction which he felt on account of the generous spirit of the Philippians, and that still more for their sakes than for his own, ver. 10—14.

*But I rejoiced in the Lord<sup>1</sup> greatly, that now, at last, your concern for me hath revived<sup>2</sup>, with regard to which ye were indeed concerned before<sup>3</sup>, but ye wanted opportunity<sup>4</sup>.* Ver. 10.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Rejoiced in the Lord:]* i. e. as a believer in Christ I was pleased to see the efficacy of Christian principles in the generosity of your conduct. See ch. iii. 1, iv. 4. “He uses (says Mr. Peirce) a very skilful way of commending the generosity of his benefactors; wherein he signifies, not only that they had done their duty, but that the Lord had favoured them by stirring them up to it; and that they had given him occasion of much thankfulness to the Lord: which shows his pious disposition who in such things took special notice of the Lord’s hand and kindness to him.” “It is observable,” says Dr. Priestley, “that the apostle thanks God for their generosity to him. Men are only the instruments in the hands of providence. The first and proper cause of all good is God. But I would observe also, that God works only by second causes, and not immediately, for that would be by miracles, which we are not now authorized to expect.”

<sup>2</sup> *Your concern, &c.]* Literally, *that you have revived, or flourished again, as to your concern for me.* It is a metaphor, borrowed from the revival of vegetables in the spring. “Like vegetables (says Dr. Doddridge), which, after having seemed during the winter to be dead in the earth, sprout up at the returning spring with new beauty.”

<sup>3</sup> *With regard to which, &c.]* εφ’ ᾧ i. e. πραγμάτων. “in which matter ye were careful.” Peirce. Mr. Wakefield’s translation is, “which indeed ye entertained before.” “I know you would have done it sooner, had not my great distance from you prevented it.” Pyle. “Qua de re tamen solliciti eratis, ut Beza vertit. Hoc autem Paulus addit, ut mitiget, quod dixerat,

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 10.

As a faithful missionary of the benevolent religion of Jesus, and solicitous for the prevalence both of its knowledge and its power, I am highly gratified with the late seasonable exertion of your bounty towards me, which cheered me like the return of spring after a dreary winter. Indeed I well know that there has been no interruption of your kind inclinations towards me, though circumstances have for a long time precluded me from deriving the benefit which you were desirous to communicate.

11. *Nor do I speak on account of want<sup>1</sup>, for I have learned in whatsoever circumstances I am, to be content.*

I assure you that my joy does not merely, or principally, arise from the ample supply of my wants, though I am far from being insensible of your kindness in this respect, or from any unbecoming contempt of the blessings of life; but acting always under a sense of duty in the discharge of my important mission, I have made up my mind to be satisfied with every change of condition which the providence of God may see fit to assign me.

---

*ipsorum studium reviruisse. εφ' ᾧ, h. e. περὶ & καθως. Καὶ, pro, μεντοι.* Rosenmuller.

<sup>1</sup> *Ye wanted opportunity.] η̅και̅ρει̅σθε̅ δε̅, or, "ye wanted ability." Peirce approves this translation, because Chrysostom says that the word was commonly used in this sense. They wanted ability, not because of their poverty, but from the want of means and opportunities of conveyance.*

<sup>1</sup> *Nor do I speak, &c.] "Neque, κατὰ, propter inopiam dico." Castellio. "Non ideo hoc dico, quod in penuria constitutus fuerim, vel magna penuria laboraverim. Sapiens enim, ut statim aliis verbis addit Paulus, tenui etiam sorte est contentus, nec multis eget." Rosenmuller.*

*I both know what it is<sup>2</sup> to be brought low, and I know what it is to abound; in every season and in all conditions I am instructed<sup>3</sup> both to be fed plentifully and to suffer hunger, both to abound and to be in want. I am sufficient for all things through him who strengtheneth me<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, ye have done right in jointly contributing<sup>5</sup> to the relief of my distress.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 12.

13.

14.

In the various scenes through which I have been conducted in the course of my ministry, I have experienced all the vicissitudes of external condition. I have experienced what it is to be poor, and what it is to be rich; I have been initiated into the great mystery of accommodating myself to all situations, to every change of time and circumstance, to live in abundance, or to be in want of the necessities of

<sup>2</sup> What it is, &c.] See Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> I am instructed.] “μεμνημαι, μνηω, proprie initio aliquem sacris et mysteriis.” Schleusner. *q. d.* it has been a part of the discipline in which I have been initiated to instruct me how to conduct myself with propriety in all circumstances and upon all occasions. “Initiatus sum: i. e. institutus. Hesychius interpretatur πεπειραμαι, expertus didici. εν παντι sc. χρονω vel τοπω, et εν πασι sc. χρημασι, in omnibus rebus vel negotiis.” Rosenmuller. “always and in all things I am instructed.” Newcome. “in every place and among all men.” Peirce. I have adopted Wakefield’s version.

<sup>4</sup> Him who strengtheneth me.] Χριστω, Christ, which is the reading of the received text, is wanting in the Alexandrine and Clermont copies, in the Coptic, Æthiopic, and Vulgate versions, and is omitted in Griesbach’s edition, and in Archbishop Newcome’s translation.

<sup>5</sup> Jointly contributing.] So Wakefield, Macknight, and Newcome. “My contentment in my circumstances does not at all lessen the commendableness of your behaviour, who have done well in commiserating and supplying me.” Peirce.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 14.

life, to be supplied with every thing, or to be destitute of all things. And in every state I can be cheerful and satisfied; for God, who has invested me with my apostolical office, supports me in it, and enables me zealously to perform all the duties and cheerfully to endure all the trials with which I am exercised in the discharge of my mission. Nevertheless, I am not above accepting the kindness of my friends; and it is much to the credit of your character, that you have made so large a contribution towards the alleviation of those difficulties in which you knew that I was involved.

5. The apostle gratefully acknowledges the repeated and peculiar obligations that he was under to the generosity of the Philippians; and expresses his earnest prayer and hope that God would abundantly reward them for all their kindness to him: concluding with a suitable doxology, ver. 15—20.

15. *And indeed, O ye Philippians, ye yourselves know that at the beginning of the gospel, when I was departed from Macedonia*<sup>1</sup>, *no church had*

---

<sup>1</sup> *At the beginning of the gospel, when I was departed from Macedonia.*] *ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπο κ. τ. λ.* Dr. Paley, in his excellent *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 265, mentions the coincidences of the facts here alluded to, with other passages in the New Testament, as remarkable illustrations of his argument for the genuineness of the epistles. *At the beginning of the gospel*: q. d. when the gospel was first preached in Macedonia. An indication that it had been preached there more than once at the time when the apostle wrote; and that the event alluded to had happened after the first visit: a fact confirmed by the history, Acts xvi. xx. The liberality of the Philippians occurred first, soon after he had quitted Macedonia: *Ye know (ὅτι) that when I was de-*



*intercourse with me as concerning giving and receiving*<sup>2</sup>, *but ye only. And that even in Thessalonica*<sup>3</sup> *more than once*<sup>4</sup> *ye sent relief to my necessity.*

Ch. IV.

Ver. 16.

I remember with gratitude your oft experienced kindness. I need not remind you, my dear Philippian friends, how repeatedly you have attended to and relieved my wants, and have been ready unasked to impart your welcome bounty; when other churches, equally indebted to my apostolical labours, either did not consider my necessities, or

---

*parted*—for so he renders ἐξελθόν, comp. Luke ii. 15, Matt. xii. 43, John xiii. 30, Acts x. 7,—*from Macedonia no church communicated with me, but ye only; και οἱ, and ye know that in Thessalonica ye sent, &c.* Now it appears from 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9, that the Macedonians, i. e. the Philippians, sent relief to him at Corinth in Achaia, i. e. after he had left Macedonia, besides the supplies which they repeatedly remitted to him at Thessalonica. So that the apostle here alludes to two distinct remittances, or rather donations, at two distinct periods; one at Corinth soon after he had left Macedonia, the other at Thessalonica: which facts coincide with the history and the epistle in a way which plainly proves that the coincidence was undesigned, and consequently that the epistle could not have been forged.

<sup>2</sup> *As concerning giving and receiving.*] εἰς λόγον. “No church communicated with me in a single instance of giving and receiving.” Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *In Thessalonica.*] “a city so much larger and richer than your own.” Peirce and Newcome. But it is not probable that the apostle intended to cast any reflection upon the liberality of the Thessalonians, for whom he expresses so much affection in his epistles to them. Possibly there might be the same reason for declining to accept a maintenance from them as from the Corinthians, and he chose rather to maintain himself by his own industry, and to derive the assistance he wanted from the Philippians, than to give his malignant enemies and persecutors a pretence to say that he was influenced by mean and sinister motives. 1 Thess. ii. 5, 6, 9; 2 Thess. iii. 7, 8, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *More than once.*] ἅπαρ και δις, *sæpius.* Grotius.



Ch. IV.  
Ver. 16.

were unable to supply them, or from peculiar circumstances were prevented from gratifying their generous inclinations. And in particular, when I first preached the gospel in Achaia after I had left Macedonia, and when for special reasons I absolutely refused accepting any remuneration at Corinth, you, and you alone of all the churches which I had established, sent me a supply; which enabled me to preach the gospel at free-cost to the Corinthians. Nor can I ever forget, that before I left Macedonia, and while I was preaching and suffering at Thessalonica, you repeatedly sent a seasonable relief to my necessities.

17. *Not that I desire another gift<sup>1</sup>; but I rather desire fruit which may abound to your account.*
18. *For I have every thing<sup>2</sup>, and abound; I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent by you, a fragrant odour, an acceptable sacrifice<sup>3</sup>, well pleasing to God.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Desire another gift.*] επιζητω. *I further desire.* Newcome. "Not that I wish for a gift so much as I wish for that fruit," &c. Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *I have every thing.*] "απεχχω, rectè omnia accepi." Grotius. Matt. vi. 2. But Peirce prefers the common translation; as he afterwards mentions his having received their present by Epaphroditus.

<sup>3</sup> *An acceptable sacrifice.*] "We see how familiar to the Jews," says Dr. Priestley, "were the rites of their religion, and how they supplied them with a constant source of figures of speech. If a present of money was called a *sacrifice well pleasing to God*, can we be surprised that so heroical an act of virtue as that which Christ manifested in his death should also be called a *sacrifice well pleasing to God*? How then can we be authorized from such phrases as these to suppose that the death of Christ was a sacrifice in any other sense than that in which this

Do not imagine, my brethren, that I remind you of these your former kindnesses, in order to trespass further upon your generosity at present: far from it. I mean no more than to encourage that liberal spirit, by the exercise of which upon every proper occasion you may be daily adding to your future reward. As to myself, I am quite at ease, in the enjoyment of abundance, since I received your bountiful present by Epaphroditus; which, as it was a most seasonable and acceptable supply to me, so as proceeding on your part from motives of piety and gratitude, it is an oblation more pleasing to God, whose servant and messenger I am, than a sacrifice of the sweetest perfume, and will in due time be acknowledged and rewarded by him as such.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 18.

*Now may my God<sup>4</sup>, according to his glorious riches<sup>5</sup>, supply all your wants by Christ Jesus.*

19.

contribution of the Christians at Philippi to Paul was called a sacrifice; or, than prayer, or any other part of our duty, may be called a sacrifice? and yet the death of Christ has been considered so much a sacrifice, as by this means alone the anger of God against sin has been appeased, and that by this means only he has become propitious to offending sinners."

<sup>4</sup> *May my God.*] *πληρωσαι*. This is the reading of the Clermont and other manuscripts, and the Vulgate and Italic versions, is noted by Griesbach as deserving of respect, and is approved by Peirce. The common reading is *πληρωσει*, my God will supply.

<sup>5</sup> *Glorious riches.*] Put *εν δοξη* between commas. Not, "in glory by Christ Jesus;" but, "he shall supply your need with glory, according to his riches in Christ Jesus." Castellio, Bowyer. "May my God gloriously supply all your need, according to his riches, or, as he is abundantly able to do it." Peirce. "*εν δοξη referendum ad πληρωσαι*, gloriosè, i. e. largissimè." Rosenmüller.

Ch. IV. *And to our God and Father*<sup>1</sup> *be glory for ever*  
 Ver. 20. *and ever. Amen.*

The only return I can make for all your kindness is by good wishes and prayers in your behalf. Of these be assured you have no common share. May that God, whose messenger I am, whose service I perform, in whose protection and favour I rejoice, and in whose great mercy I humbly confide, reward your generosity with a rich abundance of the glorious blessings of the gospel of Jesus ; with peace, and joy, and everlasting life. To this great and venerable Being, who condescends to acknowledge the endearing character of a Father to all the true disciples of Jesus Christ, be ascribed by us, and by all his faithful servants, glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

## CONCLUSION.

THE APOSTLE in a postscript adds a general salutation and the customary benediction, ver. 21—23.

21. *Salute every holy believer in Christ Jesus*<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> *To our God and Father.*] “ Here again I would observe,” says Dr. Priestley, “ what is conspicuous through all the New Testament, that *God* and *the Father* are synonymous terms, neither Christ nor any other person being so much as called God ; and that to the Father alone is glory in the highest sense ascribed, he being the author of all good, and Christ his minister or servant in communicating blessings to mankind.”

<sup>2</sup> *Holy believer in, &c.]* “ every one that is holy through

*The brethren<sup>3</sup> who are with me salute you. All the saints<sup>4</sup> salute you; particularly those of Cesar's household<sup>5</sup>. The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit<sup>6</sup>. Amen.*

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 22.  
23.

I cannot close this epistle without sending my affectionate salutations to every individual member of your Christian society. All are entitled to my best regards; and I name none, that I may not appear to give preference to any. My respected colleagues in the honourable office of preaching the gospel send their salutations to you. All the mem-

---

Christ Jesus." Newcome. It is the apostle's circumlocution for *Christian*: a term which he always avoids.

<sup>3</sup> *Brethren.*] These, being distinguished from the saints, probably signify the ministers of the gospel who were the apostle's coadjutors.

<sup>4</sup> *Saints.*] or, "holy men;" as ver. 21. "By *saints* in this place," says Dr. Priestley, "we are not to understand what was meant by that term in after ages, persons of greater sanctity than others: and least of all persons abstracted from the world and from the duties of it, but simply Christians, persons professing Christianity, and thereby constituting the church and people of God, as the Jews had been before, who were called a holy and peculiar people, as standing in a nearer relation to God than other nations."

<sup>5</sup> *Cesar's household.*] "Raphelius, Kypke, and Krebsius, show that the phrase may signify *non solum domesticos, sive aulicos sive libertos, Neronis, sed cognatos ejusdem.*" Newcome.—Dr. Macknight conjectures that the apostle may have been favourably regarded even by Poppea the emperor's wife; for Josephus, who was acquainted with her character, says she was a worshiper of the true God. *Antiq.* lib. xx. c. 7. Dr. John Jones has taken much pains to show that Epaphroditus, the freedman of Nero, and that Seneca, were both Christians. *Jones's Series of Important Facts demonstrating the Truth of the Christian Religion*, ch. iv.

<sup>6</sup> *Your spirit.*] *μετα το πνευματος υμων*, i. e. with you. This is the reading of some of the best manuscripts, and of many ancient versions: see Griesbach.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 23.

bers of the congregation of believers at Rome are solicitous to testify their affectionate regard to you. Amongst these are some whom perhaps you would little expect, some who live within the precincts of the court, who are even members of the imperial family: these in particular desire me to testify their high sense of your meritorious conduct. Finally, may all the invaluable blessings of the everlasting gospel, which is the free gift of God by Jesus Christ, be with you and yours! Amen.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The postscript, that "the Epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome by Epaphroditus," is correct. Dr. Mac-knight concludes his Notes with the observation, that "though the apostle has not mentioned it in his Letters, we may believe that not long after this epistle was written, he obtained a fair hearing and an honourable release, through the good offices of the Christians in Nero's family, as well as on account of the justice of his cause."

---

# THE EPISTLE

OF

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

## THE COLOSSIANS.

---

### INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

COLOSSÆ was a considerable city of Phrygia Major, in the Lesser Asia, upon the river Lycus, at no great distance from Hierapolis, and Laodicea, which was the largest and the most opulent of the three, and the metropolis of that district. It is debated whether the apostle Paul planted the gospel in these cities, and even whether he had ever visited them in person. It seems, indeed, highly improbable, when the historian relates, Acts xvi. 6, that “Paul and Silas went through Phrygia and Galatia;” and Acts xviii. 23, that the apostle “went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order,” that he should have declined to visit the principal cities in that region. It is, however, possible

that, for reasons not now apparent, Paul and Silas might have been warned to decline visiting these cities, as they had been forbidden to preach the gospel in Mysia, or to enter into Bithynia, Acts xvi. 6, 7<sup>1</sup>. And it has generally been inferred from the apostle's expressions Col. ii. 1, "I would that ye should know what earnest care I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh," that he had never visited these cities in person. And though Theodoret<sup>2</sup>, a writer of the fifth century, has explained these words as though he had said, "not only for you, but for others who have never seen me." Dr. Whitby justly observes, "that the structure of the sentence is inconsistent with such an interpretation<sup>3</sup>."

---

<sup>1</sup> It is also possible that the apostle in his missionary circuits might have passed through these cities, and even stopped a few days without any material occurrence worthy of record. It is plain, that in the second of these journeys the apostle was anxious to get on to Ephesus, and of course would not make a long stay at any of the places through which he passed.

<sup>2</sup> "Some are of opinion, says Theodoret, tom. iii. p. 342, that when the divine apostle wrote this epistle he had not seen the Colossians; and they endeavour to support their opinion by these words Col. ii. 1. But they should consider that the meaning of the words is this, 'I have not only a concern for you, but I have also a great concern for those who have not seen me.'" Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 457.

<sup>3</sup> Whitby says, "That St. Paul wrote this epistle to the Colossians when he had not yet seen them, is the opinion of most of the ancient scholiasts. This is confessed even by Theodoret, though he saith this does not follow from the words cited to confirm this opinion, but the contrary." And upon Theodoret's interpretation Dr. Whitby observes, "that the connecting particle being, not *αλλα*, or *αλλα και*, but also, but only *και*, and, seems to favour our translation and the opinion of the ancients."



It is also remarked, that (Col. i. 3) the apostle gives thanks to God for them since he had *heard* of their faith in Christ Jesus; whereas, when writing to the churches which he had himself planted or visited, he saith to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 3, “We give thanks to God, *remembering*, without ceasing, your work of faith;” and to the Philippians, ch. i. 3, “I thank my God upon every *remembrance* of you.”

But the fact which principally decides the question is, That whereas, in the epistles addressed to churches which the apostle is known to have planted or visited, in those to the Thessalonians, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians and the Philippians, he is continually making allusions to circumstances which occurred while he was with them, to his conduct among them, or to their behaviour to him: in the epistle to the Colossians, as well as in that to the Ephesians, there is not a single allusion of this nature, there is not a sentence, or a word, which would lead any one to conclude that Paul had ever been at Colossæ, or that he had ever seen an individual of those to whom the epistle was inscribed.

Lardner has taken great pains to establish the fact that Paul had planted, or at least visited, the church at Colossæ; but Paley thinks that he has not been successful in his argument. On the other hand, it is admitted that the majority of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, with the exception of Theodoret, and a few others, believed that the apostle was a stranger to the Colossians; and this opinion is

adopted by Whitby, Peirce, Doddridge, Rosenmüller, and Paley.

It becomes, therefore, a question when and by whom was the gospel first preached at Colossæ<sup>1</sup>. And it is generally agreed that the Christian doctrine was planted there during the residence of Paul at Ephesus, where he passed three years. It is stated Acts xix. 9, 10, that "Paul discoursed daily in the school of one Tyrannus; and this was done for two years, so that all those who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles." At this period, no doubt, some of the inhabitants of Colossæ would have an opportunity of listening to the instructions of the apostle, and would be converted to the faith, and that they would carry the gospel home to their countrymen. Among these probably were Epaphras, Philemon, Archippus, and others.

The EPISTLE to the COLOSSIANS is one of those

---

<sup>1</sup> "It is uncertain by whom a Christian church was planted at Colossæ. It seems probable that it was not by Paul himself. Nor is it certain that the Colossians were converted to the Christian faith by any whom St. Paul sent to them. This, indeed, seems probable; for he had spent three years at Ephesus, Acts xx. 31, and it is not unlikely that during that time some of the Colossians having occasion to go to Ephesus, might by him be turned to Christianity, and might when they went home be employed by him to preach the gospel to their fellow-citizens. This may be thought the more probable from what Luke says of his success when he had been at Ephesus but two years, Acts xix. 10. Epaphras may well be supposed to be one of this number. He was himself a Colossian, chap. iv. 12, a faithful minister of Christ for them, chap. i. 7, by whom he intimates they had been chiefly instructed. And possibly they therefore sent him as their minister to St. Paul." Peirce.

the genuineness of which has never been called in question<sup>2</sup>. It professes to have been written by the apostle Paul: it contains nothing inconsistent with this supposition, nothing incongruous to the apostle's character and circumstances, to his doctrine, his style, and manner of thinking; or to the age in which he lived, and the relative situation of the writer and of those to whom his epistle is inscribed: and its authenticity is confirmed by various incidental coincidences with Luke's History and the other epistles, which are noticed by Archdeacon Paley. It was universally received by the primitive church; was early translated into different languages; copies of it were multiplied and widely diffused: it has been cited from age to age, invariably, as the production of the apostle's pen; and the copies which are now extant in all parts of the world, whether in the original language, or in versions ancient or modern, harmonize with each other, with very few, and those immaterial, variations.

This epistle was written by the apostle from Rome, at the latter end of the year 62, or the beginning of the year 63, at the same time with the epistle to the Ephesians, with which it remarkably

---

<sup>2</sup> The late learned and pious Edward Evanson is the single exception to this assertion, and his objection is founded upon the supposed inconsistency between the language of the epistle, which implies that he had never personally visited Colossæ, and the declaration of Luke that he had passed through Galatia and Phrygia in order. Evanson's *Dissonance of the Evangelists*, p. 313.

harmonizes both in matter and style, as is distinctly and beautifully illustrated by Paley<sup>1</sup>; and it was sent to Colossæ by the same messengers, Tychicus and Onesimus, who conveyed the Epistle to the Ephesians, or Laodiceans. Compare Eph. vi. 21, 22 with Col. iv. 7, 8.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Both epistles," says Paley, p. 209, "represent the writer as under imprisonment for the gospel, and both treat of the same general subject. The epistle, therefore, to the Ephesians, and the epistle to the Colossians, import to be two letters written by the same person, nearly at the same time, and upon the same subject, and to have been sent by the same messenger. Now every thing in the sentiments, order, and diction of the two writings, corresponds with what might be expected from this circumstance of identity or cognation in their original. The leading doctrine of both epistles is the union of Jews and Gentiles under the Christian dispensation; and that doctrine in both is established by the same argument, or, more properly, illustrated by the same similitudes: 'one head,' 'one body,' 'one new man,' 'one temple,' are, in both epistles, the figures under which the society of believers in Christ, and their common relation to him as such, are represented. The ancient, and, as had been thought, the indelible distinction between Jew and Gentile, in both epistles is declared to be now abolished by the cross. Beside this consent in the general tenor of the two epistles, and in the run also, and warmth of thought with which they are composed, we may naturally expect in letters produced under the circumstances in which these appear to have been written, a closer resemblance of style and diction than between other letters of the same person, but of distant dates, or between letters adapted to different occasions. In particular we may look for many of the same expressions, and sometimes for whole sentences being alike, since such expressions and sentences would be repeated in the second letter (whichever that was), as yet fresh in the author's mind from the writing of the first. Compare Eph. i. 7, 10 with Col. i. 14, 20; Eph. iii. 2 with Col. i. 25. Sometimes the order of the principal words is inadvertently changed; and in many instances not single words, nor whole sentences, but parts and fragments of sentences are repeated. Eph. i. 19, ii. 5, compared with Col. ii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 2—4 with Col. iii. 12—15."

