and uprightness in religion. We need desire no more to make us happy than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This the apostle begs for these Christians, and therein shews us what we are chiefly concerned to obtain; and, both for their and our encouragement to hope for it, he adds his amen.

AN EXPOSITION,
WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,
OF THE
EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.
Completed by Mr. Roswell.

SOME think that this epistle to the Ephesians was a circular letter sent to several churches; and that the copy directed to the Ephesians, happened to be taken into the canon, and so it came to bear that particular inscription. And they have been induced the rather to think this, because it is the only one of all St. Paul's epistles, that has nothing in it peculiarly adapted to the state or case of that particular church; but it has much of common concernment to all Christians; and especially to all who, having been Gentiles in times past, were converted to Christianity. But then it may be observed, on the other hand, that the epistle is expressly inscribed (ch. 1. 1.) to the saints which are at Ephesus; and in the close of it he tells them that he had sent Tychicus unto them, whom, in 2 Tim. 4. 12. he says, he had sent to Ephesus.

It is an epistle that bears date out of a prison: and some have observed that what this apostle wrote when he was a prisoner, had the greatest relish and savour in it of the things of God. When his tribulations did abound, his consolations and experiences did much more abound. Whence we may observe, that the afflictive exercises of God's people, and particularly of his ministers, often tend to the advantage of others as well as to their own.

The apostle's design is, to settle and establish the Ephesians in the truth; and further to acquaint them with the mystery of the gospel, in order to it. In the former part he represents the great privilege of the Ephesians, who, having been in time past idolatrous heathens, were now converted to Christianity, and received into covenant with God, which he illustrates from a view of their deplorable state before their conversion, ch. 1—3. In the latter part (which we have in the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters) he instructs them in the principal duties of religion, both personal and relative; and exhorts and quickens them to the faithful discharge of them. Zanchy observes, that we have here an epitome of the whole Christian doctrine, and of almost all the chief heads of divinity.

EPHESIANS, I.

chap. i.

In this chapter, we have, 1. The introduction to the whole epistle, which is much the same as in others, v. 1. 2. II. The apostle's thanksgivings and praises to God for his inestimable blessings bestowed on the believing Ephesians, v. 3. 14. III. His earnest prayers to God for their welfare, v. 15. 23. This great apostle was wont to abound in prayers and in thanksgivings to almighty God; which he generally so disposes and orders, that at the same time they carry with them and convey the great and important doctrines of the Christian religion, and the most weighty instructions to all those who seriously peruse them.

1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2. Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is, 1. The title St. Paul takes to himself, as belonging to him—Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, &c. He reckoned it a great honor to be employed
by Christ, as one of his messengers to the sons of men. The apostles were prime officers in the Christian church, being extraordinary ministers appointed for a time only. They were furnished by their great ordination with extraordinary gifts, and the immediate assistance of the Spirit, that they might be fitted for publishing and spreading the gospel, and for the governing of the church in its infant-age. Such a one St. Paul was, and that not by the will of man conferring that office upon him, nor by his own intrusion into it; but by the will of God, very expressly and plainly signified to him; he being immediately called (as the other apostles were) by Christ himself to the work. Every faithful minister of Christ (though his call and office are not of so extraordinary a nature) may, with our apostle, reflect on it as an honour and comfort to himself, that he is what he is, by the will of God. 2. The persons to whom this epistle is sent—To the saints which are at Ephesus, to the Christians who were members of the church at Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia. He calls them saints, for such they were in profession, such they were bound to be in truth and reality; and many of them were such. All Christians must be saints; and if they come not under that character on earth, they will never be saints in glory. He calls them the faithful in Christ Jesus, believers in him, and him and constant in their adherence to him, and to his truths and ways. They are not saints, who are not faithful, believing in Christ, firmly adhering to him, and true to the profession they make of relation to their Lord. Note, It is not only the honour of ministers, but of private Christians too, to have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—In Christ Jesus, from whom they derive all their grace and spiritual strength; and in whom their persons, and all that they perform, are made accepted. 3. The apostolical benediction—Grace be to you, &c. This is the token in every epistle; and it speaks the apostle's good will to his friends, and a real desire of their welfare. By grace we are to understand, the free and undeserved love and favour of God, and those graces of the Spirit which proceed from it; by peace, all other blessings, spiritual and temporal, the fruits and product of the former. No peace without grace. No peace, nor grace, but from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. These peculiar blessings proceed from God, not as a Creator, but as a Father by special grace, and from Christ, by his mediation. He, who, having purchased them for his people, has a right to bestow them upon them. Indeed the saints, and the faithful in Christ Jesus, had already received grace and peace; but the increase of these is very desirable, and the best saints stand in need of fresh supplies of the graces of the Spirit, and cannot but desire to improve and grow: and therefore they should pray, each one for himself, and for one another, that such blessings may still abound unto them. After this short introduction, he comes to the matter and body of the epistle; and though it may seem somewhat peculiar in a letter, yet the Spirit of God saw fit that his discourse of divine things in this chapter should be cast into prayers and praises: which as they are solemn addresses to God, so they convey weighty instructions to others. Prayer may preach; and praise may do so too.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him. 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; 12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

He begins with thanksgivings and praise, and enlarges with a great deal of fluency and copiousness of affection upon the exceeding great and precious benefits which we enjoy by Jesus Christ. For, the great privileges of our religion are very aptly recounted and enlarged upon in our praises to God. In general, (v. 3.) he blesses God for spiritual blessings: where he styles him the God and Father so our Lord Jesus Christ: For, as Mediator, the Father was his God; as God, and the second Person in the blessed Trinity, God was his Father. It speaks the mystical union between Christ and believers, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is their God and Father; and that, in and through him. All blessings come from God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. No good can be expected from a righteous and holy God to sinful creatures, but by his mediation. He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings. Note, Spiritual blessings are the best blessings with which God blesses us, and for which we are to bless him. HE blesses us by bestowing such things upon us as make us really blessed. WE cannot thus bless God again; but must do it by praising and magnifying, and speaking well of him on that account; and when God blesses with some, he blesses with all spiritual blessings: to show that he freely gives us all these things. It is not so with temporal blessings; we are favoured with health, and not with riches; some with riches, and not with health, &c. But where God blesses with spiritual blessings, he blesses with all. They are spiritual blessings in heavenly places; that is, say some, in the church, distinguished from the world, and called out of it. Or it may be read, in heavenly things, such as come from heaven, and are designed to prepare men for it, and to secure
their reception into it. We should hence learn to mind spiritual and heavenly things as the principal things, spiritual and heavenly blessings as the best blessings, with which we cannot be miserable, and without which we cannot be happy. So we should not be affected on things on the earth, but on those things which are above. These we are blessed with in Christ: for as all our services ascend to God through Christ, so all our blessings are conveyed to us the same way; he being the Mediator between God and us.

The particular spiritual blessings with which we are blessed in Christ, and for which we ought to bless God, are (as many of them) here enumerated and urged upon.

1. Election and predestination, which are the secret springs whence the others flow, v. 4, 5, 11. Election, or choice, respects that lump or mass of mankind, out of which some are chosen, from which they are separated and distinguished. Predestination has respect to the blessings they are designed for; particularly the adoption of children: it being the purpose of God, that in due time we should become his adopted children, and so have a right to all the privileges, and to the inheritance, of children. We have here the date of this act of love; it was before the foundation of the world: not only before God's people had a being, but before the world had a beginning; for they were chosen in the counsel of God from all eternity. It magnifies these blessings to a high degree, that they are the result of God's eternal counsel.

2. To make his church, and those who are chosen to happiness, happy, who have, through the will of his will, v. 5, for the sake of any thing in them foreseen, but because it was his sovereign will, and a thing highly pleasing to him. It is according to the purpose, the fixed and unalterable will, of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, v. 11, who powerfully accomplishes whatever concerns his elect, as he has wisely and freely ordained the last and highest designs of God and the design of all which, is his own glory. To the praise of the glory of his grace, v. 6. That we should be to the praise of his grace, v. 12, that we should live and behave ourselves in such a manner that his rich grace might be magnified, and appear glorious, and worthy of the highest praise. Acts of God, and from him, and through him, and therefore all must be to his glory, and, and comes, and God bless his praises. Note, The glory of God is his own end, and it should be our's in all that we do. The next spiritual blessing the apostle takes notice of, is,

2. Acceptance with God through Jesus Christ; Wherefore, or by which grace, he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, v. 6. Jesus Christ is the Beloved of his Father, Matt. 3. 17, as well as of angels and saints. It is our great privilege to be accepted of God, which implies his love to us, and his taking us under his care, and into his family. We cannot be thus accepted of God, but in and through Jesus Christ. He loves his people for the sake of the Beloved.

3. Remission of sins, and redemption, through the blood of Jesus, v. 7. No remission without redemption. It was by reason of sin that we were captivated; and we cannot be accepted of God but by the remission of our sins. This redemption we have in Christ, and this remission through his blood. The guilt and the stain of sin could be no otherwise removed than by the blood of Jesus. All our spiritual blessings flow down to us in that stream. This great benefit, which comes freely to us, was dearly bought and paid for by our blessed Lord: and yet it is according to the riches of God's grace. Christ's satisfaction, and God's satisfaction, are consistent in the great affair of man's redemption. God was satisfied by Christ as our Substitute and Surety; but it was rich grace that would accept of a Surety, when he might have executed the severity of the law upon the transgressor; and it was rich grace to provide such a Surety as his own Son, and freely to deliver him up, when nothing of that nature could have entered into our thoughts, or have been any otherwise found out for us. In which instance he has not only manifested riches of grace, but hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; v. 8, wisdom in contriving the dispensation, and prudence in executing the counsel of his will, as he has done. How illustrious have the divine wisdom and prudence rendered themselves, in so happily adjusting the matter between justice and mercy in this grand affair; in securing the honour of God and the glory of his name, at the same time that the recovery of sinners and their salvation are ascertained and made sure!

4. Another privilege which the apostle here blesses God for, is, divine revelation—that God hath made known to us the mystery of his will; v. 9, so much of his good will to men, which had been concealed for a long time, and is still concealed from so great a part of the world: this we owe to Christ, who, having been foreseen to be the Messiah, that he might come to declare his will to the children of men.

According to his good pleasure, his secret counsels concerning man's redemption, which he had purposed, or resolved upon, merely in and from himself, and not for any thing in them. In this revelation, and in his making known unto us the mystery of his will, the wisdom and the prudence of God do abound. It is not only the word of truth, and the gospel of our salvation. Every word of it is true; it contains and instructs us in the most weighty and important truths, and it is confirmed and sealed by the very oath of God: from whence we should learn to set aside ourselves to it in all our searches after divine truth. It is the gospel of our

* This passage has been understood by some in a very different sense, and with a special reference to the conversion of these Ephesians to Christianity. Those who have a mind to see what is said to this purpose, may consult Mr. Locke, and other well-known writers, on the place.
salvation: it publishes the glad tidings of salvation, and contains the offer of it: it points out the way that leads to it; and the blessed Spirit renders the reading and the ministration of it effectual to the salvation of souls. O, how we ought to prize this glorious gospel, and to bless God for it! This is the light shining in a dark place, for which we have reason to be thankful, and to which we should take heed.

5. Union in attaining Christ, is a great privilege, a spiritual blessing, and the foundation of many others. He gathers together in one all things in Christ, v. 10. All the lines of divine revelation meet in Christ; all religion centres in him. Jews and Gentiles were united to each other, by being both united to Christ. Things in heaven, and things on earth, are gathered together in him; peace made, correspondence settled, between heaven and earth, through him. Is not this the applying together of the church to Christ? this God purposed in himself; and it was his design in that dispensation which was to be accomplished by his sending of Christ in the fulness of time, at the exact time that God had prefixed and settled.

6. The eternal inheritance is the great blessing with which we are blessed in Christ; In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, v. 11. Heaven is the inheritance of the happiness of which is a sufficient portion for a soul: it is conveyed in the way of an inheritance, being the gift of a Father to his children. If children, then heirs. All the blessings that we have in hand, are but small if compared with the inheritance. What is laid out upon an heir in his minority, is nothing to what is reserved for him when he comes to age. Christians are said to have obtained this inheritance, as they have a present bright to it; and ever a possession of it, in Christ their Head and Representative.

7. The seal and earnest of the Spirit are of the number of these blessings. We are said to be sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, v. 13. The blessed Spirit is holy himself, and he makes us holy. He is called the Spirit of promise, as he is the promised Spirit. By him believe we are sealed; that is, separated and set apart for God, and distinguished and marked as belonging to him. The Spirit is the Earliest of our inheritance, v. 14. The earnest is part of the possession, and it secures the full sum: so is the gift of the Holy Ghost; all his influences and operations, both as a Sanctifier and a Comforter, are heaven begun, glory in the seed and bud. The Spirit’s illumination is an earnest of everlasting light; sanctification is an earnest of perfect holiness; and his comforts are earnest of everlasting joy. Grace is said to be the Earliest, until the redemption of the purchased possession. It may be called here the possession, because this earnest makes it as sure to the heirs as though they were already possessed of it; and it is purchased for them by the blood of Christ. The redemption of it is mentioned, because it was mortgaged and forfeited by sin; and Christ restores it to us, and so is said to purchase it, in his own behalf. Observe from all this, what a gracious promise that is, which secures the dead to those who trust in him. The apostle mentions the great end and design of God in bestowing all these spiritual privileges; that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ, v. 15. We to whom the gospel was first preached, and who were first converted to the faith of Christ, and to the placing under it and just in him. Note: Seniority in grace is a preceptment; Who were in Christ before me, says the apostle: (Rom. 16. 7.) they who have for a longer time experienced the grace of Christ, are under more special obligations to glorify God. They should be strong in faith, and more eminently glorify him; but this should be the common end of all. For this we were made, and for this we were redeemed; this is the great design of our Christianity, and of God in all that he has done for us; unto the praise of his glory, v. 14. He intends that his grace and power and other perfections should by this means become conspicuous and illustrious, and that the sons of men should magnify him.

15. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16. Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: 18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

We are come to the last part of this chapter, which consists of St. Paul’s earnest prayer to God in behalf of these Ephesians. We should pray for the persons for whom we give thanks. Our apostle blesses God for what he had done for them, and then he prays that he would do more for them. He gives thanks for spiritual blessings, and prays for further supplies of them: for God will for this be required of the house of Israel, to do it for them. Here in Christ are these spiritual blessings for us in the hands of his Son the Lord Jesus; but they had not appointed us to draw them out, and fetch them in, by prayer. We have no part or lot in the matter, any further than we claim it by faith and prayer.

One inducement to pray for them, was, the good account he had of them, of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, v. 15. Faith in Christ, and love to the saints, will be attended with the graces of the Spirit, and a happy end; and, because they are such, must include love to God. They who love saints, as much, love all saints, how weak in grace, how mean in the world, how treacherous and peevish soever, some of them may be. Another inducement to pray for them, was, because they had received the earnest of the inheritance: this we may observe from the words being connected with the preceding ones by the particle wherefore. Perhaps you will think, that having received the earnest, it should follow, therefore ye are happy enough, and take no further care; you need not pray for yourselves, nor I for you. No, quite contrary. Wherefore—I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; v. 16. While he blesses God for giving them the Spirit, he ceases not to pray that he would give unto them the Spirit,
(v. 17.) that he would give greater measures of the Spirit. Observe, Even the best of Christians need to be prayed for; and while we hear well of our Christian friends, we should think ourselves obliged to intercede with God for them, that they may abound and increase yet more and more.

Now what is it that St. Paul prays for in their behalf? Not that they might be freed from persecuting enemies, or delivered from the fear of death, or pleasures of the world; but the great thing he prays for, is, the illumination of their understandings, and that their knowledge might increase and abound: he means it of a practical and experimental knowledge. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are communicated to the soul by the enlightening of the understanding. In this way he gains and keeps possession. Satan takes a contrary way; he makes possession by this and that passion, Christ, by the understanding, Observe, 1. Whence this knowledge must come; from the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, v. 17. The Lord is a God of knowledge; and there is no sound, saving, knowledge, but what comes from him; and therefore to him we must look for it, who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, (v. 3.) and the Father of glory. It is indispensable to the enjoyment of any blessings, that the recipient shall be imbued with all glory is due to him from his creatures, and he is the Author of all that glory with which his saints are, or shall be, invested. Now he gives knowledge, by giving the Spirit of knowledge; for the Spirit of God is the Teacher of the saints; the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. We have the revelation of the Spirit in the word: but will that avail us, if we have not the wisdom of the Spirit in the heart? If the same Spirit who indited the sacred scriptures do not take the veil from off our hearts, and enable us to understand and improve them, we shall be never the better. In the knowledge of him, or for the acknowledgment of him; not only a speculative knowledge of Christ, and of what relates to him, but an acknowledgment of Christ's authority by an obedient conformity to him, which must be the help of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. This knowledge is first, in the understanding. He prays that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened, v. 18. Observe, Those who have their eyes opened, and have some understanding in the things of God, have need to be more and more enlightened, and to have their knowledge more clear and distinct and experimental. Christians should not think it enough to have warm affections, but they should labour to have clear understandings; they should be ambitious of understanding their outward and inward privileges, and the immense privileges of God's people, and the expectations they have from God, and with respect to the heavenly world, as to be quickened thereby to the utmost diligence and patience in the Christian course. We ought to labour after, and pray earnestly for, a clearer insight into, and a fuller acquaintance with, the great objects of a Christian's hopes and religion; the excellency of the knowledge of his inheritance in the saints. Besides that this inheritance prepared for the saints, there is a present inheritance in the saints: for grace is glory begun, and holiness happiness in the bud. There is a glory in this inheritance; riches of glory, rendering the Christian more excellent and more truly honourable than all about him; and it is desirable to know this experimentally; to be acquainted with the principles, pleasures, and powers, of the spiritual and divine life. It may be understood of the glorious inheritance in or among the saints in heaven, where God does, as it were, lay forth all his riches, to make them happy and glorious, and where all that the saints are in possession of is transcendently glorious: as the knowledge that can be attained of this upon earth, is very desirable, and must be exceedingly desired. Observe, 2. What it is that he more particularly desires they should grow in the knowledge of. (1.) The hope of his calling, v. 18. Christianity is our calling. God has called us to it, and on that account it is said to be his calling. There is a hope in this calling; for those who deal with God, deal upon trust. And it is a desirable thing to know what this hope of which he speaks, is. A Christian should, according to the immense privileges of God's people, and the expectations they have from God, and with respect to the heavenly world, as to be quickened thereby to the utmost diligence and patience in the Christian course. We ought to labour after, and pray earnestly for, a clearer insight into, and a fuller acquaintance with, the great objects of a Christian's hopes and religion; the excellency of the knowledge of his inheritance in the saints. Besides that this inheritance prepared for the saints, there is a present inheritance in the saints: for grace is glory begun, and holiness happiness in the bud. 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serviciy to the designs of his grace concerning his church. With this therefore we may answer the messengers of the nations, that the Lord hath founded Zion. The same power that supports the world, supports the church; and we are sure he loves his church, for it is his body, (v. 23.) his mystical body, and it will be the mourners of his dead body, (v. 3.) that fillet h'at in all. Jesus Christ fillet all in all; he supplies all defects in all his members, filling them with His Spirit, and even with the fulness of God, ch. 3. 19. And yet the church is said to be His fulness; because Christ as Mediator would not be complete if he had not a church. How could he be a King if he had not a kingdom? This therefore comes in to the honour of Christ, as Mediator, that the church is his fulness.

CHAP. II.

This chapter contains an account, I. Of the miserable condition of these Ephesians by nature, (v. 1. - 3.) and again, v. 11, 12. II. Of the glorious change that was wrought in them by converting grace, (v. 4. - 10.) and again, v. 13. III. Of the great and mighty privileges that converted Jews and Gentiles both receive from Christ, v. 14. - 22.

The apostle endeavours to affect them with a sense of the wonderful change which divine grace had wrought in them; and this is very applicable to that great change which the same grace works in all those who are brought into the church. We have before picture both of the misery of unregenerate men, and of the happy condition of converted souls; enough to awaken and alarm those who are yet in their sins, and to put them upon leaving off of these sins; and to refresh and delight those whom God hath quickened, with a consideration of the mighty privileges with which they are invested.

1. AND you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The miserable condition of the Ephesians by nature, is here in part described. Observe,

1. Unregenerate souls are dead in trespasses and sins. All those who are in their sins, are dead in sins; ye were in trespasses and sins: which may signify all sorts of sins, habitual and actual; sins of heart and of life. Sin is the death of the soul. Wherever that prevails, there is a privation of all spiritual life. Sinners are dead in state, being destitute of the principles and powers of spiritual life; and cut off from God, the Fountain of life: and they are dead in law, as a condemned malefactor is said to be a dead man.

2. A state of sin is a state of conformity to this world. As we are in the world, so are we in the devil, or the prince of the power of the air. Wherein, in which trespasses and sins, in time past ye walked; ye lived and behaved yourselves in such a manner as the men of the world are used to do.

3. We are by nature bond-slaves to sin and Satan. They who walk in trespasses and sins, and according to the course of this world, walk according to the prince of the power of the air. These are the devil's own words. See Matt. 22. 24, 26. The legions of apostate angels are as one power united under one chief; and therefore what is called the powers of darkness elsewhere, is here spoken of in the singular number. The air is represented as the seat of his kingdom; and it was the opinion of both Jews and Heathens, that the air is full of spirits, and that there they exercise and exert themselves. The Devil seems to have some power (by God's permission) in the lower region of the air; there he is at hand to tempt men, and to do as much mischief to the world as he can; but it is the comfort and joy of God's people, that he who is Head over all things to the church, has conquered the Devil, and has him in his chain. But wicked men are slaves to Satan, for they walk according to him: they conform their lives and actions to the will and pleasure of this great usurper. The course and tenor of their lives are according to his suggestions, and in compliance with his temptations; they are subject to him, and are led captive by him at his will; whereupon he is called the god of this world, and the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. The children of disobedience are such as choose to disobey God, and to serve the Devil; in these he works very powerfully and effectually. As the good Spirit works that which is good in obedient souls, so this evil spirit works that which is evil in wicked men; and he now works, not only heretofore, but even since the world has been blessed with the light of the glorious gospel. The apostle adds, Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past; which words refer to the Jews, who are signified here to have been in the like sad and miserable condition by nature, and to have been as vile and wicked as the unregenerate Gentiles themselves; and whose natural state he further describes in the next words.

4. We are by nature drudges to the flesh, and to our corrupt affections, v. 3. By fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, men contract that filthiness of flesh and spirit which the apostle exhorts Gentiles to cleanse themselves from, 2 Cor. 7. 1. The fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, includes all the sin and wickedness that are acted in, and by, both the inferior and the higher and nobler powers of the soul. We lived in the actual commission of all those sins which corrupt nature inclined us unto. The carnal mind makes a man a perfect slave to his vicious appetite. —Fulfilling [the will] of the flesh, &c. so the word may be rendered; denoting the efficacy of these lusts, and what power they have over those who yield themselves up to them.

5. We are by nature the children of wrath, even as others. The Jews were so, as well as the Gentiles; and one man is as much so as another by nature, not only by custom and imitation, but from the time when we began to exist, and by reason of our being formed in our mothers' wombs. All men, being naturally children of disobedience, are all whole nature children of wrath; God is angry with the wicked every day. Our state and course are such as deserve wrath, and would end in eternal wrath, if divine grace did not interpose. What reason have sinners then to be looking out for that grace that will make them, of children of wrath, children of God and heirs of glory? Thus far the apostle has described the misery of a natural state in these verses, which we shall find him pursuing again in some following ones.

4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. 5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.) 6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. 8. For by grace are ye saved
through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast: 10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. 11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13. But now in Christ Jesus, ye which sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Here the apostle begins his account of the glorious change that was wrought in them by converting grace; where observe,

1. By whom, and in what manner, it was brought about and effected. 2. Negatively; not of yourselves, v. 5. Our faith, our conversion, and our eternal salvation, are not the mere product of our own merit and performance. 3. Affirmatively: Of works, lest any man should boast, v. 9. These things are not brought to pass by any thing done by us, and therefore all boasting is excluded; he who glories, must not glory in himself, but in the Lord. There is no room for any man's boasting of his own abilities and power; or as though he had done any thing that might deserve such immense favours from God.

2. Positively; But God, col. 1. And, col. 2. And, v. 4. God himself is the Author of this great and happy change, and his great love is the spring and final cause of it; thence he resolved to shew mercy. Love is his inclination to do us good, considered simply as creatures; Mercy respects us as apostate and as miserable creatures. Observe, God's eternal love or good-will toward his creatures, is the fountain whence all his mercies vouchsafed to us proceed; and that love of God is great love, and that mercy of his is rich mercy; inexpressibly great, and inexhaustibly rich. And then by grace ye are saved, (v. 5.) and by grace are we saved through faith—it is the gift of God, v. 8. Note, Every converted sinner is a saved sinner; such are delivered from sin and wrath; they are brought into a state of salvation, and have a right given them by grace to eternal happiness. The grace that saves them, is, the free undeserved goodness and favour of God; and the grace which saves them, is obtained by the works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, by means of which they come to partake of the great blessings of the gospel; and both that faith, and that salvation on which it has so great an influence, are the gift of God.

The great objects of faith are made known by divine revelation, and made credible by the testimony and evidence which God hath given us; and that we believe to salvation, and obtain salvation through faith, is entirely owing to divine assistance and grace; God has ordered all so that the whole shall appear to be of grace. Observe,

II. Wherein this change consists: in several particulars, answering to the misery of our natural state; of which are enumerated in this section, and others are mentioned below. 1. We who were dead are quickened. Col. 2. We are saved from the domain of sin, and have a principle of spiritual life implanted in us. Grace in the soul is a new life in the soul. As death locks up the senses, seals up all the powers and faculties, so does a state of sin, as to any thing that is good; grace unlocks and opens all, and enlarges the soul. Observe, A regenerate sinner becomes a living soul: he lives a life of souls already passed, being born of God; and he lives in the sense of the law, being delivered from the guilt of sin by pardoning and justifying grace. He hath quickened us together with Christ; our spiritual life results from our union with Christ; it is in him that we live: Because I live, ye shall live also. 2. We who were buried, are raised up, v. 6. What remains yet to be done, is the work of grace; though it were already passed, though indeed we are raised up in virtue of our union with him whom God hath raised from the dead. When he raised Christ from the dead, he did in effect raise up all believers together with him, being their common Head; and when he placed him at his right hand in heavenly places, he advanced and glorified them in and with him, their raised and exalted Head and Forerunner. And made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This may be understood in another sense; sinners roll themselves in the dust; sanctified souls sit in heavenly places, are raised above the world; the world is as nothing to them, compared with what it has been, and compared with what the other world is. Saints are not only Christ's freemen, but they are assessors with him; by the assistance of his grace they have ascended with him above this world to an infinite height of glory and dominion, to an other expectation of it. They are not only servants to the best of Masters in the best work, but they are exalted to reign with him; they sit upon the throne with Christ, as he is set down with his Father on his throne.

III. Observe what is the great design and aim of God in producing and effecting this change: And this, 1. With respect to men, what in the ages to come should be the inheritance of all the saints. &c. (v. 7.) This has been a specimen and proof of his great goodness and mercy, for the encouragement of sinners in future time. Observe, The goodness of God in converting and saving sinners heretofore, is a proper encouragement to others in after-time, to hope in his grace and mercy, and to apply themselves to these. God having this in his design, poor sinners should take great encouragement from it. All who have received the grace and kindness, from riches of grace, and from exceeding riches of grace, to which this change is owing? Through Christ Jesus, by and through whom God conveys all his favour and blessings to us. 2. With respect to the regenerated sinners themselves; For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, &c. v. 10. It appears that all is of grace, because all our spiritual advantages are from God. We are his workmanship; he means in respect of the new creation, not only as men, but as saints. The new man is a new creature; and God is its Creator. It is a new birth, and we are born or begotten of his will. In Christ Jesus, on the account of what he has done and suffered, and by the influence and operation of his blessed Spirit. Unto good works, &c. The apostle having before ascribed this change, to divine grace, in exclusion of works; lest he should seem thereby to discourage good works, he here observes, that though the change is to be ascribed to nothing of that nature, (for we are the workmanship of God,) yet God, in this new creation, has designed and prepared us for good works; Created unto good works, with a design that we should be fruitful in them. Wherever God by his grace implants good principles, they are intended to be for good works. Which God hath before ordained, decreed and appointed. Or, the words may be read, To which God hath before prepared us, by blessing us with the knowledge of his will, and with the assistance of his
Holy Spirit; and by producing such a change in us,  
_That we should walk in them, glorify God by an _exemplary conversation, and by our perseverance in holiness._

In the eleventh and twelfth verses the apostle proceeds in his account of the miserable condition of these Ephesians by nature. _Wherefore remember, &c._ v. 11. As if he had said, "You should remember what you have been, and compare it with what you now are, in order to humble yourselves, and to excite your love and thankfulness to God." Note, Converted sinners ought frequently to reflect upon the sinfulness and misery of the estate they were in by nature: (1.) To estimate the greatness of their ruin; (2.) To represent the greatness of their deliverance; (3.) To show the greatness of their interest in the covenant of grace. _Who are called un circumcision by that, &c._ that is, "You were reproached and upbraided for it by the formal Jews, who made an external profession, and who looked no further than the outward ordinance." Note, Hypocritical professors are apt to value themselves chiefly on their external privileges, and to reproach and despise others who are destitute of them. The apostle describes the misery of their case in several particulars, v. 12. _At that time, while ye were Gentiles, and in an unconverted state, ye were," (1.) _In a Christless condition, without the knowledge of the Messiah, and without any saving interest in him or relation to him._ It is true of all unconverted sinners, all those who are destitute of faith, that they have no saving interest in Christ; and it must be a sad and deplorable thing for a soul to be without Christ. Being without Christ, they were, (2.) _Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;_ they did not belong to Christ's church, and had no communion with it, that being confined to the Israelish nation. It is no small privilege to be placed in the church of Christ, and to share with the members of it in the advantages peculiar to that; (3.) _The covenant from the covenants of promise._ The covenant of grace has ever been the same for substance; though, having undergone various additions and improvements in the several ages of the church, it is called covenants; and the covenants of promise, because it is made up of promises, and particularly contains the great promise of the Messiah, and of eternal life through him. Now the Ephesians, in their gentilisness, were strangers to both; and it is here shown that they who were in a state of enmity, are reconciled. Between the Jews and the Gentiles there had been a great enmity; so there is between God and every unregenerate man. Now Jesus Christ is our peace, v. 14. He made peace by the sacrifice of himself; and came to reconcile, 1. Jews and Gentiles to each other. He made both one, by reconciling these two divisions of men, who were wont to malign, to hate, and to reproach each other. He broke down the middle wall of partition, the ceremonial law, that made the great feud, and was the badge of the Jews' peculiarity; called the partition-wall, by way of allusion to the partition in the temple, which separated the court of the Gentiles from that into which the Jews only had liberty to enter. Thus he abolished in his flesh the enmity, v. 15. By his sufferings in the flesh, taking away the binding power of the ceremonial law, so showing that cause of enmity and distance between them; which is here called the law of commandments contained in ordinances, because it enjoined a multitude of external rites and ceremonies, and consisted of many institutions and appointments about the outward parts of divine worship. The legal ceremonies were abrogated by Christ, having their accomplishment in him. By taking those out of the way, he formed one church of believers, whether they had been Jews or Gentiles. Thus he made himself of twain one new man. He framed
both these parties into one new society, or body of
God's people, uniting them to himself as their com-
mon Head; they being renewed by the Holy Ghost,
and now concurring in a new way of gospel-worship:
so making peace between these two parties who were
so much at variance before.
2. There is an enmity
between God and men: Christ came to take up the
quarrel, and to bring it to an end, by reconciling both
Jews and Gentiles, now collected and gathered into
one body, to a provoked and an offended God: and
this by the cross; or by the sacrifice of himself upon
the cross: having slain the enmity thereby. He,
being slain or sacrificed, slew the enmity that was
borne on God and men. The apostle proceeds to
illustrate the great advantages which both parties gain by
the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, v. 17.
Christ, who purchased peace on the
cross, came, partly in his own person, as to the Jews,
who are here said to have been nigh; and partly in
his apostles, whom he commissioned to preach the
gospel to the Gentiles, who are said to have been at
a distance from God, even farther than before, then
and preached peace, or published the terms of re-
conciliation with God, and of eternal life. Note here,
when the messengers of Christ deliver his truths,
it is in effect the same as if he did it immediately
himself. He is said to preach by them; insomuch
that he who received them received him; and he
who despiseth them (acting by virtue of his commis-
ssion, and delivering his message) despiseth and re-
jecteth Christ himself. Now the effect of this peace
is the free access which both Jews and Gentiles have
unto God; (v. 18.) For through him, in his name,
and by virtue of his mediation, we both have access,
admission, into the presence of God, who is become
the common reconciled Father of both: the throne
of grace is erected for us to come to; and liberty of
approach to that throne is allowed us. Our access
is by the Holy Spirit; Christ purchased for us leave
to come to God; and the Spirit gives us a heart to
come, and strength to come, even grace to serve
God acceptably. Observe, We draw nigh to God,
through Jesus Christ, by the help of the Spirit. The
Ephesians, upon their conversion, having such an
access to God, as well as the Jews, and by the same
Spirit, the apostle tells them, Now therefore ye are
no more strangers and foreigners, &c. v. 9. This
he mentions by way of opposition to what he had
observed in their previous condition: they were
now no longer aliens from the commonwealth of Is-
rael; and no longer what the Jews were wont to
account all the nations of the earth beside them-
selves, strangers to God: but fellow-citizens with
the saints, and of the household of God, members
of the church of Christ, and having a right to all
the privileges of it. Observe here, The church is
compared to a house, and every con-
verted believer is a member of it. It is also compared to a house, and every con-
verted sinner is one of the domestics, one of the
family; a servant, and a child in God's house. In
v. 20. the church is compared to a building: the foun-
dation of that building are the apostles and prophets.
They may be so called in a secondary sense, Christ
himself being the primary Foundation; but we are
not to understand it of the doctrine of the church,
but of the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles
of the New. It follows, Jesus Christ himself being the
chief Corner-stone. In him both Jews and Gen-
tiles meet, and constitute one church; and Christ
supports the building by his strength. In whom all
the building, fifty framed together, &c. v. 21. All
believers, of whom it consists, being united to Christ
by faith, and among themselves by Christian cha-
city, in which there is much communion between
God and his people, as in the temple; they worship-
ning and serving him, he manifesting himself unto
them; they offering up spiritual sacrifices to God,
and he dispensing his blessings and favours to them.
Thus the building, for the nature of it, is a temple,
a holy temple: for the church is the place which
God hath chosen to put his name there; and it be-
comes such a temple, by grace and strength derived
from himself, in the Lord. The universal church
being built upon Christ as the Foundation-stone, and
united in Christ as the Corner-stone, comes at length
to be glorified in him as the Top-stone; In whom
ye also are built together, &c. v. 22. Observe,
Not only the universal church is called the temple
of God, but particular of churches; and even every
true believer is a living temple, is a habitation of
God through the Spirit. God dwells in all believ-
ers now; they being become the temple of God
through the operations of the blessed Spirit; and his
dwelling with them now is an earnest of their dwell-
ing together with him to eternity.