Grotius introduces his Annotations upon the Epistle to the Colossians with observing: "All the Epistles of Paul are excellent; but chiefly those which are written from Rome by Paul the prisoner <sup>2</sup>."

The great design of this Epistle appears to be, to confirm the Colossians in the true faith of the gospel, to excite their admiration and gratitude at the goodness of God in inviting the Gentiles into the church; to warn them against the delusions of Jewish bigotry and heathen philosophy; and to exhort them to the cultivation of that spirit and the practice of those duties which become the professors of the holy religion of the gospel.

THE APOSTLE, after a suitable Introduction, enters upon the FIRST PART of his Epistle, in which he ex-

---

<sup>a</sup> "Omnes epistolæ Pauli egregiæ sunt; sed omnium imprimis quæ Romæ ex vinculis missæ sunt. Harum primam temporis ordine arbitror fuisse illam ad Philemonem: nam tunc adhuc cum ipso erat Epaphroditus qui et Epaphras. Alteram ad Philippenses, ubi Epaphroditum remittit. Tertiam, ad Ephesios, et eodem prope tempore hanc ad Colossenses cum adhuc quæ ad Ephesios scripserat in animo hærerent. Postrema vero omnium ea quæ posterior est ad Timotheum. Erant Colossæ urbs Phrygiæ, memorata et Herodoto, et Xenophonti, et Straboni, et Plinio, non longe a Laodicea: quæ urbes ambæ non multo post scriptam hanc epistolam terræ motu corruere. Ideo apud Ptolemæum non reperiuntur." Grotius.

That this learned critic was mistaken in his method of arranging the epistles from Rome is highly probable, as has been, or will hereafter be, shown. Nor is it certain that Epaphras was the same with Epaphroditus; for though the name might be the same, Epaphroditus, as Beausobre observes, was sent to Philippi, while Epaphras was detained a prisoner at Rome. Philimon, ver. 23.

presses his joy and thankfulness for the conversion and consistent behaviour of the Colossians : expatiates upon the liberties and privileges of the Gentile church, and upon the honour conferred upon himself as the apostle of the Gentiles ; and warns them against the artifices of false teachers who would seduce them to subjection to the ceremonial law, or to the delusions of an erroneous philosophy. This subject extends from the third verse of the first chapter to the fourth verse of the third.

And in the First place, the apostle expresses his joy in the conversion of the Colossians ; he prays for their improvement ; he declares the superiority of Jesus Christ to all other prophets and teachers ; he reminds them of the great goodness of God in bringing the Gentiles into the church ; and expresses his gratitude for the honour conferred upon him in his appointment to the apostleship of the Gentiles. Ch. i. 3—29.

He then urges the Colossian brethren to persevere in their attachment to the pure unsophisticated doctrine of the gospel ; and cautions them against corrupting it by the base intermixture of pharisaic tradition, of false philosophy, and of Jewish or heathen superstitions. Ch. ii. 1—iii. 4.

In the SECOND PART of this excellent Epistle, the apostle treats of PRACTICAL DUTIES, and particularly he insists first, upon personal duties and self-government ; secondly, upon the duties which Christians owe to each other ; he enters, thirdly,

into a brief detail of relative duties ; and lastly, represents the conduct which ought to be observed towards unbelievers. Ch. iii. 5—iv. 6.

The Epistle closes with the recommendation of Tychicus and Onesimus, who are the bearers of it ; with the salutations of the believers at Rome to those at Colossæ, with an order that the epistles to the Laodiceans and Colossians shall be mutually exchanged and read in both the churches ; with a solemn charge to Archippus, and with the apostolical benediction : accompanied with a request that they would not forget that he was now a prisoner.





---

# THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

---

## PART THE FIRST.

**THE** apostle, after a suitable introduction, expresses his joy and thankfulness for the conversion and good behaviour of the Colossians; he expatiates upon the liberty of the Gentile church, and the honour conferred upon himself by his commission to teach the Gentiles, and cautions them against the artifices of false teachers, who would seduce them to subjection to the ceremonial law. Ch. i.—iii. 4. Ch. I.

### THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

#### CHAP. I. 1, 2.

**THE APOSTLE** introduces the epistle with the usual salutation, joining the name of Timothy with his own.

*PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ, by divine appointment*<sup>1</sup>, *and Timothy our brother, to the holy*<sup>2</sup> Ver. 1.  
2.

---

<sup>1</sup> *By divine appointment.*] So Wakefield. Gr. "by the will

Ch. I.  
Ver. 2.

*and faithful<sup>3</sup> brethren in Christ at Colossæ, favour be unto you, and peace from God our Father<sup>4</sup>.*

This epistle is dictated by me, Paul, who am acknowledged in the Gentile churches as an apostle of Jesus Christ, whose office it is to teach his doctrine, and bear testimony to his resurrection; an honourable office, which I did not arrogate to myself, but to which I was expressly appointed by God, in a way that is well known, and cannot be sufficiently admired. In this salutation I join the name of Timothy my pupil, convert, companion, fellow-labourer, and fellow-prisoner, with my own. And to the holy believers in Christ in the city of Colossæ, who firmly adhere to their principles in seasons of trial and temptation, we heartily wish that God our Father,

---

of God." "to intimate his extraordinary and miraculous mission, Acts ix. xxvi. and his receiving the gospel by immediate revelation. Gal. i. ii." Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> *Holy:*] *i. e.* separated from the common state of mankind to be the people of God, and to serve him, as the Jews formerly were, and professing Christians now are, Rom. i. 18—25; Exod. xix. 5, 6; Numb. xv. 40; 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. See Peirce.

<sup>3</sup> *Faithful.*] *πιστοις.* Peirce observes, that "this term being found in the introduction to this epistle, and in that to the Ephesians, and to no one other of St. Paul's, there is just reason to think it was a term suited to the present notion he had of those he was writing to, with reference to the business he was writing about. I take it, therefore, that by the *faithful brethren*, he means such as stood firm to Christ; which he did not count them to do; who made circumcision necessary to salvation. Gal. v. 1, 2."

<sup>4</sup> *God our Father.*] The words "and the Lord Jesus Christ," which are found in the received text, are wanting in the Clermont, the Corbey, and many other manuscripts, in the Syriac, the Æthiopic, and other versions, and in several ecclesiastical writers; they are also left out in Griesbach's edition, and in Newcome's translation.

and their Father, may send that peace which the gospel brings to all who sincerely profess it, and all other blessings comprehended in it, and resulting from it.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 2.

## SECTION I.

*THE APOSTLE expresses his joy in the conversion of the Colossians, and prays for their improvement: he declares the superiority of Christ to all other prophets and teachers; reminds them of the great goodness of God in bringing them into the church, and expresses his gratitude for his own appointment to the apostolic office. Ch. i. 3—29.*

1. The apostle thanks God for their faith and love, and for the success of the gospel at Colossæ, and throughout the world, ver. 3—6.

*We give thanks<sup>5</sup> to the God and Father<sup>6</sup> of our*

3.

---

<sup>5</sup> *We give thanks, &c.]* The apostle having heard a good account of their stedfastness, ver. 3, gives thanks to God for their interest in the hopes and promises of the gospel, ver. 5; which they would have forfeited had they apostatized from the doctrine he taught. “I thank the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always on your account in my prayers.” Peirce. “praying always for you.” Newcome; who with the public version joins παντοτε with προσευχομενοι.

<sup>6</sup> *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.]* “What more could have been said by any Unitarian? It is the same Being that is called our God and Father; and to whom our Saviour always prayed under the character of his God and Father. Where, therefore, is the evidence of Christ’s having any nature superior to ours?” Dr. Priestley.

- Ch. I. *Lord Jesus Christ continually in our prayers for*  
 Ver. 4. *you (having heard<sup>1</sup> of your faith in Christ Jesus,*  
 5. *and your love towards all the saints), on account of<sup>2</sup>*  
*that hope which is laid up for you in the heavens<sup>3</sup>,*  
*of which ye have heard before in the true doctrine*  
 6. *of the gospel<sup>4</sup>, which hath appeared among you<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Having heard, &c.*] Not of their conversion, for this he must have known long before; but of their stedfast adherence to the truth to which he alludes, ver. 2; and of their love to *all* the saints of every denomination, without restricting their affection to those who adhered to the ceremonial law. The word *all* here is unquestionably emphatical, as is rightly observed by Peirce and Macknight. The apostle was apprehensive that they might have been corrupted by judaizing zealots; and he rejoices in the account brought to him by Epaphras, that they adhered to the pure and liberal principles in which they had been originally instructed. See Peirce's note, and Locke on Eph. i. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *On account of, &c.*] *δια την ελπιδα*. Mr. Peirce not finding any instance of *ευχαριςειν* being followed by *δια* with an accusative, connects this with ver. 4, and supposes that it expresses the motive for the sake of which they persevered in faith and love; *q. d.* the continuance of your faith and love for the sake of heavenly happiness. I rather prefer the common interpretation, which is also that of Wakefield and Newcome, and is most agreeable to the parallel passage in Eph. i. 15—20. There the apostle, thanking God for their faith and love, prays that they may be apprized of the value of the blessings of the gospel, represented by their advancement with Christ into heavenly places. Here he thanks God for the hope treasured up for them in the heavens: *i. e.* in the gospel dispensation.

<sup>3</sup> *In the heavens.*] “blessing God for the hope and full assurance which you now have of the heavenly happiness promised in the gospel of Christ.” So Pyle, and others. But I beg leave to submit whether the word *heavens* may not here be better understood of the heavenly dispensation of the gospel, and whether this interpretation would not better correspond with the sense of *επερανις* as applied to Christ Eph. i. 20, and to believers Eph. ii. 6. See Locke on the *Ephesians*. It cannot, however, be denied that *hope* is not unfrequently put for the *object* of hope.

<sup>4</sup> *The true doctrine of the gospel.*] So Newcome and Wakefield. Gr. “in the word of truth of the gospel.”

*as it hath also in all the world<sup>6</sup>, where it beareth fruit<sup>7</sup> and groweth<sup>8</sup>, as it hath also among you from the day in which ye heard and acknowledged the favour of God in truth<sup>9</sup>.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 6.

In the daily exercises of devotion, when I bear upon my heart the cases of the several churches of Christ, in the presence of that merciful Being who is the God and Father of our master Jesus Christ, and whom we his disciples of every nation are taught to regard and adore as our Father and our God, I have always remembered you, my beloved brethren at Colossæ; ever since the encouraging accounts which I have received of your character and state; that you believe the gospel; and that undismayed by perils and persecutions you firmly adhere to the faith of Christ; that you love one another; and indeed that your kind affection extends to all of every name and country who truly believe in Jesus, without confining your benevolent regard to those only who mix up the burdensome ceremonial of the law with the free grace of the gospel.

<sup>5</sup> *Hath appeared among you.*] So Wakefield. *παρουτος εις υμας*, “which is come to you.” Newcome.

<sup>6</sup> *In all the world:*] *i. e.* the known world, and particularly the Roman empire. Peirce thinks that the apostle alludes to the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles.

<sup>7</sup> *Where it beareth fruit.*] Gr. *και*, and, “beareth fruit.”—Some good copies leave out *και*, and read, “as it bringeth forth fruit, and increaseth in all the world also, even as among you.” See Griesbach and Newcome.

<sup>8</sup> *And groweth.*] These words are found in the most approved manuscripts and versions. See Griesbach. They are wanting in the received text.

<sup>9</sup> *The favour of God in truth.*] “Truly, really, substantially.” Newcome. “this genuine kindness of God.” Wakefield.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 6.

And I bless God, that thus professing your faith in the gospel, and breathing its generous spirit, you have acquired a title to the glorious hope of immortal existence which is treasured up in this heavenly dispensation, and which is secured to all who practically receive it. It is your privilege that you have long ago been put into possession of this invaluable blessing, through the labours of those faithful men who first taught you the uncorrupted doctrine of Christ. And I am happy to assure you that this doctrine, notwithstanding all opposition, is now making great and rapid progress through the whole Roman empire, and indeed throughout the world: and that every where it produces the best effects in the hearts and lives of its sincere professors, exactly as it has done at Colossæ, ever since you knew and became justly sensible of the value of the gospel, that best and most important gift of God to mankind.

2. He mentions Epaphras, who had first preached the gospel to them, as the person from whom he had received this encouraging account, ver. 7, 8.

7. *Even as<sup>1</sup> ye learned it of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ*
8. *in our stead<sup>2</sup>; who has also declared to us your love in the spirit<sup>3</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Even as.*] και, even, is found in the best copies, and is introduced into the text by Griesbach.

<sup>2</sup> *In our stead.*] υπερ ημων. This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and approved by Gries-



Ch. I.  
Ver. 8.

I rejoice in your faithful adherence to that pure doctrine which you learned from Epaphras, whose name I cannot mention but in terms of the highest commendation. He is my beloved companion in the service of Christ, a faithful fellow-labourer in the propagation of the gospel. And as it was not in my power to visit Colossæ when I was preaching the gospel in those regions, I sent him to officiate in my stead; in which mission he was blessed with extraordinary success. It is from him that I have received here at Rome, where I am now a prisoner, that delightful intelligence of your Christian affection to each other, to all believers, and to myself, which has cheered my spirits, and is the subject of my devout and habitual gratitude.

3. He assures them of his daily earnest prayers for their improvement in spiritual gifts and in Christian virtues; and especially in knowledge, holiness, and fortitude, ver. 9—12.

---

bach, though not received into his text. The apostle, though he preached the gospel in the Lesser Asia, could not himself visit every city in person; but he probably sent evangelists, such as Timothy, Epaphras, &c. to preach the gospel in those places which he could not reach, and amongst the rest to Colossæ: where Epaphras, fully instructed by the apostle, seems to have met with great success. Epaphras may be a contraction for Epaphroditus, but he could not be the same person with that Epaphroditus whom Paul sent to Philippi.

<sup>3</sup> *Love in the spirit :*] i. e. your Christian affection; your love to me on account of my knowledge of the gospel, and my zeal and sufferings in its defence. Or, perhaps, more generally, your love to all the saints, to believers in general, without restriction. “your love in *your* spirit—your sincere and hearty love. See Rom. i. 9.” Newcome.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 9.

*For this cause we also, from the day that we heard these things<sup>1</sup>, cease not to pray for you, and to request that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will<sup>2</sup> in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*

After having heard so good a report concerning you, we could not but entertain a favourable opinion of you, and an anxious solicitude for your improvement. And for this reason, ever since I heard these pleasing tidings, I have made it the subject of my daily prayers to the Father of mercies that you may possess a complete, distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the will of God in the gospel dispensation, so that it may not be in the power of any false teacher to mislead you by the arts of sophistry, or pretences of superior knowledge.

10. *That ye may walk worthy of the Lord<sup>3</sup> so as to please him in all things, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge<sup>4</sup> of God.*

We also pray that your conduct may correspond

<sup>1</sup> These things.] So Peirce. *i. e.* all the good things he had before mentioned concerning them, ver. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Filled, &c.] Compare Eph. i. 8, 9 : *i. e.* a comprehensive view of the will of God, and particularly concerning the call of the Gentiles, the mystery which was now revealed. See Peirce and Locke on Eph. i. 17. "spiritual understanding; *i. e.* an understanding of spiritual things." Peirce.

<sup>3</sup> That ye may walk worthy of the Lord.] περιπατησαι for εις το περιπατησαι. Comp. Eph. iii. 17. Right knowledge is to lead to right practice. "so as to please him in all things." Newcome. Gr. "to all pleasing."

<sup>4</sup> In the knowledge.] The best manuscripts read τη επιγνωσει. "Επιγνωσις major, perfectior et exactior cognitio et scientia; nam επι in compositis haud raro auget significationem." Schleusner.

with your faith and knowledge, that it may become your Christian profession, that it may be in all respects acceptable to God, who is then best pleased when those who profess the faith of Christ abound most in the fruits of righteousness, and increase in the practice of those virtues which prove them to be the genuine children of God. Obedience to the precepts will also contribute to the increase of your knowledge of the scheme of the gospel, and of the wisdom of God in it.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 10.

*Being endued with all strength according to his glorious power<sup>5</sup>, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks unto the Father, who by enlightening us<sup>6</sup> hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints.*

11.

12.

I further implore, that your faith may be confirmed by the possession of miraculous powers, and

---

<sup>5</sup> *Endued with all strength according to his glorious power.*]

This may be understood either of miraculous powers, or of fortitude and strength of mind, probably the latter. The *glorious power* of God is that which was exhibited in the conversion of the Gentiles, and which, Eph. i. 19, he compares to the power exerted in raising Christ from the dead. See Peirce.

<sup>6</sup> *By enlightening us.*] Mangey (see Bowyer) puts a comma after *ἡμᾶς* and *ἀγίων*, see Eph. i. 18, which favours this interpretation. Rosenmuller also approves it. If the common construction be retained, the inheritance among the saints in light is, as Mr. Peirce well observes, opposed to the darkness, ver. 13, “and signifies the light which the saints have by the gospel in this world.” See Eph. v. 8. Dr. Macknight adopts this interpretation. Peirce remarks that *us* and *we*, ver. 12, 13, 14, manifestly signify the Gentile converts. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage, “giving thanks to the Father for thinking us worthy of this share of the lot of the saints in light:” and he takes this to be the force of the word *ἐκαιωσάντων* here, and 2 Cor. iii. 6, 1 Tim. i. 12.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 12.

that your minds may be invigorated by the principles and hopes of the Christian religion, so that you may bear the afflictions of life, and particularly all persecution for the sake of Christ, not only with patience, meekness, and forbearance, but with joy and gratitude; giving thanks to God for your instruction in the discoveries, and your participation in the privileges of the gospel dispensation, whatever trials and sufferings you may be called to endure for the profession of it.

4. The apostle gratefully acknowledges God as the author of the happy change which had taken place in the state of the converted Gentiles, ver. 13, 14.

13. *Who hath rescued us from the dominion of darkness<sup>1</sup>, and hath translated us into the kingdom of*  
14. *his beloved son; by whom we have this deliverance<sup>2</sup>, even the remission of sins<sup>3</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Dominion of darkness.*] In the writings of the apostle the world is often represented as divided into two great empires. The unbelieving world is the empire of darkness, under the government of Satan, the enemy, the prince of darkness, the God of this world: believers are the kingdom of light, under the government of Christ, enlightened by his doctrine and regulated by his laws. To be translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's beloved son, is to be converted to the Christian religion. Eph. vi. 12, Acts xxvi. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *This deliverance.*] The received text adds *διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ*, *through his blood*; but these words are wanting in all the uncial, and in many other MSS. and in most of the ancient versions, and are left out of the text by Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Remission of sins.*] See Eph. i. 7, "we are no longer regarded as unholy, or in an uncovenanted state." Dr. Priestley, who was

Of all the numerous topics of thanksgiving, there is none more worthy of being insisted upon with devout and ardent gratitude, than the happy change which by the mercy of God has taken place in your moral state. You were once subjects of the empire of darkness; poor, ignorant, idolatrous, vicious heathen; who knew nothing of God or duty, or of a future life. You are now by divine goodness introduced into a new and happy community, into a kingdom which God himself has lately established in the world, and placed under the government of his beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom he has commissioned to reclaim mankind from that wretched state of superstition and vice in which they are involved, and to enlighten their minds upon subjects of the greatest moral importance. And it is by his ministry and doctrine that we all, whether Jews or heathen, who now profess to be his disciples, have been delivered from our respective errors and prejudices, and from a state of hostility and alienation have been introduced into a state of external peace and amity with God; which, if we improve properly, will ensure our everlasting felicity.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 14.

### 5. The apostle proceeds in bold and highly figu-

---

not aware of the true reading of this text, observes, that "to deliver mankind from a state of heathen darkness, and to bring them into a state of gospel light, Christ submitted even to death. This is the most natural meaning of the passage; which is far from implying that Christ redeemed mankind from the punishment due to sin, by dying in their stead, becoming the object of God's wrath for us. God the righteous judge can never so confound the innocent and the guilty."

Ch. I. rative language to represent the dignity of Christ as the head of the new creation, and the renovator of the moral world, ver. 15—20.

Ver. 15. *Who is an image of the invisible God<sup>1</sup>, the first-born of the whole creation<sup>2</sup>.*

Our honoured master Jesus Christ, the sovereign of this new empire, the author of this new and happy state of things, has received from God a commission for this purpose, and in his regal capacity he acts as the delegate and representative of his heavenly Father; so that God does as it were become visible in him, and makes known his pleasure by him. And so great and astonishing is the change which takes place in the moral state of those who are converted from heathenism to Christianity, that it may fitly be represented as a new creation, of which Christ is the former and the head.

<sup>1</sup> *An image, &c.*] Gen. i. 26. Man is said to be made in the image of God, as having dominion over the creatures; and here Christ is represented as an image of God, as being the sovereign of that kingdom which God has established in the world. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Christ exercises any personal authority over believers: but as the dominion of Satan signifies the dominion, not of a real person, but of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, so the dominion of Christ is the dominion, not of Christ personally, but of the doctrines and the spirit of the gospel.

<sup>2</sup> *First-born, &c.*] *πρωτοτοκος*, an expression of endearment similar to the expressions, *beloved*, ver. 13, and *only-begotten*, John iii. 16. See also Exod. iv. 22. The meaning may be that Christ is the most distinguished person in the new dispensation, the chief of the prophets and messengers of God; as much superior to the rest as the first-born son is to the other children of the family. It may also have reference to priority in time, as well as in rank, ver. 18. He was the first who rose from the dead.

*For in him<sup>3</sup> were created all things<sup>4</sup> in the heavens and upon the earth<sup>5</sup>, the visible and the invi-*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *In him.*] All things are said to be created *in him* *εν αυτω*, *by him* *δι' αυτου*, and *for him* *εις αυτον*. The apostle appears evidently to intend a distinction which the generality of interpreters have overlooked. All things are created *in him*: *i. e.* all are new-modelled under the Christian dispensation, or by the profession of Christianity. This is the proper sense of *εν αυτω*. See Rom. xvi. 2, 7, 8; 2 Cor. v. 17, where *εν Χριστω* and similar phrases evidently mean nothing more than professing Christianity; the consequence of which was such a change in their moral state as might be called a new creation. "If any man be in Christ Jesus," *i. e.* a Christian, "there is a new creation;" an expression exactly similar to those which occur here. See also Gal. vi. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Were created all things, &c.*] Observe that the apostle does not say that natural objects, the heavens, the earth, the sea, &c. were made by Christ; the formation of these things is uniformly attributed to the Supreme Being. Moreover, if the observation in the preceding note be just, that the words *εν αυτω*, *in him*, imply that this change took place in consequence of the Christian dispensation, it entirely precludes the notion of a creation of natural substances. Also when the apostle enters into the detail of things said to be created, he mentions neither animate nor inanimate beings, neither angels nor men, but enumerates merely states of things, thrones, dominions, &c.; which, whatever they mean, are not substances, but orders and ranks, or conditions, of being: so that nothing can be more astonishing than the confidence with which the generality of Christian interpreters explain this text as asserting that all natural substances, all worlds and all their inhabitants, and even celestial intelligences, angels, archangels, and the like, were created by Christ; than which nothing could be more remote from the apostle's meaning.

Archbishop Newcome here adopts the common interpretation. "Here," says he, "a proper creation is meant, and not a figurative one to good works: *thrones*, &c. are several orders of angels." But what evidence have we of this fact?

Dr. Priestley gives a more probable interpretation. "The countenance," says he, "which this passage has given to the notion of Christ being under God the creator of all things, has arisen from not attending to the meaning of the word which we render *creation*. In the scriptures it is often used to express



Ch. I.  
Ver. 16.