CHAP. III.

This chapter consists of two parts. 1. Of the account
which St. Paul gives the Ephesians concerning himself, as
one appointed by God to be the apostle of the Gentiles, v. 1.
13. II. Of his devoted and affectionate prayer to God for
the Ephesians, v. 14. 21. We may observe it to have been
very much the business of this apostle to intermix, with his
instructions and counsels, intercessions and prayers to God
for those to whom he wrote, as knowing that all his instruc-
tions and teachings would be useless and vain, except God
did co-operate with them, and render them effectual. This
is an example that all the ministers of Christ should ever
carry after: praying earnestly that the efficacious operations
of the divine Spirit may attend their ministrations, and crown
them with success.

1. FOR this cause I Paul, the prisoner
of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of
the grace of God which is given me to you-
ward: 3. How that by revelation he made
known unto me the mystery; as I wrote
 afore in few words; 4. Whereby, when
ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in
the mystery of Christ, 5. Which in
other ages was not made known unto the
sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his
holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
6. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs,
and of the same body, and partakers of his
promise in Christ by the gospel: 7. Where-
fore I was made a minister, according to the
gift of the grace of God given unto me by
the effectual working of his power. 8. Unto
me, who am less than the least of all
saints, is this grace given, that I should
preach among the Gentiles the unsearch-
able riches of Christ; 9. And to make all
men see what is the fellowship of the mys-
tery, which from the beginning of the world
hath been hid in God, who created all
things by Jesus Christ: 10. To the intent
that now unto the principalities and powers in
heavenly places might be known by the
curch the manifold wisdom of God, 11. Ac-
cording to the eternal purpose which he pur-
gished in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12.
In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. 13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Here we have the account which St. Paul gives the Ephesians concerning himself, as he was appointed by God the apostle of the Gentiles.

I. We may observe that he acquaints them with the tribulations and sufferings which he endured in the discharge of that office, v. 1. The first clause refers to the preceding chapter, and may be understood either of these two ways: For this cause, the apostle, or For this cause, which was the apostle of the Gentiles, and preached the gospel to them. We may learn hence, that the faithful ministers of Christ are to dispense his sacred truths, however disagreeable they may be to some, and whatever they themselves may suffer for doing so. Or, 2. The words may be thus understood: For this cause, since ye are no more strangers and foreigners, (as ch. 2. 13.) but are united to Christ, and admitted into communion with his church, Paul, who am the prisoner of Jesus Christ, pray that you may be enabled to act as becomes persons thus favoured by God, and made partakers of so great privileges. To this purport you find him expressing himself, v. 14. where, after the digression contained in the several verses intervening, he proceeds with what he began in this first verse. Observe These verses do not have received grace and signal favours from God, singly, but he prays that they may improve and advance, and continue to act as becomes them. And seeing Paul, while he was a prisoner, employed himself in such prayers to God in behalf of the Ephesians, we should learn that no particular sufferings of our own should make us so solicitous about ourselves as to neglect the cases of others in our supplications and addresses to God.

He speaks again of his sufferings; Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory, v. 15. While he was in prison, he suffered much there; and though it was upon their account that he suffered, yet he would not have them discouraged nor dismayed at this. But seeing God had done such great things for them by his ministry. What a tender concern was here for the comfort of others! Paul was himself so great, so solicitous lest they should be discouraged and faint upon his tribulations, than about what he himself endured: and to prevent this, he tells them, that his sufferings were their glory; and would be so far from being a real discouragement, if they duly considered the matter, that they ministered cause to them for glorying and for rejoicing; as this discovered the great esteem and regard which God bore to them, in that he not only sent his apostles to preach the gospel to them, but even to suffer for them, and to confirm the truths they delivered, by the persecutions they underwent. Observe, Not only the faithful ministers of Christ themselves, but their people too, have some special cause for joy and glorying, when they suffer for the sake of dispensing the gospel.

II. The apostle informs them of God's appointing him to the office; and eminently fitting and qualifying him for it, by a special revelation that he made unto him.

God appointed him to the office; If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward, v. 2. They could not but have heard of this, and therefore he does not design to speak doubtfully of this matter. Ely, is sometimes in an affirmative sense, and means, We have heard, &c. He styles the gospel the grace of God here, (as in other places,) because it is the gift of divine grace to sinful men; and all the gracious overtures that it makes, and the joyful tidings that it contains, proceed from the rich grace of God; and it is also the great instrument in the hands of the Spirit, by which God works grace in the souls of men. He speaks of the dispensation of this grace given to him, the message and commission by which he was appointed and commissioned by God to dispense the doctrine of the gospel; which commission and authority were given to him, chiefly for the service of the Gentiles; to you-ward. And again, speaking of the gospel, he says, Whereof I was made a minister, &c. v. 7. Here he again asserts his authority; He was MADE a minister, he did not make himself such; he was called, not he the caller; and he was made such according to the gifts of the grace of God unto him. God supplied and furnished him for his work; and in the discharge of it suitably assisted and helped him with all needful gifts and graces, both ordinary and extraordinary, and that by the effectual working of his power; in himself more especially; and also in great numbers of those to whom he preached; by which means his labours among them were successful. What God calls men to, he fits them for; and does it with an almighty power. An effectual working of divine power attends the gifts of divine grace.

As God appointed him to the office, so he eminently qualified him for it, by a special revelation that he made unto him. He makes mention both of the mystery that was revealed, and of the revelation of it.

The mystery revealed is, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel; (v. 6.) that they should be joint-heirs with the believing Jews, of the heavenly inheritance; and that they should be members of the same mystical body, be received into the church of Christ, and be interested in the gospel-promises, as well as the Jews; and particularly in the great promise of the Spirit. And this in Christ, because he is related to Christ, and all his promises are you and amen: by the gospel, that is, in the times of the gospel, as some understand it, or, by the gospel preached to them; which is the great instrument and means by which God works faith in Christ, as others. This was the great truth revealed to the apostle, that God would call the Gentiles to salvation by faith in Christ, and that without that faith they could not be saved.

Of the revelation of this truth, he speaks v. 3-5. Where we may observe that the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in the gospel-church was a mystery, a great mystery; what was designed in the counsel of God before all worlds, but what could not be fully understood for many ages, till the accomplishment expounded the prophecies of it. It is called a mystery, because the several circumstances and peculiarities of it, (such as the time and manner and means by which it should be effected) were concealed and
kept secret in God's own breast, till by an immediate revelation he made them known to his servant. See Acts 26. 16–18. And it is called the mystery of Christ, because it was revealed by him, (Gal. 1. 12.) and because it relates so very much to him. Of this the apostle had given some hints afore; or a little before; that is, in the preceding chapters. Whereby, when ye read; or, as those words may be read, this is, on the face of it. This is not to be read, and seriously consider and lay to heart what we read;) ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ; so as to perceive how God had fitted and qualified him to be an apostle to the Gentiles, which might be to them an evident token of his divine authority. This mystery, he says, in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as little as could have been; his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (v. 5.) that is, it was not so fully and clearly discovered in the ages before Christ, as it is now revealed unto the prophets of that age, the prophets of the New Testament, who were immediately inspired and taught by the Spirit. Let us observe, that the conversion of the Gentile world to the faith of Christ was an adorable mystery, and we ought to regard Christ and his work to this day. Those who have been so long in the dark, and at so great a distance, should be enlightened with the marvellous light, and be made nigh? Let us learn hence not to despair of the worst; of the worst of persons, and of the worst of nations. Nothing is too hard for divine grace to do: none so unworthy but God may please to confer great grace upon them. And how much are we ourselves interested in this affair; not only as we live in a time in which the mystery are here revealed, but particularly as we are a part of the nations which in times past were foreigners and strangers, and lived in gross idolatry; but are now enlightened with the everlasting gospel, and partake of its promises!

III. The apostle acquaints them how he was employed in this office, and that with respect to the Gentiles, and to all men. 1. With respect to the Gentiles, he preached to them the unsearchable riches of Christ, v. 8. Observe, in this verse, how humbly he speaks of himself, and how highly he speaks of Jesus Christ. (1.) How humbly he speaks of himself; I am less than the least of all saints. St. Paul, who was the chief of the apostles, calls himself less than the least of all saints; he means on the account of his having been formerly a persecutor of the followers of Christ. He was, in his own esteem, as little as could have been. We can be less than the least? To speak himself as little as could be, he speaks himself less than could be. Observe, Those whom God advances to honourable employments, he humbles, and makes low in their own eyes; and where God gives grace to be humble, there he gives all other grace. You may also observe in what a different manner the apostle speaks of himself, and of his office. While he measures the height he has reached himself, observe, his faith Minister of Christ may be very humble, and think very meanly of himself, even when he thinks and speaks very highly and honourably of his sacred function. (2.) How highly he speaks of Jesus Christ; The unsearchable riches of Christ. There is a mighty treasury of mercy, grace, and love, laid up in Christ Jesus, and that for Jews and Gentiles both. Or, the riches of the grace of God, and the riches which Christ purchased for, and bestows upon, all believers. And they are unsearchable riches, which we cannot find the bottom of; which human sagacity could never have discovered; and men could no otherwise attain to the knowledge of them but by revelation. Now it was the apostle's business and employment to preach these unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles; and it was a favour he greatly valued, and looked upon it as an unspeakable honour to him; "Unto me is this grace given;" this special favour God has granted to such an unworthy creature as I am. And it is an unspeakable favour to the Gentile world, that to them the unsearchable riches of Christ are preached. Though many remain poor, and are not enriched with these favours; but it is this one thing which is preached among us, to have an offer of them made to us; and if we be not enriched with them, it is our own fault.

2. With respect to all men, v. 9. His business and employment were, to make all men see; to publish and make known to the whole world, what is the fellowship of the mystery, that the Gentiles, who have hitherto been strangers to the church, shall be admitted into the Lord Jesus, who is the beginning of the world hath been hid in God; kept secret in his purpose; who created all things by Jesus Christ; as John 1. 3. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made, that was made; and therefore no wonder that he saves the Gentiles as well as the Jews; for he is the common Creator of them both; and we may conclude that he is able to perform the work of their redemption sooner or later. We are a figure of the great work of creation. It is true, that both the first creation, when God made all things out of nothing, and the new creation, whereby sinners are made new creatures by converting grace, are of God by Jesus Christ. The apostle adds, To the intent that now unto the principals and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God. v. 10. This was one thing, among others, which God had in his eye in revealing this mystery, that the good angels, who have a pre-eminence in governing the kingdoms and principalities of the world, and who are induced with great power to execute the will of God on this earth, (though their ordinary residence is in heaven,) may be informed, from what passes in the church and is done in and by it, (of the manifold wisdom of God,) of the great variety with which God wisely dispenses things; or of his wisdom manifested in the many ways and methods he takes in ordering his church in the several ages of it, and especially in receiving the Gentiles into it. The holy angels, who look into the mystery of our redemption by Christ, could not but take notice of this branch of that mystery, that among the Gentiles is preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. And this is according to the eternal purpose which God purposed to execute in and through Jesus Christ: the whole of what he has done in the great affair of man's redemption, being in pursuance of his eternal decree about that matter. The apostle, having mentioned our Lord Jesus Christ, subjoins, In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him; (v. 12.) that is, By, or through, whom we have liberty to open our minds freely to God, as to a Father, and a well-grounded persuasion of audience and of acceptance with him; and this by means of the faith we have in him, as our great Mediator and Advocate. We may come with humble boldness to hear
from God, knowing that the terror of the curse is done away; and we may expect to hear from him good words and comfortable. We may have access with confidence to speak to God, knowing that we have such a Mediator between God and us, and such an Advocate with the Father."

14. For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

We are now come to the second part of this chapter, which contains St. Paul's devout and affectionate prayer to God for his beloved Ephesians.

For this cause. This may be referred either to the immediately foregoing verse, That ye faint not, &c. or rather, the apostle is here resuming what he began at the first verse, from which he digressed in those which are interposed. Observe to whom he prays—to God, as the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which see ch. 1. 3. Observe further, his outward posture in prayer, which was humble and reverent; I bow my knees. Note, When we draw nigh to God, we should reverence him in our hearts, and express it in the most suitable and becoming behaviour and gesture. And here, having mentioned Christ, he cannot pass without an honourable encomium of his love, v. 15. The universal church is in a dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ; Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. The Jews were wont to boast of Abraham as their father; but now Jews and Gentiles both are denominated from Christ; so some. While others understand it of the saints in heaven, who wear the crown of glory, and of saints on earth, who are going on in the work of grace here. Both the one and the other make but one family, one household, and one Christ, Ephesians 3:17. We therefore name them all CHRISTIANS, as they really are such; acknowledging their dependence upon, and their relation to, Christ.

Observe what the apostle asks of God for these his friends—spiritual blessings; which are the best blessings, and the most earnestly to be sought and prayed for by every one of us, both for ourselves and for our friends.

1. Spiritual strength for the work and duty to which we are called, and in which we are employed; That he would grant you, according to the riches of his grace, to be strengthened, &c. The inner man is the heart or soul. To be strengthened with might, is to be mightily strengthened, much more than they were at present; to be endowed with a high degree of grace, and spiritual abilities for discharging duty, resisting temptations, enduring persecutions, &c. And the apostle prays that this may be according to the riches of his glory, or according to his glorious riches, answerable to that great abundance of grace, mercy, and power, which is bestowed in God, and is his glory; and this by his Spirit, who is the immediate Worker of grace in the souls of God's people. Observe from these things, that strength from the Spirit of God in the inner man is the best and most desirable strength; strength in the soul; the strength of faith and other graces; strength to serve God and to do our duty, and to persevere in the Christian course with vigour and with cheerfulness. And let us therefore, that as the work of grace is first begun, so it is continued and carried on, by the blessed Spirit of God.

II. The indwelling of Christ in our hearts, v. 17. Christ is said to dwell in his people, as he is always present with them by his gracious influences and operations. Observe, It is a desirable thing to have Christ dwell in our hearts; and if the law of Christ be written there, and the love of Christ be shed abroad there, then Christ dwells there. Christ is an Inhabitant in the soul of every good Christian. Where his Spirit dwells, there he dwells; and he dwells in the heart by faith; by means of the continual exercise of faith upon him. Faith opens the door of the soul, to receive Christ; faith admits him, and submits to him. By faith we are united to Christ, and this is a great interest in him.

III. The fixation of piety, and the abasing of affections in the soul; That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, steadfastly fixed in your love to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to all the saints, the beloved of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many have some love to God, and to his servants, but it is a flux; like the cracking of thorns under a pot, it makes a great noise, but is gone presently. We should earnestly desire that good affections may be fixed in us; that we may be rooted and grounded in love. Some understand it of their being settled and established in the sense of God's love to them; which would inspire them with greater ardours of holy love to him, and to one another. And how very desirable is it to have a settled fixed sense of the love of God and Christ to our souls; so as to be able to say with the apostle, at all times, He has loved me; which is the best way to attain to this, is, to be careful that we may maintain it to God in our souls; this will be the evidence of the love of God to us. We love him, because he first loved us. In order to this, he prays,

IV. For their experimental acquaintance with the love of Jesus Christ. The more intimate acquaintance we have with Christ's love to us, the more our love will be drawn out to him, and to those who are his, for his sake. What we may be able to comprehend with all saints, &c. (v. 18, 19.) more easily, Christ doth understand, and firmly to believe, the wonderful love of Christ to his, which the saints do understand and believe in some measure, and shall understand more hereafter. Christians should not aim to comprehend above all saints; but be content that God deals with them, as he uses to do with those who love and fear him. We should desire to comprehend with all saints, to have so much of the same love to all saints as are allowed to have in this world. We should be ambitious of coming up with the first three; but not of going beyond what is the measure of the stature of other saints.

It is observable how magnificently the apostle speaks of the love of Christ. The dimensions of redeeming love are admirable. The breadth, and length, and depth, and height. By enumerating these dimensions, the apostle designs to signify the exceeding greatness of the love of Christ; the unsearchable riches of his love, which is higher than
heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea, Job 11. 8. 9. Some describe the particulars thus: By the breadth of it we may understand the extent of it to all ages, nations, and ranks of men; by the length of it, its continuance from everlasting to everlasting; by the depth of it, its stooping to the lowest condition, with a design to relieve and save. We must not ask of sinners what the depth of its misery is; by its height, its entitling, and raising us up, to the heavenly happiness and glory. We should desire to comprehend this love: it is the character of all the saints that they do so; for they all have a complacency and a confidence in the love of Christ. And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, v. 19. If it passeth knowledge, how can we know it? We must pray and endeavour to know something, we must strive to know where, and more of it, though, after the best endeavours, none can fully comprehend it: in its full extent it passeth knowledge. Though the love of Christ may be better perceived and known by Christians than it generally is, yet it cannot be fully understood on this side heaven.

V. He prays that they might be filled with all the fulness of God. It is a high expression, we should not doubt but we do not find it in the scripture. It is like those other expressions, of being plenteous of a divine nature; and of being perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. We are not to understand it of his fulness as God in himself, but of his fulness as a God in covenant with us; as a God to his people; such a fulness as God is ready to bestow, who is willing to fill every one to the utmost of his capacity, and that with all those gifts and graces which he sees they need. They may receive grace for grace from Christ's fulness, may be said to be filled with the fulness of God, according to their capacity: all which is in order to their arriving at the highest degree of the knowledge and enjoyment of God, and an entire conformity to him.

The apostle closes the chapter with a doxology, v. 20, 21. It is proper to conclude our prayers with praises. Our blessed Saviour has taught us to do so. Take notice how he describes God; and how he ascribes glory to him. He describes him as a God that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. There is an inexhaustible fulness of grace and mercy in God, which the prayers of all the saints can never dry up. Whatever we may ask, or think to ask, still God is able to do more, abundantly more, exceedingly abundantly more. Often thou showest mercy, and hast mercy where thou wilt to fill it. Note, In our applications to God we should encourage our faith by a consideration of his all-sufficiency and almighty power. According to the power which worketh in us. As if he had said, We have already had a proof of this power of God, in what he hath wrought in us, and done for us, having quickened us by his grace, and converted us to himself. The power that still worketh for the saints, is the same, (just as it was) by which God wrought in them. Wherever God gives of his faithfulness, he gives to experience his power. Having thus described God, he ascribes glory to him. When we come to ask for grace from God, we ought to give glory to God. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus. In ascribing glory to God, we ascribe all excellences and perfections to him, glory being the effulgence and reflection of God's glory. It is praising God is in the church. That little rent of praise which God receives from this world, is from the church; a very particular member of which, both Jew and Gentile, concurs in this work of praising God. The Mediator of these praises is Jesus Christ. All God's gifts come from him to us through the hand of Christ; and all our praises pass from us to him through the same hand. And God should and will be praised thus throughout all ages, world without end: for he will ever have a church to praise him, and he will ever have his tribute of praise from his church. Amen. So be it! And so it will certainly be.

CHAP. IV.

We have gone through the former part of this epistle, which consists of several important doctrinal truths, contained in the three preceding chapters. We enter now on the latter part of it, in which we have the most weighty and serious exhortations that can be given. We may observe, that in the former chapters exhortations are given, which are designed for the direction of their lives and duties, and which are the direct duties and their duties are set forth as proper subjects for grace. This former part is doctrinal, and fitted to inform the minds of men in the great truths and doctrines of the gospel: the latter is practical, and designed for the direction of their lives and duties; and the latter part of the epistle is fitted to strengthen our endeavours after soundness in the faith, and regularity in life and practice. In what has gone before, we have heard of Christian privileges, which are the matter of our comfort. In what follows, we shall hear of Christian duties, and what the Lord our God requires of us, in consideration of such privileges vouchsafed to us. The best way to understand the mysteries, and partake of the privileges, of which we have read before, is, conscientiously to practice the duties enjoined to us. This, whatever may be the exigencies of the other hand, a serious consideration and belief of the doctrines that have been taught us in the foregoing chapters, will be a good foundation on which to build the practice of the duties prescribed in them, which are yet before us. Christian faith and Christian practice mutually befriend each other.

In this chapter, we have divers exhortations to important duties. I. One that is more general, v. 1-7. An exhortation to mutual love, unity, and concord, with the proper means and motives to promote them, v. 2-6. II. An exhortation to Christian purity and holiness of life; and to that both more general, v. 7-12; and in several particular instances, v. 25, to the end.

1. I THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

This is a general exhortation to walk as becomes our Christian profession. St. Paul was now a prisoner at Rome; and he was the prisoner of the Lord, or in the Lord, which signifies as much as for the Lord. See of this, ch. 3. 1. He mentions this once and again, to shew that he was not ashamed of his bonds, well knowing that he suffered not as an evil doer: and likewise to recommend what he wrote to them, with the greater tenderness, and with some special satisfaction, in those a doctrine he thought worth suffering for, and therefore surely they should think it worthy their serious regards, and their dutiful observance. We have here the petition of a poor prisoner, one of Christ's prisoners: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, &c. Considering what God has done for you, and to what a state and condition he has called you, as has been discoursed before; I may reasonably expect you will lend me relief, or to use your interest for the obtaining my liberty, the first thing which poor prisoners are wont to solicit from their friends, but) that you would approve yourselves good Christians, and live up to your profession and calling: that ye walk worthily, agreeably, suitably, and congruously, to those happy circumstances into which the grace of God has brought you, whom he has called out of darkness into his wonderful light. Therefore, beloved, Christians ought to accommodate themselves to the gospel by which they are called, and to the glory to which they are called; both are their vocation. We are called Christians; we must answer that name, and live like Christians. We are called to God's kingdom and glory; that kingdom and glory therefore we must mind, and walk as becomes the heirs of them.
2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; 3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9. (Now, that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Here the apostle proceeds to more particular exhortations. Two he enlarges upon in this chapter—To unity and purity, holiness and love, which Christians should very much study. We do not walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called, if we be not faithful friends to all Christians, and sworn enemies to all sin.

This section contains the exhortation to mutual love, unity, and concord; with the proper means and motives to promote them. Nothing is pressed upon us more earnestly in the scriptures than this. Love is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his sacred family. Other are called, if we be not faithful friends to all Christians, and sworn enemies to all sin.

I. The means of unity; Lowliness and meekness, long-suffering, and forbearing one another in love, v. 2. By lowliness we are to understand humility, and entertaining mean thoughts of ourselves, which is opposed to pride. By meekness, that excellent disposition of soul, which makes men unwilling to provoke others, and not easily to be provoked or offended with their infirmities; and it is opposed to angry resentment and peevishness. Long-suffering implies a patient bearing of injuries, without seeking re-venge. Forbearing one another in love, signifies bearing their infirmities out of a principle of love; and so as not to cease to love them on the account of these. The best Christians have need to bear one with another, and to make the best of one another; to provoke one another's graces, and not their passions. We find much in ourselves, which it is hard to forgive; and therefore we must not think it much if we find that in others. We think hard to forgive them; and yet we must forgive them as we forgive ourselves. Now without these things unity cannot be preserved. The first step towards unity, is, humility; without that there will be no meekness, no patience, or forbearance; and without these meekness.

Pride and passion break the peace, and make as much as this. Humility and meekness restore the peace, and keep it. Unity comes contentedly; only by humility comes love. The more lowly-mindedness, the more like-mindedness. We do not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, if we be not meek and lowly of heart: for he by whom we are called, he to whom we are called, was eminent for meekness and lowliness of heart, and has commanded us therein to walk.

II. We have an account of the nature of that unity which the apostle prescribes: it is the unity of the Spirit, v. 3. The seat of Christian unity is in the heart or spirit; it does not lie in one set of thoughts, or in one form and mode of worship, but in one heart and one soul. This unity of heart and affection may be said to be of the Spirit of God; it is wrought by him, and is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Peace and concord, heart to keep. Endeavouring is a gospel-word. We must do our utmost. It others will quarrel with us, we must take all possible care not to quarrel with them. IF others will despise and hate us, we must not despise and hate them. In the bond of peace. Peace is a bond, as it unites persons, and makes them live friendly one with another. A peaceable disposition and constant bond Christians together; whereas discord and quarrel disband and disunite their hearts and affections. Many slender twigs, bound together, become strong. The bond of peace is the strength of society. Not that it can be imagined that all good people, and all the members of societies, should be in every thing just of the same length, and the same sentiments, and the same judgment: but the bond of peace unites them all together, with a non obstantibus hoc. As a bundle of rods, they may be of different lengths, and different thicknesses; but when they are tied together by one bond, they are much stronger than any, even than the strongest and strongest were of themselves.

III. We have next the motives proper to promote this Christian unity and concord. The apostle urges several, to persuade us to it. 1. Consider how many unities there are, that are the joy and glory of our Christian profession. There should be one heart; for there is one body, and one Spirit, v. 4. Two hearts in one body would be monstrous. If there be but one body, all that belong to that body should have one heart. The catholic church is one mystical body of Christ, and all good Christians make up but one body, incorporated by one charter, that of the gospel, animated by one Holy Spirit, who, by his gifts and graces, quickens, unites, and governs, that body. If we belong to Christ, we are all actuated by one and the same Spirit, and therefore should be one; even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. Hope is here put for its object, the thing hoped for, the heavenly inheritance; to the hope of which we are called. All Christians are called to the same hope of eternal life. There is one Christ that they all hope in, and one heaven that they all hope for; and therefore they should be of one heart.
One Lord, (v. 5.) that is, Christ, the Head of the church, to whom, by God's appointment, all Christians are immediately subjected. One faith, that is, the gospel, containing the doctrine of the Christian faith; or, it is the same grace of faith, (faith in Christ,) whereby all Christians are saved. One baptism, by which we profess our faith; being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and so that we be one, we engage ourselves to the Lord Christ. One body and one spirit, v. 6. One God, who owns all the true members of the church for his children; for he is the Father of all such by special relation; as he is the Father of all men by creation: and he is above all, by his essence, and with respect to the glorious perfections of his nature; and as he has dominion over all creatures, and especially over his church; and through all, by his providence upholding and governing them: and in you all, in all believers, in whom he dwells, as in his holy temple, by his Spirit and special grace.

If then there be so many ones, it is pity but there should be one more; one heart, or one soul.

2. Consider the variety of gifts that Christ has bestowed among Christians; but unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Though the members of Christ's church agree in so many things, yet there are some things wherein they differ: but this should breed no difference of affection among them; since they are all derived from the same bountiful Author, and designed for the same great ends. Unto every one of us Christians is given grace, some gift of grace, in some kind or degree or other, for the mutual help of one another. Unto every one of us ministers is given grace; to some a greater measure of gifts, to others a lesser measure. The different gifts of Christ's ministers proved a great occasion of contention among the first Christians; One was for Paul, and another for Apollos. The apostle shows that they had no reason to quarrel about them, but all the reason in the world to agree in the joint use of them, for common edification; because all was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ, in such a measure as seemed best to Christ to bestow on every one. Observe, All the ministers, and all the members of Christ, owe all the gifts and graces that they are possessed of to him: and this is a good reason why we should love one another, because to every one of us is given grace. All to whom Christ has given grace, and on whom he has bestowed his gifts, (though they are of different sizes, different names, and different sentiments, yet) ought to love one another.

The apostle takes this occasion to specify some of the gifts which Christ bestowed. And that they were bestowed by Christ, he makes appear by those words of David, wherein he foretold this concerning him; (Ps. 68. 18.) Wherefore he saith, (v. 8.) that is, the Psalmist saith, When he ascended up on high, he there received gifts for men, and gave gifts unto men. David prophesied of the ascension of Christ, the apostle descants upon it here, and in the three following verses. When he ascended up on high. We may understand the apostle both of the place into which he ascended in his human nature, that is, the highest heavens; and particularly of the state to which he was elevated, he being then highly exalted, and cushioned gloriously, by his Father. Let us set ourselves to think of the ascension of a man, Christ; our blessed Redeemer, being risen from the dead, is gone to heaven, where he sets at the right hand of the Majesty on high, which completed the proof of his being the Son of God. As great conquerors, when they rode in their triumphant chariots, so he attended with the most illustrious of their captives led in chains, and were wont to scatter their largesses and bounty among the soldiers, and other spectators of their triumphs; so Christ, when he ascended into heaven, as a triumphant Conqueror, led captivity captive. It is a phrase used in the Old Testament, to signify a conquest over enemies, especially over such as formerly had led others captive; see Judges 5. 12. Captivity is here put for captives, and signifies all our spiritual enemies, who brought us into captivity before. He conquered them, none of them had conquered us; such as sin, the world, and death. Indeed, he triumphed over these on the cross; but the triumph was completed at his ascension, when he became Lord over all, and had the keys of death and Hades put into his hands. And he gave gifts unto men: in the psalm it is, He received gifts for men. He received for them, that he might give to them a large measure of gifts and graces; particularly, he enriched his disciples with the gift of the Holy Ghost. That the Holy Ghost, who is the ascension of Christ, takes notice, that he descended first, v. 9. As much as if he had said, When David speaks of Christ's ascension, he intimates the knowledge he had of Christ's humiliation on earth: for when it is said, that he ascended, this implies that he first descended: for what is it, but a proof or demonstration of his having done so? Into the lower parts of the earth; this may refer either to his incarnation, according to the Old Testament.

My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; or, to his burial, according to that of Ps. 63. 9. They that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. He calls his death (say some of the fathers,) his descent into the lower parts of the earth. He descended to the three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of man in the heart of the earth. He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, (v. 10.) far above the airy and starry (which are the visible) heavens, into the heaven of heavens; that he might fill all things, all the members of his church, with gifts and graces suitable to their several conditions and states. Observe, Our Lord humbled himself first, and then he was exalted. He descended first, and then ascended.

The apostle next tells us, what were Christ's gifts at his ascension; He gave some, apostles, &c. &c. v. 11. Indeed he sent forth some of these before his ascension, Matt. 10. 1, 2, 3. But one was then added, Acts 1. 26. And all of them were more solemnly installed, and publicly confirmed, in their office, by his apostles. But he speaks of them as to a higher office in the church; such were apostles, prophets, and evangelists. The apostles were chief; these Christ immediately called, furnished them with extraordinary gifts, and the power of working miracles, and with infallibility in delivering his truths: and they having been the witnesses of his miracles and doctrine, he sent them forth to spread the gospel, and to confirm and govern churches. The prophesies seem to have been such as expanded the writings of the Old Testament, and foretold things to come. The evangelists were ordained persons, (2Tim. 1. 6.) whom the apostles took for their companions in travel, (Gal. 2. 1.) and sent them out to settle and establish such churches as the apostles themselves had planted: (Acts 19. 22.) not being
fixed to any particular place, they were to continue till recalled, 2 Tim. 4: 2.

And there are ordinary ministers, employed in a lower and narrower sphere; as pastors and teachers. Some take these two names to signify one office, implying the duties of ruling and teaching belonging to it. Others think they design two distinct offices, both ordinary, and of standing use in the church; and then pastors are such as are fixed at the head of particular churches, with design to guide, instruct, and feed them for life, and are pointed by Christ, and they are frequently called bishops and elders; and the teachers were such, whose work it was also to preach the gospel, and to instruct the people by way of exhortation. We see here, that it is Christ's prerogative to appoint what officers and offices he pleases in his church. And how rich is the church, that had at first such a variety of officers, and has still such a variety of gifts! How kind is Christ to his church! The one office of it, and of its edification! When he ascended, he procured the gift of the Holy Ghost: and the gifts of the Holy Ghost are various; some have greater, others have lesser measures: but all for the good of the body. Which brings to the third argument,

3. Which is taken from Christ's great end and design in giving gifts unto men. The gifts of Christ were intended for the good of his church, and in order to advance the cause of his kingdom. The former men. All these being designed for one common end, is a good reason why all Christians should agree in brotherly love; and not envy one another's gifts. All are for the perfecting of the saints, (v. 12.) that is, according to the import of the original, to bring them into an orderly, spiritual state and frame, who had been as it were, interchanged and exchanged with each other, and to strengthen, confirm, and advance them in all things, and in those things that are good, in his proper place and function, might contribute to the good of the whole. For the work of the ministry; or, for the work of disburse- sion; that they might dispense the doctrines of the gospel, and successfully discharge the several parts of their ministerial function. For the edifying of the body of Christ, to build up the church, which is Christ's mystical body, by increase of their graces, and an addition of such gifts as tend to the advancement of the work of God and the great Mediator; but such as is attended with approbation and affection, with all due honour, trust, and obedience. Unto a perfect man, to our full growth of gifts and graces, free from those childish infirmities, that we are subject to in the present world. Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, so as to be Christians of a full maturity and equation, being like Christ in all things that are of the fulness of Christ; or, according to the measure of that stature which is to make up the fulness of Christ, which is to complete his mystical body. Now we shall never come to the perfect man, till we come to the perfect world. There is a fulness in Christ, and a fulness to be derived from him; and a certain stature of that fulness, and a measure of that stature, assigned in the counsel of God to every believing soul; not to come to that measure till we come to heaven. God's children, as long as they are in this world, are growing.