*sible*<sup>1</sup>, *whether thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers*<sup>2</sup>, *all were created by him and for*

renovation, or a happy change in the constitution of things, such as was brought about by the gospel. Isaiah evidently uses the term in this sense: *Behold I create all things new!*" See an excellent *Essay on the Creation of all Things by Jesus Christ*, by Mr. Tyrwhit of Jesus Coll. Cambridge in the *Commentaries and Essays* published by the Society for Promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures, No. 14, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *In the heavens, &c.*] i. e. amongst Jews and Gentiles. See Locke on Eph. i. 10, 20.

<sup>1</sup> *Visible and invisible.*] i. e. as I understand it, the Jews, who formerly stood in a visible relation to God as theirs by covenant; and the Gentiles, who had no external badge of communion with him. It seems surprising, if any thing relating to the prejudices and errors of mankind concerning religion could occasion surprise, that when the apostle, entering into detail, specifies "thrones and dominions" instead of *heaven and earth*, it should not have led his readers to see that *arrangement*, not *creation*, was the object of his discourse. "From him were derived," says Dr. Doddridge in his exposition, "the visible splendour of the celestial luminaries, the *sun*, the *moon*, and the *stars*, even all the hosts of these lower heavens, and from him the yet brighter glories of invisible and angelic beings."

Such is Dr. Doddridge's distribution of the subject, and such would have been the distribution of the apostle, had his train of ideas been the same as that of Dr. Doddridge. But he never thought, nor did he suspect that any of his readers would think, of attributing to the humble and lowly Jesus the power of creating the celestial luminaries. And yet the above-mentioned learned expositor gravely expresses his surprise that the Socinians should interpret this of the new creation, and thinks it incredible, "if the evidence were not so undeniably strong, that any set of learned commentators could fall into so unnatural an exposition."

<sup>2</sup> *Thrones, &c.*] The apostle seems to refer here to the orders and ranks of persons holding offices in the Jewish church, which having been alluded to under the name of heaven, the officers employed in it, prophets, priests, Levites, &c. are fitly represented under names given to a supposed celestial hierarchy. The meaning is, that Jesus has introduced a new order of things into the visible church, and that all who are employed to dispense the gospel and to occupy offices in the Christian

*him*<sup>3</sup>; *and he is superior to all things*<sup>4</sup>, *and all these things are holden together in him*<sup>5</sup>.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 17.

Under this new dispensation, introduced by Christ, a most extraordinary and astonishing revolution has taken place in the moral world. It is, as I have just expressed it, a new creation: a creation not indeed of natural but of moral objects; not of things, but of states of things; not of external dignities, but of religious privileges. Under this new and heavenly dispensation Jews and Gentiles undergo a glorious and a happy change; they who were formerly the members of the visible church, and they who possessed no external badge of relation to God, are now formed into one harmonious community; and those who were most eminent for rank and station under the former covenant, cheerfully resign all former distinctions for the common but truly honourable character of believers in Jesus. This happy change was introduced by him, by his doctrine, his miracles, his sufferings, his resurrec-

---

church, receive their commission from him, whether apostles, evangelists, &c. and that he, by his spirit, qualifies them for their work. See Eph. i. 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *By him and for him.*] δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτόν. All things are *by* or *through* him. Christ is the medium of the new dispensation of the renovation of the moral world. All are created *for* him, that is, to be governed by him, and to reward his obedience and sufferings by the unspeakable delight which he derives from having been honoured as the medium of accomplishing the gracious purposes of God to man.

<sup>4</sup> *Superior to all things.*] “above all things.” Wakefield.

<sup>5</sup> *Holden together in him.*] The Jewish and Gentile church are united in Christ. See Wakefield. Christ is the chief cornerstone, Eph. ii. 20.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 17.

tion, his exaltation, and by the mission of his spirit, and it terminates in his well earned honour. For he is exalted to the high dignity of the chief of all the prophets and messengers of God, both under the old and the new dispensation ; and in the great principle, allegiance to him, believers of all nations, without any invidious distinctions, harmoniously unite.

18. *And he is the head of the body, the church ; bearing the first-fruits<sup>1</sup>, the first-born from the dead, so as to be first in all things.*

Christ and his church are now one mystical person : Christ is the head, and the church the body, which is indeed necessary to the completion of his person, and which derives life and vigour from his doctrine and his spirit. And that he is entitled to this pre-eminence, is evident from considering that he is the first-fruit of the glorious harvest, the first human being who is raised to immortal life, and who is thus become the pattern and pledge of the final resurrection of all mankind.

19. *For by him God was pleased to inhabit the whole*  
20. *complete body<sup>2</sup> : and through him to reconcile all*

---

<sup>1</sup> *First-fruits.*] *απαρχη* this is the reading of five manuscripts, and the connexion seems to require it. 1 Cor. xv. 20. See Griesbach and Peirce. If *αρχη* is the true reading, it is probably a marginal gloss, and Mr. Wakefield observes, that it is wanting in the Æthiopic version.

<sup>2</sup> *God was pleased to inhabit the whole complete body.*] “ *εν αυτω ευδοκησε παν το πληρωμα κατοικησαι.* Quoniam per eum visum est patri, omnem universitatem inhabitare.” Castalio ; who observes, that whenever an infinitive verb is in the New Testament joined with *ευδοκησε* it always denotes the action of him

*things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven<sup>3</sup>, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 20.

The church, which is the body, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, is the completion of Christ, who is the head: and God is pleased to dwell in this united church, and to manifest his favour and love to it by those gifts of the holy spirit, which he has authorized his Son to bestow so liberally upon it. And by the mission of Jesus, and particularly by his death, he has confirmed the new covenant and set aside the old; incorporating Jew and Gentile into one harmonious society, of which Jesus is the head. Being thus united to *him* by faith, they are joined in bonds of fraternal affection to each other, and no longer regard each other with an envious or a malignant eye.

## 6. The apostle assures the Colossians that being

---

who is spoken of as pleased. Peirce adopts this interpretation, and renders the text, "it seemed good to God to inhabit all fulness by Christ:" that is, to inhabit the church, which is the πληρωμα, "the fulness or complement of Christ." Eph. i. 23. "All is added because there is a double fulness, a fulness of the Jews and a fulness of the Gentiles." Adopting this interpretation, I have a little altered the phraseology in the translation, to make it more intelligible to the English reader.

<sup>3</sup> *Things on earth, &c.*] i. e. Jews and Gentiles. "This sense," as Peirce justly observes, "best suits the connexion, and coincides exactly with the parallel passage, Eph. ii. 14—16. He is our peace who hath made both (Jews and Gentiles) one," &c. Nevertheless, this learned expositor declines, though with reluctance, to adopt this interpretation, which gives the only rational and proper sense, and explains the text as referring to some unknown and incomprehensible reconciliation of angels and men.

Ch. I. now, by the death of Christ, introduced into a new and holy community, all the privileges and blessings of it shall be ensured to them, provided that they adhere faithfully to their Christian profession, ver. 21—23.

Ver. 21. *And you who were formerly aliens and enemies in your minds by wicked works<sup>1</sup>, he hath now indeed<sup>2</sup> reconciled through the death of his fleshly body<sup>3</sup>, that he might present you before himself<sup>4</sup> holy and spotless, and irreproachable.*

Of this church, which is the mystical body of Christ, you are now approved members. Formerly, indeed, you were aliens from this holy community; being in principle and affection idolatrous and vicious heathen, you were enemies to the people of God, and had neither the wish nor the power to join that venerable society. But the death of Christ (I speak now not of his mystical but of his natural person) has put an end to the Jewish peculiarity, and has introduced a dispensation by which Jew

---

<sup>1</sup> *Aliens and enemies by wicked works.*] See Eph. ii. 12. “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> *Indeed.*]  $\delta\eta$  for  $\delta\epsilon$ . Dr. Mangey. See Bowyer’s *Conjectures*.

<sup>3</sup> *Reconciled through the death of his fleshly body.*] So Wakefield. The fleshly body is put in opposition to the spiritual or mystical body, ver. 18, 24. See Newcome. The death of Christ reconciles Jews and Gentiles, by putting an end to the Jewish peculiarity, and introducing a new and liberal dispensation. This thought is more largely insisted upon Eph. ii. 14—18; which fully explains the apostle’s meaning here. See Newcome and Peirce.

<sup>4</sup> *Before himself.*]  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$  for  $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$  the passage, as is well observed by Peirce and others, is exactly parallel to Eph. v. 27, “that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

and Gentile are reconciled to each other and to God. Into this society you have been introduced by Christ; and his gracious intention is, that by this means you may attain, not only to a state of privilege, but to virtue of character, that so you may become honourable and useful members of that glorious body of which he is the exalted head.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 22.

*If ye continue<sup>5</sup> in the faith, firm on its foundation, and be not moved away from the hope of that gospel which ye have heard, which hath been proclaimed to the whole creation under heaven<sup>6</sup>, of which I, Paul, have been appointed a minister.*

23.

I must, however, faithfully warn you that your improvement, and even your safety, depend upon your perseverance. You have no right to expect the blessings of the gospel any longer than you adhere to the profession of it; resting your hope on a practical belief of the fundamental truth that Jesus is the Christ, and not being influenced by any consideration whatever to depart from the genuine simplicity of that doctrine, which is the only proper ground of hope; which has been preached by the command of Christ to all mankind without distinction, even to the idolatrous heathen; and which I esteem it my greatest honour that I, notwithstanding my great unworthiness, have been selected, and expressly appointed, to be a teacher and publisher.

<sup>5</sup> *If ye continue, &c.*] εἰ γὰρ. I prefer this translation to that of Peirce, who renders the phrase, "since ye continue." See Wakefield.

<sup>6</sup> *The whole creation, &c.*] "to Jews and Gentiles." Newcome.

Ch. I. 7. The apostle expresses the joy which he experienced amidst, and even on account of, the difficulties and persecutions which he endured in the discharge of his honourable commission, ver. 24—26.

Ver. 24. *Now I rejoice in these sufferings<sup>1</sup> for you; and am in my turn<sup>2</sup> filling up that which remains of the afflictions of Christ<sup>3</sup> in my person, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*

<sup>1</sup> *These sufferings.*] The pronoun *μς* (my) in the received text, is wanting in the best manuscripts, and is omitted in Griesbach's edition, and in Newcome's version.

<sup>2</sup> *In my turn.*] *ανταναπληρω.* Le Clerc observes, that the apostle elegantly insinuates that he had formerly made others suffer for Christ. *Art. Crit.* part ii. sect. i. c. 12. See Peirce and Macknight. "I who formerly persecuted the church, now in my turn fill up, by my bodily sufferings, what remains behind in the course of my life of the afflictions allotted to me because of Christ. See Elsner." Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Afflictions of Christ:*] *i. e.* for the sake of Christ, or such sufferings as Christ underwent, 2 Cor. i. 5. See Newcome.—Dr. Doddridge observes, that "the apostle considered it as the plan of providence that a certain measure of sufferings should be endured by this body of which Christ was the head, and he rejoices to think that what he endured in his own person was congruous to that wise and gracious scheme." "This passage may mean either that the apostle partook largely of what remained in the cup of affliction of which Christ drank; or that Paul in his person endured to the utmost whatever affliction had been endured by others in the Christian cause." Philalethes's *Translation of Colossians*, &c. 1819. "It is remarkable," says Dr. Priestley, "that the apostle, in speaking of his own sufferings for the sake of the gospel, represents them in the same light with the sufferings of Christ himself, as both having the same general object and effect. Christ laid down his life for his friends and for the church, and the apostle also was ready to lay down his for the sake of Christ's body, which is the church. This is language which he could never have used if he had considered the death of Christ as the means of making atonement



Ch. I.  
Ver. 24.

Having mentioned my character as a minister of this new dispensation, let me assure you that the sufferings which I endure in the faithful discharge of my apostolic duties are far from exciting regret at my appointment to that honourable office. On the contrary, the persecutions I now undergo for preaching the gospel to the heathen are to me a source of exquisite satisfaction, as undoubted testimonies to my fidelity and efficacious means of success. I was once a persecutor of the church of Christ; in my turn I am now a sufferer in the same cause; and being a member of the mystical body, I willingly bear my share of the persecutions which that body is destined to endure in order to promote the growth and perfection of the whole.

*Of which church I have been appointed a minister, in reference to that dispensation of God which hath been intrusted to me for you, that I may fully teach the word of God; even the mystery<sup>4</sup>, which hath been concealed from ages and generations<sup>5</sup>, but which is now made manifest to his saints.*

25.

26.

---

for the sins of men. On this idea there would be great presumption and profaneness in the apostle's language. The idea which his language naturally conveys to us is this, That a great deal of suffering was necessary to establish the Christian church. That of Christ was one part, but not the whole; that of the apostles and other Christians must be added to it."

<sup>4</sup> *The mystery, &c.] i. e.* the call of the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews; see Eph. iii. 4—10, where the same subject is treated of more at large.

<sup>5</sup> *Ages and generations:] i. e.* the times under the law, which were measured by jubilees, and are therefore called *χρονοὶ αἰωνιοί*, *secular times*. Before the days of Abraham, the call of the Israelites to be the peculiar people of God was as much a my-

Ch. I.  
Ver. 26.

In the church of Christ I am appointed to execute a very honourable and important office for your benefit; being charged with a commission to teach in the most explicit and undisguised manner an important doctrine, which constitutes an essential and glorious part of the gospel dispensation; a doctrine which was indeed completely concealed from our ancestors, who lived under the ceremonial dispensation; but which is now revealed in the clearest manner to all who are sincerely willing to hear and to welcome the joyful tidings.

8. The apostle explains his meaning to be the admission of Gentiles to equality of privileges with Jews in the Christian church, a doctrine which it was the labour of his life to teach and inculcate, ver. 27—29.

27. *To whom God willed to make known the glorious riches of this mystery<sup>1</sup> towards you<sup>2</sup> Gentiles, which mystery is Christ the hope of glory.*

---

stery as the call of the Gentiles afterwards. See Peirce, and Locke's note on Rom. xvi. 25. It was only during the Jewish dispensation that this mystery concerning the Gentiles could exist.

<sup>1</sup> *Glorious riches, &c.] Gr. the riches of the glory.* See Rom. ix. 23; Eph. i. 17, 18, ii. 7, iii. 16; Phil. iv. 19. Indeed, whenever the apostle mentions the admission of the converted Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews, he seems at a loss for words to express his admiration, joy, and gratitude upon the occasion. "This great mystery," says Dr. Priestley, "to which the apostle often alludes, was the call of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of Jewish Christians, without circumcision or conformity to any other Jewish rites. This does not now strike us as a thing of very great magnitude, but in that age it must have appeared of the greatest; and accordingly we

To true believers, who are separated by their Christian profession from the ungodly and idolatrous world, God has been graciously pleased to communicate the knowledge of his purposes of mercy towards the ignorant and despised heathen, namely, that the doctrine of Jesus, which is taught among you, and received by you, who were formerly idolaters, entitles you to a participation in that glorious hope which is the peculiar privilege of the sons of God, the hope of an everlasting inheritance.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 27.

*Whom we preach, admonishing every man<sup>3</sup>, and instructing every man in all wisdom<sup>4</sup>, that we may present every man perfect in Christ<sup>5</sup>.*

28.

find that the minds of the Jewish converts were never thoroughly reconciled to it. That the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, and that uncircumcised Gentiles were proper subjects of it, were two great articles of faith which Christians learned after the descent of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost."

<sup>2</sup> *Towards you.*] See Wakefield, who thinks there can be little doubt that the words *εν υμιν* are transposed. For *ος*, the common reading in the last clause, the Alexandrine and two other uncial manuscripts read *ο*. See Griesbach. "*Spes, pro causa spei. Gloria, felicitas. Sive, spem excellentissimam; spem excellentissimæ felicitatis.*" Rosenmuller.

<sup>3</sup> *Every man.*] *παντα ανθρωπων*. It is observed that the apostle repeats these words three times in this sentence, strongly implying that the Gentiles, equally with the Jews, were the objects of the apostolic mission. See Peirce and Newcome. "*Ex toto commate patet, apostolum has voces, δεινότητος et εμφασεως causâ, data operâ repetiisse.*" Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> *Wisdom.*] "This may be understood either of the manner in which the teachers of the gospel conducted their ministry, or, of the subject of their preaching, viz. the doctrine of the gospel, which is the truest philosophy. See 1 Cor. ii. 6." Peirce; who takes it in the latter sense.

<sup>5</sup> *In Christ.*] The received text reads "Christ Jesus." In

Ch. I.  
Ver. 28.

This is the great doctrine which Jesus was commissioned to reveal; this it is the delightful employment of the faithful ambassadors of Christ to teach; this commission they execute, addressing themselves without distinction to Jew and Gentile, admonishing both of the necessity of adopting the gospel scheme, and instructing both in the nature and detail of the Christian doctrine, which is the truest wisdom, the sublimest and most valuable philosophy; and their great design in all is, that they may form these their converts, whether Jews or Gentiles, to the knowledge of truth and the practice of virtue, so that they may be able to present them to their master as believers of the highest order, worthy of being admitted into his glorious kingdom.

29. *To which purpose I also<sup>1</sup> am labouring, earnestly striving according to his energy, which operates powerfully by me<sup>2</sup>.*

In this glorious cause I also am a humble and unwearied labourer. And though I meet with continual opposition, I persevere in the arduous struggle. Not indeed relying upon my own ability, for

---

the best copies the word Jesus is wanting, and is dropped by Griesbach and Newcome. “τελειος ἐν Χριστῷ est perfectus Christianus, qui bene institutus in religione, ita sentire et agere potest, ut Christianum decet. Col. iv. 10, Eph. iv. 13.” Rosenmuller.

<sup>1</sup> I also;] i. e. “together with the other preachers mentioned ver. 28.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> According, &c.] “This may either refer to the miracles which God enabled him to perform in confirmation of his doctrine, see Gal. ii. 8, 2 Cor. xiii. 3, or else to the divine influence upon himself.” Peirce. See Rom. xv. 19, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

that would soon fail me. But supported by that energy which he who called me to the office communicated to me, to qualify me for the honourable and successful discharge of it, and the powerful efficacy of which I continually experience, to strengthen me for every labour, and to carry me triumphantly through every conflict.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 29.

## SECTION II.

*THE APOSTLE urges the Colossians to persist in their adherence to the genuine doctrine of Christ, and cautions them against the corruption of it by the intermixture of pharisaic tradition, of false philosophy, and of Jewish ceremonies.* Ch. ii. 1—iii. 4.

Ch. II.

1. The apostle expresses his earnest desire that those Christians who had not enjoyed the benefit of his personal ministry, might nevertheless be fully instructed in the doctrine of Christ, ver. 1—3.

*Therefore<sup>3</sup>, I am desirous that you should know what earnest care<sup>4</sup> I have for you, and for*

Ver. 1.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Therefore, &c.*] Dr. Macknight justly observes, “that as this verse does not contain a reason for what goes before, but is an inference from it, *γὰρ* in this passage is an illative and not a causal particle.”

<sup>4</sup> *Earnest care.*] “See *Thess. ii. 2.*” Newcome; who observes, “that the word *ἀγωνία* here refers to *ἀγωνισόμενος*, ch. i. 29. The word properly signifies *conflict*.” “It expresses,”

Ch. II. *those of Laodicea, and for as many as have not*  
 Ver. 1. *seen me in person*<sup>1</sup>.

Being thus solicitous to discharge the duties of my apostolic office, I am anxious that you should be apprized, that if I did not visit you in person when I preached the gospel in the cities that are in your neighbourhood, it was not because I was indifferent to your spiritual welfare, but because my journeys were under an immediate divine direction, and I was not permitted at that time to visit Colossæ or Laodicea, nor indeed any of the cities in the proconsular Asia. But I can truly aver that I feel as earnest a desire for your and their instruction and improvement as if you had been converted by my personal ministry.

2. *That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together*<sup>2</sup> *in love, and in all the riches of the most*

---

says Peirce, "the great solicitude and concern St. Paul had upon his mind for them, the pains he took to preach the gospel, and to assert their liberty against such as opposed, the troubles and difficulties he now underwent upon this account, and the earnestness with which he prayed for them."

<sup>1</sup> *Have not seen, &c.*] It is plain that the apostles were under a divine guidance in the progress of their mission, and were not permitted to go where they pleased. See Acts xvi. 6, 7. It appears from the passage referred to, that Paul and Silas were expressly prohibited from preaching the gospel in the proconsular Asia, and though they were allowed to pass through Phrygia, they might be restrained from preaching at Laodicea and Colossæ.

<sup>2</sup> *Being knit together.*] "*συμεικταίεν, conjungere ut duæ trabes et similia conjunguntur et compinguntur.*" Rosenmuller. Peirce observes, that "St. Paul thought that the hearty love which Christians bore to one another would be a good means to fortify them against any ill impression from seducers. See Eph. iv. 14—16."



*fully assured understanding*<sup>3</sup>, even in the complete Ch. II.  
*knowledge*<sup>4</sup> of that mystery of God<sup>5</sup>, in which<sup>6</sup> Ver. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *All the riches of the most fully assured understanding.*] εἰς πάντα πλεον της πληροφοριας της συνεσεως. See Newcome's margin. Dr. Doddridge translates the clause, "*the richest and most assured understanding*:" and observes, "that the original phrase is extremely emphatical, more agreeable to the Hebrew than to the Greek idiom, and it is one of the many instances of that strong manner of speaking with which the writings of our apostle abound." "The manner," says Peirce, "in which he speaks of this mystery, and heaps up expressions concerning it, shows how necessary he apprehended the knowledge of it to be." "Ut ad plenissimam, quæ esse potest, intelligentiam perveniant, πλεονς ut sæpe, magnitudinem rei exprimit. πλ. συν. plenitudo, vet certitudo intelligentiæ, summa certitudo." Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> *Complete knowledge.*] "ἐπιγνωσις, hic ut sæpe, est exactior cognitio." Rosenmuller.

<sup>5</sup> *Mystery of God.*] The words "and of the Father, and of Christ," which appear in the received text, are wanting in many copies and versions of good repute, and are omitted in Griesbach's edition.

"This mystery," as Peirce observes, "is that mentioned before, ch. i. 26, 27. Had he here meant any other, he would certainly have told us what it was." Newcome also explains it, of "preaching the gospel to the Gentiles." Philalethes neatly translates the passage, "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and in all the precious and full capacity of comprehending the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "The sense is," says Peirce, "that they might all concur in a full and certain persuasion and public profession of this doctrine."

<sup>6</sup> *In which.*] ἐν ᾧ. If the received text is admitted, these words are properly translated *in whom*; i. e. in Christ. "When we consider ch. i. 27, and ch. ii. 2, we shall be induced to think that the words in the verse before us are very applicable to the *mystery of God*; that is, to the gospel preached among the Gentiles. But as the words expunged from Griesbach's text may well be supplied, it remains doubtful whether *mystery*, or *God*, or *Christ*, be the antecedent." Newcome. If *in whom* be referred to Christ, the meaning will be the same: *q. d.* in the doctrine of Christ. See Rosenmuller.



Ch. II.  
Ver. 3.

*are laid up<sup>1</sup> all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

The primary object of my solicitude for those with whom I have had no personal intercourse is, that they may be so firmly united to each other in the bonds of Christian affection, that they may be proof against every insidious attempt to introduce contentions and divisions among them. Thus united, they will encourage one another to persevere in the purity of the faith, notwithstanding the unjust censures and unfounded denunciations of those who would pervert your minds. And being thus united in affection, may they also be united in the pursuit of Christian knowledge, and especially in the attainment of that most valuable of all knowledge, the complete comprehension of that glorious truth, which, though long concealed in the counsels of the Most High, is now clearly and distinctly revealed to mankind; and which contains in itself a rich treasure of all that is most important for man to know: namely, that all mankind without distinction are admitted by faith into the privileges of the gospel, by which life and immortality are brought to light,

2. Being as nearly interested for them as if he were present with them, he warns them not to be misled by the specious harangues of false teachers,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Are laid up.*] ἀποκρυφαι quum dicit, similitudinem sumit ab arca, in qua pecuniæ servantur, indidem promendæ, ubi opus est." Rosenmuller.

but thankfully to abide in the doctrine which they CH. II.  
had already learned, ver. 4—7.

*Now I say this, lest any man should deceive you* Ver. 4.  
*by plausible discourses*<sup>2</sup>,

I give you this advice, to love one another, to understand your principles, and to be true to the doctrine of Christ, that you may be upon your guard against the specious harangues of false teachers, who would corrupt your faith. Nothing will so effectually counteract their artifices as being well acquainted with the grounds and reasons of the Christian doctrine.

*For though I be absent in person, yet in spirit* 5.  
*I am with you*<sup>3</sup>, *rejoicing at the sight*<sup>4</sup> *of your*  
*order, and the stedfastness of your faith*<sup>5</sup> *in*  
*Christ.*

Though I am now in chains at Rome, and cannot personally visit you, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing as much in the account which Ephras has given me of the decency and good order which prevail in your public assemblies, and of your faithful firm adherence to the pure doctrine of

<sup>2</sup> *Plausible discourses.*] πιθανολογια. See Doddridge. "specious doctrines." Wakefield. "persuasive words." Newcome. "Ne quis vos speciosa oratione decipiat." Schleusner.

<sup>3</sup> *In spirit.*] Peirce observes that "as *spirit* here stands opposed to *flesh*, εν σαρκι, it is most reasonable to understand it of St. Paul's own spirit and not of the holy spirit."

<sup>4</sup> *Rejoicing at the sight.*] χαιρων και βλεπων, hendiadys. *Lætābundus observans rectum quem tenetis ordinem.*" Rosenmüller.

<sup>5</sup> *Stedfastness of your faith:*] i. e. in opposition to those who submitted to the ceremonial law. Gal. v. 1, 2. See Peirce.

Ch. II. Christ, as if I were actually an eye-witness to every thing that passes in your society.

Ver. 6. *As, therefore, ye have received Christ Jesus as*  
 7. *your master*<sup>1</sup>, *so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and confirming yourselves in the faith*<sup>2</sup>: *and as ye have been taught, abounding in thanksgiving*<sup>3</sup>.

Since, then, you profess to acknowledge Jesus as your master, and to admit no doctrine as of divine original but what you receive from him, and as you have learned this from your pious instructors, let me entreat you to act in character, and to govern your conduct solely by a regard to his authority. Let Christ be the root upon which you grow, and the foundation upon which you build. Acknowledge and bow to no other authority whatever, but firmly adhere to the Christian doctrine. And, as you have been taught by those who have given

<sup>1</sup> *Received, &c.*] “As therefore ye received Jesus from me to be the Christ, and the Lord.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *Rooted and built up, confirming yourselves.*] “*Eadem res ter dicitur. ἐρριζωμένοι radicibus hærentes, ἐποικοδοµημένοι in fundamento ædificati, ergo firmi: βεβαιωμένοι, firmi. Firmi et fundati et constanter in religione.*” Rosenmüller. “As ye have received from me the plain doctrine of the gospel, free from the specious subtleties of your present teachers, continue in it. Here it is exceedingly evident that by *Christ* we are to understand the doctrine of Christ, or, Christianity. To receive Christ, to walk in Christ, to be rooted and built up in Christ, is here explained by the phrase ‘established in the faith.’” Dr. Priestley.

<sup>3</sup> *Abounding in thanksgiving.*] The words ἐν αὐτῇ, *therein*, are wanting in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and are marked as doubtful by Newcome. The sense is clearer without them. See Griesbach. Mr. Wakefield for καθως reads καὶ ὡς, with the Æthiopic translator; which seems preferable.

competent proof of their mission from him, rejoice abundantly in the blessings of the gospel, and in the liberty of the Gentile church: and receive these invaluable gifts with a grateful heart.

CH. II.  
Ver. 7.

3. The apostle warns them against those who, for their own unworthy purposes, would blend Jewish ceremonies and the dreams of a false philosophy with the doctrine of Christ; and reminds them, that being united to Christ as their head, they are subject to no authority but his, ver. 8—12.

*Beware lest any man make a prey of you by a vain deceitful philosophy<sup>4</sup>, according to the traditions of men<sup>5</sup>, according to the shadows of this world<sup>6</sup>, and not according to Christ.*

8.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Vain deceitful philosophy.*] “through philosophy and empty deceit.” Newcome; who observes that the words are a hendiadys. The philosophers here alluded to were probably Jewish believers, who were zealous for the ceremonial law, and who added some idle speculations of their own to the doctrines of revelation. This indeed has been the primary source of all the corruptions of the Christian religion. It is plain from what the apostle says of these teachers, that they were plausible and selfish. What the erroneous speculations were which they dignified with the name of philosophy is uncertain; perhaps some groundless notions concerning the existence, powers, and worship of angels, and other unintelligible subjects, which the apostle justly stigmatizes as false and vain (see ver. 18), and foreign to the Christian doctrine. See Peirce’s note, and Newcome.

<sup>5</sup> *Traditions, &c.*] Probably the pharisaic traditions, or those of other philosophic and perhaps platonizing Jews, such as Philo and others.

<sup>6</sup> *Shadows of this world:*] so, after Le Clerc and Peirce, and upon the authorities they produce, I render *σκιαι* by which are to be understood the Jewish ceremonies, which were types and shadows of the doctrine of Christ, which is the body or substance to which the type refers. *Στοιχεια* properly signifies

Ch. II.  
Ver. 8.

The reason why I so strenuously insist upon your firm adherence to the purity of the Christian faith is, that I am well informed that there are some who from interested motives are taking no small pains to seduce you from it. Be, then, upon your guard against those men who set themselves up as philosophic teachers of Christianity, and who profess to add many refined and subtle speculations to the plain word of Christ. Be assured that theirs is a vain and false philosophy, the teachers of which have nothing in view but to promote their own interest, and to make their advantage of your credulity. The doctrines they profess are mere human inventions; the rites they would impose are mere Jewish ceremonies or pharisaical mummary. At best they are the mere types and shadows of a better dispensation, and are not in the least degree obligatory upon the Gentile convert to the faith of the gospel. In a word, the doctrines which they circulate, and the servitude which they enjoin, are quite foreign to the doctrine of Christ, utterly unauthorized by him, and subversive of the freedom of the Gentile church.

9. *For in him resideth substantially<sup>1</sup> a fulness of divine communications<sup>2</sup>.*

---

*elements or first principles*; and in this sense the word is to be understood Gal. iv. 3, 9, where it also expresses the ritual law. Most expositors give it the same signification here, and it cannot be denied that it makes a good sense. The Jewish dispensation is called *the world* because its objects and sanctions are of a worldly nature. See Peirce on the place, and Locke on Gal. iv. 3.

<sup>1</sup> *Substantially.*] *σωματικῶς* *bodily*, in opposition, if Mr. Peirce's and Le Clerc's interpretation be true, to *συχία* *sha-*

I do not deny that the rites and ceremonies of the law were of divine original; but, as I have just observed, they were only shadows, mere rudiments, the occupations of children, which must now be laid aside since Christ has appeared; for in him the law is fulfilled. He is the body of which the law is the shadow; and in him reside all those communica-

---

*dows*: the manifestations of the divine will, under the law, to those under the gospel, were as the shadow to the substance.

<sup>2</sup> *Fulness of divine communications.*] παντοπληρωματης Θεοτητος. "all the fulness of the godhead." This text is the strong hold of what is called the *indwelling* scheme of the doctrine of the Trinity, of which Dr. Thomas Burnet, Dr. Watts, and Dr. Doddridge are the most considerable advocates: the latter of whom would translate the text, "in whom the whole fulness of deity substantially dwells." See Burnet's *Script. Doct. of the Trinity*, p. 173, 174. But, unless the advocates for this hypothesis mean to assert that the substance and consciousness of the Father is so united with the substance and consciousness of the created Logos as to become one conscious intelligent agent called the Son, who is distinct both from the uncreated Father and the created Logos, which is too absurd to be maintained, they mean nothing: for in any other sense of indwelling, this famous hypothesis is compatible with Arianism, and even with perfect Unitarianism; for it can mean nothing more than that God inspired Christ with the knowledge of his will, and enabled him to work miracles in confirmation of his mission. The apostle's expression lays no foundation for any such erroneous conclusion. Eph. iii. 19 the apostle prays that they may be filled with all the fulness of God; but who supposes that the divine substance is intended? The expression is universally understood of *divine communications*; and such no doubt is the sense of Θεότης in this passage, which no one will say is a stronger expression than Θεός and to argue from the word σωματικώς is arbitrary in the extreme. "All those blessings which proceed from Godhead, and wherewith we are filled, dwell in Christ truly and substantially." Peirce.—"Nam ipsi insunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ divinæ reverâ. Θεότητος non intelligitur de ipsa natura Dei, tanquam de eo quod habitet in aliquo, sed de illo quod sit a Deo profectum, ab eoque originem ducat." Rosenmuller.



Ch. II.  
Ver. 9.

tions of knowledge and power which are necessary either for the instruction or the conviction of mankind.

10. *And ye are complete in him<sup>1</sup>, who is the head of all principality and power<sup>2</sup>.*

You are the body: Christ is the head; a junction with whom is necessary to form the complete mystical person. And as the body derives from the

<sup>1</sup> *Ye are complete in him.*] *πεπληρωμενοι εν αυτω* q. d. you are his *πληρωμα*, Eph. i. 23, or he is yours; you are complements to each other, as the head and the body make the perfect man; and from him as the head of vital influence you are supplied with all that you want to advance you individually to perfect manhood, or to complete your proportion as limbs of Christ's mystical body; for the apostle does not always keep the ideas distinct. ver. 10, *εν αυτω*, "in him ye are filled;" ver. 11, *εν αυτω*, "in him ye are circumcised;" ver. 12, *αυτω*, "with him you are buried;" *ibid.* "in him you are raised to life."

<sup>2</sup> *Who is the head of all principality and power.*] Mr. Locke, in his excellent note upon Eph. iii. 10, has made it appear so probable that by these expressions the apostle means, the rulers and teachers, the priests, scribes and pharisees of the Jewish nation, that there can be no reasonable doubt that they are to be taken in the same or a similar sense here. Christ is the head of all principality and power, of all the rulers and teachers of the church, whether under the old dispensation, or the new; under the law, or under the gospel; there is no authority but from him: his disciples are to receive no doctrine but what is taught by his authorized ministers; and upon no account to listen to those who would impose upon them judaical rites.

It is surprising that learned men, who interpret these expressions of the superiority of Christ to angelic beings, should not be aware how improbable it is that the Divine Being, (who in his all-wise administration, is so severely æconomical in the communications of his will, as to reveal nothing but what is of the utmost practical necessity, nothing to gratify idle curiosity,) should reveal facts concerning ranks and orders of angels; which are at best useless, and in general unintelligible to mankind.



Ch. II.  
Ver. 10.

head all its supplies of vital influence, so you derive from Christ all that is necessary to the spiritual life; all that instruction which is requisite to your becoming perfect Christians. You need not look elsewhere: Christ is the head of the apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers of the Christian dispensation: they have no authority but what they derive from him. And as to the priests and rabbis of the Jewish œconomy, they are completely superseded, and their authority, so far as you are concerned, is null and void.

*In whom ye were circumcised<sup>3</sup>, by a circumcision not made with hands, by the putting off the fleshly body by the circumcision of Christ<sup>4</sup>.*

11.

And to continue the allegory, the circumcision

<sup>3</sup> *In whom ye were circumcised;*] *q. d.* as constituting Christ's mystical body, what was done by him as necessary to fulfill all righteousness, may be considered as done in or by you. As, therefore, he was circumcised, you may be considered as circumcised in him; not indeed literally, according to the Jewish manner, but in a sublime and spiritual sense. Your circumcision consists in having cast off your heathen idolatries and impurities, and having consecrated yourselves to God.

<sup>4</sup> *By the circumcision of Christ.*] *ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ* or, “in the circumcision of Christ;” a repetition of the first clause not unusual with the apostle. Others understand the clause *q. d.* in the Christian circumcision: *i. e.* in baptism, which, under the Christian dispensation, is substituted for circumcision, by which initiatory rite you publicly professed your faith in Christ, and renounced all the impurities and idolatrous practices of your heathen state. This is a very good sense, and seems to be supported by the succeeding words, which allude to the mode of baptism. But it is a singular phraseology, and hardly to be paralleled in the writings of the apostle. See Whitby, Peirce, &c. The fleshly body, or the old man, ch. iii. 9. The received text reads, *τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν*, *sins of the flesh*, which is wanting in the best copies, and dropped by Griesbach.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 11.

of Christ may be considered as the circumcision of his mystical body, of which you are a part. This mystical circumcision means that you have entirely laid aside the vanities and impurity of your heathen state, and are now consecrated to God through Christ; and this circumcision is all that is now required of those who profess faith in Christ, and who submit to the rite of baptism, which may not unaptly be called the Christian circumcision.

12. *Being buried with him in baptism<sup>1</sup>, in which ye were also raised with him through faith in the operation<sup>2</sup> of God who raised him from the dead.*

And such was the effect of your solemn renunciation of heathenism, by the public profession of the Christian doctrine, that it may even be considered as death to your former state, as Christ died

---

<sup>1</sup> *Buried with him in baptism.*] This seems to imply that he had alluded to baptism as the initiatory rite, the Christian circumcision in the preceding verse. In the word *buried* it is generally admitted that the apostle alludes to the mode of baptism by immersion; but allowing this, it does not prove that immersion was universal, much less indispensable. See Newcome. This allusion is pursued by the apostle more at large, Rom. vi. 4, &c., where the apostle represents heathenism as a prior state of existence: professing Christianity is death to that state; immersion is burial; emerging from the baptismal water a resurrection to a new life, similar to the resurrection of Christ; and as Christ never dies again, so believers are never to return to their old state of heathenism, but like Christ are to consecrate their renovated powers to God.

<sup>2</sup> *Faith in the operation, &c.*] “*ἐνεργείας*, the mighty working of God.” Newcome. Observe here, that it is faith in the resurrection of Christ which constitutes a man a Christian, a disciple of Christ, one of the Christian community, saved and holy. See Rom. x. 9.

upon the cross ; and your baptismal immersion resembles his temporary residence in the tomb. But as he was soon raised to life by the power of God, so likewise you emerge from the baptismal water into a new and happy state of existence, in consequence of your assured belief in that wonderful operation of divine power by which Jesus rose from the dead. So that, in consequence of this resurrection with Christ, you have no more to do with heathenism or judaism than if you were inhabitants of a new world.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 12.

4. The believers at Colossæ having become dead to their former state of heathen idolatry, and being raised to a new and better life, are under no obligation to submit to that yoke of ceremonies which their new teachers were desirous of imposing upon them, ver. 13—15.

*And you who are dead to the trespasses<sup>3</sup> and to the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath God raised to life with him<sup>4</sup>; having freely forgiven you all*

13.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Dead to the trespasses, &c.*] The received text reads *εν τοις κ. τ. λ.* “in trespasses ;” *εν* however is wanting in several manuscripts : and with Mr. Wakefield I adopt this reading, as better suiting the apostle’s train of ideas, and confirmed by Eph. ii. 1. By faith in Christ they die to trespasses and circumcision, *i. e.* to heathenism and to the law ; by immersion they are buried with Christ, by emersion they are raised with him to a new life under the heavenly dispensation of the gospel. Dr. Harwood also omits the particle *εν* : he renders the clause, “you who are now dead to your vices,” &c.; and refers to the editions of Erasmus, Aldus, Colinæus, Strasburg, and Basil, as supporting the same reading.

<sup>4</sup> *Raised to life with him.*] *συνεζωποιοησε.* In the parallel

- Ch. II. *those trespasses; having cancelled the bond*<sup>1</sup> *which*  
 Ver. 14. *was in the book of ordinances*<sup>2</sup> *against us, which*  
*was contrary to us, and taken it from between us*<sup>3</sup>,  
 15. *nailing it to the cross*<sup>4</sup>; *and having stripped prin-*  
*cipalities and powers*<sup>5</sup>, *he made them a public spec-*  
*tacle, leading them in triumph by him*<sup>6</sup>.

passage Eph. ii. 6, believers are represented as raised with Christ, and sitting with him in heavenly places: that is, according to Mr. Locke, “made partakers of his heavenly kingdom;” or, in other words, put into possession of the privileges of the gospel.

<sup>1</sup> *Cancelled the bond.*] This is the proper sense of the word χειρογραφον. See Peirce and Schleusner. It is a writing from the debtor to the creditor, acknowledging the debt. The law of Moses was this handwriting; by which the Jews were bound to observe the law, as the condition of receiving the promise. This handwriting was against us, and contrary to us: it was the means of preventing the union between Jew and Gentile; it was the wall of partition which separated the holy place from the court of the Gentiles. Eph. ii. 14, 15. Newcome thinks that the words *contrary to us* have “the appearance of a marginal explanatory note.”

<sup>2</sup> *In the book, &c.*] So Mr. Wakefield. “Having entirely cancelled and vacated that bill, consisting of such a variety of ceremonial articles, which we were liable to discharge.” Harwood.

<sup>3</sup> *From between us.*] ηρκεν εκ μεσσω, *he took from between us*: “a Hebrew change of construction,” says Dr. Newcome, “instead of απας. See Eph. i. 20, John i. 32.” He did not suffer this bond to continue between us and the Jews, to separate us from one another. Eph. ii. 14, 15, he calls the ceremonial law the middle-wall of partition, and the cause of enmity between Jews and Gentiles. See Peirce.

<sup>4</sup> *Nailing it to the cross.*] Grotius observes: “*mos est quibusdam in locis, clavis transfigendi edicta antiquata. Is tunc etiam in Asia videtur fuisse, et ad eum alludere Paulus.*” This allusion to the custom of cancelling a bond by driving a nail through it is adopted by Hammond, Doddridge, and Newcome.

<sup>5</sup> *Having stripped principalities and powers.*] τας αρχας και τας εξουσιας, “these principalities and these powers:” namely, those which have been before alluded to ver. 10, and which

I repeat it, my Christian friends, as a circumstance deserving your utmost attention: you are now dead and buried to your former state of heathenism and alienation from God, and in consequence of your baptismal profession your connexion

Ch. II.  
Ver. 15.

were there shown to mean the Jewish hierarchy, the priests and rulers; the crucifixion of Christ, which sealed and ratified the gospel dispensation, completely divested the teachers and rulers of the Jewish dispensation of every species of authority over those who were admitted into the community of believers. And by the extraordinary success of the gospel, they were in a manner led in triumph every where, and exhibited as captives whose power was now at an end.

Dr. Harwood's translation is, "having pulled down those religious establishments which were supported by the great and powerful." But this seems wide of the apostle's meaning.—"By the powerful means used to subdue vice, God showed openly that he triumphed over evil spirits." Newcome. "God hath made us victorious over the formidable spirits of darkness, having spoiled these principalities and powers of the trophies which they had gained by drawing us into the grand apostasy." Doddridge. But what reason is there to suppose that any spirit either good or evil is alluded to in this expression? Mr. Peirce's interpretation is very peculiar, viz. "Having taken from good angels their authority, he subjected them to Christ, and proposed them publicly as an example of cheerful obedience to him, causing them to triumph in Christ." Such a hypothesis surely needs no confutation: it is indeed wonderful that a man of so much talent and learning could indulge himself in these wild reveries, or could imagine that a revelation was communicated to mankind to instruct them in the useless tale of a revolution in the celestial hierarchy. "*Hostes, quos Christus contumeliæ publicæ exposuit, sunt defensores illius chirographi de quo sermo fuit, legis Mosaicæ. Defensio enim hujus legis fuit maximum impedimentum religionis Christianæ propagandæ. Christus autem morte sua effecit, ut isti hostes potentissimi, Judæorum principes et sacerdotes, nihil amplius valerent.*" Rosenmuller.

<sup>6</sup> By him:] i. e. by Christ. God is the agent in view throughout the whole context. See Peirce. Dr. Newcome renders it, "by the cross," and refers to the ancient versions in the Polyglot in confirmation of his interpretation. Origen read *εν τῷ ξυλῳ*, by the tree: i. e. the cross.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 15.

with idolatry is as completely dissolved as that of a dead corpse with the living world. Nevertheless, God has raised you to a new, and holy, and happy life, by the same power by which he raised up Jesus from the dead. And as you were before in a state of sin and alienation from God, you are now, in consequence of your admission into the Christian covenant, in a state of reconciliation and forgiveness. And this communication of evangelical blessings is perfectly gratuitous; it is the free, unmerited, unsolicited gift of God. And whereas your new teachers insinuate that you must submit to the yoke of ceremonial institutions: I earnestly advise you to give no credit to their insinuations. For God has himself cancelled that obsolete bond contained in the writings of Moses, which imposed the severe conditions of acceptance and reconciliation under the former dispensation; keeping Jews and Gentiles at an inaccessible distance from each other. And as it is common to cancel a covenant by driving a nail through the instrument which contains it, so the Mosaic covenant may be said to be nailed to the cross of Christ, being vacated by that event, which ratified the new and liberal dispensation of the Messiah; a dispensation by which all who believe are admitted without distinction to all the privileges of the family of God. Thus, putting an end to the Mosaic covenant, he divested the ministers and officers of the Jewish church of all authority to impose the yoke of the law upon believers in Christ; and by the mission and doctrine of Jesus, by the



power and energy of the spirit with which it is attended, and by its triumphant success, he has plainly and publicly transferred the authority, which was once vested in the Jewish priesthood, to the apostles and teachers of the Christian dispensation, who alone are now authorized to declare the terms of acceptance with God.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 15.

5. Upon these grounds the apostle earnestly dissuades the Colossian Christians from paying any regard to the censures of those false teachers who would either subject them to the yoke of the ceremonial law, or mislead them by plausible but erroneous tenets, repugnant to the doctrine of Christ, ver. 16—19.

*Let no one, therefore, call you to account<sup>1</sup> about meat or drink<sup>2</sup>, or with respect to a festival, or a new moon, or sabbaths<sup>3</sup>, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ's<sup>4</sup>.*

16.

17.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Call you to account.*] *μη κρινετω.* Dr. Macknight argues, that as they could not prevent others from judging them, it might be more proper to translate the words, "Let no man rule you." In the writings of the Jews it is said of their rulers, that they *judged* Israel. The sense, however, is obvious upon the common interpretation. See Rom. xiv. 3. "decide for you." Philalethes. "*Contemnite ista judicia, nec istis diris perterreamini, quas obnuncient, qui sanctè servari, hæc instituta, a vobis velint.*" Rosenmuller. *q. d.* regard them not.

<sup>2</sup> *Meat or drink.*] Macknight observes that there was no law which forbade any kind of drink except to the Nazarites: he conjectures, therefore, that abstinence from wine and strong drink might be forbidden by tradition to those who aimed at superior holiness.

<sup>3</sup> *Sabbaths.*] Nothing can be more explicit than the apostle's declaration of the entire abolition of the Jewish sabbath, which



Ch. II.  
Ver. 17.