Dr. Lightfoot understands the apostle as speaking here of Jews and Gentiles knit in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God; so making a perfect man, and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The apostle further shews, in the following verses, what was God's design in his sacred institutions, and what effect they ought to have upon us. As,

(1.) That we henceforth be no more children, &c. (v. 14.) that is, that we may be no more children in knowledge, weak in the faith, and inconstant in our judgments; easily yielding to every temptation, readily complying with every one's humour, and being at every man's mercy. Children are easily imposed upon; we must take care of that; for being tossed to and fro, like ships without ballast; and carried about, like clouds in the air, with such doctrines as have no truth or solidity in them, but nevertheless spread themselves far and wide, and are therefore compared to wind. By the weight of men; it is a metaphor taken from mariners, and signifies the mischievous subtility of seducers; and cunning craftiness, by which we pretend to find out ways to seduce and deceive; for it follows, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, as in an ambush, in order to circumvent the weak, and draw them from the truth. Note, They must be very wicked and ungodly men, who set themselves to seduce and deceive others into false doctrines and errors. The apostle describes them here as base men, using a great deal of devilish art and cunning, in order thereupon to persuade others to their own destruction. The apostle then prefers the mind of the saints against such, is, to study the sacred oracles, and to pray for the illumination and grace of the Spirit of Christ, that we may know the truth as it is in Jesus, and be established in it.

(2.) That we should speak the truth in love, (v. 15.) or follow the truth in love; or be sincere in love to our fellow-Christians. While we adhere to the doctrine of Christ, we shall live in harmony with each other, and pass over all differences, and that sort of love which is to overcome all; and that sort of love, love in a particular way one with another. Love is to be supreme in the souls of men, but we must be careful to preserve truth together with it. Truth is an excellent thing; yet it is requisite that we speak it in love, and not in contention. These two should go together—truth and peace.

(3.) That we should grow up into Christ in all things. Into Christ, so as to be more deeply rooted in him. In all things; in knowledge, love, faith, and all the more perfections that are necessary, growing up toward maturity; which is opposed to the being children. These are improving Christians, who grow up into Christ. The more we grow into an acquaintance with Christ, faith in him, love to him, dependence upon him, the more we shall flourish in every grace. He is the Head; and we should thus grow, that we may thereby honour our Head. The Christian's growth tends to the glory of Christ.

(4.) We should be assistant to our fellow-believers to another, as members of the same body, v. 16. Here the apostle makes a comparison between the natural body and Christ's mystical body, that body of which Christ is the Head; and he observes, that as there must be communion and mutual communications of the members of the body among themselves, in order to their growth and improvement, so there must be a similar communion, and united meetings together with the proper fruits of these, among Christians, in order to their spiritual improvement and growth in grace. From whom, says he, that is, from Christ their Head, who conveys influence and nourishment to every particular member, the whole body of Christians jointly joined together and compacted, being orderly and firmly united among themselves, every one in his place, assisting one another, and coming together with the proper fruits of these, among Christians, in order to their united parts, thus united, gives to the whole: or by the Spirit, faith, love, sacraments, &c. which (like the veins and arteries in the body) serve to unite Christians to Christ their Head, and to one another as fellow-members. According to the effectual work-
ing in the measure of every part: that is, say, according to the power which the Holy Ghost exerts to make God’s appointed means effectual for this great end; in such a measure as Christ judges to be sufficient and proper for every member, according to its respective place and office in the body. Or, as others, according to the power of Christ, who, as Head, influences and enlivens every member. Or, according to the effectual working of every member, in communicating to others of what it has received, nourishment is conveyed to all in their proportions, and, according to the state and exigence of every part, makes increase of the body, such an increase as is convenient for the body. Observe, Particular Christians receive their gifts and graces from Christ for the sake and benefit of the whole body. Unto the edifying of itself in love. We may understand this two ways. Either, that all the members of the church may attain to a greater measure of love to Christ and to one another. Or, that they are moved to act in the manner mentioned, from love to Christ and to one another. Observe, Mutual love among Christians is a great friend to spiritual growth: it is in love that the body edifies itself: whereas, A kingdom, divided against itself, cannot stand.

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

18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19. Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20. But ye have not so learned Christ; 21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22. That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24. And that ye put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27. Neither give place to the devil. 28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him who needeth. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.

The apostle having gone through his exhortation to mutual love, unity, and concord, in the foregoing verses; there follows in these an exhortation to Christian purity, and holiness of heart and life; and that both more general, (v. 17—24.) and in several particular instances, v. 25—32. This is solemly introduced; “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord; that is, seeing the matter is as above described; seeing ye are members of Christ’s body, and that there is in such a body of such a number as I am, many consciences, and bear witness to as thy duty in the Lord’s name, and by virtue of the authority I have derived from him.” And then, the more general exhortation to purity and holiness of heart and life, begins thus; “That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk; that for the time to come ye do not live, and behave yourselves, as ignorant and unconverted heathens do, who are wholly guided by an abasing employment upon vain things, their idols, and their worldly possessions; things which are not way profitable to their souls, and which will deceive their expectations.” Converted Gentiles must not live as unconverted Gentiles do. Though they live among them, they must not live like them. Here the apostle takes occasion to describe the wickedness of the Gentile world, out of which regenerated Christians were snatched as brands out of the furnace.

I. Their understandings were darkened, v. 18. They were void of all saving knowledge; yea, ignorant of many things concerning God, which the light of nature might have taught them. They sat in darkness, and they loved it rather than light; and by their ignorance they were alienated from the life of God. They were estranged from, and had a dishabitation to, a life of holiness, which is not only that way of life which God requires and approves of, and by which we live to him, but which resembles God himself, in his purity, righteousness, truth, and goodness. Their wilful ignorance was the cause of their estrangement from this life of God, which begins in light and knowledge. Gross and affected ignorance is destructive to religion and godliness. And what was the cause of their being thus ignorant? It was because of the hardness of their heart. It was not because God did not make himself known to them by his works, but because they would not admit the instructive rays of the divine light. They were ignorant because they would be so. Their ignorance proceeded from their obstinacy, and the hardness of their hearts; they resisting the light, and rejecting all the means of illumination and knowledge.

II. Their consciences were deadened and scarred; Who being past feeling, v. 19. They had no sense of their sin, or of the misery and danger of their case by means of it; whereupon, they gave themselves over unto lasciviousness. They indulged themselves in their filthy lusts; and, yielding themselves up to the domination of these, they became the slaves and drudges of sin and the devil; senators, and willing slaves, of their own devices. This being the common practice to commit all sorts of uncleanness, and even the most unnatural and monstrous sins, and that with insatiable desires. Observe, When men’s consciences are once scarred, there are no bounds to their sins. When they set their hearts upon the gratification of their lusts, what can be expected, but the most abominable enormity and enormities, and that the most horrid enormities will abound? This was the character of the Gentiles; but these Christians must distinguish themselves from such Gentiles; Ye have not so learned Christ, v. 20. It may be read, But ye not so; ye have learned Christ. Those who have learned Christ, are saved from the darkness and defilement which others lie under; and, as they know more, they are obliged to live in
a better manner than others. It is a good argument against sin, that we have not so learned Christ. Learn Christ! Is Christ a Book, a Lesson, a Way, a Trade? The meaning is, "Ye have not so learned Christianity—the doctrines of Christ, and the rules of life prescribed by him. Not so, as if the book itself in
which you have heard him, (v. 21.) have heard his doctrine preached by us, and have been taught by him, inwardly and effectually, by his Spirit." Christ is the Lesson; we must learn Christ: and Christ is the Teacher; we are taught by him. *As the truth is in Jesus.* This may be under
stood two ways; either, 1. "Ye have been taught the real truth, as held forth by Christ himself, both in his doctrine and in his life." Or, 2. "The truth has made such an impression on your hearts, in your measure, as it did upon the heart of Jesus." The truth of Christ then appears in its beauty and power, when it appears as in Jesus.

Another branch of the general exhortation follows in those words, *That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man,* &c. v. 22—24. "This is a great part of the doctrine which has been taught you, and the reason why you are called, to put off old man, is to appear in new clothes, but not in garments taken from garments. The principles, habits, and dispositions of the soul must be changed, before there can be a saving change of the life. There must be sanctification; which consists of these two things:

1. The old man must be put off. The corrupt nature is called a man, because, like the human body, it consists of divers parts, naturally supporting and strengthening one another. It is the old man, Adam from whom we derived it: it is bred in the bone, and we brought it into the world with us: it is subtle as an old man; but in all God's saints decaying and withering as an old man, and ready to pass away. It is said to be corrupt; for sin in the soul is the corruption of its faculties: and where it is not mortified, it grows daily worse and worse; and so tends to destruction. According to the deceitful lusts. Sinful inclinations and desires are deceitful lusts: they promise men happiness, but render men more miserable; and betray men into destruction, if they are not subdued and mortified. These therefore must be put off, as an old garment that we would be ashamed to be seen in: they must be subdued and mortified. These lusts prevailed against them in their *former conversation,* that is, during their state of unregeneration and heathenism.

2. The new man must be put on. It is not enough to shake off corrupt principles; but we must be actuated by gracious ones. We must embrace them, espouse them, and get them written on our hearts: it is not enough to cease to do evil; but we must learn to do well. *He renewed in the spirit of your mind;* (v. 23.) use the proper and prescribed means in order to have the mind, which is a spirit, renewed more and more after the image. Here the object is to put off the old man, and put on the new.

"Be the new man, is meant the new nature, the new creature, which is actuated by a new principle, even regenerating grace, enabling a man to lead a new life; that life of righteousness and holiness which Christianity requires. This new man is created, or produced, out of confusion and emptiness, by God's almighty power, whose workmanship it is, truly excellent and beautiful. *After God;* in *imaging his own*EXAMPLE AND PATTERNS. The loss of God's image upon the soul, was both the sinfulness and misery of man's fallen state; and that resemblance which it bears to God, is the beauty, the glory, and the happiness, of the new creature. In righteousness toward men, including all the duties of the second table; and in holiness toward God, signifying a sincere obedience to the commands of the first table; true holiness, in opposition to the outward and ceremonial holiness of the Jews. We are said to put on this new man, when, in the use of all God's appointed means, we are endeavouring after this divine nature, this new creature. This is the more general exhortation to purity and holiness of heart and life. The apostle proceeds to some things more particular. Because generations are not so apt to affect, we are told what are these particular limbs of the old man, that must be mortified; those filthy rags of the old nature, that must be put off; and what the peculiar ornaments of the new man, wherewith we should adorn our Christian profession.

[1.] Take heed of lying, and be ever careful to speak the truth; (v. 22.) "Wherefore, since ye have been so well instructed in your duty, and are under such obligations to discharge it, let it appear, in your future behaviour and conduct, that there is a great and real change wrought in you; particularly by *putting away lying.* Of this sin the heathens were very guilty, affirming that a profitable lie was better than a hurtful truth: and therefore the apostle exhorts them to cease from lying, from every thing that is *hurtful,* for the sake of his grace. This is a part of the old man, that must be put off: and that branch of the new, who must put on in opposition to it, is, *speaking the truth in all our conversations.*

[2.] "Take heed of anger and ungoverned passions. *Be ye angry, and sin not,*" (v. 26.) This is borrowed from the LXX translation of Ps. 4. 4, where we render it, *Stand in awe, and sin not.* Here is an easy concession; for as much as we should consider it, rather than as a command. *Be ye angry.* This we are apt enough to be. God knows we are; and therefore reason here given for veracity is, *We are members one of another.* Truth is a debt we owe one another: and if we love one another, we shall not deceive one another. We belong to the same society or body, which falsehood and lying tend to dissolve: and therefore we should avoid that, and speak truth. Observe, Lying is a very great sin; a peculiar violation of the obligations which Christians are under, and very injurious and hurtful to Christian society.

[3.] "*Take heed of the flesh,*" (v. 26.) A true Christian, is said to be so brought in the world, that he is capable of being taught, not only the doctrine of the new life, but also the nature of the old. The life of the old man is, the life of a natural man, a mere copy of the life of Adam—unrestrained, without care, without hope. The life of a new man, is the life of a Christian—holy, heavenly, and manger. This is a true Christian life; it is taught in the law, and is also taught in the gospel, and is a new commandment. The life of Jesus is the life of a new man, and the life of the church is the life of a new man. The life of a new man is, a life of holiness. "*Put off your old self,* which is corrupted according to the deceitful lusts;" (v. 24.) A true Christian is a new creature, and therefore he must be like to an old man. Therefore we are called to put away the old man, and put on the new. For *if ye be dead with Christ,* (v. 25.) we must put off the old man, and put on the new. For *if ye be risen again with Christ,* (v. 20.) we must put off the old man, and put on the new. For *if ye follow Christ,* (v. 26.) we must put off the old man, and put on the new. For *if ye be members of Christ,* (v. 20.) we must put off the old man, and put on the new. For *if ye have put on Christ,* (v. 3.) we must put off the old man, and put on the new. For *if ye have put on Christ,* (v. 3.) we must put off the old man, and put on the new.
words:) “let your ears be deaf to whisperers, tale-

bearers, and slanderers.”

[3.] We are here warned against the sin of stealing,
the breach of the eighth commandment; and
advised to honest industry and to beneficence; Let
him that stole, steal no more, v. 28. It is a caution
against all manner of wrong-doing, by force or fraud.

“Let those of you, who, in the time of your Gen-
tilism, have been guilty of this enormity, be no
longer guilty of it. But we never talk of the sin, but conscientiously abound in the oppo-
site duty: not only not steal, but rather let him
labour, working with his hands the thing that is good.
Idleness makes thieves. So Chrysostom, Τῷ καρπῷ
κοιμίας—Stealing is the effect of idleness. They
who will not work, and who are ashamed to beg,
expose themselves greatly to temptations to thievery. Men should not do only what they may live them-
selves, but in any unlawful way, but in some ho-

est calling. Working the thing which is good. In-
dustry, in some honest way, will keep people out of

temptation of doing wrong. But there is another
reason why men ought to be industrious, namely,
that they may be capable of doing some good; as
as well as that they may be preserved from tempta-
tion; That he may have to give to him that needeth.
They may also do what they may live them-
selves, and live honestly, but that they may distrib-
ute for supplying the wants of others. Observe,
Even those who get their living by their labour,
should be charitable out of their little to those who
are disabled for labour. So necessary and incum-
bent a duty is it to be charitable to the poor, that
even labourers and servants, and those who have
but little for themselves, must cast their mite into the
treasury. God must have his dues, and the poor
are his receivers. Observe further, Those arms
that are likely to be acceptable to God, must not
be the produce of unrighteousness and robbery, but
of honesty and industry. God hates robbery for
burnt-offerings.

[4.] We are here warned against corrupt commu-
nication; and directed to that which is useful and
edifying, v. 29. Filthy and unclean words and dis-

course are distressing, and injurious to all: as putrid rott-

en meat: they proceed from, and prove, a great deal of
corruption in the heart of the speaker, and tend to
corrupt the minds and manners of others who hear
them; and therefore Christians should beware of all
such discourse. It may be taken in general, for all
that which provokes the lusts and passions of others.
We must not only put off corrupt communication,
but put on that which is good to the use of edifying.
The great use of speech is to edify those with whom
we converse. Christians should endeavour to pro-
mote useful conversation; that it may minister grace
unto the hearers; that it may be good for, and ac-
ceptable to, the hearers; either in the way of in-
formation, counsel, pertinent reproof, or the like.
Observe, It is the great duty of Christians to take
care that they offend not with their lips; and that
they impart speech with a kind and gentle spirit;
as much as may be, for the good of others.

[5.] Here is another caution against wrath and
anger: and further advice to mutual love, and kindly
dispositions toward each other, v. 31, 32.* By bit-
terness, wrath, and anger, are meant violent inward
resentment and displeasure against others: and by
clamour, big words, loud threatenings, and other
interposing speeches, by which bitterness, wrath,
and anger, do vent themselves. Christians should
not entertain these vile passions in their hearts, nor
be ceremonious with their tongues. Evil-speaking
signifies all railing, reviling, and reproachful
speeches, against such as we are angry with. And

by malice we are to understand that rooted anger
which prompts men to design and to do mischief to
others.