Being thus completely released from all the restraints of the ceremonial law, do not voluntarily

---

is plainly no more obligatory upon Christians than the institution of the passover, or the rite of circumcision. The fourth commandment, therefore, is a precept which has no place in the Christian law, and ought never to be appealed to as an argument for a sabbatical institution. And it behoves those who think the observation of a day of sabbatical rest is of such high importance under the Christian dispensation, and who are so loud in their charges against those who deny, or who, as they call it, *profane* the sabbath, to show what authority they have for this imposition. I see none. The old sabbath is expressly repealed, and no new one is enjoined in its stead : always, however, keeping in mind the very obvious and important distinction between the Lord's day as a *weekly religious festival*, in joyful commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, in which way it has been universally observed from the beginning ; and as a *day of sabbatical rest* from the common employments and innocent amusements of life, for which there is no precept in the New Testament, and no example in the primitive age ; the practice of which was universally discountenanced in the primitive church, and which, to this day, prevails only in a small proportion of the protestant churches in Europe, and among their descendants in America. In Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew objects to Christians that, "pretending to excel others, they observe no sabbaths:" Justin replies, "The new law will have you keep a perpetual sabbath. You, when you have passed a day in idleness, think you are religious. The Lord our God is not pleased with such things as these. If any one is guilty of perjury or fraud, let him reform ; if he be an adulterer, let him repent ; and he will then have kept the kind of sabbath truly pleasing to God. You see that the elements are never idle, and keep no sabbath. There was no need of the observation of sabbaths before Moses, neither now is there any need of them after Jesus Christ." Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, p. 227, 229, 241, edit. Par. ; Evanson on the Sabbath, p. 92, 93.

The emperor Constantine was the first who established by law the sabbatical observation of the Lord's day : but he limited this injunction to the inhabitants of towns ; a plain proof that he did not regard it as a divine command. The emperor Leo in the fifth century enjoined universal cessation from labour on the first day of the week ; but this decree having no force in the

resign your Christian liberty. And if any one assuming airs of authority, or setting himself up for

Ch. II.  
Ver. 17.

---

West, the Council of Orleans in the sixth century abolished all restrictions of this nature, as savouring more of Judaism than Christianity; only prohibiting husbandmen from working in the field during the time of divine service. The first day of the week, therefore, has never been observed with that strictness which the decree of Leo requires in any country of Europe but our own, and that, only since the reign of Charles II. Evanson's *Lett. to Priestley*, p. 138—140, 153—155.

As the law of the country requires suspension from labour on the Lord's day, it is the duty of subjects to obey it. But surely this sabbatical observation of the day can never be of that high moral importance which many apprehend; otherwise Christ and his apostles would never have been so totally silent upon the subject. But will-worship was not confined to the apostolic age; and the censures passed upon those who do not *sabbatize* like others, are as loud and as bitter *now* as they were seventeen hundred years ago. Let those, therefore, who understand their Christian emancipation, and who determine to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made them free, while they sanctify every day as a sabbath, by abstaining from all evil, as advised by the holy Martyr, encourage themselves at the same time by the exhortation of the apostle, and suffer no man to judge them with respect to the sabbath-day. Regard no man's censure, of whatever rank, or degree, or pretensions, for not receiving as of divine authority, institutions which Christ our sole head, who possesses all authority and power in the church, hath not required.

Dr. Priestley, in his note upon this passage, remarks, that “the Gentiles were under no obligation to observe the seventh day for the purpose of *rest*, as the Jews were; but as the apostles had always been used to *offices of public worship* one day in the seven, and the propriety and use of the custom was never questioned, it cannot be supposed that they would voluntarily abandon so useful an institution, or that they would not recommend it to their disciples.” And no doubt it has been the uniform practice from the earliest age of Christianity, and sanctioned by the apostles, to observe the Lord's day as a religious festival; to consecrate it by *offices of public worship*, but not to solemnize it as a day of *sabbatical rest*. Dr. Priestley adds: “It is obvious that a day *devoted* to public worship should not be a day of *worldly business*, or of *public diversion*; because these

Ch. II.  
Ver. 17.

a person of extraordinary sanctity, should take upon himself to condemn you for neglecting the ceremonial distinctions of clean and unclean in articles of food, for not observing the annual festivals of divine appointment, paying no religious respect to the

things, though innocent in themselves, are of so different a nature from the proper business of the day, that they will be apt to interfere with one another." But may it not be asked, How much of the day is to be *devoted* to public worship? How the rest of the day can be better employed than in useful labour or innocent amusement? What can be expected from the mass of the people when they are forbidden both to work and to play? and finally, Whether, in fact, there be not more mischief done, and more crimes committed, on the first day of the week, than on all the other days put together?

This, however, is not the question. The sabbatical observation of the Lord's day is by this learned writer, and by many others, placed upon the ground of expedience *ALONE*. And if it be expedient, let it be observed; but in the name of all that is sacred, let not *expedients of human device* be substituted as *injunctions of divine authority*. The plain question is: Whether the sabbatical observation of the Lord's day is enjoined by divine authority? If it be, let the order be shown, and it shall be obeyed. In the New Testament I see the Jewish sabbath plainly abrogated; I see no new sabbatical institution appointed in its place; and I know that the primitive church explicitly disavowed any such institution. I conclude, therefore, that Christ, our only Master, saw no necessity for appointing an institution, without which, as many now think, the Christian religion could not exist. In whose judgement may we most safely confide?

How, then, it may be asked, is the Lord's day to be observed? Answer: Let a reasonable proportion of it be devoted to Christian worship and instruction; and let the remainder be spent in useful employment or innocent amusement.—They who thus keep the Lord's day, need *not regard any man's judgement concerning sabbaths*.

\* *The body is Christ's.*] "As the body stands opposed to the shadow, it must signify the reality, truth, or substance. See ver. 9. This body or substance is of Christ. that is, belongs to him, is his, is only to be found or sought in him, and not in the law." Peirce.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 17.

day of the new moon, and even making no distinction between sabbaths, and other days, regard them not. The gospel knows no such distinction. Under the new dispensation all meats are pure, all days are equal. These ceremonial distinctions were indeed well adapted to the infant state and puerile conceptions of the Jewish church; and were intended to prefigure that improved and liberal state of things which was to take place under the Christian dispensation, which is the manhood and maturity of religion; and is the substance, of which the rites of Moses were merely the shadows. We are taught by Christ that all the creatures of God are good, and consequently that one species of food will not recommend us to God more than another; also that every day is to be devoted to the service of God, and therefore that no one day, either in the week, the month, or the year, is more holy than another. And if any persons presume to teach a different doctrine, and to condemn your conduct, let them know that, acknowledging no master but Christ, you equally disregard their authority, and despise their censures.

*Let no one defraud you of your prize<sup>1</sup>, by affecting humility in the worship of angels<sup>2</sup>, in-*

18.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Defraud you, &c.*] So Newcome. Mr. Peirce translates καταβραβεύω, *condemn*. The word is used in both senses. See Schleusner.

<sup>2</sup> *Affecting humility, &c.*] “*Θελων*,” says Archbishop Newcome, “seems equivalent to *Θελητης, εθελοντης*, ‘a voluntary in humility,’ as in the margin of the bible.” Literally it may be rendered “a volunteer in humility in the worship of angels.”

Ch. II. *truding into those things which he hath not seen*<sup>1</sup>;  
 Ver. 19. *rashly puffed up by his carnal mind*<sup>2</sup>, and not adhering firmly to the head<sup>3</sup>, from which the whole body being supplied and compacted by connecting joints, increaseth with a very large increase<sup>4</sup>.

I have cautioned you against some who would infringe your liberty by bringing you under the yoke

It alludes to those who, from pretended humility, applied to angels as mediators to render their prayers acceptable to God. That the Jews regarded the angels as mediators, is evident from Tobit, ch. xii. and from a passage in Philo quoted by Peirce.—It seems highly probable that the apostle here refers to the Essenes, a sect of the Jews who practised great austerities, and who boasted that they knew and preserved with great care the names of angels. See Joseph. *De Bell. Jud.* l. ii. c. 7. § 12., and Aldrich's note. Vide Peirce *in loc.*

<sup>1</sup> *Intruding into, &c.*] “*Ingrediens in ea.*” Bos. See also Elsner, that the word signifies “*immiscere se, ingerere, rebus non ad se pertinentibus.*” Newcome. “boldly prying into, and dictating about, matters which he knows nothing of.” Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> *Carnal mind.*] “And this he is led to by his Jewish temper.” Peirce; who observes, “that this is the sense in which the apostle often uses the words *σαρξ* and *σαρκικός*, and refers to Gal. iii. 3, 2 Cor. xi. 18. See Locke. *Phil.* iii. 3, 4; Heb. vii. 16, ix. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *The head.*] “Christ. The expression has a reference to ver. 10.” Newcome. “*κρατεῖν τινα, sectari aliquem, eique tenacissime inhærere.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> *With a very large increase.*] “In the original, ‘with the increase of God,’ a well known form of the Hebrew superlative degree.” Harwood. “Upon the whole, the thing which the apostle cautions against is the worshipping of angels: the pretence by which this was endeavoured to be ushered in was, that this was most agreeable to humility: what St. Paul says of their intruding into things they had not seen, their being puffed up by a fleshly mind, and not holding the head, is his censure upon their conduct; and when he says, ‘Let no man judge or condemn you in this respect,’ he means that the Colossians should not be moved with, or at all regard, any such judgement. Compare ver. 16.” Peirce.

of the ceremonial law ; but there are others against whose doctrines and practices I must enter a still stronger protest. They are so radically inconsistent with the essential doctrines of Christ, that to embrace them would be to renounce the profession, and with it the rewards, of Christianity. Guard strictly, then, against the plausible insinuations of those teachers who, making loud pretensions to superior humility, and representing it as unpardonable pride in sinful man to address his supplications immediately to a holy God, inculcate the worship of angels as mediators to intercede with God for us. This doctrine and the teachers of it are reprehensible in the highest degree. It is an arrogant intrusion into things which are not revealed, and of which, therefore, it is impossible that these pretended teachers can have the least knowledge. And, while they boast of their humility, they are in fact conceited to a high degree with this groundless notion, which they vainly regard as a profound philosophical speculation annexed to the doctrine of Moses. But the most important consideration of all is, that by this doctrine they entirely separate themselves from Christ, the only mediator between God and man, the only head and law-giver of the church, which is his mystical body, vitally united to him, and which lives, and grows, and thrives, only as it derives from him the nourishment of pure and unsophisticated truth. If, therefore, under any pretence whatever, you become worshipers of supposed invisible and created spirits, you are no longer

Ch. II.  
Ver. 19.



Ch. II. the disciples of Christ, nor true and accepted mem-  
Ver. 19. bers of his visible church.

6. The apostle, addressing himself particularly to those converts who were disposed to submit to the yoke of the ceremonial law, argues strongly against their subjecting themselves to a ritual to which they were by profession dead, ver. 20—23.

20. *Seeing<sup>1</sup> that ye are dead with Christ from the rudiments<sup>2</sup> of the world, why, as though living in the world<sup>3</sup>, are ye imposing upon yourselves<sup>4</sup> or-*

<sup>1</sup> *Seeing.*] “*ei* for *ειπε*” see ch. iii. 1.” Wakefield, Harwood. The apostle alludes to ver. 12 and 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Rudiments.*] or, *shadows*; *σκιαιωμ*, i. e. from the Jewish ritual; see ver. 8: *q. d.* you have renounced all expectation of being benefited by the observation of rites and ceremonies. Mr. Peirce thinks this paragraph is addressed to the Jewish converts only, for they alone were attached to Jewish rites, and were dead by profession to Jewish ordinances, under which the Gentile converts, whom through the epistle he continually praises for their stedfastness in the faith (see ch. i. 4, 6, 7, ii. 5, 6, 7) had never lived. But the apostle seems to represent the heathen converts as dead by profession, not only to their heathen idolatrous state, but to all expectation of benefit from any other system than Christianity; and though the majority of heathen converts might be stedfast in their adherence to the faith, yet some might, and probably did, incline to listen to their Judaizing teachers; and no doubt it was chiefly to obviate the impression made by them, and to preserve purity of faith in the heathen converts, that the apostle wrote this and its concomitant epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians. At any rate, the advice is addressed to those who were disposed to impose Jewish rites upon themselves or others.

<sup>3</sup> *In the world.*] “under the Jewish dispensation, ver. 8.” Newcome.

<sup>4</sup> *Imposing upon yourselves.*] See Wakefield and Macknight. “Why do ye still dogmatize? i. e. require compliance with the injunctions of the law?” Peirce.



*dinances (eat not<sup>5</sup>, taste not, touch not, all which meats<sup>6</sup> are made to be consumed by the use of them), according to the commandments and the doctrines of men<sup>7</sup>: which, having<sup>8</sup> indeed a pretence of wisdom<sup>9</sup> in will-worship<sup>10</sup>, and humility of mind,*

Ch. II.

Ver. 21, 22.

23.

<sup>5</sup> *Eat not.*] *μη άψη.* Mr. Wakefield refers to 2 Cor. vi. 17, as a passage in which the word bears the same sense. Dr. Harwood confirms it by passages from Diogenes Laertius and Opiian, and Schleusner by the authority of Xenophon and Homer. Dr. Doddridge observes, “ that the quick succession of these precepts, without any copulatives between, happily expresses the eagerness with which the seducing teachers inculcated those things.” Kypke and others observe a climax in the apostle’s words, “ do not eat, do not taste, do not touch.”

<sup>6</sup> *All which meats.*] In this interpretation of the clause I agree with Peirce, Newcome, Rosenmuller, and others. “ *Sensus est, hi omnes cibi, tantum abest ut polluant vescentem, ut potius ipso usu pereant, et conficiantur.*” Rosenmuller. “ All these things are to be consumed by a temperate use of them.” Peirce. *αποχρησει* is wanting in the Æthiopic, and omitted by Wakefield. “ It denotes the use of such things as are consumed in using, in opposition to the use of such as are not consumed; viz. houses, land,” &c. Bowyer.

<sup>7</sup> *Doctrines of men.*] The Jewish sectaries, the Pharisees, Essenes, &c. carried their traditional precepts far beyond the rigour of the written law. To these the apostle appears to allude, rather than to the Pythagorean precepts, as Macknight supposes; or to the worship of angels, which is Peirce’s opinion, and in which Newcome follows him. Perhaps he includes all the extravagances of the Essene opinions. “ *Videtur Paulus non simpliciter contra Judæos, Mosis legem defendentes disputare, adeo contemptim de opinionibus eorum loquitur; sed, contra Judæos magnam vanarum opinionum copiam, ad Mosis legem, adsciscentes.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>8</sup> *Which, having, &c.*] This verse is obscure; but by the punctuation suggested by Peirce and others, the sense is made plain. Include in a parenthesis from *λογον* to *σωματος*, and place a comma after *τινι*, supplying the adversative particle *αλλα* before *προς*. “ Which precepts, though pretending to wisdom, are not in any estimation, but serve to satisfy the flesh.” See Peirce, Newcome, Griesbach, and Barrington *apud* Bowyer.

<sup>9</sup> *Pretence of wisdom.*] *λογον* amongst many other senses

Ch. II. *and corporal severity, are in no estimation*<sup>1</sup>, but  
Ver. 23. *serve to the gratification of the flesh*<sup>2</sup>.

Let me speak freely to those among you who are disposed to submit to that yoke of useless rites which the Jewish sectaries endeavour to impose. Remember, my brethren, that by your baptismal profession you are dead, not only to a state of heathenism, but of Judaism also; and that you have no more concern with the ritual law than a dead man with the living world. Why, then, do you disgrace the gospel by acting as if you were living under the Jewish polity, and subject to all the burdensome rites, not only of Moses, but of the Jewish sectaries? Why do you impose upon yourselves and others harsh restrictions concerning different kinds of food? do not eat this, do not taste that, do not touch the other? Be assured that the gospel pronounces all the creatures of God to be equally good, equally lawful; and its generous spirit

of this word, Schleusner gives the following, which he supports by authorities from Chrysostom, Sophocles, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus: "*Species apparens, et externa alicujus rei, quæ rei ipsi et veritati opponitur.*" The Essenes, who are here probably alluded to, pretended to be adepts in a superior and sublime philosophy. See Peirce, and Prideaux's *Connexion*, part ii. book v. p. 343—361. 8vo. Also Joseph. *Antiq.* l. xviii. 2. *De Bell. Jud.* ii. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Will-worship.*] worship of angels; compare ver. 18.

<sup>1</sup> *In no estimation.*] "*ἐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι*" τιμή signifies both *honour* and *profit*." Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> *Gratification of the flesh.*] "Gratifying persons of a fleshly or Jewish disposition, ver. 18." Peirce. The word *flesh*, in the apostle's writings, is continually used for the *law*, in opposition to *spirit*, which signifies the *gospel*. See Rom. viii. 4—8.

disdains to prescribe any rules concerning articles of diet and daily consumption, but those of temperance and gratitude. Nor indeed did the law of Moses itself extend to those burdensome restrictions which the Jewish sectaries now prescribe. They are mere human inventions and impositions, of no authority whatever, even in respect to Jews, much less with regard to Christians. They are indeed proposed to you under the specious form of a sublime philosophy, of a superior wisdom; which enjoins a purity and perfection of worship beyond what the law of God itself requires; which promotes humility and self-abasement; and which recommends itself to God by voluntary austerities, and severe corporal abstinences and penances. But all this voluntary service and mortification is irrational and unauthorized. It is of no account in the sight of God, and of no practical or moral use to the misguided man who submits to it. And it is but too true that many who make the loudest pretensions to mortification and humility, and who are most rigorous in ceremonial services, are prompted to it by spiritual pride, and an absurd opinion that, by such practices, they shall attain a peculiar share of the divine favour, while they neglect the proper duties of life.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 23.

7. As risen with Christ to a new life, the apostle exhorts them to act up to the free and liberal spirit of the gospel, in full assurance of an ultimate and everlasting reward, ch. iii. ver. 1—4.

Ch. III.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 1.

*Seeing*<sup>1</sup>, therefore, that ye have been raised up with Christ, seek those things which are above<sup>2</sup>, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God<sup>3</sup>.

2. *Set your minds*<sup>4</sup> on things above, not on those on the earth.

As by your baptismal immersion you are dead and buried to the heathen and the Jewish state, and to all their laws and rules; so by your return from that ordinance you are figuratively raised with Christ to another life, you are introduced by your profession of Christianity into a new world; you are become members of that holy community of which Jesus is the exalted chief; you are introduced into new connexions, new privileges, and new ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Seeing*, &c.] Compare ch. ii. 20. As dead, they were to renounce all expectation from rites of the law: as raised to life, they were to act conformably to the principles and expectations of the gospel. See ch. ii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Things which are above*.] Calvin justly understands this of the sublimer parts of Christianity, as opposed to Jewish ceremonies and rudiments of the world. See Doddridge on the text. It is plain that the apostle, by things *above*, means that superior state into which we are introduced by Christ, *i. e.* the gospel dispensation.

<sup>3</sup> *Where Christ*, &c.] This expression has misled expositors to imagine that the apostle is here alluding to a local heaven. Whereas the expression, *sitting at the right hand of God*, can mean nothing more than advancement to great dignity in the church, of which Christ is appointed by God to be Lord and Head.

<sup>4</sup> *Set your minds*, &c.] *φρονεῖτε*, an advance upon *ζῴτετε* in the preceding verse. *Things on earth*: “such poor matters as meats and drinks.” Peirce. This ingenious expositor perceived that “things on earth” signified the “requisitions of the law;” but it does not appear to have occurred to him that its opposite, “things above,” must therefore signify “the precepts and the spirit of the gospel.”

pectations, and are subject to new laws. You are, in a manner, translated from earth to heaven. Let your whole conduct, therefore, be worthy of your exalted situation; and behave in all respects as becomes members of that community over which Christ is appointed by God to exercise supreme authority. Let me press it upon you to practise and to devote yourselves wholly to the moral duties of your Christian profession, and to pay no attention whatsoever to Jewish rites. To you they are as insignificant and worthless as the toys of earth to an inhabitant of heaven.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 2.

*For ye have died<sup>5</sup>, and your life is treasured up<sup>6</sup> with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, shall be manifested, then ye also shall be manifested with him in glory.*

3.

4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ye have died.*] See Gal. ii. 20, where the same thought occurs. Christians are dead to all expectations from the world, and from the law; yet they possess a life with Christ; they are raised with him to a life of holiness, and to the hope of immortal life. This life is treasured up in God; secure in his purpose and promise. It is also concealed; for the blessings promised are not known to the world, nor even to believers themselves. But the time will come when the divine purpose shall be made manifest. Christ, their life, the preacher of life, whose resurrection is the proof and pledge of theirs, and who is their living head, whose life is inseparably connected with theirs, shall appear to fulfill his glorious mission, and then they shall be publicly manifested as the heirs of immortal happiness.

<sup>6</sup> *Treasured up.*] “laid up in store with Christ in God: as in a store-room, ready for future use. *κεκρυπται* is equivalent to *τεθησαυρισται*. See Col. ii. 3; Matt. xiii. 44; 2 Tim. i. 12. Hence light is thrown upon Luke xx. 38, Matt. vi. 1.” Wakefield. Newcome observes, that “*κεκρυπται*, ver. 3, is opposed to *φανερῶθη*, ver. 4; and is explained by it *q. d.* as Christ is invisibly with God, so your life is with God, concealed, deposited, or treasured up with him, to be bestowed on you in his

Ch. III.  
Ver. 4.

And why, my brethren, am I so much in earnest in urging you to neglect ceremonial services, and to confine your attention to the moral duties of the gospel? It is because you have no concern whatever with the Jewish institutes. You are, by the profession of Christianity, become dead to all expectation of benefit by a ritual service. Nevertheless you live: you have entered upon a new and glorious life; a life of holiness, and faith, and virtue here, preparatory for, and introductory to, a life of happiness hereafter. This life is treasured up in God, in his purposes, his councils, and his promises; it is at present concealed; it does not yet appear what we shall be. And though you will shortly moulder in the dust, you will still live with Christ, your instructor, your fore-runner, and your pledge of immortality. His renewed life is the security for yours. Nor shall this great distinction remain for ever veiled in obscurity. When the appointed season arrives, Christ, your Redeemer from the grave, shall appear in his own and his Father's glory, to raise the dead and to judge the world. Then shall you be publicly acknowledged by him as his faithful and approved disciples, and be admitted to share with him in his glorious and everlasting triumph.

---

good time." "The life of the Christian," says Dr. Doddridge, "is here represented as an invaluable jewel, and under a double security, secure as the abode of Christ with the Father, or, as the fidelity and immutability of the Father himself could make it." ver. 4. *your life*: this is the reading of the Ephrem and other MSS. The received text reads *ἡμῶν, our*.

## PART THE SECOND.

THE APOSTLE IN THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE Ch. III.  
 EPISTLE INSISTS UPON PERSONAL DUTIES, UPON  
 THE DUTIES WHICH CHRISTIANS OWE TO EACH  
 OTHER, UPON RELATIVE DUTIES, AND FINALLY,  
 UPON THE CONDUCT WHICH OUGHT TO BE OB-  
 SERVED TO UNBELIEVERS. Ch. iii. 5—iv. 6.

## SECTION I.

*THE APOSTLE presses the duty of self-government,  
 and the indispensable necessity of utterly for-  
 saking the vices of their former heathen state.*  
 Ch. iii. 5—7.

*Put to death<sup>1</sup>, therefore, your members, which* Ver. 5.  
*were upon the earth<sup>2</sup>, fornication, impurity, dis-*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Put to death.*] So Macknight. *Mortify* is always used in a figurative sense, and does not convey the apostle's idea. The heathen *self* is supposed to be dead by the profession of Christianity; if, however, there should be in any of its members any remains of life, they are to be resolutely put to death. By this the apostle means, that if any of those disorderly passions, those impure affections, which were not only tolerated but encouraged by heathen idolatry, and to which the Colossians themselves had been addicted in their unconverted state, remained in their hearts, they must resolutely resist and exterminate them, as absolutely inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity.

<sup>2</sup> *Which were upon the earth.*] i. e. which belonged to you



Ch. III.  
Ver. 5.

*orderly passion, evil desire, and exorbitant lewdness, which is idolatry*<sup>1</sup>.

I have said that, by the profession of Christianity, you are become new creatures, and have entered into a new world. Your former persons, your heathen selves, are dead. It is, however, possible that some parts or limbs of this former self may not be quite extinct, but may still possess life and motion. If this be the case, I strictly charge you to put them to death without delay and without reserve. The meaning of this allegory, I doubt not, you well understand. The impure abominable rites of heathenism were intended and calculated to inflame the passions. The most odious debaucheries often constituted a part of idolatrous worship. These crimes are strictly prohibited by the Christian law; all tendency to them must be guarded against with the utmost vigilance and resolution: and all irregular affections must be completely suppressed.

6. *For which the anger of God is coming upon the*
7. *sons of disobedience*<sup>2</sup>; *in which ye also formerly walked when ye lived among them.*

---

in your heathen state. You are now raised to life with Christ, and elevated with him to an upper region. See ver. 1, 2.

<sup>1</sup> *Exorbitant lewdness, which is idolatry.*] πλεονεξία that this word is used in the writings of the apostle for those abominable impurities to which the heathen were so notoriously addicted, is sufficiently proved by Mr. Locke, after Dr. Hammond, in his note upon Eph. iv. 19, which is quoted at length by Peirce. Mr. Wakefield translates it "inordinate desire." It is called idolatry, as being authorized and countenanced by the rites and practices of idolatrous nations. The infamous state of the Gentile world in this respect is well known, and is strongly and justly represented by the apostle, Rom. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Sons of disobedience.*] i. e. the heathen, who were disobe-

These criminal excesses are highly offensive in the sight of God, and he will in due time manifest his displeasure by overturning the heathen idolatry from its foundations. But if he is justly incensed against the uninstructed and unconverted heathen on this account, how much more offensive must such conduct be in professing Christians! Nor will you think my caution useless, when you recollect that many of you, while in your heathen state, were as culpable in these respects as others.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 7.

## SECTION II.

*THE APOSTLE insists upon the duties which believers owe to each other. Ch. iii. 8—17.*

1. He cautions them against giving way to intemperate passion; and to abstain from falsehood and deceit, ver. 8—11.

*But now, do ye also lay aside all these: anger, animosity, malice, evil-speaking, reproachful words<sup>3</sup> from your mouth.* 8.

---

dient, not only to the gospel revelation, but to the light and law of nature, Rom. i. 20—28. The anger of God, which is here denounced, may signify the calamities which were impending over the Roman empire; but more probably the utter extermination of the then prevailing system of heathen superstition, by the success of the Christian religion.

<sup>3</sup> *Reproachful words.*] *αἰσχρολογία*. Dr. Whitby observes, from Hesychius, Phavorinus, and Julius Pollux, that the word is used in this sense; which also best suits the connexion. It

Ch. III.  
Ver. 8.

As it is your duty to maintain the strictest government over your appetites and passions, so likewise you are required to set a guard upon your tempers. You are not to imagine, as the heathen do, that you are at liberty to indulge implacable animosity, resentment, and rage, for every offence, and to give vent to your angry and malignant passions in calumnious and reproachful language. Such a conduct as this would be a disgrace to your profession.

9. *Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the*  
10. *old man*<sup>1</sup> *with his practices, and have put on the*  
*new man; who is renewed in knowledge according*  
*to the image of his creator*<sup>2</sup>.

Let no consideration induce you to utter a wilful falsehood with an intention to deceive and injure others. How innocent soever such conduct may be deemed among ignorant heathen, it is utterly inadmissible among professing Christians. Remember, you are dead to your old heathen state, and by

---

is generally rendered *filthy talking or conversation*, and is understood as a prohibition of all licentious discourse. See Eph. iv. 29.

<sup>1</sup> *The old man, &c.] i. e.* your heathen state, your former self, with his deeds, and particularly the habit of *lying*. Many of the philosophers thought lying lawful when it was profitable. See Leland *on the Necessity of the Christian Revelation*, vol. ii. p. 219, 220.

<sup>2</sup> *The new man, &c.] Your Christian state; your new self.* New in all respects: particularly as to the knowledge of right and wrong. *According to the image of his creator:* i. e. Jesus Christ. See Col. i. 16. Believers by the new creation are formed after the image of Christ their creator, as man was originally formed after the image of God in the natural creation. Gen. i. 26, 27.

embracing the doctrine of Christ you are become new persons, living in a new state, possessing new apprehensions and feelings, subject to new laws, and influenced by new views and hopes. You are created anew by Jesus Christ, and you bear the stamp and image of your Creator. And particularly you resemble him in knowledge, and in the power of discriminating justly between right and wrong, so as not to be in danger of confounding good and evil like your heathen neighbours; who are involved in the most pernicious errors upon moral subjects. You, I say, are of that new creation,

Ch. III.  
Ver. 10.

*Wherein there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free-man, but Christ is all and in all*<sup>3</sup>.

11.

In this new state into which you are introduced by the gospel, all ceremonial and civil distinctions are overlooked. The believing Gentile is as acceptable to God as the believing Jew; the barbarian has the same title to the privileges of the gospel as the

---

<sup>3</sup> *Christ is all, and in all.*] Christ, *i. e.* a resemblance to Christ, *is all*, *i. e.* is the only thing attended to: *in all*, *i. e.* in all believers, of whatsoever rank, profession, or country. The only qualification necessary for a participation of the blessings of the gospel is Christ, a belief of his doctrine, and a conformity to his image. All other distinctions, whether ceremonial or civil, are in this view of no use. Hence we see how very frivolous and inconclusive the argument is which is drawn from this text to prove that Christ is truly God: viz. that he is here called *all and in all*; and that the same words are applied to God, 1 Cor. xv. 28, that God may be all in all. The expressions in the two passages are used in senses widely different. The same mode of reasoning would prove Adam to be God; for he was the Father of all mankind, and so likewise is God.

Ch. III. polite, and the Christian slave as the Christian free-  
Ver. 11. man. In a word, the only circumstance of any importance in this new state into which believers are introduced is, their resemblance to Christ in all the excellencies of his character. In proportion as they bear his image, they are entitled to participate in his glory.

2. The apostle earnestly recommends the practice of various social virtues, and particularly the exercise of a gentle and forgiving spirit, ver. 12—15.

12. *Put on*<sup>1</sup>, *therefore, as chosen, holy, and beloved of God*<sup>2</sup>, *the tenderest pity*<sup>3</sup>, *kindness*<sup>4</sup>, *humility of mind, meekness, long-suffering, (bearing with each other, and freely forgiving each other if any*

<sup>1</sup> *Put on, &c.*] The heathen man, the former self, being dead, his garments also were to be laid aside, viz. *anger, wrath, &c.* ver. 8, 9; i. e. the vices of the heathen state. And the *new man*, the Christian self, the image of Christ, being assumed, a becoming dress must be put on with it, such as *pity, kindness, and the other virtues of the Christian character*; which are all to be made fast with the girdle of love. Gal. iii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Chosen, &c.*] These are epithets which express their present privileged and Christian state as distinguished from their former state of heathenism when they were excluded from the privileges of God's professing people. They were *chosen* by God from the rest of the heathen world; they were *holy*, as being separated from the rest of mankind by their profession of Christianity: they were *beloved*, as being favoured with peculiar privileges. See Taylor's *Key to the Romans*.

<sup>3</sup> *Tenderest pity.*] In the Greek, "bowels of pity." See Macknight.

<sup>4</sup> *Kindness.*] χρηστοτητα "properly signifies," says Dr. Macknight, "that sweetness of disposition which leads men to comply with the innocent inclinations of others, and to speak to them courteously."

one have a complaint against another, even as the Lord freely forgave<sup>5</sup> you, so also do ye,) and over all these put on love, which is the band of perfection<sup>6</sup>. .

Ch. II.

Ver. 14.

In your new created state, if you all bear the image of Christ in profession and spirit, you are all equally dear to God, whatever your previous local, civil, or ceremonial distinctions may have been; and you are all equally entitled to those high and honourable epithets which were once limited to the chosen descendants of Abraham. But in your new state you must also wear a new dress: instead of clothing yourselves in robes of anger, resentment, and revenge, when any injury has been received, or

---

<sup>5</sup> *The Lord freely forgave.*] The Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and the Italic and Vulgate versions, read *Κυριος* instead of *Χριστος*. God is said to have freely forgiven the sins of their heathen state, by having gratuitously admitted them to a participation of the privileges of the gospel, upon the profession of their faith in Christ. This, in the apostle's language, is being justified freely by his grace. Rom. iii. 24. This seems to indicate, that Christians are not to wait till overtures of reconciliation are made by the offending party; but, though justly offended, to be the first in proposing offers of peace.

<sup>6</sup> *Over all these, &c.*] Love is the Christian's girdle. See Macknight. *Τελειοι* are *perfect Christians*; believers eminent in knowledge and virtue: see 1 Cor. ii. 6; Eph. iv. 13; Col. i. 28, iv. 12: *τελειοτης*, therefore, is that which constitutes perfection, viz. the virtues of the Christian character. Love is the band of these virtues: it comprehends them all. When love exists, no other social virtue will be wanting. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Rom. xiii. 10. The Clermont and some other copies read *ενοτητα*. Love is the band of *unity*: it is this which preserves harmony and union among the different members of the Christian church. See Schleusner and Griesbach. This sense does not seem quite so well to suit the connexion, where love is represented as the girdle of the Christian dress, binding together the various articles of which it is composed.



Ch. III.  
Ver. 14.

apprehended, you must, as the chosen servants of God, put on the garments of pity, of kindness, of forbearance and forgiveness; bearing with each others infirmities and imperfections. And even where offence has been wantonly given, you ought to be ready to forgive the penitent offender without always waiting for complete compensation for the injury received: in this respect imitating the great example of God himself, who has gratuitously, and without any solicitation on your part, overlooked the sins of your heathen state, and imparted to you the inestimable blessings of the gospel. Let this illustrious instance of divine mercy be the model of your conduct. And finally, let the social virtues be bound to your heart by the cincture of love; of love, which comprehends in itself all social duty, and is the great bond of union among the disciples of Christ.

15. *And let the peace of Christ<sup>1</sup>, unto which ye have been called in one body, preside<sup>2</sup> in your hearts; and be thankful.*

Let that peace which you enjoy as members of

---

<sup>1</sup> *Peace of Christ.*]  $\chi\rho\iota\varsigma\epsilon$ . Such is the reading of the Alexandrine and other approved copies; which is adopted by Griesbach, Newcome, and Wakefield. *The peace of Christ* is that state of peace with God and with each other into which we have been introduced by Christ. See Eph. ii. 14—16. This peace is accomplished by uniting all believers in one body, of which Christ is the head. Eph. iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Preside in your hearts.*]  $\beta\rho\alpha\varsigma\epsilon\upsilon\omega$  is, to assign the prize to the conqueror in the games; and in general, to *preside* or *rule*. The apostle's advice is, that they should act by their fellow-Christians consistently with that state of harmony and concord into which they have been introduced by Christ.



Christ's mystical body, peace with God, and reconciliation to each other, animate you to live at peace one with another, and to love each other. Let mutual love and harmony be the great prize of your holy and Christian ambition: and maintain a thankful spirit for the blessings which you enjoy by the gospel revelation.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 15.

3. The apostle further recommends a cheerful, thankful, pious spirit as the best evidence of an intimate knowledge of the gospel, ver. 16, 17.

*Let the doctrine of Christ dwell in you richly<sup>3</sup>. With all wisdom teaching and admonishing yourselves<sup>4</sup> by psalms, and hymns, and spiritual odes<sup>5</sup>; singing with thankfulness<sup>6</sup> in your hearts to God<sup>7</sup>.*

16.

Study the instructions of Christ with attention suited to their importance; and make yourselves very familiar, both with the precepts and the doctrines of Christianity. And in this view you will find it of great advantage to commit to memory psalms and hymns and other pious poetical compositions which are easily remembered and recol-

<sup>3</sup> *Richly.*] I follow the punctuation of Griesbach and Macknight.

<sup>4</sup> *Yourselves.*] *ἑαυτοῖς*. So Wakefield. "one another." Newcome. "yourselves and others." Macknight.

<sup>5</sup> *Psalms, &c.*] It is not easy to distinguish the different kinds of poems to which the apostle alludes. See Eph. v. 19. Dr. Macknight says that *ὠδαί*, *odes*, are poems which were composed to be sung with a lyre or other musical instrument.

<sup>6</sup> *With thankfulness.*] *ἐν χαρῇ*. See Wakefield and Newcome. Rom. vi. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 57; 2 Cor. ii. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *To God.*] *Θεῷ*. This is the reading of the most approved manuscripts and versions. See Griesbach and Newcome.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 16.

lected, and which convey important truths in impressive language. These impressions will also be more permanent and useful, if the repetition of the words is accompanied with music vocal or instrumental. Only let me remind you, that when you sing you must exercise devout affections; and particularly, a grateful spirit, without which the most sublime language accompanied with the most exquisite harmony would be nothing more than a contemptible jargon of unmeaning sounds.

17. *And whatsoever ye say or do<sup>1</sup>, do all in the name of Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>; giving thanks to God, even the Father, through him.*

To conclude: I earnestly press it upon you, in every state and circumstance of life to act agreeably to your Christian profession; in obedience to the authority, and in conformity to the example, of your master Jesus: and, like his, let your whole lives be a continued act of devotion, and an uninterrupted expression of gratitude to God.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Say or do :*] this is Mr. Wakefield's version.

<sup>2</sup> *Jesus Christ.*] Such is the reading of most of the ancient copies. The received text reads, "Lord Jesus." See Griesbach. "Let your whole minds be occupied by Christian sentiments. Let your great object be to recommend the principles of your religion to others, by acting upon them yourselves; and always consider yourselves as under the greatest obligation to God for this invaluable gift." Dr. Priestley.

## SECTION III.

*THE APOSTLE briefly insists upon relative duties.* Ch. IV.  
Ch. iii. 18—iv. i.

1. He urges the duties of the conjugal relation, ver. 18, 19.

*Wives, be subject<sup>3</sup> to your husbands, as it is fit* Ver. 18.  
*in the Lord<sup>4</sup>. Husbands, love your wives, and be* 19.  
*not bitter toward them.*

Let Christian wives yield that deference to their unbelieving husbands which the laws and customs of society require : for such conduct is highly agreeable to the principles of the Christian religion, which, whatever change it may introduce into men's moral state, makes no alteration in their civil relations. And let Christian husbands behave kindly and tenderly to their unbelieving wives ; and not think themselves authorized to deal harshly with them

---

<sup>3</sup> *Wives, be subject, &c.*] Dr. Chandler has satisfactorily shown that the precepts concerning relative duties Eph. v. 22 *et seq.* evidently relate to persons of different religions ; and as these are a brief recapitulation of the same advices, there can be no doubt that they relate to persons in the same circumstances. The apostle might not think it necessary to insist more particularly upon the subject, as he directs the Colossians to send for and to read the other epistle in the church. See ver. 16.

<sup>4</sup> *It is fit in the Lord.*] “ *In the Lord.* Among those who are Christians.” Newcome.

Ch. III. because they have not yet embraced the faith of Christ.

2. He states the duties of children and parents, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 20. *Children, obey your parents in all things*<sup>1</sup>; for  
21. *this is acceptable in the Lord*<sup>2</sup>. *Fathers, do not irritate*<sup>3</sup> *your children, lest they be discouraged.*

Let not the believing children of unbelieving parents imagine that the profession of Christianity releases them from the obligation of filial duty; but let them be assured that they are then acting a part most acceptable to God and most suitable to their Christian profession, when they yield that entire subjection to paternal authority which the established order of society requires, and even excel others in filial duty, where the superior obligations of religion do not interfere.

And let not believing parents animadvert with too much severity upon the errors and the faults of their unconverted children, lest young persons often and harshly reprov'd, and despairing of coming up to that high standard of perfection which the parent has established, should be tempted to

---

<sup>1</sup> *In all things.*] Christianity does not diminish that authority which the laws and customs of the country have placed in the hands of the parent. An exception, however, must be made to those precepts which are plainly repugnant to the laws of God.

<sup>2</sup> *Acceptable in the Lord.*] *εν Κυριω* is the true reading. See ver. 18, and Griesbach.

<sup>3</sup> *Irritate.*] *παροργιζετε* is the reading of the most authentic copies. See Griesbach.

throw off every restraint, and to abandon themselves to vice and ruin. Ch. III.

3. He insists more particularly upon the duties of servants and masters, ver. 22—iv. 1.

*Bond-servants, obey your earthly masters<sup>4</sup> in all things; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but with simplicity of heart revering the Lord<sup>5</sup>: and whatsoever ye are employed in, perform it from the soul<sup>6</sup> as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that from the Lord ye will receive the reward of the inheritance, for Christ indeed is the master whom ye are serving<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, he that doeth* Ver. 22. 23. 24. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Earthly masters.*] In the original, “masters according to the flesh.” “temporal masters.” Dr. Harwood. The apostle is evidently addressing himself to the Christian servants, or rather slaves, of unbelieving masters; who probably might believe, and by their false teachers be told, that being emancipated from all former connexions by faith in Christ, they were no further bound to obey their masters than while they were under their immediate inspection and in danger of punishment for neglect of duty; but that they were at perfect liberty to neglect their master's service if they could do it with impunity. The apostle teaches them that the profession of Christianity relaxed no civil obligations; that obedience to their masters was a duty they owed to Christ; and that, however unjust or oppressive the conduct of their masters might be, it was their duty to be faithful and active in their service, whether under their master's eye, or not, and to look for their reward in a future life. See Eph. vi. 5—8, and Chandler's notes.

<sup>5</sup> *Revering the Lord.*] *τον Κυριον* is the true reading: the received text reads “God.” See Griesbach. Simplicity of heart in the preceding clause is opposed to that double-dealing for which slaves were remarkable.

<sup>6</sup> *From the soul.*] See Wakefield. *εκ ψυχης*. Comp. Eph. vi. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *For Christ indeed, &c.*] This is Mr. Wakefield's version, and expresses accurately the true meaning of the apostle.

Ch. III. *wrong shall suffer for the wrong which he hath*  
Ver. 25. *done; and there is no respect of persons* <sup>1</sup>.

I must be a little more particular in my advice to Christian slaves, who, having been regenerated into that new creation in which in a moral view there is no distinction but what arises from real worth, may be inclined to believe, and are indeed by their false teachers instructed, that they are released from all obligation to serve heathen masters; and that they are in duty bound to do nothing more than what they are compelled to do under their master's eye. Let me assure you, that these principles are very remote from the spirit of the gospel; which enforces all civil duties by new and most efficacious motives.

Instead, therefore, of neglecting the service of your heathen masters, I call upon you to obey them with alacrity in all their lawful commands: and that not only when their eye is upon you, and from a desire to recommend yourselves to them, but perform your work honestly as a Christian duty, and from regard to the authority of Christ. Do all that is required of you, and do it cheerfully; as if you were working, not for an earthly master, but for Christ himself. In a word, always consider yourselves as the servants of Christ; and whatever you are ordered to do, do it with the same alertness and zeal as if Christ had given you the com-

---

<sup>1</sup> *No respect of persons.*] This observation is applied to the conduct of masters Eph. vi. 9.

mand. For he is your true master ; and whether your heathen masters reward you or not, he will give you ample recompense for your fidelity, and will admit you to the relation and privileges of children in the great family of which he is the head. But on the contrary, if any one neglects his proper duty, and under any pretence whatever does injury to another, he shall certainly suffer condign punishment from his impartial judge ; whether he be a believer or an unbeliever, a master or a slave.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 25.

*Masters, give unto your bond-servants what is just and equitable<sup>2</sup>, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 1.

Christian masters, see to it that ye do not treat your heathen slaves as if they were not entitled to common humanity and common justice. Require nothing from them but what is reasonable, and give them the encouragement and recompense which is their due. Remember that you are by profession the servants of Christ ; and though he is now invisible, he will another day appear in judgement, and as you have acted by your slaves and dependants, so you may justly expect to be treated by your Master when he comes.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Just and equitable.*] το δικαιον, και την ισοτητα. Comp. Eph. vi. 9. τα αυτα ποιειτε, *do the same things.*



## SECTION IV.

Ch. IV. *THE APOSTLE recommends piety and devotion towards God, and prudence in their conduct towards their heathen neighbours. Ch. iv. 2—6.*

1. The apostle recommends prayer and thanksgiving, and desires an interest in their intercessions, ver. 2—4.

Ver. 2. *Persevere in prayer*<sup>1</sup>, *and watch therein with*  
 3. *thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door of utterance*<sup>2</sup>, *to declare the mystery of Christ, for which*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Persevere in prayer, &c.*] From the connexion in which this exhortation is introduced, Mr. Peirce argues that the apostle had a particular reference to the perilous circumstances of Christians at that time. This observation is corroborated by comparing this passage with its parallel, Eph. vi. 18—20. “The duty of prayer,” says Dr. Priestley, “is constantly urged upon Christians: and to have God continually in our thoughts, in which state of mind it will be impossible not to address ourselves to him in thanksgiving and petition, is the great object of all the means of religion. When we have attained to this habitual devotion, so that, as the Psalmist says, God shall be in all our thoughts, we shall be prepared for all the events of life, and secure against all temptations to sin. And without this habitual devotion, or constant regard to the presence and government of God in all our actions, all the prescribed means of religion signify nothing.”

<sup>2</sup> *A door of utterance.*] *Θύραν τοῦ λόγου*, a door for the word. Wakefield and Macknight. *i. e.* a favourable opportunity of preaching the gospel with success; and that he would remove every obstruction out of the way. The former signification best

*indeed I am in bonds<sup>3</sup>, that I may make it manifest by speaking as I ought<sup>4</sup>.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 4.

You are in the midst of dangers, and surrounded by temptations, either to corrupt the doctrine or to desert the profession of Christianity; pray, therefore, to be preserved from apostasy, and as your dangers are incessant, let your prayers be constant; and amidst the business and avocations of life, watch for and embrace every favourable opportunity for this purpose. And let your prayers for perseverance be joined with devout thanksgivings for the blessings and privileges of the gospel.

And in your prayers, as a testimony of affection, remember me, and pray for me that God would grant me an opportunity to preach the gospel, and

---

agrees with the corresponding passage Eph. vi. 19. *q. d.* “a large opportunity of declaring the mystery of the gospel to the Gentiles, and their equal participation of its privileges with the Jews.” Newcome.

“It is very observable,” says Dr. Priestley, “that all the apostle wished for from the prayers of his friends was, his having a more open field for preaching the gospel. This appears to have been his only great object: to life or death he seems to have been indifferent. Could such a man as this, whose epistles are so much the language of nature, be an impostor, carrying on some artful design, the object of which must have been his interest or fame? They know nothing of human nature, or the natural expressions of human sentiments, who can suspect any such thing.”

<sup>3</sup> *The mystery of Christ, &c.*] This mystery was the admission of the Gentiles into the church, Eph. iii. 8, 9. For preaching this doctrine the apostle was arrested at Jerusalem, and sent a prisoner to Rome.

<sup>4</sup> *Speaking as I ought.*] So Wakefield. Gr. “as it behoves me to speak.” “that I may declare it as plainly and fully as it becomes me to do, who have been so peculiarly intrusted with the revelation of it, and a commission to preach it.” Peirce.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 4.

to make known that gracious purpose which was so long concealed in the counsels of heaven, that the Gentiles should be admitted to the privileges of the chosen people. A glorious discovery, for bearing testimony to which I am now in bonds. But so far am I from being discouraged by persecution, that I request your prayers to be united with those of other churches for my release for no other purpose, but that I may be more at liberty to publish the joyful tidings with a zeal and activity worthy of the cause, and of the unspeakable obligation I am under to him by whose mercy I was selected and commissioned for this important embassy.