The contrary to all this follows; Be ye kind one
to another. This implies the principle of love in
the heart, and the outward expression of it, in an
affable, humble, courteous behaviour and carriage.
It becomes the disciples of Jesus to be kind one to
another. It is a grace which those who would learn
and teach, the art of obliging. Tender-hearted; mer-
ciful, and having a tender sense of the distresses and
sufferings of others, so as to be quickly moved to
compassion and pity. Forgiving one another. Oc-
casions of difference will happen among Christ’s
disciples; and therefore they must be placable, and
ready to forgive; therein resembling God himself;
who for Christ’s sake hath forgiven them, and that
more particularly, he暂缓sime, and is not easily
angered. With God there is forgiveness; and he forgives sin
for the sake of Jesus Christ, and on the account of
that atonement which he has made to divine justice.
Note again, They who are forgiven of God, should
be of a forgiving spirit, and should forgive even as
God forgives, sincerely and heartily, readily and
cheerfully, universally and for ever, upon the sin-
ner’s sincere repentance, as remembering that they
have been forgiven; and we, as we forgive them
who trespass against us. Now,

We may observe concerning all these particulars
that the apostle has insisted on, that they belong to
the second table; whence Christians should learn
the strict obligations they are under to the duties of
the second table; and that he who does not conscien-
tiously discharge them, can never fear or love God
in truth and in sincerity; whatever he may pre-

tend to.

In the midst of these exhortations and cautions
the apostle interposes that general one, And griev not
the holy Spirit of God, v. 30. By looking to what
precedes, and to what follows, we may see what it
is that grieves the Spirit of God. In the verses be-
fore it is intimated, that all lewdness and filthiness,
lying, and corrupt communications that stir up filthy
appetites and lusts, grieve the Spirit of God. In what
follows it is intimated, that those corrupt pas-
sions of bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and cla-
mour, and evil-speaking, and malice, grieve this
good Spirit. By this we are not to understand as
though that blessed Being could properly be grieved
or vexed as we are: but the design of the exhorta-
tion is, that we act not toward him in such a manner
as is wont to be grievous and disquieting to our fel-
lovers; we cannot but do that which is con-
trary to his holy nature and his will; we must not
refuse to hearken to his counsels, nor rebel against
his government; which things would provoke him
to act towards us, as men are wont to do toward
them with whom they are displeased and grieved;
withdrawing themselves and their wonted kindness
from such, and abandoning them to their enemies.
O provoke not the holy Spirit of God by doing as he
does, and his gracious influences from you! It
is a great good reason why we should not grieve
him, because by him we are sealed unto the day of
redemption. There is to be a day of redemption;
the body is to be redeemed from the power of the
grave at the resurrection-day: and then God’s peo-
pes will be delivered from all the effects of sin, as
well as from all sin and misery: which they have
been rescued out of the grave: and then their full
and complete happiness commences. All true be-
lievers are sealed to that day. God has distinguished
them from others, having set his mark upon them;
and he gives them the earnest and assurance of a
joyful and a glorious resurrection: and the Spirit of
God is the Seal. Wherewith that blessed Spirit is
as a Sanctifier, he is the Earnest of all the joys and

* See upon v. 30, below.
glories of the redemption-day; and we should be undone, should God take away His Holy Spirit from us.

CHAP. V.

We had several important exhortations in the close of the foregoing chapter, and they are continued in this: particularly, 1. We have here an exhortation to mutual love and charity, v. 1, 2. Against all manner of uncleanness; with proper arguments and remedies proposed against such vice: and some further cautions are added, and other duties recommended, v. 3. 20. III. The apostle directs to the conscientious discharge of relative duties, from v. 21. throughout this, and in the beginning of the next chapter.

1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

Here we have the exhortation to mutual love, or to Christian charity. The apostle had been insisting on this in the former chapter, and particularly in the last verses of it, to which the particle therefore refers, and connects what he had said there, with what is contained in these verses, thus: "Because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you, therefore be ye followers of God, or imitators of him:" for so the word signifies. Few persons should imitate the character of God, who are any regard to Him, as far as He has revealed himself as imitable by them. They must conform themselves to his example, and have his image renewed upon them. This puts a great honour upon practical religion, that it is the imitation of God. We must be holy as God is holy, merciful as he is merciful, perfect as he is perfect. But there is no one attribute of God more recommended to our imitation than that of his goodness. Be ye imitators of God, or resemble him, in every grace, and especially in his love, and in his pardoning goodness. God is love; and they that dwell in love, dwell in God, and God in them. Thus he has proclaimed his name, Gracious and merciful, and abundant in goodness. As dear children, as children (who are wont to be greatly beloved by their parents) usually resemble them in the lineaments and features of their faces, and in the disposition and qualities of their minds: or as becomes the children of God, who are beloved and cherished by their heavenly Father. Children are obliged to imitate their parents in what is good; especially when dearly beloved by them. The character that we bear of God's children, obliges us to resemble him, especially in his love and goodness, in his mercy and readiness to forgive. And they only are God's dear children, who imitate him in these. It follows, And walk in love, v. 2. This Godlike grace should conduct and influence our whole conversation, which is meant by walking in it. It should be the principle from which we act, it should direct the ends at which we aim. We should be more careful to give proof of the sincerity of our love one to another. As Christ also hath loved us. Here the apostle directs us to the example of Christ, whom Christians were obliged to imitate, and in whom we have an instance of the most free and generous love that ever was; that great love wherewith he hath loved us. We are all joint sharers in that love, and partakers of the comfort of it, and therefore should love one another; Christ having loved us all, and given such proof of his love to us: for he hath given himself for us. The grace is described, as it is so fully on this subject; for we can yield us more delightful matter for contemplation than this? Christ gave himself to die for us; and the death of Christ was the great sacrifice of atonement. An offering and a sacrifice to God; or an offering, even a sacrifice: a propitiatory sacrifice, to expiate our guilt, which had been preferred in the legal oblations and sacrifices: and this for a sweet-smelling savour. Some observe, that the sin-offerings were never said to be of a sweet-smelling savour: but this is said of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. As he offered himself with a design to be accepted of God, so God did accept, was pleased with, and appeas'd by, that sacrifice. Note, As the sacrifice of Christ was efficacious with God, so his example should be prevailing with us, and we should carefully copy after it.

3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks. 5. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light; 9. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth manifest is light. 14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; 20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

These verses contain a caution against all manner of uncleanness, with proper arguments and remedies proposed; some further cautions are added, and other duties recommended. Filthy lusts must be suppressed, in order to the supporting of holy love. Walk in love; and shun fornication, and all uncleanness. Filthiness is hateful committed between unmarried persons. All uncleanness includes all other sorts of filthy lusts, which were too common among the Gentiles. Or covetousness; which being thus connected, and mentioned as a thing which
should not be *once* named; some understand it, in the chaste style of the scripture, of unnatural lust: while others take it, in the more common sense, for an immoderate desire of gain, or an insatiable love of riches, which is spiritual adultery: for by this, the soul, which was espoused to God, goes astray from him, and embraces the bosom of a stranger: and therefore carnal worldlings are called adulterers. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? No man that is an enemy to God may be declared and detected to the highest degree. Let it not be once named among you, never in a way of approbation, and without abhorrence, as becometh saints, holy persons, who are separated from the world, and dedicated unto God. The apostle not only cautions against the gross acts of sin, but against what some may be apt to make light of, and think to be excusable. *Neither filthiness, nor unseemly gestures and behaviour.* Nor foolish talking, obscene and lewd discourse; or, more generally, such vain discourse as betrays much folly and indiscretion, and is far from edifying the hearers.

*Nor jesting.* The Greek word ἐπιθετικαί is the same which Aristotel, in his Ethics, makes a virtue; pleasantness of conversation. And there is, no doubt, an innocent and inoffensive jesting, which we cannot suppose the apostle here forbid. What the whole may be understood him of, is, such scurrilous and abusive reflections, which are used to expose others, and to make them ridiculous. This is bad enough: but the context seems to restrain it to such pleasantness of discourse as is filthy and obscene; which he may also design by that corrupt, or putrid and rotten, communication that he speaks of, ch. 4. 29. Of these things he says, *They be not convenient.* Indeed there is more than inconvenient, many great prevent of mischief, in the power of error. They are so far from being suitable to the divine will, that they pollute and poison the hearers. But the meaning is, Those things do not become Christians, and are very unsuitable to profession and character. Christians are allowed to be cheerful and pleasant; but they must be merry and wise. The apostle adds, *but rather giving of thanks:* so far let the Christian's way of mirth be from that of obscenity and filthiness, that he should be the comforter of his mind, and make himself cheerful, by a grateful remembrance of God's goodness and mercy to him, and by blessing and praising him on the account of these. Note, 1. We should take all occasions to render thanksgivings and praises to God for his kindness and favours to us. 2. A reflection on the grace and goodness of God to us, with a design to excite our thankfulness to him, is proper to refresh and delight the Christian's mind, and to make him cheerful. Dr. Hammond thinks that ἐπιθετικαί may signify gracious, pious, religious discourse in the general; by way of opposition to what the apostle condemns. Our cheerfulness, instead of breaking out into what is vain and sinful, and a profanation of God's name, should express itself as becomes Christians, and in what may tend to his glory. If men abounded more in good and pious expressions, they would not be so apt to utter ill and unbecoming words; for shall blessing and cursing, lewdness and thanksgivings, proceed out of the same mouth? To fortify us against the sins of uncleanness, &c. the apostle urges several arguments, and prescribes several remedies, in what follows.

1. He urges several arguments. As,

1. Consider that they are sins which shut persons out of heaven; *For this ye know, &c.* "Tell ye not, or have ye not known, that he which is a friend unto the world is an enemy unto God?" This knew it, being informed of it by the Christian religion. By a covetous man, some understand a villain, lascivious libertine, who indulges himself in those vile lusts which were accounted the certain marks of a heathen and an idolater. Others understand it in the common acceptance of the word; and such a man is an idolater, because there is spiritual idolatry in the love of this world. As the Epicure makes a god of his belly, so a covetous man makes a god of his money; sets those affections upon it, and places that hope, confidence, and delight, in worldly good, which should be reserved for God only. He serves mammon instead of God. Of these persons it is said, that they *have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God;* that is, the kingdom of Christ, who is God, or the kingdom which is God's by nature, and Christ's as he is Mediator: the kingdom which Christ has purchased, and which God bestows. Heaven is here described as a kingdom, (as frequently elsewhere,) with respect to its eminency and glory, its fineness and sufficiency, &c. In this kingdom, the saints and servants of God have an inheritance; for it is the inheritance of the saints in light. But those who are impenitent, and allow themselves, either in the exercise of their reason, or of the will, to be, of the world, are not Christians indeed, and so belong not to the kingdom of grace, nor shall they ever come to the kingdom of glory. Let us then be excited to be on guard against those sins which would exclude and shut us out of heaven.

2. These sins bring the wrath of God upon those who are guilty of them; *Let no man deceive you with vain words,* &c. v. 8. Let none flatter you, as though he were a wise man, and should be able to answer for such sins, as are the devil's part. This is in Christiain; or as though they were not very provoking and offensive unto God; or as though you might indulge yourselves in them, and yet escape with impunity. These are *vain words.* Observe, They who flatter themselves and others with hopes of impunity in sin, do but put a cheat upon themselves and others. Thus Satan deceived our first parents, as he said, "Ye shall not surely die." They who flatter themselves; for those who trust in them, will find themselves wretchedly imposed upon, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. By children of disobedience may be meant the Gentiles, who disbelieved, and refused to comply with, and to submit themselves to, the gospel: or more generally, all obstinate sinners, who will not bow to the yoke of the gospel. Whether they be of Jews or of Gentiles, children of disobedience is the very malignity of sin. And it is by a usual Hebraism that such sinners are called children of disobedience; and such indeed they are from their childhood, going astray as soon as they are born. The wrath of God comes upon such, because of their sins; sometimes in this world, but more especially in the next. And dare we make light of that which will lay us under the wrath of God? *Be not therefor the fleet of the mind, &c.* (v. 7.) Do not partake with them in their sins, that ye may not share in their punishment. We partake with other men in their sins, not only when we live in the same sinful manner that they do, and consent and comply with their temptations and solicitations to sin, but when we encourage them in their sins, prompt them to them, and do not prevent and hinder them, as far as it may be in our power to do so.

3. Consider what obligations Christians are under to live at another rate than such sinners do; For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are light, &c. v. 8. The meaning is, "Such courses are very unsuitable to your present condition: for whereas in your Gentile and your regenerate state ye were darkness, we have now undergone a great change. The apostle calls their former condition darkness in the abstract, to express the great darkness they were in. They lived wicked and profane lives, being destitute of the light of instruction without, and of the illumination and grace of the blessed Spirit within. Note, A state of sin is a state of darkness. Sinners,
manifest by the light, v. 13. The meaning of which
passage may be this; "All those unfruitful works of
darkness which ye are called upon to reprove, are
laid open, and made to appear in their proper
colours to the sinners themselves, by the light of
doctrine or of God's word in your mouths, as faith
ful provers; or by that instructive light which is
fused by the holiness of your lives, and by your ex
ample walk." Observe, The light of God's word,
and the exemplification of it in a Christian conversa-
tion, are proper means to convince sinners of
sin and wickedness. It follows, For whatsoever doth
make manifest, is light; that is, it is the light that
discovers what was concealed before in darkness;
and accordingly it becomes those who are children
of light, who are light in the Lord, to discover to
others their sins, and to endeavour to convince them
of the evil and danger of them, thus shining as lights
to others. The apostle further urges this duty
up to the example of God or Christ; Wherefore be
saith, &c. (v. 14.) as if he had said, "In doing this,
you will copy after the great God, who has set him
self to awaken sinners from their sleep, and to raise
them from the death of sin, that they might receive
light from Christ." He saith, The Lord is constantly
saying in his word what is more particularly
expressed, Isa. 60. 1. Or, Christ, by his ministers,
who must shew them their sin, are authorised and
called upon to this effect; Awake, thou that sleepest,
and arise from the dead. The same thing is to be
done by means of these different expressions, and they
serve to remind us of the great stupidity and the wretched
security of sinners; how insensible they are of their danger, and how unapt
they naturally are to spiritual motions, sensations, and actions. When God calls upon them to awake,
and to arise, they must shew them, that they must arise from
off their sins by repentance, and enter on a course of
holy obedience; and he encourages them to essay and to do their utmost that way, by that gracious
promise; And Christ shall give thee light; or, Christ
shall enlighten thee, or, shall shine upon thee. "He
shall bring thee into a state of knowledge, holiness, and comfort; assisting thee with his grace, and re
freshing thy mind with joy and peace here, and re
warding thee there with glory and joy." Observe,
when we are endeavouring to convince sinners,
and to reform them from their sins, we are imitating God and Christ, in that which is
their great design throughout the gospel. Some indeed
understand this as a call to sinners and to saints: to
sinners, to repent and turn; to saints, to stir up themselves
to their duty. The former must arise from
their spiritual death; and the other must awake from
their spiritual sleep, and resign themselves to God.

3. Another remedy against sin, is, circumspection,
care, and caution; (v. 15.) See then, &c. This may
be understood, either with respect to what im
mediately precedes: "If you are to reprove others
for their sins, and would be faithful to your duty in
this particular, you must look well to yourselves,
and to your own behaviour and conduct;" (and, in
ceding, they only are fit to reproves others whom
with due circumspection and care themselves;) or
else, we have here another remedy, or rather pre
servative from the before-mentioned sins; and this I
take to be the design of the apostle; it being im
possible to maintain purity and holiness of heart
and life without great circumspection and care. Walk
circumspectly; or, as the word signifies, accurately,
exactly, in the right way: in order to which, we
must be careful to follow the directions we have in the sacred or
acles. Not as fools, who walk at all adventures, and who have no
understanding of their duty, or of the worth of their
souls; and through neglect, supineness, and want of
care, fall into sin, and destroy themselves: but as
wise; as persons taught of God, and endued with wisdom from above. Circumspect walking is the effect of true wisdom; but the contrary of folly. It follows, redeeming the time, &c. (v. 16.) literally, buying the opportunity. It is a metaphor taken from merchants and traders, who diligently observe and provide for the various seasons for merchandize and trade.

It is a great part of Christian wisdom to redeem the time. Good Christians must be good husbands of their time, and take care to improve it to the best purposes, by watching against temptations; by doing good while it is in the power of their hands; and by filling it up with proper employment—one special preservative from sin. They should make the best use that God has given them. The present seasons of grace. Our time is a talent given by God to work both to good and evil ends, and it is mispent and lost when it is not employed according to his design. If we have lost our time heretofore, we must endeavour to redeem it by doubling our diligence in doing our duty for the future. The reason given, is, because the days are evil: either by reason of the wickedness of those who dwell in them; or, rather, as they are troublesome and dangerous times to you, who live in them. Those were times of persecution; and the apostle wrote this: the Christians were in jeopardy every hour. When the days are evil, we have one superadded argument to redeem time; especially, because we know not how soon they may be worse. People are very apt to complain of bad times; it were well if that would stir them up to redeem time. Wherefore, says the apostle, (v. 17.) because of the badness of the times, he do not, otherwise, ignorant of your duty and negligent about your souls: but understanding what the will of the Lord is, Study, consider, and further acquaint yourselves with, the will of God, as determining your duty. Observe, Ignorance of our duty, and neglect of our souls, are evidences of the greatest folly; while an acquaintance with the will of God, and a care to comply with it, bespeak the best and truest wisdom.

In the three following verses the apostle warns against some other particular sins, and urges some other duties.

(1.) He warns against the sin of drunkenness; And be not drunk with wine, v. 18. This was a sin very frequent among the heathens, and particularly on occasion of the festivals of their gods; and more especially among merchants: for then they were wont to inflame themselves with wine; and all manner of inordinate lusts were consequent upon it; and therefore the apostle adds, wherein, or in which drunkenness, is excess. The word ἐπανετύμβωσις may signify luxury or dissoluteness; and it is certain that drunkenness is no friend to chastity and purity of life; but it virtually contains all manner of extravagance, and transgressions, men into gross sensuality and vice everywhere. Not only is it a sin that seldom goes alone, but often involves men in other instances of guilt: it is a sin very provoking to God, and a great hindrance to the spiritual life. The apostle may design all such intemperance and disorder as are opposite to the sober and prudent demeanour he intends in his advice, to redeem the time.

(2.) Instead of being filled with wine, he exhorts them to be filled with the Spirit. Those who are full of drink, are not likely to be full of the Spirit; and therefore this duty is opposed to the former sin. The meaning of the exhortation is, that men should labour for a plentiful measure of the graces of the Spirit, that would fill their souls with holy joy, strength, and courage: which things sensual men expect their wine should inspire them with. We cannot be guilty of any excess in our endeavours after these: may, we ought not to be satisfied with a little of the Spirit, but to be aspiring after greater measures, so as to be filled with the Spirit. Now by this means we shall come to understand what the will of the Lord is; for the Spirit of God is given as a Spirit of wisdom and of understanding. And because those who are filled with the Spirit will be carried out in acts of devotion, and all the proper expressings of it, therefore the next. (3.) To sing unto the Lord, v. 19. Drunkards are wont to sing obscene and profane songs. The heathens, in their Bacchane, used to sing hymns to Bacchus, when they called the god of wine. Thus they express their joy; but the Christian's joy should express itself in songs of praise to his God. In these they should speak to themselves in some assemblies and meetings together, for mutual edification. By psalms may be meant the regular psalms, or such compositions as were fitly sung with musical instruments. By hymns may he meant such others as were confined to matter of praise, as those of Zacharias, Simeon, &c. Spiritual songs may contain a greater variety of matter, doctrinal, prophetic, historical, &c. Observe here, [1.] Singing of psalms and hymns is a gospel-ordinance: it is an ordinance of God, and appointed for his glory. [2.] Though Christians are in an especial sense to profane mirth, yet it encourages joy and gladness, and the proper expressions of these in the professors of it. God's people have reason to rejoice, and to sing for joy. They are to sing and to make melody in their hearts; not only with their voices, but with inward affection; and then their doing this will be as delightful and acceptable to God as music is to us; and it must be with a design to please him, and to promote his glory, that we do this; and then it will be done to the Lord.

(4.) Thanksgiving is another duty that the apostle exhorts to, v. 20. We are appointed to sing psalms, &c. for the expression of our thankfulness to God: but though we are not always singing, we should be always giving thanks; we should never want a disposition for this duty, as we never want matter for it. We must continue it throughout the whole course of our lives; and we should give thanks for all things: not only for spiritual blessings enjoyed, and eternal ones expected; (for what of the former we have it hand, and for what of the other we have hope;) but for temporal mercies too; not only for our comforts, but also for our sanctified affections; not only for what immediately concerns ourselves, but also for the instances of God's kindness and favour to others also. It is our duty to have something to give thanks unto God and the Father; to God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in him; in whose name we are to offer up all our prayers, and praises, and spiritual services, that they may be acceptable to God.

21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body. 24. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. 27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrin-
kle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 29. So taught men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nouriseth and cherish-eth it, even as the Lord the church: 30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Here the apostle begins his exhortation to the discharge of relative duties. As a general foundation for these duties, he lays down that rule, v. 21. There is a mutual submission that Christians owe one another. The apostle assigns two reasons: not advancing themselves above others, or domineering over one another, and giving laws to one another. St. Paul was an example of this truly Christian temper, who became all things to all men. We must be of a yielding and of a submissive spirit, and ready to all the duties of the respective places and stations that God has allotted to us in the world. In the Fear of God, that is, so far as is consistent with the fear of God; for this sake, and out of con- science toward him; and that hereby we may give proof that we truly fear him. Where there is this mutual condescension and submission, the duties of all relations will be the better performed. From v. 22, to the end, he speaks of the duties of husbands and wives; and he speaks of these in a Christian manner, setting the church as an example of the wise's submission, and Christ as an example of love in husbands.

1. The duty prescribed to wives, is, submission to their husbands in the Lord; (v. 22.) which sub-mission includes the honouring and the obeying them, and that from a principle of love to them: they must do this in compliance with God's authority, who has commanded it, which is doing it as unto the Lord. Or, it may be understood by way of simili-tude and likeness; that the sense may be, "as, be- ing devoted to God, you submit yourselves unto him." From the former sense we may learn, that by a conscientious discharge of the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures, we obey and please God him-self: and from the latter, that God not only requires and insists on these duties which immediately re-spect himself, but such as respect our neighbours too. The apostle assigns two reasons of this sub-mission from wives; For the husband is the head of the wife, v. 23. The metaphor is taken from the head in the natural body, which, being the seat of reason, of wisdom, and of knowledge, and the fountain of sense and motion, is more excellent than the rest of the body. God has given the man the pre-eminence, and a right to direct and govern by creation, and in that original law of creation. Then you shall be a wife, and he shall rule over thee. Whatever there is of uneasiness, in that, it is an effect of sin coming into the world. Generally, too, the man has (what he ought to have) a superiority in wisdom and knowledge. He is therefore the head; even as Christ is the head of the church. There is a resemblance of Christ's authority over the church, in that superiority and headship which God has appointed to the husband. The apostle adds, and he is the Saviour of the body. Christ's authority is exercised over the church, in the saving her from evil, and the supplying her with every thing good for her. In like manner should the husband be employed for the protection and comfort of his spouse; and therefore she should the more cheerfully subject herself unto him. So it follows, Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, (v. 24.) with cheerfulness, with fidelity, with a sense of her duty, and a sense of her own husband's love to her in every thing; in every thing pertaining to her authority justly extends itself; in every thing lawful, and consistent with duty to God.

2. The duty of husbands (on the other hand) is to love their wives; (v. 25.) for without this they would abuse their superiority and headship; and wherever this prevails as it ought to do, it will infer the other duties of the relation; it being a special and peculiar affection that is required in the husband. The love of Christ to the church is proposed as an example of this; which love of his is a sincere, a pure, an ardent, and a constant affection; and that notwithstanding the imperfections and failures that she is guilty of. The greatness of his love to the church appeared in his giving himself unto the death for it. Observe, As the church's subjection to Christ is proposed as an example to wives, so the love of Christ to his church is proposed as an example to husbands; and while such exemplars are offered to both, and so much required of each, neither has reason to complain of the divine in- junctions. The love which God requires from the husband in behalf of his wife, will make an amends for the subjection which he demands from her to her husband: and the prescribed subjection of the wife will be an abatement of the measure of that love of the husband which God has made her due.

The apostle, having mentioned Christ's love to the church, enlarges upon it; assigning the reason why he gave himself for it. That he might sanctify it in this world, and glorify it in the next, v. 26, 27. That he might sanctify and change it, with the washing of water by the word; (v. 26.) that he might enucleate all his members with a principle of holiness, and the ordinances of the gospel, and the dominion of sin. The instrumental means whereby this is effected, are, the instituted sacraments, particularly the washing of baptism, and the preaching and reception of the gospel. And that he might present it to himself, &c. v. 27. Dr. Lightfoot thinks the apostle alludes here to the Jews' extraordinary curiousness in their washings for purifications. They were careful that there should be no wrinkle to keep the flesh from the water, and no spot or dirt which was not thoroughly washed. Others understand him as alluding to a garment come new out of the fuller's hand, purged from spots, stretched from wrinkles; the former newly contructed, the latter by long time and cus-tome. That he might present it to himself, that he might perfectly unite to himself in the great day, a glorious church without blemish, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, nothing of deformity or defilement remaining, but entirely amiable and pleasing in his eye: holy and without blemish, free from the least remains of sin. The church in general, and particular believers, will not be without spot or wrinkle till they come to glory. From this and the former verse together we may take notice, that the gloriency of the church is intended in the sanctifying of it: and that those, and those only, who are sanctified now, shall be glorified hereafter. So taught men to love their wives as their own bodies, &c. v. 28. The wife being made one with her husband, (not in a natural,
but in a civil and in a relative sense,) this is an argument why he should love her with as cordial and as ardent an affection as that with which he loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; (v. 29.) no man in his right senses ever hated himself, however deformed, or whatever his imperfections, or whatever by the grace of God he should have left to himself, even the apostle, the world, and cherishes it; he uses himself with a great deal of care and tenderness; and is industrious to supply himself with every thing convenient or good for him, with food and clothing, &c. even as the Lord the church: as the Lord nourishes and cherishes the church, which he furnishes with all things that he sees needful or good for her, with whatever conduce to her everlasting happiness and welfare. The apostle compares the members of the body, the flesh, and of his bones, v. 30. He assigns this as a reason why Christ nourishes and cherishes his church—because all who belong to it, are members of his body, of his mystical body. Or, we are members out of his body; all the grace and glory which the church has, are from Christ, as Eve was taken out of the man. But, (as one observes,) it being the manner of the sacred writings to express a complex natural idea by parts of it, we have parts of it here, heaven and earth for the world; evening and morning, for the natural day; so here, by body, flesh, and bones, we are to understand himself; the meaning of the verse being, that we are members of Christ. For this cause, because they are one, as Christ and his church are one, shall a man leave his father and mother; the apostle refers to the words of Adam, when Eve was given to him for a helpmeet, Gen. 2. 24. We are not to understand by them, as though a man’s obligation to other relations were cancelled upon his marriage; but only that this relation is to be preferred to all others; there being a nearer union between these two, than between any other; that the man must rather leave any of those than his wife. And they two shall be one flesh, that is, by virtue of the matrimonial bond. This is a great mystery, v. 32. Those words of Adam, just mentioned by the apostle, are spoken literally of marriage; but they have also a hidden mystical sense in them, relating to the union between Christ and his church, of which the conjugal union between Adam and the mother of us all was a type; though not instituted or appointed by God to signify this, yet it was a kind of a natural type, as having a resemblance to it; I speak concerning Christ and the church. After this, the apostle concludes this part of his discourse with a brief summary of the duty of husbands and wives, v. 33. “Nevertheless, though there be such a secret, mystical sense, yet the plain literal sense concerns you. Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, with such a sincere, peculiar, singular, and prevailing affection as that as which he bears to himself. And the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Reverence the husband, as a type of God’s love to you, and so produce a care to please; and of fear, which awakens a caution lest just offence be given. That the wife thus reverence her husband, is the will of God, and the law of the relation.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter, 1. The apostle proceeds in the exhortation to relative duties, which he began in the former; particularly he insists on the duties of children and parents; and of servants and masters, v. 1. 9. 11. He exhorts and directs Christians how to discharge themselves toward their spiritual enemies, to oppose the enemies of their souls; and to the exercise of several Christian graces, which he proposes to them as so many pieces of spiritual armor, to preserve and defend them in the conflict, v. 10. 18. 11. We have here the conclusion of the epistle, in which he takes his leave of them, recommending himself to the prayers of the believing Ephesians, and praying for them, v. 19. 24.

1. CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 5. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. 9. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatenings: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. Here we have further directions concerning relative duties, in which the apostle is very particular. 1. The duty of children to their parents; Come, ye children, hearken to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord. The great duty of children, is, to obey their parents, v. 1. Parents being the instruments of their being, God and nature having given them an authority to command, in subserivency to God; and if children will be obedient to their pious parents, will they be in a fair way to be pious as they are. That obedience which God demands from their children, in their behalf, includes an inward reverence, as well as the outward expressions and acts. Obey your parents, v. 2. Obey the Lord. Some take this as a limitation, and understand it thus, “as far as is consistent with your duty to God.” We must not disobey our heavenly Father, in obedience to earthly parents; for our obligation to God is prior and superior to all others. I take it rather as a reason; Children, obey your parents; for the Lord has commanded it; obey them therefore for the Lord’s sake, and with an eye to him. Or it may be a particular specification of the general duty; “Obey your parents, especially in those things which relate to the Lord. Your parents teach you good manners, and therein you must obey them. They teach you what is for your health, and in that you must obey them; but the chief things in which you are to do it, are, the things pertaining to the Lord. Re-
Honour thy father and mother; (v. 2) which honour implies reverence, obedience, and relief and maintenance, if these be needed. The apostle adds, which is the first commandment with promise. Some little difficulty arises from this, which we should not overlook; because some who plead for the lawfulness of images, bring this as a proof that we are not obliged to reverence the saints, but not to reverence the Scripture. There is no manner of force in the argument. The second commandment has not a particular promise; but only a general declaration or assertion, which relates to the whole law of God's keeping mercy for thousands. And then by this is not meant the first commandment of the decalogue that has a promise; for there is no other after it that has, and therefore it would be improper to say it is the first: but the great observance and end of the service, of the second commandment, and it has a promise; it is the first commandment in the second table. The promise is, That it may be well with thee, &c. v. 3. Observe, Whereas the promise in the commandment has reference to the land of Canaan, the apostle hereby shews that that and other promises, which we have in the Old Testament relating to the land of Canaan, are to be understood more generally. The curse and the blessing, to which all sinners are liable, by whom God gave the land of Canaan, were bound by the fifth commandment, he here gives it a further sense, That it may be well with thee, &c. Outward prosperity and long life are blessings promised to those who keep this commandment. This is the way to have it well with us; and obedient children are often rewarded with outward prosperity: not indeed that it is always so; there are instances of such children who meet with much affliction in this life: but ordinarily it is thus rewarded; and where it is not, it is made up with something better. Observe, 1. The gospel has its temporal promises, as well as spiritual ones. 2. Although the authority of God be sufficient to engage us in our duty, yet we are allowed to have respect to the promised reward: and, 3. Though it contains some temporal advantage, even that may be considered as a motive and encouragement to our obedience.

II. The duty of parents; And ye fathers, v. 4. Or, ye parents, 1. Do not provoke your children to wrath. Though God has given you power, you must not abuse that power: remembering that your children are, in a particular manner, pieces of yourselves, and therefore ought to be governed with great tenderness and love. Be more ready to perform your duty to them; use no unreasonable severities, and lay no rigid injunctions upon them. When you caution them, when you counsel them, when you reprove them, do it in such a manner as not to provoke them to wrath. In all such cases deal prudently and wisely with them, endeavouring to convince their judgments, and to work upon their reason. 2. Bring them up well; in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; in the discipline of proper and of compassionate correction; and in the knowledge of that duty which God requires of them, and by which they may become better acquainted with him. Give them a good education. It is the great duty of parents to be careful in the education of their children; Not only bring them up as the brutes do, taking care to provide for them; but bring them up in nurture and admonition; and teach them what is meet for their lives, and what is meet for the exercise of their reason. Next, not only bring them up as men, in nurture and admonition; but as Christians, in the admonition of the Lord. Let them have a religious education. Instruct them to fear sinning; and inform them of, and excite them to, the whole of their duty toward God.

III. The duty of servants; that also is summed up in one word, which is, obedience. He is largest on this article; as knowing there was the greatest need of it. These servants were generally slaves. Civil servitude is not inconsistent with Christian liberty. They may be the Lord's freemen, who are slaves to men. Your masters according to the flesh, (v. 5.) who have the command of your bodies, but not of your souls and consciences: God alone has dominion there. "Your masters according to the flesh," says the apostle, "shall not be lords, but "fear them, as Lord Christ; be obedient to them, as to God, for the Lord's sake; serving, not men, but God. Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. If you serve, serve him from the heart, as in the Lord, and not in the sight of men, lest you should do amiss in the sight of men, but in the sight of God. For it is written, 'Ye shall do no wrong to a poor and to a needy.'" Why, God will as certainly reward thee for the meanest goodness, that is done from a sense of duty, and with an eye to himself. And what can be said more proper, both to engage and to encourage servants to their duty? IV. The duty of masters; And ye, masters, do the same things unto them; (v. 9.) act after the same.
against, a Captain to fight for, a banner to fight under, and certain rules of war by which we are to govern ourselves. 