2. The apostle recommends prudence in conduct and conversation towards their unbelieving neighbours, ver. 5, 6.

5. *Behave wisely towards those that are without*<sup>1</sup>;
6. *thus gaining time*<sup>2</sup>. *Let your conversation be always courteous*<sup>3</sup>, *seasoned with discretion*<sup>4</sup>, *that ye may know how ye ought to answer every one*<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Those that are without:] i. e. "the unconverted heathen."* Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Gaining time.]* See Dan. ii. 8, LXX. Eph. v. 15, 16. "gaining as much as you can, prolonging your own tranquillity, and the opportunity of spreading the gospel." Peirce.

<sup>3</sup> *Courteous.] εν χαριτι.* "well-pleasing, mild, becoming, good, making you gracious to and favoured by your hearers." Newcome. See Peirce on ch. iii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Discretion.]* In the original, *salt*. Mr. Peirce observes, that "salt is put for wisdom both in sacred and profane authors."

<sup>5</sup> *That ye may know, &c.]* Mr. Peirce supposes that the apostle here has particular respect to the heathen magistrates, who had it in their power to call them in question for their religion. See

Be prudent in your conduct towards your hearthen neighbours ; and do not by any impropriety of behaviour, and particularly by acting as though, by the profession of Christianity, you were released from the obligation of social duties, give any unnecessary offence. Your principles are themselves sufficiently obnoxious ; and let your conduct be ever so correct and benevolent, they will probably, some time or other, expose you to persecution ; but circumspection and an inoffensive behaviour will delay the storm, and prolong the season of security and tranquillity.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 6.

Do not excite prejudice by unguarded and unbecoming language. Be courteous, be discreet : observe the characters and manners of those with whom you associate ; and, without sacrificing your principles, or your integrity, endeavour so to adapt your conversation to your company, that none may be disgusted, and that, if possible, all may be pleased, instructed, and edified.

---

See 1 Pet. iii. 15. But it does not seem necessary to limit the apostle's advice to this case. Mr. Wakefield's version is, " knowing the proper answer for every person." " This," says Dr. Priestley, " is an admonition to avoid whatever is offensive, and to study whatever is civil and agreeable in conversation ; and also that address which will qualify a man to defend his principles, whether they be attacked by argument or ridicule. Good sense is never employed to more advantage than in this way. And to persons who see much of the world, there is continual occasion for it."

## CONCLUSION.

Ch. IV. *THE APOSTLE expresses his solicitude that the Colossian Christians should be informed of his present situation, for which purpose he sends Tychicus to visit them. He closes his epistle with salutations and a benediction. Ch. iv. 7—19.*

1. The apostle refers the Colossians to Tychicus and Onesimus for a complete account of his affairs, ver. 7—9.

Ver. 7. *Tychicus*<sup>1</sup>, *that beloved brother and faithful minister, and my fellow-servant in the Lord, will*  
 8. *make known to you all things concerning me; whom*  
*I have sent to you for this very purpose, that ye*  
*might know our situation*<sup>2</sup>, *and that he might com-*  
 9. *fort your hearts: together with Onesimus, that*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Tychicus.*] Tychicus was one of the Christian evangelists who accompanied the apostle in his travels, and who now ministered to him in his imprisonment. He and Onesimus were commissioned by the apostle to carry his epistles to the Ephesians or Laodiceans, vi. 21, 22, to the Colossians, and to Philemon; and to communicate all the intelligence respecting himself and his affairs at Rome, which his friends might be desirous to hear. *In the Lord, i. e.* “under our common Lord, in the church of Christ.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *That ye might know, &c.*] *ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν.* This is the reading of the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, and literally coincides with Eph. vi. 22. It is marked as of good authority by Griesbach, and adopted by Dr. Harwood.

*faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you*<sup>3</sup>, *they will inform you concerning all affairs here.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 9.

I know, my brethren, that you are under great solicitude on my account, and perhaps you apprehend my situation to be more inconvenient and hazardous than it really is. To alleviate your anxiety, therefore, and to comfort your spirits, I have sent Tychicus, my beloved fellow-Christian, and my faithful fellow-labourer in the gospel ministry, to represent to you the exact state in which I am. That you may know that, though a prisoner for the cause of truth, I am neither discouraged, nor inactive, nor useless; and that I am not without hope of obtaining a speedy release. And with Tychicus I have sent Onesimus, whom you know as your countryman, and whom I have now the satisfaction to announce to you as your Christian brother; of whose sincerity and faithfulness I have had much experience, and who is dear to me, and will, I trust, be so to you in the bonds of Christian affection. These two excellent men will give you the most satisfactory information concerning me, and the affairs of the believers at Rome.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Onesimus—one of you.*] He was the fugitive slave of Philemon, an inhabitant of Colossæ; he had been converted to Christianity by the apostle at Rome, and was now sent back to his master with a letter of recommendation from the apostle. The apostle, no doubt, ordered Onesimus first to deliver his epistle to Philemon, and presumed upon the success of his intercession, before he would allow him to join with Tychicus in delivering the epistle to the Colossians.

Indeed the epistle to Philemon is so connected with that to the Colossians, that I have taken the liberty of transposing that short epistle and annexing it as an appendix to the other.

Ch. IV. 2. The apostle sends the salutations of his companions and fellow-labourers, some of whom were also his fellow-sufferers at Rome, ver. 10—14.

Ver. 10. *Aristarchus*<sup>1</sup>, my fellow-prisoner, and *Mark*<sup>2</sup>, the nephew of *Barnabas*<sup>3</sup>, concerning whom ye have received instructions, (if he come unto you entertain him,) and *Jesus called Justus*<sup>4</sup>, salute you. These are the only persons who, being of the circumcision, have been my fellow-labourers in the kingdom of God, and have been a comfort to me.

Of these eminent persons, my friends and fellow-labourers who send their salutations to you, one is *Aristarchus*, to whose merit you are probably no strangers, who has been the companion of my journeys, and of my dangers, both in Thessalonica and Judea, and who is now my fellow-prisoner at Rome. Another of them is *Mark*, (the near relation of my first beloved associate *Barnabas*,) whose timid con-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner.*] He was a Macedonian of Thessalonica, Acts xix. 29, xx. 24, but a Jew by descent. He went with St. Paul into Asia, and was seized by the mob at Ephesus. He afterwards accompanied the apostle to Rome, Acts xxvii. 2, where he was his fellow-labourer, (Philem. 24,) and perhaps his fellow-prisoner. See note on ver. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Mark.*] This evangelist, though he had formerly deserted the apostle, Acts xiii. 13, and for that reason had been rejected by him as an associate, Acts xv. 38; yet was now perfectly reconciled to him, and held in high estimation by him. See Philem. ver. 24, 2 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Nephew of Barnabas.*] ἀνεψιός: “cousin.” Wakefield.—“sister’s son,” in the Public Version, &c. “Aut patruelles, aut amitini, aut consobrini. His tribus vocibus Græca illa vox in Glossis vertitur.” Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> *Jesus called Justus.*] This name had probably been given him at Rome, as sounding less uncouth to a Roman ear than his proper Hebrew name *Jesus*.



duct produced a temporary separation between us, but who has long since resumed his courage and zeal in the cause of truth, and is now one of my most active supporters and best friends. He is soon setting off from hence upon an important mission; if he should come to Colossæ in his way, receive and entertain him with the respect due to his character and office. To the honour of these two enlightened and liberal-minded persons, together with that of Justus, who desires that his name may be united in the salutation with theirs, be it known that, though they are Jews by descent, and strict observers of the law themselves, they are far from being desirous to impose the yoke upon Gentile believers. Being well instructed in the liberal genius and spirit of Christianity, they have cheerfully co-operated with me in preaching the gospel to the heathen, and have comforted and encouraged me in all my difficulties. And to say the truth, they are the only Jewish believers in this place from whom I have derived any assistance, or any consolation; such is the violence of prejudice against me for teaching fully and clearly the liberty of the Gentiles from the yoke of the ceremonial law.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. II.

*Epaphras*<sup>5</sup>, who is one of you, a servant of

12.

---

<sup>5</sup> *Epaphras*, one of you.] He appears to have been a citizen of Colossæ, and to have instructed them in the doctrine of Christ; also from him the apostle received a favourable account of the state of the church in that city. See Col. i. 6—8. In the epistle to Philemon, ver. 23, he is mentioned as *the fellow-prisoner* of the apostle, and Aristarchus not. The Æthiopic version omits the words “my fellow-prisoner,” verse 10, to which

- Ch. IV. *Christ, saluteth you, always earnestly striving for*  
 Ver. 12. *you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and*  
 13. *complete in the whole will of God*<sup>1</sup>. *For I bear*  
*him witness that he has a great concern*<sup>2</sup> *for you,*  
*and for those in Laodicea, and in Hierapolis.*

Epaphras also sends his salutations to you. You know him well as a faithful servant of Christ, by whom many of you were converted to the Christian faith; who diligently and successfully performed the office of a teacher among you when divine Providence restrained me from making you a visit, and employed my labours elsewhere. From him I have lately received the acceptable tidings of your steadfastness and improvement; and his zeal and assiduity, even in this place, have endangered his personal safety. Though he cannot personally address you, he still bears you upon his mind, and he earnestly prays for you and for the neighbouring churches in which his labours have been employed, that as you are at present so well informed and so eminently distinguished in faith and virtue, you may firmly adhere to the principles in which you

---

Mill accedes. See Bowyer. Perhaps that clause should be introduced after Epaphras in this place; for it seems extraordinary that, if Epaphras was in prison, the apostle should not mention it to the Colossians.

<sup>1</sup> *Whole will of God.*] Peirce observes, that “he has here a respect more especially to that part of the will of God which was so much upon his heart, their maintaining their Christian liberty, and not submitting to Jewish ordinances.”

<sup>2</sup> *Great concern.*] Griesbach, upon the authority of the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, reads *πολυν πόνον*, *great concern*, instead of *πολυν ζήλον*, *great zeal*, which is the reading of the received text. See Newcome.

have been instructed, and not suffer yourselves to be corrupted by the artifices of seducing teachers, either in doctrine or in practice. Ch. IV.  
Ver. 13.

*Luke*<sup>3</sup> the physician, and beloved brother, and *Demas*<sup>4</sup>, salute you. 14.

These my brethren and fellow-labourers, who have accompanied me in my missionary journeys, and one of whom has been my faithful companion, my kind friend, during the whole of my long and perilous confinement here, desire me to assure you of their affectionate regards.

3. The apostle sends salutations to Laodicea; directs that both his epistles be read in both the churches, and gives a solemn charge to Archippus, ver. 15—17.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Luke.*] It is generally allowed that the person here mentioned is Luke the evangelist and historian, and the associate of Paul in his travels and his labours. From comparing this with ver. 11, where the apostle says that he had no fellow-labourer of the circumcision, but those whom he had named, Lord Barrington concludes that Luke was a proselyte of the Gate before he was converted to Christianity; and Dr. Doddridge thinks it may be fairly concluded that he was not a Jew.

<sup>4</sup> *Demas.*] If we admit with Dr. Lardner, what appears highly probable, that the second epistle to Timothy was written not long after the apostle's arrival at Rome, it will follow that Demas, whom the apostle in that epistle accuses of deserting him and of going off to Thessalonica, had, like Mark, recovered his courage, returned to Rome, and been received into favour; and had, with the rest of the brethren, united in sending his salutations to Philemon and the Colossians in those epistles, which were written a short time before the apostle's release. See 2 Tim. iv. 9, 10; Philem. ver. 22, 24. It appears from the passage in the epistle to Timothy, that Titus was one who deserted the apostle upon that occasion, leaving him with

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 15.

*Salute the brethren that are at Laodicea, and Nymphas<sup>1</sup>, and the church which assembleth in his house. And when this epistle has been read among you, cause it to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye also read that which ye will receive from Laodicea<sup>2</sup>.*

Convey my salutations and kind wishes to the Christians of Laodicea, and particularly to Nym-

Luke only for his companion. Nor does it appear that Titus ever returned. Can this be the reason why Luke never mentions the name of Titus in his history? It is observable that Demas withdrew to Thessalonica, where the distinguished piety and fortitude of the believers, and their marked affection to the apostle, so much extolled by him in his epistles to the Thessalonians, would be very likely to bring the fugitive to himself, to rouse his courage, to rekindle his affection, and to induce him to return to the apostle.

<sup>1</sup> *Nymphas.*] Of this excellent person, who probably lived at Laodicea, we know nothing but what is here hinted to his honour; that, being probably like Philemon a person of property, he allowed the Christians at Laodicea to assemble for social worship in his house, as Philemon did those at Colossæ, Philem. ver. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *From Laodicea;*] not, as some suppose, an epistle written by the Laodiceans, but an epistle written by Paul to the Christians at Laodicea, which the Colossians would receive from them. *τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας, that of the Laodiceans.* “that written to them by me.” Wakefield; who refers to Luke viii. 27. See Bowyer, Grotius, Knatchbull, and Newcome. This epistle is by many supposed to be lost; but it seems highly probable that the epistle which is now inscribed to the Ephesians is the letter referred to by the apostle, and that it was originally sent to the Laodiceans. There can be no doubt that this epistle was written and sent at the same time with that to the Colossians; the train of thought and the phraseology are the same in both; they are excellent commentaries upon each other, and in order to be understood should be read in connexion with each other. Compare Col. i. 26 with Eph. iii. 9; Col. ii. 13 with Eph. ii. 1, &c.; Col. iii. 11 with Eph. i. 10, &c.; Col. iii. 18, 19 with Eph. v. 22—33. See Doddridge’s excellent note upon this text.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 16.

phas, that excellent man, who, in a season of exigency and peril, permits the disciples to assemble for religious worship at his house.

Let the epistle which I have written, and which I now send, be read with great seriousness and attention before the whole congregation of believers at Colossæ; and when you have finished it, send it forward to Laodicea, that it may be read to the congregation of believers there. I have written another letter to that church, which I send by the same messengers who are the bearers of this to you. They are upon the same subject; and, when attentively compared together, they will greatly elucidate each other. Borrow, therefore, that letter from the church of Laodicea, and let it be read to the believers at Colossæ. Both societies will be better instructed, edified, and comforted, by this mutual communication of what I have written to each.

*And say to Archippus<sup>3</sup>, See that thou fully discharge that ministry in the Lord, which thou hast received.*

17.

Archippus, who, in consideration of his mature age and eminent wisdom, has been chosen and approved as the regular instructor and officiating minister of the church at Colossæ, is no doubt duly

---

<sup>3</sup> *Archippus.*] This eminent person, who was probably the officiating minister of the church at Colossæ, is mentioned in terms of such high respect in the epistle to Philemon (ver. 2), that it is not at all probable that the apostle intended, as some have imagined, by this advice, obliquely to insinuate that Archippus had been negligent in the discharge of his official duties. See Macknight.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 17.

apprized of the importance of the office, and of the nature of the duties that are incumbent upon him. It may, however, tend to make a useful impression upon his mind, and to excite and encourage his zeal, if you will give him a solemn charge in my name, that he studiously fulfill, to the best of his abilities, the duties of his sacred office, without fear, and without disguise; animated by a tender concern for the welfare of his fellow-creatures, and by the awful expectation of the great account.

4. The epistle concludes with the apostle's general salutation and benediction, written with his own hand, ver. 18, 19.

18. *The salutation of me, Paul, with my own hand. Remember these my bonds<sup>1</sup>. Favour be with you<sup>2</sup>.*

To this letter, written by the hand of a friend, and to these good wishes, I here subscribe my name

---

<sup>1</sup> *Remember these my bonds.*] Μνημονεύετε με τῶν δεσμῶν. Remember these bonds of mine." Wakefield. The apostle, writing the salutation with his own hand to authenticate the epistle, 2 Thess. iii. 17, casts his eye upon the chain by which his hand was bound to that of the soldier by whom he was kept in the *custodia militari*, and gracefully alludes to it in the close of his epistle, in order to leave a deep impression of the fact upon the minds of the Christians at Colossæ, and to excite their zeal in adherence to and in the defence of those rights and privileges for which he was then suffering. See Eph. vi. 20, Acts xxviii. 16. A similar beautiful allusion to his chain is found in his speech to king Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Favour be with you.*] "the favour of God." Newcome. Or perhaps of Christ, meaning the blessings of the gospel. See Phil. iv. 23. The most ancient manuscripts omit the word *Amen*, and likewise the postscript; which, however, truly relates that the epistle to the Colossians was written from Rome by Tychicus and Onesimus.

with my own hand, as a testimony to its genuineness and authenticity, and that you may not be imposed upon by spurious productions passing under my name. I write to you with a chain upon my wrist. Do not you, my friends, forget it, nor the cause of this confinement. It was for preaching up boldly the liberties of the Gentile church. Value, then, and improve your privileges as you ought; and may the blessing of God be with you! Farewell.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 18.





---

# THE EPISTLE

OF

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

### PHILEMON.

---

#### INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

**PHILEMON** was an inhabitant of Colossæ <sup>1</sup>. He appears to have been a man of property and distinction, from the hospitality which he exercised and which the apostle here commends, and from the respectful manner in which the apostle addresses him. He had been converted to the Christian religion by the apostle himself (ver. 19) <sup>2</sup>, but in what manner,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Of Colossæ.*] This is apparent from Colossians iv. 9, where it is said of Onesimus the slave of Philemon, that he was of that city. Archippus, who is included in the salutation to Philemon (ver. 2), was also a minister of the gospel at Colossæ, Col. iv. 17. These evidently undesigned coincidences, as Dr. Paley well observes, *Hor. Paul.* 290, 369, strongly support the genuineness of the two epistles. Theodoret in the fifth century says that Philemon's house was still remaining at Colossæ.

<sup>2</sup> *Converted by the apostle himself.*] Dr. Benson infers from

or at what time and place, does not appear. As Paul had not visited Colossæ, Philemon had perhaps attended his ministry during his long residence at Ephesus.

Onesimus was the slave of Philemon. Having deserted<sup>1</sup> his master, he had fled to Rome; where, having happily met with the apostle, and been converted by him, he had become a sincere and conscientious Christian. For some time after his conversion, the apostle appears to have retained him in his service; but after having had sufficient proof of his fidelity and good conduct, though his services were very acceptable and useful to him, he thought it right to send him back to Philemon, with a letter of recommendation and intercession for his pardon. Tychicus upon this occasion accompanied Onesimus, and they were both charged with the Epistle to the Colossians<sup>2</sup>; after the delivery of which Tychicus was perhaps directed<sup>3</sup> to go on

---

ver. 5, where the apostle only speaks of having heard of Philemon's faith, that he had never seen him; but the expression ver. 19, "thou owest to me thy own self," is so very emphatical, that it must surely allude to his having been converted by the apostle, who might afterwards have heard of his perseverance and his benevolence.

<sup>1</sup> *Deserted, &c.*] Some infer from ver. 18 that he had also robbed his master: but this is not certain. See Macknight's Preface to the epistle.

<sup>2</sup> *Both charged.*] See Col. iv. 7—9.

<sup>3</sup> *Tychicus was directed.*] Eph. vi. 21, where Tychicus only is mentioned. Colossæ lay about twenty-eight miles north-east of Laodicea. Probably Onesimus was directed to deliver his letter first, and having obtained forgiveness from Philemon, he would then be authorized to join Tychicus in delivering the letter to the church at Colossæ. The apostle would scarcely

with that which was addressed to the Laodiceans, and which is commonly called the Epistle to the Ephesians <sup>4</sup>.

THIS EPISTLE, the genuineness of which is unquestionable, is a private letter <sup>5</sup> from the apostle

have thought it expedient to make a runaway slave the bearer of a letter to the church of which his master was a member, till after a reconciliation had taken place. Perhaps the more probable supposition may be, that Tychicus sent Onesimus forward with the letter to Philemon, while he remained at Laodicea to deliver his letter there; after which he went forward to Colossæ and joined Onesimus, who had been previously reconciled to Philemon, in delivering the apostle's letter to the church at Colossæ.

<sup>4</sup> *Commonly called, &c.*] See the Preface to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

<sup>5</sup> *A private letter,*] which the apostle probably never intended nor expected to be preserved; any more than St. John intended that his letters to Gaius and to the elect lady should be regarded as inspired writings. It is sufficient for the credit of these epistles that they are genuine productions of the apostles, and that they contain many valuable sentiments and advices. Whether these epistles are canonical or not, is a verbal controversy. If "canonical" means *inspired*, neither these nor any other of the apostolic writings are so. The apostles always possessed a complete knowledge of the gospel revelation, and whatever they say or write upon this subject is of the highest authority; but there is no reason to suppose that they were inspired to deliver every discourse, or to indite every epistle. If no epistles are to be deemed canonical but those which are addressed to Christian churches, the epistle to Philemon is not canonical; but if the question is simply this, Whether this epistle ought to be received as of equal authority with the other genuine writings of the apostle? there can be no hesitation in answering in the affirmative. See Benson's *Hist. of the Epistle*, sect. ii.

"There is not much," says Dr. Priestley, "of what may be called apostolic dignity in this epistle, no article of Christian doctrine being discussed in it; yet it has great propriety and beauty as a private letter; and it clearly shows the apostle to

to his friend upon a particular occasion ; and it is written with the spirit of a Christian, the authority of an apostle, the politeness of a gentleman, and the affection of a friend. It would be puerile to suppose that such a letter as this was dictated by any other inspiration than that of philanthropy and friendship. The apostle probably wrote many such ;

have been no wild enthusiast, but one who was well acquainted with mankind, and with human nature, and who governed himself by that knowledge. It therefore shows us that inattention to these things is no recommendation of a Christian."

Dr. Benson very ingeniously specifies the following doctrines and precepts of Christianity, as expressed or insinuated in this epistle: *v. g.* 1. In a religious view all Christians are upon a level: Onesimus the slave, upon becoming a Christian, is the apostle's dear son and Philemon's brother. 2. Christianity makes no alteration in men's civil affairs: by Christian baptism a slave did not become a freedman. 3. Servants, *i. e.* slaves, should not be taken or detained from their own masters, without their masters' consent. 4. We should love and do good to all men: we should not contemn persons of low estate. The apostle has here set an example of benevolence, condescension, and Christian charity, which it behoves us to follow. 5. We should not utterly despair of those who are wicked, but use our best endeavours to reclaim them. 6. Restitution is due where an injury is done. 7. We should be grateful to our benefactors. 8. We should forgive the penitent and be heartily reconciled to them. 9. The apostle's example teaches us to do all we can to make up quarrels and differences, and to reconcile those who are at variance. 10. A wise man chooses sometimes to address in a soft and obliging manner, even in cases where there is authority to command. 11. The bishops and pastors of the Christian church, and all teachers of religion, have here the most glorious example set before them to induce them to have a most tender regard to the souls of men of all ranks and conditions. 12. Here is a most glorious proof of the good effect of Christianity, where it is rightly understood and sincerely embraced. It transforms a worthless slave into a pious, virtuous, amiable, and useful man." Benson's *History of the First Planting of the Christian Religion*, book iii. ch. x. sect. 10.

which, however they might be valued by the persons to whom they were inscribed, have long since been lost; but which no doubt all breathed the same spirit of piety, benevolence, and wisdom.

I. The apostle begins his epistle with expressing his good wishes for Philemon, his family, and friends, ver. 1—3.

II. He declares his great satisfaction in the tidings which he had received of the faith and the benevolence of his friend, and of his kindness to Christian strangers, ver. 4—7.

III. Waving his authority as an apostle, he urges him, upon the ground of personal friendship, and of the affection and regard due to him as the imprisoned ambassador of Christ, to receive Onesimus again into his family, and to forgive him his great offence, ver. 8—12.

IV. Desirous as he was to retain Onesimus at Rome, he regarded himself as bound in honour and justice to send him back to his lawful master; hoping that Philemon would no longer treat him as a slave, but as a Christian brother, and as the apostle's friend, ver. 13—17.

V. He promises to pay whatever Philemon had lost by Onesimus's dishonesty or misconduct; and expresses his firm confidence in the ready compliance of his friend, ver. 18—21.

VI. The apostle concludes the epistle with expressing his hope that he should soon be at liberty to make him a visit, and with the usual salutations and benediction, ver. 22—25.

We have no account of the success of this earnest and powerful intercession in behalf of a fugitive slave; but there can be no reasonable doubt that Philemon would be eager to testify his veneration and gratitude to the apostle by a compliance with his desires to their utmost extent.

This epistle is supposed to have been written A.D. 62, a little before the close of the apostle's first imprisonment.

## P O S T S C R I P T.

*I have annexed this short but eloquent epistle as a sort of Appendix to the Epistle to the Colossians, the two epistles having been written at the same time, and conveyed by the same person to the same place; and being mutually illustrative of each other. These reasons I hope will be accepted as a sufficient apology for the transposition.*



---

## THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

---

1. **THE** apostle introduces his epistle with expressions of good-will to Philemon and his family, and to other Christian friends, ver. 1—3.

*PAUL a prisoner<sup>1</sup> of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow-labourer<sup>2</sup>, and to our beloved sister Appia<sup>3</sup>, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to*

Ver. 1.  
2.

---

<sup>1</sup> *A prisoner.*] Archbishop Newcome observes, that δεσμιος is a reading better supported than δελος or αποστολος, and preferable on account of its delicacy. Dr. Benson in his note enumerates the various modes of introduction to the epistles of Paul, and shows the propriety of each.

<sup>2</sup> *Fellow-labourer.*] Some have inferred, from this expression, that Philemon was a bishop or minister of the Christian church at Colossæ. This is not improbable, though Archippus was undoubtedly such, Col. iv. 17; for it is certain that several elders or bishops were sometimes appointed to one church. See Acts xx. 17, 28. Dr. Benson, however, justly observes, that there is no necessity of drawing this conclusion: for, whoever contributed any way towards helping forward the gospel, are called the *apostle's helpers* and *fellow-labourers*, whether men or women. See ver. 24; Rom. xvi. 3, 9, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Appia.*] Gr. "Apphia." Dr. Benson observes that this is a Roman name, and that Paul writes it after the Hebrew manner. Appia is asserted by Chrysostom and Theodoret to have been the wife of Philemon; which, as she is mentioned next to

Ver. 3. *the church in thy house*<sup>1</sup>, *favour be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I Paul, who am not only a teacher of the gospel but a sufferer for it, and who have now been some years a prisoner for having preached the doctrine of Christ to the Gentiles, and Timothy the faithful and affectionate companion of my labours and sufferings, unite in our friendly salutations to Philemon our dear Christian brother and fellow-labourer in the same honourable cause, and to his faithful consort Appia our beloved sister in Christ, and to Archippus, who has voluntarily accepted the important office of a Christian minister, and is ready to share with us in all the difficulties, conflicts and dangers of this arduous service; and to all the other Christian friends, whether members of your family or otherwise, who occasionally or statedly assemble for religious worship and instruction under your hospitable roof: May the favour of God our common Father, and the unspeakable blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ our common master, abide

---

Philemon and before Archippus, is not improbable. Many manuscripts of the best authority read *sister* instead of *beloved*; and some of the ancient versions read both.

<sup>1</sup> *The church in thy house.*] It is doubted whether this means the family and friends of Philemon only, or whether the body of Christians at Colossæ, assembled for Christian worship at Philemon's house. The former is the general opinion, and it may be true; but Dr. Benson's argument, that the apostle upon other occasions where he salutes the church in a particular house, afterwards sends salutations to individuals, does not decisively prove it. See Rom. xvi. 5, 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

with and enrich you all! We cannot form a better wish for you, nor give you a stronger testimony of our Christian affection. Ver. 3.

2. The apostle expresses his great satisfaction in the faith and benevolence of his friend, and in his kind sympathy with the suffering brethren, of which he had received the most favourable accounts, ver. 4—7.

*I thank my God<sup>2</sup>, continually making mention of thee in my prayers, (having heard<sup>3</sup> of thy faith towards the Lord Jesus, and of thy love to all the saints,) that the faith of which thou partakest may operate<sup>4</sup> in the acknowledgement of every thing* 4.  
5.  
6.

---

<sup>2</sup> *I thank my God, &c.*] Mr. Wakefield makes the construction clearer by transposing the clauses of the fourth and fifth verses. His version is, "I thank my God for the accounts which I receive of thy firm belief in the Lord Jesus, and thy love towards all the saints, making mention of thee always in my prayers, that thy fellowship in the faith," &c. I adopt the suggestion of Bowyer and Newcome, including the fifth verse in a parenthesis.

<sup>3</sup> *Having heard, &c.*] It has been before observed, that the expression "having heard" does not necessarily imply that the apostle had never seen Philemon. Six manuscripts, and the Syriac version, read *faith and love*. See Mill and Newcome. There can be no doubt that the apostle meant, and perhaps dictated, the same or similar words which occur Eph. i. 15, Col. i. 3, 4; which were written nearly at the same time. The expression might be varied by the mistake of an early transcriber. In the original, as in the common version, it stands thus: "Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints."

<sup>4</sup> *May operate.*] "that thy partaking of the faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is among us as concerning Christ Jesus: i.e. in giving thee knowledge and experience of every good thing which God bestows

Ver. 7. *good that is among us concerning Christ Jesus. For we are greatly rejoiced and comforted on account of thy love, because the bowels<sup>1</sup> of the saints have been refreshed by thee, brother.*

I have heard much from Epaphras your fellow-citizen, who is now with me, and from others, of your faith in Christ, of your firm adherence to the pure doctrine of Christianity, and of that which is indeed the necessary consequence of true faith, your kindness to all who bear the Christian name. I continually bless God on these accounts; and I earnestly pray that the vigour of your faith may discover itself more and more in your zeal for good works, and in your increasing knowledge of the unspeakable blessings which we derive from the gospel of Christ. And truly, my dear brother, I am delighted to hear with what tender sympathy you have behaved to your afflicted and suffering brethren, and how much their broken spirits have been soothed, and cheered, and comforted, by your seasonable ad-

---

upon us as Christians." Newcome. Similar to this is Mr. Wakefield's version: "that thy fellowship in the faith may have its effect in an acknowledgement of every thing good in Christ Jesus."

The best copies read ἡμῖν, *us*, for ὑμῖν, *you*; which the Primate properly notices, *every good thing among us*, i. e. *us believers, concerning Christ*.

"Optans ut fides quam nobiscum habes communem, magis magisque se manifestet (per opera bona) tuque cognoscas magnitudinem beneficiorum, quæ debemus Christo. ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, *una cum cognitione*." Rosenmuller.

<sup>1</sup> *Bowels*:] i. e. *affections*. Col. iii. 8. "the minds of the saints are soothed in thee." Wakefield. "Multorum pauperum Christianorum animos recreasti dum ex opibus tuis eorum necessitatibus tempestive subvenires." Rosenmuller.

vice and benevolent aid. The very report of your extraordinary kindness to the persecuted and impoverished brethren, cheers my spirit even in prison. Ver. 7.

3. Waving his authority as an apostle, he urges Philemon, upon the ground of affection and the tender respect due to his character, to receive his penitent slave into his house again, ver. 8—12.

*Therefore, though I might use great freedom in Christ to enjoin thee<sup>2</sup> what is fit, I rather, for affection's sake<sup>3</sup>, intreat, being such an one as Paul the ambassador<sup>4</sup>, and now, even the prisoner* 8.  
9.

---

<sup>2</sup> *To enjoin thee.*] Mark the delicacy of the apostle's address: waving his authority as an apostle of Christ, he rather chooses to appeal to his friend's affection, to his benevolence, to his tender respect to the suffering ambassador of Christ. Nor does he mention Onesimus's name till after he has described him in the most endearing characters; and then recommends him to be received into Philemon's house as if he had been the apostle's own darling son. Nothing can be conceived more delicate, tender, and appropriate, than the apostle's language upon this occasion.

<sup>3</sup> *For affection's sake.*] Literally, "for love's sake." "because of my love." Newcome.—"because of my love for thee." Wakefield. "by that love which thou bearest to the saints and to me." Macknight. Perhaps the apostle included both: *q. d.* because of our mutual affection to each other.

<sup>4</sup> *Paul the ambassador.*] Παυλος πρεσβυτης. The apostle was called a young man when Stephen was stoned, about A.D. 36, Acts vii. 58. He could not well be less than thirty, considering the commissions with which he was charged: see Acts ix. 1, 2. If, therefore, this epistle were written A.D. 62, the apostle would be about fifty-six or fifty-seven; and could not with propriety call himself *aged*. Dr. Benson observes, that the apostle upon no other occasion alludes to his advanced years, but frequently to his character as an ambassador of Christ in bonds, and particularly in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, written nearly at the same time with this to Philemon. Eph. vi. 20. He

- Ver. 10. *of Jesus Christ. I intreat thee in behalf of a son of mine<sup>1</sup>, whom I have begotten during these my*  
 11. *bonds, Onesimus; who was lately of no value<sup>2</sup> to thee, but will now be of great value to thee, even*  
 12. *as he has been to me<sup>3</sup>. Whom I have sent back:*
- 

admits that the proper word for *ambassador* is. *πρεσβευτης*, but he remarks that the LXX. have used *πρεσβυτης* for an ambassador, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, and that it is so used 2 Macc. xi. 34; and if it is contended that these instances are slips of the pen, he desires that the same allowance may be made in the present case. The Doctor adds that Theophylact read *πρεσβευτης*.

Dr. Bentley maintains, not only that the adversative particle *δε* requires *πρεσβευτης* as opposed to *δεσμιος*, but that it is highly probable that the original reading was *παλαι*, instead of *Παυλος*, which would properly correspond with *νυνι δε*, so that the proper translation would be, "for affection's sake I intreat thee: being one who, having long been an ambassador, am now even a prisoner of Jesus Christ." See Bowyer. These conjectures are very plausible, though not supported by the authority of manuscripts or versions. Dr. Priestley says, "that Paul could not, at this time, have been much more than fifty-four or fifty-five years old; but through his incessant labours he might be infirm." But there is not the slightest reason for this supposition. Paul never complains or alludes to the infirmities of age; and what man of fifty-four or fifty-five ever speaks of himself as *the aged*? Unsupported as the conjecture is by authorities, I think that, from the connexion, it is almost impossible to doubt that the apostle speaks of himself as "Paul the ambassador," and not "Paul the aged."

<sup>1</sup> *A son of mine, &c.*] "This, which is the order of the original," Dr. Doddridge observes, "keeps the mind in an agreeable suspense, and has a fine effect, which every reader of taste will quickly perceive."

<sup>2</sup> *Lately of no value, &c.*] So Mr. Wakefield. Observe in what gentle language the apostle speaks of the fault of Onesimus, that he might not irritate the feelings of Philemon. See Benson and Macknight. Doddridge remarks, that "Paul evidently refers to the etymology of the word Onesimus, which signifies *profitable*." This is more evident in ver. 20, where he alludes to his name.

<sup>3</sup> *Even as he has been, &c.*] Macknight translates the words,

*do thou, therefore, receive him as my own beloved son* <sup>4.</sup> Ver. 12.

I have a favour to request ; which, indeed, as an apostle of Christ, I should be fully authorized to enjoin as a duty ; but, knowing your regard for me, I would rather solicit it as an act of kindness, of kindness to myself personally ; a gratification which you will not refuse to your friend under the peculiar circumstances in which he writes to you, having long been employed by Jesus Christ our common Lord as his ambassador to the heathen world, and having now, as you well know, for some years suffered a tedious confinement for his sake. Relying, therefore, upon your friendship and sympathy, I prefer my request in behalf of a dear convert of mine, my own son in the faith of Jesus, whom I have brought over to the profession and practice of the Christian religion since I have been a prisoner at Rome ; and who, by his virtuous conduct and kind attentions, has endeared himself to me beyond expression, as if he were my own child. And this is no other than Onesimus, your fugitive slave ; from whom, of late, you have derived little satisfaction and little profit, but who, I trust, will here-

---

“ but now will be very profitable to thee, even as to me.” See Benson.

\* *My beloved son :*] literally, “ ‘ my own bowels,’ *i. e.* my son, a part of me.” Macknight. Dr. Benson remarks, that “ there are many passages in the classics in which children are called the bowels of their parents,” and refers to Le Clerc and Pricæus upon the text. He observes how the apostle rises in his expressions ; ver. 10, he calls Onesimus his *son*, here his *bowels*, *i. e.* his beloved son ; and ver. 17, his *very self*.



Ver. 12. after redeem his character, and prove a most valuable assistant to you, as he has indeed been to me, ever since his conversion. By my advice and direction he is returned to you; receive him, my dear friend, into your family again, and admit him into your house with the same readiness, with the same tenderness, with which you would entertain a favourite son of mine, if I had sent him to visit you.

4. Desirous as he was to have retained Onesimus, the apostle, nevertheless, felt himself bound in justice to send him back to his master, confident that he would be treated by him in the kindest manner, ver. 13—17.

13. *I was indeed desirous to keep him with me, that he might, in thy stead, have ministered to me in*  
 14. *these bonds for the gospel. But without thy consent I would do nothing, that thy goodness might not be, as it were, from constraint, but voluntary.*  
 15. *For perhaps he therefore was separated<sup>1</sup> from thee for a short time, that thou mightest receive him*  
 16. *back for ever<sup>2</sup>. No longer as a slave, but above a*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Was separated.*] Dr. Benson remarks, that “the apostle here uses a soft expression, which seems to ascribe the separation of Onesimus from his master to the over-ruling providence of God for the accomplishment of his great and good purposes, as the bondage of Joseph is represented, Gen. xlv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *For ever :*] i. e. to the end of life. “This,” says Dr. Benson, “is one instance in which the phrase *for ever* must stand for a finite or indefinite duration, and there are other instances in scripture. The apostle probably alludes to the case of the Hebrew servant, who voluntarily consented to serve his master for life, Exod. xxi. 2, 6; Deut. xv. 17. See also Lev. xxv. 46.”

“*Αἰώνιον* possumus vertere, semper, perpetuū; ut sensus sit, ut

*slave, as a brother beloved very much by me, but* Ver. 16.  
*how much more by thee, both as a man and as a*  
*believer in the Lord*<sup>3</sup>. *If, therefore, thou regard* 17.  
*me as a friend*<sup>4</sup>, *receive him as myself.*

The services of Onesimus were so very useful to me, that I should have been glad to have retained him with me to have performed those offices of kindness and sympathy for me in my imprisonment, which your tender friendship would have been eager to have performed had you been present with me; and which I am fully persuaded that you would have been well pleased that Onesimus should have remained to have executed in your stead. Nevertheless, as I had no opportunity of obtaining your consent, I would not keep him without it, lest it should be suspected by those who knew not the liberality of your spirit, that I detained your servant against your will.

---

*eum retineas perpetuo, servum bonum, tibi que utilem; quæ sententia præferenda esse videtur.*" Rosenmüller.

Observe, that the apostle does not order Philemon to set his slave at liberty; nor did Onesimus's conversion emancipate him from the yoke. Christianity makes no alteration in the civil states of men. See 1 Cor. vii. 20, and Mr. Locke's note; also Benson *in loc.*

<sup>3</sup> *As a man, &c.*] In the original it is "in the flesh, and in the Lord." Mr. Wakefield's version is, "as a man, and as a Christian;" which is undoubtedly the true meaning of the words. Nevertheless, as the word *Christian* was in use in the apostolic age, and yet the apostle never adopts it, but constantly uses in lieu of it *οἱ ἐν Κυρίῳ*, or *ἐν Χριστῷ*, or some equivalent phrase, I think it not proper to use the word *Christian* in translating his writings, but rather to adopt his own phrase, supplying the words that are understood.

<sup>4</sup> *Friend.*] *κοινωνός*: a joint partaker with him in the blessings of the gospel. See Doddridge and Benson.

Ver. 17. And perhaps the intention of divine Providence in this temporary separation might be, that your fugitive slave, being in this interval converted to the Christian faith, might be restored to you to be a comfort, and to be useful to you as long as you live. Not indeed in the capacity of a slave, but in the nobler character of a friend, a brother, a fellow-Christian, very dear to me, who am his spiritual father, and who have been greatly benefited by his services; and still more dear to you, who have known him longer, who will feel a peculiar interest in the conversion of the penitent fugitive, and who will, for a much longer period, enjoy the benefit of his faithful and tender attentions. As a slave, you will be pleased with his dutiful behaviour; as a Christian, you will acknowledge and love him as a brother. If, then, you love me, treat Onesimus with kindness; receive him as my representative and harbinger, and entertain him as myself.

5. The apostle promises to make good whatever loss Philemon might have sustained from Onesimus; and continues to urge his suit in full confidence of success, ver. 18—21.

18. *But if he have done thee any wrong<sup>1</sup>, or owe*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Any wrong.*] Some have inferred from this expression that Onesimus had robbed his master; but of this fact there is no proof. The apostle means to obviate every possible objection to the re-admission of Onesimus; and therefore offers to pay whatever might be due to Philemon, whether from the loss of his slave's service, or on any other account. "*Quæ Paulus huc usque scripserat plena erant humanitatis; reliqua plenissima sunt*

thee any thing, charge it to my account. I, Paul, Ver. 19.  
 have written<sup>2</sup> it with my own hand, I will repay  
 it; not to say unto thee, that thou owest even thine  
 own self to me. Yea, brother, let me enjoy this 20.  
 satisfaction<sup>3</sup> from thee in the Lord; gratify my  
 tender feelings<sup>4</sup> in Christ. In full assurance of 21.  
 thy compliance, I have thus written to thee, know-  
 ing that thou wilt do even more than I ask.

---

urbanitatis. Εἰ τι κ. τ. λ. non ad vivum resecanda, eleganter potius et facete dicta esse quum mutua inter Paulum et Philemonem officia, tum sequentia satis declarant." Rosenmuller.

\* I, Paul, have written it.] This is a promissory note, which the apostle writes with his own hand. "Dubitari potest, scripseritne Apostolus totam hanc epistolam manu propria, an hanc tantum ejus particulam, literis forte, ut Hieronymus conjiciebat, majusculis, quod omnino augeret facetam orationis urbanitatem, quam nemo non agnoscat in eleganti quæ sequitur præteritione; ἰνα μη κ. τ. λ." Rosenmuller. The learned writer thinks that the apostle means to be facetious; but is not the subject too grave to admit of that supposition? It must, however, be allowed that the apostle, in the next verse, puns upon Onesimus's name. "It is not certain," says Dr. Priestley, "that Onesimus had robbed his master of any thing. All that Paul alludes to might be the loss of his service for so long a time as he had been absent from him."

<sup>3</sup> Let me enjoy this satisfaction:] or, let me be benefited by thee. *ὄναιμην*, an allusion to the name of Onesimus: *q. d.* Be you an Onesimus to me. In the Lord; *q. d.* let me enjoy that Christian satisfaction in you in this particular, which you will derive from the pious and dutiful services of Onesimus as long as you live. "Fac ut hunc fructum percipiam ex te, ut homine Christiano. Paulus fortassis alludere voluit ad Onesimi nomen; nam Paronomasiæ usus non abhorret a stilo Paulino." Rosenmuller.

<sup>4</sup> Gratify my feelings.] Gr. "refresh my bowels."—"refresh my feelings." Wakefield. In Christ: This is the reading best supported. The received text reads "in the Lord." See Benson.

The allusion in the expression *refresh* or *soothe my bowels*, is not to the relief of hunger; but to the gratification of the kind

Ver. 21. Let it not be any objection to the pardon of Onesimus that he is in your debt, or that he has injured you in any shape, either by dishonesty or neglect. Set this to my account. I, Paul, poor and prisoner as I am, will undertake to satisfy every just and legal claim, though Onesimus should not have it in his power to do so. This hand-writing of mine shall be your warrant for the demand. Nor, if you choose to urge it, will I bar your claim by reminding you of the far greater obligation you are yourself under to me, who have been the means of redeeming you from a much heavier bondage, and saving you from a severer condemnation. Yes, my dear Christian brother, waving all considerations of this kind, let me prevail upon you to gratify my most earnest wishes, in a case which so loudly appeals to your humanity and Christian benevolence. And I am confident that I shall not solicit in vain; for I know so well your generous spirit, that I am persuaded your kindness to Onesimus will even exceed what I request on his account.

6. The epistle closes with the expression of the apostle's hope that he should soon have it in his power to make his friend a visit, and with the customary salutations and benediction, ver. 22—25.

22. *At the same time also prepare me a lodging*<sup>1</sup>,

---

and tender affections. “*Mentem meam, metuentem ne quid acerbius in eum consulas, tranquillam redde. Proprie, ad quietem redige viscera mea.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>1</sup> *Prepare me a lodging.*] Dr. Doddridge remarks, that “Theo-

*for I hope that through your prayers I shall be mercifully restored to you. Epaphras<sup>2</sup> my fellow-captive in Christ Jesus, Mark<sup>3</sup>, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-labourers, salute thee: the favour of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all<sup>4</sup>.*

Ver. 22.  
23.  
24.  
25.

I entertain great hopes that your prayers, in concurrence with my own, and those of other Christian churches, will obtain the blessing of a speedy release from my present confinement: in which event I propose soon to make you a visit, to take up my residence at your hospitable mansion, and to thank you in person for your attention to this letter. Let an apartment be prepared for me, as you know not

---

doret justly observes, that Paul's mentioning his purpose of coming to lodge with Philemon quickly, would naturally add greater weight to his interposition in favour of Onesimus."

<sup>2</sup> *Epaphras.*] Grotius and Brenius think that Epaphras is an abbreviation of Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 25, iv. 18; and Dr. Benson allows that the epistle to the Philippians was written after this to Philemon, because he there says that he trusted he should come to them *quickly*, Phil. ii. 24; which is an expression which he does not use to Philemon. Epaphras is mentioned in the epistle to the Colossians, i. 7, iv. 12, 13. Dr. Benson thinks he was a different person from Epaphroditus. He is called by Paul his fellow-captive (*συναιχμαλωτος*), and he might have been in custody at Rome some time before; but Benson assigns plausible reasons for supposing that he was not a prisoner when this letter was written. He also observes, that "by calling Epaphras his fellow-captive, the apostle a fifth time put Philemon in mind of his bonds." See ver. 9, 10, 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Mark, &c.*] These are the same persons, with the exception of Justus, who were mentioned in the salutations at the close of the epistle to the Colossians, ch. iv.

<sup>4</sup> *You all.*] In the original "your spirit:" the pronoun is plural, which indicates that the salutation extends to Philemon and his friends. *Your spirit:* i. e. yourselves. The word *Amen* and the postscript are wanting in the best copies.

Ver. 25. how soon I may be with you. Epaphras, whom you know as a highly respected minister of Christ, and my fellow-captive in this holy war, sends his affectionate salutations to you. Mark and Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, the two former, countrymen of my own and observers of the law; the two latter, converts from the heathen world, all of them harmoniously co-operating with me in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; unite in transmitting to you their friendly salutations. With theirs, accept my own best wishes for you and for your friends; that you may continue to possess in its purity, and to experience in its power, the inestimable blessings of the gospel of our great master Jesus Christ, the rich, unsolicited, efficacious gift of God for the recovery and restoration of an apostate world.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY RICHARD AND ARTHUR TAYLOR,  
SHOE LANE.



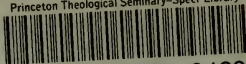






BS2650 .B452 v.3  
The Epistles of Paul the Apostle

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00073 8429