"Finally, my brethren; (v. 16.) it yet remains that ye apply yourselves to your work and duty as Christian soldiers." Now it is requisite that a soldier have a good heart, and that he be well armed. If Christians be soldiers of Jesus Christ,

1. They must see that they have a good heart for it. This is prescribed here: Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Those who have so many battles to fight, who, in their way to heaven, must dispute every step, like a pass, with dint of sword, have need of a great deal of courage. *Be strong therefore, strong for service, strong for suffering, strong for fighting.* Let a soldier be ever so well armed without, if he have not within a good heart, his armour will stand him in little stead. Note, Spiritual strength and courage are very necessary for our spiritual warfare.

2. They must use all the proper defensives and weapons for repelling the temptations and stratagems of Satan, and exercising all the Christian graces, the whole armour, that no part be neglected, and exposed to the enemy's fire. Observe, They who would approve themselves to have true grace, must aim at all grace: the whole armour. It is called the armour of God, because he both prepares and bestows it. We have no armour of our own, that will be armour of proof in a trying time. Nothing will stand us in stead but the armour of God. This armour is prepared for us, but we must put it on; we must pray for grace; we must use the grace given us, and draw it out into act and exercise as there is occasion. The reason assigned, why the Christian should be completely armed, is, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil, that ye may be able to hold out, and to overcome, notwithstanding all his assaults, both of force and fraud; all the deceits he puts upon us, all the snares he lays for us, and all his machinations against us.

This the apostle enlarges upon here, and shews,

(1.) With a subtle enemy; an enemy who uses wiles and stratagems, as v. 11. He has a thousand ways of beguiling unstable souls: hence he is called, a serpent for subtility; an old serpent, experienced in the art and trade of tempting.

(2.) He is a powerful enemy against principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places: because he is a very formidable enemy which they exercise in this world. We have to do,

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manner. Be just to them, as ye expect they should be to you: shew the like good-will and concern for them, and be careful herein to approve yourselves to God." Observe, Masters are under as strict obligations to discharge their duty to their servants, as servants are to be obedient and dutiful to them. *"Forbearing threatening; where—moderation threatening, and remitting the evils which you threaten them with.* Remember that your servants are made of the same mould with yourselves, and therefore be not tyrannical and imperious over them, *knowing that your Master also is in heaven;* some copies read, both your and their Master. *"You have a Master to obey, who makes this your duty; and you and they are but fellow-servants in respect of Christ. You will be as punishable by him, for the neglect of your duty, or for acting contrary to it, as any others of meaner condition in the world. You are therefore to shew favour to others, even as you expect to find favour with him; and you will never be a match for him, even though you may be too hard for your servants."* *Neither in respect of persons with him;* a rich, a wealthy, and a dignified master, if he be unjust, imperious, and abusive, is not a jot the nearer being accepted of God, for his riches, wealth, and honour. He will call masters and servants to an impartial account for their conduct towards one another; and will neither spare the one, because they are more advanced, nor be severe toward the other, because they are inferior and mean in the world. If masters and servants would consider both their relation and obligation to God, and the account they must shortly give to him, they would be more careful of their duty to each other.

Thus the apostle concludes his exhortation to relative duties.

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

11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil.

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

13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

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

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

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

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints:

Here is a general exhortation to constancy in our Christian course, and to courage in our Christian warfare. Is not our life a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the common calamities of human life. Is not our religion much more a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the opposition of the powers of darkness, and with many enemies who would keep us from God and heaven. We have enemies to fight
(5.) They are spiritual enemies; spiritual wickedness in high places; or wicked spirits, as some translate it. The Devil is a spirit, a wicked spirit; and our danger is the greater from our enemies, because they are unseen, and assault us ere we are aware of them. The devils are wicked spirits, and they chiefly annoy the saints with, and provoke them to, spiritual wickednesses, pride, envy, malice, &c. These enemies are said to be in high places, or in heavenly places; so the word is: taking heaven (as one says) for the whole expansion, or spreading out of the air between the earth and the stars; the air being the place from which the devils assault us. Or the meaning may be, ‘We wrestle about heavenly places, or heavenly things,’ some of the ancients interpret it. Our enemies strive to prevent our entering heaven, to deprive us of heavenly blessings, and to obstruct our communion with heaven. They assault us in the things that belong to our souls, and labour to deface the heavenly image in our hearts; and therefore we have need to be upon our guard against them. We have need of faith in our Christian warfare, because we have spiritual enemies to grapple with, as well as of faith in our Christian work, because we have spiritual strength to fight with. It is therefore necessary for us to arm ourselves with the whole armour of God.

2. What our duty is; to take and put on the whole armour of God, and then to stand our ground, and withstand our enemies.

(1.) We must withstand, v. 13. We must not yield to the Devil’s allurements and assaults, but oppose them. Satan is said to stand up against us, 1 Chron. 21. 1. If he stand up against us, we must stand against him; set up, and keep up, an interest in opposition to the Devil. Satan is the world’s accuser, and his kingdom is the kingdom of sin; to stand against Satan, is to strive against sin. That we may be able to withstand in the evil day, in the temptation, or of any sore affliction.

(2.) We must stand our ground; and having done all, to stand. We must resolve, by God’s grace, not to yield to Satan. Resist him, and he will flee. If we give back, he will get ground. If we distrust, either our cause, or our Leader, or our armour, we give him advantage. Our present business is, to withstand the assaults of the Devil, and to stand it out; and then having done all, that is incumbent on the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, our warfare will be accomplished, and we shall be finally victorious.

(3.) We must stand armed; and this is here most enlarged upon. Faith is the breast-plate of the Christian in complete armour: and the armour is divine. Armour of Light, Rom. 13. 12. Armour of righteousness, 2 Cor. 6. 7. The apostle specifies the particulars of this armour, both offensive and defensive. Here is the military girdle or belt; the breast-plate; the greaves, or soldier’s shoes; the shield; the helmet, and the sword. It is observable, among them all, there is none for the back; if we turn our back, and put our face to the fire, our heart is exposed. 1. Truth or sincerity is our girdle, v. 14. It was prophesied of Christ, (Isa. 11. 5.) that righteousness should be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his heart. That which Christ was girt with, all Christians must be girt with. God desires truth, that is, sincerity, in the inward parts. This is the strength of our loins; and it is observable, that the first thing of our armour which is therefore first mentioned. I know no religion without sincerity. Some understand it of the doctrine and the truths of the gospel: they should cleave to us, as the girdle doth to the loins. Jer. 13. 11. This will restrain from all libertinism and licentiousness, as a girdle restrains and keeps in the body. This is the Christian-soldier’s belt: unjust with this, he is unblest.

2. Righteousness must be our breast-plate. The breast-plate secures the vitals, shelters the heart. The righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, is our breast-plate against the arrows of divine wrath. The righteousness of Christ, implanted in us, is our breast-plate to fortify the heart against the attacks which Satan makes against us. The apostle explains this in 1 Thess. 5. 8. Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love. Faith and love include all Christian graces strongly set forth by Paul; we are to be united to Christ, and by love to our brethren. These will infer a diligent observance of our duty to God, and a righteous deportment toward men, in all the offices of justice, truth, and charity.

3. Resolution must be as the greaves on legs; and their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, v. 15. Shoes, or greaves of brass, or the like, were formerly part of the military armour; (1 Sam. 17. 6.) the use of them was to defend their feet against the gall-traps, and sharp sticks, which were wont to be laid privily in the way, to obstruct the marching of the enemy; they who fell upon them being unfit to march. The preparation of the gospel of peace, signifies a prepared and resolved frame of heart, to adhere to the gospel, and abide by it; which will enable us to walk with steady pace in the way of religion, notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers that may be in the way. It is styled the gospel of peace, because it brings all sorts of peace; peace with God, with ourselves, and with one another.

It may also be meant of that which prepares for the entertainment of the gospel; and that is repentance. With this our feet must be shod; for by living a life of repentance, we are armed against the temptations to sin, and the designs of our great enemy.

Dr. Whitby thinks this may be the sense of the words; ‘That ye may be ready for the combat, be ye shod with the gospel of peace; endurance after that peaceable and quiet mind which the gospel calls for. Be not easily provoked, or prone to quarrel; but shew all gentleness, and all long-suffering to all men; and this will as certainly preserve you from many great temptations and persecutions, as did those shoes of brass the soldiers from those gall-traps,’ &c.

[4.] Faith must be our shield. Above all, or chiefly, taking the shield of faith, v. 16. This is more necessary than any of them. Faith is all in all to us in an hour of temptation. The breast-plate secures the vitals; but with the shield we turn every assault aside. This is a universal shield. We are to be fully persuaded of the truth of all God’s promises and threatenings; such a faith being of great use against temptations. Consider faith, as it is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for; and it will appear to be of admirable use for this purpose. Faith, as receiving Christ, and the benefits of redemption, so receiving grace and security to defend all men, is a universal defence. Our enemy the Devil is here called the wicked one. He is wicked himself, and he endeavours to make us wicked. His temptations are called darts, because of their swift and undiscovered flight, and the deep wounds that they give to the soul; fiery darts, by way of allusion to the poisonous darts which were wont to inflame the parts where they were staked, and therefore were so called; as the serpent’s with poisonous stings are called fiery serpents. Violent temptations, by which the soul is set on fire of hell, are the darts which Satan shoots at us. Faith is the shield, with which we must gird on these fiery darts; wherein we should receive them, and so render them ineffectual, that they may not hurt us, or at least that they may not hurt us. Observe, Faith, acted upon the word of God, and applying
that, 

acted upon the grace of Christ, and improving
that, qualities the darts of temptation —

[3] Salvation must be our helmet; (v. 17.) that is, Higher, which has salvation for its object; so 1 Thess. 5. 8. The helmet secures the head. A good hope of salvation, well founded, and well built, will both purify the soul, and keep it from being defiled by Satan; and it will comfort the soul, and keep it from being troubled and tormented by Satan. He would tempt us to despair, but good hope keeps us trusting in God, and rejoicing in him.

[6.] The word of God is the sword of the Spirit. The sword is a very necessary and useful part of a soldier's furniture. The word of God is very necessary, and of great use to the Christian, in order to his maintaining, and his succeeding in, the spiritual warfare. It is called the sword of the Spirit, because it is of the Spirit's inditing; and he renders it efficacious and powerful, and sharper than a two- edged sword. Observe what he in that verse uses of it; with this we assault the assailants. Scripture-arguments are the most powerful arguments to repel a temptation with. Christ himself resisted Satan's temptations with, It is written, Matt. 4. 1, 2, &c. This, being hid in the heart, will preserve from sin, (Ps. 119. 11.) and will mortify and kill those lusts and corruptions that are latent there.

[7.] Prayer must be our arm, and the other parts of our Christian armour, v. 18. We must join prayer with all these graces, for our defence against these spiritual enemies: imploring help and assistance of God, as the case requires: and we must pray always. Not as though we were to do nothing else but pray; for there are other duties of religion, and of our respective stations in the world, that are to be done in their place and season: but we should keep up constant times of prayer, and be constant to them. We must pray upon all occasions, and as often as our own and others' necessities call us to it. We must always keep up a disposition to prayer; and should intermix ejaculatory prayers with our duties, and with common business. Though set and solemn prayer may sometimes be unseasonable, (as when other duties to be done, yet pious ejaculations can never be so. We must pray with all prayers, and supplications, with all kinds of prayer, public, private, and secret; social and solitary, solemn and sudden; with all the parts of prayer; confession of sin, petition for mercy, and thanksgivings for favours received. We must pray in the Spirit; our spirits must be employed in the duty; and we must do it by the grace of God's good Spirit. We must watch and be aware, to carry our hearts in a prayerful frame; and take all occasions, and approve all opportunities, for the thoughts and musings must watch to all the motions of our own hearts toward the duty. When God says, Seek ye my face; our hearts must comply, Ps. 27. 8. This we must do with all perseverance. We must abide by the duty of prayer, whatever change there may be in our outward circumstances; and we must continue in it as long as we live in the world. We must persevere in a particular prayer; not cutting it short, when our hearts are disposed to enlarge, and there is time for it, and our occasions call for it. We must likewise persevere in particular requests, notwithstanding some present discouragements and reproaches. And we must pray with supplication, not for ourselves only, but for all saints; for we are members one of another. Observe, None are so much saints, and in such a condition in this world, as they need our prayers; and they ought to have them. The apostle passes hence to the conclusion of the epistle.

19. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel. 20. For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. 21. But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychoctus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things; 22. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. 23. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Here, I. He desires their prayers for him, v. 19. Having mentioned supplication for all saints, he puts himself into the number. We must pray for all saints; and particularly, for God's faithful ministers. Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may be glorified, and | that we may have grace, he here adds, and that we may have the word of the Lord may be glorified, and that we may have grace, that we may have grace, &c. Observe, it is he would have them pray for in his behalf, "that utterance may be given unto me; that I may be enlarged from my present restraints, and so have liberty to propagate the faith of Christ; that I may have ability to express myself in a suitable and becoming manner, and that I may open my mouth boldly; that I may deliver the whole counsel of God, without any base fear, shame, or partiality." To make known the mystery of the gospel; some understand it of that part of the gospel which concerns the calling of the Gentiles, which had hitherto, as a mystery, been concealed. But the whole gospel was a mystery, till made known by divine revelation; and it is the work of Christ's ministers to publish it. Observe, St. Paul had a great command of language; they called him Mercury, because he was the chief speaker, (Acts 14. 12.) and yet he would have this ministry, and be at liberty; and the word of the Lord may be glorified, &c.

2. He desires their prayers for his ministration, v. 22. He speaks of himself as an ambassador in bonds, and says, 23. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Having thus desired their prayers.

II. He recommends Tychoctus unto them, v. 21, 22. He sent him with this epistle, that he might acquaint them with what other churches were informed of, that is, how he did, and what he did; how he was used by the Romans in his bonds; and how he behaved himself in his present circumstances. It is desirable to good ministers, both that their Christian friends should know their state, and likewise to be acquainted with the condition of their friends; for by this means they may the better help each other in their prayers. And that he might comfort their hearts; by giving such an account of
their sufferings, of the cause of them, and of the temper of his mind, and his behaviour under them, as might prevent their fainting at his tribulations and even minister matter of joy and thanksgiving unto them. He tells them, that Tychicus was a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord. He was a sincere Christian, and so a brother in Christ; he was a faithful minister in the work of Christ; and he was very dear to St. Paul: which makes his love to these Christian Ephesians the more observable, in that he should now part with so good and dear a friend for their sakes, when his company and conversation must have been peculiarly delightful and serviceable to himself. But the faithful servants of Jesus Christ are wont to prefer the public good to their own private or personal interests.

III. He concludes with his good wishes and prayers for them; and not for them only, but for all the brethren, v. 23, 24. His usual benediction was grace and peace: here it is, Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith. By peace we are to understand all manner of peace; peace with God, peace with conscience, peace among themselves: and all outward prosperity is included in the word; as if he had said, "I wish the continuance and increase of all happiness to you." And love with faith. This in part explains what he means in the following verse by grace: not only grace in the fountain, or the love and favour of God; but grace in the streams, the grace of the Spirit flowing from that divine principle; faith and love including all the rest. It is the continuance and increase of those that he desires for them, in whom they were already begun. It follows, from God the Father, &c. All grace and blessings are derived to the saints from God, through the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The closing benediction is more extensive than the former; for in this he prays for all true believers at Ephesus, and every where else. It is the undoubted character of all the saints, that they love our Lord Jesus Christ. Our love to Christ is not acceptable, unless it be in sincerity; indeed there is no such thing as love to Christ, whatever men may pretend, where there is not sincerity. The words may be read, Grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption, who continue constant in their love to him, so as not to be corrupted out of it by any blots or seductions whatsoever; and whose love to him is incorruptible by any opposite lust, or the love of any thing displeasing to him. Grace, that is, the favour of God, and all good, (spiritual and temporal,) that is, the product of it, is and shall be with all them who thus love our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is, or ought to be, the desire and prayer of every lover of Christ, that it may be so with all his fellow-Christians. Amen, so be it.

AN

EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

OF THE

EPISODELE OF ST. PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

Completed by Dr. W. Harris.

PHILIPPI was a chief city of the western part of Macedonia, ποτα της Μικρης της Μακεδονιας πλησις, Acts 16. 12. It took its name from Philip, the famous king of Macedon, who repaired and beautified it; and was afterward made a Roman colony. Near this place were the Cympli Philippli, remarkable for the famous battles between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great; and that between Augustus and Antony on one side, and Cassius and Brutus on the other. But it is most remarkable among Christians for this epistle, which was written when Paul was prisoner at Rome, A. D. 62. St Paul seems to have had a very particular kindness for the church at Philippi, which he himself had been instrumental in planting; and though he had the care of all the churches, he had, upon that account, a particular fatherly tender care of this. These whom God has employed us to do any good to, we should look upon ourselves both encouraged and engaged to study to do more good to. He looked upon them as his children, and, having begotten them by the gospel, he was desirous by the same gospel to nourish and nurse them up.

I. He was called in an extraordinary manner to preach the gospel at Philippi, Acts 16. 9. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. He saw God going before him, and was encouraged to use all means for carrying on the good work which was begun among them, and building upon the foundation which was laid.